

# **THE NEW KINGDOM NECROPOLIS OF MEMPHIS**

## **Historical and Iconographical Studies**

*by*

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Chapter Seven

### **The Ritual of Breaking the Red Pots**

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## 7 | The Ritual of Breaking the Red Pots

UNLIKE most of the walls in the Inner Courtyard of the Memphite tomb of Horemheb, its north wall and the northern half of its east wall were not occupied by scenes commemorating his military achievements and his special relationship with King Tut'ankhamun, but by scenes of a more traditional nature. Although most of the decoration of these walls has vanished, the remaining revetment blocks give a clear indication that the scenes which were once depicted on these walls dealt with Horemheb's funeral procession. Servant figures carrying chests and vases suspended from the ends of yokes and a large number of horses and chariots are all that survives from the main register on the north wall,<sup>1</sup> but parallels from other tombs, both at Saqqâra and in the Theban necropolis indicate that the rest of the wall must once have shown the dragging of the sarcophagus and the transportation of the extensive burial equipment to the tomb. The scenes began on the northern half of the east wall, where several houses are depicted which probably belong to the estate of Horemheb and may perhaps represent the starting point of the funerary procession.<sup>2</sup> Below the main scenes on these walls is a subregister depicting a large number (at least fourteen can be counted) of funerary booths, small rectangular buildings of a temporary nature, the entrances of which are flanked by palm branches. Fruits of an uncertain kind are suspended from the ceilings and both inside the booths and beside them are small portable tables heaped with all sorts of food-offerings for the deceased. A number of booths on the north wall contain four large jars of a type commonly used for the temporary storage of water, with a tall neck and a biconical body with a round base. In front of each booth is a shaven-headed man who displays various gestures of mourning. This man removes the jars one by one from their stands and smashes them on the ground so that their contents, probably water, flow out. Meanwhile a bull is being slaughtered and incense is thrown on a burnt-offering near-by. These scenes provide us with what is hitherto the most complete depiction of a ritual called *sg dšrwt*

<sup>1</sup> *MTH* I, Pl. 123 (scene no. 83); of the fragments grouped under no. 89 on Pl. 124 the second from the left adjoins scene no. 83 on its far left.

<sup>2</sup> *MTH* I, Pl. 125, 124 (scene nos. 88 and 86).

"breaking the *dsrt*-vessels".

*Sḏ dsrwt* is the Egyptian term for a ritual consisting in the destruction of pottery vases by crushing them with a pestle,<sup>3</sup> by dashing two of them against each other,<sup>4</sup> or by smashing them on the ground.<sup>5</sup> Our understanding of this ritual is hampered by the fact that the archaeological evidence on the one hand, and the textual and iconographical evidence on the other, though doubtless related, are of a different nature and seem to refer to a different ritual setting in each case. The two categories are therefore best discussed separately.



Fig. 28. The group *sḏ dsrwt* in Pyr. 249b.

From the Pyramid of Unas, Saqqāra.

The archaeological evidence consists mainly of a number of groups of figurines<sup>6</sup> depicting enemies and fragments of deliberately broken pottery vessels inscribed with the so-called Execration Texts (*Ächtungstexte*). Eleven groups have so far been found, varying in date from the Fifth Dynasty to the Late Period; in addition to these there are some 25 isolated figurines in various museum collections.<sup>7</sup> Only two of the groups consist of inscribed potsherds, both dated to the middle of Dynasty XII, i.e. a group allegedly originating "from a tomb" on the Theban west bank<sup>8</sup> and another found in

<sup>3</sup> Pyr. 249b [M]; cf. K. Sethe, *Die Ächtung feindlicher Fürsten, Völker und Dinge auf altägyptischen Tongefäßscherben des Mittleren Reiches* (Berlin, 1926), 20.

<sup>4</sup> H. Brunner, *Die südlichen Räume des Tempels von Luxor* (Mainz am Rhein, 1977), Pl. 71.

<sup>5</sup> L. Borchardt, "Bilder des 'Zerbrechens der Krüge'", *ZAS* 64 (1929), 12-16.

<sup>6</sup> Usually of sun-dried clay, sometimes of limestone or even alabaster.

<sup>7</sup> See the list given by G. Posener, *Cinq figurines d'envoûtement* (Cairo, 1987), 1-6. An additional figurine was found at 'Ayn Aşil (Balat) in Dakhla Oasis (end of the Old Kingdom), see L. L. Giddy, *ASAE* 69 (1983), 107; P. Posener-Krieger, *BIFAO* 82 (1982), 384, Pl. lxx; N.-C. Grimal, "Les 'noyés' de Balat", in *Mélanges offerts à Jean Vercoutter* (Paris, 1985), 111-121; cf. Posener, *op. cit.*, 6 n. 6.

<sup>8</sup> Sethe, *op. cit.*, 20-21, who connected the find with the ritual mentioned in Pyr. 244 (see below), surmised that it derived from the tomb or mortuary temple of one of the kings of Dynasty XI, but this possibility is ruled out by the Twelfth Dynasty date of the find, see Posener, *Princes et pays de l'Asie et de la Nubie* (Brussels, 1940), 35 n. 1; id., *Kush* 6 (1958), 43.

the desert near the Middle Kingdom fortresses of Mirgissa.<sup>9</sup> The remaining groups consist of figurines depicting foreign or Egyptian enemies, whose hands have usually been bound behind their backs, and who in most cases have been carefully identified by name and filiation. Most of these were buried loose in the sand, but occasionally they were stored together in a jar. Spell 23 of the Coffin Texts gives a description of an execution which agrees well with this ritual burial: "You shall not be interrogated, you shall not be arrested, you shall not be imprisoned, you shall not be fettered, you shall not be put under guard, you shall not be taken to the place of execution to which one takes rebels, sand shall not be thrown over your face".<sup>10</sup>

The connection between sherds and figurines is proven not only by the fact that both are inscribed with the same execration formulae, but also by the Mirgissa find, which in addition to a large number of sherds contained three limestone figurines. Most of the finds derive from cemeteries (Giza, Abusir, Saqqara, Lisht, Thebes), but they do not seem to be related to one particular burial. Four jars each containing a vast quantity of small figurines as well as one larger figure were found buried in four different locations which together formed a line running from east to north-west in the northern part of the necropolis of Giza. According to hieratic dockets on the jars they had been deposited there at short intervals, within a period of two months during the reign of an unknown king of Dynasty VI.<sup>11</sup> Other groups and individual figurines were found near the Egyptian fortresses in the region of the Second Cataract (Semna West, Uronarti, Mirgissa) and near the Saite fortress at Tell Defenneh in the Eastern Delta.

The Mirgissa find presents a particularly interesting case. Here the execration deposit was located in the desert surrounding the Middle Kingdom fortifications. Apart from potsherds and figurines several more objects were found, including figures of animals, a flint knife, and human remains, and it has been suggested that an actual human sacrifice was part of the execration ritual here,<sup>12</sup> a sacrifice more commonly substituted by the symbolic destruction of figurines or pottery vessels. Nothing is known about the

<sup>9</sup> Y. Koenig, "Les textes d'envoûtement de Mirgissa", *RdE* 41 (1990), 101-125.

<sup>10</sup> *CT* I, 70b-71a.

<sup>11</sup> Probably Pepi II; see J. Osing, *MDAIK* 32 (1976), 154-155.

<sup>12</sup> A. Vila, in *L'homme hier et aujourd'hui. Recueil d'études en hommage à André Leroi-Gourhan* (Paris, 1973), 625-639.

occasion that prompted the enactment of the ritual. Perhaps it took place when an area of the desert had to be "conquered" from and protected against the powers of chaos for the laying out of a cemetery or the building of a fortress.<sup>13</sup> As such the figurines may be comparable to the large limestone statues of bound prisoners found in the precincts of Old Kingdom pyramid temples<sup>14</sup> or indeed to the reliefs depicting similar prisoners on the exterior walls of New Kingdom temples.<sup>15</sup>

The "execution" of figurines of enemies is well known from Late Period rituals such as the "Book of Overthrowing Seth and His Gang"<sup>16</sup> or the "Book of Overthrowing Apophis"<sup>17</sup> and from representations in Graeco-Roman temples.<sup>18</sup> Only one group of figurines of Late Period date has so far been discovered, although a few more individual pieces of uncertain provenance exist in museum collections.<sup>19</sup> The group consists of "some thirty or forty" uninscribed figurines of limestone, many of which were broken; they were found in the desert to the east of El Kasr el Bint el Yehudi, the fortress of Psammetichus I at Tell Defenneh.<sup>20</sup> The paucity of actual finds from the Late Period and indeed of more finds from earlier times is probably due to the frequent use of figurines of (red) wax,<sup>21</sup> wood,<sup>22</sup> and other perishable materials, or of drawings on papyrus<sup>23</sup> which, at least in Late Period

<sup>13</sup> In that case the execration deposit would supplement the foundation deposit whose principal function was "to delimit and purify the sacred area within which the temple or tomb was built", (James M. Weinstein, *Foundation Deposits in Ancient Egypt*, diss. University of Pennsylvania 1973, 433). Contrary to Mesopotamian foundation deposits, which included prophylactic figurines, their Egyptian counterparts had no apparent protective function (*op. cit.*, 434-435).

<sup>14</sup> J.-P. Lauer/J. Leclant, *RdE* 21 (1969), 55-62; M. Verner, *RdE* 36 (1985), 145-152.

<sup>15</sup> E.g. on the façade of the eastern high gate of Medînet Habu (*Medinet Habu* VIII, Pl. 600); cf. W. J. Murnane, *United With Eternity* (Chicago/Cairo, 1980), 6-7.

<sup>16</sup> *Urk.* VI, 1-59.

<sup>17</sup> Pap. Bremner-Rhind, 22: 1-32, 12. See also Pap. BM 10081, 35: 21 (S. Schott, *ZÄS* 65 [1930], 35-42); cf. Posener, *Annuaire de Collège de France*, 74<sup>e</sup> année (1973-1974), 397-405; 75<sup>e</sup> année (1974-1975), 405-412.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. J. Capart, in: Posener, *Princes et pays*, 6-7.

<sup>19</sup> Posener, *Cinq figurines d'envoûtement*, 4, 6.

<sup>20</sup> W. M. F. Petrie, *Tanis* II (and) *Nebeshah (Am) and Defenneh (Tahpanhes)* (London, 1888), 73, Pl. xl: 8-13. They were found in the desert "beyond 29", for which see Petrie's Pl. xlv.

<sup>21</sup> *Urk.* VI, 5: 6; 37: 3; Pap. Bremner-Rhind, 23: 6-7 etc. See for the use of wax in destructive rituals M. J. Raven, *OMRO* 64 (1983), 24-26.

<sup>22</sup> *Urk.* VI, 5: 11; Pap. Jumilhac, 18: 9-10.

rituals, were "fettered, spat upon four times, trampled with the left foot, pierced with a spear, cut with a knife, thrown into the fire, spat upon several more times while in the fire"<sup>24</sup> and thus effectively destroyed. No reference is made to the breaking of pottery vessels in these late texts, which may indicate that the practice had by then been abandoned.

Textual references to a ritual called *sd' dšrwt* almost all derive from a funerary context. The earliest example is found in Spell 244 of the Pyramid Texts, where the ritual accompanies an offering presented to the king "in order that he may be strong and that he (i.e. the enemy<sup>25</sup>) may fear him".<sup>26</sup> It is also occasionally mentioned at the end of the offering-list in some Old and Middle Kingdom tombs,<sup>27</sup> often together with the rite called *inlt rd*.<sup>28</sup> The *dšrt*-vessels destroyed at the end of the offering ritual are undoubtedly the same as those occurring in the offering-list itself, where they are always said to contain water (*mw dšrt* or *dšrt nt mw*).<sup>29</sup> "Those who carry the *dšrt*-vessels" (*hryw dšrwt*) are also mentioned in the Funerary Liturgy of Pap. Ramesseum E.<sup>30</sup> That the breaking of the red vessels was not restricted to funerals is shown by a unique scene in the temple of Luxor. On the wall enclosing the door which gives access to the offering room for the cult-image of Amun, Amenhotep III is depicted breaking two *dšrt*-vessels for the god by dashing them against each other.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>23</sup> *Urk* VI, 5: 9-10, etc.

<sup>24</sup> *Urk* VI, 5: 12-19; 37. 13ff.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. *Pyr.* 113a-b; 614c.

<sup>26</sup> *Pyr* 249a-b

<sup>27</sup> P. Duell, *The Mastaba of Mereruka I* (Chicago, 1938), Pl. 67; A. M. Blackman, *The Rock Tombs of Meir* IV (London, 1924), Pl. xviii: 1; W. M. F. Petrie, *Deshasheh* (London, 1898), Pl. xxix, unpublished tomb of *Wnls-(h)j-šst.f* at Saqqāra, see W. Barta, *Die altägyptische Opferliste von der Frühzeit bis zur griechisch-römischen Epoche* (Berlin, 1963), 87. Cf. also *CT* VII, 128f-k.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. for this rite Gardiner, in: N. de G. Davies/A. H. Gardiner, *The Tomb of Amenemhät (No. 82)* (London, 1915), 93-94; H. Altenmüller, "Eine neue Deutung der Zeremonie des *inlt rd*", *JEA* 57 (1971), 146-153.

<sup>29</sup> Barta, *Opferliste*, index s.v. *dšrt*. In the New Kingdom offering-list of the Daily Temple Ritual one *dšrt*-vessel is sometimes said to contain "Lower-Egyptian wine", *ibid.*, 141, 143.

<sup>30</sup> Gardiner, *JEA* 41 (1955), 16, Pl. vi (c).

<sup>31</sup> A. Moret, "Le rite de briser les vases rouges au temple de Louxor", *RdE* 3 (1938), 167; Brunner, *Die südliche Räume des Tempels von Luxor*, Pl. 16, 71, and see pp. 79ff. for the function of this room as "Speisetischsaal für das Kultbild". Whether the scene in E. Naville, *The Festival*

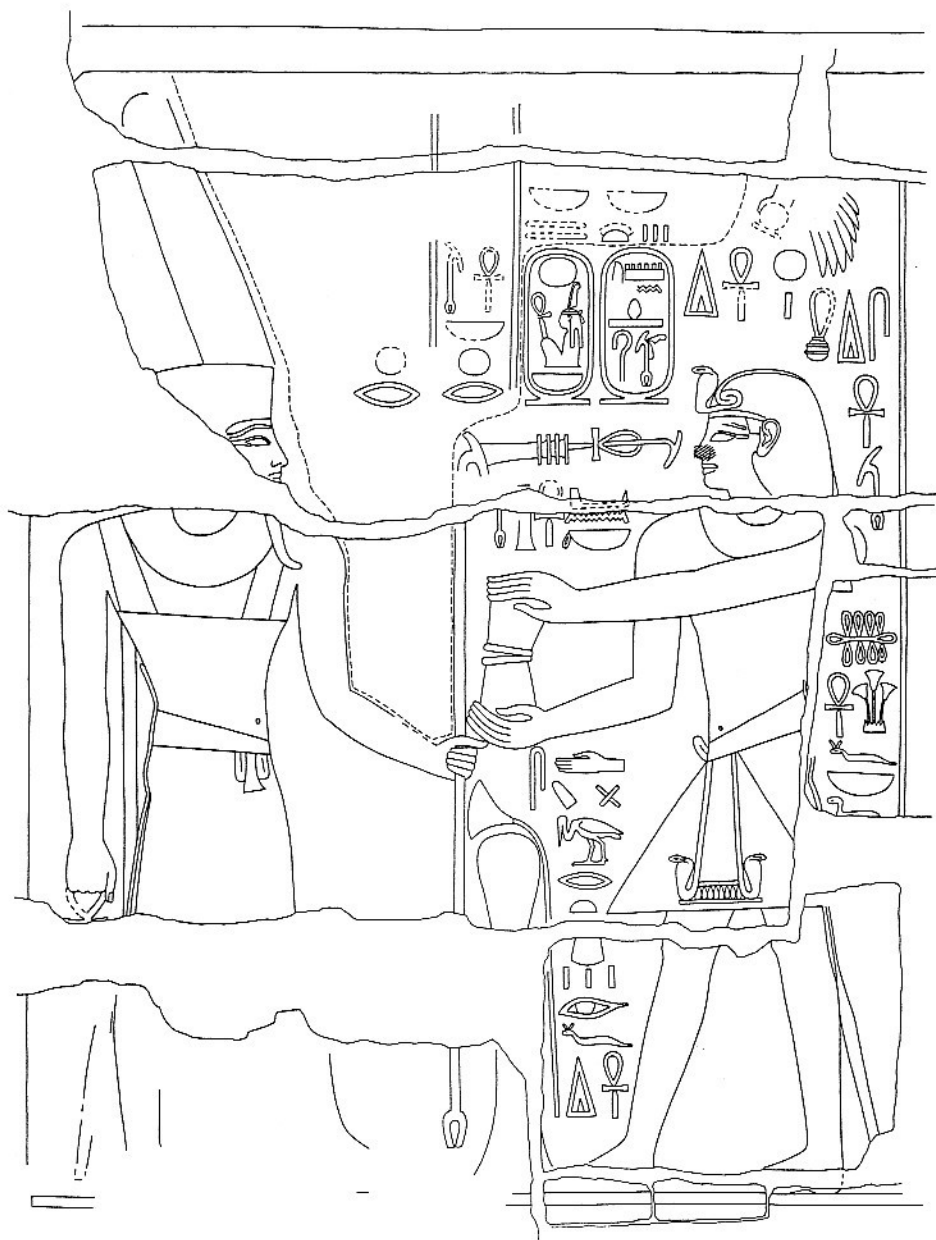


Fig. 29. Amenhotep III breaking the red pots for Amun.

Reproduced from H. Brunner, *Die südlichen Räume des Tempels von Luxor*, Pl. 71.

*Hall of Osorkon II in the Great Temple of Bubastis* (London, 1892), Pl. xxiv: 9 has anything to do with the ritual (cf. Borchardt, *op. cit.*, 16) is very uncertain.

Four *nmst* and four *dsrt*-jars were used in the Ritual of Opening the Mouth<sup>32</sup> and these are often represented in the so-called *frises d'objets* on Middle Kingdom coffins.<sup>33</sup> Strictly speaking the term *dsrt* refers to a wide conical pot with a round base,<sup>34</sup> but already in Pyr. 249b funnel-necked jars are shown among the determinatives of *dsrwt*<sup>35</sup> and the term therefore could probably refer to any vessel showing the red colour (*dsr*) of the earthenware from which it was made.<sup>36</sup> This is also evident from the iconographical material which, apart from the Luxor scene already mentioned, consists exclusively of representations in New Kingdom tombs, mainly in the Memphite necropolis.

Most of the Memphite examples are found on loose blocks containing only small sections of scenes which may at least in some cases originally have shown the complete ritual, and not all of these blocks show the actual breaking of the jars. The following examples, however, do:

1. Horemheb, *in situ* on the north and east walls of the Inner Courtyard of his Memphite tomb (see below p. 187, Fig. 31); an additional fragment in Munich, ÄS 7089, temp. Tut'ankhamun. Martin, *MTH* I, 100-103, Pl. 118-124 (scene nos. 83 and 86); S. Schoske, in: *Münchner Jahrbuch der bildende Kunst* 3. Folge, Bd. 40 (1989), 229, Fig. 6; C.-B. Arnst, *BSEG* 15 (1991), 5-8, Fig. 1-2.
2. Ptahemhat Ty, Berlin 12411, the so-called "Berliner Trauerrelief", temp. Tut'ankhamun-Ay. L. Borchardt, *ZÄS* 64 (1929), Pl. i: 2; PM III<sup>2</sup>/2, 711-712; C.-B. Arnst, in K.-H. Priese (ed.), *Ägyptisches Museum* (Mainz, 1991), 136-138 (no. 82). From an unknown location at Saqqâra, probably from the vicinity of the Bubastieion, i. e. from the Teti Pyramid Cemetery.<sup>37</sup>
3. Ipula, Cairo TN 21.6.24.16, Late Dynasty XVIII. J. E. Quibell/A. G. K.

<sup>32</sup> E. Otto, *Das ägyptische Mundöffnungsritual* II (Wiesbaden, 1960), 37-44.

<sup>33</sup> G. Jéquier, *Les frises d'objets des sarcophages du Moyen Empire* (Cairo, 1921), 311-312.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar*, Sign-list, W 11 and W 13; *Wb* V, 493.

<sup>35</sup> See A. Piankoff, *The Pyramid of Unas* (Princeton, 1968), Pl. 37; cf. also W. V. Davies, *JEA* 62 (1976), 177.

<sup>36</sup> Jéquier, *op. cit.*, 311. Although *dsrt*-vessels of gold or other metals were sometimes made for permanent use in the temple (cf. H. Kees, *Der Opfertanz des ägyptischen Königs* [Leipzig, 1912], 55-56), there is no evidence to suggest that the ritual originally consisted of the noisy destruction of red copper vessels in order to strike terror into the enemies (thus Dorothea Arnold, *LA* II, 487).

<sup>37</sup> Cf. A.-P. Zivie, "La localisation de la tombe du grand-prêtre de Ptah Ptahemhat-Ty", *RdE* 35 (1984), 200-203.



Hayter, *Teti Pyramid, North Side* (Cairo, 1927), Pl. 10; Borchardt, *op. cit.*, Pl. I: 3; PM III<sup>2</sup>/2, 555; C.-B. Arnst, *Altorientalische Forschungen* 16 (1989), 207-208, Pl. 3. From a tomb in the Teti Pyramid Cemetery.

4. Kha'emwaset, Cairo TN 12.6.2420, Late Dyn. XVIII - early Dyn. XIX. M. Werbrouck, *Les pleureuses dans l'Égypte ancienne* (Brussels, 1938), Pl. xxxiv; Borchardt, *op. cit.*, Pl. I: 4; PM III<sup>2</sup>/1, 304. From a tomb at Kafr el-Batrân.<sup>38</sup>

5. Hormin, Cairo JE 8374, temp. Seti I. Werbrouck, *Les pleureuses*, Pl. xxxv; Borchardt, *op. cit.*, p. 15, Fig. 2; PM III<sup>2</sup>/2, 665. From Lepsius's tomb No. 29, west of the tomb of Horemheb.

6. Kyiry, Cairo JE 43275, Ramesside. Quibell, *The Monastery of Apa Jeremias* (Cairo, 1912), Pl. lxxx: 4; Borchardt, *op. cit.*, p. 15, Fig. 2; PM III<sup>2</sup>/2, 668. From the area west of the Monastery of Apa Jeremias.

The following incomplete or abbreviated scenes show parts of the ritual, including in some cases an episode involving emptying the jars onto the ground, but not the actual breaking of the jars:

7. Maya, Berlin 2088-9, temp. Tut'ankhamun. LD III 242b; PM III<sup>2</sup>/2, 662 (5), see E. Graefe, *MDAIK* 31 (1975), 200 with n. 1 and 202 fig. 6b. From the south wall of the Inner Courtyard of his tomb.

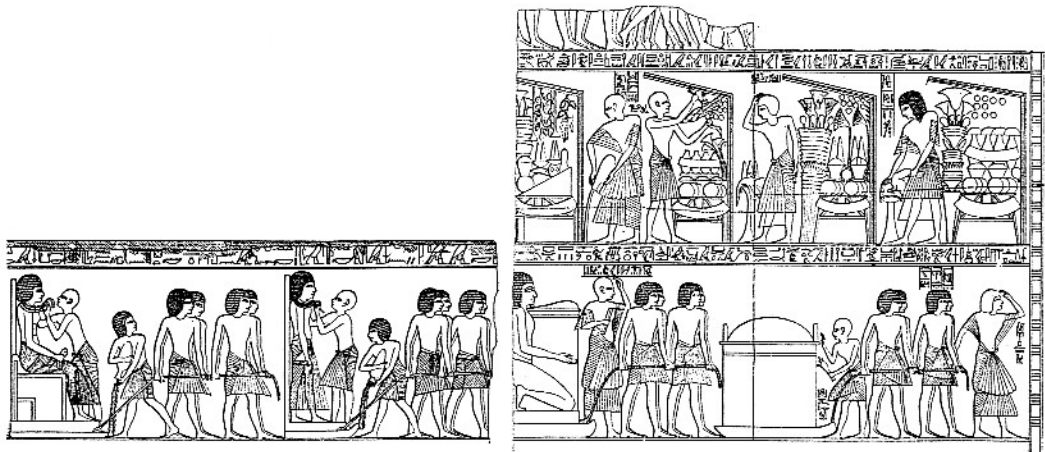


Fig. 30. Scene in the tomb of Maya. In the upper register funerary booths and part of the Ritual of Breaking the Red Pots. Underneath it part of the procession of statues, including a naophorous one.

Reproduced from LD III, 242a-b.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. C. M. Zivie, *BIFAO* 75 (1975), 285 n. 2; 286 n. 3.

8. Pay, Musée Rodin Inv. No. 235 + 104, Late Dyn. XVIII. PM III<sup>2</sup>/2, 655; J. Berlandini, *BIFAO* 77 (1977), 29-31, Pl. iv. From a tomb situated immediately south of the Outer Courtyard of the tomb of Horemheb.<sup>39</sup>
9. Ptahnefer, Cairo TN 10.6.24.12, Late Dyn. XVIII. PM III<sup>2</sup>/2, 754 (add F. W. von Bissing, *Die Kultur des alten Ägyptens* [Leipzig, 1913], Pl. 8: 15). From an unknown location at Saqqâra.
10. NN, Moscow I.1.a.6008 + Detroit 24.98, Late Dyn. XVIII. PM III<sup>2</sup>/2, 759, 757, S. Hodjash/O. Berlev, *The Egyptian Reliefs and Stelae in the Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts Moscow* (Leningrad, 1982), 121-123, no. 68; Arnst, *BSEG* 15 (1991), 20-27, Fig. 15-16; G. T. Martin, *Corpus* I, 27, Pl. 25 (no. 64; Detroit block only). From an unknown location at Saqqâra.<sup>40</sup>
11. NN, Copenhagen AIN. 38, Late Dyn. XVIII. PM III<sup>2</sup>/2, 756; Arnst, *Altor. Forsch.* 16 (1989), 204-205, Pl. 1; id., *BSEG* 15 (1991), 8-20, Fig. 3-5, 9-14; Martin, *Corpus* I, Pl. 22 (no. 62). From an unknown location at Saqqâra.
12. Neferhotep, Cairo TN 8.11.26.4, Late Dyn. XVIII. PM III<sup>2</sup>/2, 755; Arnst, *op. cit.*, 205-207, Pl. ii; B. Geßler-Löhr, in J. Assmann, *Das Grab des Amenemope, TT 41* (Mainz am Rhein, 1991), 173, Fig. 8.
13. NN, in EAO magazine at Saqqâra, Late Dyn. XVIII-early Dyn. XIX. Block from surface debris in Temple of Nectanebo II at North-Saqqâra. Martin, *The Tomb of Hetepka* (London, 1979), 42, Pl. 37 (no. 127); id., *Corpus* I, 27, Pl. 23, 51 (no. 63). Originally from a tomb of unknown location at Saqqâra.
14. NN, Cairo TN 25.6.24.8, Dyn. XIX (early). PM III<sup>2</sup>/2, 755, where it is somewhat misleadingly described as "man making libation".<sup>41</sup> Man standing with his back towards a funerary booth, pouring the contents of a (red) jar

<sup>39</sup> See Martin, *JEA* 62 (1976), 13 n. 13.

<sup>40</sup> This scene as well as the Copenhagen block (no. 11) are both tentatively assigned to the tomb of Horemheb by C.-B. Arnst, *BSEG* 15, 8-27, in both cases wrongly, in my opinion. The Copenhagen block is almost entirely in raised relief, whereas the scenes in Horemheb, including the register above the funerary booths, are in sunk relief; the Moscow-Detroit blocks are in sunk relief, but the shape of the funerary booths both here and in the Copenhagen scene is very different from those in Horemheb and the booths on the blocks are shown in profile, not from the front as in Horemheb. Stylistic similarities are insufficient proof as there are many more as yet unexcavated late Eighteenth Dynasty tombs at Saqqâra. In many studies too much weight is given to stylistic criteria; experience in the field shows, however, that different "styles" were sometimes used within one monument, as is only natural, considering the fact that these tombs were decorated by a group of sculptors, not by a single artist with a distinctive, personal "style".

<sup>41</sup> The same description is applied to no. 8, *op. cit.*, 655.

onto the floor. Unpublished. From an unknown location at Saqqâra.

15. Neferrenpet, Brussels E 3053-3055, Dyn. XIX. Werbrouck, *Les pleureuses*, Pl. xxxii; PM III<sup>2</sup>/2, 752. From an unknown location at Saqqâra.

16. Mose, Cairo TN 17.5.25.1, temp. Ramesses II. PM III<sup>2</sup>/2, 555; G. A. Gaballa, *The Memphite Tomb-Chapel of Mose* (Warminster, 1977), Pl. xxxiv-xxxv. From the Teti Pyramid Cemetery.

Most of the scenes just listed differ in one respect or another from the Horemheb reliefs. The funerary booths are of much lighter construction, their roofs being supported by light poles composed of papyrus-stalks; as in Horemheb, the entrance is usually flanked by two palm-branches and fruits (sometimes resembling grapes<sup>42</sup>) are hanging down from the ceiling. In some cases (nos. 7-9, 14) the jars are not broken immediately, but poured empty first and then smashed on the floor. Sometimes the burning of incense is also depicted, though it is not clear whether this took place before (as in no. 5) or after (as in no. 1) the breaking of the jars. At the end of the ritual the booths themselves were also demolished.<sup>43</sup> The men enacting the ritual are almost always shaven-headed, but exceptions do occur.<sup>44</sup> Even when they are shown with bald heads they do not appear to represent priests, however, for in some cases their names and titles are mentioned. In the tomb of Maya (no. 7), for example, various colleagues and subordinates of the tomb-owner are involved; thus the man shown emptying one of the jars is "the overseer of works in the Place of Eternity (i.e. the Valley of the Kings), the chief annalist Userhat". In scene no. 14 the man emptying the jar is dressed in the costume with tapering front-piece habitually worn by soldiers. On the Berlin "Trauerrelief" (no. 2) one man is called "the overseer of the offering-table (*hry-hwt*) of Ptah Ra'mose" and therefore again a subordinate of the tomb-owner, who was High Priest of Ptah in Memphis, but another man is called "the cheironomer (*dhnw*)<sup>45</sup> Kefkef", whereas the three men engaged in

<sup>42</sup> Grapes are often shown suspended from the roof of the throne baldachin of the king and of the god Osiris (e.g., Naville, *Das ägyptische Tottenbuch* I [Berlin, 1886], Pl. cxcvi) and it has been argued that the booths represent the "vegetation dwelling" from which the deceased arises from the dead, see W. B. Kristensen, *De loofhut en het loofhuttenfeest in den Egyptischen cultus* (Amsterdam, 1923) and the critical review by Kees, *OLZ* 28 (1925), 71-72.

<sup>43</sup> Depicted in no. 2.

<sup>44</sup> In no. 8 all three men shown on the block wear wigs; in nos. 4 and 7 both men with and without wigs appear.

<sup>45</sup> *Hb.* V, 484: 14-18.

demolishing the booths appear to be "gardeners". These men are therefore professionals who may or may not have been employed by the temple. Professional wailing women are sometimes shown as well, but they do not take part in the action of breaking the jars. Since almost all our sources consist of incomplete fragments it is difficult to ascertain the actual number of booths; the arrangement of some scenes (notably those in the tomb of Horemheb) suggests that there were only one or two of them (on either side of the funerary procession?) and that the various depictions should be taken as successive scenes showing different stages of the ritual performed in front of one and the same booth.

Similar booths, including ones containing four jars, are frequently shown in Theban tombs as well,<sup>46</sup> but the depiction of the breaking of the jars does not seem to have been part of the standard repertory of the tomb decoration here. That the ritual did nevertheless take place at Theban funerals as well, at least in Ramesside times, is suggested by the occasional representation of a priest pouring water from a jar in front of the booth<sup>47</sup> and by one more explicit scene<sup>48</sup> which varies from the Memphite examples in that the jars are not broken by a man but by the last woman of a group of female mourners.<sup>49</sup>

In the tomb of Kha'emhat (TT 57) the booths are called "Chapels of the Red Crown" (*hwwt nt*), which may point to an ancient Delta origin of the ritual.<sup>50</sup> In the Pyramid Texts (Sp. 81 and 312) the *hwwt nt* are mentioned

<sup>46</sup> See PM I<sup>2</sup>/1, 472, s. v. "Booths with offerings and servants"; Beinlich-Seeber, in C. Beinlich-Seeber/A. G. Shedid, *Das Grab des Userhat (TT 56)* (Mainz am Rhein, 1987), 93-94; Geßler-Löhr, in J. Assmann, *Das Grab des Amenemope*, 162 n. 2.

<sup>47</sup> TT 341 [Nakhtamun], see N. de G. Davies, *Seven Private Tombs at Kurnah* (London, 1948), 36 with n. 4, Pl. xxv; TT 49 [Neferhotep], id., *The Tomb of Neferhotep at Thebes I* (New York, 1933), Pl. xxi.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. also TT 13 [Shuroy], M. Werbrouck, *Les pleureuses dans l'Égypte ancienne* (Brussels, 1938), Pl. xxxix; TT 178 [Neferrenpet], M. Abdul-Qader Muhammed, *The Development of the Funerary Reliefs and Practices Displayed in the Private Tombs of the New Kingdom at Thebes* (Cairo, 1966), Pl. 76.

<sup>49</sup> TT 44 [Amenemheb], Borchardt, *op. cit.*, Pl. i: 1; Werbrouck, *op. cit.*, Pl. xxx; P. Barthelmeß, *Der Übergang ins Jenseits in den thebanischen Beamtengräbern der Ramessidenzeit* (Heidelberg, 1992), 83 with n. 466. Cf. the female mourners in front of the booth in the Memphite examples Brooklyn 37.1504E [NN], PM III<sup>2</sup>/2, 752; Martin, *Corpus I*, no. 101, and Pap. Leiden T 4 [Book of the Dead of Pagarer], Werbrouck, *op. cit.*, Pl. xxix; H. D. Schneider, *Art from Ancient Egypt* (Tokyo, 1987), 31, no. 3-a; cf. M. Heerma van Voss, *BSFE* 105 (1986), 13.

as the location of the food-offerings for the deceased king and connected with Buto, and in *CT* Spell 952 they appear as the seat of the goddess Wadjet of Buto "who protects the gods from those who would harm them" and for whom the people are afraid when they burn incense to her.<sup>51</sup> On the other hand, Sethe has pointed to the frequent connection of the "Chapels of the Red Crown" with Saïs and its goddess Neith.<sup>52</sup> Similar booths are sometimes shown in temple processions, as in the Opet Festival scenes in the temple of Luxor, where their solid construction resembles that of the booths in the tomb of Horemheb.<sup>53</sup> The ancient songs accompanying the procession which actually consist of words spoken by Neith herself appear to refer to these booths with the term *mswr* "drinking place", obviously the place where the participants in the procession could refresh themselves after the strenuous journey from Karnak to Luxor (and back).<sup>54</sup> A connection of the booths and of the ritual aimed at the destruction of the enemies which took place in them with Neith would agree well with the beligerent and protective aspects of this goddess, especially since she is also responsible for the ritual protection (*sjw*, *mkt*) of a temple during the foundation ceremonies<sup>55</sup> which, as we have seen,<sup>56</sup> are related to the *sg dšrwt* ritual.

Actual finds of deposits of broken red pots have not been found so far, or if they have, they have not been recognized and recorded as such. A possible exception is a cache consisting of fragments of some 150 pottery vessels of almost exclusively New Kingdom date contained in a shallow pit dug in the forecourt of the tomb of Paser, against the rear wall of the tomb of Horemheb at Saqqâra.<sup>57</sup> A connection with the ritual of breaking the red

<sup>50</sup> Cf. E. Lüddeckens, *MDAIK* 11 (1943), 13-14.

<sup>51</sup> *CT* VII, 167a-f; cf. also *CT* III 145f.

<sup>52</sup> K. Sethe, *Urgeschichte und älteste Religion der Ägypter* (Leipzig, 1930), 66-68; cf. Bonnet, *RÄRG* 512.

<sup>53</sup> W. Wolf, *Das schöne Fest von Opet* (Leipzig, 1931), Pl. i-ii; cf. Barthelmess, *op. cit.*, 85-86.

<sup>54</sup> K. Sethe, "Die beiden alten Lieder von der Trinkstätte in den Darstellungen des Luxorfestzuges", *ZAS* 64 (1929), 1-5; Wolf, *op. cit.*, text no. 15.

<sup>55</sup> *KRI* I, 186: 8-9; cf. H. Kees, *Religionsgeschichtliches Lesebuch 10: Ägypten* (Tübingen, 1928), 39.

<sup>56</sup> Above, n. 13.

<sup>57</sup> J. Bournia/D. Aston, in: G. T. Martin et al., *The Tomb-Chapels of Paser and Raïa at Saqqâra* (London, 1985), 47-48.

pots has been suggested, but since some of the sherds had obviously been re-used as lamps or to hold plaster or paint, it is equally possible that the cache represents the refuse left by the builders and artists employed in the construction of either the tomb of Paser or that of Horemheb, particularly so since similar groups of paint and plaster pots were later discovered during the clearance of the tombs of Tia and Maya as well.<sup>58</sup> On the basis of "various pieces of red pot" found in the tomb of Tut'ankhamun it has been speculated that the ritual of breaking the red pots may have been carried out during the king's obsequies.<sup>59</sup> The evidence adduced for this are Carter's nos. 175d and 179; no. 175d is the "fragment of a pot containing some black substance", while no. 179 is a "group of diverse objects including bones, fragments of pottery, fragment of ivory box, wooden label, two clay seals".<sup>60</sup> In neither case is the colour of the pottery recorded on Carter's slips, and since Carter specified "red pottery" in a number of other cases,<sup>61</sup> it is almost certain that the colour of the fragments was in fact not red. There is no evidence to suggest that any of these fragments had anything to do with the ritual of breaking the red pots; indeed, such a connection is improbable from the start, for the sherds of the vessels broken during the ritual were not likely to be included among the burial equipment stored in the tomb as they symbolized the enemies of the deceased. In itself it is quite plausible that the ritual was carried out at a king's funeral as well as at a commoner's, but the archaeological "evidence" from the tomb of Tut'ankhamun produced to prove this has to be dismissed as irrelevant.

The breaking of objects as a funerary rite is widespread and many different reasons for this custom are given in various cultures.<sup>62</sup> In Egyptological literature it is often assumed that the explanation of the breaking of the *dšrt*-vessels as the destruction of the enemies of the

<sup>58</sup> Tia: *JEA* 70 (1984), 8; Maya: *JEA* 74 (1988), 13.

<sup>59</sup> A. Wilkinson, in: S. I. Groll (ed.), *Pharaonic Egypt, the Bible and Christianity* (Jerusalem, 1985), 334.

<sup>60</sup> H. Murray/M. Nuttall, *A Handlist to Howard Carter's Catalogue of Objects in Tut'ankhamun's Tomb* (Oxford, 1963), 8.

<sup>61</sup> Nos 175a "red pottery stopper with blue decoration"; 177 "red pottery libation pot"; 197 and 203, both "red pottery jars". All of these were obviously found intact.

<sup>62</sup> See the excellent survey given by L. V. Grinsell, *Folklore* 72 (1961), 475-491; 84 (1973), 111-114; id., *Barrow, Pyramid and Tomb* (London, 1975), 60-67.

deceased is a later mythological interpretation of a custom originally practical,<sup>63</sup> i.e. to prevent the re-use of the ritual vessels for subsequent "profane" or non-ritual purposes.<sup>64</sup> Other explanations given are that the vessels had to be "killed" in order to "assimilate them to the state of the owner"<sup>65</sup> or to render them harmless for the surviving relatives.<sup>66</sup> It has even been maintained that the vessels were filled with "magical potential" through their contact with the demonic powers of the netherworld and that this magical power was released from the vessels by breaking them.<sup>67</sup> It should be stressed, however, that none of these explanations is supported by Egyptian evidence. The breaking of the red jars takes place at the end of the offering-ritual which itself forms part of the Funerary Ritual.<sup>68</sup> It is followed by the liturgy of carrying the funerary equipment to the tomb and the two liturgies are terminated by the slaughtering of a bull; then follows the dragging of the sarcophagus into the tomb, accompanied by the song "To the West, to the West, O praised one!" In New Kingdom tomb scenes the breaking of the jars in front of the funerary booths is in most cases depicted in the immediate vicinity of the scenes showing the bringing of the funerary equipment and the dragging of the sarcophagus; in one case (no. 5) the words "To the West, to the West, O praised one!" are recited by the man who performs the ritual while removing the jars from the booth in order to smash them.

In the Pyramid Texts the *sd dšrwt* of Spell 244 is followed by a libation in Spell 32;<sup>69</sup> both rites have been explained by Altenmüller<sup>70</sup> as actions

<sup>63</sup> E. Brunner-Traut, *LA* II, 124 ("ursprünglich keine Symbolhandlung").

<sup>64</sup> Blackman, *Meir* IV, 51; Borchardt, *op. cit.*, 15-16; Barta, *Opferliste*, 72; H. Altenmüller, *Die Texte zum Begräbnisritual in den Pyramiden des Alten Reiches* (Wiesbaden, 1972), 99.

<sup>65</sup> Davies, *The Tomb of Two Sculptors at Thebes* (New York, 1925), 48 n. 1.

<sup>66</sup> Borchardt, *op. cit.*, 15-16; H. Kees, *Farbensymbolik in ägyptischen religiösen Texten* (Göttingen, 1943), 462.

<sup>67</sup> J. Spiegel, *Das Auferstehungsritual der Unas-Pyramide* (Wiesbaden, 1971), 37-38. Such interpretations are more primitive than the actual rituals they pretend to "explain"; cf. my remarks in *JEGOL* 26 (1979-1980), 23.

<sup>68</sup> The offering-ritual is introduced by Pyr. Sp. 311-312 and the same spells accompany the pictorial version of the liturgy in the tomb of Kha'emhat [TT 57], see Altenmüller, *op. cit.*, 110-111; Lüdeckens, *op. cit.*, 14.

<sup>69</sup> Altenmüller, *op. cit.*, 38. Cf. *CT* VII, 128j-k.

<sup>70</sup> Altenmüller, *op. cit.*, 98-100.







the ritual may be described in a purely technical sense as an act of sympathetic magic, it is more likely to be interpreted as a rite of reassurance,<sup>74</sup> enacted to reassure and thereby protect<sup>75</sup> the participants of the ritual when they approach the dangerous borderline between the ordered world and the domain of the powers of chaos.

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<sup>74</sup> H. te Velde, *JEOL* 21 (1969-1970), 181.

<sup>75</sup> J. van Dijk, *JEOL* 26 (1979-1980), 23-25.