
CHRONOLOGY OF THE GOVERNORS OF DEIR EL-GEBRAWI REVISITED

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ABSTRACT

Two groups of nomarchs/governors are known to have ruled the Twelfth province of Upper Egypt and to have been buried on the northern and southern cliffs of Deir el-Gebrawi. While the succession of the governors in each group is well established, the order in which the two cliffs were used is highly disputed. The officials buried on the southern cliff are precisely dated by biographical inscriptions to the reigns of Merenre to the end of that of Pepy II. If the officials buried on the northern cliff preceded them, they should then be dated to the reigns of Teti and Pepy I, but if they succeeded them, they should be dated to the Eighth Dynasty and the First Intermediate Period. The relative dating of these two groups is of utmost importance, since it can influence the dating of officials in other provinces through stylistic comparison of palaeography, art and architecture, and can accordingly lead to wrong understanding of the development of various aspects of the civilisation in this period.

This article examines all the distinctive architectural, artistic and inscriptional features of all the tombs on both cliffs and compare them with the same features found in tombs at various provinces as well as in those at the capital cemeteries of Giza and Saqqara. The evidence consistently suggests that the Northern cliff was the first to be used, and accordingly the following order is proposed for the nomarchs of Deir el-Gebrawi: (Northern cliff): Henqu I, Hemre/ Izi I, Henqu II, Hemre/ Izi II; (Southern cliff): Ibi, Djau/Shemai, Djau. These nomarchs governed throughout the Sixth Dynasty, with the inauguration of the Northern cliff taking place late under Teti and that of the Southern cliff under Merenre.

KEYWORDS: Old Kingdom, art and architecture, palaeography, chronology, administration

METHODOLOGY

While there is sufficient genealogical evidence for establishing the succession of the governors buried on each of the Northern and Southern cliffs of Deir el-Gebrawi, the relative order of use of the two cliffs is

highly controversial. With the total absence of any king's cartouche in the names, titles, or inscriptions of the owners of the tombs on the Northern cliff, it was necessary to use a comparative analysis of the evidence from these tombs with those found in well dated tombs in other provinces and at Giza and Saqqara. Using dating criteria established by many scholars, such as Cherpion, Fischer, Harpur, Kanawati, and Strudwick, the dating of the tombs on the Northern cliff has been reconsidered, based on their architectural features, the names attested in the tombs, the types of titles held by these governors and their wives, the palaeographic details, and the phraseology used.

INTRODUCTION

The correct chronology of the governors of the 12th Upper Egyptian province is of special importance for our understanding of the history of the latter part of the Old Kingdom as well as the development of art, architecture, palaeography, and administration. The governors/ nomarchs and other officials of this period were buried in two cemeteries, the northern cliff and the southern cliff (Davies, 1902A; idem, 1902B; Kanawati, 2005; idem, 2007A; idem 2013). It is generally agreed that the entire use of one of the cliffs preceded the other, but the order in which they were used is disputed. Settling this issue is crucial. The governors buried in the southern cliff are securely dated by biographical inscriptions. These are Ibi, his son Djau/ Shemai and the latter's son Djau. The first governor, Ibi, recorded that he was a youth under Pepy I and was appointed by Merenre as governor of the 12th Upper Egyptian province, before he was installed by Pepy II as hereditary prince and true overseer of Upper Egypt (Davies, 1902A, pl. 23; Kanawati, 2007A, pl. 54; Sethe, 1933, 142; Strudwick, 2005, No. 266). Djau/ Shemai died before preparing a tomb for himself,¹ and was buried by and with his son and successor Djau in a single tomb prepared by the latter. In his biography, Djau mentions his request to Pepy II for burial equipment and again for the rank title of *ḥ3tj-ꜥ* 'count' for his father, Djau/ Shemai, and the king's fulfilment of both requests (Davies, 1902B, pl. 13; Kanawati, 2013, 55-56, pl. 68; Sethe, 1933, 146-147; Strudwick, 2005, No. 267). These biographies make it safe to assume that this family ruled the 12th province during the full reign of Merenre and much of that of Pepy II.

It is now suggested that the nomarchs/ governors/ great overlords buried on the northern cliff succeeded in the following order: Henqu I, Hemre/ Izi I,

¹ It is possible that the uninscribed tomb S10 (Kanawati, 2007A, 79), which is close to and architecturally similar to tomb S8 of Ibi belonged to Djau/ Shemai, who died before completing his resting place and was buried with his son.

Henqu II, Hemre II (Kanawati, 2005, 20). Yet whether they occupied the nomarchy before or after the Ibi-Djau family is disputed. If they were before the southern group, then they cannot be earlier than the reign of Teti when the title of 'great overlord of the province' was introduced, and could not be later than the end of Pepy I's reign, since Ibi of the southern cliff was appointed to this office by Merenre. On the other hand, if the northern group was later than the southern one, then they must have governed during the 8th Dynasty and/or the First Intermediate Period. The importance of placing the northern group in the correct order comes from the fact that the tombs there contain many scenes and inscriptions. Placing them in the wrong period would not simply affect our understanding of the role the 12th province played at the end of the Old Kingdom and beyond, but would result in establishing wrong typology of architecture, art and palaeography of the early 6th Dynasty or that of the First Intermediate Period. This would certainly affect our dating of other sites and objects through stylistic comparison, and the problem becomes entangled and difficult to rectify.

HISTORY OF THE PROBLEM

Davies who in 1902 produced the first complete record of the two cliffs considered the relative dating of the tombs on the northern cliff in comparison with the well dated tombs of the southern cliff. He showed some hesitation about which group was earlier, but seems to give preference for placing the northern cliff before the southern. According to Davies, its location was the most suitable, many names which occur in the tombs point to the last reign of the 5th Dynasty and the first two reigns of the 6th. Some titles of the officials buried there are familiar in the 5th Dynasty, while the connection with Abydos, which is emphasised in the tombs of the southern cliff, is completely absent in the northern tombs. Furthermore, Davies felt that the titles of Hemre/ Isi suggested an earlier period than the decline of the 6th Dynasty (Davies, 1902B, 38-43).

Writing in 1946 Smith suggested that the northern group 'seem to show a gradual degeneration during the last years of the Old Kingdom and in the early part of the Intermediate Period'. Describing this 'degeneration', he mentions that the scenes are less well spaced, heads of figures are too small or over-large, and figures are elongated. But he admits that this change in proportions is found in the tomb of Djau and in some 6th Dynasty Memphite tombs, including that of Mereruka at Saqqara (Smith, 1946, 221-222). We should also bear in mind that the decline in the size and richness of tombs in general is well attested in the latter part of Teti's reign and during that of Pepy I. Commenting in 1960 on Davies' dating of the tomb of Henqu/ Kheteti, Baer also wrote that 'since his arguments for

the earlier dating are based on the names only (sic), whereas those for a later date are archaeological, I feel there can be little doubt that this tomb and the others in the northern group were later'. He then dated the whole group to the end of the 6th Dynasty or later (Baer, 1960, 102-103 [323, 324], 104 [333], 292 [323-324, 333]), which presumably influenced some later studies. Thus, in his examination of palaeographic and epigraphic indications for dating, Fischer wrote in 1968 that with regard to Anubis in the *hꜥp dj nswt* formula, the later writing, showing the animal on a stand, is attested in the tombs of Ibi as well as Djau/ Shemai, whereas the earlier form is used in the tomb of Hemre/ Isi. Similarly, the later form of writing the name of Hathor appears in the tomb of Ibi, while the early form is used by Hemre/ Isi. Despite this, Fischer considered Hemre/ Isi later than Ibi; thus for no clear reasons he contradicted his own findings and placed the northern cliff after the southern (Fischer, 1968, 84). This dating seems now to be accepted by most scholars. Therefore, Stock (1949, 12), Helck (1974, 101), Martin-Pardey (1976, 208-210), Kanawati (1977, 50-51), Gomaà (1980, 93-94), Strudwick (1985, 202, 303; idem, 2005, 266-267, 269), Harpur (1987, 280), and Kloth (2002, 44), among others considered the southern group earlier than the northern.

In 2005-2013 Kanawati re-recorded the two cliffs at Deir el-Gebrawi. He summarised the differences in the architectural, artistic and inscriptional evidence between the tombs in the two sites and compared them to others in different sites, concluding that the northern cliff is in fact the earlier and dating the tombs cut in it to the reigns of Teti and Pepy I (Kanawati, 2005, 12-20). The evidence will be re-examined below. This last chronology was followed by Martinet in her 2011 publication (Martinet, 2011, 55-59, 92-95). But in 2016 Gourdon wrote that despite the fact that the chronology of these two groups of nomarchs is very controversial, we risk suggesting the following succession: Ibi, Djau/Shemai, Djau, Henqu I, Hemre/Izi I, Henqu II, Hemre/Izi II. Accordingly, he considered that the governors of the 12th nome of Upper Egypt were first installed in the province under Merenre, and that Ibi was perhaps already nomarch of the 8th nome of Upper Egypt (Abydos), from which he most probably originated. He sees Ibi as a son of Khui and Nebet, the parents of the two queens of Pepy I named Ankhnespepy and the vizier Djau of Abydos. He also suggests that it is possible that the appointment of Ibi at the head of the 12th nome of Upper Egypt was accompanied by his marriage to a girl of the local nobles named Hemre. This name is evidently carried by the nomarchs of this region during the First Intermediate Period (Gourdon, 2016, 136-138). That Ibi's wife, Hemre, belongs to the same family of the nomarchs of the northern group, is very probable. But it is much more likely that Ibi married the daughter of one of his predecessors in order to facilitate the

transition of power from one family to the other. It is less likely that Ibi married a girl from a local noble family, whose existence is at least doubtful, and whose family later ousted his own successors. Finally, in her 2019 publication Martinet reversed her earlier dating by placing the northern group at the end of the 6th Dynasty to the 8th Dynasty, i.e. later than the southern group (Martinet, 2019, 908, 914, 918, 920, 922, 924).

EVALUATING THE DATA

After studying the architectural, artistic and inscriptional evidence from the tombs cut on the northern cliff, Kanawati dated these tombs to the reigns of Teti and Pepy I and placed Henqu I/ Kheteti (tomb No. N39) as the first nomarch to hold the office of ‘great overlord of nome 12’ under Teti (Kanawati, 2005, 12-20).² This evidence will now be re-examined in some detail. Because of the absence of any name of a king in any tomb on the cliff, the dating of these tombs had to rely mainly on stylistic development and comparison. However, we have to bear in mind that while a ‘style’, whether architectural or artistic, may well be common at a certain period, it frequently recurs at a later period. For instance, during the 5th Dynasty the offering chamber, i.e. where the false door is located, in mastabas as well as rock-cut tombs had the shape of a narrow rectangle, with a north-south axis, as attested for example in the tombs of Nesutnofer and Seshemnofer III at Giza, Kahay and Kaiemheset at Saqqara (Junker, 1938, figs. 26, 36; Moussa and Altenmüller, 1971, fig. 2; Lashien, 2013, pl. 77; McFarlane, 2003, pl. 40), Nikaiankh I and Nikaiankh II at Tehna, Kaikhent (A2) and Kaikhent (A3) at El-Hammamiya, Hesimin, Memi and Ankhu at El-Hawawish (Thompson, 2014, pls. 49, 59; El-Khouli and Kanawati, 1990, pls. 31, 52; Kanawati, 1983, fig. 1; idem, 1985, figs. 11, 23). Towards the end of the 5th and the beginning of the 6th Dynasty the chapels in mastabas of important officials were formed of multiple rooms, with a preference for the offering chamber to be oriented east-west and the main false door to occupy almost the entire west wall. Examples of such design are the mastabas of Ptahhotep I, Ptahhotep II, Kagemni, Mereruka, Mehu and Khentika (Mourad, 2015, pl. 77; Harpur and Scremin, 2008, 3; idem, 2006, 3; Kanawati and Abder-Raziq, 2004, pl. 42; Altenmüller, 1998, plan A; James, 1953, pl. 3). However, at sometime early in the 6th Dynasty a return to the north-south axis for the offering chambers is evident in the mastabas of the most influential men at the time, as may be seen in the mastabas of Nikausesi, Inumin, and Rewer, all in the Teti cemetery at Saqqara and dated to the end of Teti’s reign and the beginning of that of Pepy I

² In an earlier study Kanawati’s dating of the northern group to the reigns of Teti and Pepy I was the same, but the order of succession was different (Kanawati and McFarlane, 1992, 299).

(Kanawati and Abder-Raziq, 2000, pl. 39; Kanawati, 2006, pl. 35; El-Fikey, 1980, 4, fig. 2). It was these last tombs that probably had the greatest influence on the first tombs to be cut in some provinces early in the Sixth Dynasty.

Kanawati has already pointed out a number of artistic similarities between the tombs of the northern cliff and others dated to early Sixth Dynasty or even earlier. Of these is the use of the early type of frieze above the scenes on the north wall of Henqu I's tomb and the south wall of that of Hemre/Isi I, and the use by Henqu I and his wife of a chair with no back or cushion, which went out of fashion sometime in the Fifth Dynasty (Cherpion, 1989, 26-31) (Figure 1). He also drew attention to the type of bead-net pattern dress worn by the wife of Hemre/Isi I and typical at El-Hawawish in this period (Kanawati, 2005, 14-16). But perhaps most indicative of an early date and possibly familiarity with the art in the Teti cemetery is the punishment scene depicted in the tomb of Henqu II where the accused is tied to a whipping post and beaten on the back (Kanawati, 2005 pls. 27-28, 55) (figures 2). Similar scenes are found only in the tombs of Mereruka and Khentika from the reign of Teti and early Pepy I (Duell, 1938, pls. 36-38; Kanawati, Woods, Shafik and Alexakis, 2010, pl. 66a; James, 1953, pl. 9). Later scenes of punishment show the accused totally prostrated and held in place by two men while a third applies the stick, as documented in the tombs of Ibi at Deir el-Gebrawi and Tjeti-iqer at El-Hawawish (Davies, 1902A, pl. 8; Kanawati, 2007A, pl. 50). The latter type of punishment seems to have continued and is recorded in the Eleventh Dynasty tomb of Baqet III at Beni Hassan (Newberry, 1894, pl. 7; Kanawati and Evans, 2018, pls. 50b, 82).

Both Davies and Kanawati have argued that the inscriptional evidence is in favour of an earlier date for the northern cliff. Both names and titles of the tomb owners and their wives are characteristics of the earlier period. It is true that we cannot date an individual or a tomb based only on a name, yet the cumulative evidence is suggestive. This may be seen in the popularity of the name Isi, also held by the first vizier at Edfu, Hemre/ Hemi, like Hemetre/ Hemi a likely daughter of Wenis, Bendjet, like the daughter of Idu of Giza and the wife of Inumin of Saqqara, and Nebet, a name which may suggest a link with the royal in-laws of Abydos.

Many scholars have used the palaeographic details and phraseology to place the northern cliff after the southern. By doing so, Fischer, for instance noticed that early features appear in what he placed as late tombs and vice versa, yet he seems to consider contradictions as acceptable (Fischer, 1968, 84-85). In fact, such numerous contradictions are likely to have resulted from placing some tombs in the wrong dates. While

occasional use of an earlier sign in a later tomb may have occurred, we have to consider the weight of all evidence in dating a tomb. Kloth relied on the phraseology used in the autobiography of Henqu II and describing the condition of the country for placing the northern cliff to the very end of the Old Kingdom or later (Kloth, 2002, 44). It is now believed that the severe conditions that probably brought about the end of the Old Kingdom started much earlier than we initially thought. In fact, these conditions might have been the very reason for the change in the system of provincial management including the appointment of resident nomarchs at the beginning of the Sixth Dynasty. The conditions described by Henqu II are also echoed in statements made by Meryrenofet/ Qar of Edfu who is securely dated to the reign of Merenre (Sethe, 1933, 254-255; El-Khadragy, 2002, figs. 2-3; Strudwick, 2005, No. 247).

THE NOMARCHS OF THE NORTHERN CLIFF

Questions that need to be considered concern Henqu I. Was he sent from the capital or was he a member of a local family and if the latter, how was he able to oust the ruling family of Ibi-Djau, particularly as they seem to have been close to or even related to the royal family which resided at Abydos?

In a large offering table scene painted in a most conspicuous place on the west wall next to the false door of his tomb, Henqu I is described as *jm3hw hr Pth-Zkr* 'the honoured one before Ptah-Sokar' (Davies, 1902B, pl. 28; Kanawati, 2005, pl. 37). In the surviving inscriptions on the false door and on the north wall, he is described as *jm3hw hr M3jt nbt J3kmt* 'the honoured one before Matit, lady of Iakmet' (Davies, 1902B, pl. 28; Kanawati, 2005, pls. 38-39). The reference to being honoured before Ptah-Sokar is usually claimed by officials who originated from Memphis, or who have spent a period of education and/or employment in the capital (Martin-Pardey, 1976, 134-137). None of the following nomarchs buried in the northern cliff is referred to as honoured before Ptah-Sokar. Although probably originating from Memphis, the governors of the different provinces presumably had to show adherence to the local deities, and it is noticeable that the reference to being honoured by Matit was increasing at Deir el-Gebrawi, with eight such mentions attested in the preserved inscriptions of Djau, the last nomarch buried on the southern cliff (Davies, 1902B, pls. 7-10, 12; Kanawati, 2013, pls. 55-56). Ibi, the first nomarch to inaugurate the cemetery on the southern cliff under Merenre was described as honoured before Ptah, possessor of love before Onuris, and honoured before Matit (Davies, 1902A, pls. 17-18; Kanawati, 2007A, pls. 56-57, 74). This possibly indicates his Memphite origin, his growing up at

Abydos, possibly as a member of the royal in-law's family, and his current appointment at nome 12.³

Henqu I is designated as *jmj-jb n nb.f* 'confidant of his lord', and both Henqu II and Nebib are described as *jm3hw hr nb.f* 'the honoured one before his lord', in all cases *nb* 'lord' is followed by the falcon determinative (Davies, 1902B, pls. 21, 23, 28; Kanawati, 2005, pls. 37, 54, 60). Both Ibi and Djau of the southern group write the epithets *jmj-jb n nswt* 'confidant of the king', or *jmj-jb n nb.f* 'confidant of his lord' without the falcon determinative (Davies, 1902A, 6; idem, 1902B, pls. 8, 12; Kanawati, 2007A, pl. 48; idem, 2013, pls. 65, 76), and it is possible that a lessening in the status of the king occurred later in the Old Kingdom.

It is also significant that Nebet, the wife of Henqu II was the first to hold the title *hkrt nswt w^ctt* "sole ornamented one of the king" (Kanawati, 2005, pl. 57), a title which is similarly held by the wife of the following nomarch, Hemre/ Isi II, who owned an unusually small tomb (Kanawati, 2005, pl. 58). It is then held by the wives of all nomarchs buried on the Southern cliff (Davies, 1902A, idem, 1902B). This title, which became common among all governors' wives in Upper Egypt, is missing in the case of the wives of Henqu I and Hemre/ Isi I, and it would be unlikely that that would occur, if these governors followed Ibi, Djau/ Shemai and Djau. This could have only happened if the Northern cliff was earlier.

Henqu I's wife, Bendjet, is depicted of equal size to her husband and seated next to him before an offering table. The name Bendjet is very rare. Its two attestations listed by Ranke are in the example under consideration and a daughter of Idu and sister of Qar of Giza (Ranke, 1935, 97:25; Simpson, 1976, figs. 26, 38). To these we may add the wife of Inumin of Saqqara who is dated to the early part of Pepy I's reign (Kanawati, 2006, 13, pls. 44, 48), and a stela belonging to a woman with that name found at Akhmim (Kanawati, 1988, pl. 13a, fig. 33b). Kanawati argued that the daughter of Idu and sister of Qar married Inumin, who possibly originated from Akhmim. Following Inumin's death, she went to Akhmim as a *wršt Mnw* 'watcher of Min', a title that would allow a widow of an administrator from Akhmim to receive an income from the temple of Min. It is interesting that another stela found at Akhmim belongs to a woman named Tjetuti (Kanawati, 2007B, 9, 13-16, figs. 5, 11), another very rare name (Ranke, 1935, 395:9), which coincides with Tjetut, the older sister of Bendjet and Qar of Giza (Simpson, 1976, fig. 26). It seems likely that the

³ Kanawati rejects the possibility that Ibi acquired the epithet 'possessor of love before Onuris' being also the governor of nome 8, as the epithet was not held by his two successors who were equally governors of nome 8 (Kanawati, 2007A, 19-20).

two sisters married men from Akhmim, and it may be equally possible that the wife of Henqu I was another daughter of Idu or Qar who was not represented in their tombs. Tjetuti, for example, does not appear in her father's tomb, but is represented in that of her brother. It seems that Qar, who is dated to the reign of Pepy I (Strudwick, 1985, 69[23], 142[135]),⁴ became a vizier,⁵ and accordingly a very important individual in the decision making of the time. It is possible that the late promotion of Inumin to the vizierate, was accompanied by his late marriage to Bendjet,⁶ and it is also possible that Henqu I's appointment at Deir el-Gebrawi may have been supported by his influential in-laws.

Although it is difficult to make a comparison between the tombs of Henqu I and Inumin, since the former is rock-cut while the latter is a mastaba, some similarities are evident. Like the tomb of Henqu I, that of Inumin has its entrance positioned in the right section of its façade, and both tombs have a rectangular offering chamber, with north-south axis. More importantly, the main shafts of both tombs have storage rooms/ magazines that open into the upper sections of the shafts (Kanawati, 2005, 25-26, pls. 35-36; idem, 2006, 23, pls. 35, 38).⁷ Further links between Henqu I and Inumin, whose wives bear the same name of Bendjet, may be found in the tomb of Nebib (No. N38) (Kanawati, 2005, 83-86, pls. 33-34, 59-60). This tomb is adjacent to that of Henqu I, with only a thin wall separating the two, a position which suggests a deliberate wish to be close to each other. Nebib is almost certainly very close in date to Henqu I. He bears the title of [jmj-r] *hntj(w)-š pr-š* 'overseer of the palace guards',⁸ a title which probably indicates his earlier employment in the capital, and his closeness to the palace. He refers to himself as *jm3hw hr nb.f hrw nb* 'the honoured one before his lord every day', and like Henqu I, writes *nb* with the falcon determinative. It is interesting that Inumin had two eldest sons, both

⁴ This may also be deduced from his 'beautiful name' Meryrenofet and the fact that he was *hntj-š* of Pepy I's pyramid (Simpson, 1976, figs. 20-21, 26, 28, 32).

⁵ Two fragments, one with the name Qar and the other with the title *jmj-r hwt-wrt 6 m3c* 'true overseer of the 6 great courts' were found near the tomb (Simpson, 1976, pl. 34a, fig. 42). According to Strudwick this title is held only by viziers. However, his exclusion of Qar from his list of holders of the title is unjustified (Strudwick, 1985, 176-178). The dividing lines of the text, the size of the signs and style of relief are identical in the two fragments, which appear to have originated from a now damaged external inscription.

⁶ The title of vizier was not inscribed in his chapel, but is recorded on the inner wall of his sarcophagus (Kanawati, 2006, pls. 34b, 56c). That this was a late marriage of Inumin to a much younger woman may be deduced from the fact that he already had grown up sons, while she was represented with a hairstyle showing a plait ending in a disc, associated with young age (Kanawati, 2006, 13, pls. 5b, 44).

⁷ The same feature is found in the tomb of Henqu II (Kanawati, 2005, pl. 52).

⁸ For this translation of the title see Kanawati, 2003, 14-24. For earlier translations see Jones, 2000, 189[710].

described as *jmj-r st hntj(w)-š (pr-ᜫ)* ‘overseer of the department of palace guards’, and Inumin himself bore the rare title *jmj-r stp-z3 pr-nswt nb* ‘overseer of the protection of every palace’, an office also attested with the viziers Mereruka and Khentika (Kanawati, 2008, 11, 13-14, pls. 47, 51b). Nebib presumably worked under Inumin and with the latter’s two sons. It is noticeable that both Inumin and Nebib are depicted in very prominent scenes wearing anklets (figures 3, 4), a very rare feature among men and unattested elsewhere at both Saqqara and Deir el-Gebrawi (Kanawati, 2006, 26, pls. 1-3, 40-41; Kanawati, 2005, pls. 33, 60).⁹

Nebib is represented holding a perfume jar with his forefinger and thumb and his eldest son holds a bigger jar in the same way and offers it to his father. Henqu I is not shown with a perfume jar but one is held by Hemre/Isi I and Henqu II, in all cases while seated at the offering table, each with his wife next to him on the same chair and equal in size (Davies, 1902B, pls. 17, 26; Kanawati, 2005, pls. 46, 53, 60). Similar representations with the perfume jars are mostly found in the earlier part of the Sixth Dynasty, with the wife present, as in the tombs of Qar of Giza, and Bawi of tomb G126 at El-Hawawish (Simpson, 1976, fig. 30; Kanawati, 1989, fig. 15), although absent as in the tombs of Mereruka, Khentika, Mereri of the Teti cemetery, Merefnebef also at Saqqara, tomb G 97 and tomb K5 of Bawi at El-Hawawish (Duell, 1938, pl. 117; Kanawati, Woods, Shafik and Alexakis, 2010, pl. 108; James, 1953, pl. 21; Davies, El-Khouli, Lloyd and Spencer, 1984, pl. 12; Myśliwiec, Kuraszkiewicz, Czerwik, Rzeuska, Kaczmarek, Kowalska, Radomska, Godziejewski, 2004, pls. 18, 23; Kanawati, 2008, figs. 5, 18). It is also significant that the vizier and nomarch Isi of Edfu, who is securely dated to the reign of Teti and early of that of Pepy I, held a jar of perfume in this manner (Alliot, 1935, pl. 14).

Architecturally, the chapel of Henqu I is rectangular in shape with a north-south longitudinal axis perpendicular to its façade, and with the entrance sited to the right of the central axis (Davies, 1902B, pl. 27; Kanawati, 2005, pls. 35-36). An almost identical layout is found in the tomb of Nehwet-deshor of tomb No. G95 at El-Hawawish, who was the first nomarch to govern Akhmim, now dated to the end of Teti’s reign and the earlier part of that of Pepy I (Kanawati, 1988, fig. 1; Kanawati and McFarlane, 1992, 49-54). It is also possible that the tomb of Kaihep/ Tjeti (No. M8), who is dated by biographical inscription to the reign of Merenre (Martinet, 2019, 877) had a similar design before it was expanded both north and west (Kanawati, 1982, fig. 1). At Thebes, the tomb of

⁹ Regrettably, this ornament could not be verified in the case of Henqu I himself, as the lower parts of his legs are damaged in most scenes.

Wenisankh is rectangular and that of Khenty appears to have also been rectangular with the door in the right section of the façade, before the chapel was expanded (Saleh, 1977, pls. 2, 7), almost in a similar manner to that of Kaihep/ Tjeti (No. M8) at El-Hawawish. Rectangular offering chambers with north-south axis, whether in rock-cut tombs or mastabas, are characteristic of the end of the Fifth and the early part of the Sixth Dynasty as attested for instance at Akhmim in the tombs of Hesimin, Hemmin, Memi, Ankhu, Duamin, Webebu and Qereri (Kanawati, 1983), fig. 1; idem, 1985, figs. 1, 11, 23; idem, 1986), pls. 4, 18, 20).

CONCLUDING JUDGEMENT

The above data provides a strong hypothesis that the tomb of Henqu I is earlier than those of the southern cliff of Deir el-Gebrawi. Indeed, an examination of the architectural, artistic and inscriptional evidence supports the case that the nomarchs buried on the northern cliff preceded those buried on the southern cliff. Henqu I, on whom much of the evidence and case depends, was probably the first governor of the province. With close connections to the king and the influential viziers of the time, such as Meryrenofet/ Qar of Giza and Inumin of Saqqara, it appears that Henqu I originated from the elite bureaucracy of the capital, Memphis, and was sent to Deir el-Gebrawi as the first residing governor of the Twelfth Upper Egyptian province. The governors buried on the southern cliff, starting by Ibi, represent a new line, probably descending from the royal in-laws of Abydos. However, the marriage of Ibi to a woman named Hemre, a typical name among the old governors of the province, suggests that the transfer of power to the new family was achieved through a marriage alliance.

Henqu I was the first nomarch to be appointed at Deir el-Gebrawi, presumably under Teti, and the succession of the governors in the Sixth Dynasty was as follows: Henqu I, Hemre/ Izi I, Henqu II, Hemre/ Izi II, Ibi, Djau/Shemai, Djau. Their rule extended throughout the Sixth Dynasty, with the change in the ruling family and the move to a new cemetery on the Southern cliff under Merenre.

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