

Some Theban Officials of the Early Middle Kingdom



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OVER THE COURSE OF HIS EGYPTOLOGICAL CAREER, THE NAME OF William Kelly Simpson has become nearly synonymous with Middle Kingdom studies. Although his interests have included most aspects of ancient Egyptian civilization, Kelly's first love has always been the literature, art, and history of the Middle Kingdom. The list of his publications bears eloquent witness to just how much his scholarship has expanded and enriched our knowledge in these areas over the past forty years. It is my privilege to offer the present study—which covers an equivalent span of time in the formation of the Middle Kingdom—in tribute to Kelly's scholarship, and with affection to an esteemed colleague and a treasured friend.

The recent redating of the tomb of Meket-re (TT 280, fig. 1) to the early years of Amenemhat I has provided a new benchmark for the art and history of the early Middle Kingdom.¹ Given the service of Meket-re under Mentuhotep II (see below), this new dating now provides evidence for an official career stretching from the last decades of Mentuhotep II (ca. 2030–2010 B.C. in the traditional chronology), through the reign of Mentuhotep III (ca. 2010–1998 B.C.) and the end of the Eleventh Dynasty, to the first years of Dynasty 12 (ca. 1991–1981 B.C.).

The titles preserved in Meket-re's tomb are *mr ḥtmt* "Overseer of the Seal" and *mr pr wr* "Chief Steward."² The former identifies him as

¹ Dorothea Arnold, "Amenemhat I and the Early Twelfth Dynasty at Thebes," *MMJ* 26 (1991), pp. 21–32; J. Allen, "The Coffin Fragments of Meketra," *MMJ* 26 (1991), pp. 39–40. I am grateful to Dorothea Arnold for discussing the subject of the present paper with me and for offering numerous valuable comments. In Arnold, *op. cit.*, p. 23 and p. 38 fig. 62, and Allen, *op. cit.*, p. 39, the bookroll with two ties, which appears on a fragment from Meket-re's coffin, was cited as partial evidence for the date of the tomb. A further search of the fragments of tomb relief has revealed another instance of the same sign, also with two ties, in carved relief (MMA 20.3.1018).

² On fragment, MMA 20.3.962 (MMA Theban Expedition drawing AM 691), and a fragment in the Egyptian Museum, Cairo, respectively. The latter is reproduced in Arnold, *MMJ* 26 (1991), p. 21 fig. 26, and discussed *ibid.*, p. 23.

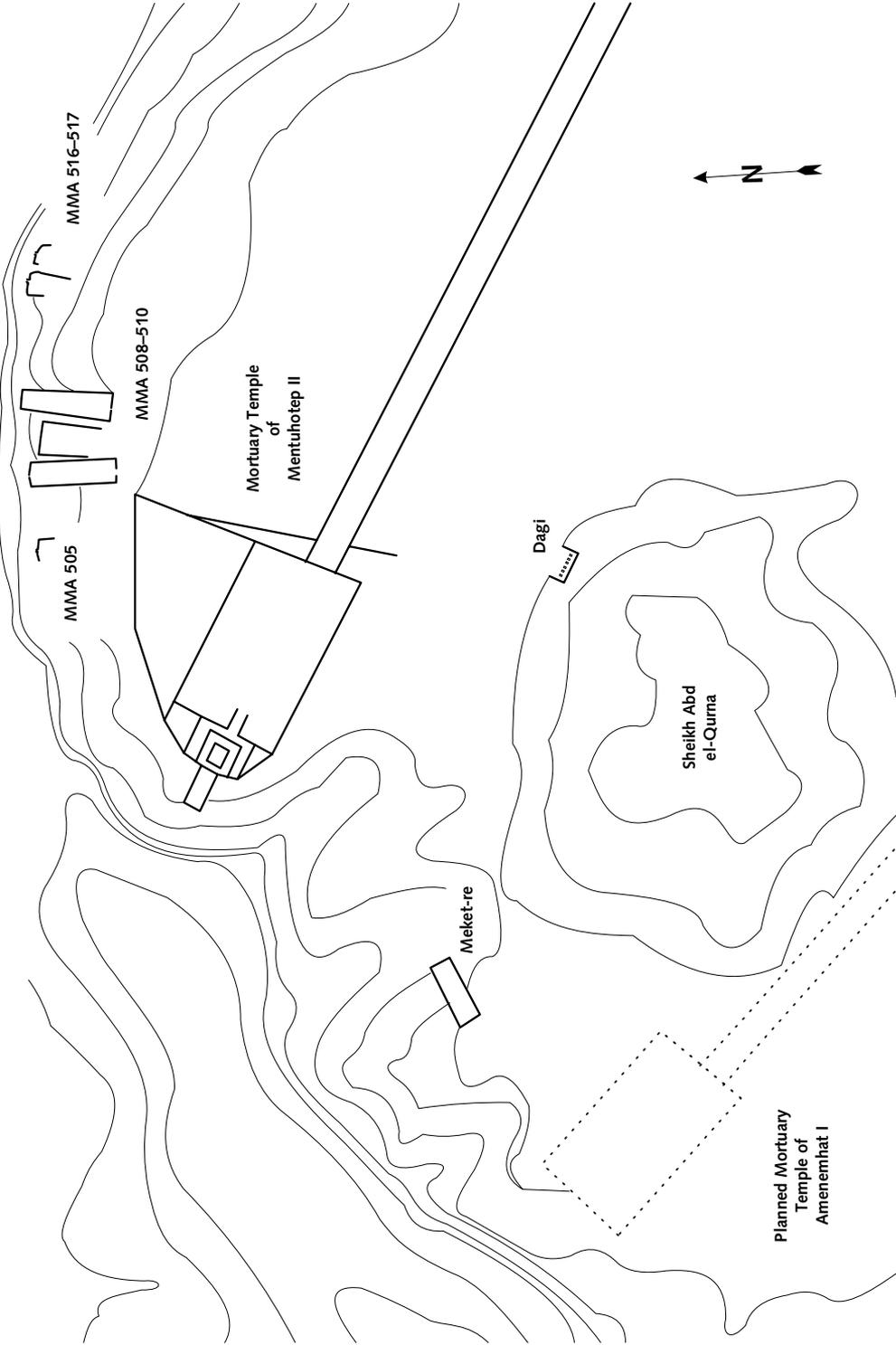


Fig. 1. The Theban Necropolis in the early Middle Kingdom.

the official responsible for the personal property of the king; the latter, as the administrator of state property.³ Meket-re also appears as *mr ḥtmt* in fragments from the reliefs of the mortuary temple of Mentuhotep II.⁴ He had thus attained the office sometime in the final two decades of Mentuhotep's reign,⁵ and presumably exercised it under succeeding kings until his death in the early years of the Twelfth Dynasty. The title of *mr pr wr*, which appears only in his tomb, was presumably conferred on him by Amenemhat I.

Meket-re's predecessor as *mr ḥtmt* was probably Khety, the owner of TT 311 (MMA tomb no. 508), above Mentuhotep's temple in the north cliff of Deir el-Bahari (fig. 2). Khety appears with this title in two graffiti from the Wadi Shatt el-Rigala, where he is shown before the figure of Mentuhotep II.⁶ In a nearby group of graffiti commemorating other officials of Mentuhotep's court, Meket-re is identified only as *mrr nb=f mꜣ<ꜣ> mikwt-rꜣ* "Truly beloved of his lord, Meket-re."⁷ These may date to Mentuhotep II's Year 39, but are probably a few years later (see below).

³ W. Helck, *Zur Verwaltung des Mittleren und Neuen Reiches*, Probleme der Ägyptologie 3 (Leiden, 1958), pp. 77–79 and 92. For the function of *mr ḥtmt*, see also B. Schmitz, "Schatzhaus(vorsteher)," *LÄ* 5, cols. 539–43; and G. van den Boorn, *The Duties of the Vizier* (London, 1988), pp. 61–62. For the office of *mr pr wr*, first attested in Dyn. 12, see Arnold, *MMJ* 26 (1991), p. 23; O. Berlev, "The Date of the 'Eloquent Peasant'," in *Form und Mass, Festschrift für Gerhard Fecht*, ed. by J. Osing and G. Dreyer, *ÄAT* 12 (Wiesbaden, 1987), p. 79; F. Arnold, "The High Stewards of the Early Middle Kingdom," *GM* 122 (1991), pp. 7–14.

⁴ Fr. 5344 = BM 1452: E. Naville, *The XIth Dynasty Temple at Deir el-Bahari* 2, EEF 30 (London, 1910), pl. 9D; J.J. Clère and J. Vandier, *Textes de la première période intermédiaire et de la XIème dynastie*, BAe 10 (Brussels, 1948), no. 28r3: ... *smr* *wꜣ[t](i) mr ḥtmt mikt-rꜣ*. The mortuary temple relief has been studied by B. Jaroš-Deckert. Her papers are now in the MMA's Department of Egyptian Art, and I am grateful to Dieter Arnold for making them available to me for study. These show Meket-re on at least two other fragments: 5342 (BM 1398), which depicts him carrying a collar, with the legend *r[p]ꜣ ḥtmti-bit(i) smr-wꜣt(i) mr ḥtmt mikwt-rꜣ*; and 1464, with the partial title *[mr]-ḥtmt m[i]kwt-rꜣ*. All three inscriptions mentioning Meket-re are in raised relief, and thus integral with the original decoration of the temple, rather than secondary additions. Other references to fragments from the mortuary temple in the present article are derived from Jaroš-Deckert's papers; all the fragments are in raised relief.

⁵ The fragments of temple decoration derive from building phase D; for the date, see Dieter Arnold, *The Temple of Mentuhotep at Deir el-Bahari*, PMMA 21 (New York, 1979), pp. 41–45.

⁶ W.M.F. Petrie, *A Season in Egypt, 1887* (London, 1888), pl. 16 no. 489 and pl. 15 no. 443; H. E. Winlock, "The Court of King Neb-ḥepet-rēꜣ Mentu-ḥotpe at the Shatt er Rigāl," *AJSL* 57 (1940), p. 142 (and fig. 7) and p. 143 fig. 8 = idem, *The Rise and Fall of the Middle Kingdom in Thebes* (New York, 1947), pls. 36–37.

⁷ Petrie, *Season*, pl. 15 no. 455; Winlock, *AJSL* 57 (1940), pp. 147, 148 fig. 10D, 149–50 = *Rise and Fall*, pp. 66–67 and pl. 39D. An initial *mr* preceding this graffito was erased. The title *mr ḥwt 6 wrt*, which follows Meket-re's name and which was read by Petrie and Winlock with it, belongs to another graffito (discussed below).

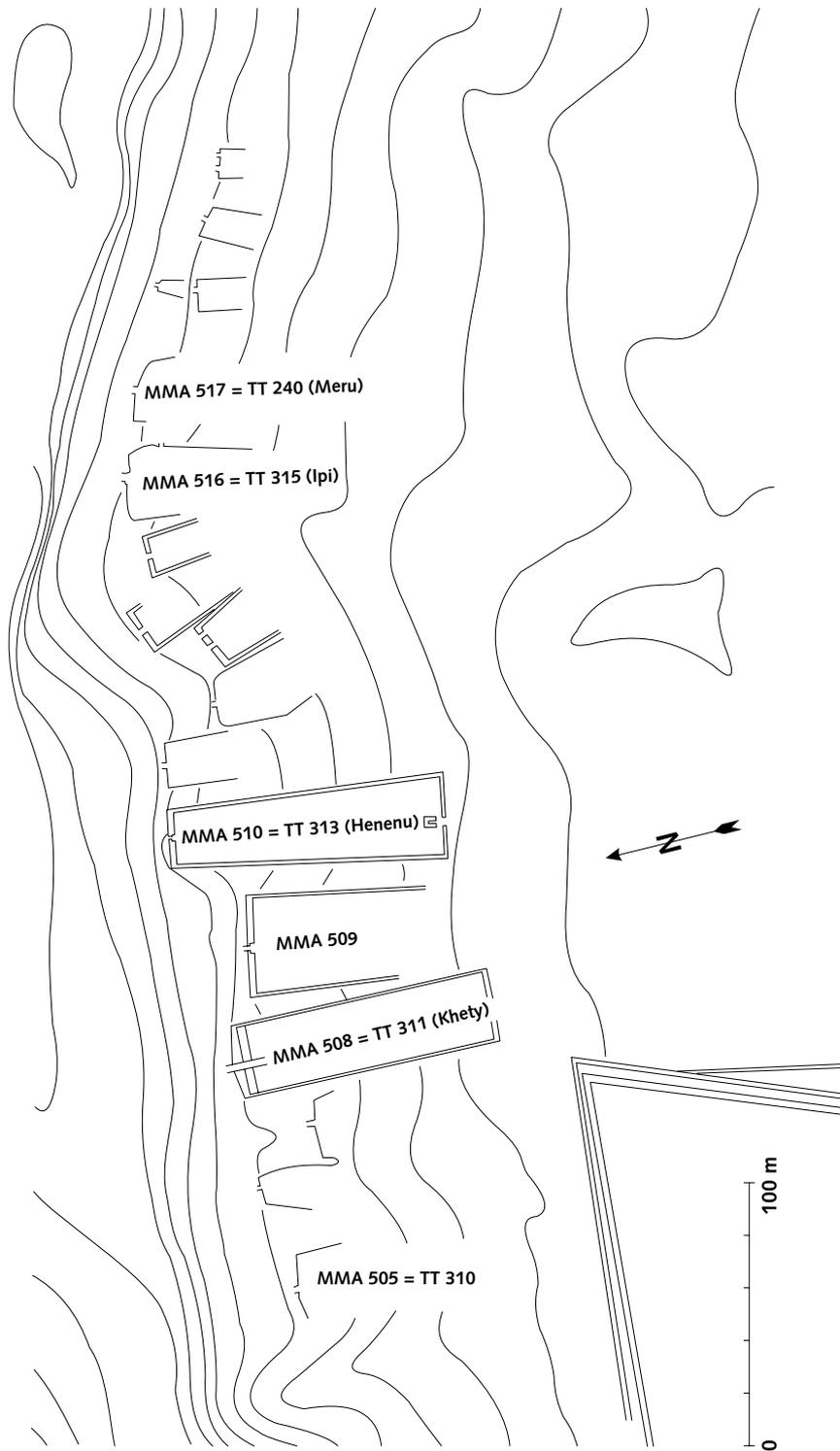


Fig. 2. Early Middle Kingdom tombs above the mortuary temple of Mentuhotep II; after Arnold, *Das Grab des Inj-iti-f*, pl. 1.

Evidence for Meket-re's title at this time, while Khety was still in office, is preserved in a graffito of Mentuhotep's Year 41 from Aswan:⁸

ḥsbt 41 ḥr 9 ḥrw ZM3-T3Wì (n)swt bit(i) NB-ḤPT-Rc ḥ nḥ mi-r dt
iwt ḥtmti-bit(i) smr-wrti mr ḥtmww 10 ḥty ms.n zst-r m3t ḥrw
ḥrw n w3wt mikwt-r ḥtmt(i)¹¹

Year 41 under the Horus UNITER OF THE TWO LANDS, King of Upper and Lower Egypt NB-ḤPT-Rc, alive like Re forever. Return of the King's Sealbearer, Unique Friend, Overseer of Sealers Khety, born of Sit-Re, justified; boats of Wawat; and Meket-re the Sealbearer.

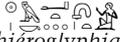
In light of this inscription, Meket-re's appointment as *mr ḥtmt* can be dated to Mentuhotep II's Year 41 at the earliest, following his return from Aswan and the death of his predecessor.¹²

Khety's office is attested throughout the reliefs from his tomb, as well as in his sarcophagus and on the offering table from the tomb's entrance.¹³ The reliefs preserve a number of his other honorary and functional titles as well, including *rpḥ ḥst(i)-c ḥtmti-bit(i) smr wrt(i)* "Hereditary Noble, High Official, King's Sealbearer, Unique Friend," *ḥrp rḥw-(n)sw* "Director of the King's Acquaintances," *rḥ-(n)swt [imi] ib=f* "King's Acquaintance and Intimate," *[(i)t]-nṯr mry-nṯr* "God's Father and Beloved," *mr prwì-ḥd* "Overseer of the Two Treasuries," *imì-r ḥd ḥnr nbw mr ḥsbḏ mfk3[t]* "Overseer of silver and gold, Overseer of lapis-lazuli and turquoise," and *mr ḥb wḥmw nšmt šw* "Overseer of horn, hoof, scale, and feather."¹⁴ His name and title also occur on linen from the tombs of Mentuhotep's queens Aashyt and Henhenet, in the king's

⁸ *AJSL* 57 (1940), p. 147 = *Rise and Fall*, pp. 65–66; W. Schenkel, *Memphis-Herakleopolis-Theben*, AA 12 (Wiesbaden, 1965), no. 359. The graffito is reproduced in Petrie, *Season*, pl. 8 no. 213.

⁹ For *ḥr* alone introducing the king's name, see the *Belegstellen* to *Wb.* 3, 316, 1. The sign shown in Petrie's copy between the numeral and *ḥr* is probably nothing: H.E. Winlock, in *MMA Theban Expedition Journal* 3, p. 84.

¹⁰ For this spelling, cf. G.T. Martin, *Egyptian Administrative and Private-Name Seals* (Oxford, 1971), pl. 5 no. 18. The individual in question is probably not the same as the *mr ḥtmt* Khety: see below.

¹¹ Petrie's copy can plausibly be read as . For the spelling of the title, cf. J. Couyat and P. Montet, *Les inscriptions hiéroglyphiques et hiératiques du Ouâdi Ham-mâmât*, MIFAO 34 (Cairo, 1912), no. 113, 12. Its position after the name is unusual, but not unparalleled: R. Anthes, *Die Felsinschriften von Hatnub*, UGAÄ 9 (Leipzig, 1928), no. 19, 5; cf. also Winlock, *AJSL* 57 (1940), pp. 148 fig. 10K, 152 = *Rise and Fall*, p. 69 and pl. 39K.

¹² Thus substantiating the chronological arguments of Arnold, *MMJ* 26 (1991), pp. 21–22.

¹³ For the offering table, see H.E. Winlock, "The Egyptian Expedition 1922-1923," *BMMA* 18 (1923), Part 2, p. 14 fig. 4 and p. 17 fig. 7. The relief and sarcophagus fragments are unpublished: MMA Theban Expedition drawings AM 705–706 and 713, respectively. For the burial chamber, see C.K. Wilkinson and M. Hill, *Egyptian Wall Paintings* (New York, 1983), p. 67.

mortuary complex;¹⁵ and from Tomb 23 in the triangular court north of the temple, which also yielded linen dated to Year 40.¹⁶

Nearly all of Khety's attestations are associated with the final phase of Mentuhotep's reign, marked by the Horus name *zmꜣ-tꜣwꜣ* and prenomen *NB-ḤPT-Rꜥ*.¹⁷ Besides the graffiti from the Wadi Shatt el-Rigala, this titulary also occurs, along with the king's image, in the fragmentary stelae from Khety's tomb.¹⁸ The graffiti are commonly dated to Mentuhotep's Year 39 on the basis of year-dates scratched secondarily on either side of the two main inscriptions showing the figure of the king.¹⁹ The relationship between the dates and the graffiti is not completely certain, but the fact that the king is shown, in one instance, in Sed-Festival garb suggests that Khety was involved in the planning or celebration of this event, probably sometime between Years 30 and 39.²⁰ The linen marks from the queens' burials also suggest that Khety had attained his high office earlier than, or at the latest around the beginning of, the reign's final phase.²¹ Those from Tomb 23 show that he was serving as *mr ḥtmt* in or after Year 40. He may also appear in the reliefs of Mentuhotep's mortuary temple, like Meket-re, although the evidence is not unequivocal.²² If so, he must have died while the temple was being decorated, since there is no evidence for more than one royal *mr ḥtmt* in office at any one time. The combined evidence indicates that Khety

¹⁴ MMA Theban Expedition drawings AM 705–706 and AM 709; MMA Theban Expedition Journal 3, p. 116. Khety's reliefs (AM 705) contain what appears to be the first known use of the "tongue" sign (Gardiner F20) as a writing of the word "overseer" (*imi-r*), in the sequence *imi-r ḥtmt imi-r ḥꜥ ḥnꜥ nbw*; the usage is next attested under Senwosret I: W. Schenkel, *Frühmittelägyptische Studien* (Bonner Orientalistische Studien, 13: Bonn, 1962), § 7.

¹⁵ Aashyt: Winlock, *BMMA* 18 (1923), Part 2, p. 12 fig. 2 (MMA 22.3.3; MMA Theban Tomb Card 61). Henhenet: MMA 07.230.1c3; MMA Theban Tomb Card 31 (unpublished).

¹⁶ Noted by Winlock, *AJSL* 57 (1940), p. 146 = *Rise and Fall*, p. 65; otherwise unpublished: MMA 25.3.262 (MMA Theban Expedition photograph M6C 424, MMA Theban Tomb Card 93) (*mr ḥtmt ḥty*) and MMA 25.3.264 (MMA Theban Expedition photograph M6C 423, MMA Theban Tomb Card 94) (*ḥsbt 40*).

¹⁷ As suggested, in slightly different terms, by Winlock, *AJSL* 57 (1940), p. 146 = *Rise and Fall*, p. 65. For the king's titulary, see Dieter Arnold, "Zur frühen Namensformen des Königs *Mntꜣw-ḥtp Nb-ḥpt-Rꜥ*" *MDAIK* 24 (1969), pp. 38–42.

¹⁸ Unpublished: MMA Theban Expedition drawings AM 708 (including fragments of the king's figure: MMA 26.3.354B-C) and AM 705.

¹⁹ Winlock, *AJSL* 57 (1940), pp. 153 and 143 fig. 8 = *Rise and Fall*, p. 70 and pl. 37.

²⁰ For the date of Mentuhotep II's Sed-Festival, see Dieter Arnold, *Der Tempel des Königs Mentuhotep von Deir el-Bahari* 1, AV 8 (Mainz, 1974), p. 66 and n. 178.

²¹ The burial of Henhenet, and probably also that of Aashyt, was sealed by the temple's Phase C: Arnold, *Tempel* 1, p. 64; idem, *Mentuhotep*, p. 41. This building phase seems to have been inaugurated at the time of Mentuhotep's adoption of the Horus name *zmꜣ-tꜣwꜣ*: idem, *Mentuhotep*, pp. 42 and 56.

became *mr ḥtmt* sometime before the final decade of Mentuhotep II and was succeeded by Meket-re in the king's last years, before the decoration of the mortuary temple had been completed.

In this respect, several monuments attributed to the Khety of TT 311 (hereafter distinguished, for convenience, as "Khety I") should probably be assigned to other individuals. Winlock identified Khety I with the expedition-leader named in the Aswan graffito of Year 41, cited above.²³ The identification is tempting, but the title *mr ḥtmww* makes such an equation problematic,²⁴ since it is apparently a variant of the more common title *mr ḥtmtyw*, of lower rank than *mr ḥtmt*.²⁵ If the two men were identical, Khety could have become *mr ḥtmt* in Year 41 at the earliest. This in turn would date the burial of Mentuhotep's queens, and building phase C of his mortuary temple, also to Year 41 at the earliest. Though barely conceivable, the time span is probably too short to accommodate the architectural and historical events that occurred before the king's death in Year 51: building phases C and D of the royal mortuary temple,²⁶ Khety's career and the construction of his own tomb, and Khety's death and the succession of Meket-re. At any rate, the likeliest interpretation of the Wadi Shatt el-Rigala graffiti indicates that Khety I was already *mr ḥtmt* at the time of Mentuhotep II's Sed-Festival, in Year 39 at the latest.

At the other end of the scale, Khety I has also been identified with the owner of a statue from Karnak and a second offering-table that may come from the same place.²⁷ The statue was inscribed for the *ḥtmt(i)-biti smr wʿ(ti) (i)t-nṯr mr ḥtmt m tṣ r dṛ=f imṣḥ ḥty mṣṣ ḥrw* "King's

²² Frs. 82 (...) *ḥtmt ḥ[t]y* [...], 660 (... *ḥtmjt ḥty*), 3078 (...) *ḥtmt ḥty*). The relief mentioned by E. Naville, *The XIth Dynasty Temple at Deir el-Bahari I*, EEF 28 (London, 1907), p. 40 n. 1, showing "the king, enthroned as Osiris, receiving the homage of the vizier Khety," depicts Mentuhotep, identified as (*n*)*swt bit(i) [NB]-ḤPT-[Rʿ]*, in Sed-Festival garb, receiving a procession of officials, the first two of whom are identified as (*i*)*t-nṯr mry-nṯr ḥ<t>y* and *mr ḥtmt* [...] (fr. 5130). Although the first title is attested for the *mr ḥtmt* Khety (see above), the fact that it is followed by a separate *mr ḥtmt* suggests that the individual in question is another Khety, or Khety followed by his predecessor. The relief is at a small scale and unlike the others in which Mentuhotep II's officials are depicted.

²³ *AJSL* 57 (1940), p. 147 = *Rise and Fall*, pp. 65–66.

²⁴ As noted by Arnold, *MMJ* 26 (1991), p. 45 n. 108.

²⁵ For the latter, see Helck, *Verwaltung*, pp. 83–84, 181; S. Quirke, "The Regular Titles of the Late Middle Kingdom," *RdE* 37 (1986), p. 118 and n. 39.

²⁶ The sanctuary of the mortuary temple bore a cornice inscription mentioning the king's first Sed-Festival: Dieter Arnold, *Der Tempel des Königs Mentuhotep von Deir el-Bahari 2*, AV 11 (Mainz, 1974), pl. 1. On that basis, Arnold has suggested that the temple's decoration was completed around the time of the Sed-Festival: *Tempel* 1, p. 66; 2, p. 20. The evidence assembled in the present article indicates that this inscription is more probably commemorative.

²⁷ Winlock, *AJSL* 57 (1940), pp. 146–47 = *Rise and Fall*, p. 65.

Sealbearer, Unique Friend, God's Father, Overseer of the Seal in the entire land, revered Khety, justified."²⁸ The offering-table bears two dedicatory texts: *imꜥḥ ḥr nꜥr ʿ3 (𓆎𓅓𓆏𓅓) nb ꜥbdw (i)t-nꜥr mry-nꜥr ḥty mꜥr ḥrw* "Revered by the Great God, lord of Abydos, God's Father and Beloved Khety, justified" and *ḥtp-ḏi-(n)swt ḥꜥ t ḥnqt kꜥ ꜥpd sꜥ mnḥt n mr ḥtmt imꜥḥ ḥty mꜥr ḥrw* "A royal offering of a thousand of bread and beer, beef and fowl, alabaster and clothing for the Overseer of the Seal, revered Khety, justified."²⁹ Although the inscriptions on these two monuments contain the name and titles of Khety I, the objects themselves belong stylistically in the early Twelfth Dynasty, or even later.³⁰ The statue's closest parallel, particularly in the treatment of the legs, is that made for Nakht, Chief Steward of Senwosret I, sometime during the reign of Amenemhat I.³¹ The offering-table displays a pair of basins linked by curving channels to the central spout, a feature well attested in Twelfth-Dynasty examples; antecedents in the late Eleventh and early Twelfth Dynasties tend to have straight channels.³² Stylistically, its closest analogues are a slab made for Ameny, vizier under Amenemhat II,³³ and another dedicated to Wah-ka I or II, nomarch of Qaw el-Kebir in the latter half of the Twelfth Dynasty.³⁴ It is quite different from the much simpler offering-table found at Khety's tomb, which has a large, \ominus -shaped central element covered with depictions of offerings in raised relief, two basins without channels, and no spout.³⁵ If the Karnak pieces

²⁸ A. Mariette, *Karnak 1* (Leipzig, 1875), p. 44 no. 12; 2, pl. 8j. P.A.A. Boeser, *Beschreibung der Aegyptischen Sammlung des Niederländischen Reichsmuseum der Altertümer in Leiden 3* (Hague, 1910), p. 5 no. 40, pl. 21 fig. 13.

²⁹ M. Kamal, "Journal d'entrée, no. 67858," *ASAE* 38 (1938), pp. 15–19 and pl. 3.

³⁰ Thus probably also not attributable to the *(i)t-nꜥr mry-nꜥr* Khety who appears in reliefs from Mentuhotep II's mortuary temple (see n. 22 above). I am grateful to Dorothea Arnold for discussing these objects with me, and for pointing out stylistic parallels.

³¹ Arnold, *MMJ* 26 (1991), p. 30. Nakht's statue (C 409) comes from his mastaba in Lisht (LN 493): J. Gautier and G. Jéquier, *Les fouilles de Licht* (MIFAO 6: Cairo, 1902), p. 100 and figs. 121–22; L. Borchardt, *Statuen und Statuetten von Königen und Privatleuten im Museum von Kairo* (CG 1–1294: Berlin, 1925), pp. 20–21 and pl. 67; G. Evers, *Staat aus dem Stein* (Munich, 1929), pl. 22. The statue of Khety is unfortunately headless: cf. Winlock, *AJSL* 57 (1940), p. 147 n. 31 = *Rise and Fall*, p. 65 n. 30.

³² See Arnold, *MMJ* 26 (1991), p. 9; H.G. Fischer, "Some Early Monuments from Busiris, in the Egyptian Delta," *MMJ* 11 (1976), pp. 165–66. For Dyn. 12 examples (from Lisht), cf. A. Kamal, *Tables d'offrandes* (CG 23001–23256: Cairo, 1909), nos. 23029, 23049–56, 23062, 23064.

³³ C 23027: Kamal, *Tables d'offrandes*, pp. 22–23 and pl. 12. For Ameny, see D. Franke, *Personendaten aus dem Mittleren Reich* (ÄA 41: Wiesbaden, 1984), p. 18 and Dossier 117; W.K. Simpson, "Lepsius Pyramid LV at Dahshur: the Mastaba of Si-Ese, Vizier of Amenemhet II," in J. Baines et al., eds., *Pyramid Studies and Other Essays Presented to I.E.S. Edwards* (EES Occasional Publications 7: London, 1988), p. 59.

³⁴ W.M.F. Petrie, *Memphis 1* (BSA 15: London, 1909), pl. 4. See Franke, *Personendaten*, Dossier 200.

date to the Twelfth Dynasty, they cannot have been made at the behest of Khety I, who evidently died in the final decade of Mentuhotep II's reign. They must then be posthumous donations to Khety's cult, or objects made for a later individual of the same name and titles, who evidently served under Amenemhat I and perhaps into the next reign, as a successor of Meket-re, probably following the service of the *mr ḥtmt* Intef, who was buried in Meket-re's complex and who may have succeeded him in office.³⁶

In his rise from *ḥtmt(i)* in Mentuhotep II's Year 41 to *mr ḥtmt* before the king's death, Meket-re seems to have bypassed the intermediate rank of *mr ḥtmtiḥw* "Overseer of Sealbearers."³⁷ In Year 41, this office was apparently held by the expedition-leader Khety (if the two titles *mr ḥtmww* and *mr ḥtmtiḥw* are the same), under whom Meket-re visited Aswan. In the Wadi Shatt el-Rigala graffito of Mentuhotep II's courtiers, it is associated with a man named Meru, who appears in at least two inscriptions: as *ḥtmti-bit(i) smr wct(i) mr ḥ:swt i3btt iḥ n=f wrw m ksw r r(w)t pr-(n)swt mry-nb=f mr ḥtmtiḥw mrw* "King's Sealbearer, Unique Friend, Overseer of the Eastern Hill-country, to whom the great come bowing at the gate of the King's House, his lord's chosen, Overseer of Sealbearers Meru,"³⁸ and as simply *mr ḥtmtiḥw mrw* "Overseer of Sealbearers Meru."³⁹ Since there is no clear evidence for two royal *mr ḥtmtiḥw* serving at the same time, a third graffito in the same group should perhaps be assigned to the same individual: it names the *mḥ-ib-*

³⁵ Winlock, *BMAA* 18 (1923), Part 2, pp. 14 fig. 4 and 17 fig. 7. The fragmentary offering-table made for Mentuhotep II's queen Tem has comparable features: Arnold, *Tempel* 1, p. 54 and pl. 25b.

³⁶ For the tomb of Intef see H.E. Winlock, *Excavations at Deir el-Bahri 1911–1931* (New York, 1942), p. 20 and fig. 2. Intef's title is preserved on a statue base from the tomb, identical to one made for Meket-re, with the inscription *prt-ḥrw t ḥnqt k3 3pd n im3ḥ ḥr nḥr 3 mr ḥtmt in-t=f m3 ḥrw* (MMA 20.3.961: MMA Theban Expedition drawing AM 691). Both bases originally measured ca. 55 x 35cm.

³⁷ For the offices, see Helck, *Verwaltung*, pp. 83–84 and 181; S. Quirke, *RdE* 37 (1986), p. 118 and n. 39. There is no direct evidence associating Meket-re with the office of *mr ḥtmtiḥw*. A fragment from his tomb has the partial inscription *ḥtmtiḥw n* (MMA 20.3.1002), but the context and reference are unknown. Winlock's reading of a Wadi Shatt el-Rigala graffito as *mr ḥtmtiḥw mikwt* (*AJSL* 57 (1940), p. 155 = *Rise and Fall*, p. 71) is questionable: see the copy in Petrie, *Season*, pl. 14 no. 409. It is not associated with those of Mentuhotep II's courtiers, and is evidently of a different individual; Meket-re's name is not otherwise attested without the *r* element. A [...] *ḥtmt mikti* appears in the mortuary temple reliefs (fr. 5332; see n. 22), perhaps identical with the [*ḥri*] *3 mr ḥtmt m* [...], who also occurs in the mortuary temple (fr. 345), and with the *ḥtmw mikwt* attested in the Wadi Shatt el-Rigala (Winlock, *AJSL* 57 (1940), p. 155).

³⁸ Petrie, *Season*, pl. 15 no. 459; Winlock, *AJSL* 57 (1940), pp. 148 fig. 10G, 150–51 = *Rise and Fall*, p. 68 and pl. 39G.

³⁹ Petrie, *Season*, pl. 15 no. 478; Winlock, *AJSL* 57 (1940), p. 151 and n. 50 = *Rise and Fall*, p. 68 and n. 40.

(n)sw m st=f nb ḥz.n nb=f mꜣꜥ ḥtmti-bit(i) mr ḥtmtiw mry “King’s trustee in all his places, whom his lord has truly favored, King’s Sealbearer, Overseer of Sealbearers Mery.”⁴⁰

If there was in fact only a single *mr ḥtmtiw* in office at any one time, and if the title of the expedition-leader Khety in the Aswan graffito was in fact equivalent to *mr ḥtmtiw*, Meru’s appearance with the same title in the Wadi Shatt el-Rigala graffito dates these inscriptions to Year 41 or later. The two dates of “Year 39” scratched next to the graffito depicting Mentuhotep II must then refer to the year of the event commemorated (the king’s Sed-Festival?) and not to that of the inscriptions themselves—if, in fact, they have any contemporary relevance at all. At any rate, Meru is firmly attested as *mr ḥtmtiw* in Year 46 of Mentuhotep II by a stela of his, which was probably erected in Abydos.⁴¹ The same title appears in the sarcophagus from his tomb (TT 240, MMA tomb no. 517), the easternmost in the row of early Middle Kingdom tombs in the north cliff of Deir el-Bahari (fig. 2).⁴² The date of Meru’s death is unknown, but could be as late as the beginning of Dyn. 12 on the basis of his tomb’s architecture and the orthography of his sarcophagus.⁴³ In that case, he will have been roughly the same age as Meket-re, under whom he apparently served for most of his professional career.

As noted above, Meket-re’s title of *mr pr wr* “Chief Steward” was evidently conferred on him late in life by Amenemhat I, since it is not attested before the Twelfth Dynasty. His predecessor in this office seems

⁴⁰ Petrie, *Season*, pl. 15 no. 474+472; Winlock, *AJSL* 57 (1940), pp. 148 fig. 10J and 152 = *Rise and Fall*, p. 69 and pl. 39J. The graffito of a *mr ḥtmtiw sbkw-ḥtp* is not associated with those of Mentuhotep’s court, and is probably later: Petrie, *Season*, pl. 17 no. 586; Winlock, *AJSL* 57 (1940), p. 153 and fig. 12 = *Rise and Fall*, p. 69 and pl. 38D. Meru’s name is not otherwise attested in the spelling *mry*, but the variant *mrwꜣ(i) ~ mriꜣi* is plausible: cf. Schenkel, *FmāS*, § 18. An Aswan graffito of Year 41 that Winlock assigns to Meru (Petrie, *Season*, pl. 8 no. 243; *AJSL* 57 (1940), p. 152) belonged to a man named *mrr-tty*: cf. Schenkel, *MHT*, no. 358. Winlock apparently changed his mind about the attribution, since it is not repeated in *Rise and Fall*, p. 69.

⁴¹ Turin 1447: Schenkel, *MHT*, no. 387. A good photograph can be found in L. Klebs, *Die Reliefs und Malereien des Mittleren Reiches*, AHAW 6 (Heidelberg, 1922), p. 22 fig. 14. For the stela’s origin, see Winlock, *AJSL* 57 (1940) p. 151 = *Rise and Fall*, p. 68; Fischer, review of W. Schenkel, *Frühmittelägyptische Studien*, in *BiOr* 23 (1966), p. 30. Meru does not seem to appear in the mortuary temple reliefs, although fr. 3650, with the inscription [...]*rw*, could attest to his presence among the other officials honored there.

⁴² R. Lepsius, *Denkmäler aus Aegypten und Aethiopien* (Berlin, 1849–59), Abt. 2, pl. 148c–d. The small tombs to the east of Meru’s belong to Dyn. 12 or later: Winlock, in *MMA Theban Expedition Journal* 3, p. 181; Arnold, *MMJ* 26 (1991), p. 48 n. 196 (for TT 316 = MMA tomb no. 518).

⁴³ The tomb’s architecture is discussed below. The sarcophagus displays the group $\overline{\text{𓆎}}$, otherwise attested only in Dyn. 12: Schenkel, *FmāS*, § 4; Fischer, *MMJ* 11 (1976), p. 9 and n. 33. I know of no other royal *mr ḥtmtiw* that can be firmly dated to the time between Year 46 of Mentuhotep II and the beginning of the Twelfth Dynasty.

to have been the Steward (*mr pr*) Henenu, a contemporary of Khety I. The tomb of Henenu (TT 313, MMA tomb no. 510) is similar in design to that of Khety, and lies to its east (fig. 2). His name (*mr pr ḥnnw*) occurs on linen from the tomb of Mentuhotep II's queen Miyet, in the king's mortuary complex, like that of Khety in the burials of Aashyt and Henhenet.⁴⁴ Henenu's tomb, like Khety's, commemorated the titulary associated with the final phase of Mentuhotep's reign, both on its entrance doorway and in at least one of the two wall-stelae flanking the entrance.⁴⁵ Besides his chief office, the fragments from Henenu's tomb record a number of his other titles, honorary and functional:⁴⁶ *ḥtmt(i)-biti smr wꜣt(i)* "King's Sealbearer, Unique Friend,"⁴⁷ *ḥri-tpi-[(n)sw]* "King's Confidant,"⁴⁸ *mr [ꜣb] wḥmw šw nšmt* "Overseer of horn, hoof, feather, and scale,"⁴⁹ *mr qbḥ pꜣwt ḥnn[t]* "Overseer of fowl that swim, fly, and land,"⁵⁰ and *mr nt[t] iw[tt]* "Overseer of what is and is not."

The title *mr pr* occurs throughout Henenu's tomb, as well as on fragments from his sarcophagus.⁵¹ On Stela A it has the unique form *[m]r pr ꜣ*, perhaps also *m[r pr ꜣ] m tꜣ r ḏr=f*.⁵² Unlike the Twelfth Dynasty's *mr pr wr*, the adjective here probably does not qualify the title *mr pr* ("Great Steward") but is to be read with *pr* alone—i.e., "Overseer of the *pr ꜣ*."⁵³ Hence, perhaps, the additional qualification *m tꜣ r ḏr=f* "in the entire land." Given the scope of Henenu's stewardship, this is evidently a forerunner of the later title *mr pr wr* "Chief Steward," which Amenemhat I bestowed on his successor, Meket-re.

The linen mark from Miyet's tomb indicates that Henenu, like Khety, came into office before the final phase of Mentuhotep II's reign.

⁴⁴ MMA 22.3.7, unpublished: MMA Theban Expedition Tomb Card 65, photograph MCC 133.

⁴⁵ The doorway is unpublished: MMA Theban Expedition Journal 3, p. 142, photograph M7C 133. The fragmentary stela (A) was published by W.C. Hayes, "Career of the Great Steward Henenu under Nebhepetre Mentuhotpe," *JEA* 35 (1949), pp. 43–49 and pl. 4.

⁴⁶ Primarily from Stela A (see preceding note). Additional sources (all unpublished) are noted separately.

⁴⁷ From the entrance doorway (see n. 45).

⁴⁸ On Stela C: MMA Theban Expedition Journal 3, 157, photograph M7C 135. Cf. also line 3 of Stela A: *iw [ir].n=f w(i) m ḥri-tpi=[f]* "He made me his confidant."

⁴⁹ Also on Stela C (see preceding note).

⁵⁰ See Hayes, *JEA* 35 (1949), p. 47 (c).

⁵¹ The latter are unpublished: MMA Theban Expedition Journal 3, pp. 147–48, photograph M7C 136.

⁵² Hayes, *JEA* 35 (1949), pl. 4 line 1 and right frame. Hayes's restoration of the latter as *m[r pr wr] m tꜣ r ḏr=f* is improbable: Berlev, in *Form und Mass*, p. 81.

⁵³ For the *pr ꜣ* in the Middle Kingdom, see O.D. Berlev, in B.G. Gafurova et al., eds., *Труды 20-й Международной Конференции по истории и культуре Древнего Востока*, 1 (*Proceedings of the Twenty-fifth International Congress of Orientalists* 1) (Moscow, 1962), pp. 143–44 and 145–46.

It is uncertain whether he is represented in the Wadi Shatt el-Rigala graffiti, although the traces of one partially erased inscription can be plausibly read as *mr pr ḥnn/w*.⁵⁴ From their titles, Khety and Henenu would appear to have divided the administration of Mentuhotep's personal and state property between them (see n. 3 above). Their common responsibility for property may account for the fact that both bear the title *mr ḥb wḥmw nšmt šw* "Overseer of horn, hoof, scale, and feather" apparently at the same time: in Khety's case, the title may denote the king's private livestock; in Henenu's, that of the state.

The titulary of Mentuhotep II in Henenu's tomb shows that he survived with Khety into the king's final decade. Like Khety, he may have been represented in the reliefs of Mentuhotep's mortuary temple.⁵⁵ In construction and decoration (discussed below), Henenu's tomb is somewhat earlier than that of Khety. For this reason, Henenu is probably not identical with the Steward Henu who led an expedition to the Wadi Hammamat in Year 8 of Mentuhotep III.⁵⁶ Since no other stewards of comparable rank are known from the late Eleventh Dynasty,⁵⁷ Henu seems to have been Henenu's successor as (Chief) Steward and Meket-re's predecessor. His tomb is not known, but it could be one of the anonymous structures in the north cliff—perhaps MMA 511, just west of Henenu's.

Apart from Meket-re, Khety, and perhaps also Henenu, two other high officials are known to have been honored by the inclusion of their names and figures in the reliefs of Mentuhotep II's mortuary temple. The first of these, the vizier Bebi, occurs only once, as the last of a row of officials; the accompanying inscription (the only one preserved) reads: *ṯṯ(ti) zṯb ṯṯiti bbi* "Vizier, Dignitary of the Curtain, Bebi."⁵⁸ The second, the vizier Dagi, is attested on several fragments, one of which names him as *ḥst(i) ḥ mr nwt ṯṯ(ti) zṯb ṯṯiti dṯg[i]* "High Official, Overseer of the Pyramid Town, Vizier, Dignitary of the Curtain, Dagi."⁵⁹ Since there is no evidence for two viziers in office at the same time during this period,

⁵⁴ Petrie, *Season*, pl. 15 no. 487; Winlock, *AJSL* 57 (1940), pp. 149 and 148 fig. 10C = *Rise and Fall*, p. 67 and pl. 39C.

⁵⁵ A [...] *ḥnr[t] ḥnnw* appears on one fragment (646), but a title with this element is not otherwise attested for the Steward Henenu.

⁵⁶ Couyat and Montet, *Hammâmât*, no. 114. Hayes, *JEA* 35 (1949), pp. 43 and 47(a); Schenkel, *MHT*, no. 426.

⁵⁷ For the Steward Shedwi-Ptah, under Mentuhotep IV, see Schenkel, *MHT*, 260 n. a.

⁵⁸ H.R. Hall and E.J. Lambert, *Hieroglyphic Texts from Egyptian Stelae, etc., in the British Museum* 6 (London, 1922), pl. 24; Clère and Vandier, *TPPI*, § 28r4; N. de Garis Davies, *Five Theban Tombs*, ASE 21 (London, 1913), p. 39. This is fr. 5341 (BM 116). The beginning of the inscription is lost.

one or the other must have died during the decoration of the temple—most probably Bebi, who is not known elsewhere.⁶⁰ Dagi appears with other members of Mentuhotep's court in the graffiti of the Wadi Shatt el-Rigala, as *mr ḥwt 6 wrt dꜣg ms.n nmt(i)* "Overseer of the Great Enclosure of Six, Dagi, born of Nemti."⁶¹ This inscription commemorates Dagi's career at a stage where he had assumed at least partial responsibility for the office of vizier.⁶² Since Bebi's name does not appear in the graffiti, it is conceivable that he had died and that Dagi was in fact vizier in his own right. If so, Dagi's inscription dates the Wadi Shatt el-Rigala graffiti to a time when the decoration of Mentuhotep II's mortuary temple (phase D) had been started but not yet completed.

Dagi is also attested as vizier in his tomb on the hill of Sheikh Abd el-Qurna, south of the causeway of Mentuhotep's mortuary temple (TT 103, fig. 1). The tomb was decorated in two stages, the second of which—probably begun after Dagi's appointment as vizier—involved

⁵⁹ Fr. 471: Davies, *Five Theban Tombs*, p. 39; Clère and Vandier, *TPPI*, no. 28r5. The beginning of the inscription is lost; the word *nwt* "town" has a "pyramid" determinative. Dagi also appears in fr. 5352 ([...] *zꜣb tꜣiti dꜣg*) and probably also fr. 1097 ([...] *tꜣ r dꜣrꜣf dꜣg[i]*).

⁶⁰ Fr. 5352, cited in the preceding note, may join with another (fr. 1496), which would identify the official preceding Dagi as *tꜣ(tꜣ) zꜣb [tꜣiti ...]*—perhaps honoring Dagi's immediate predecessor, Bebi. Whether this indicates that the two viziers were in office simultaneously, however, is debatable. For the question, see E. Martin-Pardey, "Wesir, Wesirat," *LÄ* 6, cols. 1227–28, with additional references there.

⁶¹ Petrie, *Season*, pl. 15, 455+456; Winlock, *AJSL* 57 (1940), pp. 148 fig. 10D-E, 150 = *Rise and Fall*, pp. 57–68 and pl. 39D–E. Winlock read the title as part of Meket-re's graffiti, and the name as part of graffiti E (Petrie 456). It is evident, however, from the facsimile (and photograph in H.E. Winlock, "The Egyptian Expedition, 1925–1927," *BMMA* 23 (1928) Section 2, p. 23 fig. 24) that Petrie's 455+456 = Winlock's D-E actually consists of three separate graffiti. The first of these, chronologically, constitutes the beginning of Winlock's E: *whmw n (n)swt rḥ.n nꜣr rnꜣf sd(m) šmrw mḥw mry-nbꜣf mꜣꜣ zꜣ-mꜣḥzꜣ* "Herald of the King, whose name the god knows, whom the Nile Valley and Delta hear, his lord's true chosen, Si-Mahes." For the epithet *sdm šmrw mḥw*, cf. W. Ward, *Index of Egyptian Administrative and Religious Titles of the Middle Kingdom* (Beirut, 1982), nos. 745, 748, 750. The name *zꜣ-mꜣḥzꜣ* is apparently otherwise unattested, but cf. the feminine *s(s)t-mꜣḥsꜣ* (MK): H. Ranke, *Die ägyptischen Personennamen* 1 (Glückstadt, 1935–77), p. 288, 27; the *ꜣ*-bird above and between the *mꜣ* and *ḥ* signs appears to belong to this inscription, inserted secondarily. Meket-re's graffiti (the beginning of Winlock's D) was inscribed next, above that of Si-Mahes (E); its signs seem to have been adjusted around the superlinear *ꜣ* of E. The two lines of Dagi's text were added last, to the left: the upper line is lower than Meket-re's, and the bottom line is higher than that of Si-Mahes. The spelling *dꜣg* also appears in the mortuary temple reliefs (fr. 5352: see note 59 above) and in Dagi's tomb (Davies, *Five Theban Tombs*, pl. 38, 1); the vizier Dagi is also depicted with a woman named *nmti* there (Davies, op. cit., p. 32 n. 8, p. 37, and pl. 34).

⁶² The title *mr ḥwt 6 wrt* is a common, and nearly exclusive, feature of the vizier's titulary: cf. W. Helck, *Untersuchungen zu den Beamtentiteln des ägyptischen Alten Reiches* (ÄF 18: Glückstadt, 1954), p. 73; W.C. Hayes, *A Papyrus of the Late Middle Kingdom in the Brooklyn Museum*, Wilbour Monographs 5 (Brooklyn, 1955), p. 74; Strudwick, *Administration*, pp. 186–98. Only exceptionally is it borne by officials other than the vizier: Strudwick, op. cit., pp. 178 and 186.

among other changes the application of a fine limestone face to the walls of the entrance corridor, as in the tombs of Khety, Henenu, and Meketre.⁶³ The sarcophagus from this tomb contains several paleographic features that point to a date at the end of Dyn. 11, if not in early Dyn. 12.⁶⁴ The only title recorded on this object, however, is *mr rwyt* "Overseer of the Gate," which has led to speculation that the sarcophagus was made either before Dagi became vizier, or for a different individual.⁶⁵ An official with the same title is attested in a relief from Mentuhotep II's mortuary temple, which could date, like the fragment mentioning the vizier Bebi, to a time just before Dagi became vizier.⁶⁶ Dagi's promotion from *mr rwyt* to vizier is conceivable, since the former title is often qualified by the designation *ḥtmti-biti* "King's Sealbearer," indicating membership in the king's inner circle of advisors.⁶⁷ It is less likely, however, that the sarcophagus was made before this promotion, given the late indications of its paleography noted above. It could conceivably have been decorated for another Dagi, perhaps a son of the vizier, but there is no evidence for a burial other than Dagi's in the tomb.⁶⁸ In this light, it is arguable that the sarcophagus was made for Dagi himself, just prior to his burial. The fact that it does not mention his highest title is disturbing, but not completely unparalleled: the sarcophagus of the

⁶³ Davies, *Five Theban Tombs*, pp. 28–30; Dieter Arnold, *Das Grab des Inj-jtj.f*, AV 4 (Mainz, 1971), p. 40; B. Jaroš-Deckert, *Das Grab des Inj-jtj.f*, AV 12 (Mainz, 1984), p. 131. Dagi's vizieral titles appear on the stonework: Davies, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

⁶⁴ Schenkel, *FmäS*, § 42f. Cf. also H. Willems, *Chests of Life*, MVEOL 25 (Leiden, 1988), p. 112. The sarcophagus is published in Lepsius, *Denkmäler 2*, pls. 147–148b; and P. Lacau, *Sarcophages antérieurs au Nouvel Empire*, CG 28001–28126 (Cairo, 1903 and 1906), no. 28024.

⁶⁵ Davies, *Five Theban Tombs*, pp. 38–39; Arnold, *Inj-jtj.f*, p. 40.

⁶⁶ Fr. 5333 ([...] *mr ryt d[s]g*), part of the scene noted in n. 22, above: Davies, *Five Theban Tombs*, p. 39; Clère and Vander, *TPPI*, p. 42 n. b. For the title, see Helck, *Verwaltung*, p. 65; H.G. Fischer, *Dendera in the Third Millennium B.C.* (Locust Valley, NY, 1968), p. 166.

⁶⁷ Quirke, *RdE* 37 (1986), pp. 123–24. Cf. the references in Ward, *Titles*, no. 236. The sequence *ḥtmti-bit(i) smr wꜣt(i)* appears on the exterior ends of Dagi's sarcophagus: Lacau, *Sarcophages*, no. 28024. Traces at the beginning of the inscription cited in the preceding note may also suit [*ḥtmti*] *bit(i)*. An early Twelfth-Dynasty holder of the title had the sequence *ꜣꜣ ḥst(i) ḥtmt(i)-biti mr rwyt*: A. Nibbi, "Remarks on the Two Stelae from the Wadi Gasus," *JEA* 62 (1976), pl. 9. The office of *mr rwyt* seems to be closely linked with that of the *mr ḥtmt*, to judge from a stela associating the *mr ḥtmt* Ikhernefret and the *mr rwyt* Inpi: H.O. Lange and H. Schäfer, *Grab- und Denksteine des Mittleren Reichs*, CG 20001–20780 (Cairo, 1902–1925), no. 20683; cf. Franke, *Personendaten*, Dossier 27. An official of the later Twelfth Dynasty was both *mr ḥtmt* and *mr rwyt*: Borchardt, *Statuen und Statuetten*, nos. 433–436; cf. Franke, *op. cit.*, Dossier 340.

⁶⁸ No family members are identified in the tomb other than the woman Nemti, who seems to have been his mother (see n. 61 above). A row of seated men, however, is commonly supposed to represent his sons: Davies, *Five Theban Tombs*, pl. 30 no. 1; W.C. Hayes, *The Scepter of Egypt* 1 (New York, 1953), p. 163 fig. 99 (MMA 12.180.243).

vizier Mentuhotep, who served under Senwosret I, and the tomb chamber of Siese, vizier of Amenemhat II, also bear no evidence of their owners' service as vizier—perhaps in deference to their successors—although at least the sarcophagus of Mentuhotep was made near the end of its owner's life.⁶⁹

Though fraught with uncertainties, the bulk of evidence thus suggests that Dagi initially served as *mr rwy*t during the viziership of Bebi and was promoted to vizier after the latter's death sometime in the final decade of Mentuhotep II's reign. Among the titles preserved in his tomb are several comparable to those held by the Chief Steward Henu in Year 8 of Mentuhotep III: *mr prwî-ḥd mr prwî nbw mr šnwtî* "Overseer of the Double Treasuries of Silver and Gold, Overseer of the Double Granary."⁷⁰ If this is of any significance, it may serve to date Dagi's death to the same year, at the latest. At any rate, he cannot have survived beyond Year 2 of Mentuhotep IV, when Amenemhat is attested as vizier.⁷¹

Dagi's probable date of death, between Year 8 of Mentuhotep III, at the earliest, and Year 2 of Mentuhotep IV, at the latest, has further ramifications for the date of the vizier Ipi, the owner of TT 315 (MMA tomb no. 516). On the basis of his tomb's position, just west of Meru's in the row of tombs lining the north cliff of Deir el-Bahari, Ipi has generally been dated to the reign of Mentuhotep II. Unlike the other tomb-owners in this row, however, Ipi is not attested outside his tomb, and the tomb itself bears no evidence of an association with that king.⁷² The tomb's position alone makes it unlikely that Ipi preceded Bebi as vizier. This leaves only two periods within the late Eleventh Dynasty when Ipi could have been in office: a few years between Bebi and Dagi in the last decade of Mentuhotep II; or a maximum of six years between the death of Dagi and the accession of the vizier Amenemhat, assuming that the latter was appointed by Mentuhotep IV. The former is improbable, not only because the vizier Ipi does not appear in the reliefs of Mentuhotep's mortuary temple, unlike Bebi and Dagi,⁷³ but also because the time involved would seem to be too short for the construction of his tomb. The latter

⁶⁹ See Simpson, in *Pyramid Studies*, p. 60. Cf. Willems, *Chests of Life*, p. 112. The sarcophagus of Ipi, however, bears his vizieral titles (MMA Theban Expedition drawings AM 138 and 774); L.S. Bull, "A New Vizier of the Eleventh Dynasty," *JEA* 10 (1924), p. 15. The sarcophagus of Mentuhotep will be published in J. Allen, *Funerary Texts from Lisht* (PMMA, forthcoming).

⁷⁰ Davies, *Five Theban Tombs*, pl. 32. For Henu's titles, see n. 56 above. For the titles, see Helck, *Verwaltung*, pp. 180–82; Strudwick, *Administration*, pp. 290–99.

⁷¹ Couyat and Montet, *Hammâmât*, nos. 110, 113, 192.

⁷² As noted by Arnold, *MMJ* 26 (1991), p. 36.

is conceivable, though equally limited in time. More importantly, however, Ipi's tomb bears several features that point to a later date for its construction.

Although most of the late Eleventh-Dynasty burials in the north cliff of Deir el-Bahari were accompanied by wood models, as was that of Meket-re, only the tombs of Ipi, Meru, and Meket-re contained separate chambers for such models, excavated in each case in the floor of the entrance corridor.⁷⁴ This feature alone places Ipi's tomb in a group dating probably (Meru) or certainly (Meket-re) to the early Twelfth Dynasty. His tomb also has a number of other characteristics found otherwise only in the tomb of Meket-re. Both complexes contain a contemporary subsidiary tomb excavated in the upper righthand corner of the courtyard: that of Wah, Meket-re's storekeeper (*mr st*); and that of Meseh, in the case of Ipi.⁷⁵ In the same corner, each complex also exhibits a small crypt in which the owner's embalming materials were interred.⁷⁶ This last peculiarity is linked to another significant characteristic of Ipi's burial: the presence of a canopic chest alongside the sarcophagus. Of all contemporary nonroyal Theban tombs, only that of Ipi and the coordinate burials of Meket-re and Intef exhibit this feature.⁷⁷ The separate burial of the viscera in a canopic chest seems to be a northern practice, adopted in the south only after the reunification and for nonroyal burials in Thebes apparently only at the very end of the Eleventh Dynasty or

⁷³ See Arnold, *MMJ* 26 (1991), p. 48 n. 195. An official identified only as [...]pi appears among those honored in the reliefs of Mentuhotep II's mortuary temple (fr. 3346).

⁷⁴ For plans of TT 315 (Ipi) and TT 280 (Meket-re), see Winlock, *Excavations*, pp. 54 fig. 6 and 18 fig. 2, respectively. The plan of TT 240 (Meru) is unpublished (MMA Theban Expedition drawing AM 4330). An antecedent exists in the burial of Mentuhotep II: Arnold, *Tempel* 1, pp. 45–46; 2, pp. 11–13. The feature is absent, however, from the tombs of Mentuhotep's queens, although that of Neferu (TT 319) has several small niches that could have been used to store models: Winlock, *op. cit.*, p. 102 fig. 8. The use of a separate chamber thus appears to have been initially a feature of the royal burial, and adopted only much later for non-royal tombs. Arnold's impression that "nearly all the large tombs in the northern cliff" had model chambers (*ibid.*, 1, p. 46 and n. 105) is mistaken. Of the "large tombs" (nos. 508–517), only that of Ipi (516 = TT 315), cited by Arnold, and Meru (517 = TT 240) have a distinct chamber like that of Meket-re. Nos. 508 (TT 311) 509, 512, 513 (TT 314), and 515 have none at all (MMA Theban Expedition drawings AM 759, 1285, 768, and 1287–88). No. 510 (TT 313, Henenu) has three, all apparently later excavations (MMA Theban Expedition drawings AM 766, 1295; Winlock, *MMA Theban Expedition Journal* 3, p. 146). No. 511 has a crude shaft with two chambers, sunk in the floor of its chapel (MMA Theban Expedition drawing 1283), probably associated with the six burials of early Twelfth-Dynasty coffins found in this tomb (MMA Theban Expedition Tomb Cards 1738–43). No. 514, a "gallery" tomb for multiple burials, has five subterranean chambers off its entrance corridor (MMA Theban Expedition drawing AM 1286).

⁷⁵ Winlock, *Excavations*, pp. 29–30 and 55. See also Arnold, *MMJ* 26 (1991), pp. 34–37.

⁷⁶ For Meket-re, see Winlock, *Excavations*, p. 18 fig. 2; finds from this cache are recorded on MMA Theban Expedition Tomb Cards 3484–87. For Ipi, see Winlock, *op. cit.*, pp. 55–56.

more probably in Dyn. 12.⁷⁸ As with separate model chambers, the use of this feature appears first in the burial of Mentuhotep II (though perhaps only in jars, without a canopic chest) and only much later in the tombs of court officials.

The distinctive architectural features that Ipi's tomb shares with that of Meket-re indicate that it was constructed, like the latter, at the beginning of Dyn. 12. If so, Ipi's service as vizier must be placed in the same period, presumably as the first vizier of Amenemhat I and successor of the vizier Amenemhat. Barring the discovery of another late Eleventh-Dynasty vizier, Dagi's tenure will then have stretched from the death of Bebi to the appointment of Amenemhat in the final years of Mentuhotep III or early in the reign of Mentuhotep IV. The careers of Dagi and the other officials discussed above, during the forty years from the last decades of Mentuhotep II to the first of Dyn. 12, are summarized in the table in fig. 3.

This proposed chronology, and the attendant discussion above, involves of necessity some revision in the picture of the Theban necropolis and its development in the late Eleventh and early Twelfth Dynasties. The two ends of the process are anchored by the tombs of Khety (TT 311) and Meket-re (TT 280). Meket-re's appearance as *mr ḥtmt* in the mortuary temple reliefs of Mentuhotep II dates the death of Khety fairly securely to the last decade of Mentuhotep's reign, and Meket-re's own tomb has been dated to the early years of Amenemhat I, as noted above.

⁷⁷ For Ipi, cf. Winlock, *Excavations*, p. 54 fig. 6; "The Egyptian Expedition, 1921–1922," *BMMA* 17 (1922), Part 2, p. 38 fig. 29. The chests of Meket-re and Intef are recorded in plan in MMA Theban Expedition drawing AM 645; Meket-re's was placed under the sarcophagus. All three are of stone. Winlock's published plan of Khety's tomb (*Excavations*, p. 69, fig. 7) shows a canopic chest beside the sarcophagus, but this is simply speculative. The original plan (MMA Theban Expedition drawing AM 723) records the box only as a reconstruction. No fragments of such a chest were actually found. The assumption that there was one is based on the general shape of the pit in which the sarcophagus was constructed. The photograph of this pit as found (M4C 113) shows only a crude excavation in one of its sides, with rough walls and an uneven floor, unsuited for the placement of a canopic chest. If it had any purpose at all, the feature is more probably a slot for the wood beams used to maneuver the large slabs of the sarcophagus.

⁷⁸ Two wood heads, probably from canopic jars, were found in the tomb of Mentuhotep II: Arnold, *Tempel* 2, p. 49 and pl. 62a. The bodies of Mentuhotep's queens, however, were buried with viscera intact: Winlock, MMA Theban Expedition Tomb Card 22. Of the non-royal examples collected by B. Lüscher, *Untersuchungen zu ägyptischen Kanopenkästen*, HÄB 31 (Hildesheim, 1990), pp. 96–113, those identified as pre-Dyn. 12 (mostly of wood) are predominantly from Saqqara (nos. 3–7, 14, 19, 23, 37–38, 40–41, 64, 68, 72, 76–78, and 103—the last of stone), and Haraga (nos. 95–97). Examples from Middle Egypt, less certainly pre-Dyn. 12, are from Beni Hasan (nos. 46, 48–49, and 79) and Bersha (nos. 82–85). Only one example possibly prior to the Twelfth Dynasty is known to have originated in the south, at Nag ed-Deir (no. 53). Another (no. 104) is of unknown provenience.

DECADE	<i>mr ḥtmt</i>	<i>mr pr</i>	<i>vizier</i>	<i>mr ḥtmtiḥw</i>	<i>other</i>
30-41 MH II	KHETY (I) (WSR, linen, TT 311; MT?)	HENENU (WSR, linen, TT 313; MT?)	BEBI (MT)	KHETY (II) (Aswan)	MT C-D queens' burials Sed-Festival
41-51 MH II	MEKET-RE (MT)		DAGI (WSR, MT, TT 103)	MERU (WSR, stela)	MT D
1-12 MH III		HENU (WH 114)			
1-2 MH IV + 5 YEARS		?	AMENEMHAT (WH 110, etc.)		
1-10 A I	INTEF (TT 280)	MEKET-RE (<i>mr pr wr</i>) (TT 280)	IPI (TT 315)		MT in Thebes Arnold, <i>MMJ</i> 26 (1991), 5-16

Fig. 3. Chronology of the high officials of the early Middle Kingdom. The following abbreviations are employed in the table:

- MH II-IV Mentuhotep II-IV
- A I Amenemhat I
- WSR Wadi Shatt el-Rigala graffiti
- Aswan Aswan graffito of Year 41
- MT mortuary temple: of Mentuhotep II (C and D = construction phases), and Amenemhat I
- WH Wadi Hammamat graffiti
- linen linen marks from the tombs in Mentuhotep II's mortuary temple
- stela Meru stela of Year 46.

The term "decade" indicates only the period in which service began or ended, not the full length of such service.

Khety's tomb is the westernmost of the three largest tombs in the cliff to the north of the mortuary temple (fig. 2). It was decorated in two stages. The statue chamber at the end of its entrance corridor was originally plastered and painted, in a "local" style analogous to—but different from—that found in the earlier tombs of Intef (TT 386) and Djar (TT 366).⁷⁹ The walls of this chamber and those of the corridor were subsequently lined with limestone and carved in incised relief, in a style most comparable to that used in the earlier tomb of Mentuhotep's queen Neferu (TT 319); Khety's painted sarcophagus chamber is also similar in style to that of Neferu.⁸⁰ The two stelae from the tomb, originally placed opposite each other on the walls of the corridor just inside the entrance, were decorated with the figure of Mentuhotep II in a fairly high raised relief similar to that of the final construction phase (D) in the king's own mortuary temple.⁸¹ Altogether, this combination of styles

⁷⁹ Jaroš-Deckert, *Jnj-jtj.f.*, p. 130 and pl. 10d. This phase of decoration bears Khety's name: Winlock, MMA Theban Expedition Journal 3, p. 96. For the date of Intef's tomb, see Arnold, *Jnj-jtj.f.*, p. 49. The tomb of Djar is being prepared for publication by Catharine Roehrig.

places the decoration of Khety's tomb in a period contemporaneous with the last two decades of Mentuhotep II—fully in accord with the historical evidence for Khety's career noted above.

The tomb of Henenu (MMA 510 = TT 313) is the easternmost of the three largest tombs in the cliff north of the mortuary temple. Very little remains of its decoration. A fragment of incised relief from the entrance shows the figure of Henenu in a style somewhat less attenuated than that of Khety, with thicker arms and waist more like those found on the stela of Meru from Year 46.⁸² The low raised relief of Henenu's Stela A is also more advanced than that of Khety's stelae, and stylistically comparable to relief from the sanctuary of Mentuhotep II's mortuary temple; in concept and execution it appears to be somewhat earlier than the stela of Intef, son of Tjefi, which shows marked Memphite influence and is perhaps the latest attributable to the reign of Mentuhotep II.⁸³ Taken together, these features indicate that Henenu's tomb was decorated a few years after that of Khety. This is possible historically, since Khety and Henenu appear to be contemporaries.

Other remains from the tomb, however, exhibit an earlier style. Henenu's Stela B, which was apparently placed opposite Stela A inside the vestibule of the tomb, was carved in a very high relief most closely paralleled in reliefs from the tomb of Neferu.⁸⁴ The few remnants of his sarcophagus show that it was rather crudely painted on the interior with texts and object friezes; the latter include human figures, in the "Upper Egyptian" style exemplified elsewhere by coffins from Gebelein and

⁸⁰ R. Freed, *The Development of Middle Kingdom Egyptian Relief Sculptural Schools of Late Dynasty XI* (Ph.D. dissertation, Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, 1984), pp. 55–60 and 164–65; Jaroš-Deckert, *Jnj-jtj.f*, p. 130. A sample of Khety's incised relief appears in Hayes, *Scepter* 1, p. 165 fig. 101 (MMA 26.3.354). For his sarcophagus chamber, see Wilkinson and Hill, *Egyptian Wall Paintings*, p. 67; Winlock, *Excavations*, pl. 16. For that of Neferu, see Winlock, *op. cit.*, pl. 13. For the date of Neferu's tomb, see Arnold, *Mentuhotep*, p. 19.

⁸¹ Freed, *Development*, p. 59. For the stela, see n. 18, above.

⁸² Unpublished: Winlock, MMA Theban Expedition Journal 3, p. 141; photograph M7C 132.

⁸³ Freed, *Development*, pp. 71–73. For Henenu's Stela A, see n. 45, above. Henenu's fragmentary stelae C and D (unpublished) were similar in style, though less well executed: Winlock, MMA Theban Expedition Journal 3, p. 152. For the stela of Intef, see Freed, *op. cit.*, pp. 75–78; H.G. Fischer, "An Example of Memphite Influence in a Theban Stela of the Eleventh Dynasty," *Artibus Asiae* 22 (1959), pp. 240–52; idem, "The Inscription of *IN-IT.F*, Born of *TFi*," *JNES* 19 (1960), pp. 258–68.

⁸⁴ See Freed, *Development*, pp. 73–75; Jaroš-Deckert, *Jnj-jtj.f*, p. 136. For the stela's placement, see Hayes, *JEA* 35 (1949), p. 43 n. 6. A photograph of the figure of Henenu from the stela (MMA 26.3.218) was published by H.G. Fischer, "Flachbildkunst des Mittleren Reiches," in C. Vandersleyen, ed., *Das alte Ägypten*, Propyläen Kunstgeschichte 15 (Berlin, 1975), pp. 299–300 and pl. 268a. No titles are preserved from this stela.

Assiut and in Thebes exclusively by coffins and sarcophagi predating the final phase of Mentuhotep's reign.⁸⁵ This evidence indicates that the decoration of Henenu's tomb was begun before that of Khety.

The tombs of Khety and Henenu lie on either side of MMA 509, an unfinished tomb of the same type, whose owner is unknown. No decoration survives from this tomb, other than the cartouche of a king [...]-*HTP*—presumably Mentuhotep II—inscribed on the wood door at its entrance.⁸⁶ Its facade and entrance court are larger than those of either Khety or Henenu. The owners of these three tombs were clearly honored with the most favorable position in the row, closest to the king. Khety and Henenu appear to have been roughly of the same generation, although Henenu evidently survived somewhat longer. Between them, they shared responsibility for the management of the king's property, private (Khety) and state (Henenu). In view of the relationship and rank of these two tomb-owners, it seems probable that the unknown official buried in MMA 509 was of the same generation and equally high office—perhaps, therefore, the vizier Bebi, who apparently died during the final decoration of Mentuhotep II's mortuary temple.

All three tombs lie east of the fieldstone wall that marked the eastern limit of the temple enclosure during its first two construction phases (figs. 1–2).⁸⁷ The courts of MMA 509 and 510 (Henenu) are aligned on an axis roughly parallel to this wall, suggesting that they were excavated during the same period. That of MMA 508 (Khety), however, is skewed some ten degrees to the east, even though it lies just to the east of the fieldstone wall. This indicates that it was laid out after the northeast corner of the “shield-shaped” enclosure wall, erected during construction phase C of the mortuary temple (figs. 1–2) was in place.⁸⁸ If Khety's court had been built on the same orientation as MMA 509 and 510, the sightline up to the tomb's facade would have been partly

⁸⁵ The fragments, which bear Henenu's title of *mr pr*, are unpublished: Winlock, MMA Theban Expedition Journal 3, pp. 147–50; photographs M7C 136–40. The human figures appear in one fragment representing a bull-slaughtering scene (caption *zft iw3*). Henenu's burial chamber was undecorated. For the “Upper Egyptian” comparanda, see G. Lapp, *Typologie der Särge und Sarkkammern von der 6. bis 13. Dynastie*, SAGA 7 (Heidelberg, 1993), §§ 306–308 (Assiut), 348–71 and 414–16 (Thebes), and 427–30 (Gebelein). The sarcophagus from Khety's tomb apparently had only horizontal dedicatory inscriptions around the exterior: Winlock, MMA Theban Expedition Journal 3, p. 86; drawing AM 713.

⁸⁶ Winlock, *BMMA* 18 (1923), Part 2, p. 15 and fig. 5 (in situ); Hayes, *Scepter* 1, p. 257 and fig. 163 (MMA 23.3.174). A few fragments of raised relief found at the bottom of the cliff were identified as coming from MMA 509, but the attribution is uncertain: Winlock, MMA Theban Expedition Journal 3, p. 139; photograph M8C 221.

⁸⁷ For the date of the wall, see Arnold, *Tempel* 1, p. 63; idem, *Mentuhotep*, pp. 8–9, 40.

⁸⁸ For the date of the wall, see Arnold, *Tempel* 1, p. 65; idem, *Mentuhotep*, p. 41.

obscured by the northeast corner of this wall.⁸⁹ Khety's tomb was therefore built later than MMA 509 and 510: if it had been the first tomb constructed in the row, it could easily have been located farther east, to better expose its court and facade to visitors coming from below.

Before the construction of Khety's court, MMA 509 clearly had the most advantageous position with respect to the royal mortuary temple. This relationship, added to the evidence from the orientation of Khety's court, indicates that MMA 509 was the first tomb constructed in the north cliff. Its owner—whether the vizier Bebi or some other high official—evidently died before it was decorated. The tomb of Henenu may have been licensed either at the same time as MMA 509 or slightly later; in the first case, its position would indicate that Henenu's rank was in some respect junior to that of the anonymous owner of MMA 509. The insertion of Khety's tomb between MMA 509 and the mortuary temple could indicate that the owner of MMA 509 had died, but it may also reflect the close association with Mentuhotep that Khety presumably enjoyed as manager of the king's private estate. In this regard, the relationship of his tomb to the royal monument can be seen as antecedent to that between the later tombs of Meket-re and his storekeeper Wah.

The tomb of Dagi (TT 103), Bebi's apparent successor, is not among those lining the north cliff; it lies instead to the south of the royal complex, on the north face of Sheikh Abd el-Qurna, directly opposite MMA

⁸⁹ MMA 507, to the west of Khety's tomb, is almost certainly later, and therefore cannot have influenced the latter's position. This tomb, which consists of a number of "galleries" off a central corridor, was the burial place of some sixty soldiers killed in battle: H.E. Winlock, *The Slain Soldiers of Neb-hepet-Re Mentu-hotpe*, PMMA 16 (New York, 1945), pp. 1–6 and pl. 1. The grading of Khety's court buried a stairway of mudbrick whose axis, projected, points to the entrance of MMA 507 (*ibid.*, p. 3 and pl. 1). Partly on the basis of this feature, Winlock dated the tomb to the reign of Mentuhotep II, and suggested that Khety's tomb was built later. The relationship of the stairway to the two tombs, however, is not certain. Winlock suggested that it could also have been built to facilitate the climb to Khety's tomb before the court was finished (*ibid.*, p. 3); the problem cannot be settled without further excavation. More importantly, the prosopographic evidence from MMA 507 points convincingly to a Twelfth-Dynasty date. Linen recovered from the tomb bore private names clearly modelled after those of Amenemhat I and Senwosret I: *sh̄tp-ib*, *h̄pr-kz*, and *z-n-wsrt* (*ibid.*, pp. 28–30, nos. 17, 23, 29, 30, 33); cf. G. Posener, *Princes et pays d'Asie et de Nubie* (Brussels, 1940), p. 32; H. de Meulenaere, "Contributions à la prosopographie du Moyen Empire," in *Bulletin du Centenaire, BIFAO* 81 Supplement (1981), p. 78; P. Vernus, *Le surnom au Moyen Empire*, *Studia Pohl* 13 (Rome, 1986), p. 113. For the historical implications of this redating, cf. H. Willems, "The Nomarchs of the Hare Nome and Early Middle Kingdom History," *JEOL* 28 (1983–84), pp. 98–99. Of the other large tombs to the west of Khety's, MMA 506 has a "gallery" substructure like MMA 507 (see Winlock, *op. cit.*, pl. 1), and is evidently of the same date; it was largely empty when excavated: Winlock, *MMA Theban Expedition Journal* 3, p. 66. TT 310 = MMA 505 is discussed below.

509 (fig. 1). Since the north cliff seems to have been originally designated for Mentuhotep's highest officials, this location may indicate that Dagi began the tomb before he became vizier. Evidence in favor of an earlier date exists in the tomb's plan, which is marked by a facade of pillars excavated from the bedrock and by a relatively short entrance corridor: the same features appear in tombs built prior to the latest phase of construction in the royal mortuary temple, such as that of the General Intef (TT 386).⁹⁰ In Dagi's case, this plan was eventually altered: a limestone facing was applied to the walls of the statue chamber and entrance corridor, and extended out the door to the two central pillars, thus lengthening the corridor and placing the tomb's entrance directly at the end of the court rather than behind a row of pillars. The changes effectively converted the original plan to that of the higher-status tombs in the north cliff,⁹¹ and were most likely initiated after Dagi's appointment as vizier.

The decoration of Dagi's tomb consists of painting and relief, both generally exhibiting a style more advanced than that found in the tombs of Khety and Henenu.⁹² Of all the Theban tombs of this era, Dagi's is the first in which the paintings show the same degree of northern, "canonical" influence as the relief, with figures more compactly proportioned than those of the post-unification Theban style.⁹³ The carved decoration reflects even more strongly the influence of Memphite traditions.⁹⁴ Although some fragments exhibit features reminiscent of earlier relief, such as that from Neferu's tomb,⁹⁵ others are more evocative of later styles. The meticulous carving of interior details displayed in the feathers and uraei of a winged sundisk is characteristic of the art of Mentuhotep III.⁹⁶ The relief of a row of seated men (usually identified as Dagi's sons) is lower and flatter than even the latest work from Mentuhotep II's mortuary temple, and more like that of the succeeding

⁹⁰ Arnold, *Jnj-jtj.f*, pp. 39–41. Arnold's classification of Meket-re's tomb among these, however, has been revised by the later study of Arnold, *MMJ* 26 (1991), pp. 21–32; for the significance of Meket-re's pillared facade, see *ibid.*, p. 22.

⁹¹ Arnold, *Jnj-jtj.f*, p. 40 and pl. 18 (PM 103).

⁹² Jaroš-Deckert, *Jnj-jtj.f*, p. 131.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ Jaroš-Deckert, *Jnj-jtj.f*, p. 131; Freed, *Development*, pp. 60–63.

⁹⁵ E.g., MMA 12.180.265: Davies, *Five Theban Tombs*, pl. 30 no. 10. See Freed, *Development*, p. 63.

⁹⁶ Davies, *Five Theban Tombs*, pl. 30 no. 3. Cf. Freed, *Development*, p. 180; *idem*, "A Private Stela from Naga ed-Der and Relief Style of the Reign of Amenemhet I," in W.K. Simpson and W.M. Davis, eds., *Studies in Ancient Egypt, the Aegean, and the Sudan: Essays in honor of Dows Dunham* (Boston, 1981), p. 72.

reign as well.⁹⁷ As in the later relief of Meket-re, the figures appear almost as if they were pasted onto the stone rather than carved from it; the detailed painting of interior features that characterizes Meket-re's relief, however, is absent here.⁹⁸

In its combination of earlier and later stylistic features, the decoration of Dagi's tomb undoubtedly belongs in the period between the death of Mentuhotep II and the beginning of Dyn. 12, and most probably in the reign of Mentuhotep III. This agrees with the historical evidence for Dagi's career as well as with the paleographic evidence from his sarcophagus, and makes it even more probable that his tenure as vizier extended from the final years of Mentuhotep II to the appointment of the vizier Amenemhat, perhaps as late as Year 2 of Mentuhotep IV.

The probable length of Dagi's service as vizier makes it unlikely, in turn, that the vizier Ipi was in office before the first years of Amenemhat I—a conclusion strengthened by the architectural features of Ipi's tomb, as noted above. In this light, however, the location of Ipi's tomb is seemingly anomalous: unlike the tomb of Meket-re, which dates from the same period, it was not constructed near the funerary monument of Amenemhat I,⁹⁹ but lies instead among the tombs of Mentuhotep II's high officials, in the north cliff of Deir el-Bahari (fig. 2). Moreover, it is situated just west of the tomb of Meru, who began his career as *mr ḥtmtiw* under Mentuhotep II.

From all indications, the two tombs (MMA 516–517) were built at roughly the same time. Although they lie at the easternmost end of the cliff, both were clearly designed along the lines of the earlier tombs of Khety and Henenu to their west (MMA 508 and MMA 510), and display the same orientation as MMA 509–510.¹⁰⁰ Both have a plain facade equal in size to those of Khety and Henenu, and much the same interior plan,¹⁰¹ but neither was finished to the same extent. Ipi's tomb was

⁹⁷ MMA 12.180.243: Davies, *Five Theban Tombs*, pl. 30 no. 1; Hayes, *Scepter* 1, p. 163 fig. 99. See Freed, *Development*, p. 63; idem, in *Studies in Ancient Egypt*, p. 71.

⁹⁸ For the relief of Meket-re, see Arnold, *MMJ* 26 (1991), pp. 22–23.

⁹⁹ In the valley south of Deir el-Bahari, formerly attributed to Mentuhotep III: Arnold, *MMJ* 26 (1991), pp. 5–16.

¹⁰⁰ The present format does not allow for consideration of the evidence for the date of the tombs that lie between Henenu's (MMA 510) and Ipi's (MMA 516). The location of these intervening tombs, however, does not necessarily indicate that they were constructed before those of Ipi and Meru. The eastward turn of the cliff face in this region, reflected in the axes of all but MMA 511 (fig. 2), could well have been undesirable for the construction of tombs oriented to the mortuary temple of Mentuhotep II. Winlock notes that the rock in this area is badly faulted, and could also have been avoided for that reason (MMA Theban Expedition Journal 3, p. 158).

¹⁰¹ Arnold, *Jnj-jtj.f*, p. 45 and pl. 20.

supplied with a rudimentary court; that of Meru exhibits only the excavated facade. Neither tomb was decorated. Meru's burial chamber is similar to that of Khety, lined with limestone and painted with texts; his sarcophagus, unlike Khety's, was painted on the interior with object friezes and texts.¹⁰² Ipi's tomb had only a sarcophagus and canopic chest, the former also decorated on the interior like Meru's.¹⁰³

Despite their obvious similarity to the tombs of Khety and Henenu, however, the tombs of Ipi and Meru are separated from the latter not only by distance but also by the reigns of at least two kings (Mentuhotep III–IV). As already noted, both are distinguished by features that date their construction to the first years of Dyn. 12, near the end of their owners' lives. Although Meru at least, if not Ipi as well, began his career in the final years of Mentuhotep II¹⁰⁴ by the beginning of Dyn. 12 his association with this king may have become less important than another relationship to the mortuary temple—the annual visit of Amun of Karnak “in his first festivals of the summer, when he rises on the day of sailing to the Valley of *nb-ḥpt-r*.”¹⁰⁵ Of all the tombs in the north cliff, in fact, only MMA 508–510 reflect a direct relationship with Mentuhotep II per se rather than with his mortuary temple. With the possible exception of MMA 511, the tombs east of Henenu's (MMA 510) may have been built where they are in order to allow their owners posthumously to partake in the benefits of Amun's annual visit to the temple. MMA 516 (Ipi) and 517 (Meru) may have been the first of these later tombs, to judge from their size and their location in the best area of the remaining cliff (see n. 100 above). Since they were built at about the same time, the precedence accorded Ipi's tomb probably reflects his higher official rank.

In the sequence of early Middle Kingdom Theban tombs proposed here, the tomb of Meket-re is an apparent anomaly. If, as suggested

¹⁰² The burial chamber is unpublished: MMA Theban Expedition drawings AM 793–96; photographs M6C 32–37, M6C 223, M7C 203. The sarcophagus (without texts) is reproduced in Lepsius, *Denkmäler* 2, pl. 148c–d; also MMA Theban Expedition drawings AM 797–99 and photographs M6C 38–42.

¹⁰³ Unpublished: MMA Theban Expedition drawings AM 138–40 and 773–74. For a photograph of the burial chamber with sarcophagus and canopic chest in situ, see Winlock, *BMMA* 17 (1922) Part 2, p. 38 fig. 29.

¹⁰⁴ For Meru, see the stela cited in n. 41, above. The fragment of relief cited in n. 73 above could have represented Ipi at the beginning of his career.

¹⁰⁵ Winlock, *Rise and Fall*, pl. 40, no. 1. For this festival in the early Middle Kingdom, see *ibid.*, pp. 86–90; Arnold, *Tempel* 2, p. 33. A relationship between the Middle Kingdom tombs in the Assasif and the festival was first suggested by Do. Arnold, “The American Discovery of the Middle Kingdom,” in N. Thomas, ed., *The American Discovery of Ancient Egypt* (Los Angeles, forthcoming).

above, it is contemporary with the tombs of Ipi and Meru, why are the latter two not located in the new royal valley south of the Assasif—or conversely, why was Meket-re’s tomb not built in the same row on the north cliff? Dieter Arnold’s study of these tombs has suggested a possible answer.¹⁰⁶ Some sixty meters to the west of Khety’s tomb lies an unfinished tomb that was apparently never occupied (MMA 505 = TT 310). Although it was evidently planned along the lines of MMA 508–510, with the same orientation to the temple of Mentuhotep II, its position is clearly less advantageous, and for that reason alone it is probably later in date.¹⁰⁷ Its substructure is also different from those of the tombs to its east: where the latter have a sloping corridor leading from the back wall of the antechamber to the burial chamber, the burial chamber of MMA 505 is reached via a deep shaft in the floor of the antechamber. Among the Theban tombs of the early Middle Kingdom, the clearest analogue of this plan is to be found in the tomb of Meket-re. On that basis, Arnold has suggested that MMA 505 may have been originally intended for the burial of Meket-re but was abandoned before completion in favor of a site closer to the new mortuary temple of Amenemhat I.¹⁰⁸

Apart from the architectural evidence, Arnold’s theory has much to recommend it. The identification of MMA 505 as Meket-re’s original tomb places it squarely in the sequence of tomb development already exemplified by the tombs of his contemporaries Ipi and Meru. Its plan indicates that it was begun after the latter two tombs—like the tomb of Meru, therefore, only toward the end of its owner’s life. This may account in part for its location on the cliff, though it also usurps the favored position of Meket-re’s predecessor, Khety, closest to the temple. The latter may have been the more important factor, since Meket-re’s new tomb near the mortuary temple of Amenemhat I has the same relationship to the royal monument. The fact that Meket-re was able to abandon MMA 509 and at least begin work on his final resting place in the south valley suggests that he lived somewhat longer into the Twelfth Dynasty than Ipi and Meru.

In the dynastic system that we have adopted from Manetho, it is often too easy to forget that the lives of real people lie behind the historical change from one dynasty to another. The beginning of the Middle

¹⁰⁶ Arnold, *Jnj-jtj.f*, p. 45 and 41 n. 162.

¹⁰⁷ This was Winlock’s conclusion: MMA Theban Expedition Journal 3, p. 64.

¹⁰⁸ Arnold dated MMA 505 to the reign of Mentuhotep II and TT 280 to that of his successor, Mentuhotep III (n. 106, above). The chronology has since been revised by the more recent study of Arnold, *MMJ* 26 (1991).

Kingdom, from the third decade of Mentuhotep II to the first of Amenemhat I, encompassed only some forty years—well within the lifetime of many officials, as the careers of Meket-re and Meru show. Of the high officials attested under Mentuhotep II, some, such as Bebi and Khety, probably did not outlive him. Others, however, seem to have belonged to a younger generation, whose political careers were only beginning in the final years of Mentuhotep II. These officials, including Meket-re, Dagi, and Meru, served through the end of Dyn. 11 and, in some cases, into the beginning of Dyn. 12. Such men, as much as the kings they served, were the founders of the Middle Kingdom.

