

# IMAGING AND IMAGINING THE MEMPHITE NECROPOLIS

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*edited by*

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# THE MEMPHITE HARÎM OFFICIAL TJAIRY

*Jacobus van Dijk*

Although René van Walsem and I have both worked for many years with the EES-Leiden mission in the New Kingdom necropolis at Saqqara, we somehow only rarely coincided. In fact, of the twenty odd seasons I was excavating there, it was only in 1986 and briefly in 2003, when the mission had become the RMO-Leiden University expedition, that we were there at the same time. We do, however, share a love of this inexhaustible and ever surprising source of exciting new material from all periods of Egyptian history, and I therefore feel confident that he will enjoy the following brief remarks on the owner of an as yet unpublished Memphite tomb from the early Twentieth Dynasty.

In 1991, Said Gohary<sup>1</sup> published a stray block found just north of the Unas causeway, where, he suggests, it may have been reused in a later building. The block shows a standing man in raised relief steadying a large object, the edge of which he appears to be clasping with his left hand, while his raised right hand is also supporting it. Although the bottom of the scene is missing, it is clear that the object must once have stood on the same baseline as the man holding it; it flares out towards the bottom and would seem to represent a large djed pillar, even though in all examples known to me of a standing figure supporting the djed pillar, the man is either carrying it on his shoulders or lifting it up above his head with both hands.<sup>2</sup> In front of the scene is a single column of text in sunk relief, giving the man's name and title, which Gohary reads as follows: [*sš nsw*] (?) *m<sup>3c</sup> mr.f r(š) n nsut hnty inb-ḥd imy-r(š) nfrw n nb tšwy Tšry ḏd n.f R<sup>c</sup>-ms-sw[-nḥt]*, 'The true [scribe of the king], his beloved, the mouth of the king, chief in Memphis, superintendent of recruits of the Lord of the Two Lands, Tjuroy, who is called Ramesses [nakht]'. He then briefly discusses the career of this official insofar as this is possible from only such a short inscription, suggesting that he may have been 'amongst the leading ranks in the army' and have 'had control over the new recruits, as well as the administrative staff, *sš nfrw*'. As Gohary subsequently points out, however, 'the determinative of *nfrw* does not appear to be either the seated man or the child, which are the determinatives normally used with *nfrw* meaning "recruits"'. He proposes to identify the hieroglyph in question as 'a seated female figure holding a *nḥh* sign, which is used for queens' names, in which case the word *nfrw* would mean "the beautiful ones" (i.e. the harim) and the official's title would be "superintendent of the harim of the Lord of the Two Lands".<sup>3</sup>

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


<sup>1</sup> S. Gohary, 'A Monument of the Royal Scribe Tjuroy', *BIFAO* 91 (1991), 191-4.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. J. Berlandini, 'Contribution à l'étude du pilier-djed memphite', in A.P. Zivie (ed.), *Memphis et ses nécropoles au Nouvel Empire: Nouvelles données, nouvelles questions. Actes du colloque international CNRS, Paris, 9 au 11 octobre 1986* (Paris, 1988), 23-33, where the various types are listed on pp. 25-6. See also J. van Dijk, 'The Symbolism of the Memphite Djed-Pillar', *OMRO* 66 (1986), 7-20; *id.*, *The New Kingdom Necropolis of Memphis: Historical and Iconographical Studies* (Groningen, 1993), 151-72. Gohary incorrectly describes the scene as 'an official standing with a staff in his left hand, while the other is upraised in worship or greeting'; the palm of the man's right hand is facing him, not facing away towards the god or person he is supposed to be worshipping or greeting.

<sup>3</sup> Gohary, *BIFAO* 91, 194.



Fig. 1. Block from the tomb of Tjairy, Saqqara, after Gohary, *BIFAO* 91, 193 (adjusted).

The published photograph is not very clear and is taken at an awkward angle,<sup>4</sup> but the determinative of *nfrw* is definitely neither  nor  and does indeed closely resemble . The photo also shows that the name of the official is to be read    *Tjiry*, not    *Tjry* ('Tjuroy'), although both are in fact variant spellings of the same name.<sup>5</sup>



At the end of his article Gohary expressed the hope that future excavations in the New Kingdom necropolis south of the Unas causeway might result in the discovery of the tomb of this man, and this did indeed happen soon afterwards, when it was discovered by a team of the Faculty of Archaeology of Cairo University. The expedition, which was initially directed by Soad Maher, started with a brief season in the spring of 1977<sup>6</sup> and had hoped to find the cemetery belonging to the nearby monastery of Apa Jeremias. Instead of Coptic monks, however, several Ramesside tombs were uncovered in the north-eastern part of the New Kingdom cemetery, and the work was discontinued shortly afterwards. In 1982-3, the EES-Leiden mission discovered the tomb of Tia, brother-in-law of Ramesses

II, which displayed a number of architectural features that were new to us at the time, and the proximity of the Cairo University tombs therefore provided a welcome opportunity to look for parallels. During those years, I frequently walked over to the then abandoned site to study the architecture and layout of the tombs and to jot down the occasional name and title of a tomb owner. In 1984, work in this part of


<sup>4</sup> Reproduced here as Fig. 1, but with the angles digitally manipulated.

<sup>5</sup> For the form *Tjiry*, see Ranke, *PN I*, 386: 24 (with correction in II, 398); many other variants are listed in *PN I*, 392: 15, 19, 21-2; 393: 6.

<sup>6</sup> See J. Leclant, 'Fouilles et travaux en Egypte et au Soudan, 1976-1977', *Orientalia* 47 (1978), 278.

the necropolis was resumed by the late Sayed Tawfik, who cleared a large number of Ramesside tombs and published an overview of them in an article in the *Mitteilungen* of the German Institute.<sup>7</sup> The tomb of Tjairy is one of them (ST 211), although Tawfik wrongly gave his name as <sup>8</sup>. The inscriptions in the tomb confirm that Tjairy was a harîm official; the title Overseer of Young Beauties is spelled  *imy-r nfrwt* and is supplemented by the title *imy-r ipwt-nsu m pr hnt m inb-ḥd*, 'Overseer of the King's Private Apartments in the Harîm in Memphis'.

The tomb of Tjairy is the only one in the large group of tombs immediately west of the Monastery of Apa Jeremias to be orientated along a north-south rather than the normal east-west axis, with the entrance in the north and the innermost cult-chapel in the south. This suggests that the tomb was a late addition to this part of the necropolis; the architects made use of the limited space available to them after the majority of Ramesside tombs had already been constructed.<sup>9</sup> That the Memphite architects sometimes had to adapt their plans to a restricted space is demonstrated by the example of the tomb of Mose in the Teti Pyramid Cemetery; as Jaromir Málek has pointed out, the curious layout of that tomb is almost certainly due to the fact that 'Mose must have been a relative newcomer in an already heavily built-over area'.<sup>10</sup> Tjairy's pylon entrance in the north borders immediately onto the Unas causeway, and the loose block published by Gohary had therefore not strayed far from its original location and may well have been part of the pylon gateway or a doorway further into the tomb.<sup>11</sup>

In the inscriptions on Gohary's block and in the tomb, Tjairy is given a second name,  *Rꜥ-ms-sw-nḥt*, a basilophoric court name (*Hofname*) of the kind often given by the king to Egyptian officials of foreign descent.<sup>12</sup> This appears to have been the case with Tjairy as well; some variant spellings of the name Tjary/Tjairy write it with the throwstick determinative, indicating a foreign name, and at least one person called Tjary had a son named Pakharu, 'the Syrian'.<sup>13</sup> It may have been a Hurrian name (Zilli/Zilija),<sup>14</sup> but a Semitic origin has also been suggested;<sup>15</sup> in either case, the etymology of the name remains uncertain.

<sup>7</sup> S. Tawfik, 'Recently Excavated Ramesside Tombs at Saqqara: 1. Architecture', *MDAIK* 47 (1991), 403-9.

<sup>8</sup> Tawfik, *MDAIK* 47, 406.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Tawfik, *MDAIK* 47, 407. The available space was further reduced by the presence of the gigantic Old Kingdom mastaba of Minnefer which, unlike the many other mastabas in the area, was not dismantled to make room for New Kingdom tombs.

<sup>10</sup> J. Málek, 'Two problems connected with New Kingdom tombs in the Memphite area', *JEA* 67 (1981), 156-65.

<sup>11</sup> Gohary, *BIFAO* 91, 191 suggests the block was part of the inner thickness of a left-hand doorjamb.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. W. Helck, *Zur Verwaltung des Mittleren und Neuen Reichs* (PÄ 3; Leiden/Köln, 1958), 273-4; T. Säve-Söderbergh, 'The Stela of the Overseer of Works Benya, called *Paḥkēmen*', *Orientalia Suecana* 9 (1960), 54-61 (59 n. h). On basilophoric names in general, see Ranke, *PN* II, 7; 241.

<sup>13</sup> T. Schneider, *Asiatische Personennamen in ägyptischen Quellen des Neuen Reiches* (OBO 114; Freiburg/Göttingen, 1992), 253-5.



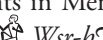
<sup>14</sup> W. Helck, *Die Beziehungen Ägyptens zu Vorderasien im 3. und 2. Jahrtausend v. Chr.* (ÄA 5; 2<sup>nd</sup> edn; Wiesbaden, 1971), 357, 367; W. Ward, 'Some Foreign Personal Names and Loan Words from the Deir el-Medineh Ostraca', in A. Leonard, Jr. and B.B. Williams (eds), *Essays in Ancient Civilization Presented to Helene J. Kantor* (SAOC 47; Chicago, 1990), 299.

<sup>15</sup> Schneider, *Asiatische Personennamen*, 254.





Fig. 2 Naophorous statue of Tjairy, Leiden (RMO AST 6), after Schneider, *Life and Death under the Pharaohs* (Tokyo, 1996), 80-1 (no. 93)  
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The National Museum of Antiquities in Leiden possesses a naophorous statue (Fig. 2)<sup>16</sup> of a man called Tjairy, whose titles are virtually identical to those of the owner of the Memphite tomb. He is  *imy-r nfrwt*<sup>17</sup> and  *imy-r ipwt-nsu wr n Mn-nfr* (var. *n nb-t'wy*), 'Great Overseer of the King's Private Apartments in Memphis' (var. 'of the Lord of the Two Lands').<sup>18</sup> On the statue, Tjairy's court name is  *Wsr-h'w-R'-nht*. This latter name refers to Sethnakht, the founder of the Twentieth Dynasty, who was long thought to have reigned for a mere two years, but for whom a fourth year is now attested.<sup>19</sup> Tjairy was obviously appointed to his high office under Sethnakht and continued in this function under the latter's son, Ramesses III, adapting his court name to that of the new ruler. Erman and Ranke once suggested that a Sixth Dynasty official changed his name from *Wd'-h'-Tti* to *S'nh-Pth-Mry-R'* after Teti had been succeeded by Pepi I,<sup>20</sup> but there is some doubt whether we are really dealing with the same person.<sup>21</sup> Be that as it may, there can be little doubt that in the case of the harîm officials Tjairy Ramessu-nakht and Tjairy Userkhaurenakht, we are dealing with one and the same man. Their birthnames are the same and they bear the same titles; furthermore, there can be little doubt that the statue of Userkhaurenakht in Leiden originates from Saqqara, which is also the location of the tomb of Ramessu-nakht. An early Twentieth Dynasty date for the Saqqâra tomb also fits perfectly with its position within the group of Nineteenth Dynasty tombs surrounding it, explaining its unusual north-south orientation.<sup>22</sup>

The naos of Tjairy's statue in Leiden contains a large Hathor emblem, rather than the more usual figures of Osiris or Ptah typically found in Memphite naophorous statues. Hathor's connection with women and sexuality is well-known; in Edfu she is called *nbt nfrwt*, as are her equivalents Isis in Philae and Mut in South Karnak.<sup>23</sup> It is therefore tempting to link Tjairy's choice with his profession: as 'Overseer of Young Beauties' he pledged allegiance to Hathor, the 'Mistress of Young Beauties'.

<sup>16</sup> Inv. AST 6 (= D 37); from the Anastasy collection and therefore almost certainly from Saqqara. P.A.A. Boeser, *Beschreibung der ägyptischen Sammlung des niederländischen Reichsmuseum der Altertümer in Leiden. Die Denkmäler des Neuen Reiches*, II: *Pyramiden, Kanopenkasten, Opfertische, Statuen* (The Hague, 1913), 6-7, Pl. VII (No. 16); H.D. Schneider, *Life and Death under the Pharaohs: Egyptian Art from the National Museum of Antiquities in Leiden, The Netherlands* (Tokyo, 1996), 80-1 (No. 93); H.D. Schneider, *Life and Death under the Pharaohs: Egyptian Art from the National Museum of Antiquities in Leiden, The Netherlands* (Perth, 1997), 72-3 (No. 93). Cf. J. van Dijk, 'A Ramesside Naophorous Statue from the Teti Pyramid Cemetery', *OMRO* 64 (1983), 49-60 (No. 12); *id.*, *The New Kingdom Necropolis of Memphis*, 113-32. I am grateful to Dr Maarten Raven for permission to reproduce the photographs from the Tokyo catalogue here.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. E. Reiser, *Der königliche Harim im alten Ägypten und seine Verwaltung* (Vienna, 1972), 73 with n. 5.

<sup>18</sup> In the word *ipwt* Boeser mistakenly gives a  $\triangle$  where  $\nabla$  is to be read, an error also found in *KRI* V, 6: 12 and 7: 6. The inscriptions were collated by me in May 1995.

<sup>19</sup> M. Boraik, 'Stela of Bakenkhonsu, High Priest of Amun-Re', *Memnonia* 18 (2008), 119-26, Pl. XXIV.

<sup>20</sup> A. Erman and H. Ranke, *Ägypten und ägyptisches Leben im Altertum* (Tübingen, 1923), 187-8.

<sup>21</sup> H. Kees, 'Zu Königsnamen im großen Namen', *ZÄS* 64 (1929), 92-3 with n. 2; cf. H. De Meulenaere, *Le surnom égyptien à la Basse Époque* (Istanbul, 1966), 1 n. 5.

<sup>22</sup> Tombs from the later Nineteenth and Twentieth Dynasties are rare at Saqqara, see J. Málek, 'The Tomb-Chapel of Hekamaetre-Nehet at Northern Saqqara', *SAK* 12 (1985), 43-59, esp. 47-8.

<sup>23</sup> *LGG* IV 74c (Hathor: *Edfou* V, 336: 8; Isis: H. Junker, *Der große Pylon des Tempels der Isis in Philä* (Vienna, 1958), 250: 6; Mut: cf. J. van Dijk, 'Over de tempel en de cultus van de Egyptische godin Moet', in J. van Dijk (ed.), *Onder Orchideeën: Nieuwe Oogst uit de Tuin der Geesteswetenschappen te Groningen* (Groningen, 2010), 74-5 with fig. 6; see [http://www.jacobusvandijk.nl/docs/Moet\\_Orch.pdf](http://www.jacobusvandijk.nl/docs/Moet_Orch.pdf).