

## Land Endowments in the Old Kingdom Private Inscriptions\*

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**Abstract:** This paper provides a close reading and commenting of a group of Old Kingdom private inscriptions relating to land endowments assigned for private mortuary cults. The study also examines the terms of such funerary foundations. Endowment texts focus on a procedure for the permanent endowment of areas of land by individuals for funerary purpose in the manner of a *waqf*, with the land entailed in a single, not-divisible line of succession of *k3*-priests. Some endowments are specifically royal gifts or authorized by the king. The study illustrates that land was controlled directly in relation to holding the office of *k3*-priest: where control of land, and the production from it is in effect payment for funerary service. A middle class of priests, who were holders of endowment lands, became visible from the late Old Kingdom onwards, reflecting the development of ancient Egyptian society. The texts here studied are presented in transliteration and translation, and a comment is provided for each text.

**Keywords:** Old Kingdom, ancient Egyptian society, land endowment, land tenure, private mortuary cults, *waqf*, *k3*-priests, transmission

### Introduction

Old Kingdom deeds of land endowments for private mortuary cults were inscribed in a number of Fifth and early Sixth Dynasty tombs, most probably imitating the original legal documents on papyrus. These private endowment texts were presented on monuments in a visible place as evidence for the terms of the funerary foundation in perpetuity.<sup>1</sup> The following Old Kingdom private inscriptions include deeds of land endowments for mortuary cults:

1. The Inscription of Penmeru
2. The Inscription of Tjenti (Cairo CG 57139)
3. The Inscription of Kaemnefret (Cairo CG 1432)

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<sup>1</sup> Christopher J. Eyre, *The Use of Documents in Pharaonic Egypt* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 132–33.

4. A Tomb Endowment on a Reused Fragment from Lisht
5. The Tomb Endowment of the Vizier Nebkauhor
6. A Wooden Door from the Family Tomb of Kaemheset at Saqqara (Cairo JE 47749)

Endowment texts usually involve agreements with the *k3*-priests to provide for the mortuary cult of individuals in return for endowments of agricultural land to provide income for the priests to fund service. They are also concerned with the hereditary transmission of these endowments to guarantee the ongoing cult.<sup>2</sup> The study provides a close reading and commenting of the corpus of textual sources relevant to Old Kingdom land endowments for private mortuary cults, with presentation of the relevant secondary literature, and strong focus on the precise interpretation of their actual content. Below are the texts:

## 1. The Inscription of Penmeru

The legal text of Penmeru ( *Pn-mrw*), a Royal *w<sup>c</sup>b*-priest, Priest of Menkaure, and Overseer of *k3*-priest(s), from his tomb at Giza (G 2197), dating to the late Fifth Dynasty,<sup>3</sup> gives information about his funerary foundation. The text reads:<sup>4</sup>


### Main Text




- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>1 <i>w<sup>c</sup>b</i>-nswt <i>hm-ntr Mn-k3w-r<sup>c</sup> imy-r hm(w)-k3 Pn-mr[w]</i></p> <p>2 <i>dd ir sn(=i) dt(=i) hm-k3 Nfr-htp hn<sup>c</sup> msw=f n it mwt</i></p> | <p>The Royal <i>w<sup>c</sup>b</i>-priest, Priest of Menkaure, and Overseer of <i>k3</i>-priest(s) Penmeru</p> <p>says: As for (my) <i>sn-dt</i>,<sup>5</sup> the <i>k3</i>-priest Neferhotep, and his posterity<sup>6</sup>, of father or mother<sup>7</sup>—</p> |
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<sup>2</sup> Hans Goedicke, "Juridical Expressions of the Old Kingdom," *JNES* 15, no. 1 (1956): 27.

<sup>3</sup> In the Western Cemetery at Giza, G. A. Reisner, *A History of the Giza Necropolis*, vol. I (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1942), 292 [2].

<sup>4</sup> South wall of his chapel niche, Peter Der Manuelian, "Penmeru Revisited—Giza Mastaba G 2197 (Giza Archives Gleanings V)," *JARCE* 45 (2009): 3, 20–30, figs. 21–23. See also G. A. Reisner and C. S. Fisher, "Preliminary Report on the Work of the Harvard-Boston Expedition in 1911–13," *ASAE* 13 (1914): 247, pl. 11a; PM III, 82–83; Bernard Grdseloff, "Deux inscriptions juridiques de l'Ancien Empire," *ASAE* 42 (1943): 39–63, fig. 3; Schafik Allam, "Zwei Schlussklauseln zur Übertragung eines Rechts im Alten Ägypten," *BiOr* 24 (1967): 20; Hans Goedicke, *Die privaten Rechtsinschriften aus dem Alten Reich*. Beihefte zur Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes 5 (Vienna: Notring, 1970), 68–74, pl. VI; Karin B. Gödecken, *Eine Betrachtung der Inschriften des Meten im Rahmen der sozialen und rechtlichen Stellung von Privatleuten im ägyptischen Alten Reich*. ÄA 29 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1976), 178–80; Schafik Allam, "Vom Stiftungswesen der Alten Ägypten," *Das Altertum* 20 (1974): 139–40; William K. Simpson, *Mastabas of the Western Cemetery, Part I: Sekhemka (G 1029); Tjetu I (G 2001); Iasen (G 2196); Penmeru (G 2197); Hagy, Nefertjentet, and Herunefer (G 2352/53); Djaty, Tjetu II, and Nimesti (G 2337 X, 2343; 2366)*. Giza Mastabas 4 (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1980), 24, pls. XLVIb, XLVII; Nigel C. Strudwick, *Texts from the Pyramid Age* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005), 200–1 (no. 112).

<sup>5</sup> For the term  *sn-dt*, see Juan C. Moreno García, "A New Old Kingdom Inscription from Giza (CGC 57163), and the Problem of *SN-DT* in Pharaonic Third Millennium Society," *JEA* 93 (2007): 132–33, 135, who states that the *sn-dt*, literally meaning brother of the body, played a role as a substitute for or representative of the beneficiary, who was to administer the land endowment and use its income to fund the offerings and rituals for the dead. In return, he was recompensed with a remuneration. Eyre, *Use of Documents*, 87, 412, translates "beneficiary".

<sup>6</sup> Goedicke, *Die privaten Rechtsinschriften*, 69 observes that  *msw* here in line 2 with the quail chick is a passive participle, rather than a plural noun which occurs in the text in lines 5, 7, and 9 with the male and female determinatives  . He translates "zusammen mit dem von ihm Abstammenden durch Vater (oder) Mutter".

<sup>7</sup> The sense is presumably 'by male or female line'.


- 3 *iw sn m hm(w)-k3 dt(=i) r prt-hrw m* they are the *k3*-priest(s) of (my) estate in  
*is(=i) dt nt hrt-ntr 3ht-Hwfw* respect of the funerary offerings in (my) tomb  
of eternity<sup>8</sup> of<sup>9</sup> the necropolis of Akhet-  
Khufu.
- 4 *ini=sn n(=i) wdb-rd n ity(=i) t3yty s3b* They should bring to (me) the reversion  
*t3ty Ssm-nfr [ir?]* offerings<sup>10</sup> of (my) sovereign, He of the  
Curtain, Chief Justice, the Vizier  
Seshemnefer.<sup>11</sup> [As for]<sup>12</sup>
- 5 *3ht h3 I [di.n(=i) n=f hn<sup>c</sup>] msw=f pn* the field of 1 *h3*<sup>13</sup> [which (I) have given to  
him together with] this posterity of his—
- 6 *n rdi<.n>(=i) shm rmt nb im=f* I do not allow any person to have authority  
over him<sup>14</sup>
- 7 *hn<sup>c</sup> msw=f pn* together with this posterity of his.

### Codicil

- 8 *n rdi<.n>(=i) shm s3(=i) nb im hn<sup>c</sup> msw* I do not allow any son of (mine) there,  
*nb* together with any of posterity, to have  
authority.
- 9 *rdi=f 3ht (?) t3 5 m prt-hrw nt rht nswt* He gives a field (?)<sup>15</sup> of 5 *t3* as funerary  
*Mrt-it=s* offering of the Royal Acquaintance  
Meretites.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Or “of (my) estate”.

<sup>9</sup> Goedicke, *Die privaten Rechtsinschriften*, 70, reads *nty <m>* after *dt*, while Manuelian, “Penmeru Revisited—Giza Mastaba G 2197,” 29, 30 n. g treats *nt* as indirect genitive and suggests that it may refer to *is*.

<sup>10</sup> For the reading *wdb-rd*, see J. J. Clère, “La lecture des termes  ‘virement (d’offrandes),” *JEJ* 25, no. 2 (1939): 215–16, arguing that it designates the transfer of offerings of a temple or an individual to the benefit of a beneficiary. See also Juan C. Moreno García, *Hwt et le milieu rural égyptien du III<sup>e</sup> millénaire: Économie, administration et organisation territoriale* (Paris: Librairie Honoré Champion, 1999), 110–11.

<sup>11</sup> Seshemnefer III, the owner of tomb G 5170, Hermann Junker, *Giza III: Die Mastabas der vorgeschrittenen V. Dynastie auf dem Westfriedhof* (Vienna and Leipzig: Hölder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1938), 9, 13; Grdseloff, “Deux inscriptions juridiques,” 41 n. 1, 57–58 (h); Manuelian, “Penmeru Revisited—Giza Mastaba G 2197,” 22 and 30 n. l. For *ity* in reference to a person other than the king, see Goedicke, *Die privaten Rechtsinschriften*, 71.

<sup>12</sup> *ir* was restored by Grdseloff, “Deux inscriptions juridiques,” 39 in the damaged space at the end of line 4.

<sup>13</sup> Most scholars took this phrase as referring to a field of 10 arouras, see Grdseloff, “Deux inscriptions juridiques,” 61; Allam, “Zwei Schlussklauseln zur Übertragung eines Rechts im Alten Ägypten,” 20; Goedicke, *Die privaten Rechtsinschriften*, 71; Allam, “Vom Stiftungswesen der Alten Ägypter,” 140; Moreno García, “A New Old Kingdom Inscription from Giza (CGC 57163),” 133. Others, however, argue that the *h3* in the Old Kingdom equals one-tenth of an aroura (1 *st3t* = 10 *h3*), Wolfgang Helck, “Maße und Gewichte,” *LÄ* III (1980): 1200; James P. Allen, *The Heqanakht Papyri* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2002), 152 n. 68; Manuelian, “Penmeru Revisited—Giza Mastaba G 2197,” 22, 30 n. m, contradicting Baer’s view that the *h3* in the Old Kingdom represents 1/3 of an aroura (1 *st3t* = 3 *h3* = 30 *t3*), Klaus Baer, “A Note on Egyptian Units of Area in the Old Kingdom,” *JNES* 15, no. 2 (1956): 115. The text of Nikaankh may support Baer’s view, where the 2 arouras are divided into 12 equal portions of 5 *t3* (meaning 2 *st3t* = 60 *t3* / 1 *st3t* = 30 *t3* / 1 *st3t* = 3 *h3*), George Fraser, “The Early Tombs at Tehneh,” *ASAE* 3 (1902): pl. 4; Goedicke, *Die privaten Rechtsinschriften*, pl. XIV; Manuelian, “Penmeru Revisited—Giza Mastaba G 2197,” fig. 1; Strudwick, *Texts from the Pyramid Age*, 196–97. The reversion here for Meretites would then seem to be half of the endowment, given that the *h3* was equivalent to 10 *t3* in the Old Kingdom.

<sup>14</sup> Or “over it”. *im=f* refers to Neferhotep, but it may also refer to the 1 *h3* of field, Manuelian, “Penmeru Revisited—Giza Mastaba G 2197,” 30 n. o.

<sup>15</sup> Grdseloff, “Deux inscriptions juridiques,” 63 argued for *3ht*, with an *s* incorrectly carved for *h*, followed by Goedicke, *Die privaten Rechtsinschriften*, 73. Manuelian, “Penmeru Revisited—Giza Mastaba G 2197,” 29, 30 n. q, reads *s3t*-land, but his reading has no basis.

Penmeru, a priest of Menkaure, here employs the *k3*-priest Neferhotep and his descendants to act as *k3*-priests of his estate, and to provide the funerary offerings in his tomb in the necropolis of Akhet-Khufu,<sup>17</sup> including the reversion offerings that derive from the Vizier Seshemnefer III (G 5170).<sup>18</sup> Here the land endowed by Penmeru seems to come from his own estate, together with a reversion of offerings from a high official, his patron.<sup>19</sup>


Penmeru gives Neferhotep and his heirs a field of 1 *h3* for bringing the offering.<sup>20</sup> The farmland was used here to fund the services of the funerary cult, as in the case of Tjenti and Kaemnefret (see below).<sup>21</sup> The phrase “together with this posterity of his” emphasizes that land transfers were entailed and not tied to a particular person, but to a specific line of *k3*-priests in perpetuity.<sup>22</sup> These *k3*-priests are protected from any claim to inheritance from other children.<sup>23</sup>

This legal text gives in the last two lines a final note that Penmeru gives a field of 5 *t3* for the funerary cult of his wife Meretites. He presents her half the field of 1 *h3* (5 *t3*). Such division can also be seen in the case of Tjenti.<sup>24</sup>

The first seven lines of the text are separated by seven horizontal rulings, while no such separates the final two lines 8–9 concerning the foundation for the funerary cult of the wife. This may indicate that these “codicil” lines 8 and 9 were added later, perhaps after the wife of Penmeru predeceased him.<sup>25</sup> Gödecken, however, argues that Penmeru was unmarried and had no children at the time he composed the main text, and that is why he assigned the *sn-ḏt* Neferhotep and his descendants to his funerary cult.<sup>26</sup> Manuelian argues that if this interpretation is accepted, Penmeru would have added this codicil after his marriage to Meretites.<sup>27</sup>

Texts of this sort identify a procedure for the permanent endowment of areas of land for funerary purpose— a sort of *wagf*— with entail of the office of *k3*-priest controlling the land in a single, not-divisible line of succession.

## 2. The Inscription of Tjenti (Cairo CG 57139)

A lintel from Giza with an inscription of Tjenti (  *Tnti*), Overseer of Commissions and Director of the Two Royal Canals (*imy-r wpwt hrp mrwy nswt*), dating to the Fifth Dynasty,

<sup>16</sup> Meretites is described on the family group statue of Penmeru, MFA 12.1484, as *hmt=f mitrt Mrt-it=s*, Manuelian, “Penmeru Revisited—Giza Mastaba G 2197,” 30 n. r, figs. 37–48.

<sup>17</sup> Goedicke, *Die privaten Rechtsinschriften*, 72.

<sup>18</sup> Peter Der Manuelian, “An Essay in Document Transmission: *Nj-k3-ḥnḥ* and the Earliest *hrjw rnpt*,” *JNES* 45, no. 1 (1986): 15; id., “Penmeru Revisited—Giza Mastaba G 2197,” 22.

<sup>19</sup> Strudwick, *Texts from the Pyramid Age*, 200.

<sup>20</sup> Allam, “Zwei Schlussklauseln zur Übertragung eines Rechts im Alten Ägypten,” 20.

<sup>21</sup> Goedicke, *Die privaten Rechtsinschriften*, 71.

<sup>22</sup> Goedicke, *Die privaten Rechtsinschriften*, 71–72.

<sup>23</sup> Goedicke, *Die privaten Rechtsinschriften*, 72; Moreno Garcia, “A New Old Kingdom Inscription from Giza (CGC 57163),” 133.

<sup>24</sup> Goedicke, *Die privaten Rechtsinschriften*, 72; Gödecken, *Meten*, 179–80.

<sup>25</sup> Grdseloff, “Deux inscriptions juridiques,” 63 n. m, 64; Goedicke, *Die privaten Rechtsinschriften*, 72.

<sup>26</sup> Gödecken, *Meten*, 179.

<sup>27</sup> Manuelian, “Penmeru Revisited—Giza Mastaba G 2197,” 22. Grdseloff and Goedicke argue that the text does not represent a complete text, but excerpts from a longer legal text, but do not justify this satisfactorily, Grdseloff, “Deux inscriptions juridiques,” 41; Goedicke, *Die privaten Rechtsinschriften*, 68.





provides information about his funerary endowment.<sup>28</sup> Tjenti was a middle rank official who received funerary offerings from the King's House (*pr-nswt*), which are then to be administered by his wife:<sup>29</sup> *ir prt-hrw prrt n(=i) m pr-nswt <m> it bdt hbs in hmt(=i) rht nswt Tp-m-nfrt prrt n(=i) prt-hrw im im3ht pw hr(=i)* “As for the funerary offerings which come to (me) from the King's House, <consisting of> barley, wheat and clothing, it is (my) wife, the Royal Acquaintance Tepemnefret, who will provide for (me) the funerary offerings from (them), for she is an honoured one by (me)”. Tjenti then says:<sup>30</sup>

*ir igr snnw n 3ht st3t [2] n prt-hrw nt mwt(=i) rht nswt Bbi iw=f n hmt(=i) rht nswt Tp-m-nfrt stt pri-hrw im n(=i) hn<sup>c</sup> mwt(=i) rht nswt Bbi*

*ink dbh sn hr nswt r im3hw ink s3=s smsw iw<sup>c</sup>=s ink krs s(y) m hrt-ntr*

As for the one<sup>31</sup> of the [2] arouras of field for the funerary offerings of (my) mother, the Royal Acquaintance Bebi, it<sup>32</sup> is (now) for (my) wife, the Royal Acquaintance Tepemnefret. She is the one who provides the funerary offerings from (it) for (me), together with (my) mother, the Royal Acquaintance Bebi.

I was the one who begged them from the king for being honoured.<sup>33</sup> I am her eldest son, her heir. I was the one who buried her in the necropolis.

<i>hm-k3 Nfr-hr 3ht t3 3 it hk3t 3</i>	<i>hm-k3 Twf=i 3ht t3 3 it hk3t 3</i>	<i>hm-k3 Snb t3 [3] hk3t 3</i>	<i>hm-k3 Pr=sn t3 [1] hk3t 1</i>
The k3-priest Neferher: a field of 3 t3 <sup>*</sup> (  ) and 3 hk3t of barley*	The k3-priest Iufi: a field of 3 t3 <sup>*</sup> (  ) and 3 hk3t of barley*	The k3-priest Seneb: (a field of) [3] t3 <sup>*</sup> (  ) and 3 hk3t (of barley)*	The k3-priest Persen: (a field of) [1] t3 <sup>*</sup> (  ) and 1 hk3t (of barley)*

<sup>28</sup> Exact find spot not known, A. Moret, “Une nouvelle disposition testamentaire de l’Ancien Empire égyptien,” *CRAIBL* 58, no. 6 (1914): 541; *Urk.* I, 163: 11–165: 2; Ibrahim Harari, “La fondation culturelle de N.K.Wi.Ankh à Tehneh: Notes sur l’organisation culturelle dans l’Ancien Empire égyptien,” *ASAE* 54 (1957): 331, 335; Goedicke, *Die privaten Rechtsinschriften*, 122–30, pl. XIII; PM III, 308; Schafik Allam, “Women as Owners of Immovables in Pharaonic Egypt,” in *Women’s Earliest Records from Ancient Egypt and Western Asia*, ed. Barbara S. Lesko (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 124; Strudwick, *Texts from the Pyramid Age*, 202–3 (no. 115); Moreno García, “A New Old Kingdom Inscription from Giza (CGC 57163),” 125 (no. 36) and 132–33.

<sup>29</sup> Goedicke, *Die privaten Rechtsinschriften*, pl. XIII = *Urk.* I, 163: 11–13; Moreno García, “A New Old Kingdom Inscription from Giza (CGC 57163),” 132.

<sup>30</sup> Goedicke, *Die privaten Rechtsinschriften*, pl. XIII = *Urk.* I, 163: 14–165: 2; Strudwick, *Texts from the Pyramid Age*, 202–3 (no. 115).

<sup>31</sup> For *snnw*, Baer has given an explanation that *snnw* ... *snnw* means “the one ... the other”, Baer, “A Note on Egyptian Units of Area,” 116 n. 10; Goedicke, *Die privaten Rechtsinschriften*, 124.

<sup>32</sup> The suffix =f refers here to the one aroura in question, illustrating that only one is assigned to his wife Tepemnefret, Baer, “A Note on Egyptian Units of Area,” 116 n. 10.

<sup>33</sup> Goedicke, *Die privaten Rechtsinschriften*, 122, 124 reads *r im3h(=i)* “für (meine) Versorgung”. This phrase refers to the origin of the two arouras, Baer, “A Note on Egyptian Units of Area,” 116 n. 10.

\* Baer reads the units of land written with an *idb*-sign ( $\Leftarrow / \Rightarrow$ ) as *t3*, since the unit must be smaller than the *st3t*, Baer, “A Note on Egyptian Units of Area,” 114, 116, fig. 1. The fourth unit of land was corrected by Baer to 1 *t3* instead of 3 *t3* according to Sethe’s note (*Urk.* I, 164: 7), Baer, “A Note on Egyptian Units of Area,” 114, fig. 1, followed by Goedicke, *Die privaten Rechtsinschriften*, pl. XIII.

\* The sign of the grain measure unit is the hieratic form of  $\#^{\oplus}$  *hk3t*, Goedicke, *Die privaten Rechtsinschriften*, 125. For the amounts of grain, it is clear in the first three cases that there are three measures. In the fourth instance, Sethe noticed only one measure but amended it to three to agree with the others (*Urk.* I, 164: 7). Baer,

*pr̄r n=sn m hrt Tp-m-nf̄rt ir.(n=i) hrt=s n  
h̄mw-k3 iptn m s̄t̄t n̄d̄st ir tm=sn h̄msw m  
h̄wt-k3 irt ntt hr h̄mt(=i) r̄ht nswt Tp-m-nf̄rt  
ph̄r r st h̄mt(=i) Tp-m-nf̄rt*

*ir prt-h̄rw nt mwt(=i) r̄ht nswt Bbi <m> it  
bdt nt šnwt h̄bs n pr-h̄d in sn(=i) d̄t(=i) h̄m-  
k3 K3-m-nf̄rt pri-h̄rw im n mwt(=i) r̄ht nswt  
Bbi h̄n̄c d̄s(=i) d̄t*

*ir snnw n 3h̄t s̄t̄t 2 pw n prt-h̄rw nt mwt(=i)  
r̄ht nswt Bbi iw=f n sn(=i) d̄t(=i) h̄m-k3 K3-  
m-nf̄rt swt pri-h̄rw im n mwt(=i) r̄ht nswt  
Bbi h̄n̄c d̄s(=i) d̄t*

(This) shall be provided for them from the property of Tepemnefret, and I have set up her property for these *k3*-priests from a small aroua (𓆎𓅓𓆏𓅓).<sup>34</sup> If they not remain in the *k3*-chapel thereof, which is under the control of (my) wife, the Royal Acquaintance Tepemnefret, then (it) will revert to the ownership of (my) wife Tepemnefret.

As for the funerary offerings of (my) mother, the Royal Acquaintance Bebi, <consisting of> barley and wheat of the granary, and clothing of the treasury, it is (my) *sn-d̄t*, the *k3*-priest Kaemnefret, who shall provide the funerary offerings from (it) for (my) mother, the Royal Acquaintance Bebi, together with (my)self.

As for the other of these two arouas of field for the funerary offerings of (my) mother, the Royal Acquaintance Bebi, it<sup>35</sup> is for (my) *sn-d̄t*, the *k3*-priest Kaemnefret. He is the one who provides the funerary offerings from (it) for (my) mother, the Royal Acquaintance Bebi, together with (my)self for ever.

Tjenti refers to a funerary endowment for providing the funerary offerings (*prt-h̄rw*) for his mother, the Royal Acquaintance Bebi, consisting of two arouas of field. He also refers to a funerary endowment coming directly from the King's House. The first of the two arouas is now assigned to his wife Tepemnefret, for providing the funerary offerings for Tjenti and his mother Bebi, as he states: "She is the one who provides the funerary offerings from (it) for (me), together with (my) mother, the Royal Acquaintance Bebi". The text refers to the origin of these two arouas, as something that Tjenti had received from the king: "I was the one who begged them from the king for being honoured". They were not private property.<sup>36</sup> He then invoked his status as the eldest son, who had accomplished the pious act of burying his mother, which defines him as her primary heir. This field is then divided among four *k3*-priests, with a schedule indicating the area assigned to each one of them and the amount of grain which each should provide. Their holding is connected to their service, with reversion to the wife if they cease performance. It is not clear whether the land assigned to them equates to the whole aroua, or whether it is only a fraction leaving the rest as income for the wife. The second of these two arouas, originally granted to his mother, goes to his *sn-d̄t*, the *k3*-priest

"A Note on Egyptian Units of Area," 116, however, prefers to keep the original text as it was, arguing that "each unit of land owed one measure of barley". Strudwick, *Texts from the Pyramid Age*, 202 reads 1 *t3* and 3 *h̄k3t* of grain. Goedicke, *Die privaten Rechtsinschriften*, 122 suggests that the amounts of grain may perhaps be considered a lease.

<sup>34</sup> Baer, "A Note on Egyptian Units of Area," 116 understood *s̄t̄t n̄d̄st* "small aroua" as a smaller unit of only 10 *t3*, which is called *h̄3*.


<sup>35</sup> The suffix =*f* refers here to the other aroua, Baer, "A Note on Egyptian Units of Area," 116 n. 10.

<sup>36</sup> Moreno García, "A New Old Kingdom Inscription from Giza (CGC 57163)," 132–33.

Kaemnefret, for providing the funerary offerings for his mother Bebi and for him.<sup>37</sup> He states: “He is the one who provides the funerary offerings from (it) for (my) mother, the Royal Acquaintance Bebi, together with (my)self for ever”.

The text of Tjenti shows that women had rights to land very early in history,<sup>38</sup> but does not necessarily indicate that they worked the land themselves, or even performed the cult themselves, rather than delegating to a priest.

### 3. The Inscription of Kaemnefret (Cairo CG 1432)

Block Cairo CG 1432, found near the pyramid of Khafre and possibly from the family tomb of Kaemnefret ( K3-m-nfret) at Giza,<sup>39</sup> from the mid-Fifth Dynasty or later, records his stipulations for his funerary cult:<sup>40</sup>

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>1 ... sk] sw ḥnh hr rdwy=f m smr wḥty<br/>hr(y)-tp Nhb stp=f s3 r nswt rḥ nb smr<br/>wḥty hr(y)-tp Nhb ḥd-mr Dw3-Hr-hnt(y)-<br/>[pt] ...</p> <p>2 ... ḥmw-k3 ipn dt(=i)</p> <p>3 ... [hft wd]t-mdw nb irt.n(=i) r=s i]w n<br/>rdi.n(=i) [s]hm [msw snw]</p> <p>4 snwt mswt nb shd ḥmw-k3 imy-ht ḥmw-<br/>k3 [ḥmw-k3 m 3ht]</p> | <p>... while] he was alive and on his two feet,<br/>being a Sole Companion, Chief of Nekheb,<br/>one who does guard duty on the king every<br/>day, the Sole Companion, Chief of Nekheb, ḥd-<br/>mr of (the domain) “Horus is a star at the top<br/>of [Heaven]” ...</p> <p>[As for] these k3-priests of (my) estate</p> <p>... [in accordance with] any (formal)<br/>[dec]laration which (I) have made concerning<br/>it. I do not allow [children, brothers,]<br/>sisters, or any of the posterity<sup>41</sup> of a supervisor<br/>of k3-priests, deputy of k3-priests, or [k3-<br/>priests] to have authority [over<sup>42</sup> the field(s)],</p> |
|---|---|

<sup>37</sup> Baer, “A Note on Egyptian Units of Area,” 116; Allam, “Women as Owners of Immovables in Pharaonic Egypt,” 124; Moreno Garcia, “A New Old Kingdom Inscription from Giza (CGC 57163),” 132–33.

<sup>38</sup> Allam, “Women as Owners of Immovables in Pharaonic Egypt,” 123–24.

<sup>39</sup> Selim Hassan, *Excavations at Giza*, vol. II: 1930–1931 (Cairo: Faculty of Arts of the Egyptian University, 1936), 104–38; PM III, 263–64. Goedicke, *Die privaten Rechtsinschriften*, 47 states that this block came from the tomb of Kaemnefret at Giza.

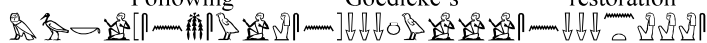
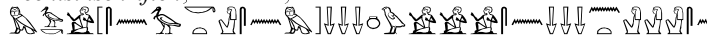

<sup>40</sup> Goedicke, *Die privaten Rechtsinschriften*, 44–67, pl. V = Urk. I, 11–15; Ludwig Borchardt, *Denkmäler des Alten Reiches (ausser den Statuen) im Museum von Kairo Nr. 1295–1808*, vol. I. Catalogue général des antiquités égyptiennes du Musée du Caire (Berlin: Reichsdruckerei, 1937), 112–13; Elmar Edel, “Inschriften des Alten Reiches XII. Zwei bisher missverstandene Erbschaftsbestimmungen in Verträgen mit Totenpriestern: Urk. I 12, 14–15 und 36, 11–12,” *ZÄS* 92 (1966): 96–99; Tycho Morsich, *Untersuchungen zur Hausurkunde des Alten Reiches: Ein Beitrag zum altägyptischen Stiftungsrecht*. MÄS 13 (Berlin: Hessling, 1968), 48–55; Jaromir Malek, *In the Shadow of the Pyramids: Egypt during the Old Kingdom* (London: Orbis, 1986), 82. Translation: Tom Logan, “The Jmyt-pr Document: Form, Function and Significance,” *JARCE* 37 (2000): 54 (part of the text with comments); Strudwick, *Texts from the Pyramid Age*, 189–91 (no. 106); Alexandra Philip-Stéphan, *Dire le droit en Égypte pharaonique: Contribution à l’étude des structures et mécanismes juridiques jusqu’à l’Empire*. Connaissance de l’Égypte ancienne, no. 9 (Brussels: Éditions Safran, 2008), 296–97 (Doc. 89); Brian Muhs, *The Ancient Egyptian Economy: 3000–30 BCE* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 35–36. See also Bernadette Menu and Ibrahim Harari, “La notion de propriété privée dans l’Ancien Empire égyptien,” *CRIPEL* 2 (1974): 145.

<sup>41</sup> For the reading of mswt, see Raymond O. Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian* (Oxford: Griffith Institute, 1991), 116; Logan, “The Jmyt-pr Document,” 54 n. 42. Breasted reads ms(w) s3t “daughter’s children”, James H. Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt: Historical Documents from the Earliest Times to the Persian Conquest*, vol. I (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1906), 91 (§ 202). Morsich, *Hausurkunde*, 48

- 5 *rmṯ ḥt nb(t) irt.n(=i) n=sn r prt-ḥrw* people, or anything, which (I) have made for  
*n(=i) im m b3k[=sn msw=sn]* them in respect of the funerary offerings for  
(me) from (them), from [their] production [and  
that of their children,]
- 6 *snw=sn snwt=sn ḥ3w prt-ḥrw [n(=i) im* their brothers, and their sisters,<sup>43</sup> beyond the  
*m ḥrt-nṯr m]* funerary offerings [for (me) from (them) in the  
necropolis, in]
- 7 *is(=i) ḏt nt(y) m mr Wr-H<sup>c</sup>=f-r<sup>c</sup> ḥft mḏd* (my) tomb of eternity<sup>44</sup> which is in (the area  
*n 3ḥt rmṯ [ḥt nb(t) irt.n(=i) n=sn r prt-* of) the pyramid Wer-Khafre, in accordance  
*ḥrw n(=i)]* with the (revenue) setup of<sup>45</sup> field(s), people,  
and [everything which (I) have made for  
them,<sup>46</sup> in respect of the funerary offerings for  
(me)]
- 8 *im n rdi<.n>(=i) šḥm ḥm-k3 nb ḏt(=i) m* from (them). I do not allow any *k3*-priest of  
*rdit 3ḥt rmṯ ḥt [nb(t) irt.n(=i) n=sn r prt-* (my) estate to have authority to<sup>47</sup> give the  
*ḥrw n(=i)]* field(s), people, or [any]thing [which (I) have  
made for them, in respect of the funerary  
offerings for (me)]
- 9 *im r isw n rmṯ nb m rdit m imyt-pr n rmṯ* from (them), by sale to any person or to give  
*nb wp-r d[d=f n s3 ikr]* by means of a deed of transfer to any person,<sup>48</sup>  
except that [he giv]es [to the excellent son]<sup>49</sup>
- 10 *n psšt=f ḥn<sup>c</sup> ḥm-k3 imn m ḥmw-k3 ipn ir* of his share<sup>50</sup> together with the *k3*-priesthood,  
*ḥm-k3 nb ḏt(=i) ḥnn[t(y)=f(y) 3ḥt rmṯ ḥt* so that (these) remain with these *k3*-priests. As  
*nb(t)]* for any *k3*-priest of (my) estate who shall

prefers to read *mst-s3* “eine Sohnesnachkommenschaft”, followed by Gödecken, *Meten*, 181 and Philip-Stéphan, *Dire le droit*, 296.

<sup>42</sup> Logan, “The *Jmyt-pr* Document,” 54 translates [to transfer what I have given them (?)].

<sup>43</sup> Following Goedicke’s restoration for this phrase:  
 *m b3k[=sn msw=sn] snw=sn snwt=sn*  
“solange sie, ihre Kinder oder ihre Brüder oder ihre Schwestern dienstbar sind”. Goedicke, *Die privaten Rechtsinschriften*, 45, 53. Sethe’s restoration (*Urk.* I, 12: 3–4):  
 *m b3k[=sn b3kt=sn m] snw=sn snwt=sn*,  
was discussed by Goedicke, *Die privaten Rechtsinschriften*, 53, who argues that the two plurals *snw* and *snwt* are  
written with the repetition of the sign (𓂏) and of determinatives, while *b3k* and *b3kt* don’t have plural  
specification, and that  *b3k* should be understood here, not as a noun, but as a verb.

<sup>44</sup> Or “of (my) estate”.

<sup>45</sup> Mrsich, *Hausurkunde*, 50 translates “Anforderungsschrift”, while Logan, “The *Jmyt-pr* Document,” 54 translates “the endowment of”.

<sup>46</sup> Following the restoration of *Urk.* I, 12: 8, while Goedicke incorrectly restores *n=f*, Goedicke, *Die privaten Rechtsinschriften*, pl. V.

<sup>47</sup> For the common Old Kingdom statement *n rdi.n(=i) šḥm ... m*, see Gödecken, *Meten*, 181–82; Arlette David, *The Legal Register of Ramesside Private Law Instruments* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2010), 38.

<sup>48</sup> For this phrase *rdi ... r isw / m imyt-pr*, see the text of Sennuankh, *Urk.* I, 36: 9–10.

<sup>49</sup> Following the restoration by Goedicke, *Die privaten Rechtsinschriften*, 45, 55, pl. V. Other restorations were proposed for this phrase: *d[d=sn n msw=sn]*, *Urk.* I, 12: 14; Edel, “Inschriften des Alten Reiches XII,” 99 restores as *d[d=f n s3=f w<sup>c</sup> mry=f]*; and Mrsich, *Hausurkunde*, 50 reads *d[d=f n s3=f w<sup>c</sup> (?)]*.

<sup>50</sup> Goedicke understands *n(y) psšt=f* in the sense of “that which belongs to his inheritance”, Goedicke, *Die privaten Rechtsinschriften*, 55. Logan, “The *Jmyt-pr* Document,” 54, translating “of his division”, argues that its use in legal texts refers to inheritance.



- 11 *nt prt-hrw(=i) rdit.n n(=i) nswt r im3hw  
nhm m-<sup>c</sup>=f mddt hrt=f [n s3 nt(y)=f  
hr=f]* disturb [the field(s), people, or anything]  
of<sup>51</sup> (my) funerary offerings which the king  
has given to (me) for being honoured, there  
should be taken from him the revenue of his  
holding [for the phyle to which he belongs].
- 12 *ir hm-k3 nb dt(=i) šnt(y)=f(y) ht r snw=f  
ir=f<sup>c</sup> n dkr=f r hm-k3 [hsf=f mddt]* As for any k3-priest of (my) estate who shall  
dispute against his brother<sup>52</sup> (his fellow) and  
who makes a complaint that he (his fellow)  
should be ejected from the k3-priesthood [with  
the aim that he takes the revenue of]<sup>53</sup>
- 13 *hrt=f hr=f nhm <m>-<sup>c</sup>=f 3ht rmt ht nb(t)  
rdit.n(=i) n=f r prt-hrw n(=i) im [.....]* his holding by means of it, there should be  
taken from him the field(s), people, or  
anything which (I) have given to him, in  
respect of the funerary offerings for (me) from  
(them) [.....]
- 14 *im ir.tw=s n=f ph hr tm šn m-b3h srw  
[hr 3ht rmt ht nb irt.n(=i)]* from (them). There shall be made to him an  
end,<sup>54</sup> not disputing in the presence of officials  
[on the matter of the field(s), people, and  
anything which (I) have made]
- 15 *n hmw-k3 dt(=i) r prt-hrw n(=i) im m  
is(=i) dt nt(y) m hrt-ntr m [mr Wr-H<sup>c</sup>=f-  
r<sup>c</sup> ir]* for the k3-priests of (my) estate in respect of  
the funerary offerings for (me) from (them) in  
(my) tomb of eternity which is in the  
necropolis in (the area of) [the pyramid Wer-  
Khafre. As for]
- 16 *hm-k3 nb dt(=i) prt(y)=f(y) n ky šsm m  
b3h srw [...]* any k3-priest of (my) estate who shall go away  
to another šsm-service into the presence of the  
officials [... if (?)]
- 17 *srw prr=f n ky šsm mddt hrt=f n s3  
nt(y)=f h[r=f] [.....]* the officials [permit], he shall go to another  
šsm-service, (but) the revenue of his holding is  
for the phyle in which he was— [I do not allow  
him to take anything (?)]
- 18 *nt 3ht rmt ht nb(t) irt.(n=i) n=sn r prt-  
hrw n(=i) im m is(=i) nt(y) m [hrt-ntr m  
mr Wr-H<sup>c</sup>=f-r]* of the field(s), people, or anything which I  
have made for them in respect of the funerary  
offerings for (me) from (them) in (my) tomb  
which is in [the necropolis in (the area of) the  
pyramid Wer-Khafre].
- 19 *prf=r rf m iw=f ir 3ht tn rdit.n n(=i)  
nswt r im3hw [.....]* He shall go off (only) with his body. As for  
this field which the king has given to (me) for

<sup>51</sup> Following Goedicke's restoration 

<sup>52</sup> For šnty=fy ht r snw=f, see also Sennuankh, *Urk. I*, 36: 17.

<sup>53</sup> Following the restoration of *Urk. I*, 13: 2–5, while Goedicke prefers the restoration [r<sup>c</sup> w3 mddt] hrt=f hr=f (r + infinitive), Goedicke, *Die privaten Rechtsinschriften*, 57–58.

<sup>54</sup> For the expression *iri ph n* 'to make an end to somebody', see Goedicke, "Juridical Expressions of the Old Kingdom," 27–29.

- being honoured ... [it belongs to the *k3*-priests?]
- 20 *r prt-hrw n(=i) im m hrt-ntr ir ht nb(t)* in respect of the funerary offerings for (me)  
*prt(y)=s(y) hnt rdit.n(=i) n=s[n .... m* from (it) in the necropolis. As for everything  
*bw]* which is produced from what (I) have given to  
 th[em .... in the place where]<sup>55</sup>
- 21 *wḏḥ im mḏdt ḏ3wt m-ht n s3w ipn m r-10* (it) is judged from (them), the revenues  
*ir nw n[=sn..... mḏdt]* remaining afterwards are for these phylae,  
 being one-tenth; this shall be done for [them  
 .....]
- 22 *ḏ3wt r prt-hrw n(=i) im m hrt-ntr m* remaining in respect of the funerary offerings  
*is(=i) dt nt(y) m [mr Wr]-Hḥ=[f]-rḥ [ir* for (me) from (them) in the necropolis, in (my)  
*niwwt]* tomb of eternity which is in (the area of) [the  
 pyramid Wer]-Kha[f]re. [As for the villages]
- 23 *nt dt(=i) rdit.n n(=i) nswt r im3h(w) ntt* of (my) estate which the king has given to  
*hw.t(i) n prt-hrw hft rht [.....]* (me) for being honoured, and which are  
 exempted for the funerary offerings in  
 accordance with the list (?) [.....]
- 24 *dt(=i) (r) prt-hrw n(=i) im m is(=i) dt* (my) estate (in respect of) the funerary  
*nt(y) m hrt-ntr m [mr Wr]-Hḥ=f-rḥ... [3ht* offerings for (me) from (them) in (my) tomb of  
*rmḥ]* eternity which is in the necropolis in (the area  
 of) [the pyramid Wer]-Khafre ... [the field(s),  
 people,]
- 25 *ht nb(t) irt.n(=i) n=s[n ir niwwt nt dt(=i)* and everything which (I) have made for them.  
*nt(y) wḥbwt wḥbt hr=[s]n ...* As for the villages of (my) estate from which  
 priestly services shall be done ...

The tomb owner here assigns a funerary endowment, consisting of field(s), people and everything (*3ht rmḥ ht nb(t)*), which was granted to him by the king, to fund his funerary offerings.<sup>56</sup> However, the text does not give details about the land property or its size.<sup>57</sup> Goedicke has argued that *rmḥ* are not slaves but tenant farmers, who were associated with the landholding and who were also responsible for the production of estates.<sup>58</sup> The word itself simply says ‘people’, and says nothing about their type of tenure. The text refers to the origin of this endowment, as being given to him by the king “for being honoured”. The text also refers to the villages (*niwwt*) of his estate (*dt*) which were granted by the king “for being honoured”, and which were exempted to fund the funerary cult of Kaemnefret.

The inscription shows that the trustees would not be able to transmit the property to anyone.<sup>59</sup> The priests are restricted here to the use of property to fund the funerary service: “I do not allow any *k3*-priest of (my) estate to have authority to give the field(s), people, or [any]thing

<sup>55</sup> Strudwick, *Texts from the Pyramid Age*, 191 suggests “[it should be divided up in the place in which] judgment is given”.

<sup>56</sup> Menu and Harari, “La notion de propriété privée,” 145.

<sup>57</sup> Moreno García, *Hwt*, 115 n. 175.

<sup>58</sup> Goedicke, *Die privaten Rechtsinschriften*, 53.

<sup>59</sup> David, *Legal Register*, 42.

[which I have made for them in respect of the funerary offerings for me] from (them), by sale to any person or to give by means of a deed of transfer to any person, except that [he giv]es [to the excellent son] of his share together with the *k3*-priesthood, so that (these) remain with these *k3*-priests". The tomb owner forbids disposing of the funerary endowment: the *k3*-priests are forbidden to sell (*rdi r isw*) or to give by means of a deed of transfer (*rdi m imyt-pr*) any of the property, except that they must give to one chosen son, who will also inherit the office of *k3*-priest, and only from his allotted share (*psšt*). The endowment must remain undivided to fund the funerary cult of the deceased.<sup>60</sup>

The tomb owner commands that if there is any violation of the endowment which the king has given him by any *k3*-priest, his share should be taken from him and shared among the phyle to which he belongs. The text also clarifies that if the *k3*-priest accepted some other service, he lost the revenue from the endowment land assigned to him.<sup>61</sup>

#### 4. A Tomb Endowment on a Reused Fragment from Lisht

The same context found in the inscription of Kaemnefret appears in a less preserved text on a reused fragment discovered in a Middle Kingdom tomb at Lisht, which certainly came from an Old Kingdom tomb in the Memphite area. The text reads:<sup>62</sup>

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | ... <i>niwt nb(t)</i> ...   | ... every village ...   |
| 2 | ... <i>shd hmw-k3 imy-ht [hmw-k3 hmw-k3 (i)pn</i> ...   | ... the supervisor of <i>k3</i> -priests, deputy of <i>k3</i> -priests, and [these <i>k3</i> -priests ...   |
| 3 | ... <i>n rdi.n(=i) s]nb rmt nb š<sup>c</sup> nb ntsn r ht=f ir it.t(w)=sn [r k3t nbt h3w prt-hrw n(=i)]</i> | ... I do not allow] <sup>63</sup> any person to change the boundaries of any piece of land. They are under his authority. <sup>64</sup> If they should be taken away [for any task apart from the funerary offerings for (me)], <sup>65</sup> |
| 4 | <i>i]w sn &lt;r&gt; nwd r dt nb(t) nst nb(t) niwt nb(t)</i>   | they should resign from (any claim to) any estate, any place of habitation, <sup>66</sup> or any village ...  |
| 5 | [.....] <i>n=f šm n smr w<sup>c</sup>ty šps nswt r mdwt=f hr=sn nhm [m-<sup>c</sup>=f ...</i>               | [... all the property which I have given] to him should go to a Sole Companion and Royal Nobleman who will speak about them and there should be taken [ from him ...  |
| 6 | ... <i>n=sn r ht dt</i> ...   | ... to the authority of ... <i>dt</i> ...   |
| 7 | [ <i>n rdi.n(=i) shm</i> ]  | [I do not give authority that] <sup>67</sup>  |

<sup>60</sup> Goedicke, *Die privaten Rechtsinschriften*, 54; Logan, "The *Jmyt-pr* Document," 53–54.

<sup>61</sup> Christopher J. Eyre, "Work and Organization of Work in the Old Kingdom," in *Labor in the Ancient Near East*, ed. Marvin A. Powell. American Oriental Series 68 (New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1987), 34.

<sup>62</sup> Goedicke, *Die privaten Rechtsinschriften*, 113–21, pl. XII; Elmar Edel, *Hieroglyphische Inschriften des Alten Reiches*. Abhandlungen der Rheinisch-Westfälischen Akademie der Wissenschaften 67 (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1981), 68–69; Strudwick, *Texts from the Pyramid Age*, 204–5 (no. 120).

<sup>63</sup> Restored by Goedicke as *n rdi.n(=i) / n rdi.n(=i) shm X m*, arguing that *rmt* is probably subject of the verb *snb*, however, he does not exclude the possibility that it may be object, Goedicke, *Die privaten Rechtsinschriften*, 115 n. 4.

<sup>64</sup> Goedicke, *Die privaten Rechtsinschriften*, 115 n. 6 suggests that the suffix *=f* may refer to an institution rather than a person.

<sup>65</sup> This restoration is proposed by Edel, *Hieroglyphische Inschriften*, 69.

<sup>66</sup> Edel, *Hieroglyphische Inschriften*, 69 translates *nst* as "Landsitz".



5	<i>mī wnt=sn ir=sn im ...</i>	According to that which they make here ...
6	<i>r irt ibd=f n prt-hrw ...</i>	to perform his monthly service for the funerary offerings ...
7	<i>n ʕ n=f r pr 3ht rmt ...</i>	There is no document for him against house, field, people ... <sup>71</sup>
8	<i>wp-r dh.t(w)=f im ... [ir s3=f n]</i>	rather he should be thrown out of (it) ... [As for his son]
9	<i>idn.n=f sw m ...</i>	He should not replace him in ...
10	<i>ir hmw-k3 nb dt(=i) n[tyw] ...</i>	As for any <i>k3</i> -priests of (my) estate ...
11	<i>šmt(y)=sn r=sn hr rmt nb ...</i>	who shall go away to any person ... <sup>72</sup>
12	<i>ny ii.n=sn r irt n(=i) ibd ...</i>	and who do not come to make for (me) the monthly service ...
13	<i>dd=sn n s3 ikr imy[w pšst=sn]</i>	They shall give to the excellent son [that which is in their share] <sup>73</sup>

Nebkauhor assigned a group of *k3*-priests to care for his mortuary cult and to provide offerings, and in return they were given “house, field, people ...”. The text is very fragmentary, but it seems that he commands that in case of any violation of the endowment by any *k3*-priest, he should lose the holding and his son should not hold the office or replace him. The *k3*-priests should also lose their rights to the property if they cease performance of his mortuary cult and transfer to another one. Their allotted shares should be passed to a designated son who will hold the office of *k3*-priest and perform the cult.<sup>74</sup> Nebkauhor then states (line 32):<sup>75</sup>

... *rdiw.n(=i) n[=s]n m imyt-pr tn ...*

... which (I) have given to [the]m by means of this deed of transfer ...

He seems to refer here to the property which he transferred to the priesthood by an *imyt-pr*-document. The formula of the last phrase of this text is unusual. It is addressed to different officials instead of his priesthood, in the manner of the Old Kingdom royal protection decrees, as following:<sup>76</sup>

*ir sr [nb] sʕh [nb] imy-st-ʕ [nb] hwt wrt šnwt pr-hd pr-ʕ hry-htm ...*

As for [any] official, [any] noble, or [any] functionary of the Great Mansion, or of the Granary, or of the Treasury, or of the House of Documents, or of the *hry-htm* ...

<sup>71</sup> Goedicke, *Die privaten Rechtsinschriften*, 85 restores as *ht nb(t) irt.n(=i) / rdit.n(=i) n=f*.

<sup>72</sup> Cf. Goedicke, *Die privaten Rechtsinschriften*, 86–87 for his discussion of this phrase.

<sup>73</sup> The restorations are proposed by Goedicke, *Die privaten Rechtsinschriften*, 86–87.

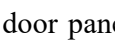
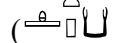
<sup>74</sup> Compare also the Fifth Dynasty endowment text of the Two Brothers at Saqqara for the terms governing the rights of the beneficiaries of the endowment, Ahmed M. Moussa and Hartwig Altenmüller, *Das Grab des Nianchnum und Chnumhotep* (Mainz am Rhein: Philipp von Zabern, 1977), 87–89, pl. 28; Eyre, *Use of Documents*, 131, 195.

<sup>75</sup> Goedicke, *Die privaten Rechtsinschriften*, pl. IX; Logan, “The *Jmyt-pr* Document,” 56; Strudwick, *Texts from the Pyramid Age*, 188.

<sup>76</sup> Goedicke, *Die privaten Rechtsinschriften*, pl. IX; Eyre, *Use of Documents*, 91, 195 and 275.

The sense of this phrase is not clear because of the break at the end of the text. It seems that he is addressing these officials to protect his property from the enforcement of revenue demands, or from the taxation and conscription of his people.<sup>77</sup>

## 6. A Wooden Door from the Family Tomb of Kaemheset at Saqqara (Cairo JE 47749)

The Old Kingdom endowment texts presented on monuments also include an inscribed wooden door panel from the family tomb of Kaemheset ( *K3-m-hst*) at Saqqara, probably dating to the Fifth Dynasty,<sup>78</sup> which refers to a land property of his younger brother Hetepka ( *Htp-k3*).<sup>79</sup> The vertical inscription in front of a large standing figure of the *imy-r kd(w) K3-m-hst* (“Overseer of Builders, Kaemheset”) and a smaller one of his younger brother, the *imy-r kd(w) Htp-k3* (“Overseer of Builders, Hetepka”), reads:<sup>80</sup>


*ir(=i) nw n it(=i) i3w n snw(=i) n-mrwt pri-hrw n=sn hn<sup>c</sup>(=i) m išt(=i)*

I made this for (my) elderly father (and) for (my) brothers,<sup>81</sup> so that funerary offerings might be provided for them together with (me) from (my) property.

At the bottom of the door are two horizontal lines reading:<sup>82</sup>

13 *sn-dt imy-r kd(w) Htp-k3*

14 *rdi<sup>83</sup> n=f m N<sup>c</sup>rt grgt Hm-dj3 3ht st3t 2*

The *sn-dt* and Overseer of Builders Hetepka: given to him in the *N<sup>c</sup>rt* province (20<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> Upper Egyptian nomes), the *grgt*-domain Hem-djefa,<sup>84</sup> (consisting of) a field of 2 arouras (.

These two lines at the bottom identify Hetepka as the *sn-dt*, managing the (funerary) endowment, consisting of a field of 2 arouras. Grdseloff translates in the sense “the *sn-dt* and *imy-r kd(w)* Hetepka, to whom were given 2 arouras of field ...”, arguing that Hetepka was given the field of 2 arouras as *sn-dt* for his brother Kaemheset.<sup>85</sup> Moreno García first translated “it is the *sn-dt* and overseer of architects *Htp-k3* who gave him the *grgt*-domain

<sup>77</sup> Eyre, *Use of Documents*, 195.


<sup>78</sup> The door was discovered in close proximity to the tomb of Kaemheset, which is located to the west of Teti’s pyramid, PM III<sup>2</sup>, 542–43; Ann McFarlane, *Mastabas at Saqqara: Kaiemheset, Kaipunesut, Kaiemsenu, Sehetepu and Others* (Oxford: Aris and Phillips, 2003), 19–23, 42.

<sup>79</sup> McFarlane, *Mastabas at Saqqara*, 42–44, pls. 15 [a], 50 = *Urk.* I, 206–7; Strudwick, *Texts from the Pyramid Age*, 241–42 (no. 158); Moreno García, “A New Old Kingdom Inscription from Giza (CGC 57163),” 130–31.

<sup>80</sup> McFarlane, *Mastabas at Saqqara*, 44, pls. 15 [a], 50 = *Urk.* I 206: 14–15.

<sup>81</sup> The names of the father Senefankh, the Royal Master Builder (*mdh kd nswt*), and the brothers (Kaemheset, Kaipunesut, Memi, Hetepka, Kakhenet) are listed on the upper part of the door, McFarlane, *Mastabas at Saqqara*, 43, pls. 15 [a], 50 = *Urk.* I, 206: 10–13.

<sup>82</sup> McFarlane, *Mastabas at Saqqara*, 44, pls. 15 [a], 50 = *Urk.* I, 207: 2–3.

<sup>83</sup> The second line in the tracing starts with *t* above the  sign instead of *r*, which is clear in the photograph, McFarlane, *Mastabas at Saqqara*, 44, pls. 15 [a], 50.

<sup>84</sup> Strudwick, *Texts from the Pyramid Age*, 242 treats this toponym as a place name, reading Gerget-Hem-djefau. For this domain, see Helen K. Jacquet-Gordon, *Les noms des domaines funéraires sous l’Ancien Empire égyptien* (Cairo: Impr. de l’Institut Français d’Archéologie Orientale, 1962), 409.

<sup>85</sup> Grdseloff, “Deux inscriptions juridiques,” 47–48.

Hem-djefa ...”.<sup>86</sup> He then translates “the *sn-dt* and overseer of architects *Htp-k3*: the *grgt*-domain Hemdjefa ... has been given to him ...”, arguing that the quantity of 2 arouras<sup>87</sup> and the use of the verb *rdi* (instead of *iri* or *ini*, the verbs employed to indicate the acquisition of land)<sup>88</sup> suggest that the official Hetepka received a royal donation and did not acquire the land through purchase. He understood the donor in the first sentence (“I made this ...”) as Hetepka, and not Kaemheset, who ordered the construction of the wooden door from his official property for his father and brothers, who were not the original recipients of the endowment, as means of honouring his elder brother.<sup>89</sup> His arguments are extremely speculative.

Comparing the text with those of Penmeru and Tjenti, the reading of Grdseloff appears to be the most appropriate. The text of Penmeru reads:<sup>90</sup> “As for (my) *sn-dt*, the *k3*-priest Neferhotep, and his posterity, of father or mother– they are the *k3*-priest(s) of (my) estate in respect of the funerary offerings in (my) tomb of eternity of the necropolis of Akhet-Khufu ... [As for] the field of 1 *h3* [which (I) have given to him together with] this posterity of his ...”; and that of Tjenti reads:<sup>91</sup> “As for the other of these two arouras of field for the funerary offerings of (my) mother, the Royal Acquaintance Bebi, it is for (my) *sn-dt*, the *k3*-priest Kaemnefret. He is the one who provides the funerary offerings from (it) for (my) mother, the Royal Acquaintance Bebi, together with (my)self for ever”.

Considering these parallel texts, the text simply indicates that Hetepka received the field of 2 arouras in his role as *sn-dt* to provide offerings for the funerary cult of the tomb owner. The *sn-dt* is usually the recipient of land to provide for the cult.<sup>92</sup> The donor in the first sentence appears to be Kaemheset, and perhaps he is the one for whom Hetepka acted as *sn-dt*.

## Conclusion

In addition to the large domains and land holdings possessed by the Old Kingdom royal mortuary and cult temples, which provided income to royal funerary and divine cults, as endowments from the king, smaller holdings appear as tomb endowments. Individuals from the Fifth and Sixth Dynasties transferred land in a *wagf*-like foundation to provide for their mortuary cult in perpetuity. Some endowments are specifically royal gifts or authorized by the king– e.g. the 2 arouras of land providing for the mortuary cult of Tjenti and for that of his mother, as well as the funerary endowment of Kaemnefret, which were of royal origin, assigned to them for being honoured (*im3hw*).<sup>93</sup> Endowments consist not just of land but of

<sup>86</sup> Juan C. Moreno García, “Administration territoriale et organisation de l’espace en Egypte au troisième millénaire avant J.-C.: *grgt* et le titre ‘(n)d-mr *grgt*,” *ZÄS* 123 (1996): 117; id., “A New Old Kingdom Inscription from Giza (CGC 57163),” 131 n. 59.

<sup>87</sup> Moreno García argues that this amount of land appears in private texts, as the inscription of Nikaankh (*Urk.* I, 25: 4) and that of Tjenti (*Urk.* I, 163: 14; 164: 17), and in Coffin Texts (III, 88h, n8g, i37g, 153c; VI, 248d; VII, 505a, 506a), as if it was a sort of minimum standard land endowment assigned for the production of offerings, Moreno García, “A New Old Kingdom Inscription from Giza (CGC 57163),” 131 n. 60.

<sup>88</sup> For the use of these verbs in the texts concerning the acquisition of land, see Juan C. Moreno García, “Acquisition de serfs durant la Première Période Intermédiaire: Une étude d’histoire sociale dans l’Égypte du III<sup>e</sup> millénaire,” *RdE* 51 (2000): 123–39.

<sup>89</sup> Moreno García, “A New Old Kingdom Inscription from Giza (CGC 57163),” 131.

<sup>90</sup> Lines 2–5, Manuelian, “Penmeru Revisited—Giza Mastaba G 2197,” 25, figs. 22 and 23.

<sup>91</sup> Goedicke, *Die privaten Rechtsinschriften*, pl. XIII = *Urk.* I, 164: 17–165: 2.

<sup>92</sup> Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*, 230.

<sup>93</sup> *Urk.* I, 164: 1; 12: 17; 14: 17.

the people and animals necessary to work them— e.g. the funerary endowment of Kaemnefret consisting of *3ht rmt ht nb(t)*.<sup>94</sup> Some texts, however, do not give a complete description of the endowment, but focus on the clauses of protection from any damage to the property.

*K3*-priests in private cults were holders of endowment lands attached to their office to pay for funerary service. The *k3*-priest passes the land to a designated son, and in case that there was a group of *k3*-priests, caring for the cult, each one passes his allotted share to his son who will inherit the office. Such endowment land is tied directly to the function of tomb cult. Specifically, it cannot be divided or disposed of in any other way, but must be transferred to a single male heir, and failure to perform the cult results in loss of the holding. The appearance of a middle class of priests who held small plots of endowment lands during the Fifth and Sixth Dynasties reflects the development of ancient Egyptian society.

The study of private endowments illustrates the impossibility of separating land tenure and the duties to supply the endowment in the manner of a *waqf*, where tenure and service are inseparable, and inherited inseparable as a package.

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<sup>94</sup> *Urk.* I, 12: 1, 10; 13: 6; 14: 2.



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