

*STUDIES IN ANCIENT ORIENTAL CIVILIZATION • NO. 48*

THE ORIENTAL INSTITUTE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

*Thomas A. Holland • Editor*

with the assistance of Thomas G. Urban



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# EGYPTIAN PHYLES IN THE OLD KINGDOM

The Evolution of a System of Social Organization

ANN MACY ROTH

THE ORIENTAL INSTITUTE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

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*Series Editor's Note*

The Egyptian hieroglyphs used herein were designed and made available—for the first time—in a laser-printer font by Cleo Huggins and Dexter Sear (IO Vision, 102 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto, California 94301). This special font contains the “standard set” of about 800 hieroglyphs and 38 additional, non-standard hieroglyphs necessary to produce this manuscript.

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










With the exception of the illustrative material in the figures and *Appendix*, the entire manuscript was prepared camera-ready on an Apple computer and laser printer with the word processing application Microsoft Word. The Oriental Institute sincerely thanks Cleo, Dexter, and Lloyd for their excellent craftsmanship and diligent service—without their skills and generosity the “in-house” production of highly specialized manuscripts such as this would be impossible.



To  
John Gordon Roth  
and  
Esther Stubblefield Roth



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## PREFACE

The present work is a revised version of a doctoral dissertation presented to The University of Chicago Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations in the Spring of 1985. As such, it inevitably amounts to far less than the sum of the individual efforts that contributed to its completion. A large part of any value found in the following pages must be attributed to the inspiration, patience, and generous criticism of the late Professor Klaus Baer who served as the chairman of my dissertation committee. I am also greatly indebted to Professors Edward Wente and Janet Johnson, the other members of the committee, who gave me the benefit of their opinions on the work, both as a dissertation and in its present form. Their supervision has rid the following chapters of many errors and obscurities. I would also like to thank Professor Lanny Bell, both for the opportunity to work at Chicago House, where I was first prompted to wonder about priestly organization, and for his useful comments on the second and third chapters in their earliest form. To these scholars and to Professor Helene Kantor, as my teachers in Egyptology, I owe a debt far greater than I can express.

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I am grateful to the curatorial staffs of the Egyptian Departments of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Lowie Museum of Anthropology at the University of California, Berkeley, and The University Museum of The University of Pennsylvania for their assistance in studying various pieces in their collections. I would especially like to thank the staff of the Egyptian Department at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, for allowing me to study the unpublished records of Reisner's Giza expeditions, and for many helpful discussions and references.

Tom Holland and Tom Urban of the Oriental Institute's Publications Department have been patient with my ever-changing address and my even more variable phrasing. Their editing and design work have clarified my arguments considerably and I am grateful for their help.

The hieroglyphic font was created, in part to order, by Cleo Huggins and Dexter Sear. Their elegant signs are a great improvement over my own.

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\* \* \* \*

Throughout, the names of private individuals will be given in transliteration, while the names of kings will be spelled out. For the latter, I have used spellings based on the Egyptian forms rather than the Manethonian translations (e.g., Menkaure rather than Mycerinus). For kings of the Archaic period, who are better known by their Horus names, I have spelled out the Horus name and left the *nswt-bjtj* name in transliteration.

Footnote citations are given in abbreviated form after the first occurrence. The bibliography also gives full references to the works cited. I have made no attempt to include all the relevant bibliographical material that has appeared in the years that have passed since the completion of the dissertation in 1985. More recent literature has been incorporated, of course, when it has affected the arguments.



## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ÄF	Ägyptologische Forschungen, Glückstadt
AOS	American Oriental Society
ASAE	<i>Annals du service des antiquités de l'Égypte</i> , Cairo
BÄBA	Beiträge zur ägyptischen Bauforschung und Altertumskunde, Wiesbaden
BIFAO	<i>Bulletin de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale</i> , Cairo
CdÉ	<i>Chronique d'Égypte</i> , Brussels
CT	A. de Buck, <i>The Egyptian Coffin Texts</i> , Chicago
JEJ	<i>Journal of Egyptian Archaeology</i> , London
JNES	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i> , Chicago
LÄ	W. Helck and E. Otto, eds., <i>Lexikon der Ägyptologie</i> , Wiesbaden
MDAIK	<i>Mitteilungen des deutschen Instituts für ägyptische Altertumskunde in Kairo</i> , Mainz
MIFAO	Memoires publiés par les membres de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale du Caire, Cairo
Or	<i>Orientalia</i> , New Series, Rome
PM	B. Porter and R. Moss, <i>Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Reliefs, and Paintings</i> . 2nd ed. 3 vols. Oxford, 1972–81
PSBA	<i>Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology</i> , London
RdÉ	<i>Revue d'égyptologie</i> , Paris
SAOC	Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization, Chicago
JSSEA	<i>Society of the Study of Egyptian Antiquities [Journal]</i> , Toronto
WdO	<i>Welt des Orients</i> , Göttingen
Wörterbuch	A. Erman and H. Grapow, <i>Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache</i> , Berlin
WVDOG	Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichungen der deutschen Orientgesellschaft, Leipzig
ZÄS	<i>Zeitschrift für ägyptischen Sprache und Altertumskunde</i> , Berlin



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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

The study of ancient Egypt has traditionally been divided into two subdisciplines: the anthropological, focusing on artifacts and archaeological evidence, and the historical, focusing on textual and iconographic evidence. Until recently, the choice between these methodologies has been determined largely by the absence or presence of written evidence in the period under consideration, so that the study of the prehistoric or predynastic period has normally been characterized by an anthropological and archaeological approach, while the history of Egypt after the beginning of the First Dynasty has been reconstructed principally on the basis of written sources. In recent years, anthropological methods have begun to be applied to later periods, but the history of pharaonic Egypt remains firmly rooted in the textual evidence.

As a result of these two approaches, Egyptologists tend to view predynastic and dynastic Egypt in very different ways. Predynastic Egypt is described as a series of cultures, which can be compared on the basis of such criteria as burial customs, the prevalence of weapons in burials, degrees of social differentiation, and the like. In other words, predynastic Egyptian society is analyzed in the same ways that other prehistoric and preliterate societies are analyzed. Dynastic Egypt, on the other hand, is viewed as a unified civilization, which was ruled by a monarchy and possessed a sophisticated bureaucracy, foreign policy, literature, and artistic style. This level of development is assumed even for the earliest dynasties, from which there survive only enigmatic references to titles and institutions that are most often analyzed in terms of their postulated later counterparts. Egyptian civilization after the beginning of the First Dynasty is approached by Egyptologists in much the same way as the Roman Empire is approached by classicists, or medieval England by medievalists.

Yet it is clear that pharaonic civilization is directly descended from the later cultures of the predynastic period, and it is highly unlikely that pharaonic

institutions were created *de novo* by the kings of the First Dynasty. Our divided view of ancient Egyptian history obscures the fact that the Old Kingdom, and even more the Archaic period preceding it, must have seen the slow evolution and development of many of the classical Egyptian institutions from the comparatively primitive social organization of predynastic society, a development parallel to that seen in the artifactual record.

The present study is an attempt to trace the evolution of one such institution, the Egyptian phyle, from its origins (so far as they can be discerned) to its crystallization as part of an organizational system in the Middle Kingdom. When analyzed in terms of the Old Kingdom and Archaic period evidence alone, rather than through the distorting glass of its later counterpart, the Egyptian phyle emerges as an institution rooted securely in the community structure of prehistoric society, which evolved over the course of the Archaic period and Old Kingdom to serve the changing needs of the developing centralized government.

In keeping with Egyptological tradition, this analysis of a pharaonic institution is largely historical. An attempt is made, however, to avoid the dangerous assumption that pharaonic Egypt was from its beginnings comparable to a modern nation-state. Furthermore, the texts upon which the reconstruction is based are studied in their archaeological context rather than as isolated fragments of history. In the study of an institution, the buildings in which it functioned and the tools used by its personnel can be as informative as written records, especially when those records are as scarce and as biased by accidents of preservation as they are for the Archaic period and the Old Kingdom. When the text and the context are integrated, patterns emerge that give a truer picture of the nature and functioning of this institution as well as its roots and course of development.

### 1.1. EGYPTIAN PHYLES

Phyles, in the sense in which Egyptologists use the word, are the groups of people that provided part-time service in temples, work crews, and the mortuary cults of kings and high officials during the pharaonic period. Egyptologists first encountered these groups in the bilingual decree of Canopus of 237 B.C., in which Ptolemy III Euergetes announced the addition of a fifth phyle to the system of four phyles then in use in temple priesthoods.<sup>1</sup> The Greek word *φύλη*,

1. K. Sethe, *Hieroglyphische Urkunden der griechisch-römischen Zeit*, Urkunden 2 (Leipzig, 1904–16), pp. 134–36.



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from which the term “phyle” is derived, was used in the Greek text of this decree to translate *z3*, the Egyptian word for these groups.

The system of phyles was soon found in much older sources. It is referred to frequently in the temple records of the Kahun papyri,<sup>2</sup> which date from the reign of Senwosret III in the Twelfth Dynasty (1862–1843 B.C.). The system seems to have changed little during the sixteen centuries intervening between the Middle Kingdom and the reign of Ptolemy III. It comprised four phyles, known by the names “first,” “second,” “third,” and “fourth.” Each phyle served for a period of one month, rotating with the other three phyles in numerical order. Only the lower levels of the priesthood appear to have been organized according to phyle membership during this period.<sup>3</sup>

There is, however, evidence for the use of phyles in even earlier periods. The phyles and the systems used for their organization in the Archaic period (3100–2630 B.C.) and the Old Kingdom (2630–2250 B.C.) differed in important ways from the system used later, but are clearly the ancestors of the later institution. During these early periods there were five phyles, designated by adjectival names such as “green” and “little” rather than numbers. The system used to organize these phyles varied to accommodate the institution to which the phyles were attached. In the best-known of these systems, the priesthoods of the royal mortuary cults of the Fifth Dynasty, each of the five phyles was divided into two divisions, which served in the cult independently and resulted in a ten-month cycle of rotating service. The phyles of Old Kingdom mortuary cults also differed from their Middle Kingdom counterparts in that the higher levels of the priesthood belonged to phyles, and in that the Old Kingdom phyles served in a rotation governed by civil months, rather than the lunar months used in the Middle Kingdom.

The pre-Middle Kingdom systems of phyles can thus be distinguished from the later system, and can be studied as a separate phenomenon. When the origins of these early phyles and the patterns in their functioning are examined in detail, it becomes clear that their importance in Egyptian culture and history has been significantly underestimated; the institution played an important role in the development of ancient Egyptian social organization. The changes that took place in the nature and functioning of phyles between the Old and Middle Kingdoms can be attributed to the incompatibility of several aspects of the Old

2. L. Borchardt, “Der zweite Papyrusfund von Kahun und die zeitliche Festlegung des Mittleren Reiches der ägyptischen Geschichte,” *ZÄS* 37 (1899):94ff.
3. H. Kees, “Die Phylen und ihre Vorsteher im Dienst der Tempel und Totenstiftung,” *Or* 17 (1948):315–16.

Kingdom institution with the new regime. This fundamental change in phyles and phyle systems that came about between the Old Kingdom and the Middle Kingdom represents the transformation of a traditional social institution into an administrative mechanism and demonstrates the dangers involved in interpreting early institutions by arguing back from their later manifestations.

## 1.2. THE STATE OF THE PROBLEM

The problems of phyles and phyle organization in the Old Kingdom have engaged the attention of a number of scholars. Sethe<sup>4</sup> was the first to discuss the existence of the system in the Old Kingdom, as well as the use of distinctive names to designate the phyles. He noted that these names are very similar to a group of nautical terms used in the Coffin Texts and he suggested that phyles originated as ships' crews. Reisner studied the use of phyles in Old Kingdom work crews in his publication of the masons' marks on the blocks of the mortuary temple of Menkaure.<sup>5</sup> Kees, in an article that examined both the Old Kingdom and Middle Kingdom systems,<sup>6</sup> focused on titles that refer to phyles or to one of the phyle names and depended chiefly on the Middle Kingdom model for his interpretation of the Old Kingdom evidence. Edel examined phyle organization in his commentary on the tablets found at the sun temple of king Userkaf, which seem to record some aspects of phyle service.<sup>7</sup> Edel also concentrated on the names of the phyles, but he dealt with the problems of phyle divisions as well.

The publication of the papyri found in Neferirkare's mortuary temple at Abu Sir,<sup>8</sup> which contain many references to the phyle system, has spurred further research on phyles. The most thorough discussion of the implications of these texts for the study of the phyle system in Old Kingdom mortuary temples is contained in Posener-Kriéger's two-volume work on the archive.<sup>9</sup> In her discussion of the phyles at the mortuary temple of Neferirkare, Posener-Kriéger considered the names of the phyles, the possibility of "parasite" phyles

4. K. Sethe, "Der Totenbuchspruch für das Herbeibringen der Fährte," ZÄS 54 (1918):3.

5. G. A. Reisner, *Mycerinus: The Temples of the Third Pyramid at Giza* (Cambridge, MA, 1931), pp. 273–77 (Appendix E).

6. Kees, "Phylen und ihre Vorsteher," pp. 71–90 and 314–25.

7. E. Edel, "Die Kalksteintäfelchen," in H. Ricke, ed., *Das Sonnenheiligtum des Königs Userkaf*, BÄBA 7 and 8 (Cairo and Wiesbaden, 1965–69) 2:1–22.

8. P. Posener-Kriéger and J.-L. de Cenival, *The Abu Sir Papyri*, Hieratic Papyri in the British Museum, 5th Series (London, 1968).

9. P. Posener-Kriéger, *Les archives du temple funéraire de Néferirkarê-Kakaï*, Bibliothèque d'Étude 65 (Cairo, 1976), pp. 565–74.

borrowed from other institutions, the periods of phyle rotation, and the size of a phyle. In her discussion of the different classes of functionaries who were active at this mortuary temple, she also examined the question of which classes took part in phyle rotation.<sup>10</sup> This information will soon be augmented by the archive of papyri discovered at the neighboring temple of Neferefre, where phyles also figured prominently according to Posener-Kriéger's initial analyses.<sup>11</sup>

Helck has also discussed the phyle system at Abu Sir in an article that characterized the Old Kingdom phyle system in general.<sup>12</sup> This short but important article established that there was a consistent order in which Old Kingdom phyles were listed, gathered the evidence for the size of a phyle, and clarified the meanings of the nautical terms that Helck, following Sethe, regarded as the source of the names and organization of phyles.

A different body of evidence was considered by Kaplony, who examined many of the references to phyles in Archaic period texts.<sup>13</sup> He gave his principal attention to the problem of the names and origins of the phyles and their connection with ships' crews.

To a great extent, the contributions of these scholars to the study of phyles have been conditioned by the evidence for phyles in the Middle Kingdom and later, a point of view that can distort the picture of the nature and importance of phyles in the earlier periods. For example, Sethe's suggestion that a nautical system of phyles was the origin of the phyles known from priesthoods and work crews, combined with the use of the system in work crews and the low level of the functionaries who were organized into phyles during the Middle Kingdom and later, has led to an assumption that phyle members were in most cases unimportant people, which was not necessarily the case in the Old Kingdom. The readings of some of the names of the phyles are also based on this hypothesis of a nautical origin. And yet, as I propose to demonstrate, it is not at all clear that the nautical use of the names was the original one, or, indeed, that phyles were ever used in ordinary boat crews at all.

10. Ibid., pp. 574–88.

11. P. Posener-Kriéger, "Les nouveaux papyrus d'Abousir," *JSSEA* 13 (1983):53–57 and idem, "Remarques préliminaires sur les nouveaux papyrus d'Abousir," in *Dauer und Wandel*, Symposium anlässlich der 75 jährigen Bestehens des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Kairo (Mainz am Rhein, 1985), pp. 35–43.

12. W. Helck, "Die Handwerker- und Priesterphylen des Alten Reiches in Ägypten," *WdO* 7 (1973):1–7.

13. Although Kaplony discusses phyles in many of his publications, usually in connection with the individual texts that refer to them, a summary of his views may be found in P. Kaplony, *Rollsiegel* 1, *Monumenta Aegyptiaca* 2, (Brussels, 1977), pp. 321–32.

Another bias arises from the fact that the later phyles seem to have been organized in one universal system; as a result, attempts have been made to derive a single, universal phyle system for the Old Kingdom that would explain all the evidence from work crews, royal temples, and private cults and from all periods. Some scholars have even attempted to impose the later system on the Old Kingdom altogether. Such universal models obscure the evolution of phyle organizations and the adaptations made for the different institutions in which they served.

### 1.3. EVIDENCE FOR PHYLES BEFORE THE MIDDLE KINGDOM

The contemporary evidence that can be applied to the study of phyles in the Archaic period and the Old Kingdom is extremely varied, because of the different institutions in which phyle organization operated, and the various tasks in which phyle members were engaged. The earliest evidence of the existence of phyles is found in inscriptions on stone jars dating to the First Dynasty. These texts give the name of a phyle or the hieroglyph for "phyle" or both along with other groups of signs and are difficult to interpret. In addition, there are a few, yet more enigmatic, references to phyles on cylinder seals also from the Archaic period. Despite their difficulty, these texts can be categorized to reveal patterns that shed light on the uses of phyles in this early period. All the relevant examples are collected and categorized in *Chapter 8* to facilitate comparison.

The next type of evidence to appear, beginning in the early Fourth Dynasty, is the inscription of the names of phyles on tools and on unfinished stone blocks, as mason's marks. These data suggest general conclusions about the nature of the work done by phyle members and, in some cases, the system of organization is reflected in the distribution of the various phyles' names on the blocks of a building. This evidence is supplemented in the early Fifth Dynasty by a number of plaques from the sun temple of Userkaf,<sup>14</sup> which, it will be argued, record the progress of phyles in construction work more explicitly.

From the late Fifth and early Sixth Dynasties, two archives of administrative documents are known from the royal mortuary temples of Neferirkare and Neferefre at Abu Sir.<sup>15</sup> These archives include tables of service, inventories, and distribution lists; they provide the clearest picture of phyle functioning available

14. Edel, "Kalksteintäfelchen," pp. 1–22.

15. Posener-Kriéger and de Cenival, *Abu Sir Papyri*. This is the archive from the temple of Neferirkare; the archive found in the neighboring temple of Neferefre in the spring of 1982 has not yet been published, except in brief preliminary reports: Posener-Kriéger, "Nouveaux papyrus," pp. 53–57, and idem, "Remarques préliminaires," pp. 35–43.

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in the Old Kingdom. In the Fifth Dynasty, references to phyles and their organization also begin to appear in the wall reliefs of private tomb chapels. Phyle activity in royal and private mortuary buildings during this period can also be seen in their architecture, since a complex of five storerooms becomes popular in which the rooms are sometimes explicitly labeled with phyle names. Finally, the titularies of Old Kingdom officials who held positions at royal mortuary cults offer many indirect clues to the evolution of phyle organization and the social status of those who participated in the system at those institutions.

As with all evidence from the Old Kingdom, and to an even greater extent than from the Archaic period, it is difficult to avoid drawing general conclusions from isolated pieces of information. Nonetheless, the variety in the kinds of evidence provides a check of sorts and permits the reconstruction of a useful picture of the phyles and the phyle systems of this early period.

## 1.4. THE SCOPE OF THIS STUDY

The present study is an investigation of phyles and the institutions in which they were used during the Archaic period and the Old Kingdom, based on the contemporary evidence. By examining separately the various sorts of evidence available for each institution that used phyle organization, the differences among the systems of phyles become clearer. These systems can then be compared to determine which characteristics are proper to phyles and which are dependent on the institutions to which they were attached.

The first section, *Chapters 2–4*, deals with the nature of phyles and phyle membership, including such general questions as the readings and meaning of the names of the phyles, the connection of the names with boats and boat crews, and the evidence for initiation ceremonies. Although characteristics of phyles such as names, origins, and acquisition of membership seem to be shared by phyles in all institutions during this period, even here some consistent variation is apparent when the sources of the evidence for these questions are distinguished.

The second section, *Chapters 5–8*, is devoted to the various spheres in which phyles were used during the Old Kingdom and the systems into which they were organized in each. Because our knowledge of the phyle system of the royal mortuary temple is the most detailed, it is described first, so as to serve as a basis for comparison of the systems used in other institutions, such as private cults and royal work crews. The final chapter of this section deals with the evidence for phyles in the Archaic period, distinguishing and, where possible, identifying the various institutions in which these earliest-known phyles were active.

The concluding chapter presents a picture of the general nature and function of phyle systems during the Archaic period and the Old Kingdom. The question of the possible origins of phyles is addressed first, by extrapolating from the Archaic period evidence and comparing evidence about the nature of phyles that has been established for later periods. This discussion also draws upon the parallels with the later Greek phyles, and the meanings of the five phyle names. The final section summarizes the evolution of the various types of phyle organization and attempts to link their development to historical events and changes in other institutions during the Old Kingdom. An explanation is then suggested for the development of a markedly different sort of phyle organization in the Middle Kingdom, in which the phyles themselves were of a radically different character. The picture of the phyle and its evolution that emerges from this analysis reveals an institution with roots in the more primitive (though not necessarily less complex) cultures that preceded the First Dynasty and the modifications it underwent before it attained its final form as an administrative mechanism of classical Egyptian civilization.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE NAMES OF THE PHYLES

#### 2.1. THE READINGS OF THE NAMES

Unlike the phyles of the Middle Kingdom and later, Old Kingdom phyles were identified by names rather than by numbers. It was recognized very early that the names were related to a nautical nomenclature used in the Coffin Texts.<sup>1</sup> On the basis of this relationship it has long been thought that the names of the phyles and the institution itself originated in rotating watches that supplied the necessary around-the-clock crews on ships.<sup>2</sup> The word *z3*, “phyle,” is thus often translated “watch,” and on the same assumption the readings commonly assigned to the names of the phyles are taken from the corresponding nautical terms. An examination of these names in the context of phyles alone, however, reveals that the Egyptians made a number of distinctions between the two sets of terms.



##### 2.1.1. or

It has generally been assumed that the full name of this phyle is *jmj-wrt*, and that the form *wr* is an abbreviated form. This assumption is based on the fact that *jmj-wrt* is the form that the nautical term “starboard” almost invariably takes and is also the form used as a phyle name in some of the best known tombs at Saqqara where private phyles of mortuary priests are named. References to the *wr* phyle are less obvious. Edel was the first to discuss its existence; however, he took it to be a different phyle rather than a variant name of the *jmj-wrt* phyle.<sup>3</sup> He argued for its existence primarily from the occurrence

1. Sethe, “Totenbuchspruch,” pp. 3–4, n. 5.

2. Ibid.; Kees, “Phylen und ihre Vorsteher,” p. 5; Kaplony, *Rollsiegel* 1:234.

3. Edel, “Kalksteintäfelchen,” pp. 10–22.

of a clear <sup>11</sup> on a plaque from the sun temple built by Userkaf<sup>4</sup> and the frequent use of the same term in the Abu Sir papyri.<sup>5</sup> He also cited as examples of this phyle the occurrences of the group  in titularies, which had previously been read as a separate title (“chief of a phyle,” or the like). Edel pointed out that this group is always attached to another title and that its purpose is to specify the phyle in which that office was performed.<sup>6</sup>

In order to reconcile the existence of this sixth phyle with the well-attested ten-month rotation cycle and with other evidence that there were only five phyles in the Old Kingdom, Edel proposed reading the phyle name that is usually read *nds* as *wr*.<sup>7</sup> This suggestion was rejected by Helck and Posener-Kriéger. Helck noted that the phyles tend to occur in a consistent order and that in the lists on two stone platters from the Step Pyramid *wr* occurs in the same position as *jmj-wrt* does in the *Mrrw-k3* storerooms; he concluded from this that *wr* is an abbreviation of *jmj-wrt*.<sup>8</sup> Posener-Kriéger argued that in the Abu Sir papyri, in the *Mrrw-k3* storerooms, and even in the tablets from the Userkaf sun temple with which Edel was concerned, the *nds* sign (Gardiner’s G 37)<sup>9</sup> is clearly distinguished from the *wr* sign (G 36). Like Helck, she correctly concluded that after the beginning of the Fifth Dynasty, the phyle name *wr* was in some cases written *jmj-wrt*.<sup>10</sup> Kaplony also argued for this view.<sup>11</sup>

These scholars assumed that the alternation of the two forms *wr* and *jmj-wrt* was random. In fact, however, when all the examples are collected, it becomes clear that a careful distinction was made in the usage of these forms. In all cases, phyles serving kings (in royal mortuary cults or in construction crews) used the name *wr* consistently from the Archaic period through the Sixth Dynasty. The name *jmj-wrt*, on the other hand, was used in the same period exclusively in phyle systems attached to the mortuary cults of private individuals, where the name *wr* never occurs. The evidence for these private phyles dates from the middle Fifth to the early Sixth Dynasties; before this period, *jmj-wrt* is unknown as a phyle name.

4. H. Rieke, “Der Bau,” in H. Rieke, ed., *Die Sonnenheiligtum des Königs Userkaf*, BÄBA 7 and 8, 2 vols. (Cairo and Wiesbaden, 1965–69) 1:29–30, pl. 20b.

5. Posener-Kriéger and de Cenival, *Abu Sir Papyri*, pls. 58F and 69, 1.

6. Edel, “Kalksteintäfelchen,” p. 18.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 16.

8. Helck, “Handwerker- und Priesterphylen,” pp. 2–3.

9. References to specific hieroglyphic signs are accompanied by numbers keyed to the sign list in A. H. Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar*, 3rd edition (London, 1957), pp. 442–548.

10. Posener-Kriéger, *Archives*, pp. 567–68.

11. Kaplony, *Rollsiegel* 1:322.



There are three apparent contradictions to this description that might be cited in support of a free variation of *wr* and *jmj-wrt*. These are groups of texts in which both variants of the name seem to be applied to phyles working in work crews: the work records from the sun temple of Userkaf, the masons' marks on the outer blocks of a Fourth Dynasty mastaba at Giza, and masons' marks on the blocks of Menkaure's mortuary temple. A closer examination of these texts shows, however, that they preserve the same distinction.

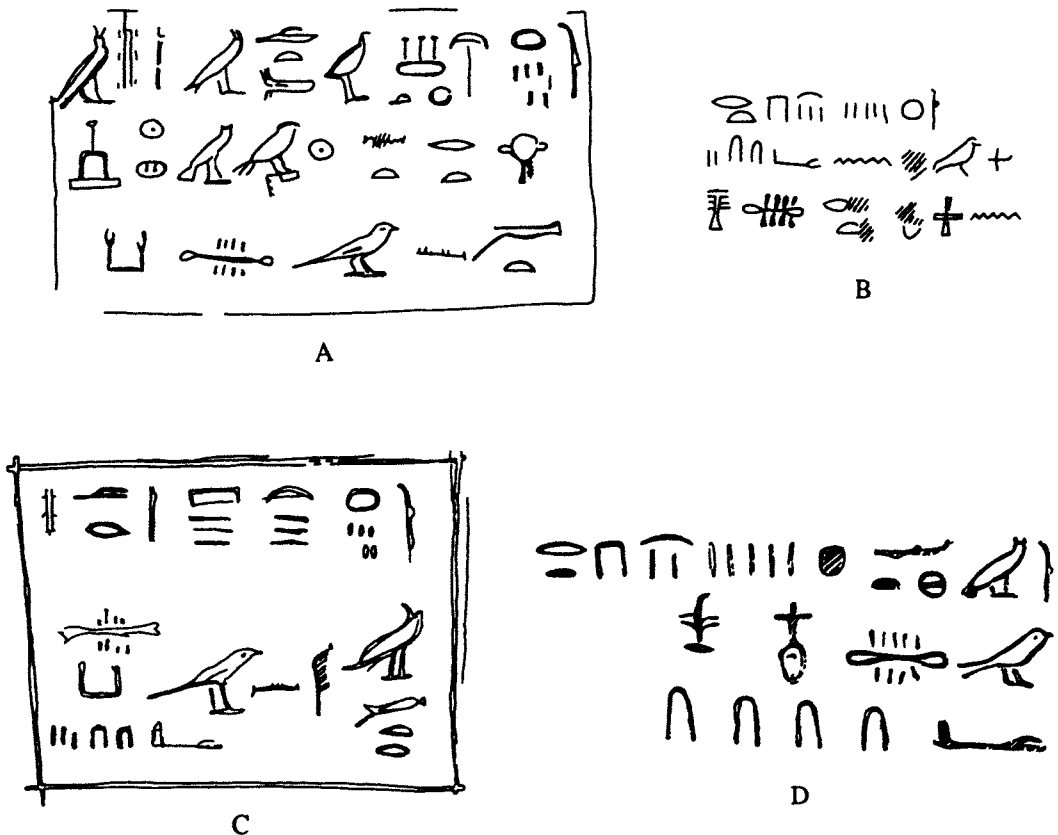
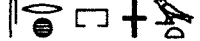

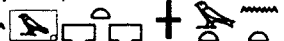
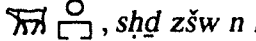


Figure 2.1. Tablets from the Sun Temple of Userkaf

According to Edel's readings, the four texts found at the sun temple of Userkaf mention three phyles: *wr*, *jmj-wrt*, and *jmj-nfrt* (see fig. 2.1).<sup>12</sup> However, there is clearly a difference between the bird on tablets A and C and the *wr* bird on tablet D. In light of the arguments of Helck and Posener-Kriéger cited above, the phyle name should be read *nds* in tablets A and C, and *wr* only on tablet D, as they concluded. Tablet B is lost; its text survives only in a hand

12. Edel, "Kalksteintäfelchen," pp. 2–3, figs. 1, 2. These copies are redrawn in my figure 2.1.

copy from the excavator's field notebook. In this copy, Edel saw the names of two phyles, *jmj-wrt* (line 2) and *jmj-nfrt* (line 3), but the reading "*jmj-wrt* phyle" is not very well supported by the copy. There is no phyle sign, and the small break (shaded area) after the group in question does not allow enough space for one to be restored. The *jmj* sign (Z 11) does not look like the example in the line below; and the bird is similar to neither the *wr* nor the *nds* signs on the other tablets. These problems may be the fault of the copyist, but other difficulties are less easy to explain. No division is mentioned after the name, while the phyles mentioned on this and the other tablets have at least one division specified. None of the other tablets mention more than one phyle. And each of the other tablets gives a compass direction: north in tablets A and C and south in tablet D.<sup>13</sup>


If the signs in line 2 to the right of the *n* are taken to be the compass direction *jmj-wrt* "west," rather than the phyle name, the epigraphic difficulties are minimized and this tablet is more consistent with the other tablets in this group. The use of *jmj-wrt* as a geographical term, indicating the "western" part of a building or temple, is well attested in the Old Kingdom. Grdseloff has discussed its use in the phrase , *srh jmj-wrt*, "the western *srh*" from a letter of the Sixth Dynasty,<sup>14</sup> citing as parallels the titles of *Hw-wj-wr*: , *jmj-r gs jmj-wrt* '3 *hr* (variant: *hr* '3), "overseer of the great western side of the Giza plateau" and  and , *shd zšw n hwt-wrt jmj-wrt nt hnw* "Inspector of scribes of the western *hwt-wrt* of the Residence."<sup>15</sup> The term *jmj-wrt* is also applied to the western half of the Harpoon nome in the tomb of *3htj-htp* at Saqqara.<sup>16</sup> The simplest interpretation, then, and the one yielding the most consistent format among the texts is to read one phyle name on each tablet: *nds* on A and C, *wr* on D, and *jmj-nfrt* on B. There is thus no *jmj-wrt* phyle mentioned in these texts, but a *wr* phyle does occur, which is consistent with a royal institution.


13. Edel took the word "south" in tablet D as a second division name; however, the facts that the other tablets have only one division name and that this "division name" is a compass direction like "north" on tablets A and C argue against this interpretation. These tablets and the problems involved in interpreting them are discussed in *Section 7.2*.

14. B. Grdseloff, "Remarques concernant l'opposition à un rescrit du vizir," *ASAE* 48 (1948):510–11.

15. K. Sethe, *Urkunden des Alten Reiches*, *Urkunden* 1, 2nd edition (Leipzig, 1932–33), (= Sethe, *Urkunden* 1) p. 47, 8 and 16.

16. H. Jacquet-Gordon, *Les noms de domaines funéraires sous l'ancien empire égyptien*, *BdÉ* 34 (Cairo, 1962), pp. 388–89, 393–94.

The second case where the names *jmj-wrt* and *wr* might both seem to be in use in a single phyle system is on one face of G VI S (Junker's Mastaba VII), a large tomb in the cemetery south of the Great Pyramid (see fig. 2.2.).<sup>17</sup> The texts were written in red ink on most of the blocks on this face of the mastaba, in rough hieroglyphs rather than hieratic, and are badly worn. Two work gangs of Menkaure are mentioned, one of which was transcribed by Junker as , and translated "Wie gross ist *Hr-k3-ht*."<sup>18</sup> These names are followed by various phyle names, including, according to Junker, both *wr* and *jmj-wrt*. To evaluate his readings, it is useful to examine the sign he reads as *wr* in the name of the gang, in comparison with the signs used to write *wr* and *nds* on the Userkaf tablets (fig. 2.1). The sign used in the G VI S texts, though slightly different from both of the signs in the tablets, due to the medium (the Userkaf tablets are incised), more closely resembles the *nds* sign than the *wr* sign there; it has an interior wing and a convex back rather than a forked tail and a concave back. The gang name that results from reading this sign *nds* in the gang name is "The little ones of *Hr-k3-ht*," which is not unlike other gang names of this period (see *Chapter 7*).

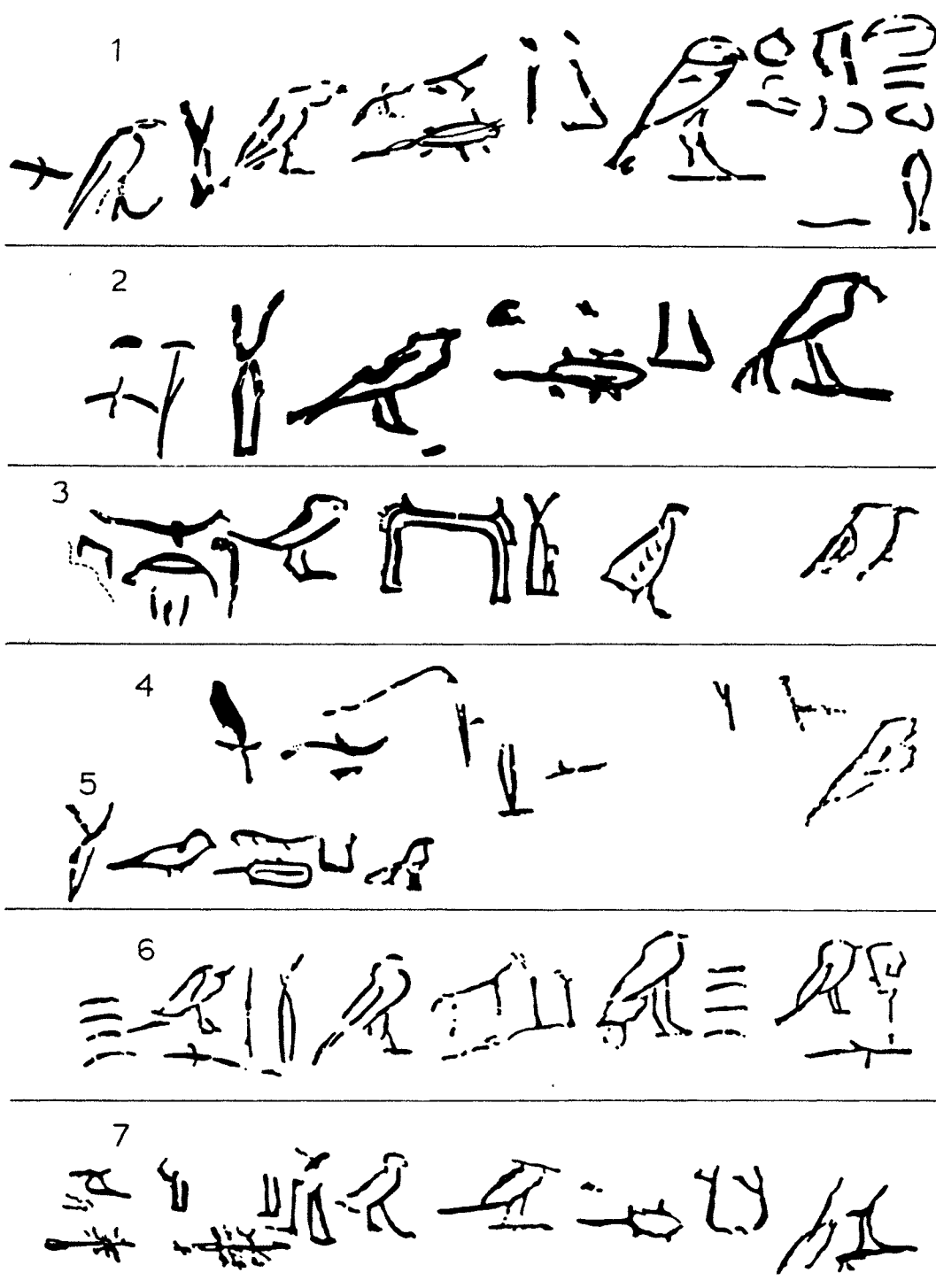
If the reading *nds* is to be adopted for the sign in the gang name, it must also be adopted for the same sign when it appears in the phyle names in texts #1 and #6, and perhaps also in #4. The sign in text #3 should probably be read *wr*, since the back of the bird is concave. The tail does not seem to be clearly forked, but this could be the result of flaking. There is a horizontal trace visible on the photograph that may be the end of the lower fork. In Junker's copy, this trace forms the top of a year sign (  ), but on the photograph the horizontal does not align well with the vertical that he attributes to the sign; one would in any case expect a number between a year sign and the month sign, which the spacing here would not allow.

The reading *nds* creates a problem in texts #4 and #6, where this sign is preceded by a sign that Junker reads *jmj*. *Jmj-nds* occurs as a variant of *nds* in the Coffin Texts,<sup>19</sup> but it is not used as the name of a phyle in any published example. I propose to read Junker's *jmj* as the sign *w3d* (M 13) and to interpret these texts as instances of two phyle names sharing a single phyle determinative. The writings of the sign itself are varied, allowing a good deal of



17. H. Junker, *Giza*, 12 vols. (Vienna, 1929–55) 10: fig. 34 (opposite p. 71).


18. *Ibid.*, p. 71–76. Junker attributes all seven texts to this gang; however, the gang names in texts #3 and #7 show a final *w*, and thus seem likely to be the name of a different gang. These texts and their interpretation are discussed further in *Section 7.1.2*.

19. For example, A. de Buck and A. H. Gardiner, eds., *The Egyptian Coffin Texts*, 7 vols. (Chicago, 1935–61), hereafter *CT*, V:85 and V:97.



**Figure 2.2. Ink Inscriptions on G VI S at Giza**

freedom in transcription, but *w3d* seems preferable even on the basis of its appearance (compare the example in #4 with the *w3d* sign in #2). Such doubling up of phyles may also be seen in texts #3 and #7, where the phyles  and  are combined; in #3 they share a phyle determinative, and in #7 they appear with separate determinatives. (These examples are discussed further in *Section 2.1.2.*) Thus the group *jmj-wrt* does not occur at all in these texts.

A final example in which *jmj-wrt* occurs in the same context as the phyle name *wr* is in quarry marks found in the mortuary temple of Menkaure.<sup>20</sup> Although the group *jmj-wrt* occurs on these blocks, Reisner excluded it from his discussion of phyles,<sup>21</sup> presumably because it occurs without a phyle determinative and follows *gs*, in parallel with the sign , which Reisner took to be a falcon on a standard (G 33).<sup>22</sup> Clearly *jmj-wrt* is used here in the geographical sense noted above.

As the name of a phyle, *wr* is actually more common than *jmj-wrt*. It occurs in all Archaic period contexts, in all references to phyles in building crews, in titles, and in royal temples:

1. The Archaic period occurrences. There are numerous and consistent references to *wr* as the name of a phyle in the Archaic period evidence, on stone vessels from the First Dynasty tombs at Abydos and from the Step Pyramid caches of inscribed stoneware. These texts are discussed at length in *Chapter 8*.
2. Phyles of stonemasons. Three cases of the use of the phyle name *wr* in the context of royal building crews are discussed above: the tablets from the sun temple of Userkaf, G VI S at Giza, and the Menkaure mortuary temple. It is also attested at the Meydum pyramid of Snefru<sup>23</sup> and some blocks from Zawiyet el-Aryan.<sup>24</sup>
3. Titles. There are four cases in which a phyle is specified in a string of titles. These titles seem usually to refer to service done for the king or a god. Such titles always specify the *wr* phyle and never *jmj-wrt* or one of the other four phyles. The examples are given below:

20. Reisner, *Mycerinus*, plan 12.


21. *Ibid.*, p. 277.

22. *Ibid.*

23. W. M. F. Petrie, *Meydum and Memphis (III)* (London, 1910), pl. 5.

24. A. Barsanti, "Fouilles de Zaouiet el-Aryan I. Rapport," *ASAE* 7 (1906):272: #28.



mortuary temple of Niuserre, where a storeroom label was found reading  almost certainly the name of the *wr* phyle.<sup>31</sup>

All of these royal contexts show the use of the phyle name *wr*; none of them offer any evidence for the use of *jmj-wrt*. On the other hand, *jmj-wrt* is used in every known example of a private phyle system, with only one rather dubious exception.

The single example in which the name *wr* might seem to have been used in a private mortuary cult is the tomb of *Nb-k3w-Hr*. In a storeroom there, a block was found bearing an inscription that Hassan transcribed:<sup>32</sup>



Such a text would read: *wr z3 pr šn<sup>c</sup> hrj-<sup>c</sup> z3b smsw h3jt shd hmw-k3 Bbj jmj-ht hmw-k3 Imj*, and would be translated “storeroom of the *wr* phyle, under the direction of the dignitary, the elder of the hall, the inspector of ka-priests Bbj, and the assistant inspector of ka-priests Imj.” The use of the name *wr* to label the storeroom of a phyle in a private cult might be taken to be a result of the high rank of the tomb owner, a vizier and a king’s son.<sup>33</sup> A more probable explanation is that the phyle name in this text is actually to be read *nds*; what seems to be the top fork of the tail on the photograph is in line with a scratch that appears at the front of the bird, and could be the continuation of that scratch rather than a carved line. Indeed, if the tail is forked, the fork is much higher and deeper than in other examples of the sign *wr* at this period. The reading adopted by Hassan may result from his interpretation of the first two signs of the text as a title (“great one of the phyles [of priests]”) rather than the name of a phyle.<sup>34</sup> The reading *nds* cannot be adopted as certain without examination of the piece;<sup>35</sup> however, the placement of the text in the group of storerooms, when compared with similar texts in the tomb of *Mrrw-k3*, tends to corroborate this reading. In the latter tomb, there is also a corridor with five storerooms opening off it, each with the name of a phyle over the door.<sup>36</sup> These phyles are arranged

31. L. Borchardt, *Das Grabdenkmal des Königs Ne-user-re*, WVDOG 7 (Leipzig, 1907), p. 54.

32. S. Hassan, *The Mastaba of Neb-Kaw-Her* (Cairo, 1975), p. 59; see pl. 48:D.

33. This tomb was built by a vizier and usurped by a later holder of the same office; however, only the second occupant, *Nb-k3w-Hr*, was called a king’s son. There is no indication which of these men was responsible for the inscription over the storeroom entrance.

34. *Ibid.*, p. 64. See *ibid.*, pl. 34a for a *wr* sign from the same tomb.

35. The block in question is no longer in the storeroom in which it was found, and I was unable to determine its current whereabouts.

36. The Sakkarah Expedition, *The Mastaba of Mereruka*, 2 vols. (Chicago, 1938) 2, pl. 199b.

in a sequence that Helck showed is the standard order of the phyles.<sup>37</sup> The *wr* phyle was assigned the largest storeroom, which was also the one furthest from the entrance to the corridor, while the *nds* phyle was assigned the second storeroom from the entrance. In the tomb of *Nb-k3w-Hr*, the storeroom furthest from the entrance is also noticeably larger than the others, and the block under discussion was found in the second storeroom from the entrance. By analogy with the storerooms of *Mrrw-k3*, a block in this position would be expected to bear the name of the *nds* phyle.

*Jmj-wrt* is used as a phyle name in five mastabas at Saqqara. The fact that these examples occur in long-published and, in many cases, easily visited tombs helps to explain why this form has for so long been taken to be the principal name of the first phyle. As noted above, the name *jmj-wrt* occurs in the *Mrrw-k3* storeroom labels.<sup>38</sup> It also is used three times in the tomb of *‘nh-m-‘-Hr* to label bearers of offerings and other commodities.<sup>39</sup> It is similarly used twice in the tomb chapel of *Nj-ḥft-k3j*,<sup>40</sup> twice in the tomb of *Pth-ḥtp I*,<sup>41</sup> and once in the tomb of *3ḥtj-ḥtp*.<sup>42</sup> (In the last mentioned tomb, the name is written *jmj-wr* rather than *jmj-wrt*, and the surface of the wall shows no trace of an obliterated sign.<sup>43</sup> The geographical term *jmj-wrt* is also written without the final *t* in this tomb. I can suggest no reasons for this omission, although the identical anomaly of spelling indicates a connection between the words.) The group *jmj-wrt* also appears on a fragment of relief from Giza in the collection of the Lowie

37. This order and Helck's argument for it are discussed in the last section of this chapter.

38. *Ibid.*, pl. 199b.

39. J. Capart, *Une Rue de tombeaux à Saqqarah* (Brussels, 1906), pl. 65; Alex. Badawy, *The Tombs of Nyhetep-Ptah at Giza and ‘Ankhm‘ahor at Saqqara* (Berkeley, 1978), fig. 40. The third example is not recorded in either publication of the tomb. It is on the wall photographed by Capart as pl. 65, but above the area of his photograph; my copy of this entire wall is given below as figure 4.1. None of the examples of phyle names in this tomb are determined with the phyle sign, but their contexts make it clear that phyles are referred to.

40. Mariette, *Mastabas*, mastaba D.47. Another phyle name in this tomb was read *wr* by Kees, "Phylen und ihre Vorsteher," p. 75; and by Edel, "Kalksteintäfelchen," p. 18, no. 1; however, it was read *nds* by Reisner, *Mycerinus*, p. 267. Since the only text available is Mariette's hand-copy (the tomb's location has been lost), it seems prudent to read the sign in the way that causes the least conflict with the other evidence, i.e., *nds*.

41. S. Hassan, *Mastaba of Ni-‘ankh-Pepi and Others* (Cairo, 1975), pls. 25, 25bis, 26A.

42. N. de G. Davies, *The Mastaba of Ptahhetep and Akhetetep at Saqqarah*, 2 vols. (London, 1900–01) 2, pl. 5.

43. The condition of the surface is not clear from the publication; the lack of damage was determined by an examination of the original wall.




Museum of Anthropology,<sup>44</sup> which shows a priest bringing strips of cloth to the deceased. A possible seventh example is in the tomb of *Htp-n-Pth* at Giza (G 2430), where an offering bearer is called<sup>45</sup>



*jmj-r pr, [jmj-r] gs dpt jmj-wrt*

“Steward, overseer ka-priests of the  
*jmj-wrt* side of the boat.”

(The initial *jmj-r* is probably to be read both vertically and horizontally.) The lack of a phyle sign is significant here, as is the clear connection with the phrase “side of a boat.” The office held is that of a ka-priest and not a sailor, implying that the priesthood of this tomb was divided into a starboard and port side rather than into phyles. (This text is, of course, important for the understanding of the relationship between phyles and the nautical terms and is discussed in Chapter 3.)

Where in the hierarchy the division was made between cults with a *wr* phyle and cults with an *jmj-wrt* phyle is not clear. The example in the tomb of the king’s son,<sup>46</sup> *Nb-k3w-Hr*, discussed above, is probably to be read *ngs* rather than *wr* and hence gives no clue whether *wr* or *jmj-wrt* would have been used in the cult of a king’s son. The two references that have been cited in the literature to phyles of queens are rather dubious. One of these, a possible reference to an *jmj-wrt* phyle of a queen was noted by Edel: a graffito on a piece of limestone from the tomb of queen *Wdbt.n.j*, which he transcribed .<sup>47</sup> If this

44. H. F. Lutz, *Egyptian Tomb Stelas and Offering Stones of the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnology, University of California* (Leipzig, 1927), pl. 9: #16. (Lowie Museum of Anthropology, #6–19829, University of California, Berkeley.)

45. The transcription given here is based on examination of the monument itself and on photographs taken at the time of the original excavation of the tomb by Reisner, which are at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. A later photograph is published by Badawy, in *Nyhetep-Ptah and ‘Ankhm‘ahor*, pl. 13. Badawy’s reading of this title, as “overseer of the funerary priests, director of the fowlers of starboard” (ibid., p. 7), results from his misinterpretation of a number of the signs, as can be seen by comparing his drawing of the scene (ibid., fig. 13) with the photographs: the *pr* sign under the group *jmj-r* is partly visible in his photograph and clear in the photograph at the Museum of Fine Arts. The sign he reads *hrp* is clearly *gs* (for this, see also R. Lepsius, *Denkmäler aus Ägypten und Äthiopien*, 12 vols. (Berlin, 1849–56) 2, pl. 72). The boat sign he transliterates *wh‘* has a standard cabin rather than the rounded one usually used in that sign, and the upturned prow and stern in his drawing are, respectively, the right arm of the *k3* sign and the right border of the scene.

46. This title does not necessarily mean that its holder was the son of a king; he could be a grandson or even a more distant descendant. See Junker, *Giza* 2:32–39.

47. Edel, “Kalksteintäfelchen,” p. 15.

graffito does indeed refer to a phyle, it need not refer to a phyle in the cult of that queen, as the flake on which it is inscribed is so easily transportable. Kaplony cited two texts from the mastaba of queen *Mr.s-ḥḥ* III, at Giza, which he took as examples of the phyle name;<sup>48</sup> however, these texts are certainly examples of the well-known title *wrt ḥts*, as Dunham and Simpson have read them.<sup>49</sup>

The only clear example of *jmj-wrt* used as the name of a royal phyle occurs in a very curious context dating to the Eighteenth Dynasty. In the scene from Hatshepsut's mortuary temple at Deir el-Bahri where her father Thutmose I announces her elevation to the kingship,<sup>50</sup> the kiosk where the king appears to make the announcement is identified as the kiosk of the *jmj-wrt* phyle. The use of a named phyle here is certainly an archaism; the temple contains many other archaic references, most of which recall the Old Kingdom. The most probable explanation for this exception is to assume that by the Eighteenth Dynasty, the names of the Old Kingdom phyles were thoroughly confused with the corresponding Old Kingdom names for the quadrants of boats. These were still in active use in the spells of the Book of the Dead; hence the nautical term *jmj-wrt* was used here rather than the historically correct *wr*.

It is thus clear that the primary name of the phyle under discussion is *wr*. *Jmj-wrt* seems to have been a later variation, and one that was avoided in all royal and divine cults, and even royal work crews. In the Old Kingdom, *jmj-wrt* was used only for the cults of private individuals where phyle organization was employed.

### 2.1.2.

The transcription of the name of this phyle was intentionally avoided in the preceding discussion. Though it is written with a sign indistinguishable from the sign usually read *st*, (Gardiner's S 22, as shown above) this phyle's name is usually read *t3-wr*, on the basis of its nautical counterpart, *t3-wr*, "port."<sup>51</sup> An examination of all the examples of this phyle show, however, that, unlike the nautical term, it is never written with more than this single sign. As with the *wr* phyle, a confusion of the phyle name and the nautical term in modern


48. Kaplony, *Rollsiegel* 1:322, n. 616 (end).

49. D. Dunham and W. K. Simpson, *Mersyankh III*, Giza Mastabas 1 (Boston, 1974), figs. 1c, 1d, and p. 7.



50. E. Naville, *The Temple of Deir-el-Bahri*, 6 vols. (London, 1894–1908) 3, pl. 60.

51. Sethe, "Totenbuchspruch," pp. 3–4, n. 5.

discussions obscures a distinction that the Egyptians preserved between the two terms.

There is only one instance where the name of this phyle seems to have been written with more than one sign: a *wr* sign follows it in texts #3 and #7 of the ink inscriptions on the blocks of G VI S at Giza (see fig. 2.2 above).<sup>52</sup> The name  in these texts is probably to be interpreted as two different names, the phyle under discussion and the *wr* phyle, which are paired in a way similar to the pairing of the *w3dt* and *nds* phyles discussed in the preceding section. In text #3, the phyle determinative following these names is shared, as in texts #4 and #6, but in text #7 the two phyle determinatives are written out, one below each of the names.<sup>53</sup>

Junker took the groups in both #3 and #7 to be the names of a single phyle, interpreting the doubled phyle sign in the latter as a scribal error.<sup>54</sup> However, he himself had remarked earlier on the extraordinary care taken with the *z3* signs in this example: all the loops are carefully drawn, as in the hieroglyphic sign, and in contrast to the more hieratic sign that is used in all the other examples. The care taken with this sign indicates that the scribe who wrote text #7 was writing more carefully than his fellows rather than less, and hence was more likely to have written out the full form of the label that the others abbreviated. Moreover, this interpretation of the G VI S texts, which implies a pairing of phyles, is shown in *Chapter 7* to be consistent with the organization of work crews during this period, as determined from other evidence.


Since the name of this phyle was thus never clearly written with a supplementary *wr* sign, the next problem to be considered is that of the examples in which the name is said to be written with the doorway sign , *t3* (O 17). Those scholars who understand this phyle's name as *t3-wr* have claimed that this sign was substituted for the sign (S 22),<sup>55</sup> presumably because of the two signs' similarity in hieratic, and because scribes were unfamiliar with a reading *t3-wr* for the latter sign. Kaplony suggested the reverse, that this phyle name should be read simply *t3* wherever no *wr* bird follows it and that writings with the  sign are scribal errors based on the similarity of the shapes of the





52. Junker, *Giza* 10:73.

53. The ordering of these names is admittedly unusual. One would expect the *wr* phyle to come first (see *Section 2.2* below on the ordering of the phyles). However, the order may have been influenced by other circumstances, or even by the nautical term, which was sometimes written this way, and which begins to be attested not long after these texts were written. Another explanation for the order is suggested in *Section 7.1.2* below.

54. *Ibid.*, p. 73.

55. Gardiner, *Grammar*, p. 506.

two signs.<sup>56</sup> There are four examples cited in the literature of texts in which  is said to have been used to write the name of the phyle.

The case most easily explained is the example from the *Mrrw-k3* storerooms,<sup>57</sup> which was recorded as  by Helck<sup>58</sup> and Edel;<sup>59</sup> but as  by Kees.<sup>60</sup> The sign used in this tomb (see fig. 2.3) is indeed somewhat like the sign  at its base, but it lacks the characteristic cobra frieze present in all writings of the doorway sign in this tomb,<sup>61</sup> and instead has the loops and short ties of the  sign. It is clearly an example of the usual writing of the phyle name with this sign.

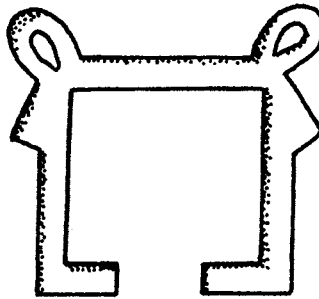


Figure 2.3. A Phyle Name from the Storerooms of Mereruka

Kaplony cited another case in which the phyle name is allegedly written with the *t3* sign alone, the titles of a man in a procession at the mortuary temple of Pepi I (see fig. 2.4).<sup>62</sup> The lower part of the title is broken, and Kaplony interpreted it as a parallel to the *Mrrw-k3* storeroom labels, the “*t3*” phyle’s storeroom. Jéquier, however, restored the group as *t3jtj z3b [t3tj] Šn ‘j*. He took the final group as a personal name, and had good justification for doing so, because a man of this name is known from elsewhere in Pepi II’s mortuary temple, and also from a tomb in the surrounding cemetery.<sup>63</sup> The ear of the jackal visible below the doorway sign further supports Jéquier’s reading.

56. Kaplony, *Rollsiegel* 1:324, n. 623.

57. The Sakkarah Expedition, *Mereruka* 2: pl. 199b, redrawn in my figure 2.3.

58. Helck, “Handwerker- und Priesterphylen,” p. 3.

59. Edel, “Kalksteintäfelchen,” p. 11.

60. Kees, “Phylen und ihre Vorsteher,” p. 74.

61. For example, see The Sakkarah Expedition, *Mereruka*, 1: pls. 63, 72, 75, 132, 137, 179, 183 (all raised relief).

62. G. Jéquier, *Le Monument funéraire de Pepi II*, 3 vols. (Cairo, 1936–40) 2, pl. 73; cited by Kaplony, *Rollsiegel* 1:323. Figure 2.4 is redrawn from Jéquier’s plate.

63. Jéquier, *Pepi II*, 2: p. 59 and pl. 58; idem, *Tombeaux de particuliers de l’époque de Pepi II* (Cairo, 1929), p. 109.

Furthermore, Jéquier's reading is preferable to Kaplony's because it is clear that a person, not a storeroom, is being designated by this caption.

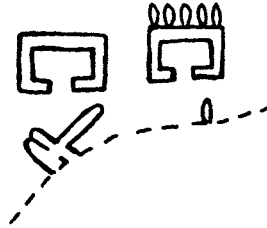
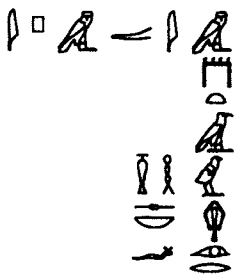


Figure 2.4. Titles from the Mortuary Temple of Pepi I

Edel also read this title as a phyle name in his argument that the *st* sign (S 22) evolved into the gateway with uraeus frieze (O 17) over the course of the Old Kingdom.<sup>64</sup> As a further example of an abbreviated spelling of the phyle name, he cited a scene from a pillar in the tomb of *Mḥw* at Qubbet el-Hawa,



where a man offering incense is captioned with a text (left) that he read *jmj-t3w ḥm-k3 jrrj ḥz(zt) nbw.f, Jmpj*. He compared the phrase "*jmj-t3w*" to the phrase "*jmj-z3*" in legal texts referring to phyle members and in the title *ḥrp-jmjw-z3*, and argued that the *r* had been dropped from the pronunciation of the phyle name by this period. The resulting translation reads "der in (der Phyle) 'Backbord' befindliche Totenpriester, der tut,

was sein Herr lobt, (namens) *Jmpj*."<sup>65</sup> The phonetic complements here indicate that the reading of the sign is certainly *t3*; however, the phyle name may not be meant, since no phyle sign is written and no other evidence of phyle organization has been found in this tomb or in any other private tomb outside of the Memphite cemeteries. A priestly title *jmj-t3* is known from the New Kingdom and from Ptolemaic texts in the Edfu temple, which might suggest another meaning for this group;<sup>66</sup> or the reference may be to the nautical term, since a nautical organization seems to have been adopted in the organization of the priesthood in the tomb of *Ḥtp-n-Pth* at Giza.<sup>67</sup> In any case, the meaning of


64. E. Edel, "Ein bisher unbeachteter Beleg für 'Kompositum Älterer Bildungsweise,'" *Form und Mass: Beiträge zur Literatur, Sprache und Kunst des alten Ägypten: Festschrift für Gerhard Fecht zum 65. Geburtstag am 6 Februar 1987* (Wiesbaden, 1987), p. 129.

65. *Ibid.*, p. 131.

66. A. Erman and H. Grapow, *Wörterbuch der ägyptische Sprache*, 7 vols. and 5 vols. *Belegstellungen* (Leipzig, 1926–31) 1:75, 19.

67. Badawy, *Nyhetep-Ptah and 'Ankhm'ahor*, pl. 13, as discussed in Section 2.1.1 above.

this example is not clear enough to support reading it as a phyle name without further evidence of this spelling.

The final examples in which the phyle name is allegedly written with an unaccompanied *t3* sign occur in the Abu Sir papyri from the temples of Neferirkare and Neferefre, where the name is always transcribed .<sup>68</sup> This hieratic sign is, however, identical to the sign used in the same texts for *st* (for example in the commodity *stt*). Moreover, the *t3* sign, for example in the vizier's title *t3jtj z3b t3tj*, differs from them both.









 13,1d	 13,1  68,d  69,2	 63,a  64,g
<i>st</i> Sign	Phyle Name	<i>t3</i> Sign

Figure 2.5. Hieratic Signs from the Abu Sir Papyri

The hieratic forms of these signs are compared in figure 2.5.<sup>69</sup> As with the example in the tomb of *Mrrw-k3*, the phyle name lacks the characteristic cobra frieze. The forms of the signs clearly show that here, as in all other examples, the name of this phyle is written with a single *st* sign.

To summarize, a collection of all the known references to this phyle is shown in figure 2.6. These signs were drawn on the basis of photographs or facsimile drawings wherever possible. These examples clearly show that the name of this phyle is always written with a single *st* sign, , and never with the *t3* sign, , or with a supplementary *wr* bird. The reading of this phyle name as *t3* or *t3-wr* would thus be untenable, if it were not for the connection of the phyle names with the nautical nomenclature and the use of the *st* sign in some versions of the nautical term. Although the examination of the name of the

68. Posener-Kriéger and de Cenival, *Abu Sir Papyri*, pls. 13:1; 68:d; 69:2; Posener-Kriéger, "Remarques préliminaires," pp. 36–37.

69. Numbers in this figure refer to the plates in Posener-Kriéger and de Cenival, *Abu Sir Papyri*, from which they are redrawn. The two examples of this sign in the Neferefre papyri, visible in Posener-Kriéger, "Remarques préliminaires," pl. 3, do not appear to show the vertical tics of the cobra frieze, but are not well enough preserved to argue for either reading.

## THE NAMES OF THE PHYLES

25

Step Pyramid Inventory Text  
(Reign of Djoser or Before)  
Lacau and Lauer, *Pyramid  
à degrés* 5, figs. 34–35



Tomb of *Nj-ḥft-k3j*  
(Mid Fifth Dynasty)  
Mariette, *Mastabas*, D.47



Mastaba G VI S  
(Reign of Menkaure)  
Junker, *Giza* 10, fig. 34, #3



Abu Sir Papyri  
(Year 27 of Djedkare)  
Posener-Kriéger and de Cenival,  
*Abu Sir Papyri*, pl. 13, 1



Oil Tablet  
(Old Kingdom)  
British Museum 6122  
(from a photograph kindly  
provided by L. Bell)



Tomb of *Mrrw-k3*  
(Reign of Teti)  
The Sakkarah Expedition,  
*Mereruka* 2, pl. 199b



Ostrakon from Giza  
(Late Fourth Dynasty)  
Smith, "Evidence," p. 102



From the Tomb of *‘nh-m-‘-Ḥr*  
(Reign of Pepi I)  
Badawy, *Ny-hetep-Ptah and*



Masons' Mark  
from Wehemka Pyramid  
(Reign of Wehemka)  
Barsanti, "Zawiouet  
el-Aryan," p. 270 #9










From the Tomb of *‘nh-m-‘-Ḥr*  
(Reign of Pepi I)  
See figure 4.1 below








Figure 2.6. The Form of the Second Phyle Name  
(asterisk indicates no facsimile available)

*wr* phyle shows that the phyle names and the nautical terms are not necessarily identical, the connection must be taken into consideration before the reading *t3-wr* can be completely rejected.

To establish that the name of this phyle differs consistently from the corresponding nautical term, Old Kingdom occurrences of the nautical term are collected in figure 2.7. (The post-Old Kingdom instances do not use the sign  at all, but are written with a *t3* sign [ or ] and a *wr* bird; they are not discussed here since none of these signs were ever used in writing the name of the phyle.) These examples are arranged in chronological order, insofar as it can be determined. A sign that cannot be distinguished from the *st* sign (S 22) is used in all examples but that from the tomb of *D'w* at Deir el-Gebrawi; this is probably the latest example, and hence is to be compared with the Coffin Text examples that use the sign . Of the examples using the sign , most contain either the flat-land sign  (N 17), or the *wr* sign, or both.

The nautical term is clearly to be read *t3-wr*. The question is the function of the sign  in these examples. Does it have an independent value, *t3-wr*, so that the *t3* and *wr* signs serve simply as phonetic complements? Or does the sign occur here to indicate some concept associated with the nautical term, the reading of the word being indicated solely by the signs augmenting it?

Kaplony compromised by reading the sign  as *t3* on the assumption that it is an error for the *t3* sign.<sup>70</sup> This reading appears to be based on the writing of the nautical term in the tombs of *Tjj* and *Pth-špss*, and what he took to be the single phyle name with one and two phyle determinatives at G VI S at Giza (see fig. 2.2, #3 and #7, and accompanying discussion). These last texts, it is suggested above, refer to two separate phyles rather than a single one, and the forms of the nautical terms collected in figure 2.7 throw some doubt on the degree to which one can assume that  is an error for . The nautical term is augmented with a *t3* sign almost as frequently as it is augmented with a *wr* sign, and the writing in the tomb of *Ftk-t3* gives both, with the sign  following the *wr* sign like a determinative. In addition, it is now clear that the two signs are distinguished, rather than confused, in the Abu Sir texts, and the *st* sign is never substituted for a *t3* sign in any other context. Finally, Kaplony's reading would make the evidence more complicated rather than less, since the only reason for reading the sign  in any way other than *st* when it occurs in the phyle name is its supposed congruence with the nautical term.

70. Kaplony, *Rollsiegel* 1:324, n. 623. This is in contrast to Gardiner, *Grammar*, Sign List O 16 and S 22, where it is postulated that the *t3* sign (O 17) is the later variant.



## THE NAMES OF THE PHYLES

27

Mortuary Boat of Khufu  
(Reign of Khufu)  
Abu Bakr and Mustafa  
"Funerary Boat of Cheops," fig. 7



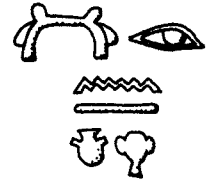
Tomb of *Sndm-jb/Jntj*  
(Reign of Djedkare)  
Lepsius, *Denkmäler Erg.*,  
pl. 20 (form of the  
first sign kindly  
provided by E. Brovarski)



Block from Lisht  
(Early Fifth Dynasty)  
Goedicke, *Re-used Blocks*,  
p. 113 #63



Tomb of *Hnwt*  
at Saqqara  
(Reign of Unis)  
Unpublished



Tomb of *Jrj.n-k3-Pth*  
(Mid-Late Fifth Dynasty)  
Moussa and Junge, *Two  
Tombs of Craftsmen*, pl. 8  
(2 examples)



Tomb of *3htj-htp* (Louvre)  
(Fifth-Early Sixth Dynasty)  
Boreaux, *Études de nautique*,  
pl. 1 (opposite p. 272)



Tomb of *Tjj*  
(Late Fifth Dynasty)  
Epron and Wild, *Ti*, pl. 49



Tomb of *Ftk-t3*  
(Mid Fifth-Sixth Dynasty)  
Lepsius, *Denkmäler* 2, pl. 96



Tomb of *Pth-špss* at Abu Sir  
(Late Fifth Dynasty)  
(from notes of D. Dunham;  
text is apparently no longer extant)




Unknown  
(Old Kingdom)  
False door in the  
Cairo Museum,  
G46, NW corner












Tomb of *D'w*  
(Reign of Pepi II)  
Davies, *Deir el-Gebrawi* 2, pl. 7



Figure 2.7. Old Kingdom Writings of the Nautical Term *T3-wr*

Most scholars have accepted a simpler explanation, that the sign  has an independent value *t3-wr* in addition to its usual value *st*. The best arguments for this reading of the sign are the examples where it occurs alone in the nautical term; however, none of these examples are without problems. The example of the term on the Lisht block cannot be used in this argument, since it is broken at the crucial point.<sup>71</sup> The example from the tomb of *Hnwt* makes a stronger case. The parallel text using the term *jmj-wrt* in place of the *st* sign, *jr jmj-wrt n t3 hrj-jb*, "Make for starboard of the land in the middle," is well attested.<sup>72</sup> But the flat *t3* sign in this phrase, which is separated from the nautical term only by another flat sign (*n*), may have confused the draftsman of the *Hnwt* example, so that he left out the supplementary *t3* sign in the nautical term.

Two other occurrences of the nautical term that might appear to have been written with the *st* sign alone are the examples in the tomb of *Jrj.n-k3-Pth*.<sup>73</sup> In both of these occurrences, however, the *st* sign is followed by horizontal lines in the published drawing, which initially appear to be working lines, since one extends out past the end of the *st* sign to join a vertical line tangent to the boat. From examination of the wall itself, however, it is clear that the horizontal line under each *st* sign is a separate sign, presumably .



Aside from the example in the tomb of *Hnwt*, which, as pointed out above, might be the result of confusion, the best case for the reading of the *st* sign alone as *t3-wr* is its use to mark the boards of the port-bow quadrant of the disassembled mortuary boat of Khufu, which seems to be the earliest attestation of the nautical term. Here the sign occurs alone, without question. But its significance in the argument is tempered by the fact that all the nautical terms on this boat are abbreviated: *jmj-wrt* is written  rather than  ; *w3dt* is written  rather than  ; and *nds* is written  rather than . By analogy with the other terms, one might expect that only the first sign of the usual writing of *t3-wr* would be used, and the *st* sign is the first sign in all but three of the examples. It is true that the Egyptians usually added additional signs when a sign was used in an unaccustomed way, but here the correct reading of the sign was less important, since the purpose of the quadrant indications was to insure



71. In his publication of this piece, H. Goedicke transliterated this sign *st* without comment (*Re-Used Blocks from the Pyramid of Amenemhet I at Lisht* [New York, 1971], p. 113). This reading for the nautical term is not supported with any evidence, however.

72. A. Erman, *Reden, Rufe, und Lieder auf Gräberbildern des Alten Reiches*, Abhandlungen der preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften Jahrgang 1918 (Berlin, 1919), p. 54.

73. A. M. Moussa and F. Junge, *Two Tombs of Craftsmen* (Mainz am Rhein, 1971), pl. 8, middle and upper registers.

correct assembly of the boat, and as such these marks were of a very different nature from the references in tomb reliefs of nautical scenes.<sup>74</sup>

In any case, the majority of the writings of the nautical term *t3-wr* clearly supplement the sign  with one or more phonetic complements. Since one of the elements alone is sufficient to indicate the reading *t3-wr*, the sign  must have contained within itself either the word *t3-wr* or the meaning it indicated. As such, it could perhaps even stand alone, as in the tomb of *Hnwt*. It is significant, however, that this unaccompanied use was extremely rare in the nautical terms; in the phyle name it is the rule. If the phyle name were borrowed directly from the nautical term—if, indeed, they were the same word—one would expect the frequency with which phonetic complements occurred to be the same in both terminologies. The marked distinction that was made implies the contrary: they were not the same word. The nautical term was *t3-wr* and the phyle name was *st*.

A possible parallel to this type of association might be seen in the association of the sign  (I 9), which is read *f* in most environments, with the word *jt*, “father,” in which its usual reading is entirely absent. In the writing of this word, the sign is usually augmented with a *t*, and sometimes also a seated man determinative or the letter *j*; rarely, however, it has this meaning without phonetic complements.<sup>75</sup> If this sign was thought by the Egyptians to have a separate value *jt*, this reading was limited to this single word, just as the sign  would have been assigned the value *t3-wr* only in the nautical term. How the *st* sign became associated with the word *t3-wr*, “port bow,” is an important question that is discussed in the next chapter.

An additional, tentative, piece of evidence for reading this phyle’s name as *st* might be seen in the markings on some blocks from the pyramid of Snefru at Meydum. Among the masons’ marks found on these chips are a number of clear occurrences of the *wr* phyle, as well as two groups that might be phonetic writings of the phyle name *st* (see fig. 2.8).<sup>76</sup> These groups could also be read as the verb *stz*, “to lift up,” since the phyle determinative is often indistinguishable

74. It is argued in the next chapter that the marks on the Khufu boat did not relate to the nautical terms in private tombs at all, but were analogous to the mason’s marks found on major architectural works.

75. In H. O. Lange and H. Schäfer, *Grab und Denksteine des mittleren Reiches*, Catalogue général, Cairo, 2 vols. (Cairo, 1908), (= Lange and Schäfer, CG) #20164, for example.

76. Petrie, *Meydum and Memphis III*, pl. 5: #7, #8. These groups are drawn as A and B respectively in figure 2.8. In text B, the traces of the group have been pulled out of a mishmash of marks, caused by the superimposition of a drawing of a boat at right angles to the text.

from the sign *z* in cursive texts and would yield the plausible interpretation "This side up." However, such an instruction is not known from any other collections of masons' marks, whereas names of phyles are quite common. Another problem is the fourth sign in the group in text A, the pustule *Q*, a sign usually associated with the word *st*, and not *stz*. Its presence in a phyle name would also be puzzling (though it might be interpreted as a division name), but it would be more disturbing in an instruction for the orientation of a block. These masons' marks are, of course, open to both interpretations; they are cited here only as possible corroboration of the reading *st* for the name of the phyle.

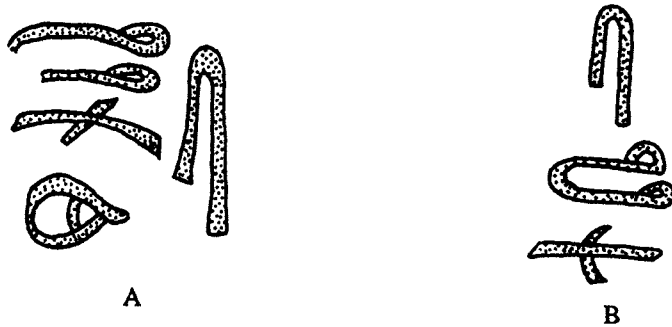


Figure 2.8. Masons' Marks from the Meydum Pyramid

The reading of the phyle name *st* as *t3-wr* by previous authors has been based on its association with the nautical term. Since it can be clearly shown that the Egyptians themselves made a distinction between these two terms in almost every case, it seems that this association was not based on a coincidence of terminology. There is no reason not to follow the standard reading of the sign, *st*; consequently, this transliteration will be used for the phyle name in the rest of this study.

### 2.1.3. *st*

The reading of this phyle name during the course of the Old Kingdom proper is not controversial; it is always read *w3dt*. No confusion with a nautical term is likely, as only one possible nautical equivalent of *w3dt* occurs in the Old Kingdom, on the mortuary boat of Khufu, where it takes the form *st*.<sup>77</sup>



In the Archaic period, this phyle name is sometimes written with a *w3d* sign and a sign that Kaplony identified as the *tjw* bird (G 4).<sup>78</sup> The reading *w3dtjw*

77. M. Z. Nour et al., *The Cheops Boats* (Cairo, 1960), p. 8, fig. 3, show this sign with other hieroglyphs that establish its orientation.

78. P. Kaplony, "Bemerkungen zu einigen Steingefässen mit archaischen Königsnamen," *MDAIK* 20 (1965):19. Examples of this writing of the phyle name may be seen in *ibid.*, pl. 5; W. M. F. Petrie, *Royal Tombs of Abydos*, 2 vols. (London, 1901–02) 1, pl. 8: #8; and P.

was accepted by Edel and Helck as an alternative name for the phyle during the Archaic period.<sup>79</sup> This form of the name is best interpreted as a nominalized plural *nisbe* adjective that describes the members of the phyle as “those belonging to green,” or “those belonging to the Green One.” None of the other names of phyles occur in a *nisbe* form, and it is unclear why the *w3dt* phyle should have such a variant writing unless the use of this form is somehow connected with the fact that *w3dt* is the only one of the names that is normally feminine in gender.

Kaplony suggested that there were three phases through which the *w3dt* phyle passed: an original, double-sized phyle called *w3dtjw*; then a transitional form, which was still twice as large as the other phyles and is attested in only two texts where Kaplony claims that a dual form is written without the *tjw* bird; and finally two separate phyles, *w3dt* and *nds*.<sup>80</sup>

According to Kaplony, the first of the texts that show a duality within the larger phyle and that attest to the intermediate phase is inscribed on a chisel.<sup>81</sup> Here the phyle name is written very curiously with two *w3d* signs, one inverted over the other. A likely explanation for this doubling of the name, however, was suggested by Rowe in the original publication of the piece and was repeated by Edel: the two *w3d* signs correspond to each of the two division names,  and , depicted on an adjacent face of the chisel.<sup>82</sup> Even if the writing of the phyle name on this chisel is interpreted as a dual, the piece itself is ill-suited to indicate a transitional stage, since it is dated to the Fourth Dynasty, while the “later” *w3dt* and *nds* phyles are known by the beginning of the Third Dynasty.<sup>83</sup>

The other instance that Kaplony gave of the alleged doubled *w3dt* phyle is a writing with two *ts* (fig. 2.9).<sup>84</sup> Kaplony read this name, like the doubled name on the chisel, as a dual of the *nisbe* form *w3dtjw*, in other words *w3dtjwj*.<sup>85</sup> The

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Lacau and J.-P. Lauer, *La Pyramide à degrés IV: Inscriptions gravées sur les vases* (Cairo, 1959–61), pl. 4: #20, pl. 15: #71, pl. 14: #69.

79. Edel, “Kalksteintäfelchen,” p. 8; Helck, “Handwerker- und Priesterphylon,” p. 5.

80. Kaplony, *Rollsiegel* 1:324, n. 623.

81. A. Rowe, “Provisional Notes on the Old Kingdom Inscriptions from the Diorite Quarries,” *ASAE* 38 (1938):393.

82. Edel, “Kalksteintäfelchen,” pp. 13–14.

83. There is an indisputable reference to both of these phyles in two texts found in the Step Pyramid of Djoser, P. Lacau and J.-P. Lauer, *La Pyramide à degrés V: Inscriptions à l'encre sur les vases* (Cairo, 1965), figs. 34, 35. These texts are dealt with in subsequent chapters.

84. W. S. Smith, “Inscriptional Evidence for the History of the Fourth Dynasty,” *JNES* 11 (1952):120, fig. 8 (G 5110), redrawn.

85. Kaplony, *Rollsiegel* 1:324, n. 623.

identification of the group  $\text{𓂏} \text{𓂐}$  as a dual is very dubious. The dual is only rarely formed by the duplication of phonetic signs (as opposed to duplication of logograms or determinatives), and then the duplication occurs in the signs giving



Figure 2.9. An Ostrakon from Giza

the root of the word, only sporadically doubling the final *t* ending of a feminine word as well.<sup>86</sup> There is no reason at all to read this group as a *nisbe* form comparable to the *w3dtjw* of the Archaic period, as Kaplony tacitly admits by his transliteration *w3dtj*, and it would require far more evidence than he has given to read it as a dual.

In his description of the text, Kaplony stated that it “setzt *imnt* (= *imj-wrt* = *wr*) und *t3* übereinander, *w3dtj* (sic) und *t3* nebeneinander.”<sup>87</sup> The first problem with this interpretation is that *jmnt* (if that is how the bird on a standard

86. E. Edel, *Altägyptische Grammatik*, 2 vols. (Rome, 1955–64) 1: section 296.

87. Kaplony, *Rollsiegel* 1:324, n. 623. The “(sic)” is Kaplony’s.

at the top of the piece is to be read) is never used to designate the *wr* phyle. More importantly, only the first of the two *st* signs (Kaplony's *t3*) is followed by a phyle determinative; the groups below it do not name phyles but rather phyle divisions. These division names, in both cases, seem to have been formed on phyle names, with the addition of a final *t*.<sup>88</sup> (The *t* after *st* is unattested in examples of the phyle name.) Finally, although the fragment is not dated, it was found in the debris of the necropolis at Giza, which suggests a date no earlier than the Fourth Dynasty; this example of the "doubled" *w3dtjw* phyle would then also post-date the division into two phyles (Third Dynasty) that Kaplony postulated.

The two supposed occurrences of a dual form of the phyle name *w3dtjw* are thus simply the phyle identification of two separate divisions and a term that is neither a dual nor a phyle name. Moreover, as demonstrated below, the *nds* phyle occurs in archaic texts that are contemporary with the *w3dtjw* phyle. Finally, Kaplony's reconstruction of events does not explain the occurrence of *w3dt* instead of *w3dtjw* in some of the earliest Archaic period texts.<sup>89</sup> Taken together, these facts suggest that Kaplony's suggestion of an early doubled phyle should be rejected.

The Old Kingdom references to this phyle are usually written with the *w3d* sign and the bread-loaf *t*. In four places the *t* is omitted: in the text on the chisel mentioned above,<sup>90</sup> in three of the four occurrences on G VI S at Giza,<sup>91</sup> in the lists of phyles found at the Step Pyramid complex,<sup>92</sup> and in two examples found in the mastaba of *Nj-ḥft-k3j* at Saqqara.<sup>93</sup> All of these examples are almost certainly abbreviated writings of the name. On the chisel, the phyle sign was also omitted, while in the G VI S texts the abbreviation occurs only where the phyle sign is shared with another name. On the plates from the Step Pyramid all of the other phyles are mentioned, so that the context makes the phyle identification quite clear. The other phyles are also all present in the examples from the tomb of *Nj-ḥft-k3j*, but it is more difficult to explain why an abbreviation should be used in such a carefully carved tomb. This is perhaps a

88. For another example of a division name taken from a phyle name, see Posener-Kriéger, "Remarques préliminaires," pp. 36–37, where *wr* is identified as a division name of the *st* phyle in the mortuary cult of Neferefre.

89. See Chapter 8.

90. Rowe, "Provisional Notes," p. 393.

91. Junker, *Giza 10*: fig. 34: #4 and #6 (redrawn as fig. 2.1 above).

92. Lacau and Lauer, *Pyramide à degrés V*, figs. 34, 35.

93. Mariette, *Mastabas*, mastaba D.47. One of these examples is published in photograph in Borchardt, CG #1558 (misnumbered #1559 in the plates).

local or scribal peculiarity of the same type as was noted in the tomb of *3ḥtj-ḥtp*,<sup>94</sup> where the *t* is regularly omitted from the writing of *jmj-wrt*.

Thus *w3ḏt* is probably the basic reading of the name of this phyle in the Old Kingdom examples and some of the examples from the Archaic period, while in the Archaic period, the name was also written *w3ḏtjw*. Another possibility, which has the advantage of consistency, would be to read the phyle name as *w3ḏtjw* throughout the Old Kingdom.<sup>95</sup> However, as there is no way to test this suggestion, the simpler reading is adopted here.

#### 2.1.4.

The nautical term that corresponds to this phyle name in the Coffin Texts is most commonly written *nḏst* or *jmj-nḏst*, in a few cases spelled out with phonetic complements.<sup>96</sup> No fuller writings are attested for the phyle name, which is thus probably to be read simply *nḏs*. It would also be possible to read the uncomplemented sign *šrj*, but there is no reason to postulate a difference from the form used in the Coffin Texts.

The arguments for reading the name of this phyle *jmj-nḏst* are based on the form of the nautical term in the Coffin Texts and on the label over a storeroom of this phyle in the tomb of *Mrrw-k3*. Citing a collation by Erman, Sethe restored an *jmj* sign in front of the name *nḏst* in this label,<sup>97</sup> and Kees made the same restoration, citing both Erman and Sethe.<sup>98</sup> As Helck<sup>99</sup> pointed out, however, there is no evidence for such a restoration on the wall itself or in the facsimile publication of the storeroom texts,<sup>100</sup> beyond a gap approximately the width of an *jmj* sign between the group *pr-šn*‘, “storeroom,” and the group *nḏst*. Edel cited Daressy’s copies of these texts, where an *jmj* occurs without brackets,<sup>101</sup> and suggested that the sign was written in ink but not carved and that it had faded or worn away in the interval between Daressy’s work and that

94. Davies, *Ptahhetep and Akhetetep* 2: pl. 5.

95. This was suggested to me by Klaus Baer, who pointed out that the endings of *nisbe* forms are not usually spelled out in Old Egyptian.

96. CT V:84e, 97e.

97. Sethe, “Totenbuchspruch,” pp. 3–4, n. 5.

98. Kees, “Die Phylen und ihre Vorsteher,” p. 74, n. 3.

99. Helck, “Handwerker- und Priesterphylen,” p. 1; however, he also claims that the nautical version of the term is exclusively *nḏs*, which is clearly an error.

100. The Sakkarah Expedition, *Mereruka* 2: pl. 199b.

101. G. Daressy, “Le Mastaba de Mera,” *Mémoires de l’Institut Égyptien* (1898) 3: p. 555.




of later copyists.<sup>102</sup> If this reconstruction is accepted (and the spacing of the signs supports it), it does not argue that the name is to be read *jmj-ndst* but the contrary; it suggests that the name was thought by the scribe who sketched out the texts to be *jmj-wrt*, but that the error was noted and corrected before the *jmj* sign was carved.<sup>103</sup>

The only remaining difficulty with this phyle name is distinguishing its occurrences from that of the *wr* phyle. This problem is particularly acute in the Archaic period examples. Edel's earlier suggestion that all examples of this phyle name be read as *wr* is discussed above.<sup>104</sup>

As with the *w3dt* phyle, the final feminine *t* is problematic, but by contrast this ending seems not to be an integral part of the name. Aside from the variant writings of the nautical term in the Coffin Texts that take this form, the form *ndst* is known only from the example in the tomb of *Mrrw-k3* that is discussed above.

#### 2.1.5.

The name of the *jmj-nfrrt* phyle is also comparatively unambiguous in its writing; in all but one instance it is written with signs with well-established readings placed in the same configuration. No corresponding nautical term is attested, so the name of the phyle cannot have become confused with the nautical terminology. Confusion with this phyle may, however, be responsible for the variant writing of *nds* as *jmj-ndst* in most of the Coffin Texts occurrences.

The only case in which the name of this phyle requires any discussion is the earliest and only known Archaic period occurrence. In two accounts written on shallow bowls found among the broken stoneware in the storerooms of the Step Pyramid complex,<sup>105</sup> the four other phyle names are listed along with a peculiar sign that does not look like the standard Old Kingdom writing of *jmj-nfrrt* but must be equivalent to it from the context (see fig. 2.10). This sign occurs three times on these plates. Helck, who was the first to note the connection of these texts with phyles, transcribed this sign as , the white crown (S 1), and took it as a "Vorläufer der sonst erst aus der 18. Dynastie belegten Benennung der o.a.

102. Edel, "Beleg," pp. 135–36.

103. Perhaps the anomalous *t* was corrected in plaster. It is possible that the bird sign was modified as well, although there are no traces of plaster or recutting visible on the wall.

104. Edel himself has apparently abandoned that view; see Edel, "Beleg," pp. 134–36.

105. Lacau and Lauer, *Pyramide à degrés V*, figs. 34, 35. Figure 2.10 is taken from *ibid.*, pl. 17:2 (above and to the right of the dish's center), the only example clearly visible in the photographs.

Krone als *nfr.t*,” an abbreviation he found comparable to that where *wr* is written for *jmj-wrt*.<sup>106</sup>



Figure 2.10. An Archaic Writing of the Name of the *Jmj-Nfrt* Phyle

However, as shown above, *wr* is the basic name of the phyle, and *jmj-wrt* is only a variant used in the context of private tombs. To read this sign *nfr* would imply that *nfr* was the basic name of this phyle, as it is both the earliest and simplest form of the name. But the reading of the Archaic period examples is too uncertain to allow this interpretation. Moreover, Helck seems to have ignored the “feet” on this sign, that is, the two ties at the base of his “crown.” Kaplony considered them “Bandeln,”<sup>107</sup> but ties are unknown on any hieroglyphic writings of the white crown in the Old Kingdom. If ties were added on this occasion, it could only have been for the purpose of distinguishing the sign from the unadorned white crown, and hence would be a strong argument against, rather than for, equating it with that hieroglyph. Whatever reading is adopted for this sign,<sup>108</sup> the name of this phyle was clearly *jmj-nfrt* during the Old Kingdom proper.

#### 2.1.6. The Forms of the Names

The foregoing examination of the names of phyles in the context of phyles alone reveals some inconsistencies between these names and the readings that are usually given them on the basis of their nautical counterparts in the Coffin Texts spells. The evidence taken from phyle contexts only yields the following readings:

106. Helck, “Handwerker- und Priesterphylen,” p. 3.

107. Kaplony, *Rollsiegel* 1:325, n. 623.

108. A different and somewhat speculative interpretation of this sign is offered in *Chapter 9*.

	<i>wr</i>	(+ <i>jmj-wrt</i> in private contexts)
	<i>st</i>	
	<i>w3dt</i>	
	<i>nds</i>	
	<i>jmj-nfrt</i>	

## 2.2. THE ORDERING OF THE PHYLES

Helck has shown that the phyles had an underlying order which, though not always followed, seems to have existed throughout the Old Kingdom.<sup>109</sup> This order was followed in the preceding discussion.

Helck's evidence included the four lists of phyles that occur on stone vessels from the Step Pyramid complex,<sup>110</sup> in which the phyles are consistently listed in this order. The same order is followed in the storerooms of the mastaba of *Mrrw-k3* at Saqqara,<sup>111</sup> which are each labeled with the name of a phyle; the names proceed towards the main offering chamber in the order that Helck proposed. A partial listing of three phyles following this order is preserved in one of the Neferirkare documents, which appears to assign an emblem or standard to a representative from each of the last three phyles.<sup>112</sup> To this can now be added two lists from the papyri found at the mortuary temple of Neferefre that give the phyles in this order.<sup>113</sup>

The three additional arguments that Helck gave for this order require further discussion. He cited a procession in the tomb of *ḥm-m-ḥr*, in which groups of men carrying boxes are associated with the names of phyles, but the order of the phyles is the reverse of the order that Helck has proposed, as he acknowledged: *jmj-nfrt*, *w3dt*, *st*, *jmj-wrt*.<sup>114</sup> He could offer no satisfactory explanation for the omission of the *nds* phyle in this procession; there is no gap in either register in

109. Helck, "Handwerker- und Priesterphylen," pp. 2–5.

110. Lacau and Lauer, *Pyramide à degrés* V, figs. 34, 35. These texts are discussed as *J:1* and *J:2* in *Chapter 8* and are drawn in the *Appendix*.

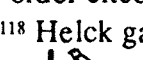

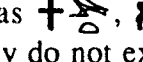
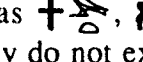


111. The Sakkarah Expedition, *Mereruka* 2: pl. 199b.

112. Posener-Kriéger and de Cenival, *Abu Sir Papyri*, pl. 18. This is part of a larger text that presumably included the first two phyles before it was damaged.

113. Posener-Kriéger, "Remarques préliminaires," pp. 36–37. The 3rd and 4th phyles are missing in the first of these lists, and the 5th is missing in the other; however, the order and placement of the phyle divisions precludes any doubt about the order.

114. Capart, *Rue de tombeaux*, pl. 65.

which that phyle's name can be restored. However, an examination of the wall itself shows that four registers of priests are shown. Only the lower two are published and figure in Helck's discussion.<sup>115</sup> The topmost of the upper registers shows five individuals, each with a caption that gives a phyle affiliation. The names *jmj-wrt*, *st*, and *jmj-nfrt* can be deduced from the traces and occur in the positions predicted by Helck's order. One can probably assume that *w3dt* and *nds* occurred in the third and fourth positions in this file, where there are remains of inscriptions. The second register from the top shows an isolated man followed by two groups of men with boxes on carrying poles, like the four phyle-groups in the lower registers. This register is badly damaged and contains no legible inscriptions, although there is space for a text in front of the single figure who begins the file. The identity of this figure can be guessed from the context. In the lowest register of this scene is another single figure, which is almost entirely erased. Such erasures occur throughout the tomb and seem to represent a son of 'nh-m-<sup>c</sup>-Hr,<sup>116</sup> who is almost invariably depicted with, or in a scene parallel to, *Jšfj*, the eldest son of 'nh-m-<sup>c</sup>-Hr.<sup>117</sup> *Jšfj* is thus a likely candidate for the leading figure in the second register from the top. Since the *nds* phyle is not among the phyles mentioned in the lower two registers, it may have been the phyle to which the eldest son was attached and thus was pulled out of its standard position to hold a place of honor at the head of the procession. The order of the phyles in the lower three registers of this scene would not then contradict Helck's order, while the upper register confirms it.

More dubious examples of this order cited by Helck are the two processions depicted in the tomb of *Nj-ḥft-k3j*.<sup>118</sup> Helck gave the order of one as , , and , and the order of the other as , , and .<sup>119</sup> Though there are omissions in these sequences, they do not expressly contradict the underlying order proposed by Helck. However, in the case of the second procession, Helck






115. Capart's photograph, *ibid.*, is the only published record of this wall; Badawy, in his publication of the tomb in *Nyhetep-Ptah and 'Ankḥm'ahor*, did not draw this wall (which is now a locked magazine with no decoration visible from the door). He did, however reproduce Capart's photograph as his pl. 65. My drawing of the complete scene is reproduced in figure 4.1.







116. Badawy, *Nyhetep-Ptah and 'Ankḥm'ahor*, pls. 35, 41 (twice), 54, 65 (the scene under discussion), 68.

117. The only exception to this rule is probably due to incomplete preservation. In *ibid.*, pl. 54, the defaced figure occurs in the lowest of three registers and faced 'nh-m-<sup>c</sup>-Hr, whose brother is depicted in the middle register. The top register is lost, but it quite probably contained a depiction of the eldest son.


118. Mariette, *Mastabas*, mastaba D.47.

119. Helck, "Handwerker- und Priesterphylen," p. 3.

did not give all the information recorded by Mariette. A less selective listing would show , , , , and , an order that seemingly contradicts Helck's. The lost name may perhaps be tentatively restored as *jmj-nfrt*, the only phyle not named in this group, in which case the sequence could be a transformation of Helck's order created by alternately listing the front and back of the order: first, last, second, second-to-last, and middle. More probably, however, the ordering of phyle members in this procession was random, or was arranged on the basis of some other criterion, such as the relationship of the individual phyle member depicted (names are given in these texts) to the deceased.

The example that Helck cited from the Coffin Texts is incorrect. In the spell he quoted, there are actually two variant orders: one with two terms,  and ; the other with all four of the terms, , , , and .<sup>120</sup> Neither order conforms to the sequence he proposed. In addition, this spell is only one of six environments in which all four nautical terms are used;<sup>121</sup> and on the whole, the prevalent order of the terms in these texts does not correspond to the order proposed by Helck. Of the fifteen occurrences and variants of these spells, eleven show the order *jmj-wrt*, *w3dt*, *t3-wr*, (*jmj*)-*ndst*. The order of the nautical terms in these texts does not, however, invalidate Helck's order for the phyle names. The Coffin Texts are later than the phyle evidence, and, as demonstrated above, they deal with terms that are related to, but not identical to, the phyle names.

In phyle contexts, the order given by Helck is remarkably consistent; six examples follow it exactly (one of these repeating the order four times), while the other two are a reversal and a possible transformation of that order. There is evidence, furthermore, that this order served as a status ranking of the phyles. Though nothing can be said about the status of the last four phyles, the *wr* phyle is clearly the most prestigious, a status that is suggested even by its name, "the great phyle." The *wr* phyle is the only one specified in titularies of officials, indicating that membership in it was thought to be an honor worthy of note.<sup>122</sup> In the tombs of private individuals, if only one reference is made to a phyle system, it is usually to a priest of the *jmj-wrt* phyle. In the tomb of *Mrrw-k3*, the storeroom that is assigned to the *jmj-wrt* phyle is considerably larger than those

120. *CTV*:246a. The writing   for   is a frequent variant in these texts.

121. In Spell 397 the terms occur three times (see *CTV*:84, 85; *ibid.*, 97; and *ibid.* 118). They occur once in each of the following spells: 414 (*ibid.*, 246), 758 (*ibid.*, VI:387 upper half), and 759 (*ibid.*, 387 lower half).

122. These titularies are given above, in *Section 2.1.1*.

of the other phyles, and many of the other tombs with five storerooms<sup>123</sup> have one storeroom at the end of the group that is larger than the others. Finally, in addition to the primacy of the *wr* phyle, the order proposed by Helck is supported by the fact that the last place in it is given to the *jmj-nfrt* phyle, the name of which can mean “at the end” or “last.”

Although it seems not to apply to the nautical terms, then, Helck’s arrangement of the names accords well with the order in which they occur in the context of phyles. This difference in the orders used with the phyle names and the nautical terms demonstrates yet another distinction between these terminologies, in addition to the significant differences in the terms themselves.

123. For example, the tombs of *Hnwt*, *Nbt*, and *Nb-k3w-Hr* at Saqqara (see *Chapter 6*).

## CHAPTER 3

### PHYLES AND SHIPS' WATCHES

Although the previous chapter demonstrates that the names of the first four phyles are distinct from the names of parts of a boat mentioned in the Coffin Texts spells and a few earlier sources, these two sets of terms are undeniably similar. This similarity led Sethe to suggest that the system of phyles derived from a system of ships' watches; and that this system was borrowed in the organization of the priesthoods and royal work crews.<sup>1</sup> His hypothesis has been accepted, with some modifications but essentially without challenge, by the scholars who have subsequently discussed phyles and their origins, principally Kees, Reisner, Helck, and Kaplony.<sup>2</sup> Closer examination of this hypothesis shows that it does not explain adequately the pattern of inconsistencies found between the two terminologies, so that another mode of connection must be postulated.

#### 3.1. THE EVIDENCE FOR A NAUTICAL PHYLE SYSTEM

Phyles and phyle names occur in only a few cases in connection with boats, and in no case does the interpretation of the text clearly imply the existence of exclusively nautical phyles. The question is somewhat confused by the fact that workmen on a mission for the king might be divided into phyles for their work; while they are traveling by boat, it might appear that the boat's crew was organized into phyles. However, none of the evidence can be taken to indicate that there was a system of rotating phyles specifically associated with boats, as opposed to royal service.

1. Sethe, "Totenbuchspruch," p. 3-4, n. 5.

2. Kees, "Die Phylen und ihre Vorsteher," p. 73; Reisner, *Mycerinus*, p. 276; Helck, "Handwerker- und Priesterphylen," p. 1; Kaplony, *Rollsiegel* 1:324.

## 3.1.1. Textual Evidence

The earliest apparent juxtaposition of phyles with boats occurs on the First Dynasty stela of *Mr-k3*.<sup>3</sup> Here, three *z3* signs (𓂏) occur below a group that looks like *f'r*, followed by a tall determinative of some sort, and above the title *hm-ntr Nt*. In a parallel column there is the title *hrp nswt*, below which and adjacent to the *z3* signs is a boat and, below that, a title beginning *hrp*. Emery read this section (and the larger text to which it belongs) as vertical columns of titles, implying that the association of the three phyle signs and the boat is fortuitous.<sup>4</sup> There is a good deal of overlap from one column into the next, but the three vertical divisions at the top of the stela and the division of most of the known titles along the lines that Emery proposed tend to support his explanation. This would imply that the association of the boat with the phyle signs is accidental. The text cannot, then, be used to support the contention that boat crews were organized into phyles.

There is some evidence for an association of boats and phyles in the title of a priest shown in the tomb of *Htp-n-Pth*, discussed above.<sup>5</sup> This title reads *jmj-r pr, hm-k3 gs jmj-wrt*, “steward, ka-priest of the *jmj-wrt* side of the boat.” This perhaps refers to a division of the ka-priests of this cult into two sides to drag or row the funerary boat. This is probably not a proper phyle, since it is not followed by a phyle sign, and the word *gs*, “side” or “half,” implies a two-part division of this cult’s priests, rather than the five-part division that would be required by a phyle system. (This title may, however, hint at the evolution of the name of the first phyle in private tombs.) Even if this text referred to a phyle, it would clearly be a phyle of priests that had occasional responsibilities on boats and not a phyle of sailors.

An association of a boat with what is clearly a phyle can be seen in a text from the mortuary temple of Menkaure at Giza. Among the masons’ marks on the blocks of this temple is one in which the gang name is followed by a boat sign, and then by the usual phyle designation.<sup>6</sup> This seems to show that this phyle and gang had something to do with boats. It might be argued that the marks were not put on these blocks by the royal gang of masons who were

3. W. Emery, *Great Tombs of the First Dynasty*, 3 vols. (Cairo and London, 1949–58) 3: pls. 23, 39. See the discussion of this piece (*K:4*) in *Chapter 8*, and the corresponding drawing in the *Appendix*.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 31.


5. Badawy, *Nyhetep-Ptah and ‘Ankham‘ahor*, pl. 13. This drawing contains a number of errors; see *Section 2.1*.

6. Reisner, *Mycerinus*, plan 12.



building the temple but by the boat crews who were responsible for moving the blocks to the site by river. However, these texts occur on the huge monolithic core blocks of the mortuary temple, which can be geologically shown to have been quarried from the same plateau where they were eventually erected.<sup>7</sup> These blocks were surely transported directly from the quarry to the core of the temple nearby without the use of a boat. The phyle names they bear thus cannot refer to phyles of sailors but only to the phyles of workmen who quarried the blocks and put them in place.

Why, then, does the boat sign occur in this context? It may have been included simply by association with the word 'pr, "gang," which is used for nautical crews as well as royal work gangs during this period.<sup>8</sup> This similarity of terminology might also be used to argue for a nautical system of phyles that would be parallel to that used in the royal work gangs; since the larger unit was used to organize sailors as well as builders, perhaps the smaller units were also common to both organizations. The word 'pr, however, has a very general meaning, "equipment,"<sup>9</sup> and its use with groups of men probably simply indicates the human equipment of a boat or a building project. The use of so general a term need not imply that the smaller units of administration were organized in the same way in every institution where it was used to designate the larger units.

The clearest connection between boats and phyles is a very rare title, , "boatman, scribe of a phyle" or "scribe of a boat phyle." This title occurs in a very fragmentary letter in the Neferirkare papyri,<sup>10</sup> in an isolated context, where the boat cannot be taken as part of another title. It is significant, however, that the boat sign is not the standard boat sign used in these texts,<sup>11</sup> but the divine boat.<sup>12</sup> The letter is, of course, part of the archives of a royal mortuary temple; hence, once again, what seems to be a nautical title may actually refer to a temple functionary. In her discussion of the letter, Posener-Kriéger cited as a parallel for this title an example in a Wadi Hammamat graffito.<sup>13</sup> The latter probably is the same title, although the phyle sign is very unusual: it does not

7. M. Lehner, personal communication, 1982.

8. Erman and Grapow, *Wörterbuch Belegstellungen* 1:181, 6.

9. *Ibid.*, 1:180, 8–23.

10. Posener-Kriéger and de Cenival, *Abu Sir Papyri*, pl. 80b.

11. *Ibid.*, Paleography pl. 9: #P 1.

12. *Ibid.*, #P 3.

13. J. Couyat and P. Montet, *Les Inscriptions hiéroglyphiques et hiératiques du Ouâdi Hammâmât* (Cairo, 1912), pl. 39: #206 and p. 104; and Sethe, *Urkunden* 1, p. 149, 12; cited by Posener-Kriéger, *Archives*, p. 467.

resemble the hieroglyph at all and resembles the hieratic sign only superficially. But again, the reference is not to an ordinary boat on which phyle organization was used, but to one presumably destined for Punt or other foreign lands on a state-sponsored trading expedition. The official was thus part of a royal enterprise.

An argument for the contrary contention, that boat crews were not, as a rule, organized into phyles, is the complete lack of any mention of phyles in the numerous captions over scenes of boats in private tombs. These are not few in number, and the boatmen in such scenes frequently call out to one another and engage in various informal conversations. In none of these scenes is any reference made to the phyles into which the boatmen were allegedly organized.

Thus there is no clear textual evidence for the association of the phyle system (as opposed to its nomenclature) with the crews of ordinary boats.

### 3.1.2. The New Kingdom Parallel

An argument for the existence of a nautical phyle system might still be made by analogy. Černý pointed out a connection that may have existed in the New Kingdom between the terminology used to describe the organization of ships' crews and that applied to the royal work crews at Deir el-Medina. He suggested that this New Kingdom relationship is analogous to the relationship of phyles in Old Kingdom work crews and the Old Kingdom nautical phyles.<sup>14</sup> In the New Kingdom, the gang of workmen at Deir el-Medina was divided into two "sides," the right side (*wnm[j]*) and the left side (*smh[j]*).<sup>15</sup> The terms "gang" (𓂏𓂐𓂑𓂒 *jst*) and "side" (𓂏𓂐𓂑𓂒 *rjt*) are both identified as nautical terms,<sup>16</sup> which suggests that the organization of these workmen may derive from a system of ships' watches.

The term for the larger group, *jst*, like the Old Kingdom term *ꜥpr*, is very general. It is known from clearly nautical contexts but was used in other connections as well.<sup>17</sup> The term *rjt*, however, is rarer and more problematic. The translation "side" is reminiscent of the nautical terms that are related to the Old Kingdom names of phyles. It has even been suggested that, in the Deir el-

14. J. Černý, *A Community of Workmen at Thebes in the Ramesside Period* (Cairo, 1973), pp. 100-01.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 101.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 103.

17. Erman and Grapow, *Wörterbuch* 1:127, 11-20.

Medina crews, the two sides served alternately in a simple rotation comparable to the phyles of the Old Kingdom.<sup>18</sup>

However, the relationship of the term *rjt* to boats, like the Old Kingdom relationship which it is purported to parallel, is not so well demonstrated as one would like. The only references known to "sides" as groups of men, apart from the Deir el-Medina material (which clearly refers to crews of workmen, not sailors), are two occurrences of the title '3 *n rjt*.<sup>19</sup> The first refers to a functionary attached to two boats of Amon (*Jmn-wsr-ḥ3t* and an unspecified *wj3 n Jmn*) which, if they were river boats at all, were towed rather than rowed. Hence, *rjt* cannot here refer to a crew of oarsmen. The second example, which dates to the Ptolemaic period, adds to the title '3 *n rjt* the expression *ḥr z3 3-nw*, "with the third phyle." This implies that the office was exercised in the temple; *rjt* apparently indicates some sort of further division of a priestly phyle. The title in both cases, then, clearly belongs to a member of the priesthood rather than to a professional sailor.

The fact that the temple ritual involves divine boats has thus camouflaged a parallel between the organization of work crews in the New Kingdom and a contemporary organization in the priesthood. On closer view, the situation in the New Kingdom appears almost exactly parallel to that known from the Old Kingdom, although not in the way Černý suggested. In both periods, the royal work crew and the priesthood used the same system of organization, which may have also been used by boat crews, though in neither period is the system actually attested in that sphere. That the nautical association in the New Kingdom evidence is the result of priestly associations with divine boats may offer a clue to the situation in the Old Kingdom.

### 3.1.3. Practical Problems

In addition to the lack of direct evidence for a nautical system of phyles, there are practical problems in applying the system known from the priesthood and work crews of the Old Kingdom to a ship's crew. Monthly rotation would, of

18. M. Della Monica, *La Class ouvrière sous les pharaons, études du village de Deir el Medineh* (Paris, 1980), p. 79, states that the two sides of the village of Deir el-Medina were divided by the main street, and that each side worked alternate weeks. Černý, however, takes the sides to be the sides of the tomb in which the entire gang worked together (*A Community of Workmen*, p. 103, n. 4.); this interpretation is strongly supported by the records of candle consumption, which show that on given days both sides use an equal number of candles. See Černý, *The Valley of the Kings* (Cairo, 1973), p. 47.

19. Cited in Erman and Grapow, *Wörterbuch Belegstellungen* 2:400, 8. Černý, *Community of Workmen*, p. 103, n. 4, states that these are "all references so far known."

course, be impractical. Even if the length of a watch were reduced to a more probable interval (four-to-six-hour watches were common in relatively modern times),<sup>20</sup> five watches would seem to be excessive. Although on some occasions the two watches customarily used in modern times could be divided again into four watches,<sup>21</sup> it is unlikely that Egyptian boats would routinely carry four or five times<sup>22</sup> the number of men needed to sail them. The practice is even more dubious if we assume that Egyptian boats docked at night, which seems probable.<sup>23</sup> A rotating service would then have been unnecessary, as only a few men were needed to guard the boat at night.

### 3.2. THE RELATIONSHIP OF PHYLE NAMES AND NAUTICAL TERMS

There is, then, no reason to believe that Old Kingdom ship's crews were organized into phyles. The relationship is one of terminologies, not of organizational systems. A comparative study of the terminologies and the history of their association may suggest why they are related: whether the terms were transmitted from one sphere of activity to another along with the system of organization in which they were used or whether they were associated by some other means.

#### 3.2.1. The Meaning of the Nautical Terms

The four nautical terms, *jmj-wrt*, *w3ḏt*, *t3-wr*, and (*jmj*)-*nds(t)*, were first noted in the Coffin Texts. Sethe and most subsequent commentators translated them as parts of a boat: *jmj-wrt* as starboard, *t3-wr* as port, *w3ḏt* as prow, and (*jmj*)-*nds* as stern.<sup>24</sup> Nautical equivalents have been proposed for the fifth phyle name, *jmj-nfrt*,<sup>25</sup> but they can only be speculation. Indeed the unity of the four

20. "Watch," in *A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles*, James A. Murray, ed. (Oxford, 1928) vol. X2, p. 147.

21. Ibid.

22. Since the fifth phyle name is unknown in the nautical nomenclature, it might be argued that only four phyles were used in the nautical system.

23. H. Kees, *Ancient Egypt: A Cultural Topography*, ed. T. G. H. James, transl. I. F. D. Morrow (London, 1961), p. 98.

24. Sethe, "Totenbuchspruch," pp. 3–4, n. 5.

25. Helck, "Handwerker- und Priesterphylonen," p. 6, suggests "Innern des Schiff (*nfrjt* "Ende" seit MR)—eher als Haltestrick des Ruders (*nfr.t*)." Kaplony, following Helck, concludes, from a writing of *jmj-nfrt* with a sign he takes to be "die Weisse Krone mit zwei Bündeln," that *jmj-nfrt* is "der Platz, wo der König sitzt, die Mitte des Schiffes" (*Rollsiegel* 1:325, n. 623).

terms in the Coffin Texts spells implies that they make up a closed set: either all four terms occur or only the first two; in both cases a totality is implied.

Helck made a very good case for translating the first four terms as quadrants of a boat rather than the compass points. He based his argument on the four quadrants of the Khufu boat, where each board is marked with a sign that indicates one of these terms: the boards in the starboard bow quadrant are marked with the sign  $\vdash$  (= *jmj-wrt*); in the port bow quadrant with the sign  $\neg$  (= *t3-wr*, or *st* ?); in the starboard quarter with  $\Upsilon$  (= *w3d(t)*); and in the port quarter with  $\text{||||}$  (which is presumably equivalent to *nds*).<sup>26</sup> Helck then asserted that the arrangement of the quadrants, taken from front to back and from right to left, corresponds to the phyle order that he proposed.<sup>27</sup> He cited as additional evidence for this assertion the writing of the term corresponding to *nds*, the fourth phyle in his order, with the group  $\text{||||}$ . The discussion in the previous chapter<sup>28</sup> demonstrates that the order of the phyles that Helck deduced differs from the order that is usually used in the Coffin Texts, namely *jmj-wrt*, *w3dt*, *t3-wr*, and *nds*; however, the *nds* quadrant is in the fourth place in both orders.

Any doubt as to the validity of Helck's translations, however, may be dispelled by applying them to one of the occurrences of the nautical terms in the Coffin Texts. In spell 397,<sup>29</sup> the deceased gives instructions for the assembly of a ferry boat. Faulkner, who used the usual translations for these terms, rendered the passage: "Take her starboard side and fix it to her bow; take her larboard side and fix it to her stern," to which he added the note "These directions are curious; one would expect the sides to be attached to both prow and stern. However this is not a treatise on boat-building, and the obvious demand of the deceased is that the hull should be put in order."<sup>30</sup> Substituting the values that Helck suggested for these terms yields: "Take her starboard bow and fix it to her starboard quarter; take her port bow and fix it to her port quarter." This still does not result in a complete boat, but it results in two complete sides, rather

26. Helck, "Handwerker- und Priesterphylen," p. 5. Helck gives the *w3dt* sign as  $\Upsilon$ , as opposed to  $\neg$ , as given in M. A. Abu Bakr and A. Y. Mustafa, "The Funerary Boat of Khufu," in *Zum 70. Geburtstag Hermann Ricke*, BÄBA 12 (Wiesbaden, 1971), p. 12. However, the orientation is clearly  $\Upsilon$ ; cf. the relationship of the sign to other hieroglyphs in Nour et al., *Cheops Boat*, p. 8, fig. 3.

27. Helck, "Handwerker- und Priesterphylen," p. 5. This order is discussed in Chapter 2 above.

28. Section 2.2.

29. CT V:84–85.

30. R. O. Faulkner, *Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts*, 3 vols. (Warminster, 1973–78) 2:25 and 29, n. 14.

than one side with a prow attached on the end and another with a stern attached, and is thus the first step that needs to be taken.

Two other Coffin Text spells, 414 and 758,<sup>31</sup> support Helck's translations. In two examples from spell 414, the terms are grouped in two columns and are configured as Helck would place them around a boat. Spell 758 is written in a band of text that curves in an oval around a vignette of a seated god. The spell is oriented, and the terms occur in it, in such a way that each term is aligned with the proper quadrant of the oval, as if the oval was a boat and the god was facing the prow; and indeed, the terms are identified as sides of a boat in the text.

Yet another corroboration can be found in the comparative frequency with which the terms *jmj-wrt* and *t3-wr* are used, as opposed to the terms *w3dt* and *nds*. The first two terms occur in scenes of navigation in the private tomb chapels of Old Kingdom officials and also in a number of the Coffin Text spells in which the other two terms are not mentioned. This situation is similar to the use of the corresponding terms in English; the terms starboard bow and port bow are well known even to people who have little to do with boats, whereas the terms for the back quadrants, "starboard quarter" and "port quarter," are technical terms infrequently used even by professionals.<sup>32</sup> In the nautical scenes and the other Coffin Text spells, where only *jmj-wrt* and *t3-wr* are used, it is possible that these two terms were intended more generally and indicated the whole sides of the boat "starboard" and "port"; but where all four terms are used the translation of each term as a quadrant is correct.

### 3.2.2. The History of the Nautical Terms

Although words for the concepts of starboard and port must have existed long before the beginning of Egyptian history, it is impossible to tell how old the words *jmj-wrt* and *t3-wr* were when they occur in the earliest preserved evidence. A chronological survey of this evidence reveals something of the terminology's development after that time and its relationship to the phyle names.

The first known occurrence of the terms in a nautical context is in the Fourth Dynasty, on the boards of the boat of Khufu.<sup>33</sup> Since this boat was a mortuary

31. *CTV*:246 and *CTVI*:387 (top).

32. In the course of this study, I asked a number of amateur sailors for the English words for the quadrants of a boat. Although all of them could give me the names starboard and port bow, several could not supply the terms starboard and port quarter.

33. Helck, "Handwerker- und Priesterphylen," p. 5.

boat,<sup>34</sup> it presumably served in the funeral of the king and then was disassembled for burial in its own pit.

The forms of the terms inscribed on this boat, as has been noted above, are unusually abbreviated. Such a simplification cannot be due to the medium in which they were carved, since many of the hieroglyphs that mark the exact placement of the boards are quite elaborate. The unaccompanied *st* sign that is used in these texts for the port bow quadrant is especially puzzling; only here is the nautical term written exactly like the phyle name.

It is possible, however, that the quadrant marks on the Khufu boat are not references to nautical terms at all but indications of the phyles of workmen responsible for its assembly. These marks would then be analogous to the masons' marks found on the blocks of the contemporary royal funerary monuments. The organization of work crews are dealt with more fully in *Chapter 7*, but it should be noted here that, during this period, work gangs and phyles were frequently used to organize construction work into sectors, as well as to organize the rotation.<sup>35</sup>

A possible confirmation of the hypothesis that the marks on the Khufu boat are names of phyles of work crews rather than nautical terms may be seen in the use of this same set of marks on stone blocks.<sup>36</sup> These blocks were used to fill the stairway and shaft of the tomb of *Htp-ḥr.s*, Khufu's mother, and thus would also date to his reign. Among these marks, there is one example of the sign  $\dagger$ ,<sup>37</sup> three possible *st* signs,<sup>38</sup> two *w3d* signs,<sup>39</sup> and a mark  $\text{||||}$ ,<sup>40</sup> which is perhaps a variant of the mark  $\text{||||}$  used on the Khufu boat. A number of other marks occur on these blocks ( $\star$ ,  $\text{𓆎}$ ,  $\text{𓆏}$ , and some others) which may have served as notations for more exact placement, as did the extra hieroglyphs on the boat.

If this explanation for the quadrant indications on the Khufu boat is correct, other royal mortuary boats of the period also must have borne phyle names. This hypothesis would suggest why *jmj-wrt* was adopted as the name of the first phyle in private tombs, and why the term *t3-wr* was complemented with an ideographic *st* sign in the boating scenes depicted in private tomb chapels.

34. Abu Bakr and Mustafa, "Funerary Boat," p. 12.

35. See *Chapter 7*.

36. G. A. Reisner, *A History of the Giza Necropolis*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, MA, 1942–55) 2: fig. 18.

37. *Ibid.*, #8.

38. *Ibid.*, #7, #10, #4.

39. *Ibid.*, #2, #9.

40. *Ibid.*, #6.

Scenes of nautical journeys that employ the terms *jmj-wrt* and *t3-wr* seem to occur in tomb chapels where a phyle system was in use. Both of the Old Kingdom private tombs that had private boat burials<sup>41</sup> are known to have organized the priests of their cult into phyles.<sup>42</sup>

The only other occurrence of any of these terms in the Fourth Dynasty is among the masons' marks on the blocks of the mortuary temple of Menkaure, where the phrase *gs jmj-wrt* "starboard (or western) half" was used to indicate the orientation or placement of blocks.<sup>43</sup> The reign of Menkaure is thus the latest possible date for the evolution of the geographical term *jmj-wrt*, which may have predated the nautical term. In its geographical usage, as sometimes in a nautical context,<sup>44</sup> the group seems to indicate a half rather than a quarter. The geographical term *jmj-wrt* continues to appear sporadically throughout the Old Kingdom; later occurrences are not discussed here except insofar as they have been confused with examples of the phyle name.

Since the Menkaure occurrences are geographical and the marks on the Khufu boat probably indicate the responsibilities of the phyles that disassembled and reassembled the boat, it can be argued that no purely nautical use of the terms *jmj-wrt* and *t3-wr* is attested until the Fifth Dynasty and that *w3dt* and *nds* do not occur as nautical terms in the Old Kingdom but appear only in the Coffin Texts.

The two terms *jmj-wrt* and *t3-wr* are attested in a number of private tombs dating from the middle Fifth through the middle Sixth Dynasties, in which they are clearly nautical terms. The scenes in which they occur depict either the mortuary voyage of the tomb owner or simply boats without indication of the purpose of the journey. The term *jmj-wrt* occurs almost universally in such scenes; *t3-wr* is rarer.<sup>45</sup>

Although these terms often occur in the context of funerary pilgrimages, they probably do not have any ritual significance. They are directions for the sailing of the boat, usually "make for port," or "make for starboard," shouted by the sailors to one another. As such, they probably represent fairly accurately the

41. E. Thomas, "Solar Barks Prow to Prow" and "A Further Note on Rockcut Boats," *JEA* 42 (1956):65–79, 117–18, cites only the tomb of *K3-gm.n.j*; the tomb of *Pth-spšs* at Abu Sir also had such boat pits.

42. All of the private tombs in which there is reason to believe that the phyle system was used are listed in *Chapter 6*.

43. Reisner, *Mycerinus*, plan 11.

44. See *Section 3.2.1*.

45. The examples of the term *t3-wr* are collected in figure 2.7 above. *Jmj-wrt* occurs in most of the same tombs, and others as well.



speech of sailors. (Although artificial speeches may have been put in the mouths of people represented in tomb reliefs, the tenor of such remarks tends to be pious wishes for the soul of the deceased, not practical instructions.) From this context, then, it may be assumed with some confidence that *jmj-wrt* was the term commonly used for "starboard" or "starboard bow" in this period.

The term for "port" or "port bow" is more complicated. The examples are clearly to be read *t3-wr*, yet the *st* sign is embedded in the term. It is argued above that the writing simply incorporates two different terms for the same thing, or for related things. The *st* sign may have been included in a traditional term *t3-wr* because of its geographical meaning ("Asiatic" or "eastern"), which paralleled the geographical use of *jmj-wrt* to mean "west." Or the extraneous sign may have been incorporated on analogy with the phyle name *wr*, which is contained in the nautical term *jmj-wrt*; the latter term was already in use as a phyle name in private tombs at the time that these nautical terms begin to be attested. It is also possible that a combination of these reasons is responsible for the incorporation of the *st* sign.

The history of the nautical terms, then, cannot be reconciled with the traditional theory that the names of nautical phyles were transferred to phyles in other spheres along with the phyle system itself. That theory required that the *wr* phyle be a later variant of the *jmj-wrt* phyle, when in fact the reverse is true; and it required that the name of the *st* phyle be read *t3-wr*, when in fact it is clearly distinguished graphically from the nautical term. The two terms that do support this interpretation, *w3dt* and *nds*, never occur as nautical terms in the Old Kingdom evidence. They are also less important practically, as was noted above, and they need not even have existed until the nautical terminology was associated with the phyle nomenclature.

The most satisfactory explanation for the evidence is that a nautical terminology consisting of two terms, *jmj-wrt* and *t3-wr*, became associated with the phyle terminology, possibly as early as the Fourth Dynasty. This association may have arisen from the use of boats in funerary ceremonies in two ways: through the association of phyles with the assembly and disassembly of mortuary boats, possibly in accordance with a ritual, and through the development of a priestly organization, somewhat parallel to phyles, in private tombs, where priests were divided into starboard and port sides. This hypothetical system of organization is hinted at in the tomb of *Htp-n-Pth*<sup>46</sup> at

46. Badawy, *Nyhetep-Ptah and 'Ankhm'ahor*, pl. 13; discussed above, Sections 2.1 and 3.1.1.

Giza and perhaps also the tomb of *Mḥw*<sup>47</sup> at Aswan. When the phyle system began to be adopted by wealthy officials, the name of the priests of the starboard side may have been retained from the older system as a substitute for the name of the *wr* phyle, perhaps because the use of this prestigious royal phyle was thought presumptuous in a private cult. The use of the *jmj*-sign on the royal mortuary boat to indicate the area for which the *wr* phyle was responsible may have been a factor contributing to this association. The name *jmj-wrt* had the advantage of a sign shared with the royal *wr* phyle; it suggested, yet did not usurp, the high status of the *wr* phyle as a group in royal service.

At about the same period, the second nautical term, *t3-wr*, was similarly associated with the second phyle name, *st*, and the *st* sign was incorporated as an ideograph in the writing of the word *t3-wr*. It is interesting to note, in support of this conclusion, that of the ten private individuals whose tombs contain writings of the nautical term *t3-wr* with a *st*-sign determinative, five show clear evidence of having had a priesthood that was organized into a phyle system.

Thus it is clear that the phyle system of the Old Kingdom was only related to boats by a partial sharing and exchange of terminology. There is no reason to believe that the system of organization into phyles originated in ships' watches and was later borrowed by the priesthood and royal work crews; indeed, there is no reason to assume that the phyle system was ever used on ships during this period. Such a conclusion throws into question the origin of phyles and the phyle system, and hence the essential nature of the institution. This question is dealt with in *Chapter 9*.

### 3.3. USE OF THE NAUTICAL TERMS IN THE COFFIN TEXTS

It was almost certainly the association of the phyles with the quadrants of mortuary boats, whether royal or private, that led to the eventual adoption of the phyle names, or, more accurately, a hybrid of the phyle names and the nautical terms, to indicate quadrants of boats in some of the Coffin Texts spells. Although no extant copies of the Coffin Texts date back to the Fourth Dynasty, one of the spells refers to a disassembled mortuary boat such as that of Khufu. In the spell (quoted above in *Section 3.2.1*<sup>48</sup>), a boat that has been taken apart into four quadrants must be reassembled for the deceased. The terms may have


47. Edel, "Beleg," pp. 130–31. See the discussion in *Section 2.1.2* above, where it is suggested that the group *m t3w* preceding a priestly title in this tomb may represent an example of the use of nautical terms in the organization of a private cult.

48. CTV:84–85 (Spell 397).

been taken directly into the mortuary text from the markings on the sides of the boat.

Throughout the preceding discussion, the occurrences of these terms in the Coffin Texts spells have been treated as a uniform nautical terminology. In fact, however, the ways in which the terms are used in the Coffin Texts vary considerably, as do their spellings and the determinatives they are given. Analysis of these variations confirms the description of the nature of the nautical terms and their relationship to the names of the phyles that is suggested by the other evidence.

Of the 219 copies of the Coffin Texts that have survived,<sup>49</sup> forty-two contain spells in which these terms are used, almost 20 percent. Half of these copies contain two or more such spells. In the great majority of these spells, only the first two names occur: *jmj-wrt* and *t3-wr*. In a few, the other two terms, *w3dt* and (*jmj*)-*nds(t)*, appear as well. Fewer still contain only the term *jmj-wrt*, used simply as a synonym for "west." No term corresponding to the fifth phyle name, *jmj-nfrt*, is known from the Coffin Text spells, unless the occasional writing of the term *nds* as *jmj-ndst* is due to a conflation of the fourth and fifth phyle names.







There are twenty-five different spells or sections of spells in which the terms occur. They vary in usage, sometimes in spelling, and in the presence and absence of modifying determinatives and associated adjectives (for example, plural strokes, divine determinatives, and the sign ). Grieshammer<sup>50</sup> identified most of these occurrences and divided them into three groups, based on the way in which they are used: technical terms relating to boats, topographical uses, and groups of people. If the orthography of the terms is compared with these semantic divisions, a pattern appears that suggests that the Coffin Texts occurrences of these terms derive from three different prototypes.

In table 1, the spells in which the nautical terms appear are divided into six groups according to context. These divisions do not coincide with Grieshammer's divisions, although there are rough correspondences between *Sides of the World* and his geographical category, and between *Sides of a Boat* and his nautical category; the remaining categories are essentially subsets of his "groups of persons" category.

49. From a count of the sources cited in L. Lesko, *Index to the Spells on Egyptian Middle Kingdom Coffins* (Berkeley, 1979).

50. R. Grieshammer, *Das Jenseitsgericht in den Sargtexten*, Ägyptologische Abhandlungen 20 (Wiesbaden, 1970), p. 118.

Table 1. The Nautical Terms in the Coffin Texts

<i>CT</i>	<i>Spell</i>	<i>Exx.</i>	<i>Terms</i>						
<b>Sides of the World</b>									
I 54	18*	4	2	4	—	—	—	2	—
IV 14b	274	4	2	3	—	—	—	—	—
IV 164	327	1	2	1	—	—	—	—	1
IV 357	343*	9	2	4	1/2	—	—	4	—
IV 368	344*	1	2	1	—	—	—	—	1
V 227–32	409	7 <sup>a</sup>	2	—	—	—	—	—	5
V 246 <sup>b</sup>	414	3	2	2	—	—	—	—	—
V 387	469*	2	2	—	—	—	—	—	—
VI 382	753	1	2	1	—	—	—	1	—
<b>Sides of a Boat</b>									
I 196	45	7	1	—	—	—	na <sup>c</sup>	na	—
V 84–85	397	10	4	—	—	—	—	3	—
V 97/118 <sup>d</sup>	397	5	4	—	—	—	—	1	—
VI 387	758	1	4	1/2	—	—	—	—	1
VI 387	759	1	4	1	—	—	—	—	1
<b>Sides of a God</b>									
V 143–4	398	8	2	8	—	—	7	—	—
V 246 <sup>b</sup>	414	2	4	2	2	2	1	—	—
VI 300	672	1	1	1	—	—	na	na	1
<b>Beneficent Groups</b>									
I 157	38	4	2	3	3	3	3	—	—
VI 150	551	3	1	3	3	1	na	na	—
<b>Groups Controlled by the Deceased</b>									
IV 14–15 <sup>e</sup>	274	4	2	3	4	4	—	—	—
VI 279	658	1	2	1	1	1	1	—	—
VI 280	659	1	2	1	1	1	1	—	—
VI 282	660	1	2	1	1	1	—	—	—
VI 285	660	1	2	1	1	1	—	—	—
<b>Cannot Determine</b>									
IV 379	347	1	1?2?	1	1	—	—	—	—





<sup>a</sup>A refrain containing the terms is repeated seven times.

<sup>b</sup>Three examples fall into the first group, two into the third.

<sup>c</sup>The notation “na” indicates that *t3-wr* does not occur in this spell.

<sup>d</sup>These represent two versions of the same passage.

<sup>e</sup>The terms occur twice in the same spell.

For each spell, the total number of examples (*Exx.*) is given, and a number (*Terms*) indicates whether *jmj-wrt* alone (1); *jmj-wrt* and *t3-wr* (2); or all four terms (4) occur in the spell. The presence or absence of six features are charted for each spell: the modifier ‘3 (  ); the seated-god determinative (  ); plural strokes following the terms (  ); the writing of *t3-wr* with the gateway *t3* sign alone, without a *wr* sign (  ); the use of the flat-land sign in the writing of *t3-*

*wr* (𓂏); and the addition of the word *gs*, “side” (𓂏). The numerals in these columns represent the number of examples that have these features.


When each group is examined separately, it is clear that distinctions were made among these texts in the spellings of the terms and the use of determinatives. While to some extent the features charted have helped in the grouping of the terms, the consistency with which the same features appear in the same context demonstrates that these distinctions are not the result of random variation but are probably the remnants of differences in the various texts from which the Coffin Texts were compiled.



The first category given in table 1, *Sides of the World*, is made up of spells containing only *jmj-wrt* and *t3-wr*. These spells are of two basic types: the spells marked with an asterisk associate one term with heaven and the other with earth (spell 469, in which both terms are associated with heaven, may be an error for this); those without an asterisk describe one term as a place of ascending and the other as a place of descending; spell 18 contains both identifications. As one would expect, since the deceased would desire to travel in the solar boat, *t3-wr*, the east, is in most cases associated with the ascent and *jmj-wrt*, the west, with the descent. However, in the more direct associations, the west is usually associated with heaven and the east with earth; possibly because the west is also the realm of the dead and is thereby to be contrasted with earth. The ‘3 sign, the *gs* sign, and the flat *t3* sign are used frequently in these texts, but the plural strokes and the isolated gateway *t3* sign do not occur at all, and the divine determinative is used only once, possibly in error, in a text where the other terms do not have divine determinatives.

The second category, *Sides of a Boat*, includes spells in which the terms clearly designate quadrants of a boat. All four terms are used in all but one of these spells. As in the preceding category, *gs* occurs, the term *t3-wr* is frequently written using the 𓂏 sign but never with the 𓂏 sign alone, and plural strokes and divine determinatives are not used.

In this context, the modifying adjective ‘3 is used much more rarely than it is in the first category, appearing with all the terms in one spell and in half of the terms in another on a single coffin. Perhaps significantly, these two spells, 758 and 759 (CT VI:387), share characteristics with the following category. Spell 758 is written in two parts around a vignette of a god who is also surrounded by the *mḥn* snake; the text implies that the god is on a boat. The halves of the spell are so arranged that the terms occur next to the quadrants they describe, reinforcing their meaning. Although these terms are here explicitly called “sides of the boat,” they may refer to the protective beings located around the god or

even to segments of the *mhn* snake shown in the vignette. Spell 759 refers to the same vignette, so the ambiguities in the meaning of the terms are the same.


The next category, *Sides of a God*, also contains spells used in a way consistent with their nautical meanings, since they designate the sides of a god as if the god was sitting in a boat. Spell 398 (CT V:143–144) is a list, rather confused in some versions, which uses the terms “port” and “starboard” to refer to the left and right hand of Atum. The adjective ‘3 occurs consistently with the terms in this spell, and in all but one case the term *t3-wr* is written with a single  sign, though it is interesting to note that in two of the better copies (where *t3-wr* rather than *jmj-wrt* is correctly related to the eastern hand of Atum) a *wr* bird is inserted after the following adjective ‘3. Spell 672 (CT VI:300) simply states that the deceased has appeared on the *jmj-wrt* side of the two gods, *Mnhwtj*. Finally, leading towards the next category, Spell 414 (CT V:246) uses the four terms to designate the “companions of Re’.”<sup>51</sup> The four terms in this text are graphically arranged on the papyrus as the companions would be configured around a boat. Since the purpose of the spell is to drive Apophis from the boat of Re’, the companions are probably arranged around Re’ according to the quadrants by which they are designated. The flat *t3* sign is never used in these texts.

The next category, *Beneficent Groups*, contains only two texts and should perhaps not be distinguished from the previous group. The texts refer to beneficent, or potentially beneficent, groups of beings. In both spells, the sign ‘3 and the divine determinative follow the terms, and the plural strokes and the writing of the term *t3-wr* with a single  sign are frequent. The flat-land sign is never used in writing this term in these spells. Spell 38 (CT I:157), in which Grieshammer was principally interested, uses the two terms to designate parts of a tribunal, either along with the *jrw wsht* or, more probably from the graphic configuration of the terms, as parts of it. In one version of this spell, the terms are not followed by the ‘3 sign but by a sign that de Buck transcribed as a doorbolt z. Wente suggested that this sign is actually a phyle sign, , which is frequently written as a stroke with a single tic in cursive texts.<sup>52</sup> In the second text of this category, only one term is used: *jmjw-wrt* refers to a group that

51. In two of the five texts of this spell, the scribes seem to have confused this usage of the terms with the usage in the first category. There are only two terms used in these three examples; they are associated with heaven and earth and lack the divine determinatives and plural strokes used consistently in the better copies. This split is in itself good evidence for the contention that the distinctions outlined here are not meaningless.

52. E. F. Wente, personal communication, citing G. Posener, “Notes de transcription,” *RdÉ* 28 (1976):146.



places the deceased (in a boat?) after which the *jmjw-st*-<sup>c</sup> lift him up and he enters among the followers. The *jmjw-wrt* may be some part of the crew of the boat, or they may simply be helpful beings called by that name.

The last identifiable group of texts consists of spells in which the deceased is said to control groups bearing the names *jmj-wrt* and *t3-wr*. The adjective <sup>c</sup>3 is used in all cases but one; the divine determinative and the plural strokes occur without exception. There are two cases in which the  sign alone is used for *t3-wr*, and the flat-land sign never occurs in the writing of this term.

There is one text that uses a term of this type that does not fall clearly into any of the above categories. It may be that the text is corrupt; in it, the *jmj-wrt* is united with the *hnt t3 w<sup>c</sup>rt*, which is perhaps a confusion of *t3-wr* with the term for “polar region” that occurs in the preceding spell. In view of its obscurity, it is disregarded in this discussion.

The contextual and orthographic distinctions displayed in these Coffin Texts occurrences reflect the three areas in which this family of terms was used in the Old Kingdom: to distinguish east and west (*Sides of the World*), to identify quadrants of a boat as marked on the Khufu boat (*Sides of a Boat*), and to name the phyles (the remaining categories). These terminologies, which are shown above to have differed significantly from one another, were not transferred into the Coffin Texts intact. Although the categories became blurred and the terminologies were conflated, the orthographic features of the different groups of terms are preserved to some extent.



The geographical term *jmj-wrt*, “west,” is known throughout the Old Kingdom, but the term for “east” that corresponds to it is not. The term adopted for “east” seems to have been taken from the Old Kingdom nautical term “port,” *t3-wr*, which was written with the flat-land *t3* sign so often used in the Coffin Texts spells of the *Sides of the World* category in all but the latest references. However, the gateway *t3* sign is also attested in the nautical term by the end of the Old Kingdom and was perhaps adopted through a reinterpretation of the *st* sign. Though both kinds of *t3* sign occur in this category of Coffin Texts spells, they are always followed by a *wr* sign, which demonstrates again that it is from the nautical terminology that the term for “east” was adopted.



The geographical use of the term *jmj-wrt* is also the context in which it was associated with the adjective <sup>c</sup>3 in the Old Kingdom. Among the titles of *Hw-wj-wr*, a title is twice repeated that refers to the “great west side of the Giza plateau,”  and ,<sup>53</sup> *jmj-r gs jmj-wr[t<sup>c</sup>3] hr*; var. *hr<sup>c</sup>3*. Although the <sup>c</sup>3 sign is not preserved in its

53. Sethe, *Urkunden* 1, p. 47, 15.

position behind the group *jmj-wrt*, the hole is said to be exactly the right size for it. Since this adjective became associated with these terms in their geographical usage, it is not surprising that it is relatively frequent in the corresponding category of Coffin Texts spells.

The origin of the terms used in the category of spells that refer to quadrants of boats has already been discussed. The most distinctive features of this category are the avoidance of the adjective '3 and the use of all four terms. If the adjective '3 was originally associated with the geographical terminology, there is no reason why it should have been adopted here. Similarly, the conclusion that the spells derived from a ritual in which the mortuary boat was assembled for the deceased to use first at the funeral and then magically to cross the river into the afterlife would tend to explain the consistent inclusion of all four terms.

The references in the third through fifth categories may be grouped together as memories of the Old Kingdom phyle system, to a greater or lesser extent. It is hard to imagine that phyles of priests would not have had a major role in funerals; hence it is not unreasonable to expect references to them in funerary texts. In general the names in these categories are followed by plural strokes, which accords well with the nature of phyles, but the strongest evidence for connecting these texts with phyles is in the writing of the term *t3-wr* (although whether it is to be so read in these texts is somewhat problematic). The flat-land sign is never used for *t3* in this group, which makes it unlikely that these terms are derived from the nautical terms where that was the most common writing. More interestingly, the term is frequently written simply , without a *wr* sign, which is strongly reminiscent of the phyle name .





Wente's suggestion about the possible use of the phyle sign  in these texts also supports the reconstruction advocated here. If the sign  could be replaced by an '3 sign in Spell 38, perhaps the similarity of the two signs is the explanation for the group '3 in the other spells of this category. By the time these spells were copied, the names of phyles had fallen out of use and had been replaced by numbers. The scribes, who were familiar with the use of the adjective '3 to modify these words when they occurred as geographical terms, could easily have interpreted the cursive phyle sign as the more comprehensible '3. That this adjective occurs even more frequently with terms in these categories than in the geographical uses is also consistent with a reinterpretation of the phyle sign, since the name of the phyle almost always occurs with a phyle sign, while the adjective '3 is optional with the geographical terms.

More difficult to explain are the divine determinatives that occur with the terms when they are used to represent groups of people. In terms that refer to



phyles, one would expect determinatives more suited to mortuary priests. However, in the context of most of these spells, the groups of beings in question seem to be functioning in the world of the gods rather than on earth; they are judges at a divine tribunal or, more frequently, the crew of the sun boat. Hence they may be assumed to be divine beings or at least functioning as such. Perhaps the mortuary priests played the roles of these beings at the funeral, which would explain why their phyles are mentioned in such funerary spells.

The Coffin Texts, then, seem to use the "nautical" terms in three ways: (1) as indications of geographical orientation, "west" and "east," and hence perhaps the sides "right" and "left"; (2) as designations of the quadrants of a boat, a usage apparently derived from the use of phyle names to mark quadrants in mortuary boats such as that of Khufu; and (3) to indicate groups of protective people or divinities, a usage derived from the phyle groupings, sometimes modified by the influence of the nautical associations of the preceding category so that the designations reflect the position of the groups around the deceased or a god (principally in the spells belonging to *Sides of a God* category). These groups are distinguished not only by their contexts but also by a number of orthographic features that can be related to their origins.

The terms normally identified as "nautical terms" in the Coffin Texts are less a single terminology than three separate terminologies, only one of which is related to boats. These terminologies were confused by the scribes who put the spells together into a single corpus, which led to misspellings such as  for  and  for . The Coffin Text occurrences of these terms thus support the interpretation that Old Kingdom phyle names and nautical terms were independent terminologies, which began to influence each other in the late Fifth Dynasty but retained characteristic features that allow them to be distinguished in far later sources.



## CHAPTER 4

### THE NATURE OF PHYLE MEMBERSHIP

#### 4.1. THE POSSIBILITY OF MEMBERSHIP IN MORE THAN ONE PHYLE

In the surviving evidence, membership in a phyle is indistinguishable from the performance of an office or function that was organized according to the phyle system. It is not clear whether the Egyptians had such a functional view of their membership in phyles, or whether it was a more important affiliation with consequences that are no longer apparent. Was it possible, for example, to belong to many phyles? Or was membership limited to one phyle and, if so, was it permanent and unvarying regardless of any offices acquired later? The question whether the phyle membership or the tenure of an office took precedence is basic to any discussion of the phyle system, yet the information now available does not allow an answer.

The argument for a single phyle affiliation is based primarily on negative evidence. No instances of membership in two or more phyles can be discerned in the evidence. On the basis of four cases in the Neferirkare papyri, in which both members of junior-senior pairs (presumably father and son) belong to the same phyle, it could be argued that phyle membership is inherited. But since offices are also frequently inherited, phyle membership could simply have been attached to the office.

The only positive point in favor of the priority of phyle membership over cult affiliation is the extreme importance of phyles apparent in the evidence from the Archaic period.<sup>1</sup> The appearance of phyle names on royal stoneware at the cemeteries of Saqqara and Abydos show that each of the phyles had distinct sets of ritual equipment, and this careful separation argues against a casual association with administrative groups. Separate sets of equipment also seem to have been used in Old Kingdom times, since each phyle had its own storeroom

1. See *Chapter 8* below.

and an Old Kingdom example of a phyle-specific oil tablet survives.<sup>2</sup> By this period it is clear that phyles served in rotation, so that there was no practical need for separate equipment. The Archaic period evidence also demonstrates the close association of phyles with the king. Such importance seems inconsistent with the assumption that phyles were simply artificial divisions created to organize a rotating staff.

#### 4.2. INITIATION: PHYLE MEMBERSHIP AND CIRCUMCISION

Despite the paucity of evidence, membership in a phyle seems likely to have been an important affiliation. But at what stage of life, and under what circumstances, did a young man take up his membership? There is no direct evidence on this question, but a relief in the tomb of *ʿnh-m-ʿHr*, which has hitherto been only partially published, suggests a connection with the rite of circumcision.

The scene is mentioned briefly above<sup>3</sup> in connection with the ordering of the phyles. It is on the inner wall of a small room (usually designated Room V and sometimes wrongly identified as a serdab); no decoration is preserved on the other three walls (the only walls visible from the doorway). A photograph of the scene was published by Capart;<sup>4</sup> however, the scene was photographed at an angle that records only the lower two registers. In his later publication of the tomb, Badawy merely reproduced Capart's photograph.<sup>5</sup> A facsimile drawing of the entire scene, which includes the badly damaged upper registers, is given in figure 4.1.

At its left edge, the scene shows a single standing figure, presumably *ʿnh-m-ʿHr*, of whom only the staff is preserved. To the right are four registers of men approaching him. In the top register are five men who are probably carrying offerings, although the upper part of the register is lost. In each of the lower registers, two large boxes are brought on carrying poles, each box supported by four men. Several other men are depicted in these registers; one carries a jar and at least two others carry *hꜣp* scepters. In front of each of the men in the upper register and near each of the boxes in the lower two registers is the phrase (phyle name) *n hꜣt*. There may also have been inscriptions in the third register,

2. An oil tablet with the name of the *sf* phyle on its back is in the collection of the British Museum (BM 6122). E. A. W. Budge, *The Mummy*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, 1925), p. 239, n. 1. Despite the form of the sign as published, a photograph of the piece, kindly obtained for me by L. Bell, establishes that this is clearly the phyle name. See figure 2.6 above.
3. See *Chapter 2*.
4. Capart, *Rue de Tombeaux*, pl. 65.
5. Badawy, *Nyhetep-Ptah and ʿAnkhmʿahor*, pl. 65.

but none are preserved. I have suggested above<sup>6</sup> that the isolated figure with the *hrp* scepter at the front of the third register from the bottom is the eldest son of *ḥḥ-m-ḥr*; and that at least one of the boxes in the third register probably is labeled with the name of the *nds* phyle, since that name is missing from the texts in the lower two registers, perhaps because it was singled out to honor the eldest son.

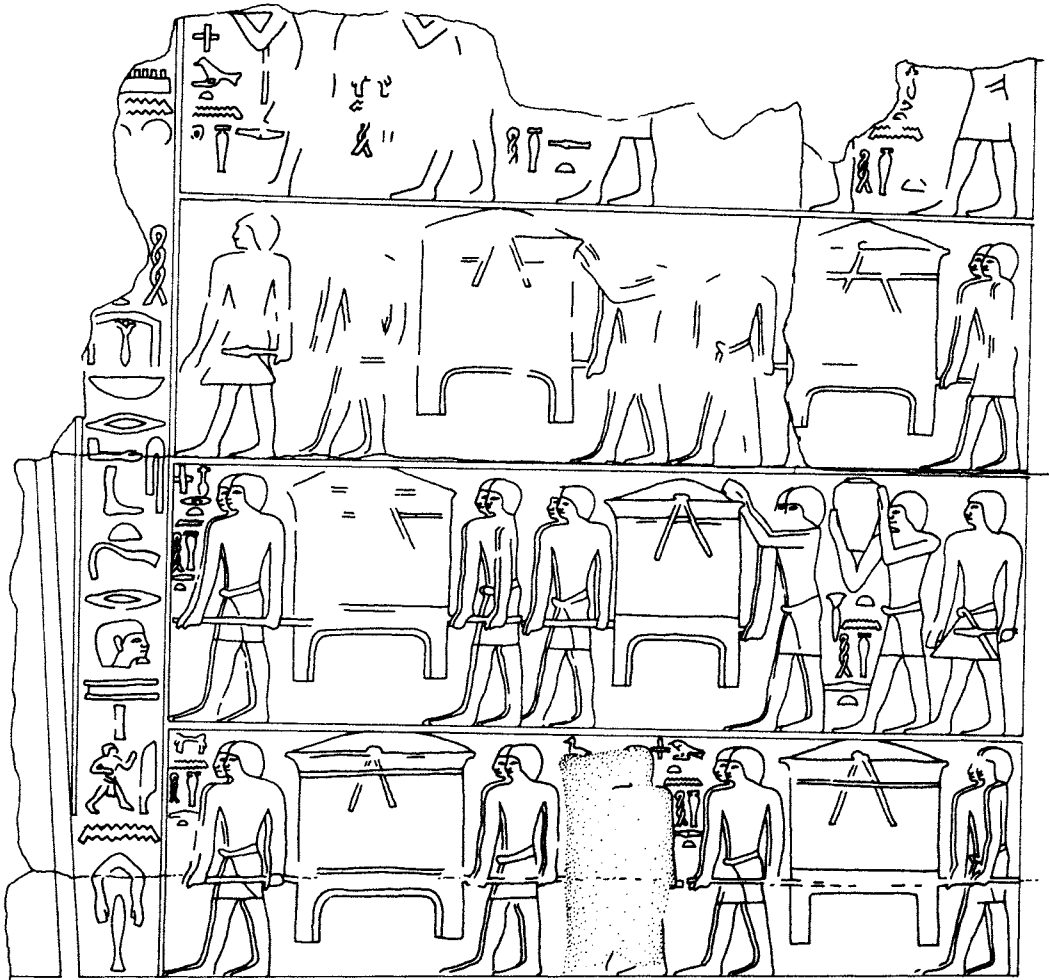




Figure 4.1. A Procession from the Tomb of *ḥḥ-m-ḥr*

The meaning of the texts is difficult to determine. The phyle name with which each text begins is not supplemented with a phyle-sign determinative, yet the terms are clearly phyle names, because the name *jmj-nfrt* is included among

6. See Section 2.2.



the determinatives  and .<sup>12</sup> In a very different context, a New Kingdom scene of a funeral depicts the *mww* dancers followed by a man with a fish on his head, who is labeled *dsr tp mr*.<sup>13</sup> Both texts might refer to a columned building, located at the head of a canal to judge from its name, which perhaps played a role in the “Butite burial” phase of the funeral.<sup>14</sup> Another possibility, since there is no determinative in this text, might be to take the phrase literally: “at the head of (or above) the canal.” The river is normally involved in the rituals associated with traditional Egyptian-Nubian circumcision ceremonies.<sup>15</sup>

A similar phrase, *tp jtrw*, is known from the Old Kingdom scenes of funeral processions<sup>16</sup> and also from scenes in a tomb in the collection of the Pennsylvania Museum.<sup>17</sup> The same phrase is used adjectivally in the New Kingdom to mean “riverine” or as a word for “quay.”<sup>18</sup> None of these meanings is apposite and, in any case, the sign in the *‘nh-m-‘-Hr* caption is clearly a *mr* sign with extended upper and lower borders rather than the simple elongated rectangle that is used for *š* or *jtrw*.

The final phrase of this text, “by the ka-priests,” probably refers to the missing initial infinitive and identifies the men in the scene as ka-priests. It is unlikely that the agent is attached to the infinitive *s‘bt* since the operation is not depicted in the scene.

Despite the difficulties of the text, this scene clearly depicts the bringing of cloth and other goods for a ceremony of circumcision that in some way involved all five phyles of the ka-priests of *‘nh-m-‘-Hr*’s mortuary cult. The ka-priests are shown bringing cloth that was apparently necessary for the ceremony. It is not clear precisely who was being circumcised, though perhaps the best candidates are the ka-priests themselves, a group that would have included *‘nh-m-‘-Hr*’s two sons.

12. Lacau and Lauer, *Pyramid à degrés IV*, pl. 16: #75, #76. See also Chapter 8, numbers *G:1* and *G:2* in the corpus of Archaic period references to phyles.
13. N. Davies and A. H. Gardiner, *Five Theban Tombs* (London, 1913), pl. 10. The figure and text are restored on the basis of notes of Maspero and a Berlin photograph of the wall. *Ibid.*, p. 17.
14. H. Junker, “Der Tanz der *Mww* und das butische Begrabnis in AR,” *MDAIK* 9 (1940): 1–39.
15. J. Kennedy, *Nubian Ceremonial Life* (Berkeley, 1978), p. 155, describes rites practiced as late as 1933 (*ibid.*, p. 153).
16. Moussa and Altenmüller, *Nianchchnum und Chnumhotep* (Mainz am Rhein, 1971), pls. 8, 12.
17. Both examples were kindly pointed out to me by D. Silverman.
18. M. Gitton, “Le Palais de Karnak,” *BIFAO* 74 (1974):64–73.

The references to the phyles might be explained by the hypothesis that it was during this circumcision that the young men were admitted to full membership in the phyles in which they would serve. *ḥm-m-ḥr* would have had a double relationship to such a ceremony. It was the circumcision of his two sons and also the initiation into their respective phyles of the people who were to serve as his mortuary priests. These events were clearly of some importance to him, since he had the scene recorded in his tomb and included himself as an observer. The obscure placement of the scene in a storeroom with no decoration visible from its doorway and its absence from other tombs may be explained by the private, personal nature of the ceremony. The related scene in the same tomb, which depicts an actual circumcision, is carved on the thickness of a doorway, a position that is not usually devoted to important scenes.

This second scene is helpful in understanding the implications of the procession scene. It is the earliest known representation of circumcision and is located in the doorway to the right as one enters the chapel (see fig. 4.2 for a drawing of both thicknesses).<sup>19</sup> The circumcision scene is in the lowest register of the east thickness. On the left is a vignette labeled *s[']bt ḥm-k3*,<sup>20</sup> “circumcising” and “ka-priest,” perhaps to be read “circumcising a ka-priest.” The operation is clearly depicted. The patient is restrained to keep him from fainting, according to the text above, while the operation is performed with a small oval knife. Flint knives of this shape are known from the Old Kingdom, and this is perhaps an example.

On the right is a scene depicting a similar operation. The caption over the subject of the procedure reads “Rub off everything excellently” and the attendant answers “I will do it sweetly.” It has been suggested that this scene represents the administration of some sort of anesthetic.<sup>21</sup> This interpretation would suit the texts and also the calm demeanor of the subject, but it would not explain what is clearly a knife in the hand of the attendant. This scene is more likely to show the shaving of the pubic hair, which, like circumcision, would have been necessary to ritual purity. Although Badawy’s drawing shows the tip

19. Badawy, *Nyhetep-Ptah and Ḥankhmḥahor*, figs. 28, 29.

20. For some unknown reason, the *ḥayin* of *s[']bt* is omitted. The determinative here is the same variant of Gardiner’s F 17 discussed above, which combines the stream of water of a *w[']b* sign with the horn sign *ḥb*. This sign is sometimes identified as the actual foreskin (Badawy, *ibid.*, p. 19 and references in n. 70, p. 52), but such an interpretation seems unnecessarily elaborate.

21. C. de Wit, “La circoncision chez les anciens Égyptiens,” *ZÄS* 99 (1972):45. Badawy makes a similar suggestion, *Nyhetep-Ptah and Ḥankhmḥahor*, p. 19; however, he implausibly identifies the scene on the left, which is clearly labeled “circumcising,” as the administration of an anesthetic.



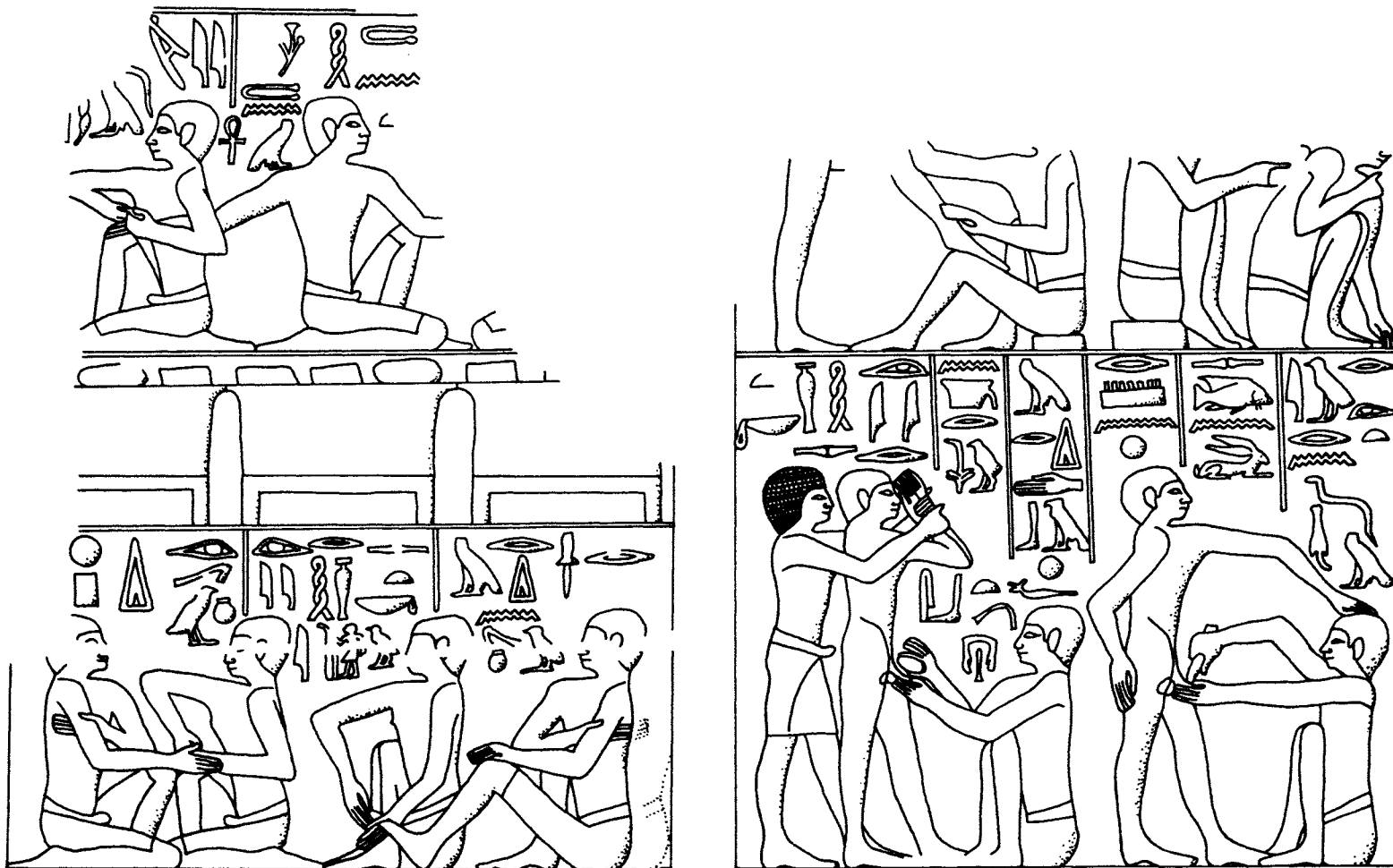


Figure 4.2. Grooming Scenes from the Tomb of ḥnḥ-m-ḥr

of the knife directly above the phallus, examination of the photograph and the wall itself shows that both the tip of the knife and the thumb of the man who performs the operation are behind it. The fact that the blade of the knife is turned towards the pubic region seems more consistent with shaving than with a surgical incision. A scene in the tomb of *Nj-‘nh-Ḥnmw* and *Ḥnmw-ḥtp* (see fig. 4.3)<sup>22</sup> shows a similar activity and carries the caption *š‘k*, “shaving”; although a razor is used rather than the knife shown in the *‘nh-m-‘-Ḥr* scene, it is possible that the more archaic tool was used for ritual purposes prior to a circumcision ceremony.

The scenes above this scene and on the opposite (western) thickness of this doorway, depict young men being cleaned and groomed. Badawy interpreted these scenes as depictions of surgery and massage, in keeping with his view of circumcision as a purely surgical operation.<sup>23</sup> However, these scenes make better sense as scenes of grooming and removing impurities for ritual reasons. On the east wall, above the circumcision scenes, scrubbing of the back and feet seems a more plausible interpretation than the massage suggested by Badawy; and on the facing thickness, the operations depicted are clearly manicure and pedicure rather than surgery on the hands and feet. The upper register of the west thickness in particular shows attendants working on both hands at the same time, an unlikely way to do surgery.<sup>24</sup>

A revealing parallel to these reliefs may be found in the tomb of *Ḥntj-k3* nearby. A partially preserved scene in this tomb has two registers of grooming activities, one of which has exactly the same caption as one of the similar scenes in the tomb of *‘nh-m-‘-Ḥr*.<sup>25</sup> Also common to the *‘nh-m-‘-Ḥr* version is a register of chests with three rectangular objects depicted on each (these chests are also shown in the barbering scene in the tomb of *Ḥnmw-ḥtp* and *Nj-‘nh-Ḥnmw*, but there they are not given their own register). The duplication of the caption and the register of chests strongly suggest that the missing part of this wall contained a circumcision scene similar to that in the tomb of *‘nh-m-‘-Ḥr*, since the borrowing of scenes from neighboring tomb chapels was common in this part of Saqqara. Corroboration of this hypothesis may also be seen in the placement of the scene, which, as in the tomb of *‘nh-m-‘-Ḥr*, is in the first room of the chapel, at the entrance to a long room to the right. The surviving scenes

22. Moussa and Altenmüller, *Nianchnum und Chnumhotep*, fig. 10, redrawn in my figure 4.3.

23. Badawy, *Nyhetep-Ptah and ‘Ankhm‘ahor*, p. 19.

24. Compare the similar scenes in the tomb of *Nj-‘nh-Ḥnmw* in figure 4.3.

25. T. G. H. James, *The Mastaba of Khentika called Ikhekhi* (London, 1953), pl. 11.

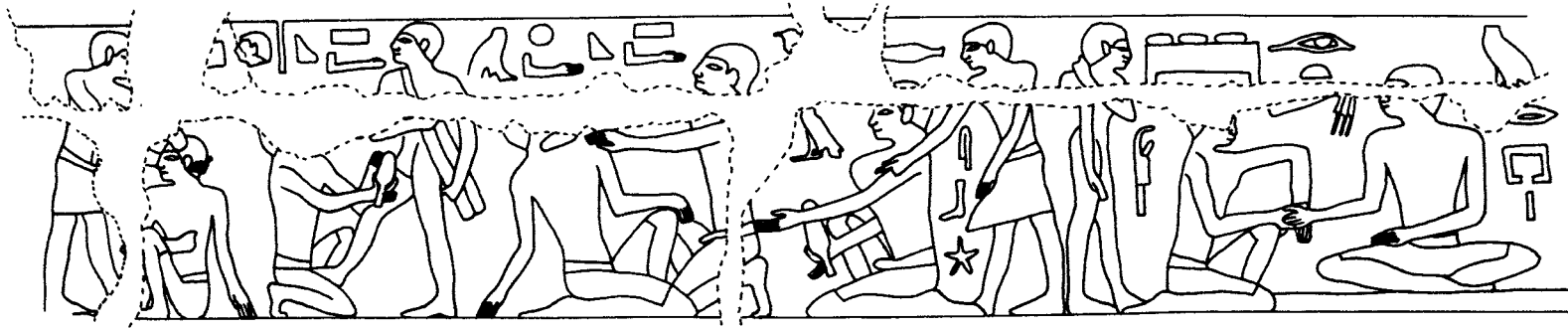


Figure 4.3. Shaving and Manicuring Scenes

are to the left of this doorway; the wall facing it, which would correspond to the wall with the circumcision scenes in the tomb of *‘nh-m-‘Hr*, is not preserved.

If the *Hntj-k3* scenes also depict parts of a circumcision ritual, the connection of these grooming scenes with the scene below them is especially significant. The lower scene depicts some boys taunting another boy, who is bound and shackled, and might seem completely unconnected with the registers above; however, the caption of the lower scene states that ka-priests were involved in the action, so that this was not simply a spontaneous children's game. Furthermore, the same personal name, *Fdnw*,<sup>26</sup> occurs in both scenes. This would seem to link the boys' game with the grooming activities above it, and, by extension, with the circumcision depicted in the parallel scene in the tomb of *‘nh-m-‘Hr*.

Interestingly, scenes of boys playing have been linked with circumcision before. In 1931, Capart suggested such a connection, which he based chiefly on the prominence of the tomb owner's sons in or near game scenes.<sup>27</sup> He thought that the play-acting in such games might actually be some kind of ritual dramatization connected with circumcision. His tentative hypothesis is strengthened by the interconnected collection of scenes in the tombs of *Hntj-k3* and *‘nh-m-‘Hr*.

This supposition, it should be noted, does not contradict the more recent identification of some scenes of this type as part of a ritual related to Hathor.<sup>28</sup> Hathor is, after all, the patroness of love and fertility, and might well be associated with a rite that marks the beginning of a young man's sexual life.

The hypothesized connection between a circumcision ceremony and the acquisition of phyle membership is further supported by the scene of children's games in the tomb of *Mrrw-k3* that Capart linked with a ceremony of circumcision. These scenes include a vignette of the harassment of a bound captive that is quite similar to the scene below the grooming scenes in the tomb of *Hntj-k3*. The word *z3*, "phyle," is used in the captions of four of these scenes, apparently to mean "team," as in "My *z3* is stronger than yours" and "My *z3* is

26. James, *Khentika*, p. 46, says that this group "may contain the word *dbhw*, needs." However, the determinative suggests that it is to be read *Fdnw* "fourth"; this name is attested in both masculine and feminine forms in the Middle Kingdom. H. Ranke, *Die ägyptische Personennamen*, 2 vols. (Hamburg, 1932) 1:143: #16, #17. The title preceding it may be *jmj-sšr*, as James reads it; it could equally well be *jmj-r ‘prw*.

27. J. Capart, "Note sur un fragment de bas-relief au British Museum," *BIFAO* (1931):74-75.

28. W. S. Smith, *A History of Egyptian Sculpture and Painting in the Old Kingdom* (Boston, 1946), p. 210; supported by E. F. Wente, "Hathor at the Jubilee," in *Studies in Honor of J. A. Wilson*, SAOC 35 (Chicago, 1969), p. 86.

gazelles.” If these athletic competitions were part of a circumcision ceremony, as suggested by the grooming scenes and the presence of ka-priests in the *Hntj-k3* parallel, phyles must have been connected with that ceremony. The most likely connection would be that the ritual of circumcision served as an initiation into phyle membership.

More light may be thrown upon this relationship by examining the evidence for the nature of circumcision rituals during the First Intermediate Period. This evidence consists of four texts from Upper Egypt, which may not necessarily reflect the same traditions as the Memphite evidence; nevertheless, they suggest something of the nature of the ceremony.<sup>29</sup> In a stela from Naga ed-Der, a certain *Wh3* claims to have been circumcised with 120 men and to have neither scratched or hit, nor to have been scratched or hit by anyone among them.<sup>30</sup> In his autobiography, this claim follows his claim to have been loved by his parents and siblings and precedes an account of the successful establishment of his house; the position of the account of his circumcision probably reflects the function of the ceremony as a transition from boyhood to manhood.

The remaining monuments, all from Dendera, refer not to the owner's circumcision but to his virtuous behavior as someone who has circumcised others. The owner of one badly broken stela states: “... I ...ed those whom I circumcised, and I caused the rulers of the land(?) to drink.”<sup>31</sup> Another resident of Dendera, according to Fischer's restoration, lists circumcision among the benevolent acts he has done for his city: “[I buried] its old people, I circumcised its young people.”<sup>32</sup> If Fischer's restoration is correct (as seems likely), this parallel suggests that circumcising young men was somehow comparable to providing a tomb and its equipment for old men. To sponsor a young man's circumcision presumably entailed some material outlay, probably for parties and presents. This sort of sponsorship is known from 19th-century Egypt, when the sons of poor people were sometimes circumcised in conjunction with the celebration of a wealthier neighbor.<sup>33</sup> Fischer's restoration of this text is strengthened by a very damaged stela in the University of Pennsylvania

29. These texts are discussed by H. G. Fischer, *Dendera in the Third Millennium B.C.* (New York, 1968), pp. 149–50.

30. D. Dunham, *Naga ed-Der Stele of the First Intermediate Period* (Boston, 1937), #84, ll. 4–5.

31. Fischer, *Dendera*, p. 150 and n. 663, cites W. M. F. Petrie, *Denderah*, 2nd edition with extra plates (London, 1900), pl. 7A: br2.

32. Fischer, *Dendera*, 149–50 and nn. 658–59, cites Petrie, *Denderah*, pl. 8c: rt2, t2r2, tr3.

33. E. Lane, *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*, reprint of the 1895 edition (The Hague, London, Cairo, 1978), p. 64.

Museum, which reads “I caused my entire city to ..., in circumcising with my own property.”<sup>34</sup> A few traces of the signs for an old man and a coffin are, however, preserved above the line Fischer translated, suggesting that this biography, like Fischer’s restoration of the previous example, drew a parallel between the burial of the old and the circumcision of the young.

These provincial texts suggest that sponsoring a circumcision ceremony was an expensive undertaking, comparable to equipping a tomb. Anyone who undertook such an expense was making a valuable contribution which he might boast about in his tomb biography. It seems likely that *‘nh-m-‘Hr* included the two scenes in his tomb to commemorate his sponsorship of such a ceremony, perhaps for the benefit of his mortuary priests (including his two sons). The cloth that the priests are carrying may have been intended to pay for their admission to membership in the phyles in which they would serve in his cult.

A connection between the ceremony of circumcision and the beginning of membership, or at least adult participation, in a phyle is supported by three lines of evidence. First is the occurrence of identifying tags giving phyle affiliations in a procession that is explicitly said to be part of a circumcision ceremony. The second, more indirect, is the connection of the scenes of circumcision and grooming in the tombs of *Hntj-k3* and *‘nh-m-‘Hr* with the scenes of play and team sports that mention phyles as teams in the tomb of *Mrrw-k3*. The third connection is even more tenuous. Coffin Texts Spell 397<sup>35</sup> uses the verb *s‘bt* “to circumcise” in connection with shipbuilding. The deceased is looking for a boat; he is told that it is “taken to pieces” (𓂏𓂛𓂏𓂛, literally, “circumcised”) in the dockyard. He orders its reconstruction, saying “Take its port bow and put it to its port quarter; take its starboard bow and put it to its starboard quarter.” The names of the quadrants used are those which, it has been argued above, derive from the names of the phyles who were responsible for their assembly and disassembly in the funeral ritual (possibly a ritual reflected in this very spell). It is possible that this description, in which the process of *s‘bt* is reversed by joining the phyle names together, is a joking or magical reference to the fact that the circumcision ceremony (*s‘bt*) is the point at which the priests were divided into phyles.



34. Fischer, *Dendera*, p. 150 and n. 661. Fischer does not translate this line completely and regards the word *s‘b* in this context as “difficult to understand as ‘circumcise.’” I am grateful to the staff of the Museum for allowing me to examine the piece and to Dr. Fischer, who holds the publication rights, for allowing me to mention it.

35. CT V:84.

## 4.3. GEOGRAPHICAL LIMITATIONS

Another problematic characteristic of phyle membership is that of the geographical area where phyle systems were used. Was the system distributed throughout the country, or did it flourish only near the capital city of Memphis? There is evidence on both sides of this question. The use of phyles in private mortuary cults<sup>36</sup> is limited to the cemeteries of Memphis: Saqqara, Abu Sir, and (rarely) Giza. Priesthoods of the royal mortuary cults are claimed in cemeteries throughout Upper Egypt as well as in the Memphite area, and titles clearly connected with phyles, such as *mtj n z3*, “inspector of a phyle,” occur with them, though the rare examples in which a phyle name is given are all from tombs at Saqqara and Giza.<sup>37</sup> Nevertheless, all the people holding such offices, wherever their burials may have been located, must have served in the cemeteries of Memphis since the royal cults were located there. Hence titles implying phyle membership of people buried outside of the Memphite area do not imply a wide geographical distribution of phyle organization.

The distribution of tools bearing the names of phyles of workmen has similar problems as an argument for a wide distribution of phyles. These tools have been found as far away from the capital as Nubia and Syria;<sup>38</sup> yet the phyles that owned them were part of royal work crews that were under the control of the central government. The work crews may have been recruited from the area around Memphis, or the system of phyle organization may have been imposed upon them after their recruitment. In either case, Edel has shown that royal expeditions left from and returned to Memphis,<sup>39</sup> which implies that their personnel were organized and administered from there.

Perhaps the best argument that can be made for the wide distribution of the system outside the Memphite area is from the titles  *jmj-r z3w*, *šm'w*, “Overseer of phyles of Upper Egypt,” and  *jmj-r z3w n sp3t*, “Overseer of phyles of the nome.” Both of these titles imply the

36. Discussed further in *Chapter 6*.

37. For example, Mariette, *Mastabas*, mastabas A.1 (*3ḥtj-ḥtp*) and D.55 (*Nfr-jrt.n.f*); Borchardt, CG #97 (*Ḥwtj*); and Hassan, *Giza 2:37* (a fragment).

38. Chisel from Nubia: F. Engelbach, “The Quarries of the Western Nubian Desert and the Ancient Road to Tushka,” *ASAE* 38 (1938): pl. 59, discussed by A. Rowe, in the same article, pp. 391–93. Axe from Syria: A. Rowe, *A Catalogue of Egyptian Scarabs, Scaraboids, Seals and Amulets in the Palestine Archaeological Museum* (Cairo, 1936), pp. 238ff. and pl. 36.

39. E. Edel, “Inschriften des Alten Reiches V. Die Reiseberichte des *Ḥrw-ḥwjf* (Herchuf),” in *Ägyptologische Studien (Festschrift für H. Grapow)*, Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin Veröffentlichung 29 (Berlin, 1955), pp. 62–64.

existence of phyles in nomes other than the Memphite nome and specifically in Upper Egypt. But these phyles may not be the same named phyles that are known from the area around the capital.

A simple explanation of these titles is that they refer to other phyles besides the five known from the capital area. These phyles may have been the remnants of similar systems used by rival princelings of the predynastic period. These systems seem to have been limited to Upper Egypt since no *jmj-r z3w t3-mḥw* is attested. When the group *z3w* “phyles” occurs without any specific names, it seems to indicate groups parallel to military organizations. For example, on an obelisk from a private tomb of the Old Kingdom, a man named Ššj is called “scribe of the phyles and troops (*t3wt*) of Heliopolis,”<sup>40</sup> which implies that phyles of this type are thought to be attached to a city. Similarly, in a Middle Kingdom tomb at Bersha, a statue is pulled by groups of men, one of which is identified as “the phyles of *wḳbw* of the Hare nome.” This group is shown parallel to three other groups of young men.<sup>41</sup> The word *z3* in these contexts seems to have had a more general meaning than the organization of five phyles known from the Memphite area. In these texts and titles, *z3* may refer to a special class of laborers or, perhaps, to local clan-like associations still surviving in the provincial southern nomes.

#### 4.4. UNIVERSAL PHYLE MEMBERSHIP

The information given in the preceding section has shown that there is no clear evidence for membership in the five phyles whose names we know outside the Memphite region. Yet it is still possible that every Egyptian belonged to some kind of phyle, and it may be these provincial phyles to which the title *jmj-r z3w šmḳw* refers. If initiation into a phyle were the only occasion for the rite of circumcision, the fact that most Egyptian men seem to have been circumcised might be taken as an indication that membership in a phyle of some sort was universal; however, circumcision need not always have been accompanied by phyle membership.

Another aspect of this question that cannot be answered with any certainty is whether women could be members of phyles. Throughout the Old Kingdom, wives of high officials hold the title *ḥmt-ntr*, “prophetess,” in the cults of goddesses and in some cases (principally in the Fourth Dynasty) in royal mortuary cults. Some women also hold the title of *ḥntjt-š*. The masculine equivalents of both offices, *ḥm-ntr* and *ḥntj-š*, are known from the Abu Sir

40. C. Kuentz, *Obélisques*, Catalogue général, Cairo (Cairo, 1932) (= Kuentz, CG) #17002.

41. P. E. Newberry, *Bersheh*, 2 vols. (London, 1894–95) 1: pl. 15.



papyri to have been among the offices organized into phyles; however, these Fifth Dynasty papyri give no examples of women serving in rotation with the phyles. This may, of course, be due to the fact that the papyri date to a period long after the death of the king, and the majority of women who hold royal mortuary priesthoods hold them in the cults of their fathers or grandfathers. Or there may have been a change in the position of women between the Fourth Dynasty, when many women with priesthoods in royal cults are attested, and the late Fifth Dynasty, when there are very few with such titles. (Women continued to hold priesthoods in cults of goddesses, however.) The possible connection of phyle membership with a ritual of circumcision need not have prevented the initiation of women, as a corresponding operation is still sometimes performed in Egypt and the Sudan today, though its occurrence in antiquity is a much-debated question. It should be noted that the scenes of games and dancing that are tentatively connected with such an initiation ceremony above include girls as well as boys.

Most questions involving the nature of phyle membership cannot be answered with the evidence we currently possess. The evidence surrounding the rite of circumcision is suggestive, as are certain titles and the geographical distribution of references to the names of the five phyles. However, we still do not clearly understand the ways in which the Egyptians viewed the phyle system and the place that any phyle affiliation would have had in their lives.



## CHAPTER 5

### PHYLES IN ROYAL MORTUARY CULTS

#### 5.1. THE ORGANIZATION OF PHYLES AT ABU SIR

The best known phyle organization of the Old Kingdom is that of the priesthoods of royal mortuary temples during the Fifth and Sixth Dynasties. The general outline of this system is clear from the archives found at the mortuary temples of two kings, Neferirkare and Neferefre, at Abu Sir. Although the texts preserved in these archives all date to a relatively brief period in the late Fifth and early Sixth Dynasties, it is probably justifiable to assume that the phyle system to which they refer was in use when these cults were founded in the middle of the Fifth Dynasty.

Only the papyri found at the mortuary temple of Neferirkare have been thoroughly published.<sup>1</sup> These will be augmented by the texts recently discovered at the neighboring temple of Neferefre,<sup>2</sup> which, when published, will not only double the quantity of texts and information available but will also allow the two neighboring mortuary temples to be compared. Such comparisons may indicate the extent to which the organization of royal mortuary temples was uniform and how much can be extrapolated from the organization of these temples to explain the organization of other royal mortuary temples.

According to the evidence of the papyri found at the mortuary temple of Neferirkare,<sup>3</sup> most of the priests and temple functionaries were divided into

1. Posener-Kriéger and de Cenival, *Abu Sir Papyri*; and Posener-Kriéger, *Archives*.
2. The Neferefre archives were discovered in the spring of 1982 and are being prepared for publication by Posener-Kriéger. She published a preliminary account of their contents in "Nouveaux papyrus" and "Remarques préliminaires." There is no reason to believe that the Gebelein papyri, the other major Old Kingdom archive, have any bearing on a temple cult.
3. This summary is taken from the synthesis given in Posener-Kriéger, *Archives*, pp. 570–73.

five phyles that were identified by the standard phyle names. The same organization of five phyles was applied to each class of functionary. Each of the five phyles was then divided in half to create a total of ten phyle divisions, each of which still contained a cross-section of the temple personnel. Members of each phyle division served in the temple for one month at a time, in rotation with the other divisions on a ten-month cycle. A phyle division at the mortuary temple of Neferirkare seems to have contained about twenty people.<sup>4</sup>

Posener-Kriéger's initial survey of the Neferefre papyri<sup>5</sup> indicated that the system of five phyles with two divisions each was common to both temples, and that indeed some of the division names of Neferirkare's phyles were duplicated in the temple of his successor (see fig. 5.1).<sup>6</sup> Whether the ♀ or ♂ divisions of both priesthoods were composed of the same individuals is a question that may be resolved by further work on the Neferefre papyri.




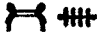
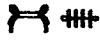











Neferirkare			Neferefre		
Phyle	Divisions		Phyle	Divisions	
	♀	?		♀	
	♂	1		♂	
	♀	?		♀	
	♂	?		♂	
	♀			♀	

Figure 5.1. Phyles and Divisions at Two Abu Sir Cults

Posener-Kriéger described extensively the duties of phyle members as reflected in the service tables from the Neferirkare papyri.<sup>7</sup> They form two daily processions around the pyramid, they care for the cult statue(s), they transport and process goods belonging to the cult, and they guard the temple during the day and night. The numerous accounts of festivals in the Neferefre papyri may add more details about the phyles' activities on special occasions; according to

4. Posener-Kriéger, *Archives*, p. 573.

5. Posener-Kriéger, "Nouveaux papyrus," pp. 51–57.

6. In the chart, the phyles and divisions of Neferirkare are taken from Posener-Kriéger, *Archives*, p. 566; those of Neferefre are from idem., "Remarques préliminaires," pp. 36–37, figs. 1, 2. In accordance with the arguments in *Section 2.1.2*, I have used the *sf* sign, rather than the *t3* sign, to transcribe the name of the second phyle.

7. Posener-Kriéger, *Archives*, pp. 535–63.




the preliminary publication,<sup>8</sup> they were principally occupied in accepting great quantities of cloth.

## 5.2. CLASSES OF TEMPLE FUNCTIONARIES

Many different kinds of temple functionaries are mentioned in the Neferirkare papyri, and it is clear that not all of them are organized according to the phyle system. Nonetheless, some of the most frequently attested titles do seem to have been connected with phyles. In most cases the titles also occur outside these papyri, so that it is often possible to distinguish the different conditions under which members of the same phyle served.

### 5.2.1. *Hmw-ntr* and *Hntjw-š*

Posener-Kriéger identified two classes of temple functionaries that were clearly organized under the phyle system: the *hmw-ntr* and the *hntjw-š*. These two classes seem to have shared many of the same duties and differed only in that the *hntjw-š* alone were responsible for the transportation of the offerings from outside the temple and in that the *hntjw-š* dressed and purified the statue in the ritual for the divine image, while the *hmw-ntr* fumigated it with incense.<sup>9</sup>

Although they worked in the same phyles and phyle divisions, each of these classes had its own hierarchy of supervisory personnel within the system, consisting of an *jmj-r*-, a *šḥd*-, and an *jmj-ḥt*- for each phyle of both *hmw-ntr* and *hntjw-š*. Posener-Kriéger suggested that the phyle as a whole was directed by an official bearing the title  $\dagger$    $\dagger$    $\dagger$  , *ḥrp jmjw z3*,<sup>10</sup> which is known from numerous tombs in the Giza necropolis<sup>11</sup> and from a single reference in the Abu Sir papyri.<sup>12</sup> Curiously, this title is completely unattested at Saqqara.

The primary distinction between *hmw-ntr* and *hntjw-š* seems to have been the degree of their attachment to the cult, which is indicated by the frequent occurrence of the element *K3k3j* (= Neferirkare) in the names of people who hold these two offices in the cult of that king. Posener-Kriéger has noted that such names are especially common among *hntjw-š* in the Neferirkare papyri and

8. Posener-Kriéger, "Nouveaux papyrus," p. 55.

9. Posener-Kriéger, *Archives*, p. 579, and idem, "Nouveaux papyrus," p. 56.

10. Posener-Kriéger, *Archives*, p. 574.

11. Junker, *Giza* 6:20ff.

12. Posener-Kriéger and de Cenival, *Abu Sir Papyri*, pl. 4.

that names based on the royal name *Jzj* (= Neferefre) are similarly common among the *hntjw-š* mentioned in the archives of Neferefre's temple.<sup>13</sup>

In the Neferirkare papyri, all but three of the titled officials with names built on the name *K3k3j* occur with the title *hntj-š*, while only one of them bears the title *hm-ntr*. In all, forty-one percent of all *hntjw-š* known from the cult of Neferirkare had names built on *K3k3j*; and no *hntj-š* mentioned in the papyri had a name formed with the name of another king.

Although personal names could be changed, and hence are not infallible indicators of the situations of their owners at birth, it seems likely from the preponderance of such names that these *hntjw-š* were associated with the cult of Neferirkare from birth, perhaps because they were assured inheritance of the title. That this title was inherited is also suggested by the fact that the people called "junior" and "senior" in the Neferirkare papyri bear the title *hntj-š* when any title is given and that three of the four names used with such distinguishing epithets are compounded on the name *K3k3j*.

By contrast, the Neferirkare papyri give only two holders of the title *hm-ntr* whose names are formed with royal names: *K3k3j-ḥ* and *Mrj-ntr-Jzzj*. The former also may have served as a *hntj-š*, since the same name appears elsewhere with that title.<sup>14</sup>

A pattern that corroborates the Abu Sir data and suggests that these conclusions may extend to other royal mortuary cults can be found in the titularies of the bearers of the title *hntj-š* who are attested in published tombs.<sup>15</sup> Not one of these holds the title *hntj-š* in more than one cult, and only four hold other titles (including the title *hm-ntr*) in cults different from the cult where they serve as *hntjw-š*.

It seems clear that a person could only serve as a *hntj-š* in one cult, and if his name is built on the name of a king, it is that of the king he serves. None have names based on the name of any other king. The comparative lack of restrictions upon the *hmw-ntr* is also discernible in the frequency with which they held the position of *hm-ntr* in more than one cult. Although most of the

13. The following argument is a summary of a more detailed study of the names of *hntjw-š*, A. M. Roth, "The Distribution of the Old Kingdom Title *hntj-š*," *Beihefte zu Studien zur ägyptischen Kultur* (forthcoming).

14. Posener-Krieger, *Archives*, pp. 648–57 (index). Eight officials with titles other than *hntj-š* and *hm-ntr* have names built on the royal names Menkaure (1), Userkaf (2), Neferefre (2), Izezi (1), Pepi (1), and Neferkare (1). The name *Mrj-nb-M3't*, given to a *hntj-š*, is probably not formed on the Horus name of Snefru, *Nb-M3't*. The last two elements are not in honorific transposition, and names on the pattern *Mrj-x-M3't* are attested elsewhere in the papyri.

15. These *hntjw-š* are listed in Roth, "Distribution," fig. 1.

*ḥmw-ntr* of royal cults served in only one cult, many held that title in two cults, and some served in three, four, or more cults.<sup>16</sup>

*Ḥmw-ntr*, then, were much less tightly bound to the mortuary cults they served than the *ḥntjw-š* with whom they worked so closely and with whom they shared the phyle organization. (Some officials held both titles, often in the same cult.) This difference may simply have been a traditional difference of class. About half of the *ḥmw-ntr* whose titularies survive and who can be dated with some probability to the Fourth Dynasty claim to be members of the royal family;<sup>17</sup> and in the Fifth and Sixth Dynasties, over half of the people who were wealthy enough to build decorated tombs held the title of *ḥmw-ntr* in at least one royal or divine cult.

In general, then, it may be said that the services required of *ḥmw-ntr* and *ḥntjw-š* were so similar that they were organized into the same units (phyle divisions) and that in some cases they seem to have been assigned duties without regard to titles.<sup>18</sup> However, the conditions under which they held office, such as remuneration and prestige, were probably quite different. The *ḥntjw-š* presumably began as low-level functionaries in both the royal palace and the royal mortuary temples (which were in some respects very similar institutions, since both served to supply the daily needs of a king). In some cases, they seem to have been responsible for farming the land that supplied their income.<sup>19</sup> Although this situation probably remained the case with most *ḥntjw-š*, the prestige inherent in serving in the royal mortuary cult was great,<sup>20</sup> and, presumably because of this, the *ḥntjw-š* who served in these temples rose in stature. By the Sixth Dynasty, the perquisites of such an office were so desirable that either they were bestowed on wealthy high officials, or they allowed the incumbents to rise in rank and fortune, or possibly both.

16. See, for example, those listed by W. Helck, "Bemerkungen zu den Pyramidenstädten im Alten Reich," *MDAIK* 15 (1957):95–110.

17. If only those *ḥmw-ntr* who can confidently be dated to the period are considered, the ratio of royal family members to non-royal *ḥmw-ntr* is even higher.

18. In service table II (Posener-Kriéger and de Cenival, *Abu Sir Papyri*, pls. 3, 4), the scribe has ignored the rubrics that specify title at the top of the columns, so that the *ḥmw-ntr* and the *ḥntjw-š* who do the morning and evening rituals are listed in an undifferentiated clump.

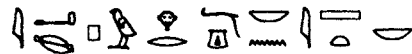
19. They are described as doing so at a temple of Snefru at Dahshur in a decree of Pepi I. H. Goedicke, *Königliche Dokumente aus dem Alten Reich* (Wiesbaden, 1967), p. 56 and fig. 5.

20. K. Baer, *Rank and Title in the Old Kingdom* (Chicago, 1960), pp. 257–58, 297.

5.2.2. *Hrjw-nst*

*Hrjw-nst* are another group of functionaries attested in the Abu Sir papyri. They seem to have done much of the heavier work of the temple. Posener-Kriéger also placed them among the functionaries of the temple who were divided into phyles and hence served in monthly rotation. She suggested<sup>21</sup> that they were young men serving an apprenticeship in a function they would later inherit.

This suggestion is confirmed by a statement in the tomb of *Nj-k3-‘nh* at Tehne, where he says of his son, *Hm-Hwt-Hr*:



*jw*‘(.j) *pw hrj-nst*(.j) *nb n jst*(.j) *nb*

“... he is my heir, my *hrj-nst*, owner of all my movable property”<sup>22</sup>

Edel translates *hrj-nst*(.j) as “der sich auf meiner Sitz (= Amt, Posten, Stellung) befindet,”<sup>23</sup> which yields a logical progression of inherited things: estates, offices, and chattel goods. And, as may be seen by his titles, *Hm-Hwt-Hr* did in fact inherit his father’s office.<sup>24</sup> Whether *hrj-nst* was a standard title used to describe a youth in this position cannot be determined from this evidence, but it was clearly used in this way by *Nj-k3-‘nh* and in the mortuary cult of Neferirkare.

5.2.3. *W‘bw*

The status of *w‘b*-priests is problematic in the Abu Sir papyri (where they are quite rare) and elsewhere. Posener-Kriéger concluded that *w‘bw* did not serve in monthly rotation and hence were not phyle members.<sup>25</sup> The evidence concerning them in the papyri is confusing. In one text,<sup>26</sup> three *w‘bw* occur, two with the same names as two men who elsewhere appear together as *hmw-ntr*. The two sections of this text are dated ten months apart and contain many of the

21. Posener-Kriéger, *Archives*, p. 584.

22. E. Edel, *Hieroglyphische Inschriften des Alten Reiches* (Opladen, 1981), p. 43 and fig. 151.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 42.

24. *Ibid.*, fig. 21.

25. Posener-Kriéger, *Archives*, p. 582.

26. Posener-Kriéger and de Cenival, *Abu Sir Papyri*, pl. 11.



same names, which suggests a phyle rotation. Another text<sup>27</sup> pairs the titles *w'bw* and *hntjw-š* directly below and apparently in parallel to the pair *z3 n hmw-ntr* and *hntjw-š*. The latter pair, however, is part of a general section heading, while the former records the distribution of cloth, so that the contexts may be less parallel than they appear. *W'bw* cannot simply be equated with *hmw-ntr*, in any case, because of the passes that allow various *hmw-ntr* to have access to the *st3t*-box of offerings of Neferirkare. Posener-Kriéger pointed out that these passes give the *hmw-ntr* the same privileges as the *w'bw* and *hntjw-š*.<sup>28</sup> One generalization that can be made about *w'bw* is that when they occur as a group in distribution lists with a group of *hntjw-š*,<sup>29</sup> the two groups always receive exactly the same quantities.

The titularies that are found in the tombs of officials indicate that one could serve as a *w'b* in one or more cults<sup>30</sup> while also serving as a *hm-ntr* in the same or other cults. Interestingly, with the exception of one *w'b* who was attached to the mortuary temple of Djedkare, none of the mortuary temples of kings after Niuserre seem to have employed *w'bw*.<sup>31</sup> It is perhaps significant that the disappearance of *w'b* as a title in decorated tombs is followed closely by the appearance of *hntj-š* in the same environment; however, though both offices may have been filled by men of approximately the same social level, the office of *w'b* lacks the exclusive connection to a single cult that one sees with the *hntjw-š*.

The titles *shd w'bw* and *jmj-ht w'bw*, which indicate an internal organization parallel to that of *hntjw-š* and *hmw-ntr*, are frequently seen in the titularies of functionaries in the cults of Fourth Dynasty kings and in the cult of Userkaf but are never attached to the cults of later kings. This may reflect a change in organization or status, perhaps also related to the introduction of the office of *hntj-š* at about the same period. There is a *shd w'bw* attested in the Abu Sir papyri,<sup>32</sup> but the title occurs in the context of many other titles that are not connected with the Neferirkare temple (e.g., *wr-ʿ*, *zš ʿprw*, and *z3b jrj-md3t*). Since *w'bw*, like *hntjw-š*, seem to have had counterparts in the palace,<sup>33</sup>

27. Ibid., pls. 92–96.

28. Posener-Kriéger, *Archives*, p. 582, cites Posener-Kriéger and de Cenival, *Abu Sir Papyri*, pl. 17A.

29. Ibid., pls. 94A, a; 95A, b2; 95A, b3.

30. See Roth, "Distribution."

31. The title *w'b* 200 seems to have been of a different nature.

32. Posener-Kriéger and de Cenival, *Abu Sir Papyri*, pl. 67.

33. Borchardt, CG #156, where a man named *Pth-htp* is called *jmj-ht w'bw pr-ʿ3*.

this is perhaps a reference to a *w'ḥ* who served in a sphere where the older organization was still used.

It is thus difficult to say whether *w'ḥw* were organized into phyles. The many parallels with *ḥntjw-š* suggest that they were, at least in some periods and circumstances, and the evidence from Abu Sir does not contradict this suggestion. The relative rarity of the title *w'ḥ* in the Abu Sir archives need not imply that it was another name for one of the better-attested classes of functionaries, nor does it necessarily mean that only a few *w'ḥw* served at the temple. The contents of the surviving papyri have been shown to be not entirely representative in many other ways,<sup>34</sup> and the absence of plentiful references to *w'ḥw* may simply be an accident of discovery. Without more evidence, it is difficult to describe the *w'ḥw* more exactly, especially in view of the possibility that their character as a class changed over the course of the Old Kingdom.

#### 5.2.4. *Hrjw-ḥ3bt*

*Hrjw-ḥ3bt*, or “lector priests,” are known from many other contexts in addition to the Abu Sir archives and clearly functioned as the directors and reciters of rituals. These priests do not seem to have been organized into the phyle system. The same *hrj-ḥ3bt* occurs in both service tables II and III,<sup>35</sup> where none of the other names are duplicated, and which therefore presumably reflect the service periods of two different phyles. *Hrjw-ḥ3bt* serve as a useful contrast to the classes of priests that were organized into phyles. Their internal hierarchy is different. There are *hrjw-ḥ3bt hrj-tp*, but no *\*shḏw-* or *\*jmjw-ḥt hrjw-ḥ3bt*. Strikingly, *hrjw-ḥ3bt* whose titularies are recorded are almost never given a modifying cult association.<sup>36</sup> Hence they seem to be connected even less closely with the cults they served than the *ḥmw-ntr*.

The title *hrj-ḥ3bt* can be held jointly with many different titles and therefore was presumably a temporary or periodic service, which was perhaps performed for a number of different cults, as determined by need or the king's pleasure. It has been suggested that the period of service was a year on the basis of the expression *hrj-ḥ3bt hrj-tp jmj-rmpt*;<sup>37</sup> if so, the cycle of rotation must have been much longer than the ten-month cycle used by phyle members.

34. Posener-Kriéger, “Nouveaux Papyrus,” pp. 556–57.



35. Posener-Kriéger and de Cenival, *Abu Sir Papyri*, pls. 3, 4 (Table II) and pls. 84C, 86A (Table III).

36. I have been able to find only one exception to this rule in Old Kingdom cults, dating to the Middle Kingdom: a man named *Ttj-m-z3.f/Nḥn* is called *hrjw-ḥ3bt hrj-tp* of the mortuary cult of Teti.

37. Posener-Kriéger, *Archives*, p. 583, n. 3, and references given therein.

## 5.3. PRIVATE PHYLES IN ROYAL MORTUARY TEMPLES

One of the most puzzling references in the papyri from the cult of Neferirkare is to the *jmj-nfrt* phyle of *Mnw-nfr*, which seems to be one of the phyles that served in the royal temple, since it is listed as having failed to return temple equipment.<sup>38</sup> This phyle is also recorded as having received goods in parallel with three individuals<sup>39</sup> and as having been in service when a wall fell down.<sup>40</sup> Posener-Kriéger determined that *Mnw-nfr*, the vizier of Niuserre who is mentioned in these references, was deceased and that the phyle in question was a sort of “parasite,” a phyle of *Mnw-nfr*’s mortuary cult that was attached to Neferirkare’s mortuary cult as part of its regular cycle of rotation.<sup>41</sup> There is a parallel for this sharing in the custom of reversion offerings, which were shared by royal cults and the cults of private individuals, as well as other institutions.

The *jmj-nfrt* phyle of *Mnw-nfr* presumably was originally either the  or the  division of the *jmj-nfrt* phyle of Neferirkare. Niuserre, the king whom *Mnw-nfr* served as vizier, did a good deal of repair and rebuilding at the mortuary complex of Neferirkare in the process of appropriating its valley temple and causeway for his own cult.<sup>42</sup> Perhaps he also appropriated the revenue assigned to one of Neferirkare’s phyle divisions and granted it to *Mnw-nfr* for the maintenance of one of his mortuary phyles; the duties at the royal mortuary temple would have remained with the revenue. The titles of *Mnw-nfr* are known only from his sarcophagus in Leiden,<sup>43</sup> the mortuary temple of Niuserre, and these papyri, so it is not known whether he listed estates of Neferirkare in his tomb. Interestingly, however, none of the officials who do list estates of Neferirkare as contributors to the maintenance of their cults can be equated with any of the names given high titles in the Neferirkare papyri.<sup>44</sup> This lack of a correspondence may be attributable, of course, to the incompleteness of both the archives and the corpus of tombs with listings of estates. The

38. Posener-Kriéger and de Cenival, *Abu Sir Papyri*, pls. 20–21. Posener-Kriéger calls the commodity not returned a “boulette” of incense (*Archives*, fig. 3, facing p. 134).

39. Posener-Kriéger and de Cenival, *Abu Sir Papyri*, pl. 63A. The phyle receives 17 shares, while the individuals receive from 3 to 7 shares.

40. *Ibid.*, pl. 31B, 4.

41. Posener-Kriéger, *Archives*, pp. 568–72.

42. L. Borchardt, *Das Grabdenkmal des Königs Neferirkare*, WVDOG 11 (Leipzig, 1909) pp. 51–57, especially 56–57.

43. P. A. A. Boeser, *Beschreibung der ägyptischen Sammlung des Niederländischen Reichsmuseum der Altertumer in Leiden* (The Hague, 1905), p. 21 and pl. 30.

44. Posener-Kriéger, *Archives*, p. 616.

“parasite phyle” hypothesis would explain why a phyle division might sometimes be referred to by the name of an official.

Posener-Kriéger also suggested that seven other private individuals, whose names occur in the papyri followed by phyle signs, might have been involved in similar arrangements. The names of four of these seven individuals are preserved: *R<sup>c</sup>-wr*, *Tjj*, *K3-jr.s*, and *Hnmw-htp*. The first two names are also the names of two wealthy officials whose tombs are known. Neither of these tombs lists any estates of Neferirkare among its revenue sources;<sup>45</sup> however, *Tjj* has a priesthood in Neferirkare’s cult, and *R<sup>c</sup>-wr* claimed in his autobiography to have been highly favored by the same king.<sup>46</sup> The evidence for identifying these men as proprietors of “parasite phyles” of the same character as the phyle of *Mnw-nfr* is, however, quite tenuous; and, in fact, one of these men, *K3-jr.s*, is listed as an individual in the same distribution account that lists the phyle of *Mnw-nfr*, a juxtaposition which suggests that *K3-jr.s* and *Mnw-nfr* had different relationships to Neferirkare’s cult.

If these personal names followed by phyle signs are not further examples of “parasite” phyles, what do they mean? One possibility is that the men named were the directors of phyles. *Hnmw-htp* does indeed appear elsewhere in the papyri with the title *šd hmw-ntr*; but the other names occur only with non-mortuary titles (*pr-<sup>c</sup>3*, *‘d-mr, jr w šn pr-<sup>c</sup>3*, etc.). Perhaps more likely is the possibility that these names belong to the owners of small private mortuary cults in the neighborhood of the temple, whose phyles are involved in some sort of transaction with the cult of Neferirkare. In any case, the question of private phyles in royal cults is confusing and must remain largely unanswered.

#### 5.4. ROYAL MORTUARY PHYLES BEFORE THE FIFTH DYNASTY

The structure of the phyle organization itself might suggest that the system developed from a system of five undivided phyles and a five-month cycle of rotation. But such a cycle is never attested in the Old Kingdom and, indeed, the surviving evidence seems to show that earlier phases of the system were more complex rather than simpler. Among the earliest phyles known are those attached to the *hwt z3-ḥ3-nb*, which was probably the name of a royal mortuary temple of the First Dynasty.<sup>47</sup> Strangely enough, these phyles appear to have had more divisions than the Fifth Dynasty phyles, if the one, two, and four

45. Ibid., p. 616. The names of *Tjj*’s estates are all built on his own name, while *R<sup>c</sup>-wr* lists estates of various Fourth Dynasty kings.

46. Sethe, *Urkunden* 1, p. 232.

47. See Chapter 8 below, the texts in *Category D*.

strokes following the phyle name indicate phyle divisions, as they almost certainly do in later periods.<sup>48</sup> This First Dynasty evidence does not, however, include all five phyles of the classical phyle system. That system is attested only in texts from the Third Dynasty mortuary temple of Djoser, in which five phyles are listed in an account of linen distribution; the texts may be older than the building in which they were found, of course.<sup>49</sup> These texts also seem to show four divisions per phyle.

### 5.5. STOREROOM GROUPS

There is no direct attestation of the five-phyle system in mortuary temples between the texts on the plates from the Djoser complex and the Abu Sir cults of the late Fifth and early Sixth Dynasty; however, architectural features which are known to have been associated with phyles in later periods indicate that the institution was continuous and provide some evidence for its development.

In the Sixth Dynasty, some of the larger tombs of officials had clusters of five storerooms, which were often divided into two levels by a deep shelf. In two cases, some or all of these rooms are labeled with the names of phyles.<sup>50</sup> Five- and ten-fold storeroom groupings also occur in the mortuary temples of kings beginning with Khafre.<sup>51</sup> Many of these storerooms have two levels, like the phyle storerooms found in private tombs; and when there are ten storerooms,

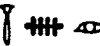
48. Edel, "Kalksteintäfelchen," pp. 11–13.

49. Lacau and Lauer, *Pyramide à degrés V*, pl. 17 and figs 34, 35. See *Chapter 8*, numbers *J:1* and *J:2*, below for a more thorough discussion of these texts.

50. *Mrrw-k3*: The Sakkarah Expedition, *Mereruka 2*: pl. 199 (all five storerooms are labeled with phyle names); *Nb-k3w-Hr*: Hassan, *Neb-Kaw-Her*, pl. 48 (only one inscribed lintel is preserved).

51. The only exceptions among the completely excavated mortuary temples are those of Shepseskaf and Neferirkare. The Shepseskaf temple has one group of three storerooms, and perhaps two of the other rooms, which seem to serve as a passageway and may have served as storerooms as well; a similar passageway in the tomb of *Mrrw-k3*, room A9, does double duty as a phyle storeroom according to the label over the door. The mortuary temple of Neferirkare, as originally planned, had at least a single set of five storerooms on its south side, the foundations of which were completed (Borchardt, *Neferirkare*, p. 50). Borchardt makes no comment on his restoration of six storerooms on the north side of the temple, but since no foundations seem to have survived (*ibid.*, Blatt 10), an opposing set of five storerooms on the north side seems equally likely, if not more so. In its later form, the temple did not reflect the system of ten phyle divisions in its plan; however, the fact that one of the storerooms still bears the name of a phyle division (see below) indicates that there were almost certainly ten such storerooms, though less symmetrically placed than in other temples.


they are usually arranged in two groups of five, either facing each other along a corridor, or in symmetrical parts of the temple.

In one such group, in the mortuary temple of Niuserre, a fragment of a phyle name *wr* was found that originally must have labeled one of the doorways.<sup>52</sup> Another storeroom, in the temple of Neferirkare, has two texts in red ink on the underside of a lintel, reading ; <sup>53</sup> a phyle division of this name is known to have served in the priesthood of this temple.<sup>54</sup> Accordingly, each phyle division must have had its own storeroom in every royal mortuary temple, presumably in the five- and ten-fold storeroom groups. Less clear is the relationship of phyles to the sets of five shrines or statue chambers with which the storerooms are closely associated in many temples.<sup>55</sup>

The connection of the pattern of the storerooms in royal mortuary temples with the number of phyles or phyle divisions implies a five-phyle system in the reigns of Khafre and Menkaure, each of whom has a mortuary temple with a group of five storerooms. If the texts from the Djoser complex also refer to phyles of a royal mortuary cult, as seems likely,<sup>56</sup> some sort of system of five phyles was presumably in continuous use in royal mortuary temples throughout the Third and Fourth Dynasties.

The change from one group of five storerooms to two such groups is first seen in the mortuary temple of Sahure. This change may reflect the reorganization of five phyles into ten divisions. An interesting corroboration of this suggestion is perhaps to be seen in the four tablets from the sun temple of Userkaf,<sup>57</sup> which indicate the existence of a system in building crews very much like the system attested in the Fifth Dynasty mortuary priesthoods, with ten phyle divisions and a ten-month cycle of rotating service. These tablets probably date to the reign of Neferirkare.<sup>58</sup> Since the phyle system attested for work crews in the reign of Menkaure, like the system of the Archaic period, seems to have divided each phyle into four divisions, it is tempting to speculate that the phyle system was reorganized in both spheres, temple staffs and work crews,

52. Borchardt, *Ne-user-re*, p. 54.

53. Borchardt, *Neferirkare*, p. 32, cites the lower two signs, and inverts them. Posener-Kriéger, *Archives*, p. 566, n. 4, cites this text, and correctly connects it with the *w3dt* phyle because the archives from the temple mention a  division of that phyle. The *w3d* sign is, however, quite clear in one of the two texts and possibly just sloppily drawn in the other.


54. Posener-Kriéger and de Cenival, *Abu Sir Papyri*, pl. 18.

55. Edel, "Kalksteintäfelchen," p. 21.

56. See *Category K, Chapter 8* below.

57. See Edel, "Kalksteintäfelchen," pp. 2–22; and Posener-Kriéger, *Archives*, p. 571.

58. Ricke, "Bau," p. 18.

sometime between the reign of Menkaure and that of Niuserre.<sup>59</sup> The five mysterious mounds behind the temple, one of which contained a plaque inscribed  11, suggests that the two-division phyle system was already in use by the priesthood of Userkaf's temple.<sup>60</sup>

Although there is no evidence for or against this speculation beyond the change in the pattern of storerooms in royal mortuary temples, this change seems to coincide with a major break in the entire organization of mortuary cults. In addition to the obvious change in dynasty, it is contemporary with the introduction of a separate sun temple connected (at least economically) with the mortuary cult of each successive king. The causes of these changes are unknown, but it seems not unlikely that they were related since they all affected the same institution.

59. See *Chapter 7* below.

60. Although the priesthood could have been reorganized sometime after the burial of the king. According to the excavators, the plaque was found in a bench which dates to Ricke's 4th building phase ("Bau," 28–30); thus it could date to any of the earlier phases, i.e., as late as the reign of Niuserre (= 3rd phase, cf. *ibid.*, p. 28).





## CHAPTER 6

### PHYLES IN PRIVATE MORTUARY CULTS

Several non-royal tomb chapels of the later Old Kingdom in the cemeteries of Giza, Abu Sir, and Saqqara display evidence that the priesthoods that served in them were organized into phyles. This evidence is of three types. Some monumental copies of the legal documents that established and regulated such cults contain specific references to phyles. Other texts refer to phyles by name<sup>1</sup> in scene captions and titles of cult functionaries. These texts can be found either in the tomb where such a functionary served or, rarely, in his own tomb. Finally, the system is demonstrated by five-storeroom complexes in which phyle names are inscribed over doorways<sup>2</sup> and, analogously, by such complexes even when the storerooms are not labeled. A related, but less certain, indication of the use of a phyle system is the clear depiction of cult personnel in multiples of five and ten in tomb reliefs.

There are thirty individuals known whose cults appear, from at least one of the above indications, to have been carried out by priests organized into private phyle systems.<sup>3</sup> Of these, twenty-six can roughly be dated. The earliest example dates no earlier than the reign of Neferirkare and no later than the reign of Niuserre; the latest dates to the reign of Pepi II. The four reigns of Djedkare, Unis, Teti, and Pepi I encompassed the period in which this organization was most popular in private cults. At least fifteen of the cults fall into this period, while only two must definitely be dated outside it. Only six cults using phyle systems are attested from the reign of Pepi I to the reign of Pepi II, as compared with twenty in the period of roughly similar length between the reigns of

1. The names of the phyles when they occur in private tombs differ slightly from the names of phyles known from royal contexts. See *Chapter 2* above.
2. See *Chapter 5* above for royal parallels to this feature.
3. These individuals are cataloged below.

Neferirkare and Teti. The phyle system thus seems to have come into use in private cults around the middle of the Fifth Dynasty, flourished around the time of the change of dynasty, and died out rather abruptly during the later Sixth Dynasty.

There is no evidence that phyle organization was ever used in private cults in later periods of Egyptian history. Allusions to phyles on monuments of private individuals of the Middle Kingdom refer either to an office in a phyle held by the deceased or to phyle members who served in a temple near the monument and from whom offerings are sought.<sup>4</sup>

A review of the Old Kingdom tomb owners who used phyle organization in their cults is useful, both to demonstrate the ways phyle activity in private tombs is evidenced and to determine whether the tomb owners share any characteristics that might explain why they adopted the royal system. In the following list, the tomb owners are listed in approximately chronological order. Since almost half of them were viziers, the chronological list of viziers given by Porter and Moss<sup>5</sup> is used as a base, and the non-viziers are placed as accurately as possible around them (the various suggested dates are discussed in the individual entries). Where the title of vizier is held, only that title is listed, since it is clearly the highest title held. Otherwise, all known titles are listed.

### 6.1. TOMB OWNERS WITH PHYLE SYSTEMS


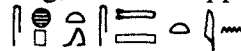
1. *Nj-ḥft-k3j*<sup>6</sup> Reliefs from this tomb chapel give the names and phyle affiliations of six *shḏw ḥmw-k3* and mention the names of four of the five phyles: *jmj-wrt*, *st*, *w3ḏ*, and *nds*.<sup>7</sup> The line of offering bearers is not complete; the phyle *jmj-nfrt* may have occurred later on in the procession, or perhaps in the second position, where there is a *shḏ ḥmw-k3* whose affiliation and name could not be read by Mariette.

4. A search through Lange and Schäfer, CG, yields mentions of phyles only as parts of titles. These titles always occur either in the titulary of the owner of the monument or in the list of passersby who are requested to make an offering to him.
5. B. Porter and R. L. B. Moss, *A Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Reliefs, and Paintings*, 2nd ed., 3 vols. (Oxford, 1972–81) 3:914–15.
6. Mariette, *Mastabas*, mastaba D.47, pp. 305–06; Borchardt, CG #1558.
7. The phyle *nds* in this tomb was read *wr* by Edel, “Kalksteintäfelchen,” p. 18, but the existence of an *jmj-wrt* phyle in the same tomb makes the reading *nds* more probable. Mariette’s hand copy is equally consistent with both interpretations.

**Titles** *w‘b R‘ Nḥn-R‘, w‘b S3ḥwR‘, w‘b Wsrk3f, jmj-r sšr-nswt, jmj-r ḥkrt-nswt, ḥrp ‘ḥ, ḥrj wḏb ḥwt ‘nḥ, ḥrj sšt3 n pr dw3t, and ‘d-mr dw3 Ḥr ḥntj-pt.*

**Location** Saqqara, exact location lost but generally in the area to the east of the Step Pyramid.

**Date** Baer<sup>8</sup> dated this chapel between Neferirkare and Niuserre; he noted that the owner’s name occurs in the mortuary temple of Sahure with some of the same titles.

2. *Pth-špss*<sup>9</sup> The plan of this tomb shows ten storerooms divided asymmetrically into two groups of four and six (in contrast to the ten-storeroom groups in royal mortuary temples, which are divided into two groups of five). Another indication that phyles were used in this tomb is perhaps to be found in a block in the Berlin Museum.<sup>10</sup> Beneath the end of a dedicatory text that names ... (*ḥrj*)-*sšt3 n pr dw3t Pth-špss* is a scene in which “Zwei Leute ziehen auf einem Schlitten ein Grabgerät” and which is captioned , probably [*shpt st3*]t *w3ḏt z3 2 shḏ-ḥmw-k3 Ḥnmw-ḥtp*, “[Bringing] the *st3t* boxes of the two divisions of the *w3ḏt* phyle, inspector of ka-priests, *Ḥnmw-ḥtp*.” This scene is paralleled by a scene in the tomb of *3ḥtj-ḥtp*,<sup>11</sup> in which men pull tapering, feather-topped structures on sledges under the caption . (There are six *st3t* in the *3ḥtj-ḥtp* scene; so although the phyle system was used in the tomb of *3ḥtj-ḥtp*,<sup>12</sup> it is unlikely that the ritual involving these *st3t*-boxes was connected with phyles.) The evidence connecting this piece with the tomb of *Pth-špss* at Abu Sir is only circumstantial, but quite plentiful. Its museum number is near those of the museum’s

8. Baer, *Rank and Title*, p. 95 (#282).

9. J. de Morgan, “Decouverte du Mastaba de Ptah-chepses dans la nécropole Abou-Sir,” *Revue archéologique*, 3rd ser., 24 (1894):18–33; M. Verner, *The Mastaba of Ptahshepses: Reliefs I/1, Abusir 1* (Prague 1977).

10. H. Schäfer, *Ägyptische Inschriften aus dem Königlichen Museen zu Berlin*, 3 vols. (Leipzig, 1913–24) 1:20 (#14105).

11. Davies, *Ptahhetep and Akhethetep*, 2: pl. 22.

12. See below, no. 11, in this list.

other pieces from Borchardt's excavations at Abu Sir.<sup>13</sup> The tomb of *Pth-špss* at Abu Sir gives *hrj-sšt3 n pr dw3t* as one of his titles,<sup>14</sup> and a *shd hmw-k3* named *Hnmw-htp*, whose name is spelled in the same way as the name on the Berlin block, occurs in the tomb.<sup>15</sup> The tomb's plan, like the text on the fragment, indicates that the phyles were separated into divisions, implying a very large, well-endowed mortuary cult. The only other individuals known to have used divisions as well as phyles in their cults (excluding kings) were the king's wife *Jpwt* and the vizier *Mrrw-k3*, whose wife was a king's daughter. The vizier *Pth-špss* is the only vizier of that name known from the Old Kingdom, and his wife was also a king's daughter. It seems unlikely that any lesser official would have had such a large cult.


*Titles* *t3jtj z3b t3tj*.

*Location* Abu Sir, near the mortuary temple of Niuserre.

*Date* Although *Pth-špss* is usually identified as a vizier of Niuserre,<sup>16</sup> Baer cast some doubt on this date. He put this tomb in the Fifth Dynasty, probably later than Niuserre.<sup>17</sup>

3. *Tntj*<sup>18</sup> On a panel from his false door, two men who are identified as *sn-dt* are preceded by a badly damaged vertical text in which two phyle signs (𓂏𓂏) are visible. The second of

13. According to the Berlin Museum's *Ausführliches Verzeichnis*, this piece, #14105, was acquired by Reinhardt in 1898, as one of a series of pieces registered as numbers 14102 through 14107. Another collector for the museum purchased pieces numbered in the series 14089 through 14097, all of which were from the sun temple of Niuserre at Abu Gurob, and Borchardt began excavating at Abu Gurob in 1898 as well. The concentration of the Berlin Museum's efforts in this area at this time makes it likely that the piece in question is also from the Abu Sir area.
14. Verner, *Mastaba of Ptahshepses*, p. 146 text 30, p. 150 text 41, p. 171 text 157, p. 178 text 182, and p. 179 text 183. In none of these texts does the title precede the name directly; however, there is considerable variation in the titles that are attested in that position.
15. Ibid. p. 157 text 76 and text 73.
16. Porter and Moss, *Topographical Bibliography*, 3:340.
17. Baer, *Rank and Title*, p. 290 (#167). The latest possible date is the middle of the reign of Djedkare, since *Hnmw-htp* and *Nj-ḥḥ-Hnmw* (no. 12 below) occur as mortuary priests in this tomb. Their tomb must predate the reign of Unis, whose causeway covered it.
18. K. R. Lepsius, *Denkmäler aus Ägypten und Äthiopien*, 12 vols. (Berlin, 1849–65) 2: pl. 31B; Junker, *Giza*, 3:38–39.

these is followed by the group . It seems unlikely that these signs refer to “protection,” since such emblems occur predominantly on royal reliefs and would in any case be located behind the tomb owner rather than in front of his dependents. The signs are thus presumably part of some title or titles, such as *zš n z3* or *jmj-r z3w*. It is not clear whether the phyles to which the text refers were operating in this tomb or not, so *Tntj*’s cult is included here with reservations.

*Titles* *smr-wʿtj, ḥrp ʿḥ, ḥrj sšt3 n pr dw3t, and ḥk3 B3t.*

*Location* Giza 4920, in the western cemetery of Khufu.














*Date* Porter and Moss assigned this tomb to the early Fifth Dynasty or later;<sup>19</sup> Baer dated it between the end of the reign of Neferirkare and the reign of Djedkare, or earlier.<sup>20</sup>

4. *Pth-ḥtp*<sup>21</sup> This tomb shows in its plan a corridor that gives access to five rooms of irregular size and shape. Though the rooms are quite large, they seem to have been undecorated, or at least no decoration was recorded. The arrangement of the rooms is reminiscent of the storerooms in the mastaba of *Mrrw-k3*.<sup>22</sup> It seems likely that they were storerooms, and their number indicates the presence of a phyle system.

*Titles* *t3jtj z3b t3tj.*

*Location* Saqqara, exact location lost, somewhere in the area to the south of the pyramid of Unis.

*Date* Middle Fifth Dynasty or later.<sup>23</sup>


5. *Pth-ḥtp-dšr*<sup>24</sup> A small obelisk of *Pth-ḥtp-dšr* gives his name and highest titles, followed by a seated figure and a horizontal line, beneath which is inscribed                

indicate that the obelisk was set up by a phyle of the cult of *Pth-ḥtp-dšr*. Alternatively, it might be a monument erected by his comrades in a phyle that was attached to another institution. *Pth-ḥtp-dšr* has no priestly titles, but it is not impossible that phyle organization was used in one of the other institutions to which his titulary refers.

*Titles* *t3jtj z3b t3tj*.

*Location* Saqqara, north of the avenue of sphinxes, in the vicinity of the tomb of *Tjj*.

*Date* Baer dated this tomb tentatively to the period between Neferirkare and the end of the reign of Djedkare, though he noted that the reign of Unis is also possible.<sup>25</sup> Porter and Moss, in their list of viziers, placed him at the earlier end of Baer's range.<sup>26</sup>

6. *ḥḥ-m-ʿR*<sup>27</sup> Over a badly damaged file of offering bearers in this chapel is the caption: , *z3 n ḥmw-k3 jmj 3bd*, "the phyle of ka-priests which is in its month." This text is a clear indication that the phyle system was in use in this cult.

*Titles* *šḥd zšw ʿ-nswt, wʿb nswt, ḥm-ntr M3ʿt, ḥrj tp n šnwt, jmj-r šwt ḥtpt-df3w*, and *zš šḥt ḥtpt-nswt*.

*Location* Giza 7837+7843, a rock-cut tomb, east of the pyramid of Khufu and north of the Khafre valley temple.

*Date* Porter and Moss dated this tomb to the first half of the Fifth Dynasty,<sup>28</sup> while Baer assigned it to the later part of the Fifth Dynasty or even later.<sup>29</sup>

7. "*K3-m-nfrt*"<sup>30</sup> Goedicke suggested that this legal text comes from the complex of *K3-m-nfrt* at Giza;<sup>31</sup> however, his evidence for

25. Baer, *Rank and Title*, p. 227 (#158).

26. Porter and Moss, *Topographical Bibliography*, 3:915.

27. Reisner's Giza Mastaba 7837 + 7843, which is unpublished. I am grateful to the staff of the Egyptian Department at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, for allowing and facilitating my access to their photographs and tracings of this tomb.

28. Porter and Moss, *Topographical Bibliography*, 3:206.

29. Baer, *Rank and Title*, p. 64 (#92).

30. Sethe, *Urkunden* 1, 11–15; H. Goedicke, *Die privaten Rechtsinschriften aus dem Alten Reich* (Vienna, 1970), pp. 44ff.

31. Published by Hassan, *Giza*, 2:104–38.

this identification is tenuous, so the titles given below are limited to those found on the monument, and the name is adopted primarily for ease of reference. This text contains two references to phyles and quite probably had a third reference, which is now lost. All the references involve the distribution of shares of the endowment's profits, usually in cases where a phyle member has neglected his duty in some way.

*Titles* *smr w'tj, hrj-tp Nhb, and 'd-mr dw3 Hr hntj-pt.*

*Location* Giza, location unknown.

*Date* Goedicke assigned the text to the Fifth Dynasty on the basis of its type and formulation.<sup>32</sup> Its length and wordiness bear a striking similarity to the inscription in the tomb of *3htj-htp/Hmj* (no. 15) and *Nb-k3w-Hr* (no. 25),<sup>33</sup> probably composed in the late Fifth Dynasty.

8. *Pth-htp I*<sup>34</sup> This tomb chapel includes both frequent mentions of the title *zš n z3* and the identification of an offering bearer as *hrp hmw-k3 jmj-wrt*, "controller of priests of the *jmj-wrt* phyle."

*Titles* *t3jtj z3b t3tj.*

*Location* Saqqara, west of the Step Pyramid and south of the avenue of sphinxes.

*Date* The evidence for the later deification of this tomb owner<sup>35</sup> identifies him as the famous vizier of Djedkare, whose "Instructions" inform us that he was an old man under that king. His tomb can thus be dated to Djedkare's reign.

9. *Shm-k3*<sup>36</sup> Ten *hmw-k3* and five *shdw hmw-k3* suggest that the personnel of this cult were organized into phyles. There are, however, no direct mentions of phyles in the surviving decoration.

32. Goedicke, *Rechtsinschriften*, p. 46.

33. Both inscriptions are written in vertical columns with a horizontal band above giving the name and titles of the owner.

34. M. A. Murray, *Saqqara Mastabas*, 2 vols. (London, 1905–37) 1:8–17; Hassan, *Ny-‘ankh-Pepi*, pls. 24–49.

35. Baer, *Rank and Title*, pp. 74–75.

36. Murray, *Saqqara Mastabas* 1: pl. 7.

- Titles** *hm-ntr* of Neferirkare, Niuserre, Hathor, Ma'at, and Sed, *z3b jrj-Nhn n hwt-wrt, w' b nswt, nj hrj-wdb, and jrj-ht nswt.*
- Location** Saqqara, exact location lost, in the area of the *Pth-htp* mastabas, somewhere to the northwest of the mastaba of *Pth-htp* I.
- Date** Niuserre or later (from his priesthoods).
10. *Snđm-jb/Jntj*<sup>37</sup> Although there is no indication in this tomb of a phyle organization, one of the cult servants of a later period who is buried nearby records his connection with *Snđm-jb/Jntj*'s cult in his own tomb and gives his titles as *shđ zš n z3 n hmw-k3*.<sup>38</sup> There is a text in the tomb of *Snđm-jb/Jntj* that discusses the conduct of his mortuary cult.<sup>39</sup> This text contains no references to phyles, which suggests that the phyle system in this tomb might have been instituted later; the priests who attest to its use date to the Sixth through the Eighth Dynasties.<sup>40</sup>
- Titles** *t3jtj z3b t3tj.*
- Location** Giza 2370, in the cemetery *en echelon* to the west of the pyramid of Khufu.
- Date** A biographical text in the tomb<sup>41</sup> dates it to the reign of Djedkare.
11. *3htj-htp*<sup>42</sup> In one of the offering processions in this tomb, a man carrying a goose is called *zš n z3 jmj-wr(t)*.<sup>43</sup>
- Titles** *t3jtj z3b t3tj.*

37. Lepsius, *Denkmäler* 2: pls. 76ff.

38. E. Brovarski, "The Senedjemib Complex at Giza: A Preliminary Report," *L'Égyptologie en 1979* (Colloques internationaux du C.N.R.S.) 2 (1982):121. The owner of Giza tomb G 2364 held these titles; the owners of G 2337 and G S 660/661 (= LG 33) may also be priests of *Snđm-jb/Jntj*; though these last two may equally well have served in the cult of the latter's son *Snđm-jb/Mhj* (no. 14 below).

39. Sethe, *Urkunden* 1, pp. 59–67.

40. Brovarski, "Senedjemib Complex," p. 120.

41. Sethe, *Urkunden* 1, pp. 59–67.

42. Davies, *Ptahhetep and Akhethetep*, 2: passim.

43. The spelling of the phyle name without the final *t* in this tomb shows the relationship of this term with the directional term *jmj-wrt*, which is also spelled *jmj-wr* in this chapel.



- Location** Saqqara, west of the Step Pyramid and south of the avenue of sphinxes, this mastaba is just south of the tomb of *Pth-ḥtp* I (no. 8 above).
- Date** This man is the son of *Pth-ḥtp* I; hence his tomb probably dates to late in the reign of Djedkare, or to the reign of Unis.
12. *Hnmw-ḥtp*  
and  
*Nj-‘nh-Hnmw*<sup>44</sup> This tomb contains a legal text that is written in the name of both tomb owners, which sets up a cult that is organized into phyles. It has the standard provisions whereby the share of a man who deserts the service of the cult or who is taken away for another duty is to be reallocated to the phyle to which he belongs.
- Titles** *Hnmw-ḥtp*: *ḥm-nṯr R‘ Šzpw-jb-R‘, w‘b Mn-jswt-NjwsrR‘, mḥnk nswt m k3wt jrjt ‘nwt, ḥrj sšt3 n nṯr.f, jrj-ḥt nswt, and w‘b nswt.*  
*Nj-‘nh-Hnmw*: *ḥm-nṯr R‘ Šzpw-jb-R‘, w‘b Mn-jswt-NjwsrR‘, jmj-r jrjw ‘nt pr-‘3, mḥnk nswt m k3wt jrjt ‘nwt, ḥrj sšt3, and jrj-ḥt nswt.*
- Location** Saqqara, under the causeway of Unis, east of the mastaba of *3ḥtj-ḥtp/Hmj* and *Nb-k3w-Hr*.
- Date** Moussa and Altenmüller dated this tomb to the later part of the reign of Menkauhor and the earlier half of Djedkare’s reign, because both men occur as ka-priests in the tomb of *Pth-špss* at Abu Sir (no. 2 above).<sup>45</sup> The tomb cannot be dated much later since the causeway of Unis was built over it.
13. *Pth-ḥtp* II<sup>46</sup> An offering bearer in this chapel holds the title *ḥm-k3 zš z3*. Since the chapel is part of the larger complex of *3ḥtj-ḥtp* (no. 11 above), the father of this man, the two cults were probably served by the same group of mortuary priests. It is clear from the title *zš z3* in this chapel and the title *zš n z3 jmj-wr(t)* in *3ḥtj-ḥtp*’s tomb that these mortuary priests were organized into phyles.

44. Moussa and Altenmüller, *Nianchchnum und Chnumhotep*, passim.

45. Ibid., p. 45.

46. Davies, *Ptahhetep and Akhethetep*, 2: passim; Hassan, *Ny-‘ankh-Pepi*, pp. 63–84 and pls. 51–71.

**Titles** *hrj-tp nswt, mdw rhjt, jwn knmwt, 'd-mr n nst hntt, wd mdw n hrj-wdb, jmj-r yhw(t), hrp 'h, hrp zšw r-j 'h,*<sup>47</sup> *hrj-sšt3 n wd-mdwt nt nswt, hm-ntr* of Ma'at and Hekāt, *jmj-r njwt* and *shd hmw-ntr* of Menkauhor and Djedkare, and *jmj-r njwt* and *shd w'bw* of Niuserre. Possibly also *t3jtj z3b t3tj, jmj-r* ...<sup>48</sup>

**Location** Saqqara, this small chapel is part of the mastaba of *3htj-htp* (no. 11) above.

**Date** Since the owner of this chapel is a grandson of the sage (no. 8) who is known from the reign of Djedkare, his mortuary cult probably dates to the reign of Unis.

14. *Snđm-jb/Mhj*<sup>49</sup> Like his father *Snđm-jb/Jntj* (no. 10 above), this tomb owner left no references to phyles in his own tomb; his phyle system is known only from the tombs of his mortuary priests, two of whom bear the title *zš n z3*.<sup>50</sup>

**Titles** *t3jtj z3b t3tj.*

**Location** Giza 2378, in the cemetery *en echelon*, just west of the pyramid of Khufu.

**Date** According to inscriptions in his tomb,<sup>51</sup> *Snđm-jb/Mhj* served under Djedkare and Unis.

15. *3htj-htp/Hmj*<sup>52</sup> It is very difficult to determine whether the indications of phyle activity in this tomb belong to *3htj-htp/Hmj* alone, or also to the later vizier who usurped his tomb, *Nb-k3w-Hr* (no. 25 below). There is a complex of five storerooms, which indicates clearly that the mastaba was designed for a priesthood organized into phyles. The label over one of the doorways (usually read *wr* phyle, but more probably to be read *nds* phyle, on the basis of the position of the

47. This reading, from H. Fischer, "Five Inscriptions of the Old Kingdom," ZÄS 105 (1978):58–59, was pointed out to me by E. Brovarski.

48. These last titles are given on the sarcophagus, as is the "good name" *Tfj*. That the title of "vizier" and the "good name" do not occur anywhere else in the tomb suggests that the sarcophagus belonged to a later, intrusive burial.

49. Lepsius, *Denkmäler* 2:73–75.

50. Brovarski, "Senedjemib Complex," p. 121.

51. Sethe, *Urkunden* 1, p. 68.

52. Hassan, *Neb-Kaw-Her*, passim.

storeroom<sup>53</sup>) may also have dated to the earlier owner. One of the two legal texts that set up the mortuary endowment<sup>54</sup> begins with the phrase “As for a phyle of ka-priests ...,” and the other mentions the title *zš n z3*. The order of the titles that are connected with these texts fits Baer’s order for the period from Djedkare to Unis exactly,<sup>55</sup> so this text must also be attributed to the earlier owner.

*Titles* *t3jtj z3b t3tj*.

*Location* Saqqara, between the Unis causeway and the southern enclosure wall of the Step Pyramid.

*Date* The period from Djedkare to Unis, according to Baer’s analysis of the titles.<sup>56</sup>

16. *Nbt*<sup>57</sup> The plan of this tomb shows a complex of six storerooms, the last two of which are joined by a doorway. Examination of these storerooms reveals, however, that only five of them have the deep shelves that split the room into the two levels typical for phyle storerooms. The room without this divider serves as an anteroom to one of the other storerooms, probably the storeroom of the *jmj-wrt* phyle, which was also given a two-room storeroom in the tomb of *Mrrw-k3* (see no. 21 below). It is thus very likely that the phyle system was employed in this tomb.

*Titles* *m33t Hr Sth, wrt hts, wrt hzt, smrt Hr, and hmt-nswt*.

*Location* Saqqara, north of the causeway of Unis, the second tomb east of his mortuary temple enclosure wall.

*Date* Because of its location, it seems reasonable to assume that this tomb’s owner was a wife of Unis.

17. *Hnwt*<sup>58</sup> This tomb, though now badly damaged, seems to have had almost exactly the same plan as that of *Nbt* (no. 16 above)

53. See Section 2.1.1, above.

54. Goedicke, *Rechtsinschriften*, pp. 81–103 and pls. 9–10.

55. Baer, *Rank and Title*, p. 232.

56. Ibid., p. 291 (discussed under #249).

57. Unpublished. The titles are taken from Z. Saad, “A Preliminary Report on the Excavations at Saqqara, 1939–40,” *ASAE* 40 (1940):683–84, and my own inspection of the tomb.


58. Unpublished, but discussed briefly in *ibid.*, pp. 684–85. (The titles are from my own copy of the doorway.)

which lies adjacent to it on the east. The configuration of the storerooms is identical.

*Titles* *m33t* [*Hr Sth*], *wrt ḥts*, *wrt ḥzt*, and *ḥmt-nswt*.

*Location* Saqqara, north of the causeway of Unis, the tomb closest to his mortuary temple's enclosure wall.

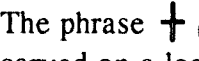
*Date* This woman also is probably a wife of Unis.

18. *Htp-n-Pth*<sup>59</sup> On one of the pillars in this tomb, a man with the title <sup>60</sup> offers *Htp-n-Pth* a duck. Since *jmj-wrt* here clearly describes the side of a boat, it may be that the *ḥmw-k3* in this tomb are divided into only two groups which are named after the sides of a boat. The full five-phyle system is probably not in use here, but this text has interesting implications for the question of how the phyle names and nautical terms became conflated.<sup>61</sup>

*Titles* *jmj-r ḥntjw-š pr-ʿ3*, *ḥrp ʿḥ*, *jmj-r 3ḥʿ*, *jmj-r šwj pr-ʿ3*, *z3b ʿd-mr pr-ʿ3*, *smr*, and *ʿ-nswt*.

*Location* Giza 2430, at the northern end of the cemetery just to the west of the pyramid of Khufu.

*Date* Porter and Moss dated this tomb to the early Sixth Dynasty,<sup>62</sup> as did Baer, who put it in the period between Unis and Mernere.<sup>63</sup>

19. *Jpwt*<sup>64</sup> The phrase , "*jmj-nfrt* phyle, 2 (divisions)," was carved on a loose block that was found in the antechamber of this pyramid chapel, which suggests that a system of ten phyle divisions was in operation in this tomb. In the same room was found a limestone chip with a brief inscription in

59. Badawy, *Nyhetep-Ptah and ʿAnkhmʿahor*, pp. 1–10 and plates and figures following. I see no reason for assuming that the *n* of this name is in honorific transposition and hence adopt the older reading.

60. Ibid., fig. 13 and pl. 13. Badawy's drawing of this scene contains a number of errors which can be corrected by inspection of the original and of the excavation photograph in the collection of the Boston Museum (B 8773). See the discussion above, *Section 2.1.1*.

61. This argument is discussed more extensively above, *Section 3.3*.

62. Porter and Moss, *Topographical Bibliography*, 3:94.

63. Baer, *Rank and Title*, p. 292 (#356).

64. C. Firth and B. Gunn, *Teti Pyramid Cemeteries*, 2 vols. (Cairo, 1926) 1:11–14, 89–92, especially p. 94: #24.

red ink.<sup>65</sup> Helck<sup>66</sup> read the traces as *jmj-wrt*, but the second sign is almost certainly an *f*, not a *wr* sign.<sup>67</sup>

*Titles* (*z3t-nswt*) *nt ht.f*, *hmt-nswt*, and *mwt-nswt*.

*Location* Saqqara, north of the pyramid of Teti.

*Date* The tomb owner was the wife of Teti; since she is called “king’s mother,” her tomb probably dates to the reign of Pepi I or shortly thereafter.

20. *K3-gm.n.j*<sup>68</sup> Phyles are attested in the tomb of *K3-gm.n.j* in two different ways. The title *zš n z3 hmw-k3* occurs five times in the tomb and there is a corridor onto which open five storerooms. The upper courses of these storerooms are not preserved; the lintels may originally have been inscribed with the names of the phyles to which they were assigned, as in the adjacent tomb of *Mrrw-k3*.

*Titles* *t3jtj z3b t3tj*.

*Location* Saqqara, north of the pyramid of Teti.

*Date* *K3-gm.n.j* served as vizier to Teti, according to his tomb biography.

21. *Mrrw-k3*<sup>69</sup> This tomb has five storerooms, each of which is labeled with the name of a phyle determined with two strokes. There are twelve different men bearing the title *zš n z3 hmw-k3* depicted on the walls. This is two more than one would expect if there was one scribe assigned to each phyle division. It is likely, however, that some of these names were inserted by later scribes in *Mrrw-k3*’s cult.

*Titles* *t3jtj z3b t3tj*.

*Location* Saqqara, north of the pyramid of Teti.

*Date* *Mrrw-k3* is probably nearly contemporary with *K3-gm.n.j*.<sup>70</sup>

65. Ibid., pl. 58 #8.

66. W. Helck, “Arbeiterabteilungen,” *LÄ* I, col. 374, n. 18.

67. See Posener-Kriéger and de Cenival, *Abu Sir Papyri*, paleography pl. V.

68. W. F. von Bissing, *Die Mastaba des Gemnikai*, 2 vols. (Berlin, 1905–11), passim.

69. The Sakkarah Expedition, *Mereruka*, passim.

70. Z. Saad, “Preliminary Report on the Excavations of the Department of Antiquities at Saqqara, 1942–1943,” *ASAE* 43 (1943) p. 451 and pl. 36. But see Bacr, *Rank and Title*, p. 82.

22. *Hntj-k3*<sup>71</sup> Phyles are attested in this tomb by a single occurrence of the title *zš n z3*, followed by the title *jmj-r pr*. Although the man given this title does not bear the title *hm-k3* and thus may have been attached to a phyle in another institution, the tomb also depicts exactly five *šḥḏw ḥmw-k3* and five *jmjw-ḥt ḥmw-k3*.<sup>72</sup> Thus it is very probable that phyle organization was used in this tomb.

*Titles* *t3jtj z3b t3tj*.

*Location* Saqqara, easternmost of the mastabas north of the pyramid of Teti I.

*Date* Although the mastaba of *Hntj-k3* is in a cemetery of officials of Teti, he held office in the pyramid cult of Pepi I, hence he probably served both kings as vizier, as James suggested.<sup>73</sup>

23. *ḥnh-m-ḥHr*<sup>74</sup> This tomb contains more, and more varied, references to phyles than any other private tomb. In addition to a *zš n z3 ḥmw-k3*, the reliefs show another man labeled *šḥḏ ḥmw-k3 jmj-wrt*. A scene in room V depicts four registers of men bringing coffers and jars before the tomb owner, many of them labeled with the legend: (phyle name) *n ḥzt*.<sup>75</sup> At least four of the five phyles are mentioned in this scene. Finally, there is a unique occurrence of the phyle name *st* in one of the conversations recorded above the butchering scenes.

*Titles* *t3jtj z3b t3tj*.

*Location* Saqqara, in the cemetery north of the Teti pyramid, second tomb in from the enclosure wall.

*Date* Baer dated this mastaba to the reign of Pepi I,<sup>76</sup> as do most other scholars. This dating is supported by the plan of the

71. James, *Khentika*, passim.

72. This circumstance was already noted by Edel, "Kalksteintäfelchen," p. 21. Edel also cites the official *Nfr-jrt.n.f*; however, while this tomb does contain five each of *šḥḏ ḥmw-k3* and *jmj-ḥt ḥmw-k3*, there are eleven or twelve ordinary *ḥmw-k3* which would not be consistent with a phyle organization.

73. James, *Khentika*, p. 13.

74. Badawy, *Nyhetep-Ptah and Ḥankhm-ahor*, pp. 11–57 and plates and figures following.

75. See Section 4.2.

76. Baer, *Rank and Title*, p. 64 (#94).

mastaba. The rooms are quite similar in arrangement (though not in size) to the rooms in the mastaba of *Hntj-k3*.

24. *Mrrj*<sup>77</sup>

A fragment of limestone from the burial chamber of this tomb seems to contain part of a legal text that probably refers to the personnel of a mortuary cult. Following this text is a standing man, called *zš n z3 Tfw*, “the scribe of a phyle, *Tfw*.” Above him is the remains of another name, larger and more finely carved than the other texts, which ends with *j* and is determined with a man seated on a chair. Although there is no reason to assume that the block came from the chapel of the tomb where it was found, the name ... *j* does not fit either of the immediately adjacent mastaba owners, *Pth-ḥtp I* and *Pth-ḥtp-jnj-‘nh*, but could be the end of the name *Mrrj*. It is thus possible that the block was found near its original position, and that the cult of *Mrrj* was organized into phyles.

*Titles* *t3jtj z3b t3tj*.

*Location* Saqqara, west of the Step Pyramid, adjacent to the tomb of *Pth-ḥtp I* (no. 8).

*Date* Hassan dated this tomb to the reign of Pepi I or later because blocks from the temple of Teti were reused in its construction.

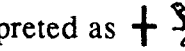
25. *Nb-k3w-Ḥr*<sup>78</sup>

The evidence for phyles in this tomb was discussed above under the name of its original owner, *3ḥtj-ḥtp/Ḥmj* (no. 15). Though it is clear that a phyle system was envisioned by the builder and first occupant of the tomb, it is less clear that *Nb-k3w-Ḥr* borrowed the system along with the tomb in which it operated. However, since *Nb-k3w-Ḥr* seems to have been careful about the titles that he usurped (some title strings end in the obliterated name of the original owner, which *Nb-k3w-Ḥr* has not replaced with his own), it can perhaps be assumed that his usurpation of the texts of the establishment of the cult means that he adopted the same system.

*Titles* *z3-nswt n ḥt.f smsw* and *t3jtj z3b t3tj*.

77. S. Hassan, *Mastaba of Princess Hemet-Re‘ and Others* (Cairo, 1975), pl. 23G.

78. Hassan, *Neb-Kaw-Her*, passim.

- Location* Saqqara, between the causeway of Unis and the Step Pyramid.
- Date* Both Hassan and Baer<sup>79</sup> assigned this tomb to the Sixth Dynasty.
26. *Snnw-<sup>c</sup>nh*<sup>80</sup> An endowment document in this tomb stipulates that if a *hm-k3* abandons his duty, his share of the endowment's revenues reverts to his phyle.
- Titles* *z3b, jmj-r zšw <sup>c</sup>h, šd zšw r-j<sup>c</sup>h, <sup>c</sup>d-mr, w<sup>c</sup>b-nswt, hm-ntr R<sup>c</sup> Nhn-R<sup>c</sup>, hm-ntr Wsrk3f, and w<sup>c</sup>b H<sup>c</sup>-b3-S3hwR<sup>c</sup>.*
- Location* Saqqara, exact location lost, somewhere in the area east of the Step Pyramid.
- Date* Although Baer dated this tomb to the latter part of the reign of Pepi II on the basis of the order of the titles,<sup>81</sup> the location of the tomb and the titles of its occupant both suggest an earlier dating. Goedicke assigned it to the Fifth Dynasty without comment;<sup>82</sup> Porter and Moss cite Baer.<sup>83</sup>
27. *Wdbt.n.j*<sup>84</sup> On a doorway in the mortuary temple of this queen is a text that gives the name and titles of a *šd hmw-ntr zš n z3*. A vase found in the tomb also bears an inscription that has been interpreted as ,<sup>85</sup> but the reading is not certain, and in any case such an easily portable object cannot be connected with this cult with certainty. Its relevance to this cult is especially questionable because the non-royal form of the first phyle name, *jmj-wrt*, is used, rather than *wr*, which would be expected in a cult where the priests were called *hmw-ntr* rather than *hmw-k3*.
- Titles* *jrjt-p<sup>c</sup>t and hmt-nswt mrt.f.*
- Location* South Saqqara, south of the pyramid of Pepi II.
- Date* Pepi II.

79. Baer, *Rank and Title*, p. 89 (#249).

80. Mariette, *Mastabas*, mastaba D.52; Goedicke, *Rechtsinschriften*, pp. 75–80.

81. Baer, *Rank and Title*, p. 293 (#452).


82. Goedicke, *Rechtsinschriften*, p. 75.

83. Porter and Moss, *Topographical Bibliography*, 3:582.

84. G. Jéquier, *La Pyramide d'Oudjebten* (Cairo, 1928), *passim*.

85. Edel, "Kalksteintäfelchen," p. 15.



28. ... <sup>86</sup> This block, which was reused in the Ptah temple at Mit Rahina, shows three men bearing offerings. One is a *shd* *hmw-k3*, another is an *jmj-ht hmw-k3*, and a third is a *hm-k3 zš n z3*. The block apparently came from a private tomb in which phyles were active. The names of the men (*R<sup>c</sup>-špss*, *Ttw*, and *Mrrj*) are not, to my knowledge, found together in any other tomb.
- Titles* Unknown.
- Location* Unknown.
- Date* Old Kingdom; the style and technique recall tombs of the Fifth or early Sixth Dynasties.
29. ... <sup>87</sup> This block, now in the collection of the Lowie Museum of Anthropology in Berkeley, California, shows a man carrying two strips of cloth, who is called *shd* ... (?) *hmw-k3 Jm3-S3hwR<sup>c</sup>*. Above him are two horizontal texts: *shpt sd3wt* ... and *jmj-wrt* phyle.
- Titles* Unknown.
- Location* Giza? According to the publication, the piece was found at Giza, presumably by Reisner's expeditions during the years 1902 through 1906, when his work was funded by the Hearst Foundation. However, a complete examination of the excavation photographs in the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston uncovered no record of the piece; it may have been purchased, in which case its provenience is unknown.
- Date* The style and technique of the carving is very fine and, together with the personal name, suggest a middle to late Fifth Dynasty date.
30. ... <sup>88</sup> A register on this block shows offering bearers carrying what are described as *krht d<sup>c</sup>m* ("vessels of electrum"). These men are identified as ...  ... by the horizontal text above them. They are presumably members of the two divisions of the *w3dt* or *jmj-nfrt* or *jmj-wrt* phyle, depicted during their month of service. This piece is clearly

86. W. M. F. Petrie, *Memphis I* (London, 1909), pl. 3.

87. Lutz, *Tomb Steles*, pl. 9 (#16).

88. Lutz, *Tomb Steles*, pl. 32 (#62).

from a tomb built by someone of wealth and prestige, because the offerings of costly vases are unusual and the phyles of priests are separated into two divisions each. One might suspect a royal origin, were it not for the top of the group *hm-k3* just above the lower break.

*Titles* Unknown.

*Location* The publication gives Deir el-Ballas as the provenience. This is very improbable, as the piece is clearly from the Old Kingdom, and the only Old Kingdom tomb that is known from Deir el-Ballas is painted, rather than decorated in raised relief. Nor are the style of the carving and the apparent position of the tomb owner consistent with a provincial origin. The piece is most likely to have come from Giza or Saqqara.

*Date* The Middle Kingdom date assigned in the publication is consistent with the provenience given, but otherwise not likely. A date in the Sixth Dynasty, perhaps even the later Sixth Dynasty, seems the most reasonable conclusion.

## 6.2. THE PATTERN OF USE OF PRIVATE PHYLE SYSTEMS

These, then, were the men and women in whose cults the phyle system is attested. Of the twenty-two men whose titles are known, the office of vizier is held by fourteen (or fifteen, if the titles and the sarcophagus in the burial shaft of *Pth-htp* II are taken to be his). All four of the women were royal wives, and at least four of the viziers were married to king's daughters.<sup>89</sup>

That viziers and king's wives had mortuary cults that were organized in imitation of the king's cult is not in itself surprising. The perplexing question is why the remaining seven or eight men had phyle systems in their tombs. They have no special titles in common and do not even share the same types of title. Some hold many positions in royal cults (nos. 1, 9, 12, 13, and 26); others seem to have had only the most tenuous connection with the king (nos. 3, 6, and 7). These men date to different periods and, though they all had decorated tombs (and hence financial resources), their tombs are of varying sizes and

89. In the course of preparing this list, I considered the possibility that the high rank of some of the wives of the men in this group were responsible for the use of such a royal system of organization in their tombs. The information is omitted here, as it did not prove to be significant as a predictor. Many of the men involved mention no wives at all; and though some of the wives are king's daughters, others bear no high titles.

elaborateness. In view of the lack of a single connecting thread, then, we must examine the possibility that all cults were organized by the phyle system.

Two circumstances argue against this position. The most obvious is that other systems are known. In the inscriptions of *Nj-k3-‘nh* at Tehne, a 12-month cycle of service is set up for the cult of a man called *Hnw-k3*, in which each member of *Nj-k3-‘nh*’s family takes a share.<sup>90</sup> This text also allows us to assume the existence of another, probably much more common, type of mortuary cult organization, in which a single ka-priest is responsible for the entire cult. *Nj-k3-‘nh* was probably the sole mortuary priest of *Hnw-k3*, since he had the power to reorganize the service and distribute it among members of his family after his own death (presumably, since he is not included in the rotation). This one-man organization is not well attested, as it offered little scope for special titles and endowment decrees.

Another argument for a more limited use of the phyle system is the prominent role it has in the decoration of some of the tombs where it was used. *Nj-ḥft-k3j*’s tomb gives the phyle affiliation of every *shd ḥmw-k3* whose depiction in the tomb survives. In the tomb of *Pth-ḥtp I*, phyle affiliations are given for the offering bearers at the entrance, and the title *zš n z3* is used frequently throughout the mastaba. *‘nh-m-‘Hr* put references to his phyle system on four different walls of his tomb. *Mrrw-k3* assigned separate storerooms to each phyle, labeled the storerooms with the names of the phyles, and spread the title *zš n z3* liberally throughout the tomb. *3ḥtj-ḥtp/Hmj* mentioned his phyles both on storeroom labels and in his endowment documents. The system of phyles was, of course, well known, if only from the royal mortuary cults. The endowment documents mention phyles casually, as pre-existing administrative units; they do not explicitly set up a phyle system in the tomb. Nonetheless, the enthusiasm which the tomb owners sometimes show for letting the visitor know that the cult was organized into phyles suggests that the system was far from universal.

One factor that may help to explain the distribution of phyle systems is the geographical distribution of the tombs in which they occurred. Figure 6.1 charts the approximate locations of the tombs that are listed above. These tombs often occur in clusters. This clustering could be an artifact of the high percentage of viziers in the group, since the better areas of the cemetery may have been dominated by these high-ranking men. In figure 6.2 the locations of all the Old Kingdom viziers listed in Porter and Moss are plotted on maps of the two major cemeteries. Although these tombs also cluster, three of these areas are

90. Goedicke, *Rechtsinschriften*, figure 41.

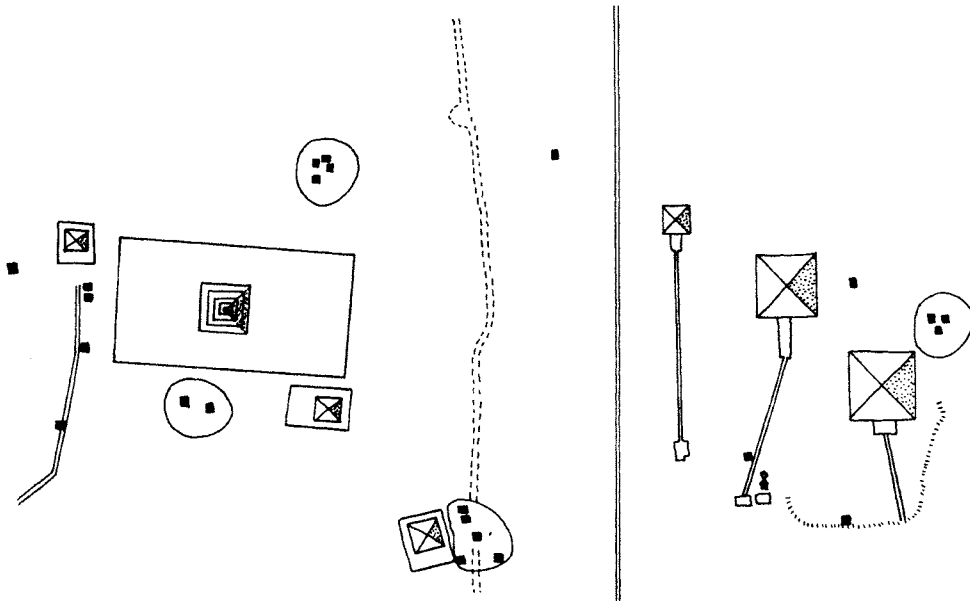


Figure 6.1. Tombs with Private Phyles at Giza and Saqqara

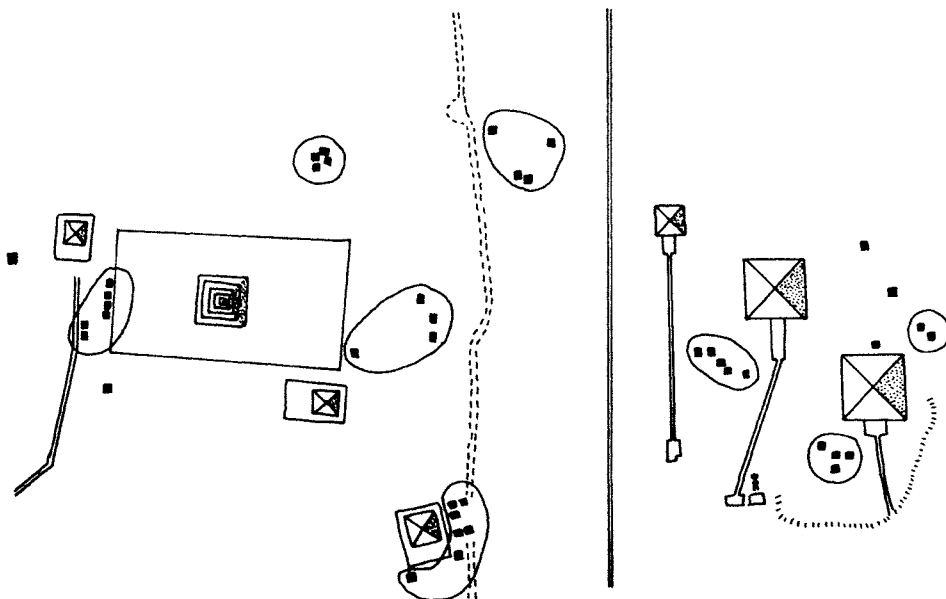


Figure 6.2. Tombs of Viziers at Giza and Saqqara

completely devoid of tombs with phyle organizations, and another has only one. Most other clusters of viziers' tombs also contain tombs with phyle organization that do not belong to viziers. The area east of the Step Pyramid at Saqqara, in contrast, contains two tombs that had phyle organizations but no viziers' tombs.

A likely explanation for this distribution is that the use of a phyle system in private cults was a passing fashion, which was begun in imitation of royal cults, was popular for a brief period, and then disappeared. The phenomenon of imitation of nearby tombs is too common in the history of Egyptian tomb decoration to need illustration. To imitate a clever and prestigious system of tomb organization is not very different from the imitation of a clever scene, although it leaves less tangible evidence. The clusters of tombs showing evidence of a phyle organization may be the result of this variety of localized borrowing.

As a status symbol, a phyle system had a number of advantages. It was expensive: five (or in the case of ostentatiously divided phyles, ten) groups of ka-priests required more supervisors, more storerooms, and probably a larger total payment to the ordinary *hm-k3*, who would want more than one-fifth of the ordinary full-time payment for doing only one fifth of the work. The system also had associations with the king, usually a high-status connection. It may even have required special permission to use the system in a private tomb, though if this were the case, one would expect to find records of the grants proudly displayed.

In addition to explaining the geographical distribution and the chronological development of phyle systems, this status-symbol model also explains the frequent mention of the system in the tombs where it obtained, especially in the early stages. Finally, it may explain the strange reference in the tomb of *Htp-n-Pth*. If his income prohibited setting up a system of five phyles, perhaps he organized a simpler system of two groups called after the sides of boats. Perhaps his reference to the "starboard" side in one of his inscriptions was made in hopes that it would be taken for the more prestigious phyle of that name.

This model leaves some questions unanswered, however. Despite the frequent use of phyle names in his tomb, *'nh-m-ḥr* avoided complementing them with the phyle determinative, though he used the sign in other contexts. It is also curious, if a phyle system was a popular status marker, that some tomb owners made no mention of the system in their tombs and we are forced to deduce its existence from the number of priests that are depicted. It may be, of course, that the system was so obvious when the cult was functioning that reference to it in the texts and tomb decoration was not necessary.

Though not entirely satisfactory, then, the status-symbol model seems to be the best available explanation for the use of the phyle system in private tombs.

### 6.3. THE NATURE OF THE PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS

How, then, did the phyle systems of private cults differ from those of the cults of kings which presumably served as their model?

One distinction that can be made between royal cults and the cults of private individuals is that the latter used the name *jmj-wrt* for the first phyle rather than the name *wr*, which was used exclusively in royal cults. This substitute was adopted from the directional term *jmj-wrt* ("west," "starboard," or "right"). That the phyle name and the directional term are viewed as the same word can be seen clearly in the tomb of *3htj-htp*, where the phyle name is for some reason written *jmj-wr* rather than *jmj-wrt*. The directional term used to indicate that some of *3htj-htp*'s estates were located in the western half of various nomes, *jmj-wr*, shares the peculiarity of the missing *t* with the phyle name.

It is also uncertain to what extent the royal form of the system could be used by members of the king's immediate family (sons, daughters, and wives), since the evidence for phyles in the tombs of these people is rare and the name of the *jmj-wrt* phyle must be preserved to allow us to determine which type of system was in use. The vase from the tomb of queen *Wdbt.n.j*<sup>91</sup> may be intrusive, and the reading of the text is not certain in any case. None of the other queens' tombs record the name of this phyle. The single storeroom label in the tomb of *Nb-k3w-Hr*, who has the title "king's son," has been read *wr* phyle,<sup>92</sup> which would imply that a king's son (or the holder of that title) could use the royal form; however, it seems likely that this sign is to be read *nds*, both from the appearance of the bird's tail and the placement of the storeroom (one would expect the larger storeroom at the end to belong to the *wr* or *jmj-wrt* phyle). The *jmj-wrt* form is used in the cults of king's sons-in-law, as the storeroom label of *Mrrw-k3* demonstrates.

Another characteristic of the private cults in which phyles are attested is that all of them are located in the cemeteries of Memphis: Giza, Abu Sir, Saqqara, and South Saqqara. This may be explained in part by the fact that most royal cults, which served as a model for the private cults, operated in this area. However, many of the officials of the later Old Kingdom whose tombs were in the provinces held positions in royal cults, so the system must have been known

91. See no. 21 above in this chapter.

92. Hassan, *Neb-Kaw-Her*, p. 4.

to them. Hence, the lack of evidence for phyle systems in provincial tombs may be significant.

From the preserved evidence, it is difficult to say much about the actual functioning of phyles in private mortuary cults. From the storeroom labels of *Mrrw-k3* and queen *Jpwt*, and from the *Pth-špss* fragment in the Berlin Museum, it seems clear that phyles were sometimes divided into two divisions each, just as they were in royal cults at the same period. It should be noted that all but one of the tombs in which evidence for this further division of phyles is found belonged to viziers or queens, and these tombs are quite large and lavishly decorated. The exception is the “*K3-m-nfrt*” fragment, which is of unknown provenience and lists only comparatively low titles, but which indicates that the endowment income is to be divided into tenths, implying a system with phyle divisions. In the smaller tomb of *Shm-k3*, on the other hand, it would be impossible to divide the phyles further. Only ten *hmw-k3* and five *shdw hmw-k3* are shown, a staff that would allow only three men for each of the five phyles.

Another characteristic of phyle organization is the frequent occurrence of the title *zš n z3*, which is also known, though more rarely, from royal cults.<sup>93</sup> In the endowment document of *3htj-htp/Hmj* and *Nb-k3w-Hr*, the *zšw n z3w* is addressed after the *shdw*- and *jmjw-ht hmw-k3* but before the ordinary *hmw-k3*. This order suggests that the scribe was third in authority. Since the title is usually combined with that of *hm-k3*, it seems likely that the scribe was selected from among the ka-priests of each phyle and continued to serve as a ka-priest in addition to his scribal duties.

The most interesting indicators of the functioning of phyle systems in private cults occurs in the tomb of ‘*nḥ-m-‘-Hr* (no. 23). The first, an enigmatic scene in a small storeroom that may depict the circumcision of ‘*nḥ-m-‘-Hr*’s ka-priests is discussed above.<sup>94</sup> The tomb also contains a reference to phyles in a butchering scene (fig. 6.3).<sup>95</sup> The man on the right, who is extracting the animal’s ribs, says, “Stand up! Hurry, my comrade, You must bring these ribs up before the lector priest comes to do the ritual!” The seated man, who is waving a length of

93. Posener-Kriéger and de Cenival, *Abu Sir Papyri*, pl. 80B; a lintel fragment of the Fifth or Sixth Dynasty in the Cleveland Museum of Art, 20.1992, in which *Nfrj* is called scribe of a phyle of the pyramid of Khufu; and *Hntj-k3* (no. 22 above), who was a *zš n z3* at the mortuary temple of Pepi I.

94. See *Chapter 4* and figure 4.1.

95. This drawing is based on that of Badawy, *Nyhetep-Ptah and ‘Ankhm‘ahor*, fig. 47, in consultation with his photograph (ibid., pl. 61). An *n* has been added in the upper right hand corner (*ntj ḥn*‘).



Figure 6.3. A Butchering Scene from the Tomb of 'nh-m-'Hr


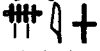
intestine in the face of the first speaker, replies,<sup>96</sup> “Me, I’ve taken hold of it’s snake!”<sup>97</sup> The ka-priests of this *st* phyle are the ones who are bringing things to the offering table.” The implication of the second speech is that the seated man does not belong to the *st* phyle. Is this because he does not belong to any phyle

96. Previous translators, most recently Badawy, *Nyhetep-Ptah and 'Ankhn'ahor*, p. 36, have attributed this speech to the third man in the scene, who is cutting off the hind leg of the animal and over whose head the speech is written. However, the exhortation to stand up, the belligerent way in which the middle man waves the intestines, and the obvious inability of the third man to stop what he is doing, make it likely that the conversation, despite its placement, is between the two men on the right.

97. Or, “I’ve taken hold myself!” The word *g* for snake is unknown, but the stroke and the manner in which the intestines are brandished make such a translation tempting. The use of the feminine suffix to refer to the animal is also a problem.





The occurrence of more than one phyle working at the same time in these scenes cannot, however, be taken as evidence that the phyles in private tombs did not serve in rotation. Two tombs, that of 'nh-m-<sup>c</sup>-R<sup>c</sup> (no. 6) and that of an unknown person (no. 29), refer to the monthly service of the phyles in private tombs. Priests are labeled , z3 n hmw-k3 jmj-3bd, "a phyle of ka-priests which is in the month," in the first case, and ... , z3 2 jmj-3bd, "the two divisions of the ... phyle which is in the month," in the second. These examples make it clear that, as in the royal cults, phyles in private cults rotated in and out of service and served for periods of one month. Private cults in which the phyles were not further split into divisions, however, would have had a five-month cycle of rotation, rather than the ten-month cycle used in royal cults and (presumably) in private cults where the phyles were split.

Another source for the internal functioning of private phyles is the endowment documents that regulated the functioning of the cult. These texts were occasionally copied on the walls of the tomb or otherwise made more permanent. Such documents also occur in royal cults.<sup>101</sup> They can be divided into two types. The first type of document, which includes all the royal documents and several of the private ones as well,<sup>102</sup> deals with the responsibilities of the cult to the mortuary priests and protects them from any control by members of the deceased's family or anyone else who might interfere with their rights to the fruits of the mortuary endowment. In some cases, these texts specify the contents of the endowment and the manner in which the position of ka-priest is to be passed on.

A second, rarer type of document deals with the responsibilities of the ka-priest to the deceased and usually specifies what is to be done if these responsibilities are neglected. It is in texts of this type that references to phyles occur.<sup>103</sup> Table 2 outlines the contents of these documents and indicates which types of clauses are used in them.<sup>104</sup> Several of these clauses deal with phyles. One stipulates that the share of a priest shall be divided among the rest of his phyle if he takes another duty (voluntarily or involuntarily) or if he makes some

101. The major royal texts of this type are collected in H. Goedicke, *Königliche Dokumente*.

102. For example, in Goedicke, *Rechtsinschriften*: Wp-m-nfrt, pl. 4; Nj-k3w-R<sup>c</sup>, pl. 3; Pn-mrw, pl. 6; a reused block from Lisht, pl. 12; and Tntj, pl. 13.

103. See "K3-m-nfrt" (no. 7 above), *ibid.* pl. 5, pp. 44–67; Nj-<sup>c</sup>nh-Hnmw and Hnmw-htp (no. 12 above), Moussa and Altenmüller, *Nianchchnum und Chnumhotep*, pl. 11; 3htj-htp/Hmj and Nb-k3w-Hr (no. 15 above), Goedicke, *Rechtsinschriften*, pls. 9–10, pp. 81–103; and Snnw-<sup>c</sup>nh (no. 26 above), *ibid.*, pl. 8, pp. 75–80.

104. The texts from the tomb of 3htj-htp and Nb-k3w-Hr are reconstructed from the parallels with the other documents.

sort of disturbance in the offerings. Another stipulation, found only in the text that we have called “*K3-m-nfrt*,” gives details about the redistribution of the endowment income. In the event of a surplus, after some judgment is made, “what remains after is to be distributed among these phyles in tenths.”<sup>105</sup> The division into tenths, rather than fifths, suggests that in the cult that this inscription regulated, as in those of *Mrrw-k3* and *Pth-špss*, phyles were divided further into ten divisions. This conclusion would throw further doubt on the identification of this piece with the cult of *K3-m-nfrt* of Giza, since that tomb is comparatively small and the owner had few of the high titles shared by the two viziers with royal wives. However, the three titles on the piece itself are very modest (*smr wʿtj*, *hrj-tp Nḥb*, and *ʿd-mr dw3 Hr ḥntj-pt*). It could be argued that the division into tenths was unrelated to the phyle system. Since ten is a round number in the Egyptian number system, a tenth share might be expected to occur in many contexts. For example, the will of *Nj-k3-ʿnh* assigns his son one-tenth of the temple income despite the fact that the cult service was organized into twelve parts.

Table 2. Phyles in Private Cult Endowment Documents

	“ <i>K3-m-nfrt</i> ”	<i>Nj-ʿnh-Hnmw</i> and <i>Hnmw-ḥtp</i>	<i>Snnw-ʿnh</i>	<i>3ḥtj-ḥtp</i> and <i>Nb-k3w-Hr</i>
Tomb owner’s family cannot interfere	×	×	×	×
Duties transferred with property to one legitimate heir only	×	—	×	×
Priest who files lawsuit loses share to accused priest	×	×	×	×
Priest who deserts loses share to his phyle	×	—	×	×
Priest who is taken away for another duty loses share to his phyle	×	×	×	×
Priest who transfers share improperly loses share to his phyle	—	×	—	×
Priest who disturbs offerings [loses share to his phyle]	×	—	—	—
Surplus income divided into ten parts	×	—	—	—

What, then, do these endowment documents tell us about the phyle system in private tombs? It is clear that the phyle functioned as an economic unit. Shares of the profits of the endowment that were forfeited by a ka-priest, along with his duties, were presumably shared among the members of his phyle until a

105. Goedicke, *Rechtsinschriften*, pl. 5, 18th and 19th vertical columns.

replacement could be found. Officials (*srw*) seem to have had a voice in the reassignment of ka-priests to other duties: either they could order it or their approval was required. The similarities in the clauses of these documents makes it likely that the general outlines of the system were similar in most cults, but the organization seems not to have been formalized or mandatory since all the documents use different phrases to specify the conditions of service.

#### 6.4. FURTHER QUESTIONS ABOUT PRIVATE PHYLES

In general, it may be concluded that the use of phyle systems in private tomb cults was a passing phenomenon that flourished during the period around the change from the Fifth to the Sixth Dynasties. As far as possible, the organization of these cults mimicked the royal system. The exactness of the parallel was constrained only by the wealth of the private tomb owner and, possibly, by a prohibition against using the name of the *wr* phyle in a private context.

In the case of the royal system, as reflected in the Neferirkare papyri, priests seem to have received their income as individuals, whereas in the endowment documents for private tombs we see that surplus shares are distributed first to the phyles and (presumably) then among the phyle members. It is interesting that in the one case in the Abu Sir papyri where a phyle seems to function as an economic unit and receive goods, it is the “parasite” *jmj-nfrt* phyle from the cult of *Mnw-nfr*.<sup>106</sup> The nature of this “parasite” relationship, however, is still a mystery. It is unclear how common such arrangements were and how the duties of the private phyle were split between the royal cult and the cult of its non-royal sponsor. The differences we see in the distribution of payment in these two kinds of cults may simply be due to the difference in the type of documents that have been preserved.

Another question about private phyles that cannot be answered with any certainty is whether the organization was used in the households of private individuals as well as in their mortuary cults. There is some evidence to suggest that this was the case in royal households, at least in the earlier periods.<sup>107</sup> There is also evidence that phyle organization was used on large estates during the First Intermediate Period, since in the story of the Eloquent Peasant the steward of the vizier calls upon two *jmjw-z3*, “members of a phyle,” who seem to be employees of the household. Whether the system was used in the households of Old Kingdom officials, however, is a question that cannot be answered with the evidence now available.

106. Posener-Kriéger and de Cenival, *Abu Sir Papyri*, pl. 63, text A.

107. See *Chapter 8* below.

## CHAPTER 7

### THE ORGANIZATION OF WORK CREWS

#### 7.1. THE FOURTH DYNASTY SYSTEM

Beginning in the early Fourth Dynasty, there is evidence that a system of phyles was applied to a practical problem, the organization of work crews. Large scale organization of labor was clearly necessary for the accurate fitting and placement of the giant monolithic blocks that were used to build the huge monuments that became popular during this period. Whether the same system was used in earlier periods is impossible to determine.

The Fourth Dynasty work crews and their duties bore little resemblance to the later temple priesthoods that made use of the same organizational nomenclature. It has been suggested, however, that the members of the same phyles who built the monuments of the kings of the Old Kingdom stayed on after the monuments were completed to maintain the buildings and carry out the cult.<sup>1</sup> The nature of the phyle system in work crews is discussed here in order to evaluate this suggestion and to establish the differences between the two spheres of phyle activity.

The internal organization of work crews is relatively well known.<sup>2</sup> For purposes of this discussion, the English word "crew" is used here to designate

1. A clear outline of this suggestion is to be found in Helck's article, "Pyramiden," in *Paulys Realencyclopädie der klassischen Altertumswissenschaften*, v. 23/2 [= 46], col. 2257, which was, however, written before publication of the Abu Sir papyri. These papyri deal a heavy blow to this theory, see R. Stadelmann, "La Ville de pyramide à l'ancien empire," *RdÉ* 33 (1982):67-77.
2. G. Haeny, "Die Steinbruch- und Baumarken," in *Die Sonnenheiligtum des Königs Userkaf*, H. Ricke, ed., 2 vols., BÄBA 7 and 8 (Wiesbaden, 1965-69) 2:30-31. For a recent discussion of this and other aspects of Old Kingdom work crews, see C. J. Eyre, "Work and the Organisation of Work in the Old Kingdom," in *Labor in the Ancient Near East*, M. A. Powell, ed., AOS Monograph Series (New Haven, 1987), pp. 5-47.

the workers who were employed on either a single project or part of a project. There is no known Egyptian equivalent to this term, but it seems to have been a very real administrative unit, made up of two “gangs” (𓂏 *prw*). The pairing of gang names in temple reliefs that depict workers demonstrates the reality of the “crew” as a unit of organization, as does the paired distribution of gang names on the buildings themselves (see below). The names of the gangs were distinctive and were usually built on the cartouche, or less frequently the Horus name, of the reigning king.<sup>3</sup> Figure 7.1 contains two texts found on separate blocks from the mortuary temple of Menkaure to illustrate the administrative hierarchy of work crews.<sup>4</sup> The gangs were further divided into phyles, only four of which are attested from the Fourth Dynasty (*wr*, *st*, *w3dt*, and *nds*), though the fifth must already have been in existence by this time.<sup>5</sup> The names of these phyles were in every case written in the forms that became standard for phyles in royal contexts in the later Old Kingdom. These phyles were further divided into what I have called “divisions,” of which there seem to have been at least four per phyle in the Menkaure work organization. As in mortuary priesthoods, these divisions were indicated by single hieroglyphs, which seem to have varied freely.

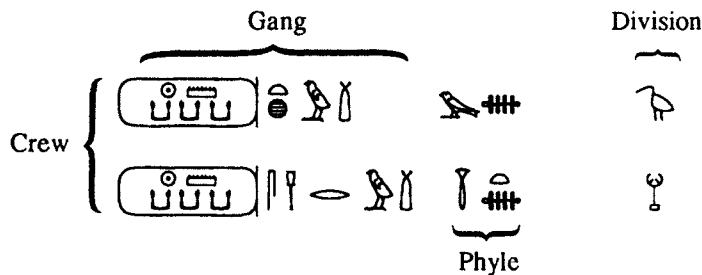









Figure 7.1. The Organization of Work Crews

Though no known ancient word for “division” is directly attested, one might be seen in the “tens” that occur in two Old Kingdom titles: 𓂏𓂏, *wr 10 šm‘w*

3. That the gangs were named after the reigning king and not the patron of the monument on which they were employed is apparent from the fact that the name of Djedefre occurs in the gang names on the blocks that covered the boat pit at the pyramid of Khufu. Nour et al., *Cheops Boat*, pl. 11.
4. See Reisner, *Mycerinus*, pl. 11. I have taken the most complete set of names as an example: that of the *w3dt* phyle of one gang and the *wr* phyle of the other, shown in Reisner’s plan as xiii and as v, xi, and xiv.
5. The plates from the Step Pyramid (discussed in *Chapter 8* below, as numbers *J:1* and *J:2*) seem to show an otherwise unattested transitional phase of five phyles, in which the name *jmj-nfrrt* has not yet been clearly established as the name of the fifth.

“Great one of the tens of Upper Egypt”; and  , *jmj-r 10* “Overseer of ten.”<sup>6</sup> Figure 2.9 shows an inscribed flake from Giza,<sup>7</sup> which gives the phyle name *st* and two of its divisions, with each division followed by a personal name. The men named share the title “overseer of ten,” which implies that, at least in this case, the phyle was divided into two groups known as “tens.” In this connection it is interesting to note that the officials who held the title     , *jmj-r z3w šm'w*, “overseer of the phyles of Upper Egypt” are almost invariably called “great one of tens of Upper Egypt” as well, often immediately afterwards.<sup>8</sup> This juxtaposition suggests that the latter title, which was much the commoner of the two, was a lower step in the same hierarchy as the former, and thus that a “ten” was a smaller unit within a phyle. It would be difficult to determine, however, whether a “ten” literally meant a group of ten men, or was simply used as a generic term for a subdivision of a phyle regardless of its size. Or the title may have had nothing to do with the number of members of the group, and have instead meant “overseer of one tenth” (*jmj-r r-10*, with the *r* serving twice). This would refer to the division of the gang into ten divisions (during a period when there were two divisions in each phyle).

The primary evidence for phyles in the context of work crews is of two types. Phyle names occur as in identifying inscriptions on tools and in texts of the same sort on the blocks of the monuments that were built by these crews.

6. Erman and Grapow, *Wörterbuch* 2:182, 2.

7. Smith, “Evidence,” p. 120, fig. 8. Figure 2.9 is a redrawing of this figure.






8. The following men are known to have borne the title *jmj-r z3w šm'w* during the Old Kingdom:

NAME	DATE	PUBLISHED	<i>wr 10 šm'w</i>
<i>Jwnw</i>	Khufu	Junker, <i>Giza</i> I, 175 fig. 31	Yes
<i>Ntr-pr.f</i>	Khufu	Fischer, <i>Dendera</i> , pl. 1	Yes
<i>K3-m-ḥ</i>	Khufu	Reisner, <i>Giza</i> I, pl. 19a	Yes
<i>K3-wd-ḥḥ</i>	Dyn. IV	James, Br. Mus. Hiero. Texts I pl. 8	No
<i>Nfr-m-3t</i>	Mid Dyn. V	Barsanti, <i>ASAE</i> 3 (1902):203–04	No
<i>K3-ḥnt II</i>	Mid-end Dyn. V	MacKay, <i>Bah. and Hem.</i> , pls. 9–19	Yes
<i>K3-ḥnt I</i>	Mid Dyn. V–IV	<i>Ibid.</i> , pls. 20–28	Yes
<i>Ḥnw-k3</i>	Mernere–Pepi II	Fraser, <i>ASAE</i> 3 (1902):75	Yes
<i>K3-m-jb</i>	Late Old Kingdom	Junker, <i>Giza</i> VII, pl. 29c	Yes
<i>Mnw-ḥḥ</i>	Dyn. VI?	Grdseloff, <i>ASAE</i> 43 (1942):358	No
<i>St-k3</i>	First Inter. Period	Unpubl. (Aswan 110)	No

All the examples in which the title *wr 10 šm'w* is missing are to a greater or lesser extent incomplete. The stela of *K3-wd-ḥḥ* in particular breaks off just after the title *jmj-r z3w šm'w*, where one most often finds *wr 10 šm'w*. The other three examples are from incompletely preserved tombs. (Professor K. Baer kindly allowed me to check this list against his files.)

13. Rowe, *Catalogue of Egyptian Scarabs*, p. 258, figure 5.



to either Khufu or Sahure on the basis of the “two falcons of gold” name.<sup>14</sup> However, only in Khufu’s golden name do the falcons occur without standards, so the axe can be securely dated to his reign.<sup>15</sup> A chisel from the diorite quarries northwest of Abu Simbel, which was found amidst broken pottery of Old Kingdom type but lacks any more exact clue to its date, also seems to make reference to this type of work crew.<sup>16</sup> Three faces of the chisel are inscribed: the first with the text , the second with , and the third with . Rowe interpreted the first group as the personal name , K3-mw, which he took to be the name of a princess or queen since it is part of the name of a gang (and hence should be a royal name) and is best paralleled by a female name from the Middle Kingdom.<sup>17</sup> This would, however, be the only example of a gang name based on the name of anyone but the king himself. Furthermore, it seems more likely that the predicate of the gang name would be used as an abbreviation, rather than the name on which it was based, since it is the predicate of a name that distinguishes it from the other gangs of the same king. Another possible reading of this face of the chisel is , nb t3wj, “Lord of Two Lands.” This would assume a gang name “[King X] is the Lord of Two Lands.”<sup>18</sup> The next face of the chisel is apparently the phyle name w3dt, though again there is no phyle determinative and the final t is lacking. The reason for the second, inverted, w3d sign is controversial. Kaplony suggested that it is related to the archaic writing of the name as w3dtjw, with the dual being used to express the phonetically identical nisbe form.<sup>19</sup> More probably, the two signs correspond to the two divisions of the w3dt phyle noted on the third face of the chisel. Rowe read these signs as a single division, the “south Libyan” division, but this involves an unusual use of two hieroglyphs as a division name. The only known example of division names that are written with multiple signs is the

14. Rowe cites occurrences with a number of different kings (*ibid.*, pp. 284, 288), including Khufu, who more closely fits the Third Dynasty to early Fourth Dynasty date range suggested by the shape of the axe blade (*ibid.*, p. 281).
15. Compare the names of Sahure listed in Kaplony, *Rollsiegel* 2: pls. 57–64, nos. 7, 14, 16, 27, 48.
16. Rowe, “Provisional Notes,” pp. 391–93.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 393.
18. This reading ignores the lowest of the three horizontal strokes. An examination of the piece itself (through the glass) in the Cairo museum suggested that this uneven and angled mark is probably a scratch. The handle on the basket sign may also be accidental. However, arguing against this interpretation is the fact that gang names normally refer to the gang members rather than to the king.
19. Kaplony, *Rollsiegel* 1:324, n. 632 (bottom). However, see the discussion of this argument above, *Section 2.1.3*.

ostrakon in which two phyle names, each supplemented with an extra *t*, serve as division names.<sup>20</sup> If the signs on the chisel represent two divisions, as it seems more reasonable to suppose, the chisel must have been shared by two divisions of the same phyle (which may or may not have constituted the entire phyle), either because they served at different times or perhaps just to make the distribution of equipment more flexible.

Of these tools, perhaps the most interesting is the axe head. Its provenience in Syria suggests that it was used on an expedition for cutting the famed “cedars of Lebanon,” perhaps even the expedition of Snefru that is mentioned on the Palermo Stone.<sup>21</sup> This would imply that the phyle system was used for all types of royal projects, not just building construction. The phyle system would have had to be modified for use on such expeditions, however, as it is hardly possible that an expedition could have traveled from Egypt to Syria, cut down and loaded the required timber, and returned to Egypt again within the standard one-month period of a phyle’s service.<sup>22</sup> Since there is no other evidence for the organization of this type of expedition, the question of how the phyle system was adapted to it must remain unanswered.

The other tools, a mallet, a chisel, and an adze, imply that the phyles to which they were assigned were employed cutting and finishing stone. This work was done either at the quarries or at the sites of the monuments, or perhaps both. All of the tools for which a provenience is known come from areas far distant from the centers of construction around Memphis; however, this may be due to the fact that metal tools abandoned in an inhabited area would probably be collected and reused, whereas those abandoned in distant quarries are more likely to have survived.

#### 7.1.2. The Pattern of Masons’ Marks

The texts found on the sites of the monuments themselves are in many ways more informative than those found on tools. They tend to be more detailed than the texts found on tools; and their fixed location and more certain datings reveal more about the way the phyle organization operated in work crews.<sup>23</sup>



20. Smith, “Evidence,” p. 120, fig. 8 (this figure is redrawn in figure 2.9 above).

21. Sethe, *Urkunden* 1, p. 236:4.

22. G. Lefebvre, “Sur trois dates dans les Mésadventures d’Ounamon,” *CdÉ* 21 (1936):97–99, allows 32 days for Wenamon’s voyage to Byblos, including a short stop in Dor. It is unlikely that the Fourth Dynasty navigators could have reached the area in less than half the time.

23. For a general discussion of the nature of these marks, see Eyre, “Work and the Organization of Work,” pp. 16–17.

The earliest reference to the use of phyles in work crews on a monument is the occurrence of the phyle name *wr* and possibly also the name *st* as masons' marks on the Meydum pyramid,<sup>24</sup> which dates from the reign of Snefru.<sup>25</sup> These marks give only the phyle, with no gang or division name. All the examples were found on fragments of the rough surfaces that had been shaved off after the blocks were in place as part of the finishing process. Since no other organizational groups are mentioned and the original patterning of the texts on the monument cannot be reconstructed, it is difficult to say much about the organization of work crews during this reign.


In the following reign of Khufu, the gang seems to have been the most important unit of organization. The texts inscribed on the side walls of the relieving chambers of the Great Pyramid name three gangs, each based on a different form of the king's name.<sup>26</sup> Seven blocks give a gang name based on his Horus name, *Hr-Mddw*;<sup>27</sup> ten give a name based on the full form of his *nswt-bjtj* name, Khnum-Khufu; and two blocks give a name based on the abbreviated form of that name, Khufu. A few of these texts may contain traces of a phyle name followed by a division mark,<sup>28</sup> but the signs  and , which occur frequently, cannot be division marks, as they occur with more than one gang. They probably indicate the orientation of the blocks or some other aid to construction.

The distribution of the gang names on the walls of the relieving chambers is an interesting foreshadowing of later developments. In each chamber, the blocks of the north side are marked with one gang name and those of the south

24. Petrie, *Meydum and Memphis* (III), pl. 5. Numbers 10 through 14 clearly mention the *wr* phyle; numbers 7 and 8 may be phonetic spellings of the name of the *st* phyle (see *Section 2.1.2*).

25. See D. Wildung, "Meidum," *LÄ* 4, col. 11, for a recent discussion of the ownership of this pyramid.

26. Reisner, *Mycerinus*, plan 12, contains a copy of these texts without any indication of their placement.

27. There are actually two variants of this name, *Hr-Mddw w'ḥ* and a writing (*ibid.*, #4) in which the *w'ḥ* sign is followed by two horizontal lines. These traces are probably the remains of the sign  an extra determinative of *w'ḥ* that has been omitted from the other examples of this name, rather than an indication of a separate gang name.

28. *Ibid.*, #4, in Nelson's chamber, may contain the name of the *w3dt* phyle. The block adjacent to it (published in J. S. Perring, *The Pyramids of Gizeh from Actual Survey and Admeasurement*, 3 fascicles (London, 1839) 1: pl. 5, lower, "West End") may give the name of the *st* phyle. These texts are located on one of the end walls of the chamber; such walls were split between the two gangs responsible for the adjacent side walls (this distribution is discussed in the text below). Hence the phyles mentioned on adjacent blocks of the same course of masonry on this wall doubtless belong to different gangs.

side with another, while the end walls are divided in half and the blocks are marked with the name of the gang whose name is on the nearest side wall. This distribution is presented schematically in figure 7.2.<sup>29</sup> The pattern suggests that

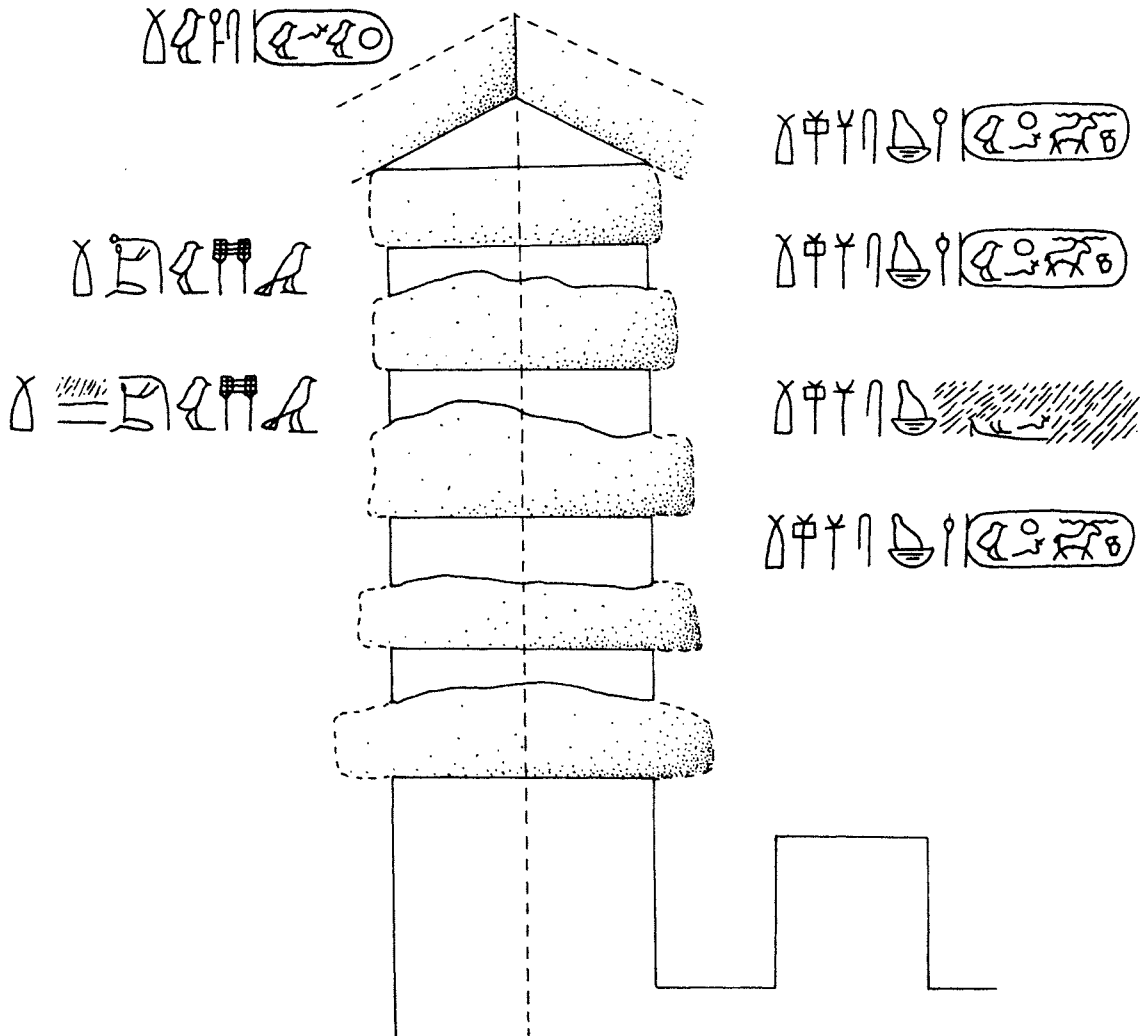




Figure 7.2. Masons' Marks in the Relieving Chambers of the Great Pyramid

29. The source of the distribution in the two upper chambers (Campbell's and Lady Arbuthnot's) is H. Vyse and J. S. Perring, *Operations Carried Out at the Pyramids of Gizeh in 1837*, 3 vols. (London, 1840–42) 1: pls. opposite pages 284 and 279. The texts from the lower chambers (Nelson's and Wellington's) and their distribution, are taken from Perring, *Pyramids of Gizeh*, 1: pl. V. The two tall signs in the northern name may be  and .

the pyramid was constructed by gangs whose responsibility was divided between its northern and southern halves. It should be noted that the blocks marked with the gang name based on the name Khufu are on a higher course of masonry than the blocks marked with the Khnum-Khufu gang on the northern wall of the same chamber, so that there may also have been a new gang assigned to the north wall (not preserved in the evidence) at the same time as a new gang came to work on the southern wall.

This patterning of gang names has interesting implications for the study of how pyramids were built. It might be argued that the King's Chamber is actually situated completely in the southern half of the pyramid, so that the gang assigned to the south might logically have been assigned the entire King's Chamber. However, this chamber was apparently considered to have an axis of its own, probably because it was built before the surrounding masonry was put in. The fact that the gangs changed during the construction of these chambers implies that gangs or even crews served in a rotation of some sort; if more evidence for this rotation could be found elsewhere, it might provide a useful guide to the rate of construction.

Another incomplete reference to the system can be seen on one of the blocks used to seal the pit of the Khufu mortuary boat. This text gives the name of a gang of Khufu's successor Djedefre and a division name, but it does not mention a phyle.<sup>30</sup> Unfortunately, no record of the position of these inscribed blocks seems to have been kept, and the ink inscriptions are no longer visible. It is to be hoped that if the second boat pit is excavated, these data will be recorded.

The first clear references on the blocks of a building to phyles as an integral part of the system of gangs and divisions occur in the mortuary temple of Menkaure.<sup>31</sup> These texts are written in red ink on the second course of the large core blocks of the temple in signs about 30 cm high. They are now almost entirely invisible.<sup>32</sup> Each text originally gave the name of a gang, a phyle, and a division. Reisner, who excavated the temple and discovered these texts, concluded that the blocks were inscribed before the blocks bearing them were put in place, because the leveling lines were drawn over the texts and because one text is sideways, the block on which it occurs having been placed on end.<sup>33</sup> He also suggested that each block was originally inscribed identically on all four

30. Nour et al., *Cheops Boat*, pl. 11.

31. Reisner, *Mycerinus*, plan 11 and Appendix E, pp. 273–77.

32. In 1982 only one of these texts remained visible to any extent (*ibid.*, plan 11, iv). Traces of red ink also remain in the areas where Reisner said texts xii and xv were.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 273.

long sides,<sup>34</sup> because in four cases both exposed sides of a block are inscribed with the same set of names. These texts undoubtedly indicate that the division named on the block was assigned responsibility for the block at some period between its quarrying and its erection in the core of the temple.

As in the relieving chambers in the Great Pyramid, a pattern can be seen in the placement of the blocks of the two gangs. Where they are preserved, the gang, phyle, and division name on each of the blocks in this course is indicated in figure 7.3. The two inscriptions that name the gang "The Companions of Menkaure," which each occur with a different phyle, are located in the southern half of the mortuary temple, while the thirteen references to the gang "The Drunks of Menkaure,"<sup>35</sup> on nine different blocks, all occur in the northern half of the temple. All the texts are located in a small, well-defined area: the large triangular area behind the open court of the upper temple and the complexes of rooms on either side of it. About a third of the blocks that comprise the second course of masonry in this area bear phyle names, so the distribution of gang names on these blocks is not likely to be coincidental.

When were these marks put on the blocks? From Reisner's arguments, it is clear that they were not marked after they were put in place. They were not monumental, in any case, because if the temple had been finished as planned, the surfaces on which they were written would have been stripped off. The core blocks upon which these texts occur were quarried on the Giza plateau, perhaps from one of the quarries on either side of the causeway, so their transport offered little opportunity for the mixing of blocks quarried at different periods. In addition, the geological layering in these blocks shows that they were frequently placed together in the temple wall just as they had been in the earth. In some cases one can see a vein of softer rock running the length of a wall.<sup>36</sup> These core blocks were generally laid in segments, having previously been fitted together,<sup>37</sup> probably at the quarry. The simplest procedure would have been to fit together a row of blocks that had been quarried from the same area.

34. Ibid.

35. The word is quite clearly *thw* rather than *rhw*, despite the gang of Unis, *Hr-nbw-w3d rhw*, which is depicted on his causeway and is shown in Gunn's notes, C.U. p. 63 #37 (I am grateful to Ms. Helen Murray, archivist at the Griffith Institute, Oxford, for making me copies of this portion of the notes, and to Dr. Mark Smith for requesting and sending them).


36. This phenomenon was pointed out to me by Mark Lehner.

37. Assuming that the building was constructed by means of ramps and filling of each course as described in S. Clarke and R. Engelbach, *Ancient Egyptian Masonry: The Building Craft* (London, 1930), pp. 91–92, 100–05.



Figure 7.3. Masons' Marks at the Mortuary Temple of Menkaure

At this point, each of the series of fitted blocks would have been marked with the hieroglyph of the division that was responsible for placing the block correctly in the temple. It can thus be assumed that divisions whose names occur on adjacent blocks were working at the same time.

This assumption implies that two phyles of the same gang were in service at the same time in this mortuary temple, since blocks naming divisions of the *wr* phyle alternate with blocks naming divisions of the *w3dt* phyle. This alternation cannot represent a simple change of phyles during the course of construction, because the blocks are so thoroughly intermixed. The  division of the *wr* phyle has three blocks in this area, each part of a different wall, which clearly suggests that each division was assigned one block of every wall segment erected. Nor could it be argued that these changes of phyle represent the passing of an entire four- or five-phyle rotation, because in that case one would expect to see blocks assigned to divisions of the intervening phyles as well.

Though rotation in and out of service, one following the other, was one of the most characteristic features of the phyle organization, it does not seem to have operated here. It is not likely, however, that all the phyles were working at the same time, because one would then expect all the phyles to be represented in this area and not just two. The most probable solution is that the phyles served in some sort of overlapping rotation.

An overlapping rotation is supported by the contemporary inscriptions on the inner blocks of the north face of a private mastaba to the south of the Great Pyramid at Giza, Mastaba G VI S,<sup>38</sup> which record gangs whose names are based on the Horus name of Menkaure, *Hr-k3-ht*. The most interesting feature of these texts is that the phyle names are in most cases grouped in pairs after the gang name on a single block. Some blocks combine the *st* and *wr* phyles; others combine *w3dt*, and *nds*. The only exceptions to this observation are the two dated texts, in which only one phyle name is given.

Junker read each of these pairs as one of two phyle names, *t3-wr* and *jmj-wrt*; however, it is maintained above that this interpretation is unlikely.<sup>39</sup> The principal arguments against Junker's readings are the careful distinction made between the *wr* and the *nds* birds, the lack of any other evidence that a *t3-wr* phyle existed, and the doubled phyle determinative in one example.

A problem with the new readings is the fact that two phyles of the same crew seem to be working at once and in fact seem to share the responsibility for

38. This mastaba is called Mastaba VII by Junker; the designation G VI S is that of Reisner and was adopted by Porter and Moss. The texts on its north face are published in Junker, *Giza*, 10: figs. 34, 35. Junker's figure 34 is redrawn in figure 2.2 above.

39. See *Sections 2.1.1–2*.



the transportation and placement of the same stone. However, as has been shown above, a system in which two phyles work simultaneously is a necessary deduction from the arrangement of the texts in the Menkaure mortuary temple. The simplest explanation for the Mastaba G VI S texts is to assume that the workmen who built it were recruited from a similarly organized crew that was working on the Menkaure mortuary complex nearby. This is not at all an unreasonable assumption. Many Old Kingdom officials brag that parts of their tombs were built at royal expense.<sup>40</sup> G VI S, like the other mastabas in the row just south of the Khufu pyramid, is very large. Though the name of the owner has been lost, one of the tombs in the same row belongs to a king's son, *Dd.f-Hwfw*,<sup>41</sup> and the king might reasonably have supplied workmen from his building crews for his relatives' tombs. In any case, the presence of blocks marked with royal crew names indicates clearly that mastaba G VI S was built by members of a royal crew.

The pair *st-wr* always occurs with the gang name *Hr-k3-ht ...w*; while the pair *w3dt-nds* and the individual *w3dt* and *nds* phyles always occur with the gang name *Hr-k3-ht nds*. This pattern suggests that during the period when G VI S was being built, the personnel of the crew on the larger royal project consisted of the *st* phyle and the *wr* phyle of the gang *Hr-k3-ht ...w* and the *w3dt* phyle and the *nds* phyle of the gang *Hr-k3-ht nds*. Rather than divert an entire division from a royal building project to accomplish this task, which would unbalance the system, the masons' marks on G VI S suggest that the overseer of works simply skimmed a few men from each phyle. These men would have retained their practice of marking each block for which they were responsible with their crew names, but the small size of the crew made further differentiation unnecessary, so that the phyle names would be combined and the division names omitted entirely.



Thus both the masons' marks on the Menkaure mortuary temple and the marks on the blocks of G VI S are most easily explained by a system of organization in which two phyles of each gang are in service at any given time. This does not necessarily imply that phyles rotated in pairs; the pairing may simply have resulted from a longer period of service, such as a system in which a new phyle began work each month but worked for a period of two months rather than one. The paired phyles on the blocks from G VI S also suggest that each gang had an independent system of rotation, since the *wr* and *st* phyles of

40. For example: *Sndm-jb/Jntj* (Sethe, *Urkunden* 1, p. 65–66); *Nj-‘nh-Shmt* (Borchardt, CG #1482).

41. Junker, *Giza* 10:50.

the *Hr-k3-ht* ...*w* gang are in service simultaneously with the *w3dt* and *nds* phyles of the gang *Hr-k3-ht nds*.

Since only the first four phyles occur in masons' marks, it seems most likely that the *jmj-nfrt* phyle was not used in work crews during this period. The similar names of the *wr* and *nds* phyles would thus be adjacent if the staggered rotation followed the standard phyle order, and this overlap would create a potential confusion in identifying blocks. The fact that these two phyles do not seem to have overlapped, both in the Menkaure mortuary temple marks and the pairings attested in the G VI S texts, suggests that this order was modified. A likely order is *st*, *wr*, *w3dt*, and *nds*, which could result in the pairings attested and would also explain why the *st* sign precedes the *wr* sign on the G VI S texts: the *st* phyle had been in service longer, and preceded the *wr* phyle in the rotation.<sup>42</sup>

After the reign of Menkaure, the next occurrence of phyle names in the context of work crews is from the unfinished monument of Wehemka<sup>43</sup> at Zawiyet el-Aryan.<sup>44</sup> These texts were found on blocks that had been thrown down the main shaft of the tomb, and hence their original location in the tomb, if any, is unknown. At least two gangs occur in these texts:  and . The former is followed in two cases by the name of the *wr* phyle, and the latter is followed in one case by what is probably the phyle name *st*. There may be other phyle names beyond these three examples, but they cannot be identified with any certainty on the basis of the published copies. These texts give very little information and would be consistent with both the system apparently in use during the reign of Menkaure and the later priestly model.

42. Herodotus II, 124, describes a three month rotation in his account of the building of the Great Pyramid. W. M. F. Petrie, *The Pyramids and Temples of Gizeh* (London, n.d.), pp. 209–15, suggested that the three months mentioned correspond to the inundation season, when agricultural workers were idle. However, R. Stadelmann, *Die ägyptische Pyramiden* (Mainz am Rhein, 1985), p. 224, has argued that the dates on masons' marks at Dahshur demonstrate that pyramid construction continued throughout the year. Eyre, "Work and the Organisation of Work in the Old Kingdom," pp. 17–18, also rejects Petrie's hypothesis. Herodotus's three-month period of service can be reconciled with the overlapping rotation described above if a new phyle came into service not every month but two of every three months. On the other hand, Herodotus' three-month shift may simply be an indication that the work was organized by the phyle system, since in the period in which Herodotus was writing there were four phyles that served a total of three months every year.
43. This king's name is sometimes read *Nfr-k3*; the reading Wehemka (*Whm-k3*) is due to Klaus Baer, who referred to Posener-Krieger and de Cenival, *Abu Sir Papyri*, Paleography pl. 3: #F25, for the shape of the sign in question.
44. Barsanti, "Zaouiet el-Aryan," pp. 262–81.

The Fourth Dynasty evidence for work crews, taken as a whole, gives a picture of phyle organization quite different from the one usually extrapolated by analogy with the later priestly phyles. The building of a royal mortuary complex seems to have been achieved by dividing it into areas and assigning a crew of two gangs to each area. The gangs then divided the area for which they were responsible into a northern and a southern sector, within which the phyles and divisions that composed them worked. Each division would have been assigned one massive block of each segment of wall, and was probably responsible for at least the joining and placement of the block and perhaps the quarrying as well. The finishing would have been done later, or, in many cases, not at all. Crews, gangs, and divisions were used to organize workers spatially, but phyles appear to have some other function, presumably some sort of overlapping rotation.

## 7.2. THE LATER OLD KINGDOM PHYLE SYSTEM IN WORK CREWS


No masons' marks that mention phyles survive on blocks from the Fifth Dynasty mortuary temples.<sup>45</sup> In the private tomb of *Pth-šps* at Abu Sir, many of the blocks bear names and titles of high officials,<sup>46</sup> which suggests that perhaps some officials copied the royal practice of retaining gangs of laborers which they named after themselves. Other blocks are marked simply with a single hieroglyph, which may be the division mark of some royal (or private?) phyle or may indicate some alternative system of organization. Since each division in a phyle organization had a distinct name, the name of the division would have been sufficient to identify the workmen responsible for the block without mention of the phyle.

The last dated references to named phyles in work crews differ considerably from the earlier evidence. These references occur on four limestone tablets found in the rubble that filled the upper part of the sun temple of Userkaf at Abu Sir.<sup>47</sup> Each tablet gives a date, the name of a phyle, and the name of a division, but no gangs are named. At least two texts refer to what is probably the side of the temple to which the phyle was attached, and three give a number associated

45. Haeny, "Steinbruch- und Baumarken," p. 33.

46. Ibid, pp. 37–39.

47. Three of these tablets were first published by H. Ricke, "Erster Grabungsbericht über das Sonnenheiligtum des Königs Userkaf bei Abusir," *ASAE* 54 (1957):77, pl. 1b; and idem, "Zweiter Grabungsbericht über das Sonnenheiligtum des Königs Userkaf bei Abusir," *ASAE* 54 (1957):311, pl. 4a. They have since been more fully published and discussed, along with a fourth text discovered by Borchardt, in Edel, "Kalksteintäfelchen," pp. 1–22. Edel's drawings of these tablets are redrawn in figure 2.1 above.

with the sign . These texts are quite informative despite the fact that their function is not entirely clear. They seem in some way to record the progress of the work.

Edel, in his discussion of these texts, concluded that they belonged to only two phyles: the *wr/jmj-wrt* phyle and the *jmj-nfrt* phyle.<sup>48</sup> Posener-Kriéger<sup>49</sup> and Helck<sup>50</sup> both rightly concluded that the name read *wr* by Edel in texts A and C is to be read *nds*, as discussed above.<sup>51</sup> Further examination also shows that the group in text B, which Edel took to be the phyle name *jmj-wrt*, is more probably a directional indication that parallels those in texts A and C. This group might be read either as the group *jmj-wrt*, “west,” or, less probably, as *jmnt*, with the same meaning.<sup>52</sup> These texts thus seem to concern three of the five phyles: *nds*, *jmj-nfrt*, and *wr*.

The general format of these texts varies only slightly within the four examples. All begin with a date, from the year of the 5th counting and the following year, probably regnal years 10 and 11 of some successor of Userkaf.<sup>53</sup> Following the date on texts A and C is a reference to the work of building, which in text A mentions the name of the temple. The fact that these more elaborate texts belong to the same phyle and division may indicate that the extra information was a flourish on the part of the scribe who was assigned to that division.

The other information, arranged in varying orders, is tabulated in table 3: (The identifying letters were assigned by Edel in chronological order.)

48. Ibid., p. 4.

49. Posener-Kriéger, *Archives*, pp. 576–78.

50. Helck, “Handwerker- und Priesterphylen,” pp. 1–3.




51. Section 2.1.1.

52. This argument is presented more fully in *Chapter 2*. Tablet B has been destroyed or lost since its discovery by Borchardt. Edel’s publication is based only on a rough copy made in the field by the excavator. Both readings of this group assume that the copy is somewhat inaccurate, but this assumption is justified by other mistakes in the copy; for example, the shaded area is not large enough to allow the restoration of the *nfr* sign that is certainly to be restored in *jmj-nfrt*.

53. W. Kaiser, “Zu den Sonnenheiligtümer der 5. Dynastie,” *MDAIK* 14 (1956):110, first pointed out that these dates cannot belong to Userkaf, based on other evidence that he reigned less than 10 years. Ricke dates the tablets to the reign of Neferirkare, arguing from the state of completion of the obelisk shown in the determinative of the sun temple’s name (Ricke, “Bau,” pp. 15–18).

Table 3. The Four Tablets from Userkaf's Sun Temple

	Date	Direction	Phyle	—
A				—
B				o o u
C				o o u
D				o o o o

The date and phyle indications are straightforward, while the other elements of the texts are problematic. The directions on tablets B and D have previously been interpreted differently. The group on tablet B was read as the phyle name *jmj-wrt*, but as there is no phyle sign and as the context is clearly royal it seems best to read it as a direction as suggested above.<sup>54</sup> Edel took the sign  on tablet D as a second division of the phyle. However, since other tablets mention only one division for each phyle and since a directional indicator is otherwise lacking on this tablet, it is likely that  is to be read here as a parallel to .

Edel assumed that because the directional indications follow the references to building in tablets A and C, they refer to the part of the temple under construction during the month given on the tablet.<sup>55</sup> This is a reasonable assumption. It is interesting, however, that the *nds* phyle worked on the north side of the temple during two rotations, separated by ten months in time. When the phyles are arranged around a plan of the upper temple in accordance with the directional indications they are associated with, as in figure 7.5, a pattern emerges.

The phyles encircle the temple in their standard order<sup>56</sup> beginning with the south (the primary direction of orientation in Egypt), continuing in counter-clockwise progression, and ending with the *jmj-nfrt* "last" phyle, appropriately at the back of the temple. The proposed restoration of the *st* and *w3dt* phyles at the southern and northern parts of the east side of the temple is admittedly rather forced. But such a restoration is supported in the archaeological evidence from a

54. The use of *jmj-wrt* as the geographical term "west" is quite well established and is discussed above in Section 3.3. Its geographical use is even attested in masons' marks at Userkaf's sun temple itself; see Haeny, "Steinbruch- und Baumarken," p. 42, fig. 4.

55. Edel, "Kalksteintäfelchen," p. 15.

56. See Section 2.2.

later reign. At the mortuary temple of Neferirkare, a pillar was found that bears the remains of a royal serekh on the northern face and the name of the  $\overline{\text{r}}$  division of the  $w3\overline{\text{d}}t$  phyle on the eastern face.<sup>57</sup> The pillar is finely carved. This is presumably a reference to a priestly phyle in the temple; however, the placement of this pillar, at the northeast corner of the temple, corresponds exactly to the position that was assigned to the  $w3\overline{\text{d}}t$  phyle based on the tablets from the Userkaf sun temple. It is interesting that the name of the phyle on this pillar is in a more prominent position (facing the front of the temple) than the name of the king on the northern side. Although the text simply may have meant that the pillar was built or repaired by members of this phyle, the correspondence with the Userkaf tablets suggests that there was a more enduring association of the phyle and the place. Borchardt noted that there is an emplacement for a similar pillar at the southeastern corner, which by my hypothesis would have been inscribed with the name of the  $st$  phyle.

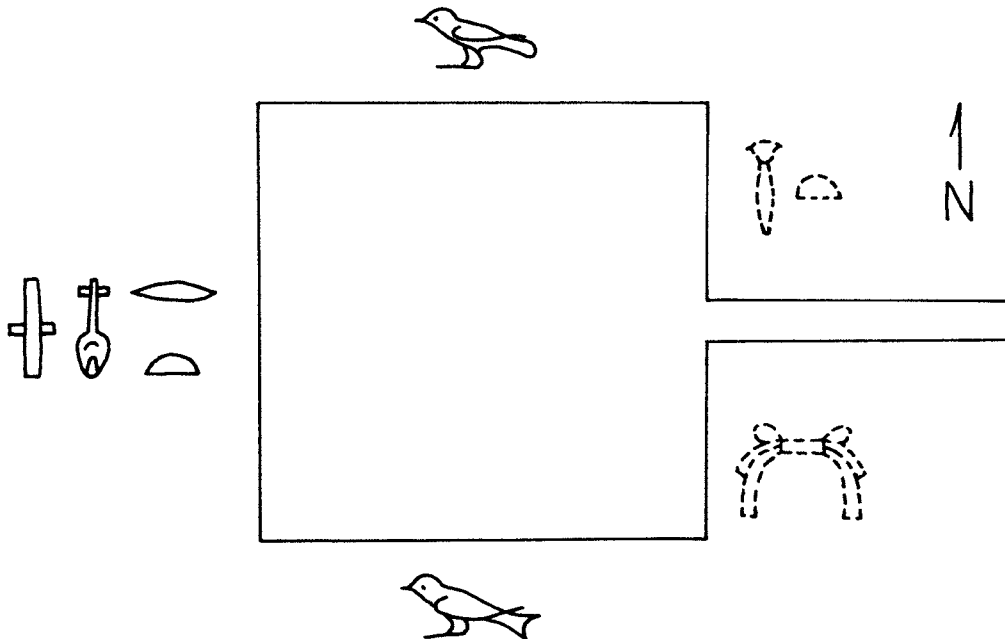


Figure 7.4. The Distribution of Phyles Around the Sun Temple of Userkaf

Aside from labels on storerooms that give phyle names,<sup>58</sup> the only other architectural element bearing a phyle name is in the mortuary temple of Sahure,

57. Borchardt, *Neferirkare*, p. 15 and fig. 6.

58. Borchardt, *Ne-user-re*, p. 54, notes that a broken text, apparently a reference to the  $wr$  phyle, occurs on a block from one of the sets of storerooms that flank the entrance vestibule of Niuserre's mortuary temple. A similar label occurs twice in red ink on the

where the name of the  $\dagger$  division of the *jmj-nfrt* phyle is carved on both jambs of a doorway in the eastern facade of the wall that encloses the entire complex.<sup>59</sup> This example is also closely associated with a royal name, as it follows directly after the name of the royal mortuary complex,  $H^c-b3-S3hwR^c$ . The position of this doorway does not correspond to the arrangement of phyles around temples postulated above, as it is to the southeast of the temple rather than to the west. However, the doorway on which these phyle names are carved gives access to the corridor that runs between the enclosure wall and the temple proper and thus might be thought of as marking the entrance to the corridor that led to the western area with which it is associated in the Userkaf tablets.

It is difficult to explain the correspondence of the references to compass points in the Userkaf tablets with the corner pillar at the Neferirkare temple as a coincidence. If these correspondences between phyles and parts of temples are real, they seem to have been valid for both the phyles of the temple functionaries and the phyles of the work crews. In any case, these geographical divisions seem to have been used for the work crews at the sun temple of Userkaf. If the phyles of work crews were routinely assigned specific areas of responsibility in the temples of the Fifth Dynasty, it would mark another change from the system of the Fourth Dynasty, when such geographical distinctions were marked by the gangs. Names of gangs do not occur in masons' marks in the Fifth Dynasty temples, and it may be that the phyles had incorporated the functions of the gang into their own organization, perhaps because some of the rotating function of the phyles had been shifted to the divisions.

Another facet of these tablets was first pointed out by Helck.<sup>60</sup> He noted that the phyles' order of rotation in and out of service seems to have corresponded to the standard phyle order: *wr*, [*st*], [*w3dt*], *nds*, and *jmj-nfrt*. His reconstruction was somewhat forced, however, as it was necessary to attribute the date given in text B to the *jmj-nfrt* phyle, mentioned in the last line of the text, rather than to the group that immediately follows the date, which Helck, following Edel, considered to be the *jmj-wrt* phyle. If this group is read as a directional indication, as suggested above, there is a clear association between the date and








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underside of a lintel of a storeroom in the mortuary temple of Neferirkare, naming a division of the *w3dt* phyle (Borchardt, *Neferirkare*, p. 32; the *w3d* sign is there however). This division is known from the temple archives to have been a priestly phyle at this temple (Posener-Kriéger, *Archives*, p. 557). These storeroom labels are discussed above in Section 5.5.

59. Borchardt, *Das Grabdenkmal des Königs Sahure*, WVDOG 14 and 26, 2 vols. (Leipzig, 1910–14) 1:100.

60. Helck, "Handwerker- und Priesterphylen," p. 4.

the desired phyle name. There is, however, no way to tell from Helck's analysis whether this rotation was a five-month cycle or whether, like the priestly phyles at Abu Sir, the two divisions of each phyle rotated separately, which would result in a cycle of ten months.

Yet another difficulty with the tablets from the Userkaf sun temple is the significance of the number that follows the sign . Edel concluded that these numbers represent the number of men working in the division.<sup>61</sup> The primary evidence for this contention in Edel's discussion is the occurrence of a genitive *n* between the group that he read as the phyle name *jmj-wrt* and the group   in text B. He took this to be the genitive indicating contents, and the contents of a phyle must be men. Since the first group is actually a compass direction, however, the *n* offers no clue to the significance of the following number. As another argument for his translation, Edel cited the apparent correspondence between the mention of two divisions on tablet D and a number that is approximately twice the number given in texts B and C, in which only one division is mentioned. Again, the interpretation of the sign  as a compass direction rather than a division name reverses the force of this argument. If this reading is accepted, the large number for tablet D implies that these groups did not indicate the number of men in a phyle division, which one would assume to have been roughly the same in all divisions. Another problem with the interpretation is the use of the word , "Portion, Stuck,"<sup>62</sup> to refer to workmen in a manner that Edel himself called "etwas schokierend."<sup>63</sup> This use of  would be completely unparalleled and is the more unexpected since  occurs so frequently in similar contexts.<sup>64</sup>

A final problem with Edel's hypothesis about the -numbers is the lack of such a group on tablet A. Although the tablets vary in the amount of information given, these variations are usually in extraneous details, which would presumably have been obvious from the original provenience of the texts.<sup>65</sup> If the number of men working in a given month was thought important enough to record on some tablets, one would expect that it would be recorded on all of them.

61. Edel, "Kalksteintäfelchen," pp. 7–8.



62. Erman and Grapow, *Wörterbuch* 1:158, 5–10.

63. Edel, "Kalksteintäfelchen," p. 7.

64. Erman and Grapow, *Wörterbuch* 3:405, 2–11.

65. The excavators record only that the tablets were found in the rubble of the upper part of the sun temple, the same part of the temple identified in text A. They were not found together, since the publications occur in two different preliminary reports and tablet B was presumably found in still another area.



One method of attacking this problem would be to assume that the lack of a -number on tablet A is offset by the extra information that this tablet provides, namely the notation that it represents the beginning of the work. The -number would then have indicated some measure of the quantity of work completed at the beginning of a period of service. Perhaps these tablets served as a record of work done and a device to allow the overseers to calculate how much work had been accomplished as the work progressed, and to compare the rates with previous periods of service.

This hypothesis can be tested by using the dates given on the tablets. It is assumed that the phyle divisions rotated in their standard phyle order, either in a five-month cycle with both divisions of a phyle serving at the same time or in a ten-month cycle that passed through the phyle order twice. These theoretical rotations are reconstructed in table 4. (Phyles whose rotation is restored are given in parentheses; division names are omitted.)













Tablet A states that the  division of the *nds* phyle was beginning its first month of service on the project, so there is no previous work to be recorded. Six months later, the  division of the *jmj-nfrt* phyle came into service for at least the second time, since twenty-two work-measures had been completed previously. Four months later, and ten months after its first service, the  division of the *nds* phyle again came into service and began with a work measure of twenty-three. Since the work measure is on the same order of that in tablet B, we can conclude that the divisions of tablets B and C served the same number of months previously, either one or two. Since there are three months between the dates of these tablets, a five-month cycle would have had to begin with the *jmj-nfrt* phyle. (The date on Tablet A cannot represent the beginning of construction for all phyles, since that would put the divisions of tablets B and C in different rotations.) The latest tablet, tablet D, records a period of service of the  division of the *wr* phyle, sixteen months after tablet A, which began with forty work measures completed. Since this is roughly twice the number of work measures completed by the divisions of the *nds* and *jmj-nfrt* phyles in tablets B and C, this phyle division can be assumed to have served twice as many months previously as they had: four months if a five-month cycle is assumed, making this its fifth month of service; or two months if a ten-month cycle is assumed, making this its third month of service. Both reconstructions accord with the dates on the tablets, as can be seen in table 4. A ten-month cycle is more probable, since it would allow for a rotation beginning with the *wr* phyle, traditionally the first phyle in a sequence.

Table 4. Phyles of Workers at the Upper Sun Temple of Userkaf

Tablet	Date	Phyle		Ten-month cycle		Five-month cycle	
				Service	Previous Months	Service	Previous Months
A	5th i 3ht	nds 	0	1st	0	1st	0
—	ii	(jmj-nfrt)	?	1st	0	2nd	1
—	iii	(wr)	?	2nd	1	2nd	1
—	iv	(st)	?	2nd	1	2nd	1
—	i prt	(w3dt)	?	2nd	1	2nd	1
—	ii	(nds)	?	2nd	1	2nd	1
B	iii	jmj-nfrt 	22	2nd	1	3rd	2
—	iv	(wr)	?	2nd	1	3rd	2
—	i šmw	(st)	?	2nd	1	3rd	2
—	ii	(w3dt)	?	2nd	1	3rd	2
C	iii	nds 	23	2nd	1	3rd	2
—	iv	(jmj-nfrt)	?	2nd	1	4th	3
—	5+1 i 3ht	(wr)	?	3rd	2	4th	3
—	ii	(st)	?	3rd	2	4th	3
—	iii	(w3dt)	?	3rd	2	4th	3
—	iv	(nds)	?	3rd	2	4th	3
—	i prt	(jmj-nfrt)	?	3rd	2	5th	4
D	ii	wr 	40	3rd	2	5th	4

The pattern discernible in these tablets establishes two probable facts: (1) that the same 10-month divisional rotation known from the Neferirkare papyri was also used in the phyles working on construction of the sun temple of Userkaf, although unlike the divisions in the Neferirkare mortuary temple the phyles of workers rotated in the established phyle order; and (2) that the work of these phyles was measured in a unit called the , and roughly twenty of these units could be completed by a division in a single month of service. It is difficult to say much more about the nature of the . It is not likely to have been a writing of , "cubit." Helck argued for interpreting it as a wooden measuring rod;<sup>66</sup> if he was correct, it is still difficult to determine what was measured.

The phyles working at the temple of Userkaf in the early Fifth Dynasty seem, in general, to have been organized in much the same way as those of the

66. Helck, "Handwerker- und Priesterphylen," p. 6, cites R. Caminos, *Literary Fragments in the Hieratic Script* (Oxford, 1956), p. 12, and R. O. Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian* (Oxford, 1972), p. 36.

royal priesthood of the mortuary temple of Neferirkare.<sup>67</sup> There were five phyles of two divisions each, which probably rotated in a ten-month cycle. The phyle was the largest and most important unit of organization for the work as well as for the rotation. The phyles attached to work crews rotated in their standard order, while the priestly phyles rotated in an irregular order; however, this difference can perhaps be attributed to the differences in the work that was done by the two systems or perhaps to the period from which the documentation comes (the Userkaf tablets date to the reign of Neferirkare or Niuserre, while the Neferirkare papyri range in date from the reign of Djedkare to the reign of Teti). The phyle systems in the royal mortuary cults and royal building crews may also have shared the fate of being adopted by commoners. The occurrence of names of private individuals on blocks of this period is reminiscent of the phyle system adopted by private tomb owners; and the occurrence of these texts on buildings other than those of the man whose name they use recalls the “parasite” phyles known from the cult of Neferirkare.

In addition, the phyles seem to have taken over the task of organizing the work spatially, a task previously accomplished by the gangs. Although gangs cease to appear in building inscriptions and masons’ marks after the end of the Fourth Dynasty, they do not disappear entirely but emerge in the the royal mortuary temple reliefs of the Fifth Dynasty kings.<sup>68</sup> These reliefs are captioned with gang names similar to those of the Fourth Dynasty and depict men wearing only a strip of cloth around their waists as a belt, with long ties hanging down in front, which are occasionally looped up into the belt when the man is running. These men in some cases carry long sticks. In one case they accompany the king during a hunting party, and, from the position of their sticks, they may be serving as beaters.<sup>69</sup> In other examples they are shown running alongside a boat.<sup>70</sup> The function of these gangs is not certain; they seem simply to be serving as royal retainers. Nothing indicates whether these gangs were further organized into phyles. Since the decoration of pre-Fifth Dynasty mortuary temples is sparse and fragmentary, it is impossible to tell whether this sort of service is a new development or a continuation of a traditional organization, which may have

67. Posener-Kriéger, *Archives*, pp. 565–68.

68. See the list of examples in Borchardt, *Sahure* 2:84–86. A similar scene from the time of Userkaf exists, although the gang determinative is the only part of the name that survives; see W. S. Smith, *The Art and Architecture of Ancient Egypt*, 2nd ed., revised by W. K. Simpson (Harmondsworth, 1981), p. 129, fig. 121; and there are also a number of such scenes on the decorated blocks from the Unis causeway.

69. Borchardt, *Sahure* 2: pl. 17.


70. *Ibid.*, pl. 9.

continued to exist as a motif in mortuary temple decoration long after the labor force had been reorganized and the gangs that are represented no longer existed.

### 7.3. THE EVOLUTION OF PHYLES IN WORK CREWS

The incorporation of phyles into work crews seems to have evolved in three phases, with changes in the function of the phyles in each phase. In the earliest known references, the phyle names appear without reference to gangs, and the gang name is only rarely followed by a phyle name, though it sometimes occurs with a division marker. This may represent either a period when phyles had not yet been integrated into the system of work crews or a period when it was not thought necessary to mention them, perhaps because they represented the temporal organization of the work while the gangs and divisions governed the spatial organization. The sole case where the phyle name is mentioned along with a gang, in a relieving chamber in the Khufu pyramid, suggests that the second alternative is the more probable.

The second system is perhaps the clearest. Although it can only be shown to have been in use during the reign of Menkaure, it may have been identical to the earlier system and simply have been recorded differently. This system has four levels: a royal work crew, which was assigned to a monument or section of a monument; two gangs that composed each crew and divided the work for which the crew was responsible into southern and northern halves; four (or perhaps five) phyles in each gang, which served in an overlapping system of rotation so that two phyles were in service at any given time; and four or more divisions for each phyle, which were used for organizing individual tasks, such as placing the core blocks in a wall.

Between the reign of Menkaure and the early Fifth Dynasty, a major reorganization of the system of work crews seems to have occurred. A group of five phyles, perhaps still organized into a gang, were assigned an area and divided the work geographically by phyle; the geographical assignments may have been further divided by division, since the "work measure"  could be applied independently to each division's work. Perhaps to compensate for the phyles' assumption of the role of spatial differentiation that had been the responsibility of the gangs, the divisions began to serve in rotation as well, which resulted in a ten-month cycle.

The reason for this change is not difficult to find. The earlier system coincided almost exactly with the period in which giant, monolithic blocks were used in building royal mortuary monuments. Earlier and later monuments were built with smaller blocks, were smaller overall, and could therefore be built with

smaller crews. If the size of a division remained constant, the number of workers available at a given time could be reduced eight-fold by halving the number of divisions, abandoning the overlapping rotation, and rotating the divisions as well as the phyles. If the organization of two gangs was also abandoned, the reduction becomes sixteen-fold.

The system adopted later was, in all but a few details, an almost exact duplicate of the system that was used in the contemporary royal mortuary temple priesthoods. The unanswerable question is whether the Fourth Dynasty priesthoods, about which we have practically no information, were organized in the same fashion as the Fourth Dynasty work crews and were subject to the same administrative organization. Until the advent of new evidence, this must remain a matter of speculation.



## CHAPTER 8

### PHYLES IN THE ARCHAIC PERIOD: A CORPUS OF EVIDENCE

#### 8.1. INTRODUCTION

In the discussions of the origins of phyles and their names, only Kaplony has examined the archaic evidence for the system in any depth.<sup>1</sup> He focused primarily, however, on the changes in the names of the phyles in connection with their supposed nautical origin. In his monumental collection of the inscriptions of the early period he discussed the institutions in which they served in somewhat more detail,<sup>2</sup> but the system is nowhere singled out for discussion.

In this chapter, a corpus of the Archaic period evidence relating to phyles is assembled. The archaeological and textual context in which the names appear is examined as well as the forms of the names and the dates of their first appearance. The inscriptions are divided into eleven groups: ten categories of examples sharing some characteristic qualities and an eleventh category of texts that do not fit into the other ten. These groups are arranged in rough chronological order, based on the range of kings mentioned in them or their similarities to the texts of the other categories.

All of the examples date to the reign of Djoser or earlier, the earliest dating to the reign of Den. An organization of phyles may have been one of the innovations of Den's reign, or perhaps their appearance during his reign is simply a result of the overall increase in documentation. The attestations are concentrated in two reigns, those of Qa'a and Ninetjer, but these concentrations are probably the result of uneven survival and discovery of evidence. The later

1. Kaplony, *Rollsiegel* 1:321–32.

2. Kaplony, *Inschriften der ägyptischen Frühzeit*, 3 vols. (Wiesbaden, 1963), pp. 89, 128, 140, 147, 166, 381, 444–45, 503, 571, 575, 593f., 610–11, and n. 1786.

examples, from the reigns of Khasekhemwy and Djoser, tend to be more obscure than the earlier examples.


For each category a brief introduction is followed by a description of the examples. Then the significance and implications of the category as a whole are discussed. Drawings of all of the texts discussed are in the *Appendix*. The first publication cited in the footnote to each text is the publication upon which my drawing is based. Significant departures from the published version (based on other versions, or examination of the photograph or the original text) are noted in the text. Many of the examples are probably not relevant to the study of the phyle system, but all possible references are included so that they may be evaluated.<sup>3</sup>

## 8.2. A CORPUS OF ARCHAIC REFERENCES TO PHYLES

### 8.2.1. Category A

The phrase *hn z3* occurs in two Archaic period texts. Kaplony took it to refer to a “Residenzphyle,” which he equated with an “oberägyptische Phyle.”<sup>4</sup> This contention is discussed below.

**A:1.**<sup>5</sup> This sealing was found in the tomb of Den at Abydos. It contains three elements: *hn z3*, occurring once; *zhn 3h*, occurring twice; and *k3*, followed by a sign that Ranke read as another *z3* sign,<sup>6</sup> but which Kaplony argued is either *tz* or the name of the god Min. This last group occurs three times between each of the other groups, and was taken as a personal name by both scholars. The second element, *zhn 3h*, is a common Archaic period title which seems to be given to mortuary priests<sup>7</sup> and which was later given to men who took part in the

3. Texts in which the *z3* sign occurs in a context clearly unrelated to phyles have, however, been omitted. These include five texts containing the group , which Kaplony has identified as a kind of phyle service, the “Lebensmittelamt.” (*Inschriften*, 1:445). These texts seem clearly to be examples of the phrase, “protection of life,” which occurs so frequently in royal texts of later periods. These texts are published in Lauer and Lacau, *Pyramid à degrés IV*, pl. VI: #1–#2, and pl. 15: #73; and in idem, *Pyramid à degrés V*, pl. 25: #2 and p. 40, fig. 58.

4. Kaplony, *Inschriften* 1:455, 485.











5. Petrie, *Royal Tombs* 2: pl. 20: #157; Kaplony, *Inschriften* 3: pl. 79: #299; *ibid.* 1:458; *ibid.* 2:1133.

6. Ranke, *Personennamen* 2:321, 15.

7. S. Schott, *Bemerkungen zum ägyptischen Pyramidenkult*, BÄBA 5 (Cairo, 1950), p. 144, suggests that these priests cared for the spirit (*3h*) of the king at his supposed cenotaph at Abydos and were distinguished from those who served at his actual burial place. The tombs at Abydos are now widely considered to be the actual burial places of the Archaic



coronation ritual.<sup>8</sup> The group *hn z3* seems likely to have designated the phyle in which the *zhn 3h* served, although in a period where both the title and the custom of indicating phyle membership are well attested, it is surprising that the two groups co-occur only in this single instance.

**A:2.**<sup>9</sup> This fragment, the lower third of an ivory label, was found in loose rubbish at Abydos along with three other ivory labels. Petrie seems to have taken the second group from the left on the label as the serekh of Qa'a,<sup>10</sup> while Kaplony took it to be the *hwt*   , although the top two signs do not accord well with this reading. The label can probably be dated to the reign of Qa'a, judging from its similarity to the other labels bearing the name of that king. The group of signs to the far left is apparently     , a phrase that is paralleled on another piece from the same find.<sup>11</sup> The two signs to the far right are difficult to identify from the parallels; the group to the left of them might be  , but on other labels the contents of the container is written to the left of the vertical division, rather than to the right as here. To the left of the vertical division on this label is the group *hn z3*, followed by three strokes.

The group *hn z3* may be a phyle name. Kaplony hypothesized an early system of a northern phyle and a southern phyle; however, this reconstruction was based on a dubious interpretation of these texts and two others, *K:1* and *K:8*. The group *hn z3* he translated as the phyle of the royal residence, which he equated with Upper Egypt on the basis of the element shared with the later term *Hn-Nhn*.<sup>12</sup> This term is still under discussion; the most recent writer argued that it refers to only the seven southernmost nomes,<sup>13</sup> in which case it could hardly be equated with *t3-šm'w*, as Kaplony suggested. The equation is also somewhat anachronistic since the term *Hn-Nhn* only emerged as an administrative division

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period kings. Kaplony, *Inschriften* 1:386–89, objected further that the discovery of the title at Helwan ruled out its use for a solely Upper Egyptian priesthood. The group may simply have been an early version of the later title *hm-k3*, “mortuary priest.”

8. K. Sethe, *Dramatische Texte zu altägyptischen Mysterienspielen* (Leipzig, 1928), pls. 7, 10.
9. Petrie, *Royal Tombs* 2: pl. 8:4; Kaplony, *Inschriften* III, pl. 145 “Q3'–'e.”
10. Petrie, *Royal Tombs* 2:26, said of the five tablets that “four of these are of King Qa.” Tablet #1 of the group has no serekh; Petrie did not read any of this tablet as the name of Qa'a, as can be seen from a later drawing in W. M. F. Petrie, *Abydos*, 2 vols. (London, 1902–03) 1: pl. 11:10. Petrie did not publish a drawing of text A:2.
11. Petrie, *Royal Tombs*, 2: pl. 8:3.
12. Kaplony, *Inschriften* 1:485; *ibid.* 2:833 (citing H. Junker, “*Phmfr*,” *ZÄS* 75 [1950]:69).
13. G. Gabra, “Preliminary Report on the Stela of *Htpi* from El Kab from the Time of Wahankh Inyotef II,” *MDAIK* 32 (1976):49–50.

of the country towards the end of the Old Kingdom. The parallel that Kaplony cited for this phyle is an alleged  $z3 \check{s}m^w$  on a sealing of Djoser (example *K:8* in this corpus). Since the  $\check{s}m^w$  and  $z3$  signs are separated by one sign in one column and four signs in the remaining columns, the reading  $z3 \check{s}m^w$  seems quite untenable. The Lower Egyptian counterpart to this hypothetical Upper Egyptian phyle is even more questionable. It is included as example *K:1* in this corpus, but the sign that Kaplony read as  $z3$  has little in common with examples of that sign from this or any other period.

If the group  $\check{h}n z3$  is a phyle name, then it probably was quickly changed to one of the better-known phyle names or fell out of use in the system, since it is not attested after  $Qa^a$  and never occurs in the same contexts as the other phyle names. It is also possible to interpret  $\check{h}n z3$  as a title, perhaps as an antecedent to the  $jmj-z3$  of later periods. In that case, however, the strokes in *A:2* would be difficult to explain.<sup>14</sup>

### 8.2.2. Category B

The texts described in this category are occurrences of the phyle sign preceded by the sign  $k3$ ,  $\text{𓂏}$ .

**B:1.**<sup>15</sup> Petrie described this piece as “a very thick ivory tablet, much burnt.” It contains the group  $k3 z3$ , to the left of the left half of the serekh of Den. Petrie took “Ka-sa” to be a personal name and suggested that this person was the predecessor of the well-known official  $\check{H}m3-k3$ . Kaplony also took the group as a name, though he read it  $Z3-k3$ .<sup>16</sup> The thickness of the ivory and the large blank area below and to the left of the surviving inscription make it improbable that this piece contained more information or served as a label.


**B:2.**<sup>17</sup> This is a fragment of an ivory date label from the tomb of Den at Abydos, which shares with other such labels the elements  $\text{𓂏}$  and  $\text{𓂏}[\text{𓂏}]$ . The  $tp$  sign is unparalleled on labels of this kind. Also without a parallel on such labels is the group  $\text{𓂏}$ , which may be the title  $jrj-N\check{h}n$ , following  $k3-z3$ . The  $z3$  sign in this example is more regular than it is in *B:1*.

14.  $\check{H}n z3$  is suspiciously close in appearance to  $jbz3$  (Erman and Grapow, *Wörterbuch* 1:64, 14), a salve that would suit the context and determinatives of *A:2* admirably. Unfortunately, the sign is clearly  $\check{h}n$  in both examples.

15. Petrie, *Royal Tombs* 1: pls. 11:16, 16:19.

16. Kaplony, *Inschriften* 1:611.



17. Petrie, *Royal Tombs* 1: pls. 11:6, 14:11.

**B:3.**<sup>18</sup> Petrie called this a sealing of Merneith, which would put it only slightly earlier than the other examples in this category. The element *k3-z3* alternates here with a group that Petrie transcribed  (?),<sup>19</sup> “the eyes of the king(?)” Kaplony also translated the group as a title, “von der oberägyptischen Abgaben.”<sup>20</sup> Neither title is paralleled.

All three of the examples in this category date either explicitly or probably to the reign of Den. Kaplony suggested that the title “*jnw šm'w*, den ‘oberägyptischen Tributen,’” which he saw in *B:3*, corresponded to the title *jrj-Nhn* in *B:2* and therefore that the two examples referred to the same person. The close association with a known title (*B:2*) and its occurrence in the alternating pattern in which names and titles frequently alternate (*B:3*) is in any case a good argument that the group *k3-z3* represents a name. Another argument for this is that *k3* is a noun rather than an adjective like the five later phyle names, or like *hn* in *Category A*, which may be a *nisbe* adjective. If it is a personal name, it is probably to be read *K3(.j)-z3(.j)*, “My ka is my protection.”

On the other hand, the possible existence of the references to another unknown phyle name in *Category A* suggests that there were other phyles in the early Archaic period. Hence this group could also have been a phyle that was in use for only a brief period and was later replaced.

### 8.2.3. Category C

The complete texts in this category give the *nswt-bjtj* names of four kings of the First Dynasty: *Zmtj* (Horus Den), *Mr-p-bj3* (Horus Anedjib), *Jrj-Nbtj*<sup>21</sup> (Horus Semerkhet), and *K3-‘-Nbtj* (Horus Qa‘a). A phyle name follows the name of the first king named in each text. Many of these texts mention the *hwt*  #, probably *p-Hr-msn*, often in connection with the group  ‘3 *hnt*. The phyles mentioned in texts of this category have names that clearly correspond to the names of phyles in the Old Kingdom. This category is a subset of a larger group of texts, some of which do not contain or do not preserve the

18. Ibid., pl. 21:28; Kaplony, *Inschriften* 3: pl. 34: #104.

19. Petrie, *Royal Tombs* 1:41.

20. Kaplony, *Inschriften* 2:1107. The translation is quite unlikely. If the first sign is *šm'j*, it should follow the noun it modifies; *jrjt*, as “grain taxes,” is only known from the Eighteenth Dynasty and later (Erman and Grapow, *Wörterbuch* 1:114, 18); and finally, if *jrjt* does represent a commodity, one would expect a preposition to indicate that the phrase is a title and not the commodity itself.

21. For the readings of the *nswt-bjtj* names of the First and Second Dynasty kings and the evolution of this part of the titulary, see J. von Beckerath, “Königsnamen und -titel,” *LÄ* 3: cols. 540–43, and the references cited therein.

names of phyles. Two of these texts, (C:6) and (C:7), are drawn and discussed along with the texts of *Category C* for purposes of comparison. Six further texts of this type, (C:8) through (C:13), are discussed but not drawn. The numbers of these examples are given in parenthesis to indicate that they do not properly belong to the corpus.

**C:1.**<sup>22</sup> These fragments of a green schist plate from the Step Pyramid complex at Saqqara show the phyle  $\text{𓆎} \text{𓆏}$ , *w3dtjw*.<sup>23</sup> The name *Zmtj* is given no royal title, nor are the names *Mr-p-bj3* or *Jrj-Nbtj*. *K3-<sup>c</sup>-Nbtj*, however, is called *nswt-bjtj*. The *k* of *K3-<sup>c</sup>-Nbtj* seems not to have been carved.

**C:2.**<sup>24</sup> These fragments of a green schist plate, also found at Saqqara, name the phyle  $\text{𓆎}$ , certainly to be read *w3d* rather than *h3*. The sign is very similar to that in the name *w3dtjw* in C:1, which is almost certainly to be so read on the basis of other parallels (see F:2 and F:3, for example); and *h3* at this period seems to have been drawn  $\text{𓆎}$  or  $\text{𓆏}$ .<sup>25</sup> The fact that the name is written *w3d*, as it is occasionally written in the Old Kingdom, rather than *w3dtjw*, as in the Archaic period, or *w3dt*, the standard Old Kingdom writing, is probably not significant. Signs are frequently omitted in these texts, perhaps, as Lacau and Lauer suggested, because they were carved over texts written in ink or paint and the failure to carve a sign was not noticeable while the color remained.<sup>26</sup> None of the kings mentioned are given royal titles in this example.

**C:3.**<sup>27</sup> This fragment of a schist vessel (the color was not noted in the publication) from a private tomb at Saqqara, S 3035, preserves only the name *Zmtj* and half of the phyle name that follows it, which may be read either *wr* or *nds*. It was probably of the same type as C:1 and C:2.

**C:4.**<sup>28</sup> This text, which is inscribed on a gray-green schist plate from the Step Pyramid complex, probably belongs to *Category C*, even though only the last of

22. Lacau and Lauer, *Pyramide à degrés IV*, pl. 4: #20.

23. The *tjw* sign is clearly distinguished here from the falcon sign *Hr* used in the name of the *hwt*: the shape and angle of the body are different and the tail is not closed at the end.

24. Lacau and Lauer, *Pyramide à degrés IV*, pl. 4: #19.


25. See J. E. Quibell, *Hierakonpolis I* (London, 1900) pl. 26B; and Kaplony, *Inschriften* 3: #839.


26. Lacau and Lauer, *Pyramide à degrés IV*, p. 10.

27. W. Emery, *The Tomb of Hemaka* (Cairo, 1938), pl. 61: #1720.

28. Lacau and Lauer, *Pyramide à degrés IV*, pl. 8: #40.

the four kings, *K3-<sup>c</sup>-Nbtj*, is named. The *wr* phyle is mentioned in connection with a *hwt p-Hr-msn* and the group *‘3 hnt*.

**C:5.**<sup>29</sup> This fragment of schist was excavated at Abydos by Amélineau. It bears the *nswt-bjtj* name of *K3-<sup>c</sup>-Nbtj*. The text to the left of the name was read *‘3 hnt* by Kaplony, although a vertical -sign is not attested elsewhere in this group. The sign looks much more like a *w3d* sign and could thus be taken to refer to the phyle of that name. The sign below it, if correctly drawn, is probably *hnt*, perhaps with the *‘3* missing. If the copy is bad, it could perhaps be interpreted as a phyle sign. The example may not even refer to phyles, however.

**(C:6).**<sup>30</sup> This green schist bowl from the Step Pyramid complex is inscribed with the most complete text of this type, but it does not mention phyles. The *hwt p-Hr-msn* is written without the enclosing *hwt* sign, and the  of the royal name *Mr-p-bj3* was not carved. All four kings are called *nswt-bjtj*. In the place of a phyle name are two falcons on standards.

**(C:7).**<sup>31</sup> This “crystal” fragment from Abydos bears the name *Zmtj* at the far right, then the name *Jrj-Nbtj*, which is inscribed over the traces of two falcons on standards and the name of *nswt-[bjtj] Mr-p-bj3*.

**C:8.**<sup>32</sup> The text on this dark diorite fragment from the Step Pyramid Complex records the name of one king, *Htp-Nbtj*, the group *hnt* (perhaps to be read *‘3 hnt*), and the name of the *wr* phyle. This text is later than the others in this category and is included here rather than it in *Category D* only because the *nswt-bjtj* name is used rather than the Horus name.

Five further texts of this type with no (surviving) references to phyles are listed below but not drawn:

**(C:9).**<sup>33</sup> A fragment of red limestone from Abydos with the names *Zmtj* and *Mr-p-bj3* separated by two falcons on standards.

29. Kaplony, “Bemerkungen,” p. 22: #45.

30. Lacau and Lauer, *Pyramide à degrés IV*, pl. 4: #21.

31. E. Naville, *Cemeteries of Abydos I*, pls. 8, 14:1.

32. Lacau and Lauer, *Pyramide à degrés IV*, pl. 17: #82.

33. Petrie, *Royal Tombs 1*: pl. 5:12.

(C:10).<sup>34</sup> A fragment of a crystal vessel from Abydos with the names *Zmtj* and *Mr-p-bj3*, with no space between them for falcons on standards or a phyle name.

(C:11).<sup>35</sup> A red limestone vessel fragment from Abydos bearing a text beginning with two falcons and the name *nswt-bjtj Mr-p-bj3*, followed by a break.

(C:12).<sup>36</sup> A fragment of pink gneiss from Abydos bearing two falcons on standards, followed by the name *nswt-bjtj Mr-p-bj3* and the *hwt* 𓏏 𓏏.

(C:13).<sup>37</sup> A bluish schist fragment from the Step Pyramid complex with two falcons on standards, followed by the name *Mr-p-bj3* (given no title, though there is a blank above the name in which *nswt-bjtj* might have been present in ink), followed directly by *nswt-bjtj K3-<sup>c</sup>Nbtj* (with no intervening space in which the intervening king, *Jrj-Nbtj*, might be restored), below which is the beginning of the *hwt p-[Hr]-msn*.

In their discussion of the texts of this type found at the Step Pyramid complex, Lacau and Lauer concluded that the names of the various kings were added to update the bowls with each successive reign.<sup>38</sup> The name of *Zmtj* is usually larger and more carefully carved than those of the later kings, and they cited one example, (C:7), from which the name of an earlier king was actually erased to prove that the names were carved successively. Successive use of these vessels by different kings would also explain the omission of kings in a number of the other examples; possibly some stoneware was not re-marked in every reign.

The most apparent variation in the texts is between the phyle designation and the two falcons on standards. In the most complete texts these groups appear in the same location, though never together, between the names of *Zmtj* and *Mr-p-bj3*.

The two falcons on standards are known from the very beginning of the Archaic period and even earlier. They appear at the heads of two files of men on the Hunters' palette.<sup>39</sup> On the Tjehenu palette, the standards are hacking at

34. Ibid., pl. 5:9.

35. Ibid., pl. 6:4.


36. Ibid., pl. 6:8.

37. Lacau and Lauer, *Pyramide à degrés IV*, pl. 8: #36.

38. Ibid., pp. 9–12.


39. R. T. Ridley, *The Unification of Egypt* (Deception Bay, Australia, 1973), pl. 12, p. 34. (This monograph is a convenient compilation of archaic relief art in ivory and stone.)

an enclosed area labeled by a clump of vegetation (each standard has its own hoe).<sup>40</sup> The two standards also occur with other standards; they precede the standard of Wepwawet and the “placenta” standard on the Narmer palette,<sup>41</sup> and they follow the same two standards on the Narmer macehead.<sup>42</sup> The use of falcon standards in processions of this sort continued throughout Egyptian history.<sup>43</sup> The double falcon standard also served as a hieroglyph in the epithet of Khasekhemwy, *hṭp Nbwy jmj.f*, “the two lords (almost certainly Horus and Seth) are reconciled in him,” and elsewhere. Falcon standards (in various numbers) also occur frequently as part of Old Kingdom offering lists where they represent various kinds of cloth.<sup>44</sup> Another way in which the two falcon standards were used, in the Old Kingdom and later, was as the nome standard of the 5th (Coptite) nome of Upper Egypt.

Although the positions of the falcons on standards is the same as that of most of the names of the phyles in most of these texts, they are not necessarily substitutes for one another. The phyle names seem to have been inscribed at the same time as the name of the first king to put his name on the vessel, always to the left of this name or below it. This is clearest in text *C:2*, in which the hieroglyphs of *Zmtj*’s name are arranged off center to the right to allow for the expansion at the bottom of the group . It is also plain that the lines of the hieroglyphs of the phyle name are of an even thickness, like those in the name of *Zmtj*, rather than sketchy and irregular like the lines used to carve the names of later kings. This distinction may also be seen, less clearly, in *C:1*.

The two falcon standards, on the other hand, seem to have been attached to the name of *Mr-p-bj3*, which they always precede, even when the name *Zmtj* does not occur (*C:11*). They are sketchily drawn, as are the names of the later kings. In example (*C:7*), in which the name of *Jrj-Nbtj* was carved over the name of *Mr-p-bj3*, the two falcons on standards were obliterated along with his name and titles. A possible explanation for the presence of the falcons on

40. Ibid., pl. 16:2, p. 45.

41. Ibid., pl. 17, p. 47. This standard is common and has been much discussed. H. Kees, “Die Schlangenstein und ihre Beziehungen zu Reichsheiligtum,” *ZÄS* 57 (1922):127, n. 1, argued for the reading *Dw3*, while G. Posener, “Le Nom de l’enseigne appelée ‘Khons’ (),” *RdÉ* 17 (1965):193–95, argued for *Nḥn* (*nswt*).

42. Ridley, *Unification*, p. 68, fig. 6.

43. For example, a scene on the shrine to Amon-Re<sup>c</sup>-Kamutef, built by Philip Arrhidaeus at Karnak, shows the two falcon standards, the Wepwawet and “placenta” standards, and eight other standards ranged before Min. The Epigraphic Survey, *Medinet Habu*, 8 vols. (Chicago, 1929–70) 4: pl. 217a.

44. W. S. Smith, “The Old Kingdom Linen List,” *ZÄS* 71 (1935):138.

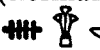
standards is that they are some sort of royal title adopted by *Mr-p-bj3*, perhaps an early masculine variant of the *nbjt* element that occurs in the names of his successors.<sup>45</sup>

There are also grounds, however, for relating the falcons on standards to the phyles. The most striking reason is the fact that they never occur together in these texts. Even if they were added at different times, they may have been perceived as serving the same purpose. The occurrence of falcons on standards in other texts that mention phyles (*F:1*, *F:2*, *F:3*, and *H:1*) also suggests a connection; however, in those texts the standards occur together with the phyle names and not in alternation with them.

Another factor that suggests that the falcon standards alternate with the phyles is the geographical distribution of these texts. Five of the seven texts from Saqqara mention phyles, while there is only one, very dubious, example from the six texts excavated at Abydos. Correspondingly, only two of the Saqqara texts show the two falcon standards, while they occur on four of the texts from Abydos. Since phyles seem more prevalent in the Memphite area, the double falcon standard might represent an Upper Egyptian equivalent. (Another regional distinction can be seen in the material of the vessels: six of the seven Saqqara texts are written on schist, while only one of the six Abydos examples is of the same material.)


The most important conclusions that can be drawn from these texts are that at least two phyles (*w3dtjw* and either *wr* or *nds*) were known by the reign of Den and that they apparently retained their claim on the vessels labeled with their names through the reign of Qa'a, adding the names of each new king to their vessels. The texts in this category also suggest a connection between phyles and the paired falcons on standards, though the nature and extent of the relationship is obscure. The most difficult aspects of *Category C*, the meaning of the group '3 *hnt* and the identity of the *hwt p-Hr-msn*, are discussed in connection with the corresponding elements that appear in *Category D*.



#### 8.2.4. Category D

The texts of this category in their fullest forms consist of the name of a king (normally the Horus name written in a serekh); the name of a *hwt*, in most cases  (the order of the signs in this name seems to vary), which is read provisionally as *hwt z3-h3-nb*; the group *hnt pr-nswt*; a phyle name, sometimes supplemented by a number between one and four; and rarely an additional sign

45. This hypothesis was suggested by H. Müller, *Die Entwicklung der Titular der ägyptischen König*, ÄF 7 (Glückstadt, 1938), p. 50.



or group of signs. Most of the texts date to the reign of Qa'a; two of the exceptions bear the names of Horus  and Horus Sneferka, who were probably ephemeral successors of Qa'a and may have usurped his inscriptions. One other, very atypical, example, *D:14*, comes from the reign of Horus Hetepsekhemwy; and *D:16*, an even more atypical example, dates to the reign of Khafre in the Fourth Dynasty (it is included here because it seems to be of the same type as the *Category D* texts, and is not paralleled in its own period).

**D:1.**<sup>46</sup> This text occurs on a black schist<sup>47</sup> bowl that was found in the tomb of Qa'a at Abydos. It begins at the right with the serekh of Qa'a, followed by the *hwt z3-h3-nb* and the group . It concludes with the group *hnt pr-nswt* and the name of the *wr* phyle. Petrie read  as "year of peace" or "vegetables and offerings";<sup>48</sup> while Kaplony took it to be a personal name, *Htp-Rnpt*, "Die Jahresgöttin (o.a.) ist zufrieden."<sup>49</sup> The single stroke following the group *rnpt htp* is omitted in the *Pyramide à degrés* drawing, but is clear in Petrie's photograph.

**D:2.**<sup>50</sup> This fragment of an alabaster bowl from Abydos bears a text identical in content and configuration to that of *D:1*.

**D:3.**<sup>51</sup> This fragment of a platter from Abydos was described as "grey marble" by Petrie. It does not bear a serekh, though the beginning of the title *nswt-bjtj* is visible at the far right and is followed by the *hwt p-Hr-msn* and the group [*hnt*] *pr-nswt*. After a space of about two and one-half groups, another inscription begins with the *hwt z3-h3-nb* and the group *hnt pr-nswt*, followed by *wr* (lacking a phyle determinative in this example) and the group *rnpt htp*. The second text is slightly larger and at a different angle from the first and was probably carved by a different person and at a different time (the proportions of the *hwt* and *pr-nswt* signs differ). The group *rnpt htp* seems fused into a single sign; unlike the writings in *D:1* and *D:2*, it is not followed by a stroke. The occurrence of both *hwts* on this bowl is perplexing. It is possible that the bowl was used in both institutions in succession and that the new assignment was

46. Petrie, *Royal Tombs* 1: pl. 9:2; Lacau and Lauer, *Pyramide à degrés* IV, pl. 4: #8.

47. Kaplony, *Inschriften* 1:583, notes that this is not "black marble" as Petrie described it, but schist.


48. Petrie, *Royal Tombs* 1:40.


49. Kaplony, *Inschriften* 1:594.


50. Ibid., pl. 153: #887; Petrie, *Royal Tombs* 1: pl. 8:12 (without lower left fragment).


51. Kaplony, "Bemerkungen," p. 22: #46; Petrie, *Royal Tombs* 1, pl. 9:1; Lacau and Lauer, *Pyramide à degrés* IV, pl. 4: #9.

added without erasing the older one, just as the names of previous kings were usually left intact on the bowls in *Category C*.

**D:4.**<sup>52</sup> This schist plate found at the Step Pyramid complex survives only in a drawing. It begins with the serekh of Horus , a name that is read “Ba3?” by Kaplony.<sup>53</sup> This is followed by the group *mnpt htp*, which is again fused and lacks a final stroke. The second column contains the *hwt z3-h3-nb*, the group *hnt pr-nswt*, and the designation *wr* phyle, followed by a single stroke.

**D:5.**<sup>54</sup> The text is inscribed on a fragment of a “metamorphic” bowl found in the tomb of Qa‘a at Abydos. The top part of the text, which included the contents of the serekh and the *hwt*, is gone, but the arrangement is similar to that of examples *D:1* and *D:2*. Beneath the *hwt* (probably to be restored *hwt z3-h3-nb*) is the sign , which Petrie read “Neith?”<sup>55</sup> and which is presumably a counterpart to the group *mnpt htp*. To the left are the groups *hntj* [*pr-nswt*], the phyle *wr*, and four strokes.

**D:6.**<sup>56</sup> This fragment of schist from Amélineau’s excavations at Abydos has only a horizontal trace and the tail of a *wr* bird at its right edge; to the left is the group *hnt pr-nswt* and the sign . The *wr* bird is probably part of a phyle name.

**D:7.**<sup>57</sup> This text occurs on a “metamorphic” bowl found in the tomb of Qa‘a at Abydos. Only the tail of the falcon remains of the serekh, which is to be restored beyond the right edge of the fragment. To the left of this is the *hwt z3-h3-nb*, which is followed at the far left by the group *hnt pr-nswt*. Beneath these two groups and slightly to the right of them are the sign  (which could have been followed by other signs, since it is just above a break) and the designation *nds* phyle followed by two strokes. It has been suggested that additional strokes should be restored,<sup>58</sup> but this addition would make the group uncharacteristically asymmetrical. The phyle name has been read *wr* in previous discussions; however, the lack of clear feet seems to indicate that the writer intended to

52. Lacau and Lauer, *Pyramide à degrés IV*, pl. 4: #7.


53. Kaplony, *Inschriften* 1:594.

54. Petrie, *Royal Tombs* 1: pl. 9:5; Lacau and Lauer, *Pyramide à degrés IV*, pl. 4: #11.


55. Petrie, *Royal Tombs* 1:40. This reading is consistent with the sign used in the name Merneith on her jar inscriptions, see *ibid.*, pl. V, #1–#7. Incised examples of this sign are usually more detailed, see Kaplony, *Inschriften* 3: #873, #876.

56. Kaplony, “Bemerkungen,” p. 31: #65.

57. Petrie, *Royal Tombs* 1: pl. 9:4; Lacau and Lauer, *Pyramide à degrés IV*, pl. 4: #10.

58. Kaplony, “Bemerkungen,” p. 19, n. 2. Petrie, *Royal Tombs* 1:40, read  without comment, and translated “Great one of the four phyles.”

differentiate clearly between the *wr* sign and the sign he used here, which is probably *nds*.

**D:8.**<sup>59</sup> This inscription, on a fragment of a schist plate, was found on the surface during the excavation of tomb 3505 at Saqqara. At the top is the serekh of Horus Sneferka, a king known from only two other inscriptions,<sup>60</sup> and the *hwt z3-ḥ3-nb*. Beneath the serekh the left edge of the group *pr-nswt* is visible and is to be associated with the *hnt* sign to its left. The designation *st* phyle follows. Emery emended this sign to *wr* and attempted to read the group as an independent title; but, as Kaplony pointed out,<sup>61</sup> the sign is certainly .

**D:9.**<sup>62</sup> This inscription is on a fragment of alabaster found in the area of the royal tombs at Abydos. It reads *hwt [z3]-ḥ3-nb* and *hnt pr-nswt*, below which is the designation *w3dtjw* followed by two strokes. Kaplony restored two additional strokes at left,<sup>63</sup> which are unnecessary, as the two strokes already there are nicely centered under the phyle name.

**D:10.**<sup>64</sup> This fragment, which is known only from Grdseloff's drawing of it, bears the group *hnt pr-nswt* and a bird sign that probably designates a phyle, although no phyle sign survives. The bird's tail, though forked, is disproportionately short; hence it is difficult to say whether it was intended to be *wr* or *nds*. Kaplony read it *wr*, perhaps only because he did not admit the existence of the *nds* phyle at this early date.

**D:11.**<sup>65</sup> Of the text at the right edge of this fragment from Abydos only the group *hnt pr-nswt* survives, though there is sufficient empty space below it to indicate that it was not followed immediately by a phyle name. To the left, a single column of text reads *hwt z3-ḥ3-nb*, *hnt pr-nswt*, *w3dtjw*. There is no phyle sign determining *w3dtjw*, but it undoubtedly indicates the phyle.

**D:12.**<sup>66</sup> This "white marble" fragment from the tomb of Qa' a at Abydos also names the *w3dtjw* phyle without a phyle determinative. Above this at the right

59. Emery, *Tombs*, 3:31–32, pls. 28a, 38.

60. Lacau and Lauer, *Pyramide à degrés IV*, pl. 17: #86 (*E:1* of this corpus) and P. Kaplony, *Steingefässe 1*, *Monumenta Aegyptica 1* (Brussels, 1968), p. 33: #13.

61. *Ibid.*, p. 45.

62. Kaplony, "Bemerkungen," pl. 5: #39.

63. *Ibid.*, p. 19.

64. *Ibid.*, p. 39: #69.

65. E. Amélineau, *Les nouvelles fouilles d'Abydos 1897–1898* (Paris, 1905), pl. 20:6.

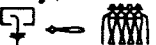
66. Petrie, *Royal Tombs 1*: pl. 8:8.

is the corner of what is probably to be restored as a *hwt* sign; directly above is *hnt*, probably part of the group *hnt pr-nswt*.

**D:13.**<sup>67</sup> The fragment of yellowish green-gray stone from Amélineau's excavations at Abydos is inscribed *hnt* [*pr-nswt*], *wr* phyle. The *wr* sign is unusual in that the wing of the bird is indicated.

**D:14.**<sup>68</sup> The text is inscribed on a black granite bowl with straight, outward-slanting sides in the Michailides collection. The single column of signs begins with the serekh of Hetepsekhemwy, the first king of the Second Dynasty, followed by '3 *hnt* and the designation *wr* phyle. This is one of the very few instances in which the '3 *hnt* group appears with a Horus name rather than a *nswt-bjtj* name.

**D:15.**<sup>69</sup> This text, written in red ink, is from a flat diorite bowl found in the Step Pyramid complex. Its inclusion in this category, and in this corpus, is due to the fact that both Gunn and Edel<sup>70</sup> read it *wr* phyle, *pr-nswt*, although the phyle sign is very unusual.<sup>71</sup> The bird sign looks more like a quail-chick than a *wr* sign and is perhaps the conclusion of a word above the break. No trace of a *hnt* sign is visible to the right of the group *pr-nswt*, although there is enough space preserved that one would expect to see it if it were there. Since the text is written in ink and not incised like the other texts that mention phyles and the *pr-nswt*, it probably does not belong to this category.

**D:16.**<sup>72</sup> This text, from an alabaster bowl in the Michailides collection, dates to the Fourth Dynasty and hence does not properly belong to this corpus. It is included both to demonstrate the persistence of the general format and to point out some deviations from the earlier examples. Like the Archaic period texts in *Category D*, it includes the serekh of a single king, in this case Khafre (Horus *Wsr-jb*), a phyle designation (*wr*), and a group that contains the *hnt* sign. The serekh is to the left of the *hnt* group rather than to the right, but it is difficult to assess the significance, if any, of such a change. More interesting is the otherwise unattested group , which seems to be a conflation of '3

67. Kaplony, "Bemerkungen," p. 31: #66.

68. Ibid., p. 25: #48; Kaplony, *Steingefässe*, pl. 21: #14 and p. 34.


69. B. Gunn, "Inscriptions from the Step Pyramid Site [I.]," *ASAE* 28 (1928):169 (fig. 18), 170: #D:3.

70. Edel, "Kalksteintäfelchen," p. 8.

71. See, in contrast, the phyle signs in other ink texts in this corpus: *F:1*, *F:5*, *H:3*, *H:4*.

72. Kaplony, *Steingefässe*, p. 57: #33.

*hnt* and *hnt pr-nswt*. The paucity of comparable Fourth Dynasty stone bowl inscriptions with which to compare it makes evaluation difficult. This form of the group could be a legitimate development from the earlier versions, unknown merely because of uneven excavation, or it could be an inaccurate archaism that was executed by some confused scribe two hundred years after the meanings of ‘3 *hnt* and *hnt pr-nswt* had been forgotten. A third possibility, suggested by its lack of a clear provenience and the similarity of its anomalies to those of text *D:4*, would be that it was inscribed in modern times using a number of sources.

The two elements of *Category D* that have no corresponding elements in *Category C*, the strokes after the phyle name and the extra hieroglyphs,  $\times$  and *rnpt htp*, appear from their placement to be related to phyles and to each other. The strokes that follow the phyle sign in examples *D:4*, *D:5*, *D:7*, and *D:9* are almost certainly indications of divisions within a phyle, as Edel suggested.<sup>73</sup> They are paralleled by examples that date to the Old Kingdom. The extra hieroglyphs are more difficult to explain. The group *rnpt htp* appears on five examples, all of which belong to the *wr* phyle. *D:4* is from the reign of Horus , though its similarity to the other texts might suggest that like the other dated texts in this group it dates to the reign of Qa‘a, but was usurped by his successor. *D:4* has a single stroke following the phyle name, while *D:1* and *D:2* show a similar stroke under the group *rnpt htp*. *D:3*, the fourth example with this group, has no stroke in either position, but it also lacks a phyle sign. The consistency with which a single stroke appears suggests that *rnpt htp* is either the name of this division or of something related to it, perhaps the name of the man in charge of it.<sup>74</sup> The three examples showing the sign  $\times$  are more varied. In *D:5* the sign occurs with the fourth division of the *wr* phyle; and in *D:6* it also occurs with the *wr* phyle, though the area where any division would be inscribed is lost. In *D:7*, however, it occurs with the second division of the *nds* phyle, but it is just above a break and may have been supplemented with another sign or signs. This difference might be taken as an argument for reading the phyle name in this text *wr*; however, the number is also clearly different. *D:9*, which belonged to the second division of the *w3dtjw* phyle, is the only example that distinguishes a division without adding an identifying group or sign, perhaps due to incomplete preservation.

Nine of the texts with known provenience from *Category D* were excavated at Abydos, whereas only two examples (and the dubious *D:15*) derive from

73. Ibid.

74. Ranke, *Personennamen*, lists neither *Rnpt-htp* nor *Htp-Rnpt*. Kaplony, *Inschriften* 1:593–94, listed the latter name, but he cited only the four examples given in this category.

Saqqara. Interestingly, both of the Saqqara texts name ephemeral kings, who probably usurped and reused the vessels and may also have moved them. As in *Category C*, the vessels from Abydos were made from a wide variety of materials.

#### 8.2.5. Excursus 1: A Comparison of Categories C and D

The texts of *Categories C* and *D* above are obviously of a similar type and function. All occur on plates or bowls. The most complete examples of each record a king or kings, a “palace” (*hwt*), a group that includes the element *hnt*; and the name of a phyle. Yet within this framework, the two categories are distinguished from each other with some consistency. The following chart summarizes the basic differences.

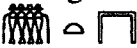
<i>Category C</i>	<i>Category D</i>
Multiple kings	Single king
<i>nswt-bjtj</i> name	Horus name
<i>hwt p-Hr-msn</i>	<i>hwt z3-h3-nb</i>
‘3 <i>hnt</i>	<i>hnt pr-nswt</i>
No strokes after phyle	Sometimes has strokes after phyle
No identifying group	Sometimes has identifying group
From Abydos and Saqqara	Almost entirely from Abydos

Both kinds of text occur without phyle names, though the other elements are only rarely missing. It is clear that these texts come from two different institutions. Both were connected with the king, though apparently in different aspects of the royal persona, since different parts of the royal titulary are used. Each category mentions something or someone designated by a group of signs including *hnt*, and each institution was served, at least in part, by people organized into phyles.

The most mysterious elements of these texts are the groups containing the *hnt* sign, since even the nature of the thing designated is unclear. The signs that I read throughout as *hnt pr-nswt* were taken by Kaplony to be an additional indication of locale (*pr-nswt*) and a title *hnt*, a variant of the title ‘3 *hnt*, which he translated “Verwalter des Krugmagazins,”<sup>75</sup> although the vessels inscribed with the phrase are plates and bowls rather than beer and wine jars. In addition to its practical difficulties, this interpretation leaves the appellation *pr-nswt*

75. Kaplony, *Inschriften* 2:1052, n. 1785.

without reference to anything and does not explain why the variation of *hnt* and '3 *hnt* correlates so well with the presence and absence of *pr-nswt*.

The translation of *hnt* as "jar stand"<sup>76</sup> is based on the use of the sign literally in the Eighteenth Dynasty and later. The single Old Kingdom example of such usage is extremely dubious. The group  is translated "jar stand" in a Pyramid Text spell<sup>77</sup> in which Re<sup>c</sup> is asked to commend the king to two gods so that they might speak on his behalf; one god is asked to cause the king's seat in heaven to endure and the other to cause his *hnt* on earth to flourish.<sup>78</sup> An earthly jar stand seems a poor counterpart to a heavenly throne; it seems more reasonable to equate *hnt* with some sort of building, as the determinative seems to suggest. The provisioning of some place within an institution accords well with the context of *Categories C* and *D*, and the two occurrences in *Category F*, as well as the title *jmj-hnt*, which is well attested in the Old Kingdom.<sup>79</sup>

The title *jmj-hnt*, according to Helck and others,<sup>80</sup> was given to the official responsible for the royal crown and ornaments, who helped dress and undress the king for ceremonial occasions. Helck translated the title "zur Vorhalle Gehörigen,"<sup>81</sup> taking *hnt* as "forecourt" in an extension of its prepositional sense, "in front of." This seems to be the best sense for the archaic texts and Pyramid Texts occurrences of *hnt* as well, though it need not refer to the same structure in all cases; the *hnt* in *jmj-hnt* might be a front hall or forecourt in the palace, while the Pyramid Text example might refer to the area in front of the tomb where offerings were made to the dead king.

The application of this interpretation to the examples in *Categories C* and *D* is problematic: '3 *hnt* could be read "the great one of the Forecourt," and *hnt pr-nswt* "the Forecourt of the King's House," but this would imply that the former term applied to a person and the latter to a building, which is not probable given their corresponding positions. Another possibility is that *hnt* in *hnt pr-nswt* is to be read simply as a *nisbe* adjective, *hntj pr-nswt* "The Foremost one of the King's House." It might also be argued that the '3 of '3 *hnt* is a reference to the

76. Erman and Grapow, *Wörterbuch* 3:301, 12.

77. K. Sethe, *Die altägyptischen Pyramidentexte*, 4 vols. (Leipzig, 1908–22) 2:1482e (Spr. 573).

78. The variant (P) reading, "supplied with provisions," is probably a corruption from a mistaken interpretation of the last two signs of *srwḏ.f* as *ḏf3w*.





79. Such a building might also be related to the common and much-discussed title *hntj-š*.

80. W. Helck, *Untersuchung zu den Beamtentiteln des ägyptischen Alten Reiches* (Glückstadt, 1954), p. 29; W. F. von Bissing and H. Kees, *Das Re-Heiligtum des Königs Ne-woser-re*, 3 vols. (Berlin, 1905–23) 3:24.

81. *Ibid.*, p. 57.

king, "The Great One," in honorific transposition, but this seems somewhat forced. In any case, the context of the groups as identifying labels on equipment makes it probable that these two groups record titles of officials attached to the *hwt* to which they are adjacent.

These two *hwts*, *hwt p-Hr-msn* in *Category C* and *hwt z3-h3-nb* in *Category D*, are only slightly less perplexing than the *hnt* groups. In addition to these texts, these institutions are mentioned in numerous other archaic texts, including the mortuary stela of the official *S3b.f*, where they appear together.<sup>82</sup> Kaplony, the most recent writer to discuss these *hwts*, equated them with palaces at Buto and Memphis respectively,<sup>83</sup> identifications that require further discussion.

Buto was first tentatively suggested as the location of the *hwt p-Hr-msn* by Helck,<sup>84</sup> who translated the name "Sitz des harpunierenden Horus." Helck's argument was based on an ivory label of Djer, in which a *hwt* that he identified as the *hwt p-Hr-msn* occurs beside a picture of round-roofed buildings alternating with palm trees along a waterway or pool.<sup>85</sup> He compared this scene to a very similar scene which has the caption , *Db'wt*,<sup>86</sup> another name for Buto.<sup>87</sup> Other elements on the label also seem to refer to Lower Egypt: the red crown appears, and possibly the names of the towns associated with Buto, *Dp* and *P*. The main problem with this argument is the reading of the *hwt*. The falcon has a much longer, more forked tail than the falcon on the serekh in the same text and lacks the two diagonal strokes that mark the latter's neck and wing. The harpoon is drawn horizontally and its barb is almost equal in length to its shaft. Finally, the sign that Helck read as *p* is much wider than it is tall and has only a single horizontal stroke, so that it resembles  or  much more than the normal writing of *p* in this text, . Although the *hwt* on this label probably is associated with Lower Egypt, it is not clear that it is to be identified with the *hwt p-Hr-msn* and thus cannot be used to argue for the equation of that *hwt* with Buto.

82. Petrie, *Royal Tombs* 1: pl. 30.

83. See the index to Kaplony, *Inschriften* 2: 1124–25.

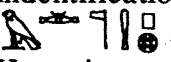



84. "[*hwt p-Hr-msn* war] vielleicht mit *P* bei Buto identisch." Helck, *Beamtentitel*, pp. 32–33 and n. 33.



85. Berlin 180206, found in Abydos by Amélineau, and published by F. Legge, "Tablets of Negadeh and Abydos," *PSBA* 29 (1909) pl. opposite p. 72; and P. Kaplony, *Kleine Beiträge zu den Inschriften der ägyptischen Frühzeit* (Wiesbaden, 1966), pl. XII, fig. 1119. An almost identical piece was discovered at Saqqara; see J. E. Quibell, *Excavations at Saqqara*, 6 vols. (Cairo, 1907–23) 6: pl. 9:2, 3.

86. W. M. F. Petrie, *The Palace of Apries (Memphis II)* (London, 1909), pl. 6.


87. H. Altenmüller, "Buto," *LÄ* 1: col. 887.



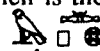
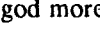
Kaplony follows Helck. He deduced additional evidence<sup>88</sup> for the identification with Buto from the title of the Third Dynasty official *Hẓj-R*ꜥ, , *ḥm-nṯr Ḥr-msnj P*, “prophet of Horus *msnj* at Pe.”<sup>89</sup> However, Horus is sometimes given the epithet *msnj*, “harpooner,”<sup>90</sup> and it is likely that *Hẓj-R*ꜥ was simply a priest of that form of the god Horus in Pe (Buto). The title could also have been a compound title that reflected priesthoods of Horus at both Buto and  *Msn*, a town in the eastern delta and a well-known cult place of Horus of Edfu. The name of the *ḥwt p-Ḥr-msn* may even refer to both these localities, implying that both forms of Horus were somehow united in this *ḥwt*. However, such an interpretation would not necessarily imply that the *ḥwt* was actually located at either site, and the contrasting writings of *msn*,  in the *ḥwt* and  in *Hẓj-R*ꜥ’s titulary, make all of these interpretations unlikely.

Kaplony pointed out five ink inscriptions on bowls from the Step Pyramid complex which give a clue to the identity of this *ḥwt*. In these texts the signs   # (without a surrounding *ḥwt* sign) are determined with a complicated sign which seems to be half a building and half a snake:<sup>91</sup>



Kaplony described this sign simply as a “Schlange” and identified it with the cobra goddess associated with Buto.<sup>92</sup> Lacau and Lauer were less certain and suggested “une coiffure ornée par devant, de l’uraeus royal?”<sup>93</sup> However, the sign is clearly the sign , *tnw*, which is known from the Pyramid Texts and several early Sixth Dynasty tombs and is usually translated “the boundary of the cultivation?”<sup>94</sup> The sign is composed of a *ḥwt* sign, a *ḥk3* scepter, and a snake, the last two of which have clear associations with the king. These elements suggest that the sign may originally have had a different meaning. In private

88. Kaplony, *Inschriften* 2:858.

89. Borchardt, CG #1426. This title occurs on only one of the panels of *Hẓj-R*ꜥ. M. A. Murray, *An Index of Names and Titles of the Old Kingdom* (London, 1908) p. 29, which is the source Kaplony cited, listed this title twice, both times inaccurately, as  and . Both of these mistaken versions connect the name of the god more closely with the place than does the original.

90. Erman and Grapow, *Wörterbuch* 2:145, 2–3.

91. Lacau and Lauer, *Pyramide à degrés* IV, p. 13, fig. 2.

92. Kaplony, *Inschriften* 2:859–60.

93. *Ibid.*, p. 14.

94. See Firth and Gunn, *Teti Pyramid Cemeteries*, 1:155; and Junker, *Giza* 3:176.

tombs, the sign usually occurs in pairs as the determinative of estates in Upper and Lower Egypt, so it can hardly have had a purely Lower Egyptian meaning. Certainly this determinative cannot be taken as an argument for equating the *hwt p-Hr-msn* with Buto.

For the corresponding *hwt*, the *hwt z3-ḥ3-nb*, the equivalent is even more uncertain. Helck suggested Hierakonpolis, very tentatively, based on the traditional opposition of Hierakonpolis to Buto.<sup>95</sup> Kaplony equated it instead with Memphis.<sup>96</sup> He published arguments for this equation in several passages of his *Inschriften der ägyptischen Frühzeit* and elsewhere. These arguments are collected and discussed in detail here.

One of the primary arguments Kaplony gives for his identification is based on his interpretation of a bowl from the Step Pyramid complex,<sup>97</sup> redrawn in figure 8.1 below.

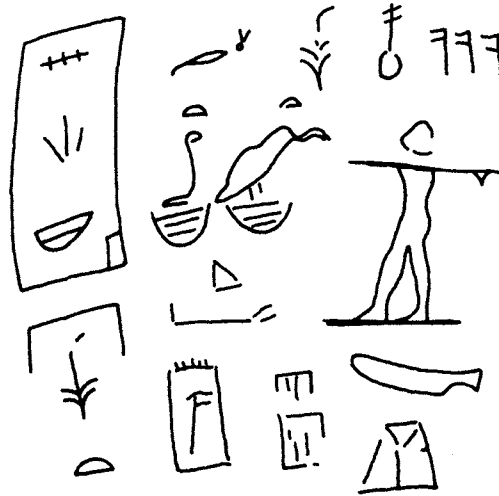


Figure 8.1. Text from a Bowl of King Qa'a

Kaplony claimed that this bowl records a visit of king Qa'a to the shrine of Ptah of Memphis, either within the *hwt z3-ḥ3-nb* or near it.<sup>98</sup> At the center of the text is a column that reads *nswt-bjtj K3-ḥ3-Nbtj, jz, ḥ-ntr*, and behind it are the

95. W. Helck, "Zur Vorstellung von der Grenze in der ägyptischen Vorgeschichte," *Vorträge Marburg* (1950):15, n. 4.




96. Kaplony, *Inschriften* 2:1125 (the index entry for this *hwt*) and the pages cited.

97. Lacau and Lauer, *Pyramide à degrés IV*, pl. 9: #46; the redrawing here is taken from P. Kaplony, "Gottespalast und Götterfestung in der ägyptischen Frühzeit," *ZÄS* 88 (1963):9: #12.

98. The argument summarized here is taken from Kaplony, "Gottespalast," p. 11 and in his *Inschriften* 2:858–59, n. 922.

designations *hwt z3-ḥ3-nb* and *pr-nswt*. Facing the king's name at the right is a column that begins *nfr-ntrw*, beneath which is a man with outstretched arms and the sign *nmt*. Kaplony took the man to be part of an anthropomorphic balance, of the type used to weigh ingots in the tomb of *K3-jrr*,<sup>99</sup> despite the fact that the most important parts of such a balance, the trays that should hang from the extended arms, are not indicated. Kaplony argued that these "scales" indicate a connection with Memphis, because its principal deity, Ptah, is sometimes called "the scales of the two lands" and because the phrase *nfr ntrw* might be the shortened form of Ptah's title *nfr hr jmj ntrw*.

The connection of this piece with Memphis and Ptah is extremely tenuous. The anthropomorphic balance was certainly not the most typical type of scales. If it were intended here for some special reason, a scribe who gave so much care to the legs and torso would have been unlikely to have omitted the balancing pans. Moreover, the epithet *nfr ntrw* is an epithet that can be applied to many gods and even to the king, as Kaplony admitted.<sup>100</sup> If, however, these elements are to be associated with Ptah, there is no reason to think that Memphis was the only location where Ptah had a shrine. Furthermore, even if this text commemorated a visit of Qa' to Ptah at Memphis, the *hwt z3-ḥ3-nb* need not have been very near there. If it was the place from which Qa' set out, as Kaplony suggested, it was probably some distance from the goal of the journey, since a short trip would be unlikely to warrant a commemorative bowl. In short, this bowl offers no evidence at all for the placement of the *hwt z3-ḥ3-nb*.

Another argument Kaplony gave for his identification of the *hwt z3-ḥ3-nb* with Memphis<sup>101</sup> is the variant writing of the name, a *hwt*   , "*z3-ḥ3-jtj*."<sup>102</sup> He compared this variant to the later *hwt jtj*, which he located at Memphis, although Gauthier described it as "sans caractère géographique ou topographique nettement déterminé."<sup>103</sup> The element *nb* in the name *z3-ḥ3-nb* in Archaic period texts is frequently replaced by other references to the king, for example a falcon,<sup>104</sup> or even his entire serekh.<sup>105</sup> If the sign substituted in the

99. J.-P. Lauer, *Saqqara* (London, 1967), pl. 68.

100. Kaplony, "Gottespalast," p. 11, n. 3.

101. Ibid., p. 11, n. 4.





102. Lacau and Lauer, *Pyramide à degrés IV*, pl. 17: #83. Lacau and Lauer read "*z3-ḥ3-w(?)*."

103. H. Gauthier, *Dictionnaire des noms géographiques contenus dans les textes hiéroglyphiques*, 7 vols. (Cairo, 1921) 4:53.

104. For example, Lacau and Lauer, *Pyramide à degrés IV*, pl. 6: #26, #27, #28.

105. For example, Petrie, *Royal Tombs II*, pl. 8:12.

example that Kaplony cited is to be read *jtj*, it is simplest to interpret it as “sovereign” in parallel with the other substitutions for *nb*. The substitution would have no significance for the identification of the *hwt z3-h3-nb*.

Kaplony also cited a number of seals in which a group of signs that bear some resemblance to *p-Hr-msn* occurs in the same environment as *Jnbw-hdw*, Memphis.<sup>106</sup> Since the *hwt p-Hr-msn* also alternates with the *hwt z3-h3-nb*, he concluded that the latter is an early name for Memphis. There are two problems with this argument, however. In order to read the name of the *hwt* as *hwt p-Hr-msn*, Kaplony had to emend a clear  sign to  and a  sign to ; and he ignored the fact that other groups also occur in this environment,<sup>107</sup> probably because the names of many different areas and institutions were substituted into the same basic type of seal. Again, there is no evidence for Kaplony's conclusion.

None of Kaplony's arguments for the identification of the *hwt z3-h3-nb* with Memphis are conclusive or even show such an equation to be very probable. If the *hwt p-Hr-msn* were placed at Buto, Helck's suggestion that the *hwt z3-h3-nb* is Hierakonpolis probably would be the most sensible assumption. But the identification of *hwt p-Hr-msn* is also open to question.

A better identification for these two *hwts* was suggested by Petrie,<sup>108</sup> on the basis of the text given above as *D:3*. Since the part of the text that is furthest to the right mentions the *hwt p-Hr-msn* and the part that mentions the *hwt z3-h3-nb* follows it to the left, Petrie concluded that the former was the palace of the king and the latter was his tomb, to which the vessel was transferred after his death. Although the evidence Petrie cited is rather conjectural, these identifications can be shown to be much more consistent with the patterns in the evidence than the identifications proposed by Kaplony.

The geographical and typological distribution of the texts that mention the two *hwts* seem to imply institutions of a differing character but not necessarily different geographical locations. References to the *hwt p-Hr-msn* occur in sealings from Abydos and in ink inscriptions from Saqqara, but this *hwt* does not occur as a potmark. The *hwt z3-h3-nb*, in contrast, is found in neither seal impressions nor in ink inscriptions but occurs frequently as a potmark at Abydos, which suggests that the *hwt z3-h3-nb* may have been located at Abydos and that the pottery made for it was not of sufficient value to transport. On incised

106. Kaplony, *Inschriften* 2:858–59, n. 992. He compared his examples in *ibid.*, 3: #310 to #311 and #312; and #317 to #318.

107. See for example, *ibid.*, 3: #316, #319.

108. Petrie, *Royal Tombs* 1:21.

stoneware vessels, however, both *hwt*s occur at both Abydos and Saqqara. In the texts collected in *Categories C* and *D*, the type of text connected with the *hwt p-Hr-msn* occurs in almost exactly equal proportions at Abydos and Saqqara, while the type associated with the *hwt z3-ḥ3-nb* occurs much more commonly at Abydos (nine of the eleven examples with known provenience). This again suggests that the latter *hwt* was located at Abydos. The even distribution of the former type may be explained by the hypothesis that these more costly vessels were transferred, as Petrie suggested, from the palace (*hwt p-Hr-msn*) to the tomb (*hwt z3-ḥ3-nb*), but that transfers in the other direction were rarer.

A number of texts from the reign of Anedjib show, next to his serekh, a stepped structure surmounted by a rectangle, the inside of which is labeled *z3-ḥ3-Hr*.<sup>109</sup> This structure is almost certainly to be identified with the later *z3-ḥ3-nb*, since both the Horus falcon (*Hr*) and the word “lord” (*nb*) are references to the king. The same stepped structure is recorded in about twenty potmarks found at Abydos, in which the label inside the rectangle reads simply *z3-ḥ3*,<sup>110</sup> apparently the immutable part of the same name. The structures in these potmarks usually have three steps, though sometimes they are given as many as five. Such a structure is never associated with the *hwt p-Hr-msn*.

The only stepped architecture known from the First Dynasty is an interior component of one of the mastabas at Saqqara, which dates to the reign of Anedjib.<sup>111</sup> This structure probably developed out of the tumulus of rubble faced with bricks which has been found inside earlier mastabas at Saqqara.<sup>112</sup> Kemp suggested that the inner and outer parts of the Saqqara mastabas represent an amalgamation of two types of superstructures that were separated at Abydos. At the Um el-Qa‘ab, a mound-like structure covered the tomb itself, while in the valley some distance from the tomb was a large, hollow, rectangular structure with a niched facade (the so-called “forts”). The early tumulus, such as that which apparently covered the tombs at Abydos in the reign of Djet,<sup>113</sup> might be presumed to have evolved simultaneously with the interior structures at

109. Lacau and Lauer, *Pyramide à degrés IV*, pl. III: #6, #7.


110. Petrie, *Royal Tombs 1*: pl. 46, lower six rows.

111. Tomb 3038 at Saqqara. See Emery, *Tombs*, 1:82–93.

112. *Ibid.*, 3:73–74 and pl. 86.

113. B. Kemp, “Abydos and the Royal Tombs of the First Dynasty,” *JEA* 52 (1966):18, n. 8, citing Petrie, *Royal Tombs 2*:10.

Saqqara. Hence he concluded that the structures surmounting the burials of Anedjib and his successors at Abydos would have been stepped.<sup>114</sup>

The building known as *z3-ḥ3-Ḥr* during the reign of Anedjib, and *z3-ḥ3-nb* later, is quite probably to be equated with these stepped structures. The simplest translation of the name of this *ḥwt*, "Protection around the Lord/Horus," would be an appropriate name for the monument that covered the king's burial chamber. Another factor to consider in this identification is that the *ḥwt* is so frequently associated in the texts of *Category D* with a title referring to the *pr-nswt*, "the king's house," and which would normally be taken to be the palace of the living king. However, in the granite burial chamber of Djoser in the Step Pyramid, on the west side of the south wall is a clearly incised group ,<sup>115</sup> which shows that *pr-nswt* could be applied to a royal tomb, at least in the Third Dynasty.

To equate the other *ḥwt*, the *ḥwt p-Ḥr-msn*, with the royal palace is not a departure from the traditional interpretations. It is clearly an institution connected with the king and may refer to more than one building.

The equation of the *ḥwt p-Ḥr-msn* with the palace of the living king and the *ḥwt z3-ḥ3-nb* and its variants with royal mortuary complexes would explain a number of the differences between *Categories C* and *D*. The multiple kings on the texts of *Category C* could be explained by the use of a royal palace and its equipment by successive kings. These texts would then have had to be updated with every change of reign. The vessels of *Category D*, in contrast, were assigned to a theoretically perpetual mortuary cult and would thus require no updating except in cases of usurpation of mortuary equipment by later kings.

The distinction between a living and a dead king might also be shown in the names by which they are identified. The scholars who favor making a distinction between living and dead kings based on their names usually regard the Horus name as identifying the living king, and the *nswt-bjtj* name as the form used for a dead king, the reverse of the pattern found in these texts. However, as Emery pointed out in his discussion of the question,<sup>116</sup> the Horus name is frequently associated with the dead king (for example, in mortuary stele) and the two names occur together in other cases. The principal reason for identifying Horus with the living king is to contrast his earthly role with that of his dead predecessor Osiris, but the god Osiris is not attested at this early date. It may be

114. Kemp, "Abydos and the Royal Tombs," pp. 18–19, partially following Emery, *Tombs*, 3:74.

115. B. Gunn, "Inscriptions from the Step Pyramid Site IV. Inscriptions from the Funerary Chamber," *ASAE* 35 (1935):65 and pl. 3: #16.

116. W. Emery, *Archaic Egypt* (Harmondsworth, 1961), p. 35.

that in the Archaic period, the Horus name reflected the divine, eternal aspect of the king, while the *nswt-bjtj* name reflected his historical, individual aspect. The latter name would thus be expected to appear in historical accounts and king lists after the death of the king as well as on objects of daily life. The Horus name, which is associated with the ka of the king (as can be seen in later depictions in which a king's ka walks behind him carrying his Horus name in a serekh), would be important in rituals and would tend to predominate in the cult of the king when he had joined his ka and his ancestors. Although the serekh in which the Horus name is written is partly composed of what is usually called a "palace facade," it should be remembered that this facade is best attested architecturally in mortuary complexes.

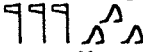
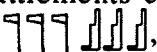
The final distinction between *Categories C* and *D* is the references to phyle divisions. It might perhaps be concluded that the phyles serving at a mortuary complex were larger than those at a royal palace and were divided into four divisions to ease administration. This would not be too surprising, since throughout Egyptian history more resources were expended upon the maintenance of the dead than upon the living; however, the evidence is so limited that it cannot be proven that divisions did not also exist in the *hwt p-Hr-msn*.

If these identifications of the two *hwts* are accepted, the texts in *Categories C* and *D* seem to reflect a situation not unlike that which obtained in the later Old Kingdom. Phyles served in groups, possibly already in rotation, at the mortuary complex of a dead king and each phyle had a store of its own equipment. That phyles also served in the palace of the living king during this period is not surprising, since the needs of the dead were modeled after the needs of the living. There is a good deal of evidence for such service in later periods.<sup>117</sup>

#### 8.2.6. Category E

The texts in this category are connected to the phyle system because of the names, *w3dtjw* and *st*, which occur in them; in neither of the examples is the name followed by a phyle sign, although in one example it is followed by two strokes that indicate divisions.

117. See the discussion of this question in *Section 8.2.14, Excursus 2*, below.

**E:1.**<sup>118</sup> This plate from the Step Pyramid complex is of dark gray schist. Its incised inscription gives the serekh of Sneferka, which is a change or addition.<sup>119</sup> Below the serekh is a *st* sign followed by two strokes, reminiscent of the two strokes that follow the phyle name in some of the texts in *Category D*. To the left of the serekh are two buildings, the ‘*h ntr*, “the palace of the god,” and a rectangular area with battlements called , or, more probably, as Lauer and Lacau read it, , *swwt-ntrw*.<sup>120</sup>

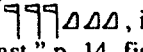
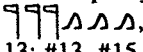
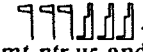
This building is mentioned in the annals of the Old Kingdom preserved on the Palermo Stone.<sup>121</sup> There it appears in the third register, in three successive years during the reign of an unnamed king. The first year marks its planning (*h3*), the second its foundation ceremony (*pdt šs*), and the third some sort of dedication (*wpt š*). Though the years in which it is mentioned almost certainly fell into the reign of Den and hence before the reigns of Qa‘a and Sneferka,<sup>122</sup> it would not be surprising for a construction of such importance to have survived into later reigns. The structure seems to have been of a different type than a *hwt*; and to judge from its name, it was not connected with any single god.

Beneath the two notations of places on *E:1* is a difficult group: a large *w**d* sign, followed by a ram and the sign *s*, with a T-shaped sign centered below the entire group. This is probably a name or title, but it is difficult to determine which, or how it should be read. The last sign is probably a determinative or modifier, since it is omitted from the parallel group in *E:2*.

**E:2.**<sup>123</sup> This text is incised on a large black schist plate from Saqqara. It is similar in content and organization to *E:1*. The serekh belongs to Qa‘a, who was quite probably the original owner of *E:1* as well. To the left of the serekh are the ‘*h-ntr* and the *swwt-ntrw*. Beneath the serekh is the name of the *w3dtjw* phyle; it is badly broken, but the traces are similar to the writings in *C:1*, *D:11*, *D:12*, and *F:3*. No strokes survive following the name. To the left is the group of a ram

118. Lacau and Lauer, *Pyramide à degrés IV*, pl. 17: #86; Emery, *Tombs*, 3: pl. 28b.

119. See *D:8*, another occurrence of this serekh.

120. Lacau and Lauer, *Pyramide à degrés IV*, p. 26. Kaplony read this group three different ways: in some cases , in another , and in yet another . Kaplony, “Gottespalast,” p. 14, figure on p. 13: #13–#15, *q3.w-ntr.w*; #16, *nmt-ntr.w*; and #19, *iswt-ntr.w*. It seems, however, more reasonable to assume that all these examples are writings of the same name. This is presumably *swwt-ntrw*, “the places of the gods,” since “the hills of the gods” and “the footsteps of the gods” seem unlikely names for buildings.

121. H Schäfer, *Ein Bruchstück altägyptischer Annalen* (Berlin, 1902), pp. 19–20.

122. W. Kaiser, “Einige Bemerkungen zur ägyptischen Frühzeit,” *ZÄS* 86 (1961):45, and W. Helck, “Bemerkungen zum Annalenstein,” *MDAIK* 30 (1974):34.

123. Lacau and Lauer, *Pyramide à degrés IV*, pl. 9: #44.




over *wḏ* s, apparently the same group as in *E:1*, though the T-shaped sign is missing (the area is intact, and is clearly not carved).

Another text of this type is known that is identical to *E:2* except for the lack of a phyle name.<sup>124</sup> The area under the serekh, where the phyle name occurs in *E:2*, is clearly uninscribed in this parallel; however, it is possible that a phyle was mentioned on some part of this plate that is not preserved.

These texts, though different in content, are similar in organization to the texts of *Category D*. They begin with the name of the king in a serekh, to the left of which a place is designated (in the case of *Category E*, two places), followed by a group of uncertain meaning. Both categories also are of roughly the same date. The texts of *Category E* clearly reflect the existence of a phyle organization at the *swwt-ntrw* towards the end of the First Dynasty, and the strokes after the phyle name suggest that, like some of the phyles at the *ḥwt z3-ḥ3-nb*, these phyles were further separated into divisions.

The character of the *swwt-ntrw* is not clear; the battlements suggest a fortified area of some type. It is possible that soldiers were organized into phyles at this period, but it is difficult to imagine a branch of military service that required large ceremonial stone platters. Perhaps the *ḥ-ntr* was a cult place within a larger, fortified area. This large area may have been, as suggested by its name, an enclosure containing the shrines of many gods, like the *ḥb-sd* court in the Djoser complex. A parallel could also be seen in later complexes with multiple temples and shrines such as Karnak temple and other city temples. Although no remains of such city temples survive from the Old Kingdom, their existence is implied by the references to earlier temples in later building inscriptions.

The notation  is also perplexing. Although a personal name is possible, it is not likely. The determinative is inappropriate, the pattern is not one that would be expected in a name, and in any case one would not expect the same person to be associated with two different phyles at the same institution. A more probable solution would be to take this as an early title connected with a cult of Khnum or another ram-deity. It is suggestive that in the year box following the last reference to the *swwt-ntrw* on the Palermo Stone, a ram is depicted in front of a shrine labeled *ḥ-ntr*.<sup>125</sup>

124. Ibid., pl. 9: #45.

125. Schäfer, *Annalen*, pl. 1, register 3, year x + 9.

## 8.2.7. Category F

Most of the texts of *Category F* date to the reign of Ninetjer in the Second Dynasty; the one exception dates to a following reign, that of Weneg. All examples of this type of text include phyle names, all were excavated at Saqqara, and all but one were found in the Step Pyramid complex. The texts consist of two vertical lines of inscription that face one another (the hieroglyphs in the right column face left, those in the left column face right). The left column contains the *nswt-bjtj* name of the king and sometimes part or all of the phyle name. The right column begins with a name, probably of a divinity or divinities, followed by the word *df3w*, “provisions,” which is sometimes followed by part or all of the phyle name and sometimes by an indication of location, *nmt* or *hnt*. All examples are incised on the exterior of shallow bowls and platters. On two examples, texts in ink appear on the inside of the vessel and partially duplicate the incised text.

**F:1.**<sup>126</sup> This text occurs on a pink limestone platter. Facing the name of *Nj-ntj-Nbtj* are three falcons on standards, the words *df3w* and *nmt*, and the name of the *nds* phyle. An ink inscription on the interior of the platter repeats the groups *nmt* and *nds* phyle but precedes them with a sign that Lacau and Lauer suggested is to be read *pr*. Lacau and Lauer, and also Helck,<sup>127</sup> took both bird signs to be *wr*, but a comparison of both with the clear *wr* signs in example *F:5* shows that the signs in *F:1* are to be read *nds*. Helck also read the top of the right column as “die beiden Herren,”<sup>128</sup> but the photograph clearly shows three standards.

**F:2.**<sup>129</sup> This bluish schist bowl gives the phyle name *w3dtjw* directly after the name of *Nj-ntj-Nbtj* in the left column. The right column has two falcons on standards and the groups *df3w* and *hnt*.

**F:3.**<sup>130</sup> The text on this green schist platter is distinct from the others in its provenience as well as its date. It was excavated by Firth in a private tomb in Saqqara (S 3014) with two other plates that mention Weneg. The left column of this piece gives the *nswt-bjtj* name *Wng-Nbtj* and the phyle name *w3dtjw*. The

126. Lacau and Lauer, *Pyramide à degrés IV*, pl. 14: #68; ink inscription, *ibid.*, pl. VII: #4.

127. W. Helck, “Die Datierung der Gefäßaufschriften aus der Djoser-pyramide,” *ZÄS* 106 (1979):123.

128. *Ibid.*

129. Lacau and Lauer, *Pyramide à degrés IV*, pl. 14: #69.

130. *Ibid.*, p. 53, fig. 5.

right column has two falcons on standards followed by the group *df3w*. There are no additional signs.

**F:4.**<sup>131</sup> This text is inscribed on a diorite bowl. The left column contains only *Nj-ntr-Nbtj*'s titles and name. The right is probably to be read *df3w-B3s(tt)* followed by the damaged name of a phyle and the sign *hnt*. The anomalous writing of *df3w* was attributed by Lacau and Lauer to the hardness of the stone; this is the only text of this type inscribed on diorite. They also remark that the phyle name and the *hnt* sign are in the reverse of their usual order; however, in the only other occurrence of *hnt* in these texts (*F:2*), the phyle name is opposite it to the left and therefore precedes it, since the left column is probably to be read first.<sup>132</sup> The phyle named is clearly *wr*. Although the tail is not visible on the photograph, I was able to view the piece in its vitrine in the Cairo Egyptian Museum and traces of a fork can be discerned.

**F:5.**<sup>133</sup> This pink limestone platter gives the name of *Nj-ntr-Nbtj* in the left column, *df3w-B3s(tt)* in the right column, and the phyle name *wr* below, split between the two columns. Each sign follows the orientation of the column above it. Because the *wr* sign, which would normally be written before the phyle sign, is written in the left column, the left column is probably to be read first in these texts. (This assumption is supported by the facts that the king's name always occurs in the left column and that this column is written from right to left, the preferred orientation.) The ink inscription on the interior of the plate consists of two columns, both face to the right. The first of these is probably to be read *df3w-B3s(tt)*; although the bird sign is not similar to the incised parallels, the group *df3w* beneath it seems clear. The second line contains an almost illegible group, perhaps identical to that on the interior of *F:1*, followed by the name of the *wr* phyle.

**F:6.**<sup>134</sup> The text on this platter, which is again of pink limestone, is identical to that described as *F:5*. There is no ink text on the interior, however.

**F:7.**<sup>135</sup> This text, also from a pink limestone platter, is identical to the incised texts of *F:5* and *F:6*, except that the phyle name has been lost. The phyle sign to the right insures that there was a phyle name, although the chip visible on the

131. Ibid., pl. 5: #1 (a drawing); B. Gunn, "Inscriptions [I.]," pl. 2: #4 (a photograph).

132. See the discussion of example *F:5*.

133. Lacau and Lauer, *Pyramide à degrés IV*, pl. 13: #63; ink inscription, ibid., pl. VII: #3.

134. Ibid., pl. 13: #65.

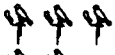



135. Ibid., pl. 13: #66.

photograph does not appear to be large enough to have obscured an entire hieroglyph.

**F:8.**<sup>136</sup> This pink limestone platter bears the same text as *F:5*, *F:6*, and *F:7*, although the king's name is missing. The writing of *df3w*, which appears to be anomalous on the photograph, is due to an inaccurate reconstruction. The tail of the second *d* and the head of the second *f* are lost in a break which must be widened to allow space for the king's name. The *wr* sign should also be aligned with the phyle sign, as the scratches on the bottom of each fragment make clear. These adjustments have been made in the drawing given here.

The platters and bowls with inscriptions of *Category F* were apparently used to transport the provisions of various divinities during the reigns of Ninetjer and Weneg. The most striking characteristic of this category is the influence the phyle designation appears to have had on the content and arrangement of the text and even the material of the bowls on which they appear. These correspondences are summarized in table 5.

Table 5. Phyle Names as a Determinant of Label Content and Material of Stone Vessels in *Category F*

Example	Phyle Name	Position of Phyle	Divinity	Type of Stone
<i>F:1</i>	<i>nds</i>	Right		Pink limestone
<i>F:2-3</i>	<i>w3dtjw</i>	Left		Blue or green schist
<i>F:4</i>	<i>wr</i>	Right		Diorite
<i>F:5-8</i>	<i>wr</i>	Split		Pink limestone

The correspondence between the divinities and the phyle names is probably the most interesting characteristic of this category of texts. Of the three groups of divinities preserved, only Bastet is a distinctive god or goddess. The *w3dtjw* phyle is attached to two gods and the *nds* phyle to three. This increase follows the standard Old Kingdom phyle order, in which the *w3dt* phyle directly preceded the *nds* phyle. These groups of two and three falcon standards may be more specific than simply the dual and plural of the word "god," however. Pairs and triads of gods and goddesses were common in Egyptian religion, and these designations may have stood for a specific pair and triad of gods whose identity was obvious in the context in which the bowls were used. The nature of the connection between the phyles and these divinities, whatever their identities, is more problematic. If all the bowls belonged to the same institution, a phyle

136. Lacau and Lauer, *Pyramide à degrés IV*, pl. 13: #64.

might have been assigned to each of several cults in a temple. But unless the divinities were worshipped only periodically, an unlikely possibility, this would imply that phyle members served continuously rather than in rotation.

A more likely explanation is to assume that the offerings contained in these bowls were not intended for the divinities mentioned but were instead reversion offerings paid by three cults, the cults of Bastet, a divine couple, and a divine triad, to another institution. The payment could have been scheduled by designating specific phyles of these cults to deliver and present the offerings during their periods of service. The “subcontracting” with phyles of other institutions to arrange materials and service for a cult may be paralleled in the “parasite” phyles at the mortuary temple of Neferirkare.<sup>137</sup> If the bowls were manufactured at different institutions, the variations in arrangement of the text and the differences in material are simply explained,<sup>138</sup> and the reason for the correlation of these characteristics with the phyles is equally clear. The donor institutions were apparently not closely associated with any individual king, since the arrangement and divinity mentioned in the bowls of the *w3dt* phyle was consistent through two reigns. The recipient of these offerings may have been the royal household or, more probably, a mortuary cult whose tableware was taken over by Djoser when he built his tomb, perhaps on the site of its storerooms or outbuildings. The anomalous provenience of the only text that mentions Weneg rather than Ninetjer suggests that the recipient institutions may have changed with the change of reign.

The two designations *hnt* and *nmt* each appear on two bowls. Their occurrence seems to be independent of the phyle name and its associated characteristics. *Hnt* is discussed at length above,<sup>139</sup> but it is unclear whether the meaning is the same in all occurrences.

#### 8.2.8. Category G

This category consists of two texts inscribed on green schist cups from the Step Pyramid complex at Saqqara. They differ only in the arrangement of a few signs and the presence and absence of a two-sign group. Both pieces bear the name of *Nj-ntr-Nbtj*. These texts are similar to those of *Category F* in that the king’s name is on the left, facing right, and another column of text is on the right, facing left. In addition to the two texts listed, a fragment with the

137. Posener-Kriéger, *Archives*, pp. 568–72, discussed in *Section 5.3* above.

138. One wonders, however, if the correlation of the green (and blue) stone bowls with the *w3dt* (“green”) phyle has any additional significance.

139. See the discussion of *hnt* following *Category D*.

hieroglyphs *tp mr*, perhaps from a parallel text, was found in the tomb of Khasekhemwy at Abydos.<sup>140</sup>

**G:1.**<sup>141</sup> The left-hand column of this text gives only the *nswt-bjtj* name of *Nj-ntr-Nbtj*; the right column has *‘nh swwt*, a *z3* sign, a bird sign of which the tail has broken away, and a horizontal group *tp mr*, determined by a building with a single central column. Although these last three signs are centered at the base of the right column, Lacau and Lauer interpreted *tp mr* as a separate group between the columns and tentatively translated *‘nh swwt* as a building name, determined by the single-columned building, with the title “chef des φυλαί” (with the signs in inverted order) intervening, and another title, “chef du canal,” to the left.<sup>142</sup>

**G:2.**<sup>143</sup> This bowl bears the same text discussed in *G:1* with three differences. First, the left-hand column is followed by a phrase that Lacau and Lauer translated “la sortie de voix habituelle.”<sup>144</sup> If it is so interpreted, this represents the earliest known occurrence of the phrase *prt hrw*, “funerary invocation offerings”; however, this phrase is not modified by *‘š3* elsewhere. The proportions of the *hrw* sign also are unusual. The second difference from text *G:1* is the arrangement of the three elements at the bottom of the right column. They are in a vertical rather than a horizontal configuration, and the building sign (here written as a horizontal with six descending vertical lines) clearly comes first.

The third distinction is the complete preservation of the bird following the *z3* sign. It is certainly not a *wr* bird and probably not a *nds* bird, since the body is more vertical and the legs begin too close to the tail (see example *F:1*). Examination of example *G:1* shows that the same bird is probably shown there, since the legs are much longer than one would expect for a *wr* or *nds* sign. Coupled with the fact that the inversion of the phyle name and determinative is completely unattested for the known phyle names in the Archaic period, this seems to indicate that the sign should be read as a quail chick, *w*. The group is thus *z3w*, either the plural “phyles” or the plural passive participle of the verb *z3*: “protected.”

140. Petrie, *Abydos* 1: pl. 4:4.

141. Lacau and Lauer, *Pyramide à degrés IV*, pl. 16: #75.

142. *Ibid.*, p. 35.

143. *Ibid.*, pl. 16: #76.

144. *Ibid.*, p. 36.

The presence of the group *tp mr* makes it tempting to see these texts as referring to phyles, since the same phrase is used in the procession of phyles to a circumcision ceremony that is depicted in the tomb of *‘nh-m-‘-Hr*.<sup>145</sup> The caption of that scene states that the ceremony takes place *r tp mr*, “at the *tp mr*.” If the building mentioned is a place where the circumcision was performed and young men became members of phyles, the name of the building might be translated “May the places of the phyles live,” or, taking *‘nh* as a reference to the king in honorific transposition, “The places of the phyles of the living one.” Neither of these translations are particularly satisfactory. To take *z3w* as an old perfective, which yields “The places of the living one are protected,” is more problematic, however, as one would expect the feminine plural ending *.tj* rather than the masculine plural *w*, which is in any case not usually written in Old Egyptian.

The presence of the group *prt hrw* (if indeed it is to be so read) favors the interpretation of this building as some part of a mortuary complex. Both determinatives could be interpreted as depicting a building with two doors, reminiscent of the Old Kingdom depictions of the funerary *w‘bt*, where the body was prepared, and which was approached by water.<sup>146</sup> The royal equivalent of this structure was the valley temple, and these texts may refer to a Second Dynasty version of that structure. In that case, these texts would be unrelated to phyles, except insofar as phyles may figure in the name of the building in question and the phrase *tp mr* connects it with the ceremony of circumcision.

### 8.2.9. Category H

This category contains four texts written in ink on stone vessels from Saqqara. Each includes a date and a phyle name, but no royal names are mentioned. Helck hypothesized that at least two of the inscriptions could be dated to the reign of Ninetjer on the basis of their high year dates and references to a jubilee.<sup>147</sup>

**H:1.**<sup>148</sup> The text on this alabaster vase begins at the right with three falcons on standards, followed by an *h* and a bird of some sort and by the vertically written group *jnw stt*, “the ‘bringing’ (or ‘tribute’?) of Asia.” The left column is framed on its right by an oversized year sign, similar to those that frame the

145. See Chapter 4, figure 4.1.

146. See, for example, the depiction in the tomb of *Jdw*: W. K. Simpson, *The Mastabas of Qar and Idu*, Giza Mastabas 2 (Boston, 1976), fig. 35.

147. Helck, “Gefäßaufschriften,” p. 128.

148. Lacau and Lauer, *Pyramide à degrés V*, p. 89.

year names in the annals of the Old Kingdom on the Palermo Stone and other fragments. This text reads, “the following-of-Horus and 17th cattle census; *w3dtjw* phyle.” (This occurrence of the *w3dtjw* phyle with falcons on standards does not parallel that in *Category F*, where it occurs with only two such standards.)

**H:2.**<sup>149</sup> The text on this tubular alabaster vase consists of two vertical columns followed by an isolated group. It is not well preserved. The first column begins with two signs which Lacau and Lauer interpreted as the title *hrp jzt*, followed by two damaged groups, a ram, and two more damaged groups. The second column is partially framed by a year sign. It begins with what appears to be the group *r-3*, after which there are two illegible groups, the end of which coincides with the end of the year sign frame. Below this is *h'j* (a building of some kind, judging from the determinative), *nds* phyle, and another illegible group. The isolated group of signs to the left also is illegible. To read the top part “l’année de la troisième fois...”<sup>150</sup> ignores the shape of the sign read as *zp*, although the format is paralleled in *H:3*. The word *h'j* may be the structure later called the *pr hj*, which is used in the jubilee;<sup>151</sup> the determinative resembles the shrine of Upper Egypt slightly. The phyle name is almost certainly *nds*, though the bird is more upright than usual.

**H:3.**<sup>152</sup> This narrow necked alabaster jar has a single handle. It is elaborately decorated with a kneeling man carved in raised relief. He holds a stepped platform, above which is a jubilee dais topped with two scarab beetles. The man and the plaque are carved on the body of the vase and the dais and beetles are carved on the handle. The inscription has two columns of text, the first of which clearly reads “year of the fourth occasion of the festival of navigation, the *nds* phyle.” The text at left is less clear. The sign *m3*, a tall sign, and a bird are legible; and below them, partially lost and on a smaller scale, is a group that is probably *b3w*. The festival written with the boat *nm* is frequently attested on the Palermo Stone: in year 5 of the king in register 2, in the sixth year recorded in register 3, and in year 11 (second occasion) and year 17 (the third occasion)

149. Ibid., p. 90, fig. 174.

150. Ibid., p. 90.


151. Erman and Grapow, *Wörterbuch* 3:40, 7; no examples are given before the Middle Kingdom.

152. Lacau and Lauer, *Pyramide à degrés V*, p. 88, fig 172; J.-P. Lauer, “Fouilles du Service des Antiquités à Saqqarah (Secteur Nord)(Novembre 1933–Mai 1934),” *ASAE* 34 (1934):58–59; J. E. Quibell, “Stone Vessels from the Step Pyramid,” *ASAE* 34 (1934):72 and pl. 4.



in the reign of Ninetjer.<sup>153</sup> It seems that the festival was celebrated at six-year intervals (the omission of a reference to a repetition six years after the occurrence in register 3 is perhaps explained by the fact that the first driving out of the Apis bull fell in that year and overshadowed the lesser festival). One would thus expect that the fourth occasion recorded in *H:3* dated to about year 23, probably of Ninetjer.

*H:4*.<sup>154</sup> This text, on a fragment of a vessel of unrecorded shape and material, is clearly marked with the name of the *wr* phyle. It is included in this category because of the long vertical stroke on the top part of the fragment, which may be the remains of a year sign, since its position above the phyle name is similar to that sign in texts *H:2* and *H:3*.

There are many problems with these texts, but the question that is pertinent to this study is why the phyle names occur. Most of the jars that bear *Category H* texts were described as “vase” by Lacau and Lauer. The naming of years on these jars, combined with their shape, suggests that the texts gave the vintage of the contents, probably wine. The phyle name is not included in the year-sign frame in three of the four cases and the most likely interpretation is that the phyle was mentioned as the owner or donor of the contents. The other possibility, that the phyles rotated every year during this period so that their names could be used to reinforce a date, is less likely; such practice would surely have been recorded in the annals of the Old Kingdom. There are no clear cases of phyle names in the annals, although there are two cases in which the phyle sign occurs with what might be taken to be a name.<sup>155</sup> However, in the Cairo fragment the *wr* sign accompanying the *z3* sign is almost certainly part of the name *pr-wr*, since the determinative of that shrine is shown below it; and on the Palermo Stone, the sign to the right of the *z3* sign seems to be a knife (  ) rather than a *wr* bird.

#### 8.2.10. Category I



The texts of this category, like those of *Category E*, are characterized by references to the *w3dtjw* and *sṯ* phyles without phyle determinatives; furthermore, the examples in both categories regularly include at least one group that incorporates a ram hieroglyph. In all examples, the phyle name is


153. Schäfer, *Annalen*, pl. 1.




154. Lacau and Lauer, *Pyramide à degrés V*, pl. 30: #3.

155. Schäfer, *Annalen*, pl. 1, register 5 year 8; H. Gauthier, “Quatre nouveaux fragments de la Pierre de Palerme,” in G. Maspero, ed., *Le Musée Egyptien* (Cairo, 1915), fragment #4, top middle year compartment.

written more crudely and perhaps at a different time than the remainder of the text. (This is also the case in *E:1* and perhaps also *E:2*.) The categories differ in that the texts in *Category I* are written in ink rather than incised, and they mention no kings or buildings.

*I:1*.<sup>156</sup> This inscription bears two occurrences of the group   , which appears on fifty-five other vases from the Step Pyramid complex as a personal name, *Jj.n-Hnmw*.<sup>157</sup> The right column contains the notation *hb sd*, followed by the name. To the left is an oversized *st* sign beside some illegible traces that seem to be on a smaller scale and may include a phyle determinative. Behind them, the name is repeated.

*I:2*.<sup>158</sup> This text appears from the drawing to have been written on a jar decorated with a net of ropes carved in raised relief. One of these ropes divides the inscription into two parts. To the right and below it is the same name recorded in *I:1*,<sup>159</sup> preceded by a horizontal sign which has been read as the title .<sup>160</sup> This reading seems unlikely, but I can suggest no improvement; since the sign precedes the name in many other occurrences it is probably a title of some kind. Above the rope and to the left is a solitary *st* sign. Kaplony also considered this sign to be the phyle name.<sup>161</sup>

*I:3*.<sup>162</sup> This piece gives what is probably another personal name,    , *Nfr-ḥtp-Hnmw*. To the right and below this is a sign resembling a *w3d* sign, though there are some unusual loops at its base. It is almost triple the size of the hieroglyphs in the name, and it is placed at an angle to them. Kaplony considered this text a reference to the *w3d* phyle.<sup>163</sup>

*I:4*.<sup>164</sup> This text is identical to that of *I:3*, except that the sign to the right of the name is vertical and broken at the top. If it is a *w3d* sign, as seems likely

156. Lacau and Lauer, *Pyramide à degrés V*, p. 4, fig. 9.

157. See Helck, "Gefäßaufschriften," pp. 127–28, for this name, which he dates to the reign of Ninetjer.

158. Ibid., p. 3, fig. 5.

159. The two vertical signs in this name are frequently reversed as they are here.

160. Ibid., p. 5.

161. Kaplony, *Inschriften* 1:410–11.

162. Lacau and Lauer, *Pyramide à degrés V*, p. 32, fig. 6.

163. Kaplony, *Inschriften* 1:547.

164. Lacau and Lauer, *Pyramide à degrés V*, p. 32, fig. 47.

from its position and the parallels, it has an unusual interior feature, four angled lines.

Lacau and Lauer postulated that the ink markings on the vessels from the Step Pyramid complex were meant to indicate either the origin or the destination of a lot of vessels, of which the vessel marked was the topmost or otherwise the most visible.<sup>165</sup> In their discussion of texts of this type, they noted that the “r” (presumably the *w3d* sign) marked on some of the jars was larger and was written in a darker ink than the other signs on the same jars, implying that these signs were added at a different time.<sup>166</sup> This may also be the explanation for the variation in size and orientation of the phyle labels.

Helck, in his discussion of the inscriptions on the stone vessels found in the Step Pyramid, concluded that the personal names indicate the recipient of the vessel given by the king and that the names were meant to have been carved eventually, although almost none of them were.<sup>167</sup> Following this reconstruction, one could hypothesize that the personal names were written first and, when the vessels were put into storage, marks were made on them to indicate their destination, perhaps a phyle storeroom.

It is interesting, however, that personal names seem to correlate with the phyle mentioned. An interpretation that would account for this correlation would be to refer again to the “parasite” phyles in the Neferirkare papyri,<sup>168</sup> in which a phyle called “the *jmj-nfrt* phyle of *Mnw-nfr*” is active in the mortuary cult of Neferirkare. Might not these texts refer to the same sort of “parasite” phyles, perhaps active at the same institution mentioned in the texts of *Category E*?

#### 8.2.11. Category J

The texts in this category are accounts written in ink on two plates found at the Step Pyramid complex. The phyle names on these texts were first identified by Helck.<sup>169</sup> They have been referred to frequently in the above chapters because they represent the earliest occurrence of all five phyles and the only clear reference to a fifth phyle predating the Fifth Dynasty.<sup>170</sup>

There is no evidence in the publication whether or not the plates were deposited with the stoneware found at the Step Pyramid complex and dated to

165. Ibid., p. 96.

166. Ibid., p. 32.

167. Helck, “Gefäßaufschriften,” p. 126.

168. See *Section 5.3*, and also the discussion of *Category F* of this corpus.

169. Helck, “Handwerker- und Priesterphylen,” pp. 7–8.

170. See especially *Section 2.1.5*.

the reign of Ninetjer.<sup>171</sup> Even if they were found with the other texts, however, they are so different as to suggest that they were intrusive. These texts contrast with all the other texts found on stoneware vessels at the Step Pyramid complex in that they are not labels or directions regarding the vessels on which they were written; instead, they simply use the vessels as a writing surface for some kind of tabulation. The accounts are not unlike the archives found at the Fifth Dynasty mortuary temples of Neferirkare and Neferefre. The Step Pyramid texts were presumably recorded by priests functioning in a cult, though it is not at all certain whose cult. Their dating is thus somewhat problematic.

**J:1.**<sup>172</sup> This plate contains four sets of records, which are described separately.

a. The top third of the plate contains a table, marked out in a grid. A transliteration of the chart is shown in figure 8.2.<sup>173</sup> The five phyle names are plotted on the left<sup>174</sup> edge of this grid vertically, against a horizontal row of numbers **9**<sup>175</sup> through **5**, in descending order. There are four further columns of numbers, neither labeled nor divided by vertical lines, at the left of the chart, two on either side of each phyle name. There are also two unlabeled columns marked out on the right edge of the chart, but these are empty.

171. Helck, "Gefäßaufschriften," p. 126.

172. Lacau and Lauer, *Pyramide à degrés* V, fig. 34, and pl. 17: #1.

173. In general, the photograph and the drawing in the publication do not agree well. The illustration is redrawn and corrected based on the photograph, and the transliteration follows the illustration. The two numbers inserted to the left of *wr* were so read by Helck, "Handwerker- und Priesterphylen," p. 7. Helck believed, however, that the three strokes under the *sf* sign indicated that this phyle was divided into three groups. It seems more likely that the strokes are part of a phyle sign, like that under the *sf* sign in *J:2a* below.

174. The table was written from right to left, but the transliteration is, of course, given from left to right. All indications of left and right in the discussion of the tables refer to the transliterations given in the figures, which are mirror images of the original.

175. Boldface is used in the transcription of numbers in the following texts when the number was written with horizontal rather than vertical strokes.

					9	8	7	6	5		
6	12	<i>wr</i>	16	4	2	1					
4	12	<i>st z3</i>	30	5	2	3					
5	13	<i>w3d</i>	6	12	5	1	3				
4	10	<i>nds</i>	6	9	3	4	2		1		
3	12	<b>4</b>	6	16	4		4				

Figure 8.2. A Transliteration of *J:1a*

*b.* Immediately below the chart is a short horizontal series of numbers, each with a phyle name listed below it, in the same order as *a*. All the numbers appear to be 6. The phyle names *w3d* and *nds* are missing, but they can be restored with certainty below the break on the basis of the arrangement of the other phyle names.

*c.* This text is badly damaged, which is unfortunate as it seems to be an account of transactions of some sort between phyles. The numbers are written with horizontal strokes as well as vertical strokes, probably simply to separate them from one another. The text runs in four vertical columns, the leftmost of which seems to be split at the top.

6      6 ... (large hole) ... 6 *jn st* 5  
           ... *w3d* 4    8 *jt nds*  
           ...        6 (+ 1?) *jn w3d* 5  
           ... ↓ 𐎓 3    9 *st* 2

The group ↓ 𐎓 probably does not contain a reference to a phyle name, since the same group appears in *J:2b* and the vertical sign is clearly differentiated from the *w3d* signs in other examples. In *J:2b*, too, it is followed by the number 3, though in horizontal strokes rather than the vertical ones used on this plate. The references to “taking” and “bringing” seem to indicate transactions between the phyles. The fact that *w3d* is followed by *nds* in line two, just as it is in the phyle order, may be significant. Another characteristic of these texts, that they seem to be dominated by the number six, may also have meaning. In addition to the frequent occurrence of that number, numbers higher than six tend to be written with horizontal strokes,

while smaller numbers are written with vertical ones; this suggests success or failure with regard to a set quota of some type.

*d.* This account alone has no mention of the phyle names. It is to the left of *b* and *c* and at an angle to them. It consists entirely of alternating groups of horizontal and vertical strokes, and perhaps served as a running account of some sort.

*J:2.*<sup>176</sup> This plate contains two texts. The first is obviously of the same type as *J:1a*.

*a.* The upper text on the plate is ruled horizontally like *J:1a*, but its columns of numbers are not divided by vertical lines, and there are no columns left of the phyle names. There is an unlabeled column immediately to the right of the names, which is followed by columns labeled 9 through 6; then a column with an illegible label (probably to be restored 5, on the basis of *J:1a*); and another column with an illegible label, which cannot be restored as 4, since the surviving trace at the bottom is curved. The table is transliterated in figure 8.3.



		9	8	7	6		
<i>wr</i>	?	10					
<i>st-z3</i>	39	3		6		4	1
<i>w3d</i>	72	5	10	5	1	1	1
<i>nds</i>	33	4	1			3	
<b>4</b>	28	8	2	3			

Figure 8.3. A Transliteration of *J:2a*

It is interesting that in column 9, the numeral 10 is written  $\cap$ , while in column 8 it seems to have been written with two rows of five strokes.<sup>177</sup> Yet the charts could not have been tallies, in which each stroke was added separately over time, because the spacing and arrangement of the strokes always accords with the final numeral.

176. Lacau and Lauer, *Pyramide à degrés V*, p. 24, fig. 35, pl. 17: #2.

177. Helck, "Handwerker- und Priesterphylen," p. 7, reads the number 10 in column 8 as "9(?)," presumably for this reason, since all ten strokes are visible on the photograph. Helck's reading seems unlikely, however, since 9 in these texts seems always to be written with three rows of three strokes.

**b.** This text consists of five vertical columns of numbers, above which the five phyle names are listed horizontally in the same order as in the charts above, though they are aligned with the five columns of numbers very irregularly. The numerals are written with the same alternation of vertical and horizontal strokes used in *J:1c* and *J:1d*. Assuming, despite their irregularity, that the phyle names were intended to head each column, the text reads:

<i>wr</i>	30 ...			
<i>st</i>	35 ...			
<i>w3d</i>	27	4		
<i>nds</i>	28	4		
<b>4</b>	35	4	↓ ∅ 3	

The group ↓ ∅ here appears almost to be a total, though not of the numbers given above. Whatever its meaning, it seems to be set apart from the other numbers. In this text, the small numbers are written horizontally.

The texts of *Category J* are tantalizingly detailed, but their lack of clear headings makes it difficult to evaluate their contents. Helck attempted to use texts *J:1a*, *J:2a*, and *J:2b* to determine the number of people belonging to each phyle; he assumed that the numbers represented men and compared the first two tables with information he extracted from the Neferirkare papyri.<sup>178</sup> He concluded that the Neferirkare accounts allow for no more than twenty-five members for each division, and hence fifty for each phyle. It is difficult to evaluate this suggestion since the tables he used are incomplete and the names of some phyle members may not have survived; at the same time he may have over-counted the men whose names are preserved, since not all of them were necessarily members of phyles.<sup>179</sup> Moreover, there is no reason to assume that the number of phyle members was constant over time or even the same for every cult. One would expect royal cults, for example, to have much larger phyles than private cults; and royal work crews would presumably have had the largest phyles of all.

178. Ibid., pp. 7–8, citing Posener-Kriéger and de Cenival, *Abu Sir Papyri*, pls. 3–4, 5–7, 13–14, 74–75.

179. See *Chapter 4* for a discussion of which temple functionaries were organized into phyles. The *hrjw h3bt* were clearly not organized into phyles; Posener-Kriéger also doubted that the *hrjw nst* were full members. Helck counted members of both these groups to arrive at his figures.

Nevertheless, there is reason to believe that Helck is correct in assuming that the numbers in columns without headings surrounding the phyle names in *J:1a* and to the immediate left of them in *J:2a* are a count of phyle members. There are four such columns in *J:1a* and only one in *J:2a*, though the format of the tables is otherwise identical. Since at least some phyles are known to have been divided into four divisions during the Archaic period and the early Old Kingdom, it is possible that the lists of members are totaled in *J:2a* and broken down into divisions in *J:1a*. The totals for both accounts would then be as follows:

	<i>J:1a</i>	<i>J:2a</i>
<i>wr</i>	38	?
<i>st</i>	51	39
<i>w3d</i>	36	?2
<i>nds</i>	29	33
<b>4</b>	37	28

The numbers for a single phyle would thus average around thirty-six, though varying from nine below to thirteen above that number. The variation could be explained by various demographic accidents (phyle members too young or too old to serve, sons serving along with their fathers in anticipation of their future inheritance of the office, members who died without leaving heirs, members who had been conscripted for other duties, etc.). The similarity of the general curve in these two accounts (the *st* phyle having the highest number and the *nds* phyle with a considerably smaller complement) might suggest that these accounts were not very far separated in time. *J:2b* may represent yet a third census.

A more interesting question is that of what these tables record. The number of phyle members seems to have been a secondary notation, with the primary information being that indicated by the numbers below the headings of horizontal numbers. It is not likely that the numbers heading the columns indicate days of the month, as Kaplony implied,<sup>180</sup> because only six columns are provided and because the numbers are given in descending order. It seems more probable that the numbers were an abbreviation for something else, probably commodities donated by or for the phyles. Column 9 has entries for every phyle, and usually a larger number than the other columns, and in general both the number of entries and the size of each entry decrease as the column numbers decrease. The view that these charts record transactions dealing with

180. The texts are called "tabellarische Monatslisten," in Kaplony, *Rollsiegel* 1:326.



commodities is somewhat buttressed by the contents of text *J:1c*, which records quantities “which the *w3d* phyle brought” and “which the *nds* phyle took.” Beyond this, several correspondences can be seen between the numbers in text *J:1a* and *c*. At the end of the first column of *c*, the *st* phyle is listed as having brought 5 of some horizontally drawn number, while in text *a* the total number recorded for *st* is 5. In *c*, column two, the number 4 is associated with the number 8 and the *nds* phyle, and 4 is the number in column 8 of *a* under *nds*. Finally, in the last column of *c*, 9 and *st* are followed by the number 2, which also occurs in column 9, row *st* of table *J:1a*. The reference to column 6 of the *w3d* phyle in the third column of text *c* is an exception. It is followed by the number 5, while the number in the chart is 3; there is, however, an entry of 5 in column 9 of *w3d*, which makes it tempting to restore three horizontal strokes next to the six that are preserved in *c*. These correspondences seem to indicate that the numbers in text *J:1c* were used to prepare the table *J:1a*.

The nature of these commodities is suggested both by the fact that the numbers at the heads of the columns are written horizontally and by the curved trace at the bottom of the left-most column of *J:2a*, which I would suggest may be restored as 9. Both of these elements are common in Old Kingdom linen lists and may refer to pieces of cloth of different dimensions.<sup>181</sup> Posener-Kriéger equated the sign  $\equiv$  with ten square cubits of cloth,<sup>182</sup> and the sign 9, which sometimes occurs in a box with a fringe at the bottom, with a piece of cloth 100 cubits square, such as the cloth from Gebelein, now in Turin.<sup>183</sup> One would expect the 9-column to occur at the high end of the scale as it does in formal offering lists carved in tombs,<sup>184</sup> but it is possible that such large pieces of cloth were not expected by the framers of the account (there are none in *J:1*) and had to be added on the left after the table had been set up. It is interesting to note that among the newly-discovered Neferefre papyri there were found twelve similar accounts (or fragments thereof) listing distribution of cloth to phyles, whose names are written vertically as in *J:1* and *J:2*.<sup>185</sup>

One of the most interesting features of these plates is that the name of the fifth phyle (presumed to be such from its position in the list), which was later written *jmj-nfrt*, is here written with a sign that is difficult to identify with any

181. See references cited in Smith, “Linen List,” pp. 134–36.

182. Posener-Kriéger, “Mésures des étoffes,” p. 88.

183. *Ibid.*, p. 93.

184. Smith, “Linen List,” p. 146.


185. Posener-Kriéger, “Nouveaux papyrus,” p. 55.

known hieroglyph. The meaning of this enigmatic sign is discussed in the next chapter in connection with the origins of the phyles.

#### 8.2.12. Category K

This category contains unique examples of contexts where phyles are mentioned or alleged to be mentioned. They are arranged, so far as it is possible, in chronological order.

**K:1.**<sup>186</sup> This sealing from tomb 3504 at Saqqara preserves only a part of the seal's pattern. On the upper left of the area preserved is a sign consisting of eight vertical strokes crossed very near the bottom by a single horizontal stroke, somewhat resembling a bundle of flax (Gardiner's M 38). Beneath this sign is a flowering plant with two buds bent down (Gardiner's M 15), which later indicated Lower Egypt. Kaplony took this group to be the designation of an "unterägyptischen Phyle(?)," which he saw as a counterpart to the "Residenzphyle."<sup>187</sup> This hypothetical reading is completely unparalleled and hence improbable. In addition to the fact that the "phyle sign" resembles a number of other signs much more than z3, the phyle name invariably precedes the z3 sign in the Archaic period.

**K:2.**<sup>188</sup> In this sealing, serekhs of Anedjib appear in a checkerboard pattern. Between them are preserved what is probably a title in the upper register and a phyle name in the lower register. The upper group shows a clear *wr* bird, above which is a horizontal sign that curves down slightly behind it. Kaplony read this group , "der Viziertitel";<sup>189</sup> a reading not justified by either sign, though no alternative reading is evident. Since the bird sign used to write the phyle name has a tail that is very different from the *wr* bird in the title, the phyle named here is probably *nds*.

**K:3.**<sup>190</sup> This sealing from tomb 3505 at Saqqara shows the serekh of Qa'a in alternation with two damaged groups that may be phyle names. One of these groups shows an *r* over a phyle sign; another shows the tail of a bird, a phyle sign, an *r*, and a broken area. Both phyle signs are unusual, lacking the end loops seen in K:2 (for example). Both groups have unanimously been read *wr*

186. Kaplony, *Inschriften* 3: pl. 39: #134; Emery, *Tombs* 2:121, fig. 70.

187. Kaplony, *Inschriften* 1:444–45. See the discussion of the "Residenzphyle" following *Category A* above.


188. *Ibid.*, 3: pl. 123: #736.

189. *Ibid.*, 2:1183.

190. Emery, *Tombs* 3: pl. 37: #3; Kaplony, *Inschriften* 3: pl. 68: #244.

phyle.<sup>191</sup> If they are to be so read, they are the only examples from any period in which the name of the *wr* phyle is written with a phonetic complement. Other unusual features would be the separation of the complement from the *wr* sign by the phyle determinative and the rounded shape of the tail. Another possible interpretation would be to read the *r* as *jrj* and to take the entire group as a title, “guardian of the *nds* phyle.”<sup>192</sup> This interpretation would explain the shape of the bird’s tail and the interposition of the phyle sign between that sign and the *r* and would make the reordering of the signs less remarkable.

**K:4.**<sup>193</sup> This stela from mastaba 3505 at Saqqara gives the titles and silhouette of an official named *Mr-k3*. On the basis of other material in the same mastaba, he is probably to be dated to the reign of Qa‘a.<sup>194</sup> The titles are divided at the top of the stela into three vertical registers, though the lines dividing them only extend down the depth of a single group. That the triple division extends down further, however, is assured by the grouping of the known titles. The third (and final) column is short and clear, reading *sm3*,<sup>195</sup> *jrj-p‘t*, *stn*, *Mr-k3*. The first and second columns tend to run over into one another and, at the point where the third column ends, seem to have merged into a single column with the title ‘*d-mr Wnt*, “district administrator of the Hare Nome,” which bridges both columns and is followed by a number of signs that cannot be translated or even be divided into groups with any certainty.

The stela of *Mr-k3* is included in this corpus because of the group , which occurs in the middle of the first column. It is preceded by a number of groups that cannot easily be divided. Immediately above it are the phonetic signs *t*, ‘, *r*, and an unclear wedge-shaped sign that Emery reads “*sn* or *tp*(?).” These may or may not belong to the title or titles above them, ‘*d-mr zmt*(?) and *šms-nswt*(?). The latter group of signs may also be *Nnt*, a geographical name that indicates the area administered by the ‘*d-mr*; otherwise it is probably attached to the ‘3 *hwt*(?) to its left and is therefore part of the middle column. The title in the middle column adjacent to the phyle signs and the group above them is almost

191. Emery, *Tombs* 3:33; Kaplony, *Inschriften* 2:1125. According to Kaplony, it also was so read by Klausens, but he gives no citation for that discussion.

192. A similar title, *jrj-z3w*, is dealt with in the discussion of example *K:4* below.

193. Emery, *Tombs* 3:30–31 and pls. 23, 39; idem, *Archaic Egypt*, p. 30a; Kaplony, *Inschriften* 1:499–505 (discussion only).

194. Emery, *Tombs* 3:5.

195. Gardiner’s sign Aa 25. Helck, *Beamtentitel*, pp. 45–46, states that this sign is normally preceded by the name of a god, but from its clear position here at the top of a register, it seems that during this period at least it could stand alone.

certainly to be read *hrp wj3-* (or *hrp dpt-*) *nswt*, a title paralleled elsewhere.<sup>196</sup> Below this title is another, probably to be read *hrp* ‘*h*’; while below the phyle signs is the clear title *hm-ntr Nt*, which demonstrates by its position relative to *hrp* ‘*h*’ that there are still two separate columns at this point and that the nautical title in the middle column cannot be connected with the phyle signs. Since the phyle signs cannot stand alone and are not attached to the groups below or to the side, they must be attached to the group directly above.

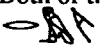
Kaplony suggested the reading *jrj-z3w*,<sup>197</sup> which is paralleled only by some Middle Kingdom examples from the Wadi Hammamat,<sup>198</sup> and possibly also by examples *K:3* and *K:7* of this corpus. The main objection to this reading is that the *r* is clearly a part of the preceding group. Nowhere else on this stela is such an integrated group broken into two titles. The group above the *z3* signs, though its reading is still problematic, is almost certainly attached to them: *t*’ and the illegible sign might indicate some supervisory office exercised over more than one *jrj z3*.

Another solution would be to take the *t* as an abbreviated writing of the verb *jt*, “to seize,” and read the rest of this group as ‘*r*, “reed pen,” since the determinative is not unlike a pen case.<sup>199</sup> Taken together, these groups might indicate some scribal office (“one who seizes the pen”) connected with the administration of the phyle system.

**K:5**,<sup>200</sup> This inscription, on a diorite bowl from the Step Pyramid complex, is unclassifiable only because of its brevity. It gives simply the *nswt bjtj* name of *Nj-ntr-Nbtj* and the *w3dtjw* phyle. It is perhaps most similar to the texts of *Category F*, although there is no indication of a divinity or the word *df3w*; possibly its brevity is due to the hardness of the stone, as was suggested of another diorite piece, *F:4*. The most interesting feature of this text is the otherwise unattested spelling of *w3dtjw* with both the *tjw* bird and a final *t*, which may represent a transitional form, since there are no clear examples of the spelling *w3dtjw* after the reign of Ninetjer.

196. Mariette, *Mastabas*, p. 191. The title in this tomb is *hrj sšt3 n hrp wj3-nswt*.

197. Kaplony, *Inschriften* 1:503.

198. Couyat and Montet, *Inscriptions du Ouâdi Hammâmât*, pls. 18: #81, 26: #96. Both of these texts date to the reign of Amenemhat III. Another title of the same period, , is perhaps related to this title; see G. Goyon, *Nouvelles Inscriptions du Wadi Hammamat* (Paris, 1957), #68, #69.

199. This reading was suggested to me by Klaus Baer.

200. Lacau and Lauer, *Pyramide à degrés IV*, pl. 15: #71.

**K:6**<sup>201</sup> Inscribed on a large green schist bowl from the Step Pyramid complex, this text includes no royal name and could thus belong to either of the first two dynasties. It bears the designation *nds* phyle and seems to have belonged, or at least to have been assigned, to a private individual, the *stm* priest, *Hm-Nt*.

**K:7**<sup>202</sup> This black steatite seal contains one of the earliest references to the office *stp-z3*, which may have some relevance to phyles. The seal seems to give the name *Wr-k3* and the emblem of the goddess Seshat. The group of interest is an adze followed by a *p*, almost certainly to be read *stp*, and a worn sign below it which is probably *z3*. Unfortunately this occurrence offers no information about the nature of a *stp z3* at such an early period.

**K:8**<sup>203</sup> This sealing shows three serekhs of Khasekhemwy (*Nbwj htp jmj.f*) surmounted by the animals of Horus and Seth. The intervals between these serekhs each contain a group of hieroglyphs. One reads *stp z3 jrj z3 ht*, another *pr hr-nd hrp*<sup>204</sup> *nd jh*, and the third *snfrt st.s*. The title *stp z3* is known from later in the Old Kingdom and is generally translated “bodyguard”; it is usually understood to be the title of a bodyguard to the king.<sup>205</sup> Its possible connection with phyle organization is discussed below.<sup>206</sup> The group below this was read *jjj-ht z3* by Kaplony,<sup>207</sup> who took it as a formation on the pattern of *jjj-ht nswt*. Another possibility would be a variant of the elusive title *jjj-z3* mentioned above in connection with *K:3* and *K:4*. Though *ht* is not otherwise attested with it, that group is associated with phyles in texts *J:1c* and *J:2b*. In any case, this piece suggests a connection of phyles with the title *stp z3*. Unfortunately, the other groups on the sealing do not clarify the problem. *Snfrt st.s* may be a personal name and the other text is probably a group of titles.

**K:9**<sup>208</sup> This sealing has three serekhs of Djoser, oriented right, with three intervening texts all oriented to the left. Two of these are identical and read

201. Lacau and Lauer, *Pyramide à degrés IV*, pl. 21 #116.

202. Kaplony, *Inschriften 3*: pl. 103: #464bis; *ibid.* 2:1154.

203. Petrie, *Royal Tombs 2*: pl. 23: #198; Kaplony, *Inschriften 3*: pl. 85: #314.

204. Kaplony read this sign *htm*, though he claimed he could not see it; *Inschriften 2*:1136.

205. Erman and Grapow, *Wörterbuch 4*:340, 8.

206. See *Chapter 9*.

207. Kaplony, *Inschriften 2*:1136.

208. Kaplony, *Inschriften 3*: pl. 78: #293; J. Garstang, *Mahâsna and Bêt Khallâf* (London, 1902), pl. 10: #14.

[*stp*]<sup>209</sup> *z3* *gd r' nb šm'w*; the third reads ... *n šsm wpt [z3 hm]*<sup>210</sup> *šm'w*. Kaplony took the last group of the single text as the title “*hm z3 šm'j*,”<sup>211</sup> which he cited as an example of “die oberägyptische Phyle.”<sup>212</sup> There are no parallels for such a title nor does it make much sense. In addition to the unexplained interposition of *hm* between *z3* and *šm'j*, it should be noted that *šm'w* occurs in the same position in the other two texts where it clearly has no connection with a phyle.

**K:10.**<sup>213</sup> This sealing also bears the serekh of Djoser, facing a single line of text, probably to be read *z3 jrp n St*, “protection (or phyle?) of the wine of the district of *St*.” This text probably refers to a royal vineyard from which this wine-jar seal came. The *z3* sign is again hard to explain. Unless the vintners were organized into phyles, which is doubtful given the seasonal nature of the work, it again seems most likely to have been meant in the sense of “protection.” Weill emends the text to *stp z3*, but such an emendation only complicates the question.<sup>214</sup>

### 8.2.13. Summary

This completes the survey of the Archaic period references to phyles. In some ways, the Archaic period references to phyles are more informative than the later references because they are more diverse. The corpus of texts discussed above indicates that phyles were active in several institutions in the Archaic period: the *hwt p-Hr-msn*, which is probably to be identified with the royal palace (*Category C*); the *hwt z3-h3-nb*, probably the royal mortuary cult (*Category D*); the ‘*h-ntr* of the fortified enclosure *swt-ntrw*, possibly a city temple (*Category E*); and the cults of Bastet, a pair of gods, and a triad of gods (*Category F*). *Category F* also suggests that the phenomenon of “parasite phyles,” known from the Abu Sir papyri, existed in earlier times. Other parallels of later phyle systems include the use of phyle names to indicate the destination of goods, the ownership of and responsibility for equipment and commodities (*Categories E and I*), and the drawing up of distribution lists on the basis of phyle membership (*Category J*). Although there are no references to phyles in

209. According to Garstang’s drawing and discussion, *ibid.*, p. 24, the *stp* sign is visible.

210. In Garstang’s drawing, *ibid.*, the two signs *z3* and *hm* are not visible and the broken area he indicates in their place is only large enough to restore *hm*.

211. Kaplony, *Inschriften* 2:1132.

212. *Ibid.*, 1:445.

213. Kaplony, *Inschriften* 3: pl. 73: #272; Garstang, *Mahâsna and Bêt Khallâf*, pl. 10: #14.

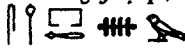
214. R. Weill, *Des monuments et de l’histoire des IIe et IIIe dynasties égyptienne* (Paris, 1908), pp. 91–93.

work crews, phyles seem to have operated during the Archaic period in all the other spheres from which they are attested during the Old Kingdom, as well as in additional institutions.

#### 8.2.14. Excursus 2: Phyle Organizations in the Royal Palace

*Category C* in the preceding corpus gives the evidence for at least two phyles as early as the reign of Den; both are attached to what is probably the royal palace. This is the earliest type of phyle organization attested. A later example in the same category indicates that the organization continued in use through the beginning of the Second Dynasty. Thereafter, texts of this type no longer occurred.

Did the use of the phyle system in the royal palace survive into the Old Kingdom proper? The continuation of the system would seem intuitively probable. The ritual used in the mortuary temples imitated the daily ceremonies that a living king would have undergone. The washing, dressing, censuring, and feeding of the king's statue in a mortuary cult are presumably modeled on the palace routine. The other principal duty of the temple functionaries, the guarding of the entrances to the palace day and night, would also be necessary to a living king. Although the quantities of food and the valuable equipment stored at the temple probably justified a full-time guard, the duty also seems likely to have paralleled the guard duty performed by the *stp z3* at the palace. A rotating system would also make a good deal of common sense in a royal palace, where the work would probably have been very demanding.<sup>215</sup>

There is some evidence to support the contention that phyles served in the royal palace in the Old Kingdom as well as in the First Dynasty. The operation of the system may perhaps be seen in the title of *3htj-htp*, an official of the 3rd or early Fourth Dynasty, who called himself ,<sup>216</sup> *shd pr-ʿ3 z3 wr*, “supervisor of the palace attendants of the *wr* phyle.” In the Fifth Dynasty, when the title *hntj-š* had come into being as a title in mortuary cults whose holders were clearly organized into phyles, there are also frequent occurrences of the title *hntj-š pr-ʿ3*, which is apparently the equivalent office in the royal

215. The royal attendants who were attached to the British court of George III were organized into four groups of equerries, which served in rotation for periods of three months. During their periods of service they complained constantly of fatigue, in part because they were never allowed to sit in the presence of the king. F. Burney, *The Diary and Letters of Madame d'Arblay*, C. Barrett, ed., 5 vols. (London, 1876), vols. 2 and 3, *passim*.

216. Mariette, *Mastabas*, p. 70 (mastaba A.1). The reliefs Mariette recorded in this tomb are now scattered among various museums; the upper parts, which contain the text, seem to have been lost and are known only from Mariette's copies.

palace. We might assume, by analogy, that these palace functionaries were organized into phyles.

Even stronger hints are given in the autobiography of *Wnj*, an official of the Sixth Dynasty who served Mernere and Pepi I. He stated that “His majesty appointed me sole friend and overseer of the *hntjw-š pr-‘3*, I having taken the place of four overseers of the *hntjw-š pr-‘3* who were there, and I acted as his majesty would praise in doing *stp z3*, in making the way of the king, and in standing in attendance.”<sup>217</sup> The number of overseers of *hntjw-š pr-‘3* is tantalizingly close to the five one would expect if *hntjw-š pr-‘3* were organized into phyles like their counterparts in the mortuary temples. It may be that the older system of four phyles was retained in the palace. Or, if the four overseers are understood as four (other) overseers, it could be argued that *Wnj*’s efficiency made the presence of four counterparts unnecessary and caused their dismissal.

The use of the phrase *stp z3* to describe *Wnj*’s duties is also significant in view of the two cylinder seals in the preceding corpus (*K:7* and *K:8*), where the group *stp z3* is associated with other occurrences of the *z3* sign and hence perhaps phyles. Another suggestion of an association between the duty of *stp z3* and phyle organization is found in the tomb of *Tjj*, where a man bearing funerary equipment is called *stp z3 jmj 3bd*.<sup>218</sup> The second part of his title may refer to his priestly service at the tomb where he is depicted; however, there are no other indications that *Tjj*’s cult was organized into phyles and it would be more usual to attribute such a modifier to the title it actually follows. If so, the implication that men holding the title *stp z3* served for periods of one month would again point to a phyle organization.

A much later argument for the existence of the phyle system in the palace during the Old Kingdom is an archaizing reference from the mortuary temple of Hatshepsut, which dates from the Eighteenth Dynasty. In a scene where Thutmose I presents his daughter Hatshepsut as the next king, he is said to be seated on his throne “in the hall of the *jmj-wrt* phyle, all the people being on their bellies in *stp z3*.”<sup>219</sup> This text is clearly trying to recall the Old Kingdom in its spelling and grammar and in the naming rather than numbering of the phyle.<sup>220</sup> The Eighteenth Dynasty scribes either assumed that the service of

217. *Urkunden* 1, p. 100:7–10.

218. L. Epron et al., *Le tombeau de Ti*, MIFAO 65, 3 vols. (Cairo, 1939–66) 1: pl. XVII.

219. Naville, *Deir el-Bahri* 3: pl. LX.

220. The use of *jmj-wrt* rather than *wr* as the name of the first phyle is easily explicable, since the names of the phyles survived at this period only in conflation with the nautical terms in the Book of the Dead. The Deir el-Bahri temple itself contains several examples of the



phyles in the palace was typical for the Old Kingdom or they modeled their account on an older text recording the way earlier kings announced their heirs.

Another indication that there may have been a phyle organization in the royal palace in the Old Kingdom is the possible existence of such an organization in the households of officials in the Ninth and Tenth Dynasties. In the discussion of private mortuary phyles above, it was pointed out that such an organization is hinted at in the story of the Eloquent Peasant, where the two underlings of the steward of the vizier's house are called *jmjw-z3* "members of the phyle."<sup>221</sup> This title also may have referred to some other office these men held; however, as their place in the story is very minor, it would seem more likely that it indicated their status as servants in the household. It would be unlikely for such an elaborate organization to have been used by a vizier if it were not also used by the king.

In short, then, there seems to be strong evidence to support the hypothesis that phyle organization was used in the royal palace in the Old Kingdom as well as the Archaic period.

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term *jmj-wrt* in the captions of nautical scenes, apparently an imitation of Old Kingdom private tomb reliefs. The conventions of Old Kingdom hieroglyphic writing are also imitated in the decoration of this temple; for example, the tripling of determinatives to indicate plurals, rather than the later three strokes.



221. See Section 6.4.



## CHAPTER 9

### THE ORIGINS AND EVOLUTION OF THE PHYLES

#### 9.1. THE WORD z3 AND ITS LATER EQUIVALENT

In the Old Kingdom and the Archaic period, the word that has been read z3 and translated as “phyle” in the foregoing chapters was written with a hieroglyphic sign that can be identified, in detailed examples, as a rope knotted or twisted into loops.<sup>1</sup> Such ropes were (and still are) used as hobbles for young animals. The loops on either end of the rope were pegged to the ground, and one of the side loops was tightened around the foot of each animal, to keep a herd together and to control the area in which they grazed. An Old Kingdom tomb relief shows two calves in such a hobble, while the legend above them reads “... calves upon their z3w.”<sup>2</sup> The extension of this literal meaning to , “stable” or “corral,”<sup>3</sup> is easily followed. Because of the way the hobble was used, the Egyptians apparently connected the sign with two abstract ideas, association and protection. The idea of association is probably related to the fact that the animals were collected together by such confinement, while the connotation of “protection” clearly derives from the safety offered animals by confinement to a small area or the shelter of a stable. The word z3, “protection,” and its derivatives are written with this sign and also with the sign , a small roll of matting that was carried over the shoulder by boatmen, possibly as a life-preserver. This latter sign has no connection with the concept of “grouping” and it is significant that the word phyle is never written with this sign before the end of the Old Kingdom. This sign is also absent in Old Kingdom writings of the

1. See, for example, Junker, *Giza* 3: pl. 6.

2. Lepsius, *Denkmäler* 2: pl. 96.

3. E. Edel and S. Wenig, *Die Jahrzeitenreliefs aus dem Sonnenheiligtum des Königs Userkaf* (Berlin, 1974), pl. A; Sethe, *Urkunden* 1, p. 78:16.

group *stp z3*, which, it has been suggested above, may be related to a phyle organization in the royal palace.

The Greeks translated the word *z3* as *φυλή*, a word that meant “clan” or “tribe” in Greek and is the origin of our translation “phyle.” The Greek phyles had a number of distinctive characteristics, some of which must also have been attributes of the Egyptian phyles in the Late period, since the Greeks thought the two close enough to use the same name for both institutions. Because of this comparison, a description of the Greek phyles may further illuminate the nature of Egyptian phyles.

The Greek phyles were the largest political divisions in the state. The major political and military institutions were organized in accordance with them. Membership in the phyles was hereditary. Because of their inflexibility and aristocratic tendencies, the traditional Greek system of phyles was in some extreme cases abolished and replaced by artificial substitutes, though the older groups were occasionally retained in religious contexts. There were between three and five phyles in most cities, although the artificial substitutes formed later were more numerous. The system instituted in Attica by the reform of Cleisthenes in the 6th century B.C. had ten phyles, whose membership was initially determined geographically and thereafter by inheritance. These phyles were named after historical heroes.<sup>4</sup> The names of the older Greek phyles were also taken from the names of heroes, mostly mythical ancestors. The phyles of the Ionians, for example, were named after the four sons of the legendary ancestor of the entire race, Ion.<sup>5</sup> This was the system with which the Egyptian phyles of the Late period was compared. While it is possible that the identification was made simply on the basis of the similar numbers of groups and the mode of transmission of membership involved in both systems, it seems more likely that the direct translation was based on a closer resemblance, perhaps the shared origin of the two systems in clan groups named for mythical patrons or ancestors.

## 9.2. THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE NAMES OF THE PHYLES

Another clue to the origin of Egyptian phyles can be found in the names they were given. Unlike the Greek phyles, these cannot be immediately equated with the names of any known heroes or gods. All the names are adjectival, though

4. *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, N. G. L. Hammond and H. H. Scullard, eds., 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1970), pp. 830–31.

5. *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, N. G. L. Hammond and H. H. Scullard, eds., (Oxford, 1948), p. 45.

the meanings are not indisputable: *wr* is “great”; *st* is “Asiatic” or perhaps simply “foreign” or “eastern”;<sup>6</sup> *w3dt* is “green” or “fresh”; *nds* is “little” or “poor”; and *jmj-nfrt* may mean “being in perfection,” “being in the end,” or simply “last,” which would accord well with its place at the end of listings of phyles. It is difficult to explain these adjectives as references to the groups they designate, since *st* and *nds* are not particularly flattering descriptions and *w3dt* is feminine. In its earliest occurrences *w3dt* is written *w3dtjw*, which is probably a *nisbe* adjective, “belonging to the Green One,” and suggests an explanation for the other names as well. They may refer to the attributes of divinities who were attached to the phyles as patrons. Since the endings of *nisbe* adjectives are rarely written in Old Egyptian,<sup>7</sup> *w3dt* might continue to be read *w3dtjw* throughout the Old Kingdom, and the same argument could be extended to the other phyle names.

Support for a connection between the names and divinities may be found in one of the Neferirkare papyri,<sup>8</sup> in which each of the four phyles identified is attached to a pair of animal emblems.<sup>9</sup> (The standards are presumably doubled so that each of the two phyle divisions may participate in the procession.) A facsimile of this papyrus based on the published photograph is given in figure 9.1. The *st* phyle is associated with two falcon-headed griffins with *atef* crowns and upward-curling tails, each of which stands on a standard with a uraeus at its front. This standard is well paralleled and is most frequently seen on the front of royal and divine boats.<sup>10</sup> The *w3dt* phyle is associated with two cobras, coiled as if to strike; the *nds* phyle is associated with a pair of scorpions; and the *jmj-nfrt* phyle is associated with a pair of baboons. In her discussion of this papyrus,

6. A. Nibbi, “The *Stt* Sign,” *JEA* 64 (1978):62, has suggested that the word may mean “imported,” since she interprets the sign used to write it as a pack saddle. The older interpretation as a “shoulder knot” (see Gardiner’s sign list, S 22) seems to fit the more common appearance of the sign too well to be abandoned; however, if it were interpreted as a pack saddle by some scribes, one would expect that its meaning was something with foreign associations, as Nibbi suggests. In any case, the sign seems to have been used to designate Asiatics from a very early period.

7. Edel, *Altägyptische Grammatik*, p. 342.

8. Posener-Kriéger and de Cenival, *Abu Sir Papyri*, pl. 18.

9. The name of the *st* phyle is actually missing, but it can be restored with certainty on the basis of the standard order of the phyles which is followed in the papyrus. Neither the name of the *wr* phyle nor its corresponding emblems are clearly preserved.

10. The earliest Old Kingdom occurrence of this standard known to my knowledge is on the boat of Sahure, Borchardt, *Sahure* 2: pl. 9. In the New Kingdom, when the standard is considerably more common, it is found on most divine barques, especially those of Amon, Mut, and Khonsu.

Posener-Kriéger suggested that the emblems were standards carried by members of the various phyles in a procession at a festival honoring Re<sup>c</sup>, since all the animals depicted can in some way be connected with his cult.<sup>11</sup> However, this progression of emblems is not found elsewhere, despite the frequency with which processions in honor of Re<sup>c</sup> were depicted in this and later periods.<sup>12</sup>

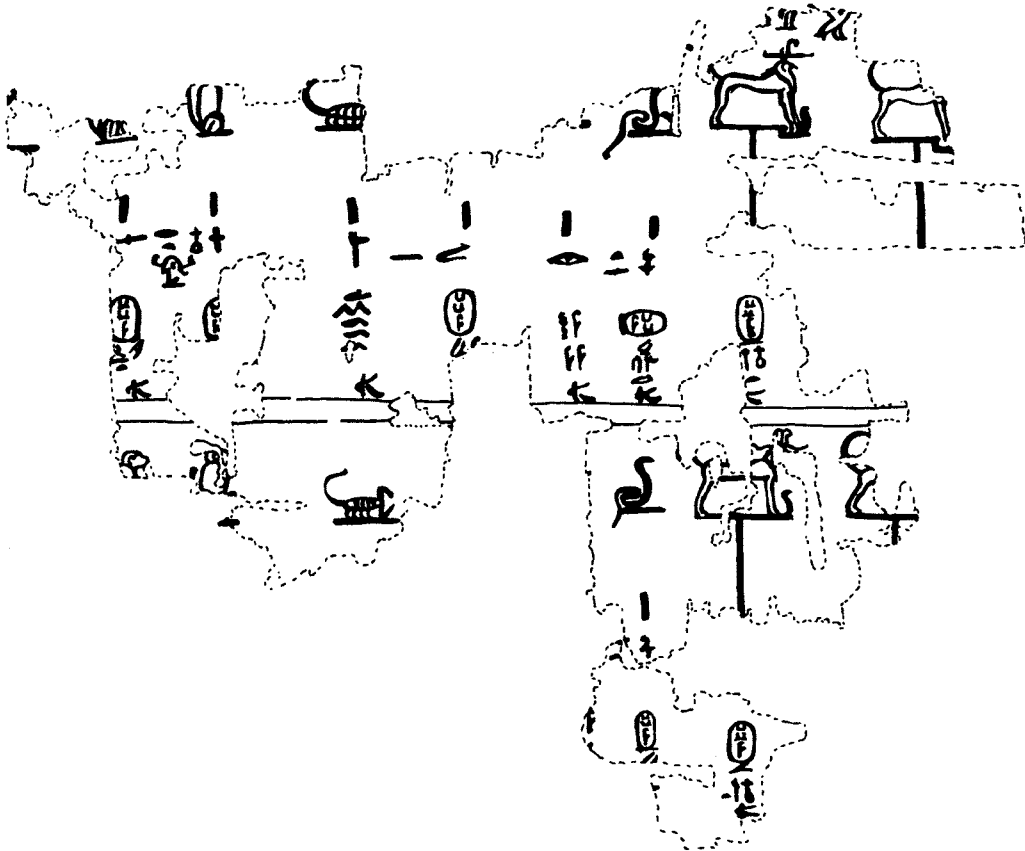


Figure 9.1. Papyrus from the Temple of Neferirkare-Kakai Showing Phyles and Standards

Posener-Kriéger also pointed out that the cobra emblem, which suggests the cobra goddess Wadjet, was paired with the similarly named *w3dt* phyle.<sup>13</sup> If the animals and the phyles with which they are associated in this papyrus are examined more closely, connections can be made between each of the emblems

11. Posener-Kriéger, *Archives*, pp. 96–97.

12. See references in H. Kees, "Ein Götterhymnus als Begleittext zur Opfertafel," *ZÄS* 57 (1922):117, n. 2.

13. Posener-Kriéger, *Archives*, p. 92.

represented and the phyle to which it is assigned; patterns can then be found that suggest the nature of the association.

Each animal represented by an emblem belongs to a different class of fauna: the griffin is a mythical composite animal, the cobra is a reptile, the scorpion is an arachnid, and the baboon is a mammal. This type of classification is not unique in Egyptian thought. predynastic artists made similar distinctions in their representations of animals, where rows of ruminants tend to alternate with rows of carnivores.<sup>14</sup> This mixing of classes can also be discerned in the phyle names, where each adjective describes a different sort of attribute—greatness, geographical origin, color, size, and rank in an order. These diversities in categories may represent an attempt to encompass all creation in the totality of the phyle system.

The name and emblem of the *wr* phyle at the beginning of this list are lost; however, there are traces of another emblem behind the baboon, perhaps beginning yet another repetition of the series (the emblems, paired with the same phyles, are listed in a lower register as well). This new series may have assigned emblems to the second divisions of the five phyles. The first emblem of a new series would thus be that of the *wr* phyle. There are only two lines of this emblem visible, a horizontal representing the front of its platform or its feet and a curved trace at an angle above the horizontal and slightly to the right of it.<sup>15</sup> Enough blank space is preserved beneath the trace to suggest that the animal had a slanted stance and was most probably a bird. A bird would add yet another class of fauna to those already represented in these emblems, and a falcon would be particularly appropriate for a phyle described as *wr*; a falcon of size and detail similar to the other animals in this text occurs in one of the other papyri from the same archive,<sup>16</sup> and these traces fit that sign very closely. Another argument in favor of this restoration is the occurrence of a pair of falcon standards in the texts of *Category C* of the Archaic period references to phyles.<sup>17</sup> There the standards occur in alternation with the phyle names *w3dt* and *nds*. The *wr* phyle is not clearly named in any of the texts prior to the reign of Qa<sup>c</sup>a, a lacuna that might be explained by assuming that the *wr* phyle in this early period was written with two falcon standards, the emblems of its patron.

14. G. Bénédite, "The Carnarvon Ivory," *JEA* 5 (1918):227.

15. These lines were not recorded in Posener-Kriéger's transcription but are clear in the photograph.

16. Posener-Kriéger and de Cenival, *Abu Sir Papyri*, pl. 1

17. See *Chapter 8*.

Another of the phyle names may also have been written with a hieroglyphic sign that depicts the animal emblem with which it is associated in the Abu Sir procession. In the two plates from the Djoser complex on which all five phyles are listed (*J:1* and *J:2* of the corpus),<sup>18</sup> the name of the *jmj-nfrt* phyle is written with a sign that is not easily identified (see fig. 9.2). Helck interpreted this sign as the white crown,<sup>19</sup> which in the New Kingdom is sometimes read *nfr*, but this explanation fails to explain the two feet-like ticks at the bottom of the sign. Kaplony explained these ticks as two ribbons, presumably those that were used to tie the crown onto the king's head, though he noted that "die Bänder sind sonst so früh unbekannt."<sup>20</sup> I can find no examples of the white crown sign with ribbons from any period; and even if such a variant existed, the added ribbons would serve to differentiate the sign from its more usual reading.



Figure 9.2. The Name of the Fifth Phyle on the Step Pyramid Plates

Another possibility would be to take this sign as a baboon. The feet imply that it is an animal of some kind, and the cone-shaped body of the sign is reminiscent of the mane that covers the upper half of a baboon's body in later hieratic representations of the sign (see fig. 9.3).<sup>21</sup> The baboon is also used quite regularly in later periods to write *nfr*; perhaps this writing derived from a memory that the phyle *jmj-nfrt*, by then long defunct, had in earlier periods been associated with a baboon.

Still another connection between the baboon and the *jmj-nfrt* phyle is the number five, which is the place the *jmj-nfrt* phyle takes in the standard phyle order. An ivory label from the tomb of Semerkhet, in the First Dynasty, shows a seated baboon with five wedges marked in front of him.<sup>22</sup> Similarly, the central

18. Lacau and Lauer, *Pyramide à degrés V*, figs. 34, 35. See Section 8.2.11, Category J.

19. Helck, "Handwerker- und Priesterphylen," p. 7.

20. Kaplony, *Rollsiegel* 1:325, n. 623.

21. N. Davies, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead* (London, 1901), pl. 51, cited in D. Paton, *Animals of Ancient Egypt* (Princeton, 1925), p. 16.

22. Petrie, *Royal Tombs* 1: pl. 18.1. There are actually only four marks preserved, but a fifth can be restored with certainty on the basis of the configuration.



of the three steles of Djoser in the Step Pyramid shows a baboon seated on five supports with a bowl in front of him;<sup>23</sup> a parallel scene occurs on an archaizing naos from the reign of Apries.<sup>24</sup> Fairman, in his discussion of these scenes, hypothesized that the early word for “baboon” was the same as the word for “five,” and that the connection was based on homophony.<sup>25</sup> The god Thoth, who is frequently represented as a baboon, also is associated with the number five in his title “Great One of the Five.”

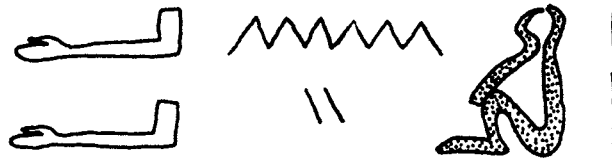


Figure 9.3. The Hieratic Sign for Baboon in a Twenty-sixth Dynasty Text

The name of the griffin attached to the *st* phyle is unknown, although winged griffins are attested with the names *tštš*, *ḥḥ*, and *sfr*.<sup>26</sup> A griffin with no wings (or possibly with wings folded across its back), such as is associated with the *st* phyle in the Abu Sir papyrus, might be compared to two animals labeled *ztr* at Bersha.<sup>27</sup> Unfortunately, one of these animals is completely destroyed, while the other survives only as a falcon head and a leonine forepaw; however, the head is too close to the register line above to allow room for spread wings such as those on the *tštš* griffin that accompanies the *ztr* griffin in both cases. The name *ztr* may well be related to the name of the *st* phyle, since *z* and *s* are frequently confused in the Middle Kingdom and later and since *r* is a weak consonant that is often written *j*.

Griffins already occur occasionally in the predynastic and Archaic periods, and they are thought to represent one of the Mesopotamian motifs borrowed shortly before the beginning of the First Dynasty.<sup>28</sup> Such a borrowing might

23. C. Firth and J. E. Quibell, *The Step Pyramid*, 2 vols. (Cairo, 1935) 2: pl. 16.

24. G. Roeder, *Naos. Catalogue général*, Cairo. 2 vols. (Leipzig, 1914) (= Roeder, CG) #70008.

25. H. W. Fairman, “Notes on the Alphabetic Signs Employed in the Hieroglyphic Inscriptions of the Temple of Edfu,” *ASAE* 43 (1943):257–63.

26. A. Eggebrecht, “Greif,” *LÄ* 2: cols. 895–96.

27. Newberry, *Bersheh* 2: pls. 11, 16.

28. Eggebrecht, “Greif,” cols. 895–96.

explain the use of the word *st*, “Asiatic,” to describe or even to name this animal.

No clear connection can be made between the name of the *nds* phyle, “little,” and the scorpion emblem, except for the obvious circumstance that the scorpion is the smallest of the animals depicted.

A final argument for the origin of the phyle names as descriptions of the animal emblems of patron divinities is the avoidance of the name of the *wr* phyle in private contexts. If these adjectival names were references to some god or demigod who was seen as the sponsor and protector of the phyle, the most powerful of these protectors would have been that of the first, most prestigious phyle. It is possible that even the epithet of this phyle’s divine protector, *wr*, was too powerful to be used for the name of a phyle serving in a private tomb. A possible parallel to this avoidance is to be found in the writing of personal names built on the name of the god Horus during the Old Kingdom. Despite the fact that the falcon was regularly used to write his name in royal names, temple inscriptions, pyramid texts, and both royal and non-royal titles (including those written in private tombs), private names compounded on the name of Horus normally substituted the phonetic writing (𐩣𐩢𐩣). The same was also true, although much less consistently, of names compounded on the name of the god Re<sup>c</sup>, which was written 𐩣 in royal names but often 𐩣 in private ones.<sup>29</sup> In these cases, the reluctance to depict manifestations of Horus and Re<sup>c</sup> explicitly may be less due to their divinity than to their special relationship with the king, whose titulary states that he was the son of Re<sup>c</sup> and the incarnation of Horus. It is possible that a similar relationship existed between the king and the divine sponsor of the most prestigious of the phyles, which would have made it inappropriate for a private individual to use the name in his phyle system.

It is even possible that the falcon emblem hypothesized for the *wr* phyle represented Horus himself. The animal emblems in combination with the descriptive names suggest divine patrons. Since the five phyles were clearly close to the king in the earliest attestations, the association of the major royal god with the system is not unlikely. Further, the “Asiatic” connotations of the *st* phyle might suggest another divinity with close connections to kingship, Seth. The king is often represented as a human-headed griffin, or sphinx, as a part of his military, or Sethian, persona.<sup>30</sup> The fact that the Seth animal was often

29. The substitution of 𐩣 for 𐩣 in private names (and in royal names when they form part of a private name) may be an example of the same phenomenon.

30. H. te Velde, *Seth, God of Confusion* (Leiden, 1977), pp. 71–72.

classed with griffins and other imaginary animals,<sup>31</sup> the association of Seth with such Asiatic gods as Baal and Teshub,<sup>32</sup> and his position at the prow of the sun boat (the same position where the griffin standard is so well paralleled) as the slayer of Apophis<sup>33</sup> are circumstances that tend to support the connection between Seth and the griffin standard and the *st* phyle.<sup>34</sup> The goddess Wadjet has already been associated with the *w3dt* phyle by Posener-Kriéger. The divinity to be identified with the scorpion of the *nds* phyle is problematic, since Selket and Isis, the two divinities connected with scorpions, are both female and the word *nds* is masculine. Thoth may have been the patron of the *jmj-nfrt* phyle, though other divinities also are possible. The association of these important gods with the phyles is admittedly tenuous, but associations of this sort are not without parallels; in New Kingdom military organization, divisions of the army were called the Division of Amon, the Division of Pre, and so forth.

### 9.3. THE ORIGIN OF THE PHYLES: PREDYNASTIC TOTEMIC CLANS?


The connection of the phyles with protective divinities and animal emblems, together with the assumption that membership was hereditary and possibly connected with initiation ceremonies, suggests an institution called by early twentieth century anthropologists "totemism," which is well known from primitive Australian and North American cultures. This phenomenon is now seen as a more general characteristic of human social organization, which is also reflected in the modern use of animal "mascots" for sports teams, political parties, social clubs, and military units.<sup>35</sup> It is nonetheless interesting to find such a system of organization playing a major role in the Archaic period and Old Kingdom in Egypt.

In its more dramatic ("primitive") manifestations, totemic organization typically functions as a means of distinguishing kinship groups, real or

31. Ibid., p. 15.

32. Ibid., p. 109.

33. Ibid., pp. 99–108.

34. It may also be significant that the gold sign  used to write Seth's epithet, *Nbtj*, "the Ombite," is almost identical to the *st* sign in hieratic.

35. C. Lévi-Strauss, *Totemism*, R. Needham, transl. (Boston, 1963), was largely responsible for the final discrediting of the "illusion of totemism" as a monolithic primitive institution that always implied the same set of specific beliefs and kinship systems. The phenomenon that inspired this exaggerated totemic theory remains a real phenomenon; its variants can be seen in many cultures, ancient and modern, as has been pointed out in several articles, notably C. S. Kessler, "Is Totem Taboo?," *Mankind (Sydney)* 8 (1971):31–36. The dubious associations of the term have, however, apparently deterred further cross-cultural analysis.

imaginary, and often restricts marriage within the group. Such groups are frequently identified by representatives of classes of animals that, as a whole, make up the same sort of unity that can be seen in the phyle emblems. For example, the Ojibwa clans of North America, from whose language the very word "totem" is derived, have as their five principal totems the catfish, crane, loon, bear, and marten,<sup>36</sup> animals that represent the categories of fish, wading birds, diving birds, land mammals, and aquatic mammals. Such selections of totems from larger categories of animals or plants are also attested in Australian totemism. Subdivision into smaller groups with secondary totems is also known from both continents. It is not infrequent that the name of the totem is different from the name of the animal when it appears in other contexts.

By analogy, it seems likely that Egyptian phyles originated in extended family or local groups that might loosely be called clans, for lack of a better term.<sup>37</sup> The system of phyles seems to have been functioning in many different environments (temples, mortuary cults, the staff of the palace) almost from the beginning of the Egyptian state. If the supposition of an origin in boat crews is discarded, as the evidence shows it should be, it is difficult to imagine that the system was an artificial, invented one.

Conversely, it would be surprising indeed if predynastic Egypt had no social organization that consisted of groups of people unified by a locality, a common culture, and ties of blood. Such groups, variously referred to as clans or moieties or tribes, depending on the culture in which they function, are common to most primitive societies. (Such groups have in fact been postulated by Butzer to explain the conservative patterns of population distribution in Upper Egypt. He argues that local, tribal identities outweighed the ecological advantages of moving to areas that improved irrigation techniques made more productive.<sup>38</sup>)

Assuming that groups of this type existed, it is likely that some of them established themselves early as royal supporters and maintained their influence throughout the course of the Old Kingdom. The *wr* phyle may have been one of the earliest adherents of the First Dynasty, since its prestige suggests a closer connection than the other phyles. The more important members of these groups would have become the higher level bureaucrats and priests, while their retainers would have become lower level temple functionaries and laborers on the royal work crews.

36. Lévi-Strauss, *Totemism*, p. 20.

37. The term "tribe," which might also be applied to such kinship groups has been avoided here because of its specific meaning to anthropologists.

38. K. Butzer, *Early Hydraulic Civilization in Egypt: A Study in Cultural Ecology* (Chicago, 1976), pp. 103-04.

The five-clan system reflected in phyle organization was probably not extended across the entire geographical extent of Egypt but instead would have belonged to a smaller population that came to dominate later Egyptian culture. This population may have been located around Abydos, the ancestral home of the First Dynasty kings; or, perhaps more likely, it might have been the local population in the area of Memphis, whose clan organization was adapted to fit the needs of the new administration by the conquering kings of the First Dynasty. Or the system may have integrated powerful clans from the two areas.

Another factor tending to support this reconstruction is the continuing existence of other phyles (clans) in other parts of Egypt. The expressions “phyles of Upper Egypt,” “phyles of the nome,” and “phyles of Heliopolis,” discussed above,<sup>39</sup> may refer to other systems of clans still extant in other parts of Egypt. Such provincial systems might also be the explanation for the *hn* phyle of *Category A* in the Archaic period evidence.<sup>40</sup> In *Category C* of the corpus of archaic texts, the two falcon standards appear on the examples from Abydos in the same position as phyle names appear in the Memphite examples. Since this category of texts seems to record some sort of palace service, it is tempting to suggest that the examples from Abydos derive from an Upper Egyptian palace of the king, where a system of local service took the place of the phyle system used in the capital.

The system of rotating service, so characteristic of the phyles, may have been instituted to insure that each of the five groups had an equal share of the benefits and hardships of royal service. The festival of circumcision, which in predynastic times may have signaled the acquisition of full membership in the family or community, was now tied to the beginning of membership in a prestigious institution devoted to the service of the king.

#### 9.4. THE HISTORICAL EVOLUTION AND EFFECTS OF THE PHYLE SYSTEM

The phyles may have lost some of their rigor as a marker of kinship over the course of its development and integration into the developing Egyptian bureaucracy. It has been suggested, for example, that ‘*nh-m-‘Hr*’s two sons belonged to different phyles. The use of the system in private cults must also have somewhat diminished its connections with purely royal service. However, if the origin and nature of phyles as a system of totemic clans is accepted, the

39. See *Section 4.3*.

40. See *Chapter 8* above. A similar explanation could also be applied to *Category B*, but the phrase *k3 z3* seems more probably to indicate a personal name.

evolution of the five-phyle system in the Archaic period and the Old Kingdom can be seen as a mirror of the modifications necessitated in all the social institutions of preliterate, clan-based Egyptian society, as it developed into a state with a centralized government and an extensive bureaucracy.

The preceding chapters contain an inquiry into the nature and functioning of the phyles known from the Egyptian Old Kingdom based on the contemporary evidence and organized, for the most part, by the institutions in which they served. In the concluding sections of this chapter, the development of the institution and its relationship to other elements of Egyptian history are traced chronologically. At the same time, this overview serves to suggest that the origin in totemic clans that has been proposed in the preceding section is consistent with the nature and development of phyles over the course of the Old Kingdom.

#### 9.4.1. The Predynastic Period and the First Dynasty

There is no evidence in the predynastic period for phyles as we know them; however, some of the motifs used in the art of the period suggest the existence of clans identified with totemic emblems. The many standards that appear, for example, on the Hunters' palette<sup>41</sup> and in the designs painted on Gerzean jars, may have been meant to record the participation of the groups they identified in hunts or rituals. The importance of these standards is indicated by their frequency, and also by the fact that many of them survive in the hieroglyphic names of the later nomes. The principal deities worshipped in these nomes are sometimes associated with the animals represented as part of the nome standard, suggesting an earlier pattern of local clan groups and their protective deities. Examples of this might be the hawk nome of Upper Egypt, where the major temple is dedicated to Horus and the crocodile nome in the Fayum, where there are a number of temples dedicated to Sobek.

The earliest of the five Old Kingdom phyles date to the reign of Den; *w3ḏt(jw)* and either *wr* or *nds* are attested in an institution that was probably the royal palace, the *ḥwt p-Ḥr-msn*. The "updating" of these texts, by the addition of the names of later kings, indicates that the system was in use throughout the rest of the First Dynasty. The reign of Qa'a seems to have been a period of increased prominence of the phyles at court. The nine pieces that can be dated to his reign attest to the presence of the *st* and *w3ḏt* phyles in the context of a divine cult, and the *wr*, *st*, *w3ḏt*, and (probably) *nds* phyles are

41. Ridley, *Unification*, p. 34 and pl. 12, also see plates 13(1), 14, 16(2) 17, 20 for examples of these standards.

attested in a royal mortuary cult (the *hwt z3-ḥ3-nb*). The *jmj-nfrt* phyle is not known from this early period. Nor is there clear evidence for the rotation of the phyles in and out of service during this period, or indeed until the Fourth Dynasty.

Not all of the earliest phyles have survived into the Old Kingdom. We have two references to a *hn* phyle from the reign of Qa'a and also three references to what may be a *k3* phyle in the reign of Den (though this latter is more probably a proper name). Interestingly, both of these possible early phyles are attested only at Abydos, which might suggest that their prestige diminished with the growth of importance of the capital at Memphis.

#### 9.4.2. The Second and Third Dynasties

The references to the phyle system during the Second Dynasty come mostly from the reign of Ninetjer, the third king of that dynasty. They are noticeably different in character from those of the First Dynasty and seem to refer to a complicated system that transferred goods among a number of divine and royal cults. The names of the *st* and *w3dt* phyles occur with the names of officials during this reign (*Category I*), but it is unlikely that these occurrences reflected the existence of private systems of phyles at such an early period. More probably, they indicate the phyle in which the official himself served.

During the later part of the Second Dynasty, a number of factors, including a series of bad Nile floods, led to social upheaval and political turmoil, the so-called "Seth rebellion," during which the god Seth replaced Horus on the royal serekh and the First Dynasty tombs at Abydos may have been desecrated. No mention of the phyles survive from this period, perhaps because the supporters of the First Dynasty kings had fallen out of favor. This silence can also be attributed to the economic effects of the political troubles of the central government, which probably led to the production of fewer fine stone vessels. Since inscriptions on such vessels are the most common source of references to phyles, this would also result in fewer attestations. There is a reference to a phyle on a cylinder seal of Khasekhemwy, the last king of the Second Dynasty and the restorer of order, but the phyle sign does not occur in connection with any of the known phyle names.

The only references to the phyle system in the Third Dynasty are the inscriptions on two plates from the Step Pyramid complex that record some kind of accounts, possibly linen distributions, and mention five phyles, four of which are designated by their well-known later names. The exact provenience of these plates seems not to have been recorded; however, they were probably found among the great quantities of vessels with inscriptions from the First and Second

Dynasties that were buried in the Step Pyramid of Djoser at Saqqara, and thus they can date no later than his reign. They were presumably inscribed by the mortuary priests of one of the kings whose stoneware was appropriated by Djoser or possibly by the priests of Djoser himself.

Although the late Second and the Third Dynasties are very badly documented, the lack of any other references to phyle names and the scarcity of references to the institution as a whole suggest that, though the groups survived and continued to serve the kings, they enjoyed less prestige and (presumably) also fewer material rewards than they had done during the First and earlier Second Dynasties.<sup>42</sup>

#### 9.4.3. The Fourth Dynasty

It is interesting that almost all of the evidence for the phyle system in the Fourth Dynasty occurs in the monumental funerary architecture that seems to have been the principal preoccupation of the kings of this period. Only one text attributed to this period is similar to the inscriptions known from First Dynasty vessels (*D:16* in *Chapter 8*). It bears the name of Khafre and probably refers to a royal mortuary cult. Unfortunately, however, the provenience of the piece is unknown, which in view of its anomalous features casts doubt upon its authenticity. If this text is ancient, it suggests that our documentation is biased by accidents of preservation.

The other references to phyles dating to the Fourth Dynasty involve phyles serving in work crews that are building the pyramids and other monuments. Pyramid building has generally been viewed as a national enterprise involving workmen from all over Egypt.<sup>43</sup> However, there is no clear evidence for this assumption beyond the fact that such a task must necessarily have involved a very large number of men. If these men were recruited from all parts of the country, it would be surprising that the names of these phyles are never mentioned outside the Memphite area except on tools clearly abandoned by

42. J. Johnson (personal communication) has suggested as an alternative possibility that the apparent decline of the system may have been due to the advent of rival phyles to the older groups, possibly including the *jmj-nfrt* phyle.

43. W. M. F. Petrie, "The Building of a Pyramid," *Ancient Egypt* (1930) part 2:3, and I. E. S. Edwards, *The Pyramids of Egypt*, rev. ed. (Harmondsworth, 1985), p. 270, both referred to massive levies of idle agricultural workers during the inundation season; K. Mendelsohn, *The Riddle of the Pyramids* (London, 1974), p. 149, suggested that this levy was the principal aim of pyramid construction, serving to distract the villagers from cattle thievery and foster a sense of national unity. R. Stadelmann, *Die ägyptischen Pyramiden* (Mainz am Rhein, 1985), p. 224, argued, on the contrary, that the dates recorded in masons' marks show that the work continued through all the seasons of the year.



royal expeditions. It is true that few Old Kingdom monuments in stone survive outside the Memphite area, but one would expect some mention of the system in rock cut graffiti or small mortuary monuments, since phyle membership seems elsewhere to have been such an important affiliation.

Since work on the pyramids was organized using only the same phyles attested at other institutions in the Memphite area, it seems most likely that the labor for these projects was supplied from the estates of the wealthy officials who held high positions in the government. The tombs of these same officials may also have been constructed, at least in part, by the royal building crews.<sup>44</sup> These workmen assigned to royal work crews were supplied for regular periods of service, so that the phyles to which they (or their patrons) belonged might easily have been adopted as a system to regulate the rotation and maintain a constant level of personnel. The periods of service during this period seem to have overlapped, so that two phyles were in service at any one time. There were presumably a number of patrons supplying groups of men to each phyle, which may be the origin of the “divisions” that were used to further organize the work.

No clear textual evidence supports the existence of phyles working in the palace or the priesthoods of the royal mortuary temples during the Fourth Dynasty. There is, however, architectural evidence for the latter, beginning in the reign of Khafre, when royal mortuary temple plans first show a hallway of five storerooms, which, by later analogy, must be assigned to the five phyles. If the phyle system had indeed declined in the Third Dynasty, its prominent role in organizing the highly visible and religiously significant enterprise of pyramid building may have prompted its readoption in other spheres. On the other hand, the importance of phyles attached to the palace and royal mortuary temples may have been greatly underestimated because their institutions are so badly attested during this period.

It is also during the Fourth Dynasty that the first evidence emerges for a ritualized assembly of a boat for the dead king at his funeral by people organized into phyles. This ritual, which can be inferred from a spell in the Coffin Texts,<sup>45</sup> is probably responsible for the markings on the four quadrants of the boat buried south of the pyramid of Khufu;<sup>46</sup> however, the omission of a role for the fifth phyle might suggest that the ritual was even older than the Fourth Dynasty.

44. See *Chapter 7*.

45. CT V:84–85 (Spell 397).

46. See *Chapter 3*.

Another innovation of this period (though perhaps dating as early as the Third Dynasty) is the title *jmj-r z3w šm'w*, "overseer of phyles of Upper Egypt." This title suggests that other phyle groups continued to exist in the provinces and served as a useful aid in organizing corvée labor but had not developed the prestige of their counterparts in the capital. The lack of a corresponding title for the phyles of Lower Egypt implies that phyles were a purely Upper Egyptian institution and tends to confirm the suggestion that the phyles predate the unification of the two predynastic cultures.<sup>47</sup>

#### 9.4.4. The Fifth and Early Sixth Dynasties

It is probably the great increase in documentation, perhaps in combination with unknown changes reflected in the increased importance of the solar religion, that led to the great prominence of phyle organization in our evidence of the Fifth Dynasty. Early in the dynasty, a major reorganization of work crews seems to have occurred, probably due to the change in the scale of building blocks as described in *Chapter 7*. When evidence begins to appear in the tablets of Userkaf's sun temple and in the mortuary temple archives of Neferirkare and Neferefre, the same system is in use in both spheres. This system, in which the two divisions of each of five phyles serve for one month in a ten-month cycle of rotation, is reflected architecturally as early as the reign of Sahure. Most royal mortuary temples thereafter have groups of ten storerooms rather than five.

Another testimony to the increased importance and prestige of phyle affiliations was that it became fashionable among some groups of high officials to use the system to organize their own mortuary cults. When a phyle system was organized for the service of a king, the division of duties among five or ten rotating groups had the beneficial effects of spreading the honor, prestige, and material rewards of such service among a larger number of people, while limiting the interest and control of any single individual. But in private cults, where such political considerations would be minor, a phyle system would have been grossly inefficient and valuable only for its conspicuous extravagance and royal associations. The officials who adopted this status symbol did not, however, presume so far as to use the prestigious *wr* phyle in their cults. They replaced it with a new phyle, or at least a newly named phyle, since the special status accorded the *jmj-wrt* phyle suggests that the new name was merely a disguise.

47. The predynastic evidence shows a highly stratified social structure in the south, but the evidence for the north, though sparse, seems to point towards a different kind of social organization. M. Hoffman, *Egypt Before the Pharaohs* (New York, 1979), pp. 211–12.

#### 9.4.5. The Late Sixth Dynasty and the First Intermediate Period

By the end of the reign of Pepi I, the popularity of the phyle system among builders of private tombs had begun to wane, although it continued in royal cults (at least the pattern of five and ten phyle storerooms continued in temple plans). To some extent, however, the system seems to have been a victim of its own success.

The adoption and modification of the phyle system over the course of the Old Kingdom had allowed the king to maintain a central authority by preventing the growth of rival institutions independent of royal control. The system of part-time priesthoods diluted the number of officials holding lucrative sinecures at well-endowed mortuary temples by a factor of ten and ensured that they were at least partially dependent on other institutions, usually including the central administration of the reigning king. It is interesting that there is no evidence for phyle organization in the central Memphite bureaucracy, while the institutions that might have rivaled it—the palace, the mortuary and sun temples, and the department of works—were organized into phyles. Although the highest level of officials at the palace or mortuary temples may not have participated in the phyle system, their subordinates probably served in the central bureaucracy as well, limiting the degree to which those subordinates might have supported their superiors in any of these rival institutions against the central authority.

It would be a mistake to overlook the possibility that the use of phyle organizations in potentially rival institutions was a conscious political strategy. It seems most likely, however, that the motivating force was the king's need to maximize the positions of patronage that he could bestow. The phyle system allowed him to reward ten times the number of supporters, binding them to himself personally both in life and after death. It is perhaps significant that the institutions that were organized into phyles were all involved in personal service to the king, either during his life or after his death. The phyle system thus strengthened the authority of the king and the central administration both by allowing a larger number of people to form personal attachments to the king, living or dead, and by preventing the growth of rival institutions.

The diffusion of power, wealth, and prestige resulting from the operation of phyle systems in various institutions was thus a major factor in establishing the stability that was one of the principal characteristics of the first six dynasties of Egyptian history. The changes in dynasty during the Old Kingdom proper apparently took place without civil strife or bureaucratic turmoil and many officials record having served kings before and after a change of dynasty. The kings of the Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Dynasties are even likely to have been

related, though perhaps not in direct line of succession. Except for the dissensions during the Second Dynasty, which unfortunately are not well documented, and the rather sudden ascent of the status of the god Re in the early Fifth Dynasty, the period seems one of almost unnatural tranquility.

The system of phyles prevented any of the potentially rival institutions from developing into a base of power strong enough to threaten the central royal administration. When the central authority did begin to fail in the later reign of Pepi II, these institutions were not able to fill the vacuum. The administration of the provinces was one area of government service that was both outside of Memphis and apparently outside of the phyle system. When the central authority was threatened, it was out of the ranks of these officials that the threat and, eventually, the new leadership came. As has been emphasized above, the five-phyle system seems to have been peculiar to Memphis, at least after the First Dynasty. With the decline of the Memphite royal house, these phyles disappear from the record and are not heard from again.

#### 9.4.6. The Middle Kingdom

The Middle Kingdom and the phyle system used in its temples is outside the scope of this study, except insofar as it represents a radical change from the system of the Old Kingdom. The most drastic change in the system was the disappearance of the five names that had become so closely attached to the phyles in royal service. The new system is reflected in the Kahun papyri, which date to the reign of Senwosret III and record the activities of the personnel of the mortuary temple of Senwosret II.<sup>48</sup> At this temple, as in all later evidence, there were four phyles, identified as "first," "second," "third," and "fourth." They seem to have rotated according to the lunar calendar;<sup>49</sup> in the Old Kingdom the monthly rotation seems to have been with the civil months. Finally, the status of the functionaries so organized seems to have been much lower, in general, than that of their Old Kingdom counterparts. The title *mtj n z3*, which is known as early as the early Sixth Dynasty,<sup>50</sup> is still in use, and the mortuary temple of Senwosret I still has corridors of five and ten storerooms, although this can easily be attributed to architectural conservatism. Although it

48. F. Ll. Griffith, *The Petrie Papyri: Hieratic Papyri from Kahun and Gurob* (London, 1897–98).

49. R. Parker, *The Calendars of Ancient Egypt*, SAOC 26 (Chicago, 1950), section 186.

50. The earliest example I have been able to find is in the titulary of *Ttj-mrj*, a son of *Mrrw-k3*, a vizier of Teti. The title thus seems to have been introduced during the reign of Pepi I.

is clear that a change in the nature of the phyle system took place, it is difficult to determine when it came about.

I would propose that this new system was an innovation of one of the first kings of the Twelfth Dynasty. According to a number of studies on the subject,<sup>51</sup> these kings were excellent and resourceful administrators who focused much of their energies on revitalizing the Memphite bureaucracy and the administrative apparatus of the central government. The early kings of the Twelfth Dynasty made intelligent use of literature and the literary tradition as a mode of propaganda and were expert in evoking the "good old days" of the Old Kingdom, presumably for political purposes, in their art and writings. Such skillful statesmen could hardly have overlooked a system of organization as useful and traditional as the phyle system, especially when it had been proven successful over almost 500 years of evolution and use.

As the Kahun papyri demonstrate, the phyle system was reinstated. The modifications that were made in it, however, tend to confirm some of the suggestions that are offered above as to its nature. The new kings were from Thebes in Upper Egypt, far from the Memphite area where the five Old Kingdom phyles had become established and may have originated. The kings of the Twelfth Dynasty would have had to reward their southern supporters as well as to placate the traditional Memphite bureaucrats. If the names and totemic emblems of the traditional five phyles still survived among the old aristocratic families of Memphis, an attempt to introduce southerners into the older phyles would have been difficult. Nor would the supplanting of these phyles by clans (z3w) of the South meet the new dynasty's political needs. Like the Greeks a millennium or so later, the Twelfth Dynasty kings seem to have set up a new, artificial system of phyles. Freed from the constraints of tradition, they changed the number of the phyles from five to four, which would fit more easily into a 12-month year and had the added advantage of further distinguishing the system from the Old Kingdom phyles. The troubles of the First Intermediate Period had suggested the advantages of trained professional bureaucrats over the completely amateur administrators, so only the lower levels of the administration were organized into phyles.

The fact that the Old Kingdom system was not simply reinstated exactly as it had been, in the face of the strong practical and political incentives for doing so, is perhaps the best argument adduced so far for the origin of phyles as clan groups. The need for new names and a new, more purely administrative, system

51. For example, G. Posener, *Littérature et politique dans l'Égypte de la XIIe dynastie* (Paris, 1956), and most recently B. Kemp, *Ancient Egypt: Anatomy of a Civilization* (London, 1989), pp. 149–80.

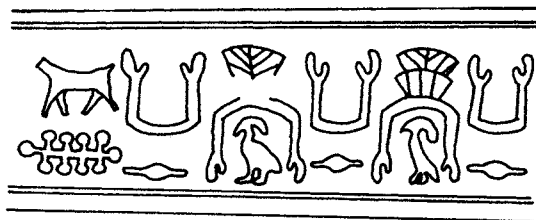
emphasizes the deep roots and strong local and family ties and associations of the phyles of the Old Kingdom.

### 9.5. SUMMARY

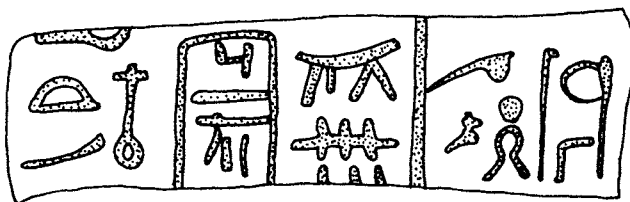
The phyle system as an institution, then, played an important role in the development and success of Egyptian kingship in the Old Kingdom. The concept of a centralized government and its attendant bureaucracy did not spring fully formed from the head of Narmer (or Aha) but developed from the clans and village societies of predynastic Egypt. The evolution of the phyle as an institution parallels the development of the state. Emerging from its original character as a totemic system of clans that served to identify and regulate the personal and family loyalties that form the basis of a primitive society, it developed into a bureaucratic mechanism that organized large numbers of people for tasks as varied as building pyramids and washing and dressing the statue of a dead king. In the course of its development, it lost some of its early complexity and royal associations, so that a slightly modified form of the system could be set up in the mortuary cult of an official, merely to demonstrate his wealth and status. However, the careful avoidance of the name of the *wr* phyle in such private cults, the connection of the phyles with totemic animal emblems in the Neferirkare papyri, and, most tellingly, the fact that the system had to be so radically altered and stripped of its names and associations to suit the needs of the Twelfth Dynasty kings, suggest that the prehistoric roots of such primitive social institutions were more fundamental to the sophisticated Egyptian society of the Old Kingdom than they have seemed.

# APPENDIX

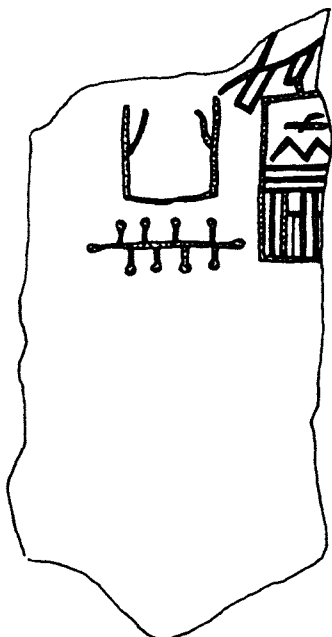
## A CORPUS OF ARCHAIC EVIDENCE FOR PHYLES



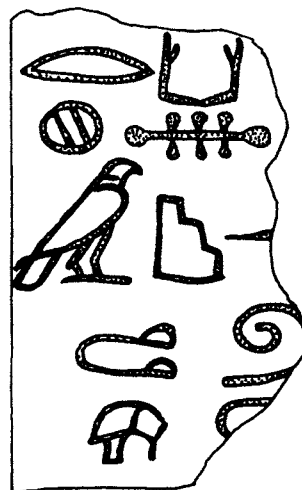
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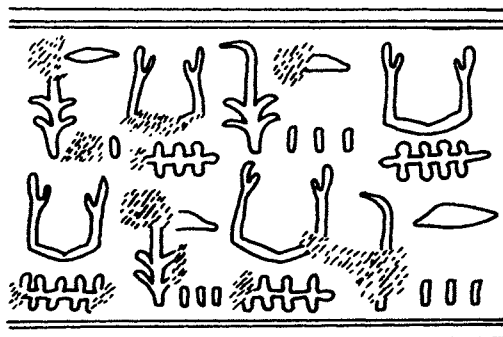
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B:3



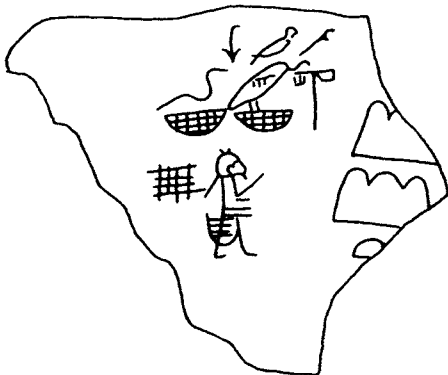


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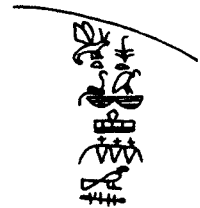
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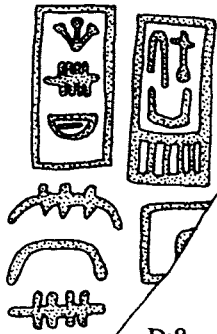


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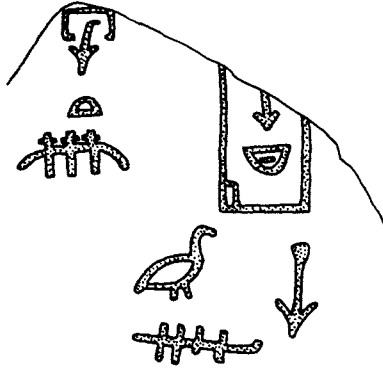


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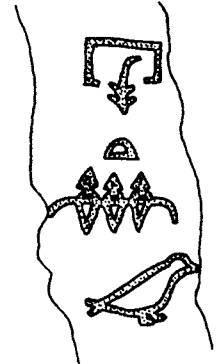
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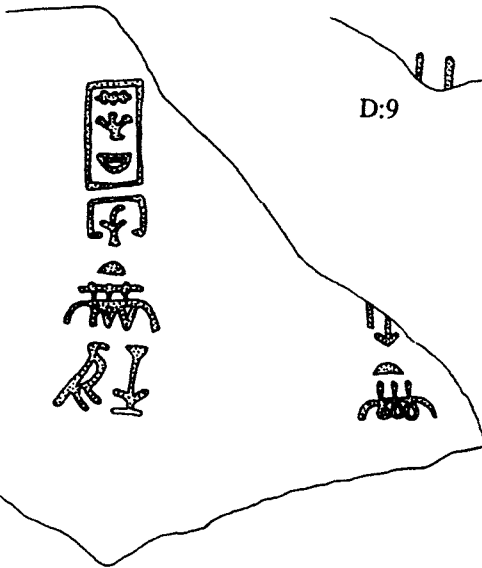
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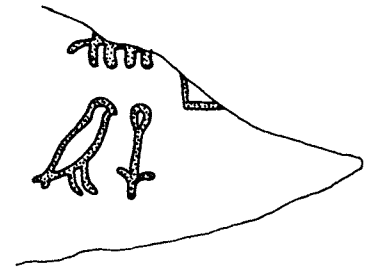
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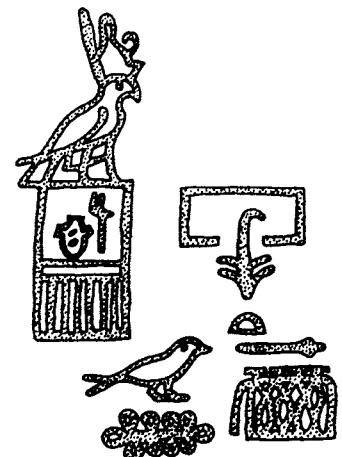
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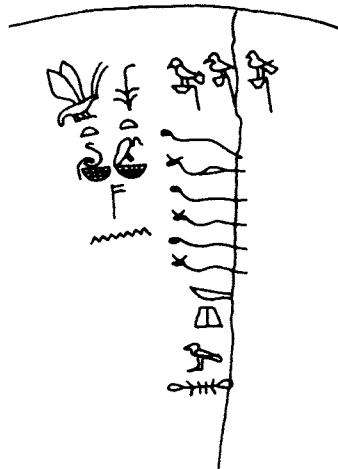
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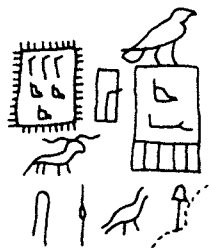
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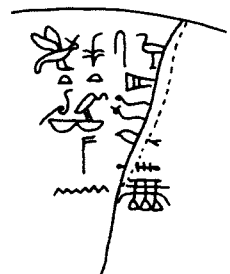
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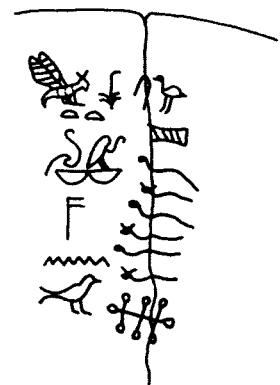
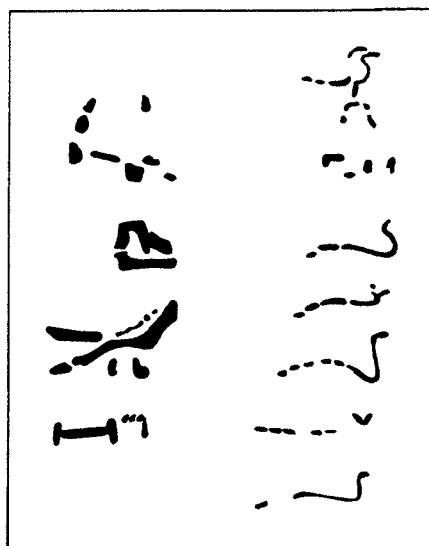
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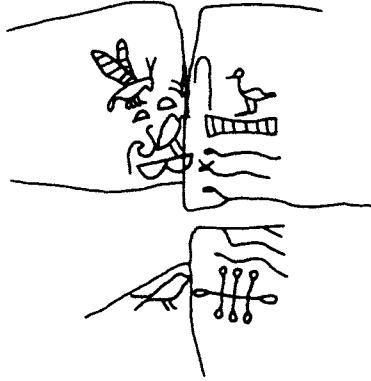
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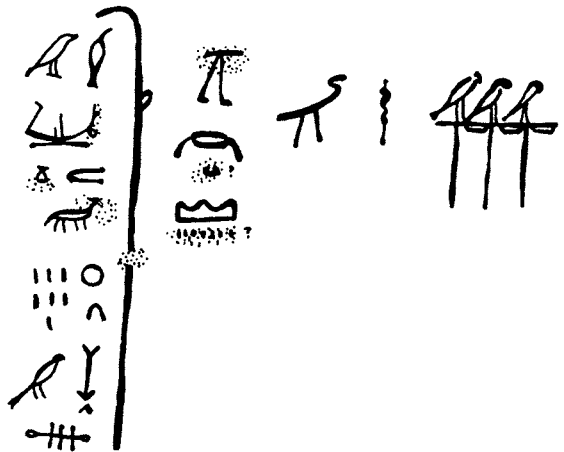
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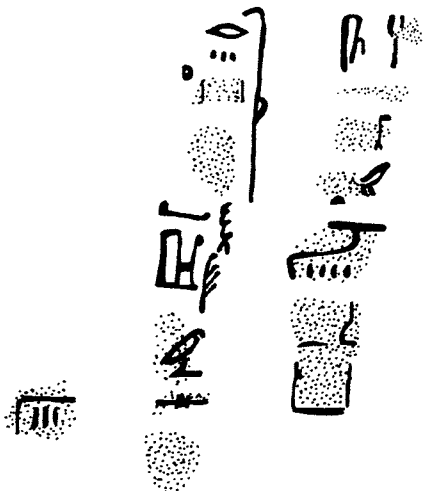
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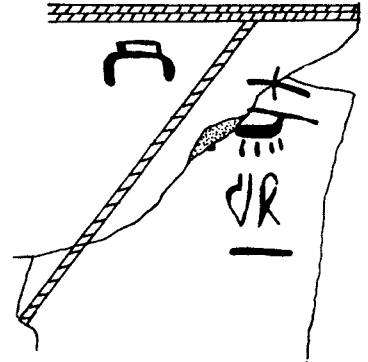
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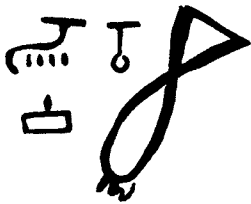
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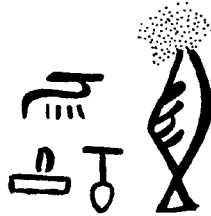
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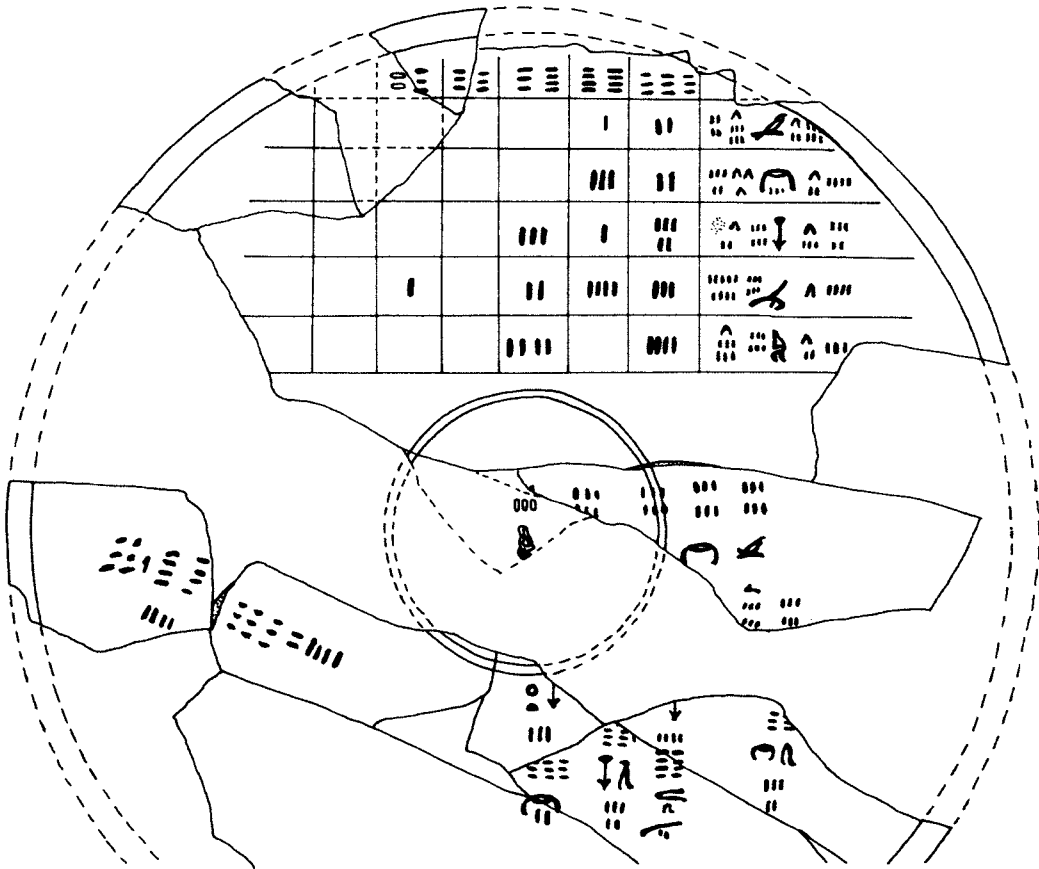
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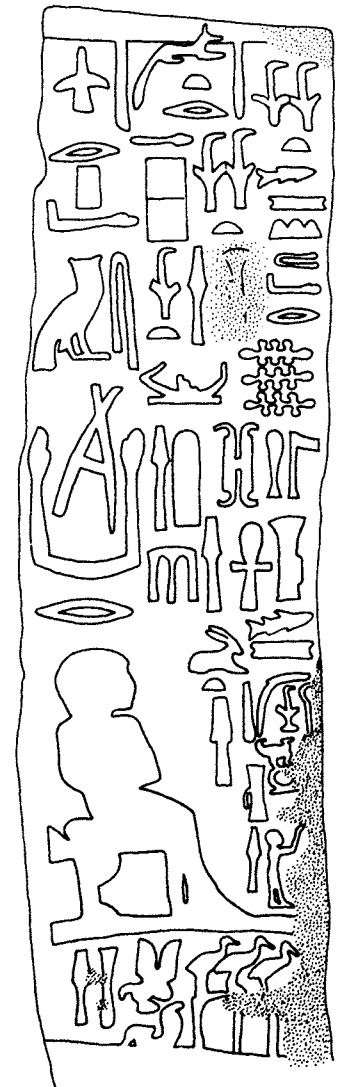
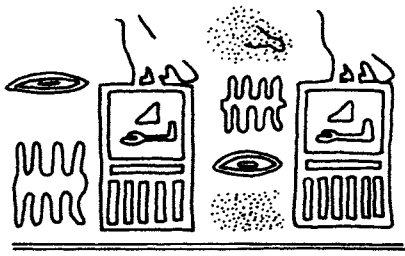
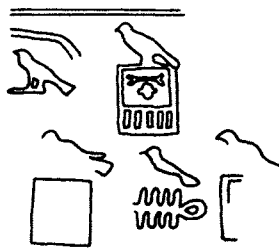
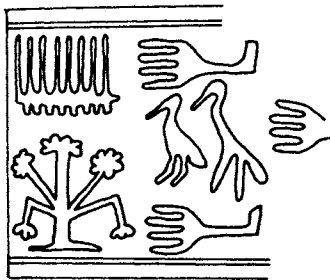
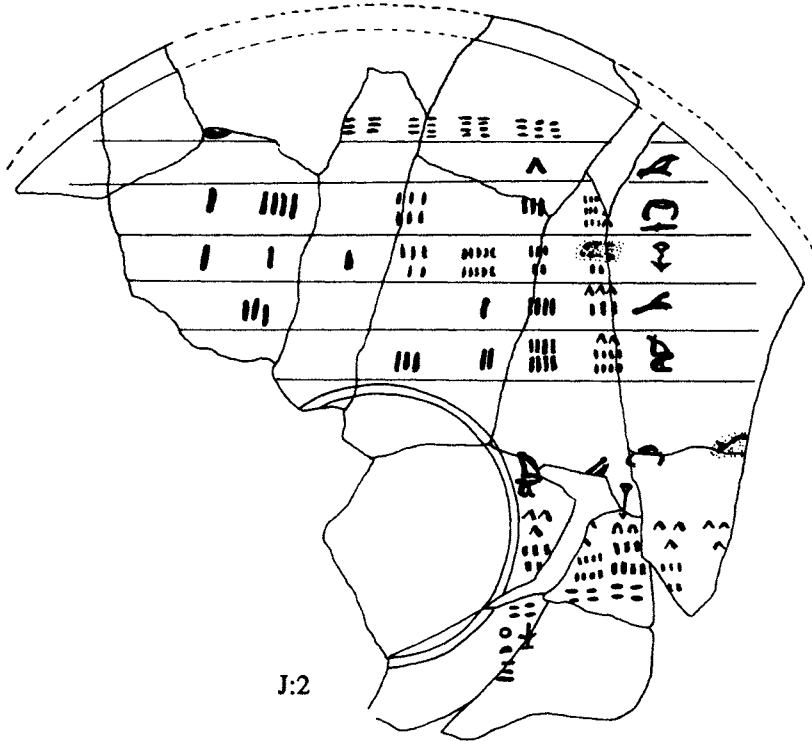
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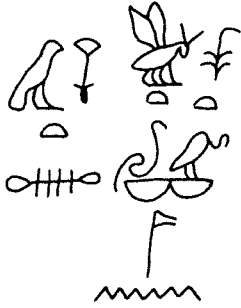


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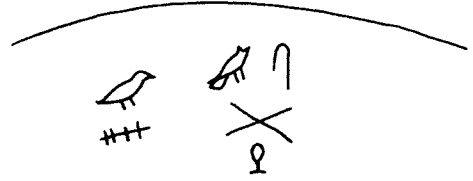


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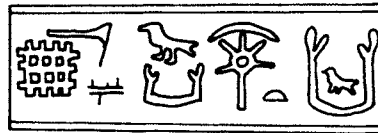




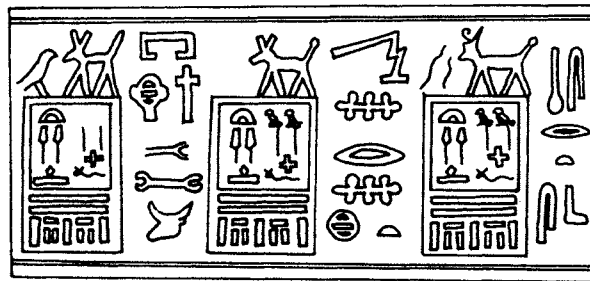
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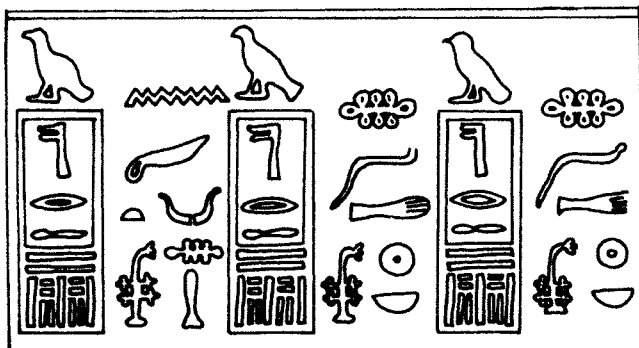
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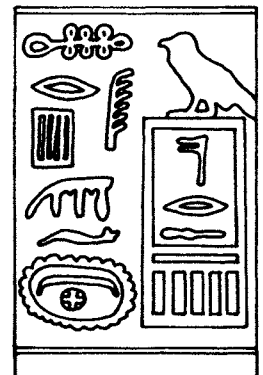
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*Index I* gives references to all the major primary sources cited in the text, with the exception of those that are discussed only in the corpus of *Chapter 8*. The page numbers in bold face indicate the location of any relevant illustrations. *Index II*, the general index, includes royal names, place names, the names of scholars whose conclusions are discussed in the text, and general topics. Non-royal personal names and royal names given in transliteration are indexed separately in *Index III*. *Index IV* contains Egyptian titles, terms and phrases cited and discussed in the text. Standard English word-by-word alphabetization is used for the first two indices; Egyptian alphabetization for the last two.

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