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ORIENTALIA

Business Manager: GIOVANNI BATTISTA SANTUCCI

Orientalia appears four times a year. The price of subscription in Italy is 27.000 lire; in other countries, \$35.00, payable in advance by check.

Volumes 1 (1932) -15 (1946) in phototypic reprint and 24 (1955) -45 (1976) in the original printing are available at 32.000 lire or \$40.00, plus postage.

All business correspondence should be directed to: Amministrazione Pubblicazioni, Pontificio Istituto Biblico, Piazza della Pilotta 35, 00187 Roma, Italia (Postal Account Number: Roma 34903005).

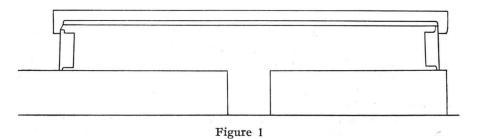
ANIMADVERSIONES

The Doors of Heaven

Edward Brovarski - Boston

In a brief communication to the Journal of Egyptian Archaeology 1, the late Jaroslav Černý noted that the expression '3. wy pt, literally "the (two) doors of heaven", meant "shrine", as in the Theban priestly title wn '3. wy pt "shrine opener" (Wb I, 164, 16). The expression 3. wy pt has, however, a more ancient origin and meaning than the references from the Late Period quoted by Černý.

In the funerary scenes in the mastaba of Mereruka, the funerary cortège with the coffin of the deceased travels from the dead man's house to the river where the coffin is loaded on a boat. The cortège crosses the river and disem-



barks at a landing place where the lector priest performs ceremonies in honor of the deceased 2 . What draws our attention is the structure labelled dbh nhmt hry-hb(t) "the requirements of the craft of the lector priest". The construction is a symbolic representation of the building which was the terminus of the deceased's journey from his home across the river to the west bank of the Nile. Here the necessary equipment and funerary offerings are arranged atop the hieroglyph for heaven with single door leaves set up at either end (Figure 1). The writer proposes that the group consisting of the sky hieroglyph and door leaves is to be read as '3. wy pt "the doors of heaven".

The same graphic device is used over a thousand years later in the Re chapel at Medinet Habu as an illustration to the text of the first hour of the "Book of the Night" (Figure 2) 3. The god Atum stands in the night boat as it enters the western horizon through the "doors of heaven". The accompanying

Jaroslav Černý, "Note on 'swy pt 'Shrine'," JEA 34 (1948) 120.
 P. Duell, The Mastaba of Mereruka 2 (Chicago 1938), pl. 130.
 George R. Hughes, Medinet Habu 6 (Chicago 1963), pl. 422.

legend reads: "Setting in the mountain of the west, in the Night Boat by this god, entering the western horizon, opening the secret double doors and dragging by the souls of the Westerners".

From similar scenes in other tombs where labels provide fuller descriptions 4 , it is apparent that the landing place of the funeral cortege in the scene from the mastaba of Mereruka is the $ibw \ n \ w'b$ "the booth of purification",

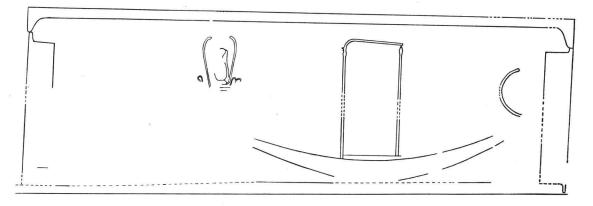


Figure 2

where the body of the dead man was ritually purified and washed before being delivered to the embalmer's workshop (w'bt nt wt⁵) for mummification. Figure 3 is a drawing of the ibw as it occurs in the tomb of Qar at Giza (G 7101) ⁶. The label dbhw n hmt hry-hb(t) appears over the chests here as it does in the mastaba of Mereruka and, in addition, we have the label which identifies the structure, dbhw n ibw "the requirements of the ibw".

The representations show the *ibw* to have been a large rectangular booth, constructed of poles and matting. The booth had entrances at either end of the structure and was erected on a quay with slipway(s) at the edge of a watercourse. The drawings vary greatly in detail, however. In the tomb of Qar, the light matwork construction of the *ibw* is emphasized in an abstract, stylised arrangement while in that of Pepyankh at Meir ⁷ the booth is shown as an arcade of slender poles. The representation in the tomb of Idu at Giza (G 7102) shows the light matwork booth of the *ibw* not at all (Figure 4). The most essential and constant element in all the drawings is not the temporary booth where the ritual took place but the terrace upon which the booth was erected

⁴ For the funeral scenes in the tombs of Qar and Idu at Giza, cf. William Stevenson Smith, A History of Egyptian Sculpture and Painting in the Old Kingdom (Boston ²1949), figs. 84a and 84b; for that in the tomb of Pepyankh Heny Kem at Meir, cf. A. M. Blackman, The Rock Tombs of Meir V (London 1953), pl. 42.

^{1953),} pl. 42.

⁵ Blackman, Meir V, pl. 42.

⁶ My thanks to Miss Suzanne E. Chapman, Associate Curator Emeritus in the Egyptian Department of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, for the three illustrations utilized in this article.

⁷ Blackman, Meir V, pl. 43.

with its slipway leading to the water's edge. The determinative for the ibw in the tombs of Idu and Qar represents the ground plan of the terrace and slipway and occurs as the central element in all the drawings of the ibw, in-

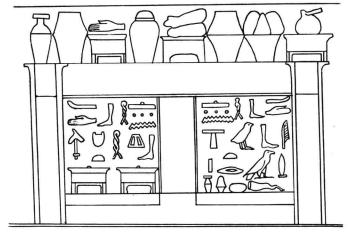


Figure 3

cluding the representation in the mastaba of Mereruka illustrated in Figure 1. Reisner, Grdseloff and Ricke all believed the valley temples of the pyramids to be the royal ibw, although they differed in their interpretation of

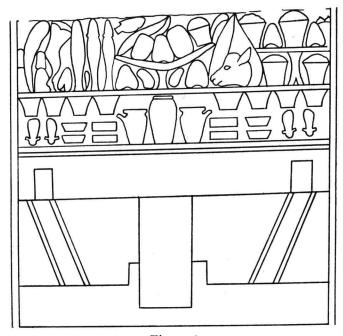


Figure 4

its architectural components 8. Like the ibw, the valley temples had two entrances. While in the Khafre complex the entrances were doorways at either end of the main façade, in the valley temple of Sahure they were elaborated into two porticoes with ramps at right angles to one another. If the Mereruka ibw could graphically be depicted as the entrance to the next world, as the "doors of heaven", then it certainly follows that the king's valley temple, as the royal ibw, would be similarly viewed as the double entrance to heaven. Essentially, the valley temple was, after all, an elaborate monumental gateway to the pyramid complex and the adjacent cemeteries. A series of spells in the Pyramid Texts mention the "doors of heaven", where Re awaits the king in order to introduce him into the heavenly conclaves (Pyr. 422). It is through these doors that the king must pass to bathe and be purified (Pyr. 325, 479, 563). The washing and ritual purification of the king's corpse was, of course, the chief of the ceremonies performed in the valley temple. The illusion of being in the heavens, when inside the valley temple, was undoubtedly heightened by the golden stars painted on its ceiling against a blue background 9. Such illusionism was common in Egyptian architecture.

II

Grdseloff thought that in association with the mastabas of the Old Kingdom officials the purification booth (ibw n w'b) and the embalming workshop (w'bt nt wt) stood independently 10. There is good evidence, both archaeological and textual, that private persons in the Old Kingdom built embalming workshops attached to their tombs. In front of the tombs of Nofer and Kai at Giza, Selim Hassan found the remains of brick walls and rock-cut basins and drains that he identified as the embalming workshops of the tombs' owners 11. In recounting his activity on his father's behalf, the Fifth Dynasty vizier Senedjem-ib says:

Further, I begged from my lord that a sarcophagus from Tura be brought for him to this tomb of his which I made for him in one year and two thirds while he was in the embalming workshop (w'bt nt 'h'w) in his tomb which was in (the necropolis of) the pyramid "Beautiful is Isesi" 12.

Later texts also mention private embalming workshops, making reference to "your embalming workshop" and "his embalming workshop" 13.

There is no evidence, however, that private persons possessed an ibw in the Old Kingdom. Grdseloff based his belief that they did on two badly damaged texts in the Fourth Dynasty tomb of Debehen 14 and in the mastaba of the vizier Washptah of the Fifth Dynasty 15. But the section added to the

¹⁴ Urk. I, 18-21; Selim Hassan, Giza IV, p. 168. 15 Urk. I, 40-45.

⁸ For a summary of their views, cf. I. E. S. Edwards, The Pyramids of Egypt (rev. ed.: London 1961) 110-111.

9 Edwards, The Pyramids, 142.

10 Bernhard Grdseloff, Das Ägyptische Reinigungszelt (Cairo 1941).

11 Selim Hassan, Excavations at Giza IV (Cairo 1943) 85-86.

12 Urk. I (Leipzig 1915) 65, 7-9.

13 Alan H. Gardiner, The Tomb of Amenembat (London 1915) 56.

Washptah text by Grdseloff's publication of an additional block 16 clearly shows that what the king gave his vizier was not the ibw, but its equipment. I would restore the broken passage as follows:

.... the tzt-chests 17 of the period of time of the booth of purification together with the requirements of the craft of the lector priest.

It is neither unprecedented nor unusual for a king to present a favored noble with the equipment for his funeral. Mry-'; of Hagarsa 18 buried his father "by a boon which the king gives" with ointment from the Residence and red linen from the House of Life and Sabni embalmed the body of his dead father Mehu with materials sent from the Residence likewise 19. A legend over the butchering scene in the representation of funeral ceremonies in the tomb of Debehen reads: "Cutting up two cattle for the very great burial as a boon which the king gives" 20.

In his translation of the earlier of the two texts, that from the tomb of Debehen 21, Grdseloff followed Junker in the latter's suggestion 22 that in line 5 of the Debehen text paralleled \ \ \] in line 4 of Washptah's inscription. The word 3b(w) occurs again at the end of line 13 in the Debehen inscription where it is written without the -w of line 5. In neither instance is it written with the booth determinative, nor even the house determinative, to indicate that a structure is intended. The i > i change at the beginning of words is hardly attested elsewhere in the Old Kingdom 23. In addition, Junker's suggestion involves a serious and unwarranted emendation of the and the in the Debehen inscription. The emendation is particularly unwarranted because of an identical writing of on another wall of Debehen's tomb 24.

The second occurrence of b(w) appears in a damaged section of the Debehen text; around half a line is missing before the end which is as follows:

- 16 Bernhard Grdseloff, "Nouvelles données concernant la tente de purification", ASAÉ 51 (1951) 127-140.
 - ¹⁷ Wb V, 404, 14-15. ¹⁸ Urk I, 267, 9-11.

 - 19 Urk I, 137-139.

 - Hassan, Giza IV, 168.
 Grdseloff, "Nouvelles données", 130-133.
 Hermann Junker, Giza VII (Vienna-Leipzig 1944), 122 (n. 3).
 - ²³ Elmar Edel, Altäg. Gr. II (Rome 1964), 133.
 - 24 Hassan, Giza IV, 168.

Grdseloff translates: "[le travail eut lieu] chaque jour, de sorte que l'3bw s'élève au haut de son socle avec la salle d'embaumement." Here Grdseloff erred in his identification of pr-w'b with w'bt, his "salle d'embaumement", for that it certainly is not. A scene in the tomb of Ti 25 shows a craftsman, a polisher $(z\S p)$ from the caption over his head, sanding a wooden shrine with straight sides and a cavetto cornice. The shrine is labelled . If further evidence were needed to show that pr-w'b is "statue shrine" and not "salle d'embaumement", the shrine of the Princess Ashayet at Deir el-Bahari preserves the label \bigcap , while the bust of a statue of the princess in limestone from the shrine survives 26.

Short of making the emendations suggested by Grdseloff and Junker, the alternative solution seems to be to suggest an otherwise unattested meaning for the verb 3b, viz. "to complete." The meaning suggested is not alien to the basic meaning of the verb as quoted by the Wörterbuch, "aufhören, eine Pause machen, aufhören zu tun," (Wb I, 6, 1-3) and 3b occurs in Papyrus Bologna 1094 and in Pleyte and Rossi, Pap. Turin 132, 4 with a transitive meaning 27. In support of this suggestion one might quote the example of the verb kni which means both "to cease" and "to complete" (Wb V, 49, 1-14). I would analyse the verbal form at the end of line 13 as iw.f plus Old Perfective 28 with an ellipse of the pronominal subject. Ellipses of the pronominal subject are due to the subject's being too clear to need expression and this, patently, is the case in line 13 of the Debehen inscription. I would read the badly broken passage, insofar as it is preserved:

It was the Ship's Captain 29 together with the two High Priests of Ptah and the Chief Builder of the King who came bringing for me a very great lifelike 30 statue every in the course of the day. It (scil. the statue) is today completed on its mountain together with the statue shrine.

The proposed meaning for 3b fits the Debehen context admirably, with the following reference to the statue shrine. The passage, when properly understood makes reference to the representation of funeral ceremonies on the roof of a tomb, illustrated on the south wall of the innermost room of Debehen's tomb³¹. The scene deserves further comment, particularly in the light of the inscription's reference to the statue being "on its mountain." On the upper right is shown a structure with food offerings beside its door. Men bearing offerings ascend a ramp to the roof of this structure and present them to a statue, standing in a double shrine with cavetto cornice. The statue forms the focus for the ceremonies. Texts of the Fifth Dynasty make reference to invocation

²⁵ Georg Steindorff, Das Grab des Ti (Lepizig 1913), pl. 132.

²⁶ E. Naville, The XIth Dynasty Temple of Deir el-Bahari II (London 1910), pl. 16b; for the bust, see p. 7, pl. 9a.

Ricardo A. Caminos, Late Egyptian Miscellanies (Oxford 1954) 27.

²⁸ Edel, op. cit. II, 909. 29 Some title such as "ship's captain" is necessary and shd wis (Urk I, 67, 2) seems to fit the traces.

³⁰ For a recent discussion of ssp r 'nh, cf. Henry G. Fischer, "Varia Aegyptiaca", JARCE 2 (1963) 24-28.

31 Hassan, Giza IV, 176; Smith, Egyptian Sculpture and Painting, pl. 47c.

offerings made on the roof of the tomb 32 and several mastabas at Giza including that of Shepseskafankh, preserve the rubble ramp leading to their roofs 33. The Debehen representation clearly depicts a mastaba facade. While the cliffface that formed the facade of Debehen's tomb was cut to the traditional angle of a mastaba facade 34, there was certainly no space at its top for ceremonies to have taken place. Reisner, unable to account for the excessive measurements given in the Debehen inscription for his tomb, suggested that they referred to a mastaba built upon the cliff above 35. While absolutely no trace of such a mastaba survives, a similar mastaba was built on top of the scarp above the doorway to the rock-cut chapel of Khunera 36. Reisner's suggestion would explain the Debehen funeral scene with the reference to the statue being "on its mountain".

As for 3bw in line 5 of the Debehen inscription, I would take it to be the substantive "completion" and read the passage:

[The Chief] Builder of the King together with the two High Priests of Ptah and the [crafts]men [came], attending to it (?), to see the work done while 50 men were placed to do the work on it every day and they were assigned the completion of the $w^c bt$ 37.

Save for the Debehen and Washptah texts, there is no evidence that private persons had embalming tents in the Old Kingdom. I believe, rather, that the purification ceremonies of king and noble took place on the terrace of the royal valley temple, and that it was here that the temporary mat and pole booth of the *ibw* was set up. While the booth could be taken down after the purification ceremonies, if every official had his own ibw, traces of their terraces and slipways, presumably of brick and stone, would seemingly have been found. The fact that several of the representations show a canal journey from the river before the ibw was reached, suggests additional, elaborate but necessary installations for the dry season. During the inundation, the funeral cortège could float right up to the ibw as is the case in the Mereruka portrayal 38.

32 John A. Wilson, "Funeral Services of the Egyptian Old Kingdom", JNES 3 (1944) 213.

33 George A. Reisner, "A Family of Royal Estate Stewards of Dynasty V'', BMFA 37 (1939), fig. 3; Hermann Junker, Giza IX (Vienna–Leipzig 1950) 4-6, figs. 2 and 3.

Hassan, Giza IV, 163.
 George A. Reisner, Mycerinus (Cambridge, Mass. 1931) 258.

³⁶ George A. Reisner, A History of the Giza Necropolis I (Cambridge, Mass. 1942) 219.

37 I understand the construction following hn' to be a passive sdmm.f of \$\frac{5}{5}\$ (Alan H. Gardiner, Gram. [Oxford \$\frac{3}{1969}\$] 425). The verb \$\frac{5}{5}\$, "to decide, assign" (Wb IV, 402) is used in the idiom \$\frac{5}{5}\$ by h "to assign work" at Sinai (Alan H. Gardiner and T. Eric Peet, The Inscriptions of Sinai I, 2nd edition revised and enlarged by Jaroslav Černý [Oxford 1952], pl. 52).

38 The drawing of the ibw in the tomb of Idu (Figure 3) could well be a representation of the contemporary velley temple of Peny II (for the date of

representation of the contemporary valley temple of Pepy II (for the date of Idu, see Klaus Baer, Rank and Title in the Old Kingdom, 62, 288 [no. 77]). A comparison of an elevation of Pepy's valley temple (Gustave Jéquier, Le monument funéraire de Pepi II III [Cairo 1940] 7) with the Idu representation suggests the oblique ramps of the representation may equal the ramps at either end of Pepy's valley temple, leading from the valley below to the first terrace before the temple. At the head of the ramps in both representation and original are two doorways. In the valley temple itself these give access to narrow staircases in the masonary of the temple leading to the first terrace. It was probably cases in the masonry of the temple leading to the first terrace. It was probably

III

A scene in the tomb of Ankhmahor at Saggara shows the scribe Mesi painting a statue of the deceased. Above him an inscription gives his title as "the scribe of the southern w'bt" 39. Commenting on the "the scribe of the southern $w^cbt^{\prime\prime}$ 39. Commenting on the scene, Wilson notes that the word "southern" emphasizes the fact that there were a pair of these $w^{c}bt$ workshops 40.

The first w'bt is the w'bt nt wt of the texts the "w'bt of the embalmer." A boon requested for the Princess Iti is "treatment (srwht) in the wbt, after the work of the embalmer has been done for her and the craft of the lector priest performed for her" 41.

Other evidence confirms the existence of the "southern w'bt". In Kemi 15, 10ff., Goyon published the tomb of a chief metalworker, Ankhi Inti, who was both "overseer of the two w'bt's" and "overseer of the southern w'bt". Govon's copy of the last title actually has the area of the rs-sign hatched 42. The false door was in better condition when Professor Charles F. Nims copied the same inscription during a sojourn at Saggara in 1935-1936, working on the mastaba of Mereruka on behalf of the Oriental Institute's Epigraphic Survey. Professor Nims has very kindly placed his copy at my disposal. It clearly shows the word rst in the area left hatched by Goyon after w'bt on Ankhi Inti's false door. From the scene in the tomb of Ankhmahor and the metalworker's titles held by Ankhi Inti, it seems that the "southern w'bt" was the workshop of the artisans who fashioned mobilier for the dead. Mekhu of Elephantine was buried with unguents from the pr-nfr and "secret things" (śšt3) from the "two w'bt's" 43. A scene in the tomb of Ibi at Deir el-Gebrawi 44 shows carpenters polishing (hwi m snwt) a chest for use in the other wbt (itnt nt wbt). Craftsmen of the (southern) w'bt carve and paint two false doors for the tomb of Nyankhsekhmet in the presence of King Izezi himself 45.

Beside the tomb of Ankhi Inti at Saggara is a second chapel which may belong to his son, Ankhi Djaa 46. Ankhi Djaa has the title imy-r; smt w'bt' "overseer of the smelters of the w'bt". A man named Šśtf, who sits at the feet of his master in the tomb of Ptahhotep 47 is similarly imy-r;

on this first terrace that the purification ceremonies were conducted and the temporary booth of the *ibw* set up. The equipment for the lector priest and the offerings in the register above of the Idu representation may be conceived of as set out on this terrace. The T-shaped central element of the *ibw* is retained in the Idu drawing as it is in the other representations of the *ibw*.

39 J. Capart, Une rue de tombeaux à Saqqarah (Brussels 1907), pl. 33.

40 Wilson, "Funeral Services", 202 (n. 5).

⁴¹ John A. Wilson, "A Group of Sixth Dynasty Inscriptions", JNES 13 (1954) 260.

⁴² Georges Goyon, "Le tombeau d'Ankhou à Saggarah", Kêmi 15 (1969), pl. 2.

48 Urk I, 138, 4-5.

⁴⁴ N. de G. Davies, The Rock Tombs of Deir el-Gebrawi I (London 1902), pl. 14.

⁴⁵ Urk I, 38-39. 46 This chapel was also copied by Professor Nims. His copies are the source for the title quoted.

⁴⁷ R. F. E. Paget and A. A. Pirie, The Tomb of Ptah-hetep (London 1898),

fnh w'bt "overseer of the carpenters of the w'bt". The master builder Kaemheset was not only hry sists n wides bt "privy to the secrets of the w'bt" but held the title $\bar{i}my-r_3$ kd n w'bt "overseer of the builders of the w'bt" 48. The builders under his supervision probably fitted out the tombs of the cemetery with the false doors and other architectural elements that were given to favored nobles by the king, Finally, a sealing of King Khufu gives the titles of an anonymous "sealer of the gold of the w'bt, of the doors of the w'bt, and of the secrets (śšt) of the $w'bt''^{49}$. The impression had been rolled a number of times over a domed mud box sealing.

Another designation which appears in the texts, the w'bt Zkr 50 "the w'bt of Sokar" may refer to the "southern w'bt" as an outstanding feature of Sokar during the Old Kingdom was his character as a craftsman. It is only later that his character of mortuary god dominates 51. The w'bt nswt, the "royal w'bt". probably refers to the king's embalming workshop, perhaps erected in the court of the royal mortuary temple 52. It is possible, however, that it refers to the "southern w'bt" which was surely under royal patronage.

If the workshop of the craftsmen could be referred to as the "southern w'bt", it is, perhaps, surprising that the workshop of the embalmers is not referred to as the "northern" w'bt. But then, the epithet "southern" may not have reference to that w'bt's placement with regard to the embalmers' workshop at all. A similar instance is the case of the "southern nht" of Hathor, the earliest mention of which is in the mastaba of Mereruka at Saggara 53. "Southern" here seems to refer to the location of Hathor's shrine south of Memphis. Papyrus Harris records how Ptah appeared in his barge to voyage upon the river "to his daughter, the mistress of the Sycamore house (nht) on the south of Memphis 54. The attachment of "southern" to the craftmens' workshop may refer to its location on the south of the pyramids of Giza, or to the south of Memphis, or of some other well-known local landmark.

In later times, w'bt may come to mean "tomb" 55, but the meaning is not attested in the Old Kingdom. The meanings of "kitchen, refectory" 56 later attached to the word w'bt may only be extensions of its meaning of "craftmens' workshop."

⁴⁸ Hermann Kees, "Eine Familie königlicher Maurermeister aus dem Anfang der 6. Dynastie", WZKM 54 (1958) 91-100.

49 George A. Reisner and William Stevenson Smith, A History of the Giza Necropolis II (Cambridge, Mass. 1955), fig. 47.

50 A. Mariette, Les mastabas de l'Ancien Empire (Paris 1889) 377 in the title imy-r; pr w'bt Zhr.

51 Maj Sandman Holmberg, The God Ptah (Lund 1946) 124.

⁵² Hassan, Giza IV, 87-95.
⁵⁸ Daressy, "Le mastaba de Mera," MIÉ 3 (1898) 563. Fischer, "A Stela of the Heracleopolitan Period at Saqqara: the Osiris Iti", ZAS 90 (1963) 37 (n. 1), quotes a second example of *Hthr nbt nht rs(t)*, dating to the Ninth Dynasty.

54 Pap. Harris I, 49, 2-3.

Leipzig 1909) 26. See Irmgard Woldering, Gods, Men and Pharaohs (Fribourg 1967), pl. 53 for a Middle Kingdom stela where w'bt seems to mean "tomb", in the phrase i 'nhw tp-t; sw;.ty.sn hr w'bt tn.

66 Gardiner, Admonitions, 26.