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Early Dynastic Women: The Written Evidence

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OLD KINGDOM WOMEN are attested in countless decorated *mastabas* and rock-cut tombs as well as three-dimensional images.[1] In all of these formats, queens, princesses, wives, mothers, and priestesses are depicted, in addition to women working in different positions in the households of the respective tomb owners. Due to a shortage of similar sources, the evidence for women from the preceding Early Dynastic Period is much scarcer. Although some female members of the royal family are known by name for the First and Second Dynasties—for example, Neithhotep, Merneith, and Nimaathapi—their precise status is still subject to debate:[2] Whose wife or mother were they? What impact did they have?

For historical research purposes, objects bearing the names of these women are useful in that they help date archaeological findings. In his description of the so-called Narmer mace head, Walter B. Emery exemplified how royal women were treated in Egyptological literature: "a representation of the union of Nithotep and Narmer, for there is strong evidence to show that the conqueror of the North attempted to legitimize his position by taking the Northern princess as his consort,"[3] displaying a rather romantic idea of Narmer's approach to power, especially since neither Neithhotep's origin or position nor her connection with Narmer is attested without doubt.

Nonroyal individuals are even less well attested in written records owing to the developing and not yet widespread use of writing. Still, there are two large corpora which are taken as sources for the present study on written evidence of women in the Early Dynastic Period: first, a group of 359 stelae from Abydos,[4] and second, several hundred privately owned cylinder seals (table 2.1).

Table 2.1. Comparison of Early Dynastic stelae and private cylinder seals

Stelae	Cylinder Seals
Abydos (royal tombs, enclosures)	mostly unprovenanced
359 objects	ca. 600 objects
Dyn. 1	Dyn. 1 – Old Kingdom?
Personal name	Personal name
Personal name + classifier	Personal name + classifier
Personal name + title	Personal name + title
Personal name + title + classifier	Personal name + title + classifier

Stelae

The stelae were mostly excavated by Émile Amélineau, William Matthew Flinders Petrie, and the German Institute of Archaeology at Abydos during the re-excavation of the site.[5] The stelae marked subsidiary graves that surrounded the royal tombs of the First Dynasty and, while the poor quality of limestone often renders reading of the stelae's inscriptions difficult, it is still possible to sort them into different groups. At a minimum, the stelae mention a personal name[6] that, in many cases, is complemented by a determinative or classifier (fig. 2.1);[7] the most complete ones also give a title.[8]

A single elaborate example from the end of the First Dynasty has one of the oldest sequences of titles known from Egypt, mentioning that the owner served as chief of different magazines or institutions (fig. 2.2).[9] The determinative indicates that Sabef, the owner, was of short stature.[10] Other classifiers on the stelae are crouching women and men, foreigners, and dogs (table 2.2). Still, there are many stelae without any additional information that can assist in interpreting the inscriptions. Furthermore, differentiation between genders is made difficult by the fact that the feminine marker .t was not yet used in writing. The stelae usually appear as one homogeneous group in the literature, where we read of "sacrificial servant burials"[11] or "members of the royal *harim*."[12] Women are mentioned in line with "dwarfs, hairdressers, other artisans, and dogs."[13] For many Egyptologists, men were professionals of some kind, while women were perceived as "concubines."[14] Depending on the findspot, information on the stelae varies.[15] The oldest examples from the burial of King Djer (Tomb O) mostly have the crouching woman as a determinative (see table 2.2), while stelae without classifiers are rare. By the middle of the
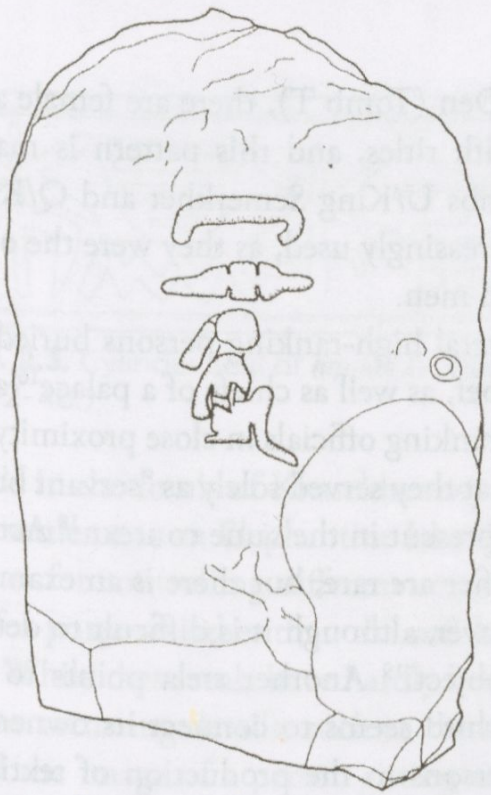
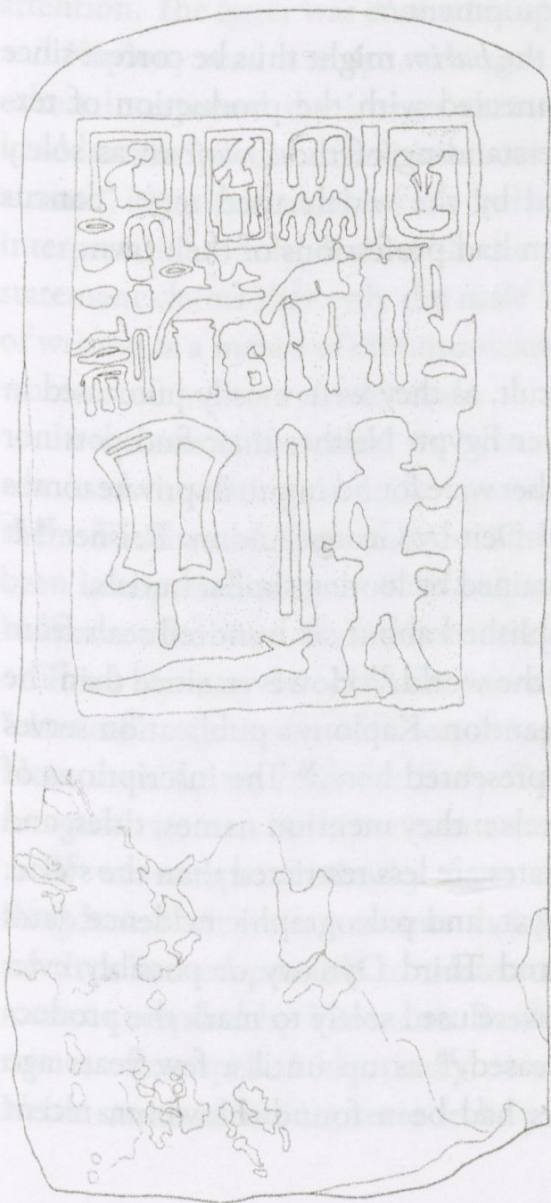**Fig. 2.1.** Stela of *sti*(?) (Cairo JE 99602, Stela 286)

Fig. 2.2. Stela of *s3b.f* (Cairo JE 34416, Stela 48)

Table 2.2. Classifiers on stelae

Classifier	Detail
Crouching woman	
Crouching man	
Person of short stature	
Foreigner	
Dog	

First Dynasty, during the reign of King Den (Tomb T), there are female and male classifiers, sometimes combined with titles, and this pattern is maintained until the end of the dynasty (Tombs U/King Semerkhet and Q/King Qa'a). Classifiers were therefore being increasingly used, as they were the only means to distinguish between women and men.

The titles indicate that there were several high-ranking persons buried in Abydos, such as the above-mentioned Sabef, as well as chiefs of a palace[16] and queens.[17] The burials of queens and high-ranking officials in close proximity to the kings contradicts the interpretation that they served solely as "servant burials," the latter of which, nevertheless, are present in the same context.[18] Actual titles in combination with a female classifier are rare, but there is an example in which a woman might have been a weaver, although it is difficult to determine because of the condition of the object.[19] Another stela points to an individual dealing with linen,[20] while a third seems to connect its owner to spinning.[21] These examples link these persons to the production of textiles, which formed a major part of funerary equipment.[22]

The connection of these persons with the *harim* might thus be correct since in later periods the royal *harim* was connected with the production of textiles.[23] However, the Egyptological understanding of these women as solely sexually exploited individuals, as implied by the widely used term "concubine," has to be refuted since these women had professions of their own.

Cylinder Seals

The case of the cylinder seals is more difficult, as they were mostly purchased in the art market at different locations all over Egypt. Neither their findspots nor their dates are secure, and only a small number were found in situ in private tombs of the First and Second Dynasty at Naga al-Deir by George Andrew Reisner.[24] It thus seems likely that the majority were obtained by looting similar burials.

In 1963 and 1964, Peter Kaplony published about six hundred seals from museums and private collections all over the world.[25] However, since then the seals have received very little scholarly attention. Kaplony's publication serves as the principal source for the drawings presented here.[26] The inscriptions of the seals are quite similar to those of the stelae: they mention names, titles, and epithets in varying combinations. Their dates are less restricted than the stelae: some were found in a First Dynasty context, and paleographic evidence dates others to the period between the First and Third Dynasty or possibly even later.[27] It has been argued that these seals were used solely to mark the production of funerary equipment for the deceased,[28] as up until a few years ago hardly any impressions of similar objects had been found. However, recent

Fig. 2.3. Cylinder seal of *ḥtp-nb(.i)* (New York 26-2-48.)

Fig. 2.4. Cylinder seal of *ḥms.t/msḥ.t* (Berlin 20333)

finds in the tomb of Khasekhemwy in Abydos,[29] at Tell al-Iswid,[30] and from the settlement on Elephantine Island,[31] prove that these seals were indeed used either for controlling different commodities during the lifetime of the owner or for purposes other than the seal-holder's private burial.

While these seals have hardly been mentioned in the literature as a group, some recurring details, such as the standard of the goddess Neith[32] (fig. 2.3) and the image of a person sitting at an offering table (fig. 2.4), have gained attention. The latter was entered as a15/a30 into the Early Dynastic Sign list,[33] and Kaplony read it as *šps,* taking it to be the title of the deceased.[34] He and others interpreted the images that mostly show figures with a large wig or headdress as "part of a traditional costume for men and women alike"[35] and, as a result, identified many of the individuals represented as men.[36] While these interpretations only dealt with the images concerned, another more recent statement claims that only the male Early Dynastic intellectual elite made use of writing as a means of communication,[37] implying that there was no need for women to employ cylinder seals.

In the case of the stelae, we have seen that while the feminine marker *.t* was not used in writing, at least figures of crouching women served to identify them. For the seals, however, the images of figures with a large wig have largely been interpreted as men, with only a few exceptions in which the feminine *.t* indicates otherwise. These latter exceptions are, however, probably of a Second or Third Dynasty date, and therefore later than the stelae. It thus seems that all "classical" techniques of interpreting grammar and image are inconclusive. How then do we read the Early Dynastic inscriptions, interpret them, and recognize women in the written record?

If we accept continuity from the Early Dynastic Period to the Old Kingdom, then we can assume that personal names are similar or even identical. It is indeed possible to relate many signs on the seals with the personal names compiled by Hermann Ranke[38] and Katrin Scheele-Schweitzer,[39] the names often spelled identically or with variations. Other elements, like the Neith-standard, do not seem to be part of the names.

Table 2.3. Female and male names on Early Dynastic cylinder seals

	Female	Probably female	?	Probably male	Male	Total
Name	9	6		4	19	38
Name + Neith	6		1		3	10
Name + "offering table"	25	4	2	2	5	38
Name + Neith + "offering table"	21	6	2	5	3	37
Name + title (including $\underline{s}hn\text{-}\underline{3}h$)	16	9	13	12	60	110
Name + epithet	2		1		9	12
$hm\text{-}n\underline{t}r$ $hw.t\text{-}hr.w$			17			17
?			282			282
Excluded			58			58
Total	79	25	376	23	99	602

From a total of 602 seals,[40] fifty-eight must be excluded, as they are either only partially preserved or possibly fakes (table 2.3). It is not possible at present to read another 282 seals or to sort them into one of the following categories. Seventeen mention the title $hm\text{-}n\underline{t}r$, "priest of the goddess Hathor," but do not contain a personal name.[41] There are therefore only 245 seals of the 602 that contain personal names: thirty-eight seals have only personal names (fig. 2.5),[42] often repeated several times; ten have a personal name and the standard of the goddess Neith;[43] thirty-eight have a personal name and an image of a figure sitting in front of an offering table;[44] thirty-seven have all three groups of personal name, standard, and offering table scene (fig. 2.6);[45] fifty-four seals show a personal name and title;[46] forty-seven present a personal name and the title $\underline{s}hn\text{-}\underline{3}h$ (fig. 2.7),[47] an Early Dynastic title of a funerary priest; nine have a title and an additional $\underline{s}hn\text{-}\underline{3}h$;[48] and there are a final twelve examples with personal names and epithets.[49]

After establishing a reading of the names that is supported by later, better-known examples, we then can attribute single seals to male or female owners. There are, however, some limitations: in many cases, an attribution is not possible and some names are attested equally for men and women alike (table 2.3). Despite these limitations, however, a tendency is recognizable: contrary to the prevailing opinion in the literature,[50] we have a percentage of women in this sample that is nearly as high as that of men.

Still, we should take a closer look at one group of inscriptions: that with the so-called offering table scene. Although the majority of recognizable names
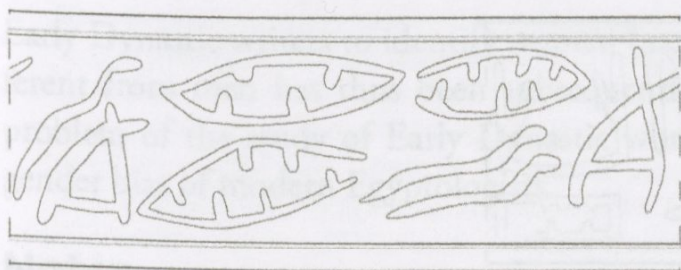
Fig. 2.5. Cylinder seal of *mr(i).f* (UC 11731).

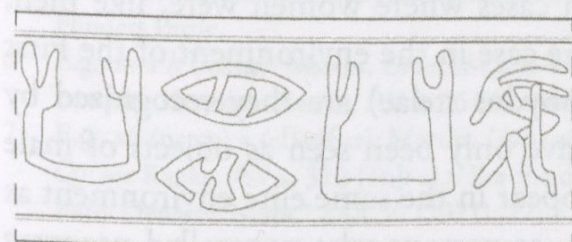**Fig. 2.6.** Cylinder seal of *kꜢj.s* (NY 10.130.1610.)

Fig. 2.7. Cylinder seal of the *sḥn-Ꜣḫ k(Ꜣ)r/kl* (UC 11741).

in these scenes are female, there are, indeed, a few male names. Furthermore, it is possible to differentiate gender in the accompanying offering table scene—a figure with a large headdress often accompanies female names, while male names are accompanied by bald-headed figures or figures with a beard, which, in several cases, represented writing for the name *šps* (fig. 2.8). The sitting figures in cases of the female names are not, however, a part of the name.[51] Another distinction is the presence of a small triangle or table sign that is missing on the "male" seals. The assumption that the wig is part of a male dress, as forwarded by von Bissing, Kaplony, and others, thus cannot be maintained. In fact, one can now tentatively identify all holders of seals with representations of sitting figures with a large wig as women, as many of these representations are accompanied by female names (table 2.3).

Conclusion

The treatment of Early Dynastic women works on two different levels. As far as the ancient Egyptians are concerned, the vast majority of attestations show that it was obviously necessary to use a determinative or classifier if a woman was mentioned, as seen in the crouching woman on the stelae or the woman
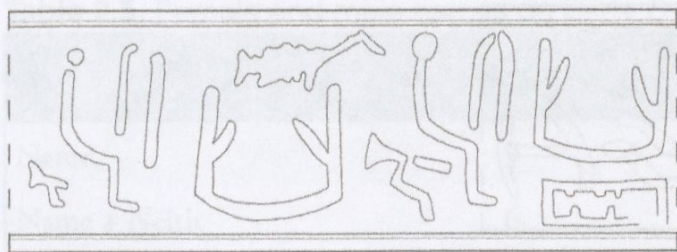
Fig. 2.8. Cylinder seal of *šps-k3-nds* (UC 11730).

in front of the offering table on the seals. The same was true for persons of short stature, foreigners, or dogs on the stelae. Men, on the other hand, did not need an explanation. It therefore seems that men were seen as the "standard" version of human beings, deviations from which had to be marked.

Modern Egyptologists, on the other hand, have treated Early Dynastic women in two different ways. Only in cases where women were, like men, victims of ritual mass killings (as was the case in the environment of the First Dynasty tombs, documented by the Abydos stelae) are they recognized by scholars. Furthermore, these women have only been seen as objects of male desire. On the other hand, if women appear in the same elite environment as owners of cylinder seals and, therefore, as persons who controlled property and had the same responsibilities as men, Egyptologists have ignored them and turned them into men.

In summary, we can recognize from both corpora a large percentage of women being treated like men—being buried like men as parts of the royal household at Abydos after having participated in the production of grave goods; holding seals and titles like their male counterparts in other crafts or positions; and being engaged in the cult of the goddess Neith. This percentage is less than approximately 50 percent of the population, but is still far more than the close to 0 percent that Egyptologists have recognized previously. The evidence shows that women were responsible for their property and owners of estates, as in the case of two women from the royal family—Nimaathapi, the mother of the king's children,[52] and the "king's daughter of his own body," Nebtireput[53]—who contributed more to the funerary equipment of King Khasekhemwy, the last king of the Second Dynasty and predecessor of Netjerikhet (Djoser), than all other private persons put together.

During the Early Dynastic Period, orthographical rules thus developed to differentiate between women and men in writing. It seems that Egyptian men were considered the "standard," as their names were only rarely accompanied by classifiers, while women (as well as foreigners, and men and women of short stature), on the other hand, had to be differentiated. What was used by the

Early Dynastic writers to identify women (and the other groups) as being different from men has thus been subsequently ignored in research. The real problem of the study of Early Dynastic women, therefore, seems to be the gender bias of modern Egyptologists.

Notes

1   I am indebted to Sara Ahmed and Bianca van Sittert for improving my English.
2   See, for example, for Merneith, Kara Cooney, *When Women Ruled the World* (Washington, DC: National Geographic, 2018), 23–58.
3   Walter B. Emery, *Archaic Egypt* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1961), 47.
4   See also Eva-Maria Engel, "Why Can't a Woman Be More Like a Man? Frauen (und Männer) in den Nebenkammern der königlichen Grabanlagen in Umm el-Qaʿab," *ZÄS* 148 (2021):124–36; Kelly, "Women in the Economic Domain: First to Sixth Dynasties" (in this volume).
5   See the (re)publication by Geoffrey Thorndike Martin, *Umm el-Qaab VII: Private Stelae of the Early Dynastic Period from the Royal Cemetery at Abydos*, AV 123 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2011). Martin's study extended the numbering system introduced by William Matthew Flinders Petrie.
6   E.g., *in-sʿh* (name): Martin, *Umm el-Qaab VII*, 192–93 (Stela 302, Ab K 6904, Tomb U); compare Hermann Ranke, *PN* 1, 35 [6]: *in-nb.f*.
7   E.g., *sti* (name) + (classifier): Martin, *Umm el-Qaab VII*, 188–89 (Stela 286, Ab K 1645, Tomb Q); see Ranke, *PN* 1, 322 [16]: *sṯ.t*. For the discussion of this name, see Eva-Maria Engel, "The Early Dynastic Neith," *SAK* 50 (2021): 77n57.
8   For example, *shn-3h* (title) + *šps-nṯr* (name) + (classifier): Martin, *Umm el-Qaab VII*, 130–31 (Stela 179, Cairo JdE 31858f = CG 14607, Tomb Z or T); compare Ranke, *PN* 1, 326 [1]: *šps.j-pth*.
9   *ḥrp ḥnt sḥ ḥw.t s3-ḥ3-nb ḥrp sḥ irp pr(.w)-dšr ḥw.t pi-ḥr.w-msn.w smr pr(.w)-nzw ḥri-wḏ-mdw ḥri-sšt3 špss(?) nb sḥ ḏd* (title) + *s3b.f* (name) + (classifier): Martin, *Umm el-Qaab VII*, 44–45 (Stela 48, Cairo JdE 34416, Tomb Q); for the name, see Katrin Scheele-Schweitzer, *Die Personennamen des Alten Reiches: Altägyptische Onomastik unter lexikographischen und soziokulturellen Aspekten*, Philippika 28 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2014), 634 [3013].
10 Male classifiers seem to occur from the reign of Den. Sign Gardiner A1, a crouching man, accompanies the individual's name. In some cases, the inscriptions depict a standing person with proportions of persons with short stature (Gardiner A282), therefore, Sabef should also have been one of this group.
11 Kerry Muhlestein, *Violence in the Service of Order: The Religious Framework for Sanctioned Killing in Ancient Egypt*, BARIS 2299 (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2011), 11–15.
12 Bruce Trigger, "The Rise of Egyptian Civilization," in *Ancient Egypt: A Social History*, ed. B.G. Trigger, B.J. Kemp, D. O'Connor, and A.B. Lloyd (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 52.
13 Rainer Stadelmann, *Die ägyptischen Pyramiden. Vom Ziegelbau zum Weltwunder* (Mainz am Rhein: Philipp von Zabern, 1997), 20: "es waren sicher keine Prinzen und hohe Beamte, sondern Zwerge, Friseure, kleine Handwerker, Frauen und sogar Hunde."
14 For example, Lana Troy, *Patterns of Queenship in Ancient Egyptian Myth and History*, BOREAS 14 (Uppsala and Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell, 1986).
15 See, for instance, Eva-Maria Engel, "Review of Geoffrey Thorndike Martin, *Umm el-Qaab VII. Private Stelae of the Early Dynastic Period from the Royal Cemetery at Abydos*, AV 123 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2011)," *BiOr* 70 (2013): 659–63.
16 Martin, *Umm el-Qaab VII*, 22–23 (stela 8), 28–29 (stela 18), 30–31 (stela 23), 32–33 (stela 29).
17 For the titles, see Dilwyn Jones, *An Index of Ancient Egyptian Titles, Epithets and Phrases of the Old Kingdom*, 2 vols., BARIS 866 (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2000), 684 [2500], 980 [3618], 348

[1297], 685 [2503]; Silke Roth, *Die Königsmütter des Alten Ägypten von der Frühzeit bis zum Ende der 12. Dynastie*, ÄAT 46 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2001), 38; Troy, *Patterns of Queenship*, 189; the attestations are ḥtm(.t)-ḥr.w skr-ḫȝs.tj (. . . (?): Martin, *Umm el-Qaab VII*, 98–99 (Stela 124, Berlin 15483, Tomb T); . . . (?): Martin, *Umm el-Qaab VII*, 28–29 (Stela 21, UC 14266, Tomb T); šd(.t)-kȝ: Martin, *Umm el-Qaab VII*, 96–97 (Stela 120, Upenn E.9902, Tomb T); sšm.t-kȝ: Martin, *Umm el-Qaab VII*, 96–97 (Stela 121, UC 14272, Tomb T); šd(.t)-kȝ: Martin, *Umm el-Qaab VII*, 98–99 (Stela 122, Tomb T); kȝ-n.t: Martin, *Umm el-Qaab VII*, 98–99 (Stela 123, UC 14273, Tomb T); . . . (?): Martin, *Umm el-Qaab VII*, 98–99 (Stela 124, Berlin 15483, Tomb T); mȝꜥ.t/wḏb.t: Martin, *Umm el-Qaab VII*, 98–99 (Stela 125, Pittsburgh, Tomb T)); wr ḥts rmn/ꜥ.w ḥr.w (nḫ.t-n.t: Martin, *Umm el-Qaab VII*, 82–83 (Stela 95, JE 35005, Tomb O); Roth, *Die Königsmütter*, 379 [I.3.3/4], Troy, *Patterns of Queenship*, 152 [1.10])); mȝȝ ḥr.w wr ḥts rmn/ꜥ.w stš (sšm.t-kȝ: Martin, *Umm el-Qaab VII*, 82–83 (Stela 96, OIM 5863, Tomb O/marked T), Roth, *Die Königsmütter*, 379 [I.3.4/4]; Troy, *Patterns of Queenship*, 152 [1.8], Jones, *Index of Ancient Egyptian Titles*, 349 [1300], 421 [1561])); mȝȝ ḥr.w rmn/ꜥ.w stš (. . . (?): Martin, *Umm el-Qaab VII*, 100–101 (Stela 128, OIM 6433, Tomb T); Roth, *Die Königsmütter*, 382–83 [I.5.3/3]; Troy, *Patterns of Queenship*, 152 [1.12]; wdpw: Martin, *Umm el-Qaab VII*, 100–101 (Stela 129, Berlin 15484, Tomb T) or smȝ.t: Roth, *Die Königsmütter*, 382 [I.5.2/3]; Troy, *Patterns of Queenship*, S. 152 [1.13]; . . . ?: Martin, *Umm el-Qaab VII*, 190–91 (Stela 288, Tomb T, SCA)).

18 E.g., butcher (sḫn ȝḫ (title) + ḥtp-sḫm (name): Martin, *Umm el-Qaab VII*, 30–31 (Stela 24, Oxford E.3939, Tomb T); nb-ḥtp Martin, *Umm el-Qaab VII*, 176–77 (Stela 260, London 14279, enclosure Tomb 117); k . . . (?): Martin, *Umm el-Qaab VII*, 199 (Stela 359, SCA, enclosure, date: Merneit)); hunter (ḥtp (?): Martin, *Umm el-Qaab VII*, 184–85 (Stela 277, SCA, Tomb T)); baker (in: Martin, *Umm el-Qaab VII*, 42–43 (Stela 46, Chicago 6741, between Tombs U and Q); di.n.f: Martin, *Umm el-Qaab VII*, 142–43 (Stela 200, Louvre E.21707, Tomb Z or T)).

19 As suggested by Martin, *Umm el-Qaab VII*, 134–35: ḫȝb.t (?) (Stela 189, Hannover 1935.200.36, Tomb T).

20 imi-nḥ.f (?): Martin, *Umm el-Qaab VII*, 196 (Stela 323, SCA, Tomb U).

21 di.f (?): Martin, *Umm el-Qaab VII*, 146–47 (Stela 207, Louvre E.21713, Tomb Z or T).

22 Jana Jones, "Pre- and Early Dynastic Textiles: Technology, Specialisation and Administration During the Process of State Formation," in *Egypt at Its Origins 2: Proceedings of the International Conference "Origin of the State: Predynastic and Early Dynastic Egypt," Toulouse (France), 5–8 September 2005*, ed. B. Midant-Reynes and Y. Tristant, OLA 172 (Leuven, Paris, and Dudley: Peeters, 2008), 99–132.

23 E.g., Elfriede Reiser, *Der königliche Harim im alten Ägypten und seine Verwaltung*, Dissertationen der Universität Wien 77 (Vienna: Verlag Notring, 1972), 57–58.

24 George A. Reisner, *The Early Dynastic Cemeteries of Naga-ed-Dêr*, pt. 1 (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1908), 119–22, pls. 43–44.

25 Peter Kaplony, *Die Inschriften der ägyptischen Frühzeit*, ÄA 8 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1963); Peter Kaplony, *Die Inschriften der ägyptischen Frühzeit, Suppl.* ÄA 9 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1964); Peter Kaplony, *Kleine Beiträge zu den Inschriften der ägyptischen Frühzeit*, ÄA 15 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1966).

26 See Eva-Maria Engel, *Private Rollsiegel der Frühzeit und des frühen Alten Reiches. Versuch einer Einordnung*, Menes 8 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2021).

27 Ilona Regulski, "Egypt's Early Dynastic Cylinder Seals Reconsidered," *BiOr* 68 (2011): 5–32.

28 E. Christiana Köhler, "Ursprung einer langen Tradition. Grab und Totenkult in der Frühzeit," in *Grab und Totenkult im Alten Ägypten*, ed. Heike Guksch, Eva Hofmann, and Martin Bommas (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2003), 23. Reisner had previously stated that some of the examples he had unearthed showed traces of use (Reisner, *Early Dynastic Cemeteries of Naga-ed-Dêr*, 122).

29 Eva-Maria Engel, "Siegelabrollungen," in "Umm el-Qaab. Nachuntersuchungen im frühzeitlichen Königsfriedhof: 16./17./18. Vorbericht," ed. Günter Dreyer et al., *MDAIK* 62 (2006): 121.

30 Ilona Regulski, "Seal Impressions from Tell el-Iswid," in *Tell el-Iswid, 2006–2009*, ed. Ahmed Baher and Beatrix Midant-Reynes, FIFAO 73 (Cairo: IFAO, 2014), 230–42.

31 Jean-Pierre Pätznick, *Die Siegelabrollungen und Rollsiegel der Stadt Elephantine im 3. Jahrtausend v. Chr. Spurensicherung eines archäologischen Artefaktes*, BARIS 1339 (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2005); Eva-Maria Engel, "Die Rollsiegel und Siegelabrollungen," in *Elephantine 24. Funde und Befunde aus der Umgebung des Satettempels*, ed. Peter Kopp, AV 104 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2018), 127–44.

32 Ramadan el-Sayed, *La déesse Neith de Saïs: Importance et rayonnement de son culte*, BdE 86 (Cairo: IFAO, 1982); Engel, "The Early Dynastic Neith," 69–85.

33 Jochem Kahl, *Das System der ägyptischen Hieroglyphenschrift in der 0.–3. Dynastie*, GOF IV, vol. 29 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1994), 432 [a15], 434 [a30]: "auf Siegeln mit zumeist unklaren PN(?)." They were not included in Ilona Regulski, *A Palaeographic Study of Early Writing in Egypt*, OLA 195 (Leuven: Peeters, 2010).

34 Peter Kaplony, "Toter am Opfertisch," in *LÄ* 6 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1986), 711.

35 Kaplony, "Toter am Opfertisch," 711: "Nicht nur Frauen, sondern auch Männer tragen eine über die Schulter fallende, große Perücke (als heliopolitanische Totentracht?)"; F.W. Freiherr von Bissing, *Der Tote vor dem Opfertisch*, Sitzungsberichte der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften 1952/3 (München, 1952), 9: "In der Frühzeit bestand noch kein grundsätzlicher Unterschied zwischen männlicher und weiblicher Haartracht."

36 See also recently Regulski, "Seal Impressions from Tell el-Iswid," 236; the inclusion of the sign as a15/a30 in the group of signs for men and their activities instead of B for women and their activities indicates that this sign was also taken to refer to men by Kahl (see above, footnote 33).

37 Ludwig D. Morenz and Robert Kuhn, "Ägypten in der Vor- und Frühzeit. Vorspann oder formative Phase? Ein kurzer Überblick," in *Vorspann oder formative Phase? Ägypten und der Vordere Orient 3500–2700 v. Chr.*, ed. Ludwig D. Morenz and Robert Kuhn, Philippika 48 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2011), 8: "Außerdem ist *bis dato* davon auszugehen, dass vorwiegend die männliche Elite sich der Schrift als Kommunikationsmittel bediente. Dies wird zumindest durch die Überlieferung von Schreibertiteln belegt, die bisher nur für Männer ab der 1. Dyn. unter Pharao Semerchet bekannt sind."

38 Ranke, *PN*.

39 Scheele-Schweitzer, *Die Personennamen des Alten Reiches*.

40 Since this research is a work in progress, the numbers presented here are subject to change. See note 26, above.

41 E.g., Kaplony, *Die Inschriften der ägyptischen Frühzeit* 3, fig. 633.

42 E.g., *mri-k3*: Kaplony, *Die Inschriften der ägyptischen Frühzeit, Suppl.*, fig. 919 (Cairo JdE 72554); for the name, see Scheele-Schweitzer, *Die Personennamen des Alten Reiches*, 389 [1345]: m and Stelae 61, 126 (Martin, *Umm el-Qaab VII*, 54–55, 100–101).

43 E.g., *it.i; it.it*: Kaplony, *Die Inschriften der ägyptischen Frühzeit, Suppl.*, fig. 924; for the possible names, see Scheele-Schweitzer, *Die Personennamen des Alten Reiches*, 273 [553, 552]: m, f.

44 E.g., *ds.ti*: Kaplony, *Die Inschriften der ägyptischen Frühzeit, Suppl.*, fig. 939; for the name, see Scheele-Schweitzer, *Die Personennamen des Alten Reiches*, 757 [3874]: f.

45 E.g., *mr(i).t-it(i.s)*: Kaplony, *Die Inschriften der ägyptischen Frühzeit* 3, fig. 613; for the standard, see el-Sayed, *La déesse Neith de Saïs* [Doc. 33]; for the name, see Scheele-Schweitzer, *Die Personennamen des Alten Reiches*, 394–95 [1377]: f.

46 E.g., *(i)r(i)-(i)ḫ.t* (title) + *nfr.i/nfr-ᶜnḫ* (name): Kaplony, *Die Inschriften der ägyptischen Frühzeit* 3, fig. 332 (Abydos Tombs P and V); for the names, see Scheele-Schweitzer, *Die Personennamen des Alten Reiches*, 465, 488 [2027; 1860]: m.

47 E.g., *ḥn.t*: Kaplony, *Die Inschriften der ägyptischen Frühzeit, Suppl.*, fig. 923; for the name, see Scheele-Schweitzer, *Die Personennamen des Alten Reiches*, 525 [2300]: ḥn.tw/m.

48 E.g., *3ḫ, sšm* (titles) + *šps-nṯr* (name): Kaplony, *Die Inschriften der ägyptischen Frühzeit, Suppl.*, fig. 921; for the name, see Scheele-Schweitzer, *Die Personennamen des Alten Reiches*, 674 [3295]: šps-ptḥ.

49 E.g., *imȝ-ib* (epithet) + *kȝ-ʿpr* (name): Kaplony, *Die Inschriften der ägyptischen Frühzeit* 3, fig. 424; for the name, see Scheele-Schweitzer, *Die Personennamen des Alten Reiches*, 694 [3430]: m.

50 See above, notes 34–36.

51 By reading the offering table sign as *šps(t)* and taking it to refer to women, it would denote the female title of a noblewoman; see Reiser, *Der königliche Harim*, 19.

52 Kaplony, *Die Inschriften der ägyptischen Frühzeit* 3, fig. 325.

53 Günter Dreyer, "Funde," in "Umm el-Qaab. Nachuntersuchungen im frühzeitlichen Königsfriedhof. 11./12. Vorbericht," ed. Günter Dreyer et al., *MDAIK* 56 (2000): 127, Abb. 27g.