

Sense and Sensibility. On the Analysis and Interpretation of the Iconography Programmes of Four Old Kingdom Elite Tombs.*

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1 Introduction

The editors of the present collection of articles have chosen the decorative programmes of three Old Kingdom (elite) tombs and asked a number of specialists to analyse them from their specific theoretical and/or methodological approaches. "One central focus of the collection will be to demonstrate the methodological and theoretical basis of the individual interpretation. Thus the expected reader will be able to compare the different ways of interpretation and their potencies... the value of the volume will be the presentation of differing, sometimes contradictory interpretations in order to exemplify their specific potencies. It will be demonstrated how different approaches can elucidate different aspects of the evidence" (from the e-mail from Martin Fitzenreiter inviting the present author to contribute).

This choice of three tombs by the editors gives identical material - basic 'data' - to all the authors on which to build their contribution. However, the contributors have been allowed to add one more tomb that they deemed crucial for supporting their case. These extra tombs, none of which is likely to be identical to any of the other ones, will provide additional 'data' for the curious and expectant editors when they receive our contributions, and thus considerably expand the body of material originally prescribed to be interpreted.

The apparent idea is that the specialists should tackle the data as representing 'evidence' of some sort in order to distil or deduce some 'facts' by analysis, and that they should subsequently synthesise these facts into an interpretation of each individual tomb, or form a general opinion about all the tombs involved. All this has to be done within the framework of Egyptology.

The underlying assumption, even though it has not been stated specifically, is that these analyses and interpretations will tell us something about Ancient Egypt. Since Egyptology claims to represent a scientific approach basing itself on 'facts', this 'something' is tacitly supposed to contain 'truth' about the ancient Egyptian cultural 'reality'. Even so, the initiators anticipate a certain degree of contradictory or conflicting results. This implies that there is an inherent and perhaps latent ambiguity in the material, with the potential for arousing disagreement among the specialists on the outcome of certain issues in their analyses; this will concern in particular the question of what these decorative programmes *really* represent, i.e. what is meant to be communicated to an or any observer. It means that the *collective* 'interpretation' will consist of a core on which everybody agrees, covered by various layers of increasingly diverging interpretations of the real purpose and *sense* of the decoration programmes. In other words we shall arrive at various '*truths*'.

The causes for the diverging or contrary results may be due to the fact that certain interpretations are simply *wrong* in various degrees (because of wrong implicit or explicit premises). Or they may be 'wrong' by a conscious or unwitting *exclusion* of certain information levels; then, the discrepancies will exist not primarily because they are wrong but rather because they are *incomplete*. This will result in various 'interpretative pictures' of both the decorative programmes of individual tombs and the generalised, all-embracing or covering 'programme' derived from the whole collection of tombs, provided, of course, that the evidence justifies such a 'comprehensive' interpretation.

2 My theoretical and methodological concepts/definitions

It is obvious from the preceding that there are certain conceptual problems and aspects inherent in the

* The English text was corrected by my colleague in Assyriology Mervyn Richardson and his wife Helen Richardson-Hewitt. They did an excellent job.

material to hand which justify some comments. Since all authors were asked in the invitation letter to "...offer a condensed summary of their individual approach", I will comply with that request before tackling the 'data'.

-Egyptology. In the *Lexikon der Ägyptologie (LÄ)*¹ there is no lemma on this subject. This was redressed in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt (OEAE)*,² 448-458. Surprisingly, however, the article does not open with even a tentative definition of the field, as it does on 'epigraphy' (op. cit. 471-472). It contains mainly a historical sketch, admitting "...the philological tilt which has characterized Egyptology as an academic discipline..." (450), resulting in a situation where "There has been a tension between philology and archaeology/art history that only in recent decades has begun to yield to an integrated or holistic view... Egyptology continues to define itself by the ability to read the language..." (loc.cit.). Although this is a considerable step forward from the *LÄ*, it is still insufficient. This was appreciated by John Baines in his review of the *OEAE* in *The Times Higher Education Supplement*, June 8 2001, 26, where he observes that the new publication covers: "...the study of ancient Egypt in all its aspects, from Neolithic times to the disappearance of indigenous Egyptian civilisation around AD 400"; subsequently he notes that "Egyptology is not a discipline but a range of approaches to a single region and a single immense period." Awareness of this "range of approaches" is the main issue for our study as well.

-Archaeology. Baines also observed that "As in many archaeologically based subjects, it is often necessary to model social and intellectual contexts in order to situate the evidence and gain a sense of what is lost." (loc.cit.) This characterises Egyptology as a particular domain within the broader field of *Archaeology*. Since neither the *LÄ*, nor the *OEAE* has an entry under this subject, I here offer a definition I have formulated and use myself to discuss Egyptian archaeology in my classes:

Archaeology is an empirical science. By means of the recovery, systematic description and analytical study of inscribed and not inscribed artefacts and ecological data, and by considering and using all available theories, methods and techniques of

the natural, exact and social sciences, it aims at constructing a synthesis, as far as possible complete, penetrating and verifiable, about the material and immaterial subsystems, their dynamic interaction and chronological evolution as manifested in the material remains of a culture in the past.

Being aware of its considerable length and complexity, and without pretending that it is the only definitive formulation possible, I trust that the reader will be able to grasp its issues and implications by careful reading, noticing that it turns into an adequate definition for our field if we substitute 'Egyptology' for 'Archaeology' and end it with "...as manifested in the material remains of the Ancient Egyptian culture". A more detailed commentary falls outside the scope of the present study.³

-Culture and artefact. However, to further the understanding of the matter, I add my definition of *culture*:

Culture is a relatively homogeneous set of subsystems comprising forms of life in a human society, spatially and temporally confined, generally accepted and transferable, which is submitted to dynamic and evolutionary diversification; it is transmittable *intra-* and *inter-*culturally, as reflected in the entire range of the material products of that society, of which the surviving parts are the material basis for the discipline of archaeology.⁴

Since the "material remains" of the former definition are only a surviving part of the total amount of "material products" of the second, but since both are represented by "artefacts", this is my definition as given in my recent publication on the iconography of Old Kingdom tombs, including a related note:

an artefact is any concrete, spatially and temporally delimited entity functioning in a man-given context, i.e. distinct from nature itself.⁵

³ For further material on this subject, see Clarke, *Archaeology*, Preface and ch. 1; Renfrew & Bahn, *Archaeology*, Introduction 9-14 and ch. 12.

⁴ On culture, see also Clarke, *Archaeology*, 18, 30, 490, 516 (index), and Renfrew & Bahn *Archaeology*, 485, 531 (index).

⁵ Van Walsem, *Iconography*, 1 with n. 5 is quoted here *in extenso* "In this definition I combine and extend the two definitions as given, e.g., in Clarke, *Analytical Archaeology*, 489 and Renfrew, Bahn, *Archaeology*, 485. Clarke's "Any object modified by a set of humanly imposed attributes." is too limited.

1 E. Otto & W. Helck (eds.), Wiesbaden 1975-1992, vol. 1-7.

2 D.B. Redford (ed.), Oxford, New York 2001, vol. 1-3.

The quotation from *OEAE*, "...a tension between philology and archaeology/art history..." prompts a definition of *art* and *archaeology*, by linking those words with /.

-Art. In *Iconography* I define the former as:

Art is the term for the individual and/or collective product of human behaviour in which, by means of artefacts and/or performances, in a relatively creative and original way (beyond the purely functional), a concept (in the widest sense of the word) is skilfully expressed, resulting in an intellectual and emotional interaction between the maker and the observers (including the patron).⁶

It is obvious that both definitions have "artefacts" as their basic material or point of departure, but one should realise that "...although not every artefact is necessarily an art product, every art product is necessarily an artefact according to our definition... In other words: art represents a specific category of artefacts."⁷ This, in its turn implies that "...it is obvious that the difference between art and applied art is only gradual and fluent, not absolute and sharp".⁸ Therefore, "...it is impossible to distinguish artefacts in general and their sub-category - products of art - in a fundamentally absolute way... Possibly one of the best criteria to discern the dividing line between art objects and mere artefacts is the complexity of the stock of ideas and emotions – irrelevant to the practical use – that are encapsulated in the former."⁹

A pottery sherd knapped into a more or less circular shape to serve as a gaming piece on a board game scratched on a floor is obviously an artefact. A naturally shaped pebble taken from its natural context and used for the same purpose without any formal modifications is in my opinion at that moment an artefact as well.

For a good understanding: sending a spacecraft to Saturn; thereby making the latter function in a human astronomical context does not make the planet an artefact, anymore than is Ayers Rock (or Uluru in the Aboriginal languages of Australia). But certain 'holy' places on the latter, distinct from the rest of the monolith, certainly are 'artefactual' from a religious or cultic point of view. The four portraits of American presidents on Mount Rushmore also make that *part* of the mountain an artefact as well."

6 Op. cit. 2 and the following comment.

7 Op. cit. 3. To highlight the words or phrases originally italicised in the quoted texts, here they are presented in non-italicised font.

8 Loc.cit.

9 Op. cit. 4, with n. 19.

Consequently, the four tombs selected for each contribution, with their decorative programmes, are artefacts as well as art, in the widest and most complex sense of the words. This complex structure is what is 'given' (the 'datum', to use the Latin word)¹⁰ by the artefact which, by its very nature, is a phenomenon that is constituted of various materials (building materials such as limestone, granite, rubble, and wood), various media (low and high relief, inlaid colour pastes, paintings) and various kinds of decoration (figurative scenes, texts); these are distributed over various architectonic areas (the façade, chapels, corridors, courts, burial chambers). All these entities are integrated into a single object or artefact, first made available for being noticed, and subsequently and inescapably for being "interpreted by", i.e. for being "communicated to" an or any observer, as was formulated above (see p. 00 [2]).

-Communication. Minimally this term implies two subjects having "something" *in common* (the etymological base of the word).¹¹ Having *something* in common presupposes a sort of "understanding" or "interpretation" of a certain *act*, conceived as an "emission, radiation or broadcasting of (bits of) information" by one individual so that it can be received by another individual. "Something" implies that the *entire* message (exactly and originally as intended) of the act may not necessarily be transmitted. That is, the sender and receiver will not necessarily completely agree on the *content* of the message. In a minimal situation, where, for instance, two people speak mutually unintelligible languages, there is still communication of some sort, because both understand (i.e. interpret) one another's actions correctly as attempts to express something that both wish the other to understand.

10 For the notion that "data" might be better named "capta", because a scholar just *isolates* only a part of the total amount of existing data, cf. op. cit. 63, with n. 80. In this light it is interesting to note that the three tomb programmes "given" by the editors (without any explanation of their selection criteria, other than that they are of a suitable size; but even so, a completely different selection could still have been made) are strictly speaking a *most selective* set of data, out of which another still further limited selection to be treated will be made by the authors of this collection of articles. Thus each set of data only represents a certain *level* of size of the number and complexity of the data *chosen* by its scholarly "attendant". For the wider relationship between selection and existence, cf. op.cit. 51-65.

11 See *Webster's*, I, 460.

-Observer. A little earlier the noun “*observer*” was qualified either with the indefinite article “*an*” or the pronominal adjective “*an(y)*”. An or any observer is not a monolithic entity. A few examples can easily illustrate this point. It is, for instance, obvious that an illiterate Egyptian farmer could only grasp part of the message expressed by the tomb simply because he was unable to read the texts. He could not tell the difference between *descriptive* texts, those identifying individuals by their titles and/or their names or their actions (ploughing, moving statues on a sledge), and *spoken* texts, those uttered by individuals participating in various acts (cf. below p.00 [35]). In other words, although the farmer would have been able correctly to identify a scene as “a number of people moving statues in a certain direction”, he would have been unable to interpret the concomitant texts as *pure* titles, names, identifications of the actions, monologues or dialogues or as some *combination* of these individual categories. Yet he would very easily have been able to proceed to interpret this scene correctly as part of a funeral procession, because he himself was part of *Egyptian* material and social culture from which he was able to recognise the figure of a “lector priest” by his clothing. He would have had direct experience of this in his own life, although he could not have read or indicated the title of the priest among the text. His illiteracy prevented him also from identifying the extent of the tomb owner’s family members in distinction from the other officials, servants, etc. from outside the family, nor could he have gone on to recognise the sometimes subtle implications about the individuals’ exact social status. And, finally, his uneducated state completely barred his way to understanding a possible metaphorical or purely symbolic “real” meaning of certain representations, unless, for instance, he had once overheard the tomb owner explain to one of his associates the latent meaning of what at first sight seemed to be a completely “innocent” scene. For instance, the owner could have pointed to the word *šti*, in a scene where he had been represented standing in a papyrus skiff spearing fish and accompanied by his wife, and he could have explained that the word did not mean “spearing” but “begetting”, i.e. inseminating his wife, an idea inspired by a pun (a metaphor which is not explicitly indicated) on the very similar word *šti* used in scenes of sowing grain. His ultimate aim was to safe-

guard his regeneration in the Hereafter.¹² Equipped with this new knowledge, our illiterate farmer might stroll to another tomb where the same scene had been depicted, and now he would be able to isolate the key word; he might have a very satisfied feeling that he has learned something, until he happens to notice that now, although the word is there, no wife is present but only a son. But we cannot be sure that he would have drawn the conclusion that, although the obvious *subject* is identical or uniform, spearing fish in both cases, the actual *message* of the subject in the second case is “on the surface” or literal (simply spearing fish in the company of his son), while in the first it is potentially latent and metaphorical at various degrees or levels. Put differently, any *single image, uniform but not identical in detail with another*, may apparently have a *multiple*, i.e. multiform or pluralistic, *message*. The unavoidable next questions are: *Why* does this difference exist (in the last instance, between the *owners* in their different approaches to an “innocent” and identical subject), and *how* can it be unambiguously expressed?

A foreigner, well-educated in his own culture, recently arriving and facing the same situation as our farmer, would fare worse in his efforts to interpret the points discussed above. Without any knowledge of written or spoken Egyptian, all he could do would be to infer *in both* cases from his practical experience of such things that the scene represents or communicates something regarding a method of fishing. He would only recognise a skiff, a man with a spear (once accompanied by a woman and once by another man) and perhaps he would also recognise the correct species of fish. As he approached the large, rectangular, bench-shaped building, he might be convinced that he was going to enter some kind of house which, in this case made of stone instead of mud brick, would be owned by a wealthy person. The “house interpretation” would seem to be confirmed on entering a sequence of corridors and rooms, in which most of the walls were covered with figures and texts, and this would also confirm the “wealth-and-important-person” (= elite) interpretation. The lack of furniture, however, might cause some consternation, but could plausibly be ascribed to the fact that the visitor is dealing with an *abandoned* elite house. Finding a couple of persons talking inside,

¹² For the example, see Van Walsem, *Iconography*, 72.

however, might very well indicate that the house would soon be reoccupied. Also the relatively limited space for living in proportion to the total volume might be understood as a means of creating extra cool rooms during summer and, *in conformity with* the building's location in the *desert*, the owner probably longed for quietness and silence. Only the "elite" aspect in this interpretation is correct, because the person involved could not see the shaft going down from the roof to a subterranean (burial) room, inaccessible from the inside. The farmer, of course, could not see the shaft either, but he would know from his cultural background that, because of the *location* in the desert, the building was an *elite tomb*.¹³

This example shows the fundamental advantage of any cultural exposition which interprets a cultural "information bit" from the inside (= emic position) rather than the outside (=etic position).¹⁴ It is obvious that only the founder of the building can be aware of and thus read and interpret the *full* range of intended (encoded) messages and information (= "truth") amassed in his building (the tomb), and he would be followed by his social equals. But, as noted before, there is no guarantee that the complete information in all cases comes across, because each owner can add more to the generally accepted and understood information, or give part of it a new "twist" which would be recognisable (= correctly interpreted) only by him and some of his relatives. The greater the social and/or cultural distance between the initiator of any artefacts and the observer, the greater is the chance for missing or misconstruing the potential levels of meaning (= interpretation) of the messages in the images and texts. It should be further realised, however, that any misunderstanding may itself be incorporated into a new artefact through the mistaken initiative of the receiver, thus expanding the store of potential information carriers already existing – especially as images and texts – with their associated interpretations. This brings us to the next point.

-Pluralism. The main function of the tomb was, undeniably, to protect the body of its owner, first, by means of its massive sarcophagus, and secondly, by

13 For the complexities involved in categorising various tomb types, see op.cit., 10; and for the definition of an elite tomb, see op.cit., 17-19.

14 See op.cit., 49.

its deep chamber, made inaccessible after burial by completely filling the shaft. The best strategy to give protection and to distract the attention of potentially destructive individuals, inimical to the deceased, would have been *not* to build a construction above the mouth of the shaft, but to camouflage it as well as possible by imitating the untouched desert surface and then to leave the spot to the play of the elements.

But the tomb had at least one other function. The massive building served to *mark* the place where the body of an *important* member of society was buried. This aim, to attract the attention of those who passed by, was obviously in conflict with that of pure protection. The importance of the *status* of the deceased could be expressed as *social "wealth"* or "environment" (by his titles, the extent of his family and other social connections, whose status would in turn be expressed by their titles), which not only added to but also partly resulted in his *material "wealth"* (demonstrated by the tomb's size and the complexity of its interior organisation, by the use of costly material, by the amount and style of decorated surface (work in relief is costlier than in paint), and the inclusion of texts would be a further expense). Furthermore, the range and composition of sub-themes and text genres and their *contents* represented may not only refer to certain ritual subjects and functions,¹⁵ but the extent by which they deviate from and/or extend the traditionally attested iconographic and textual material could express the owner's originality, and/or his intellectualism, and/or his individuality.¹⁶ The overarching result of all this is at the time a *contemporaneous* and for the later observer a *posthumous* acknowledgement that the owner represented a highly respected and successful elite member of his society. In short that he enjoyed a good reputation with his contemporaries and that he should be remembered positively by posterity are also most important messages.

-Language games and Forms of life. Thus we reach the unavoidable conclusion that the tomb has

15 For instance, the scene of the owner behind an offering table with funerary priests referring to the cult to secure the *ka's* future existence, represents a *perpetuating* ritual, while the scenes of a funeral procession refer to a *once* properly executed ritual.

16 On individuality, cf. Van Walsem, *Individuality* [in press]. Even a simple perpetuation of traditional material reveals something about someone's individuality.

no *single* function but a *pluralistic* one; in short, it encapsulates several “truths”, revealing certain aspects of the owner’s *very complex cultural reality*,¹⁷ corresponding to any person’s interaction with the external world. This complexity is impossible to communicate by a *single* genre of texts and/or iconography. It can only be fully expressed by a *variety* of textual and iconographic “language”, having different starting-points, contexts and aims, applying different “rules” or “conventions” in order to describe certain aspects of reality. The best and most practical term for this kind of communication is *language games*, an exposition of which is given in Wittgenstein’s *Philosophische Untersuchungen* (1953). Each “game” represents one of the various “truths” announced by an artefact, and even allows for “contradictory” messages.¹⁸ But these contradictions arise only if one takes a *single* premise or hypothesis to cover the interpretations, such as an assumption that *all* scenes are meant to prolong or transfer the conditions of the earthly life magically to the Hereafter. Such an assumption creates a problem for the funeral scenes, since it is hard to believe that these had to be repeated eternally.¹⁹

The *combinations* or *sets* of language games that an individual uses in his life are called by Wittgenstein that person’s *form of life*, which is necessarily a very complex entity involving both individual and collective aspects.²⁰

-“**Superposition**”. It is very important to realise that, although the total number of language games (potential and possibly incompatible) are *simultaneously* stored in a single artefact, they can only *subsequently* be actualised by any observer, whether emic or etic. This may be considered analogous to the concept of “superposition” in quantum mechanics, where the observer chooses between the mathematical sub-language games of describing an elementary particle according to its wave *or* its particle function in order to make statements about its velocity *or* its location, but not *both* simultaneously. This successive approach of the available language

games originates from the physical impossibility for the human mind either to think of or to see two different things simultaneously.²¹

-**Interpretative process**. The following sketch may be given of the interactions between an artefact potentially expressing various messages and the observer receiving them. The latter sees an artefact and he wonders what it may be. In order to answer that question he has to subsequently focus on certain observable aspects which emit information bits which may belong to various language games used and known by the sender. The observer initially does so by tentatively trying to “attune” the “antennae” of his *own* available language games²² to the observed object in such a way that this enables him to extract some part at least of the message or information which was originally intended to be expressed. The correctness of his interpretation of the information bits (data) will always necessarily be provisional and dependent by *various degrees* according to the *hardness* or *objectivity* or *unambiguity* of the conclusions that are drawn. The presence of a corpse answers in the most unambiguous manner any questions about identifying something as a tomb.²³ A body may not be present, even when there are no traces of robbery, but with a heavy stone box in a deep chamber reached by a shaft, *and* a location in the desert, *and* the mention of the gods Osiris *and/or*²⁴ Anubis in certain texts, still lead to the correct conclusion that we are observing a tomb, although each item *separately* would be too weak to come to that conclusion irrefutably. An incorrect conclusion would be that the stone box was so heavy and so difficult to reach because it was meant to protect a treasure, but this could be corrected if there was an *inscription* on the box naming an individual described like “...*after being buried in the beautiful Western desert...*”. The names of Osiris or Anubis by themselves might even be used to interpret the building as a temple of those gods.

One should carefully notice that the conclusions reached are continuously based on a set of *verifying*

17 On existence and reality, cf. Van Walsem, *Iconography*, 33-39.

18 For a detailed discussion, see op.cit., 67-69.

19 In this respect it is worthwhile to quote Münch, *Categorizing archaeological finds*, 903: “If there are difficulties with the initial hypothesis, then problems are encountered at all later stages”.

20 See Van Walsem, *Iconography*, 85-86.

21 Cf. op.cit., 86-87.

22 See op.cit., 6-7 for the fact that any question always presupposes a pre-existent base of knowledge.

23 For the kinds of tombs and my definition of an elite tomb, see, op.cit., 10, 17-19.

24 Note that it is not always necessarily an accumulation but also an alternation of evidence that may lead to a correct conclusion.

confirmations, but these alternate with a set of relative or weak *falsifying denials* (or a single strong one) as the base for a new set of confirmations in another direction; this is another language game and so on.

-Decisiveness of text. The decisive role of text, as in the above example for the correct interpretation of the concrete *primary* or *literal* function of a stone box as a sarcophagus, the container for the protection of a corpse,²⁵ is even more important when considering the representation of a scene like the fish-spearing tomb owner mentioned earlier. To the *primary* or *literal* identification, the representation of a particular incident when fish were being caught, a completely *abstract, secondary* (i.e. purely *symbolic*) interpretation was added *orally* (in our fictitious setting). Since the mental leap involved can not in any way be justified from the texts so far available in identical scenes, for a 21st century Egyptologist another *independent, unambiguous Egyptian* text is necessary to reach this meaning without falsifying the argument. Without such a text it remains impossible to collect enough extra “confirmatory” subsidiary evidence, which by nature will be weaker and will often be increasingly far-fetched,²⁶ to outweigh the explanation. A fundamental formulation concerned with the indispensable presence of texts, produced by the purveyors of that culture themselves, for the analyses and interpretations of iconography, was given by Panofsky in his iconological method.²⁷

-Ockham’s razor. In order to increase the likelihood and credibility of the interpretative results along these lines of approach as outlined, one should realise that the fewer sub-hypotheses needed to uphold a covering hypothesis/interpretation the greater are the chances that such a hypothesis answers more questions than it generates. This is the principle of *parsimony*, referred to in Münch’s article on the re-interpretation (= recategorisation) of

25 In order not to further complicate the issue here, I leave aside the various shapes and exterior decorative details of Old Kingdom stone sarcophagi, as published in Donadoni-Roveri, *Sarcophagi*. These *secondary*, metaphorical references to various types of dwellings can be verified by representations, some of which are accompanied with identifying and/or interpretative texts from many other sources.

26 See the author’s contribution “interpretation of evidence” in *OEAE*, 2, 175-179.

27 See for details, Van Walsem, *Iconography*, 20-22.

28 Münch, *Categorizing*, 906.

Hetepheres I’s “tomb” as a funerary deposit;²⁸ in the Philosophy of Science it is also known as Ockham’s razor.²⁹

3 Case studies

3.1 Introduction

Before starting my observations on the three prescribed tombs of Seshathotep (**SH**), Kaemnofret (**KMN**) and Kaihap (**KH**), I intend to consider the early 6th dynasty chapel of Hesi in the Teti-pyramid cemetery at Saqqara,³⁰ because, like the two other Memphite examples, it is of modest size (a one-room chapel of simple architecture), it extends the Memphite area into the first half of the 6th dynasty, it has a varied iconographic programme, and it has a “personal statement”, as in the provincial tomb of Kaihap.

Using the data stored in MastaBase, the database of the *L(eiden) M(astaba) P(roject)*,³¹ my argument will follow the next phases of analysis and will be closed by a synthesis.

- objectively comparing the selected tombs by listing the present *main themes* per individual tomb,
- objectively comparing the selected tombs by listing the present *sub-themes* per individual tomb,
- selecting certain main/sub-themes and analysing their *frequencies* in the total population of tombs in MastaBase,
- selecting certain main/sub-themes and analysing their *orientation* in the total population of tombs in MastaBase,
- selecting certain main/sub-themes and analysing their *distribution* on entire walls in the total population of tombs in MastaBase,

29 *Non sunt multiplicanda entia praeter necessitatem*, “Entities are not to be multiplied beyond necessity”, *EB*, 8, 867; Honderich, *Philosophy*, 633.

30 Kanawati, Abder-Raziq, *Hesi*.

31 The data (from more than 330 published tombs from the *Memphite* area, the provinces being excluded) are collected as a database on a cd-rom, *MastaBase*, which hopefully will be published in the near future, so that the same data will become available to all involved or interested in the research of Old Kingdom elite tomb iconography and its concomitant texts etc. For details on the LMP, see Van Walsem, *Mastaba Project*. For details on its numbering system, see n. 68, 70.

- commenting on textual material accompanying the selected sub-themes,
- evaluating notes on Egyptological interpretations of certain sub-themes in the light of the preceding theoretical and methodological considerations and the results of the foregoing analytical phases.

The “objective” comparison envisaged here is objective only in the sense that the same set of main/sub-themes, as defined in the LMP, is used, resulting in an objective tally of absence/presence for the individual tombs. These tallies and the other numerical results of the analytical procedures produce clear data which is valid for any researcher. It could be supposed that the ancient Egyptians could perhaps have agreed with the classification of the iconographic repertoire as adopted by the LMP. But any such coincidence between differing cultures is impossible to ascertain when one of the two is no longer existent and would in any case be unlikely, as discussed by Weeks.³² Therefore, I am completely conscious of the fact that the categorisation used in the LMP is ours, that is, *etic*.³³ Yet, it is possible and even likely that an ancient Egyptian would have agreed with the LMP main theme *Slaughtering*, since this is a self-evident or *natural* subject (there can hardly be any disagreement about the representation of a cow being killed by men), and also with our sub-categorisation of slaughtering *domestic cattle*, as opposed to *desert cattle*, since we know from many sources that the Egyptians made a very sharp distinction between the different items in the two different spheres. But he would probably not have agreed with our separate sub-category of goats, which indeed was made *artificially* by us. One has to realise that any classification or categorisation consists of a mix of so-called natural and artificial members,³⁴ and this considerably softens what at first sight seemed hard, “objective” facts.

However, by using a consistent mode of description to identify the same iconographic subjects we arrive at objective quantifications about their fre-

32 Weeks, *Art*, passim.

33 On *etic* (= approaching a culture from outside) and *emic* (= approaching from inside), see Van Walsem, *Iconography*, 49.

34 On classification, cf. op.cit., 25-26, and for a thorough discussion on the natural/artificial aspects, see Adams & Adams, *Typology*, chapters 6 and 23.

quencies, orientations and wall positions. An ancient Egyptian, even if he completely disagreed with our reasons for distinguishing “fowling with a hexagonal net” as a sub-theme, would still have to agree with us about the number of scenes representing this subject, and their orientations and their wall positions as we do. And he could not but agree with us that a score of 253 such scenes within a total of 337 tombs reveals that for the Egyptians such a theme was of very much higher importance than one with a score of 11 out of 337. *Mutatis mutandis*, this holds true for the preferred orientation and wall position as well. Here the *etic* and *emic* determination of (degree(s) of) *importance* coincide.³⁵ However, any coincidence on the *interpretation* of the potential (pluralistic) information encapsulated in (sub-)themes is a completely different matter and must never be connected with the former.

3.2 Main themes

In the LMP 17 “Main themes” are defined (see appendix 1 for the complete list). The comparative frequency with which these main themes were chosen for the individual tombs (chronologically ordered and using the abbreviations **SH**, **KMN**, **KH** and **H**), can be seen from the scores indicating the number of (*parts of*) registers shown in table 1.

Ignoring the number of registers³⁶, it is obvious that the tomb of **SH** (dated by Junker to the early 5th dynasty and by Kanawati to Sahure³⁷) shows the most simple iconographic programme, representing only 35% of all available main themes, while **KMN** (dated to the late 5th dynasty³⁸) shows 76%, **H** (dated to the reigns of Teti-early Pepi I³⁹) 70.5%, and **KH** (dated to the middle of Pepy II or even slightly later⁴⁰) 88% or even 94%.⁴¹ The last “fact” seems logical, since it is the latest tomb in the series, and as such

35 Cf. Van Walsem, *Iconography*, 93-95.

36 The numbers only indicate a *relative* “importance”, since they may represent a large number of short registers (e.g., a single ointment vessel per register, seven times repeated above each other for the “sacred oils”, repeated twice, as in **H**, Kanawati, Abder-Raziq, *Hesi*, pl. 57, 63), which does not indicate the *variety* of sub-themes and/or the actual wall surface used for a specific main theme.

37 Junker, *Giza* II, 173; Kanawati, *Giza*, II, 18.

38 Simpson, *Kayemnofret*, 1.

39 Kanawati, *Hesi*, 16

40 Kanawati, *Hawawish*, I, 14.

41 See note 1 on table 1.

Table 1: Distribution of the occurrences of Main *themes* in the selected tombs.

Note 1. If the right boat in the top register of **KH**, south wall, is interpreted as a funerary boat (as suggested by Kanawati, *Hawawish*, I, 20 (=KH, Abb. 3) and which, in comparison with id., *Hawawish*, II, 21-22, fig. 19, seems feasible, a score of 1 has to be transferred from SH (where it is alternatively interpreted as a transport boat) to FU, raising the total number of main themes to 16 for that tomb. See also Table 2, note 5.

Note 2. The numbers in the far right col., e.g. 6,33 for the tomb of Seshathotep, indicate the total number of *main themes* and the total number of *registers* dedicated to these themes, i.e. the sum of the *register* counts in the individual main theme cols.

	A	AG	AL	EX	FI	FO	FU	GA	HU	KI	MA	OF	SH	SL	ST	TR	VA	
SH	6			3								19	1	2			2	6,33
KMN	2	7	1	2	3	2					2	28	2	2	2	1	3	13,57
H	2	3	1	7	2	2				1	8	64	2	2	2		7	12,103
KH	10	1	1	6	1	1	1?	1		2	3	20	4	2	2	2	6	15/16,62
	4	3	3	4	3	3	1?	1	0	2	3	4	4	4	3	2	4	15/16,253

would have had access to the largest main theme repertoire accumulated over the Old Kingdom.⁴²

Yet one should be very careful in interpreting the table because it is highly unlikely that in the time between **SH** and **KMN** a rise from 6 to 13 (an increase of 117%) in main themes would occur, while in the not dramatically longer interval between **KMN** and **KH** a rise of 13 to 15 (an increase of 15%, or 150% taking **SH** as the base for the calculation), or 13 to 16 (23%; 167%). The point is that the empty boxes for AG, AL, FI, FO, FU, GA, HU, KI, ST and TR (10 main themes) simply indicate that these main themes were not *chosen* by **SH**, it does not indicate that they were *not available* yet. This can be proven by checking the early 4th dynasty tombs of Nefermaat and Atet, and of Rahotep and Nofret at Medum.⁴³ Nefermaat and Atet (LMP 002A) chose A, AL, EX, FI, FO, HU, KI, OF, SH, SL, ST, VA (12 main themes), while Rahotep and Nofret (LMP 001A) show the same choice, except for KI, ST and VA (9 main themes). This shows that the latter chose three main themes not selected by **SH**, while Nefermaat and his wife selected twice as many main themes as **SH**. The only themes not yet available for Nefermaat and Rahotep were AG, FU, GA, MA and TR, which raises the question of the earliest dates for these themes.

For AG, *MastaBase* gives the tomb of Meresankh III (LMP 013) as the earliest tomb, contemporary with Khufu/Kheops-Shepseskaf (Porter-Moss)⁴⁴ or Djede-

fre (Cherpion).⁴⁵ FU was first recorded in the same tomb and GA was first included in the tomb of Nefermaat at Giza (LMP 009), dated to Khufu/Kheops-Khafra/Khephren (Porter-Moss, Harpur)⁴⁶ and even to Snofru (Cherpion). MA was recorded for the first time in the tombs of Meresankh III and Seneb, both dated to Djedefre (Cherpion), while TR occurs in the same tombs for the first time. In short, *all* 17 main themes were available from the time of Djedefre onwards. The inevitable conclusion must be that the “gaps” in table 1 are due to personal choices. What *argument(s)*, whether religious, ritual, artistic, and/or social-economic etc., played a role in the eventual choice cannot be deduced from the monuments and we shall have to remain ignorant about their relative importance.

Leaving aside the main themes A (4 times) and EX (4 times), where “daily life” or better “profane” or “secular”⁴⁷ scenes are not represented (the actual subject of study of the LMP) only OF, SH, SL and VA are found in all 4 tombs. AG, AL, FI, FO, MA and ST are found in 3 tombs, while KI and TR are found in 2 tombs, and GA in 1 tomb. Only HU is certainly absent, and the probable presence of FU is uncertain (see table 1, note 1). Apart from giving some rough idea of the relative importance of the main themes for these tomb owners, the table also shows the relative *variety* of the possible combinations of main themes between the individual tombs: e.g., **H** and **KH**

⁴² See Van Walsem, *Iconography*, 52 for the selection process from the (accumulating) main/sub-theme populations during the Old Kingdom.

⁴³ LMP nos. 002A, 002B, 001A, 001B and Harpur, *Maidum*, ch. 5 (55-76), 6 (77-94), 7 (95-114), 8 (115-119).

⁴⁴ Porter-Moss, *Bibliography*.

⁴⁵ Cherpion, *Mastabas*.

⁴⁶ Harpur, *Decoration*.

⁴⁷ Cf. for these terms, Van Walsem, *Iconography*, 42, 45, 54, 62, 71.

sharing KI, and **KMN** and **KH**, sharing TR, while only **KH** shows GA. The number of registers not only shows the potentially great variety for these in any individual tomb, but even more the differences among the individual tombs.

The established variety and differences of the distribution of the main themes over the selected tombs can be visualised much better than in a table by using *wall schemes*, where each main theme is represented by a specific colour. The LMP has made wall schemes for all its tombs of the Memphite area, and figs. **M 1** (= **SH**), **M 2** (= **KMN**) and **M 3** (= **H**)⁴⁸ show the results for our tombs in various grey-tones, giving the abbreviations for the corresponding main themes in the left top of each register (segment).⁴⁹ The number of registers, their colour variations and surface (i.e. the *primary layout*) of the individual walls is made immediately clear, which illustrates their relative simplicity or complexity. Thus the schemes of **SH** appear to be much more “monochrome” than those of **KMN** and **H**. Since **KH** is a provincial tomb, there are no wall schemes available,⁵⁰ but the number of its main themes (15/16) places it with the latter two as far as its *polychromy* is concerned.

Concerning the *number of registers* per wall and their associated vertical spacing, a completely different picture emerges. **SH** and **KH** (cf. **KH**, Abb. 3-6, 10-12) very much resemble each other in the fact that the number of registers per wall only varies between 5 (**SH**, East wall, cf. fig. **M 1** where between the door and <A (the tomb owner looking to the left) another register above the existing 4 most likely has to be added) and 6 (**KH**, Abb. 11: offering list, offering ritual, and 4 registers of displayed offerings). This is markedly different from **H**, which shows a variation of at least 6 registers (fig. **M 3**, I/09 East wall) to 10 (fig. **M 3**, E/03 West wall; **M 3**, I/12 North wall), while **KMN**

varies between 9 (fig. **M 2**, I/07 North wall) to 12 registers (fig. **M 2**, I/04-06 West wall).

Comparing the tombs in this way further reveals an objective fact, namely, a completely different *spatial* approach to the available wall surface, but to understand *why* this should be is a less objective and straightforward procedure. For instance, one can only guess at the reasons for making such a limited choice of six main themes in **SH**. Lack of space is not a sufficient explanation, since in the smaller⁵¹ chapel of **KMN** one finds 15 main themes. Its chronological position is also irrelevant, since we have demonstrated that all main themes were attested from the reign of Djedefre onwards. It could represent a local tradition at Giza, because Nesutnefer, a neighbour, closely resembles **SH** in its tomb decoration.⁵² But that only serves to raise the next questions of why there should be a local difference between Giza and Saqqara, and what are the details of this difference etc. The one thing that is obvious is that the main themes A, EX and OF are by far the most important, not only for the four tombs of the present study, but for all tombs recorded in the LMP. This is an objective fact, and one that can be easily explained by the fact that a tomb can only be an elite tomb if it includes a representation of its owner (<A, A>) and, since the *ka* has to be kept alive posthumously, offering(s), in the widest sense of that word. The focus of the offering ritual to the *ka* was the false door, which explains its omnipresence as a sub-theme of EX (EX/FD). In other words, these main themes are literally of vital importance and thus indispensable and fundamental for any basic iconography of the Old Kingdom funerary concepts.⁵³ The other main themes are apparently optional and are desirable or necessary in different degrees. They consequently represent less homogeneously interpretative aspects, which can be expressed in *quantitative* variables according to the frequency and size of their sub-themes, as will be shown below.

3.2. Sub-themes

The LMP has subdivided the 17 main themes into 172 *discrete* sub-themes (each one specific to a main theme) by using additional abbreviations; 3 further

48 M stands for MastaBase, by which the figure was generated.

49 For the other abbreviations, see below 3.2, Sub-themes. From the CD they can be printed in full colour. It should be further noted that, because of technical limits to the graphics program, in case of highly complex wall schemes and/or lack of space, overlapping register numbers and/or Main theme/Sub-theme abbreviations (as in fig. **M 3**, bottom scheme) have to be accepted. They do not harm the over-all readability of the schemes and any doubt about any abbreviation used will be removed by consulting the detailed description of the particular tomb.

50 Cf. n.31.

51 The longest walls in the chapel of **SH** (SH Abb. 1) are more than 1 metre longer than those of **KMN** (**KMN** Abb. 1).

52 Junker *Giza, III*, 163-187; Kanawati, *Giza, II*, 31-50.

53 Cf. Van Walsem, *Iconography*, 94-95.

indiscrete sub-themes (i.e. theoretically possible but not *necessarily present*) have been assigned to all main themes: Sc, Va and ? (Appendix 2 gives the full list, those occurring in our tombs being highlighted in grey and the indiscrete Sc, Va and ?, not found under a specific main theme, struck through).

The application of this division to our four tombs results in table 2. One glance at the table immedi-

tely reveals the enormous complexity of the choice of combinations found in the individual tombs when they are compared with each other. The possibilities shown concern only 4 small tombs from a collection of over 300. A detailed analysis of the complete table obviously falls outside the framework of the present paper, but some specific points will be summarily mentioned and discussed.

Table 2: Distribution of occurrences of sub-themes over the selected individual tombs.

Note 1. In the third row, left column, </> indicates the tomb owner looking to the left- (<) or to the right (>).

Note 2. Numbers in the *columns of the individual tombs*, separated by *commas*, indicate *various* walls in a tomb and those in {} the number of *occurrences* of the particular sub-theme on a particular wall (which may be ≥ 1). This number does not necessarily agree with the number of *registers* of Table 1, since a main theme register may contain more than 1 sub-theme of that main theme and a sub-theme may be even repeated on a long register.

Note 3. In the *sub-total row* the first number in bold indicates the number of *discrete* sub-themes of the respective main theme in that particular tomb, while the number after / indicates the total number of sub-themes known for that specific main theme (cf. Appendix 2). The number in {} indicates the number of sub-theme *occurrences* which may be more than the previous number for the reasons explained in the preceding note.

Note 4. In the *far right column* the first number in bold indicates the number of the selected tombs containing the *particular sub-theme*, ranging from 1-4. The number in {} indicates the number of *occurrences* of the sub-theme, i.e. the sum of the preceding cols. The number in [] in the *sub-total row* of the *far-right* column indicates the number of the selected tombs containing a selection of sub-themes, also ranging from 1-4.

Note 5. **FU**, Vp shows a ? under **KH**, because the identification is doubtful (see Table1, note 1) and explains the alternative value in the *total* under **KH** and in the far right column.

Note 6. In the "Grand total" row the underlined numbers in bold between **||** indicate the total scores (*discrete* plus *indiscrete* sub-themes) per tomb.

	SH	KMN	H	KH	
A					
</>	1,1,2,1,1,1={7}	1,1={2}	2={2}	1,2,1,3,1,2={10}	4 {21}
Sub-total	2/3 {7}	1/3 {2}	1/3 {2}	2/3 {10}	[4] 2/3 {19}
AG					
Hfl		2 {2}	1 {1}		2 {3}
Hg		1 {1}	1 {1}	1 {1}	3 {3}
P		1 {1}			1 {1}
Ps			1 {1}		1 {1}
S		1 {1}			1 {1}
Td		1 {1}			1 {1}
Tr		2 {2}		1 {1}	2 {3}
W		1 {1}	1 {1}		2 {2}
Sub-total	0/12 {0}	7/12 {9}	4/12 {4}	2/12 {2}	[3] 8/12 {15}
AL					
Lp				1 {1}	1 {1}
So		1 {1}			1 {1}
St		1 {1}	1 {1}		2 {2}
Sub-total	0/20 {0}	2/20 {2}	1/20 {1}	1/20 {1}	[3] 3/20 {4}

EX					
FD	2 {2}	1 {1}	1,1={2}	1 {1}	4 {6}
Fm				1 {1}	1 {1}
OF		1 {1}	2 {2}	1,1={2}	3 {5}
T			1,1,1={3}		1 {3}
Va	1 {1}				1 {1}
?			1 {1}		1 {1}
Sub-total	1/5 {3}	2/5 {2}	3/5 {8}	3/5 {4}	{4} 4/5 {17}
FI					
D		1 {1}	1 {1}	1 {1}	3 {3}
F			1 {1}		1 {1}
H			1 {1}		1 {1}
L		1 {1}	1 {1}		2 {2}
Tr		1 {1}			1 {1}
Sub-total	0/8 {0}	3/8 {3}	4/8 {4}	1/8 {1}	{4} 5/8 {8}
FO					
A			1 {1}		1 {1}
Bt		1 {1}			1 {1}
H		1 {1}	1 {1}	1 {1}	3 {3}
Hn			1 {1}		1 {1}
Sc			1 {1}		1 {1}
St			1 {1}		1 {1}
T			1 {1}		1 {1}
Sub-total	0/11 {0}	2/11 {2}	5/11 {6}	1/11 {1}	{3} 6/11 {9}
FU					
Vp				? {1}	1 {1}
Sub-total	0/9 {0}	0/9 {0}	0/9 {0}	1/9 {1}	{1} 1/9 {1}
GA					
D				1 {1}	1 {1}
M				1 {1}	1 {1}
Sub-total	0/7 {0}	0/7 {0}	0/7 {0}	2/7 {2}	{1} 2/7 {2}
HU					
Sub-total	0/3 {0}				
KI					
Ba				1 {1}	1 {1}
Br			1 {1}	1 {1}	2 {2}
Sub-total	0/9 {0}	0/9 {0}	1/9 {1}	2/9 {2}	{2} 2/9 {3}
MA					
A		1 {1}	6 {6}	1 {1}	3 {8}
Hp		1 {1}			1 {1}
Os			1 {1}	1 {1}	2 {2}
Ot		1 {1}	1 {1}		2 {2}
Sub-total	0/10	3/10 {3}	3/10 {8}	2/10 {2}	{3} 4/10 {13}

OF					
E	1 {1}		1 {1}		2 {2}
O		11 {11}	2 {2}	4,4={8}	3 {21}
Ob	3,2,9,1={15}	3,1,1,2={7}	2,5,6,4,1={18}	1,3={4}	4 {44}
Ov			14,14,7={35}	1,1={2}	2 {37}
Pb			1 {1}		1 {1}
Pm			1 {1}		1 {1}
Prb		2 {2}			1 {2}
Prc	1,1={2}	2,3,1={6}	1,2={3}	1,1,2={4}	4 {15}
Prd	1,2={3}	1,2={3}	1 {1}	2 {2}	4 {9}
S		1 {1}			1 {1}
Sc	2 {2}				1 {2}
Sr	1,1={2}		2 {2}	1,1={2}	3 {6}
?	1 {1}				1 {1}
Sub-total	5/25 {26}	6/25 {30}	9/25 {64}	6/25 {22}	[4] 11/25 {142}
SH					
Fb		2 {2}	1 {1}	2 {2}	3 {5}
Pb				1 {1}	1 {1}
Ps			1 {1}		1 {1}
T				1 {1}	1 {1}
Wr	1 {1}				1 {1}
Ws			1 {1}	1 {1}	2 {2}
Sub-total	1/10 {1}	1/10 {2}	3/10 {3}	4/10 {5}	[4] 6/10 {11}
SL					
C	1 {1}	1 {1}	1,1={2}	2 {2}	4 {6}
D	1 {1}				1 {1}
?		1 {1}			1 {1}
Sub-total	2/4 {2}	1/4 {2}	1/4 {2}	1/4 {2}	[4] 2/4 {8}
ST					
Bc		1 {1}			1 {1}
C		1 {1}			1 {1}
Cc		1 {1}	1 {1}		2 {2}
Ccr		1 {1}		1 {1}	2 {2}
Gt				1 {1}	1 {1}
H			1 {1}		1 {1}
M			1 {1}		1 {1}
Sub-total	0/12 {0}	4/12 {4}	3/12 {3}	2/12 {2}	[3] 7/12 {9}
TR					
C				1 {1}	1 {1}
Fr		1 {1}			1 {1}
M				1 {1}	1 {1}
Ms				1 {1}	1 {1}
Sub-total	0/15 {0}	1/15 {1}	0/15 {0}	3/15 {3}	[2] 4/15 {4}

VA					
A		1 {1}	6 {6}		2 {7}
B				1 {1}	1 {1}
[Bf]				1 {1}	1 {1}
Mm/d		1 {1}			1 {1}
P		1 {1}	1 {1}	1 {1}	3 {3}
Sc	1,1={2}	1 {1}			2 {3}
Scb		1 {1}		1 {1}	2 {2}
Sub-total	0/18 {2}	4/18 {5}	2/18 {7}	4/18 {4}	[4] 6/18{18}
Grand total sub-themes.	10/181 [14] {41}	37/181 [39] {67}	40/181 [42] {113}	35/36/181 {63/64}	[4] 73/181 [78] {284/285}

- Analysing the table for the occurrences of sub-themes in the selected tombs gives the following results: only 6 sub-themes occur in 4 tombs;⁵⁴ 9 occur in 3 tombs;⁵⁵ 16 in 2 tombs;⁵⁶ 47 in 1 tomb.⁵⁷
- Comparing wall schemes, not only reveals that *main themes* may be found distributed over various walls and/or over various registers on a particular wall (this is logical, because they comprise several sub-themes that apparently not necessarily need to be clustered in one spot) but also that *sub-themes* may be split over various registers (which may be adjacent above each other or separated) and/or over single long registers. This indubitably reveals that there is no intrinsic or locally enforced coherence for the (sub)-themes. This expresses, in my view, an *artistic liberty* concerning the distribution of sub-themes over individual tombs, but it remains another question whether this liberty is due to the influence of the patron, the artist, or of an interaction between them.
- In the box for the Grand total on the far right there appear to be 73 discrete sub-themes registered for the four selected tombs out of a total of 172

54 A</>, EX/FD, OF/Ob, OF/Prc, OF/Prd, SL/C.

55 AG/Hg, EX/OF, FI/D, FO/H, MA/A, OF/O, OF/Sr, SH/Fb, VA/P.

56 AG/Hfl, AG/Tr, AG/W, AL/St, FI/L, KI/Br, MA/Os, MA/Ot, OF/E, OF/Ov, SH/Ws, ST/Cc, ST/Ccr, VA/A, VA/Sc, VA/Scb.

57 AG/P, AG/Ps, AG/S, AG/Td (note that AG/Td in reg. 6 of the East wall of **KMN** should be read Tr), AL/Lp, AG/So, EX/Fm, EX/T, EX/Va, VA/?, FI/F, FI/H, FO/A, FO/Bt, FO/Hn, FO/Sc, FO/St, FO/T, FU/Vp, GA/D, GA/M, KI/Ba, M/Hp, OF/Pb, OF/Pm, OF/Prb, OF/S, OF/Sc, OF/?, SH/Pb, SH/Ps, SH/T, SH/Wr, SL/D, SL/?, ST/Bc, ST/C, ST/Gt, ST/H, ST/M, TR/C, TR/Fr, TR/M, TR/Ms, VA/B, VA/Bf, VA/Mm/d.

for the entire LMP material, i.e. 42.4% This is remarkable, considering the limited number of tombs involved and their small size, if they are compared with huge tombs such as Ti (LMP 049), Niankhkhnum and Khnumhotep (The Two Brothers, LMP 048), Mereruka (LMP 182A-C), Kagemni (LMP 183) or Ankhmahor (LMP 190).

Establishing the number of sub-themes that are found in only one of the individual tombs shows some very interesting statistics. Although **SH** has only 10 discrete sub-themes from the LMP total of 172 (5.9%), or from the total of 73 for the 4 tombs together (13.7%), four subjects (three discrete and one indiscrete) are found only here.⁵⁸ In other words 30% of all its discrete sub-themes (or 28.6% of all its sub-themes, discrete as well as indiscrete) appears to be unique, inasmuch as those sub-themes do not appear in any of the other 3 tombs.

KMN shows 37 discrete sub-themes⁵⁹ from the LMP total of 172 (21.5%), or from the total of 73 for the 4 tombs together (50.7%), of which 13 are found only here.⁶⁰ This means that 35% of all its discrete sub-themes appears to be unique in comparison with the other 3 tombs. **H** shows 40 discrete sub-themes

58 EX/Va, OF/Sc (indiscrete), SH/Wr, SL/D.

59 The "sub-theme" ? under the main theme SL, does not represent an ancient Egyptian option but only indicates that damage prevents us from determining the kind of animals that are slaughtered, even though originally it was quite clear. Since the slaughtering of cattle (SL/C) is certain, it seems logical to reconstruct desert animals (SL/D) in the place of ?, because SL/C-D is a common combination and is even found in the limited choice of **SH**.

60 AG/P, AG/S, AG/Td, AL/So, FI/Tr, FO/Bt, MA/Hp, OF/Prb, OF/S, ST/Bc, ST/C, TR/Fr, VA/Mm/d.

(23.3% of 172; 54.8% of 73), of which 13 (12 discrete; 1 indiscrete⁶¹) are found only here.⁶² This means that 30% of all its discrete sub-themes (31% of all its sub-themes, discrete and indiscrete) appears to be unique in comparison with the other 3 tombs. **KH** has 35/36 discrete sub-themes (20.3/20.9% of 172; 47.9/49.3% of 73), of which 14 are found only here.⁶³ This means that 40/38.9% of all its discrete sub-themes appears to be unique in comparison with the other 3 tombs.

It can now be seen that from the total of 73 discrete sub-themes for the selected tombs only 31 (42.5%) are shared by two or more tombs.⁶⁴ Because only 6 sub-themes are shared by all four tombs (see Observation 1 above), only 8.2% of those 73 can be regarded as common iconographic material for all four tombs. But not all of these 6 sub-themes necessarily occur in all tombs of the LMP. For instance SL/C occurs in only 159 tombs, comprising 281 registers, and so it is absent from 178 tombs of the LMP total of 337; this is too many to be explained away through damage. A study of the wall position indexes (wpi) of the Main themes in SL (fig. **M 4**), ignoring its sub-themes C, D, Gt, and St, reveals that 202 registers from a total of 329 (61.4%) are positioned in the bottom part of the wall.⁶⁵ Even if the complete score of 70 (?) were added to the 20 examples of an Upper and Middle/Upper wall position, these positions are so far behind the lower wall position that it cannot be assumed that this sub-theme is to be considered as once being omnipresent before any damage occurred. In short, the bare core of the iconography consists only of A </>, EX/FD, including at least one sub-theme OF.

61 For EX/?, see n. 59. Because of the larger number of sub-themes under EX, it is impossible to make what could be an almost certain reconstruction.

62 AG/Ps, FI/F, FI/H, FO/A, FO/Hn, FO/Sc (indiscrete), FO/St, FO/T, OF/Pb, OF/Pm, SH/Ps, ST/H, ST/M.

63 AG/Lp, EX/Fm, FU/Vp, GA/D, GA/M, KI/Ba, SH/T, ST/Gt, TR/C, TR/M, TR/Ms, VA/B, VA/Bf.

64 A, AG/Hfl, AG/Hg, AG/W, AL/St, EX/FD, FI/D, FI/L, FO/H, KI/Br, MA/A, MA/Os, MA/Ot, OF/E, OF/O, OF/Ob, OF/Ov, OF/Prc, OF/Prd, OF/Sr, SH/Fb, SH/Ws, SL/C, ST/Cc, ST/Ccr, VA/A, VA/P, VA/Scb.

65 L=lower, M=middle, ML=middle-lower, U=upper, UM=upper-middle [UML=upper-middle-lower=entire height of register] position on the wall, see further below **3.5**.

3.3 Frequencies

The preceding discussion leads to the conclusion that there was boundless freedom in choosing and combining sub-themes to accompany the iconographic core. This can be demonstrated by: (1) a closer analysis of table 2 concerning the number of sub-themes per main theme in the tombs of **SH**, **KMN**, **H** and **KH**; and (2) a closer look at the frequency of particular sub-themes (e.g. those for AG) occurring in the four selected tombs and also occurring in the other *tombs*⁶⁶ of the LMP.⁶⁷

As for 1, it is striking that **SH** completely omitted any of the 12 known sub-themes of AG in its iconographic programme, while **KMN** chose 7 (58.3%), **H** 4 (33.3%) and **KH** only 2 (16.7%); altogether the tombs contain 8 (66.7%) sub-themes of AG. The total absence of the latter from **SH** cannot be explained by the assumption that in the lifetime of **SH** the theme had not yet been conceived, because the earliest sub-theme, Hg (harvest of grain) was recorded for LMP 002c at Medum, dated to Snofru's reign. That chronology has nothing to do with it is proven by the fact that **H** and **KH** have less sub-themes even though they are to be dated later than **KMN**, where *more* sub-themes were available. In my view, the only explanation is that **KMN** attached much more importance to AG than the other three tomb owners. We have to admit that the *reason* for this totally escapes us. It is further to be noted that only Hg is shared by all 3 tombs, while Hfl (harvest of flax) and W (winnowing) are shared only by **KMN** and **H**. The only connection between **KMN** and **KH** is Tr (transport by donkey).

Repeating this analysis for the other main/sub-themes reveals some further remarkable points. Alt-

66 It should be realised that MastaBase can be utilised at different levels for each particular main/sub-theme: on the level of *tombs*, it indicates the presence or absence of a main theme or sub-themes in a tomb; on the level of walls, it indicates the number of walls: this will be identical to the number of tombs if the main/sub-themes occur only once on a single wall, but higher if repetition occurs on more than one wall; on the level of *registers* the numbers will be far higher, since main/sub-themes may occur on various walls and/or in several registers on a wall.

67 It would have been convenient to provide lists of tomb numbers for the specific sub-themes so that the reader could compare them, but that would expand the extent of this paper far beyond the space currently available. The reader is kindly requested to take the numbers on trust.

though AL covers 20 discrete sub-themes, again none occur in **SH**, while **KMN** has 2, and **H** and **KH** 1 sub-theme each. Only St (sheep treading seed) is shared by **KMN** and **H**, while Lp (ploughing) is somewhat surprisingly only found in **KH**, although it is attested as far back as the tombs of Rahotep (LMP 001A) and Nefermaat (LMP 002A) at Medum. In the cases of FI and FO the greatest variation of sub-themes is shown in the tomb of **H**, where again the D (dragnet) of FI and the H (hexagonal net) of FO is shared by all except **SH**. It is striking that 5 of the 10 discrete sub-themes for **SH** are found under OF, underscoring the core importance of this main theme. Further analysis of the remaining sub-themes would clearly show that those shared by at least three of these four tombs, and especially those shared by all of them, demonstrate a kind of core importance iconographically for those specific subjects. It even encourages some prediction that the chance for finding FO/H in any tomb yet to be discovered is much higher than for, let us say, FO/Hn, which is actually attested only in the tomb of Mereruka (LMP 182A) and **H**.

As for 2, Table 3 shows, for instance, that Mastabase generates a list of 31 tombs for AG/Hfl (harvest of flax), ranging from LMP 042-232, etc.⁶⁸ Since the number of tombs recorded in the table varies from 2-48, while the total number of tombs is so much larger, even taking into account an estimate of supposed damage of 50-60%, it is obvious that any particular sub-theme was hardly ever obligatory. Similar tables for the other main themes, which for lack of space are not given here, reveal the same pattern. This should make us aware that there are questions about whether particular sub-themes ever had any metaphorical or deep symbolic meaning or were an essential and literally vital necessity for the posthumous state of existence of the owner of the tomb. If, for instance, one interprets the harvest of grain as a magical means to guarantee the produce of bread for the survival of the *ka* by means of the funerary cult, one wonders why it is not found in *all* tombs. It was, without exception, of the utmost importance for any tomb owner to make his *ka* survive; so surely one would expect a much larger number of scenes of S (storing) and/or M (measuring grain), but at pre-

68 The LMP numbering runs from 000a-263, representing 332 tombs (several tombs have been inserted since the beginning of the project, indicated, e.g. by 027a, b etc., thus increasing the original number) plus Blocks B001-007).

sent it occurs only 24 times in only 10 tombs, to ensure “magically” that there was a never ending flow of grain. The usefulness of harvesting flax for the survival of the *ka* (it is not particularly suited for eating) is unclear.⁶⁹ Supposing that this is a magical way to provide for linen in the hereafter is weak, for the vital importance for everyone of linen hardly squares with the fact that it occurs in only 31 tombs. In short, one should be careful of sweeping metaphorical or symbolic interpretations of such scenes, especially if they are declared universally valid for Old Kingdom iconography and funerary ideology.

Another worthwhile feature of the table is that the lower LMP numbers show the earliest date for the occurrence of a sub-theme and the higher ones the latest.⁷⁰ It shows that Hg (harvest of grain) is the earliest, first known under Snofru. It is followed by S (storage of grain), Tr (transportation by donkey), W (winnowing) and M (measuring grain), all in the tomb of Meresankh III, datable to around Djedefre. Next come P (putting papyrus flower on grain pile) and Ps (piling sheaves), dated to Sahure, which are followed by Hfl (harvesting flax) and Td (threshing with donkeys), period of Neferirkare Kakai; Tc (threshing with cattle), reigns of Niuserre-Menkauhor; Ts (threshing with sheep/goats), dated to Niuserre-Wenis. The latest sub-theme appears to be the most short-lived, since Mereruka (reign of Teti) is the last tomb to show it; the earliest (Hg) survives the longest, lasting until the early First Intermediate Period.

Much more could be said about table 3, including, for instance, the local distribution of the sub-themes, which deserves to be mentioned and can be illustrated by AG/P (putting a papyrus on a grain pile). This is recorded only six times, but occurs in tombs at Dashur (1), Giza (2) and Saqqara (3). Such facts can be amplified.

3.4 Orientation

A possible metaphorical and/or symbolic meaning for orientation is widely accepted in Egyptology, and this is certainly justified for specific cases. The false

69 Serpico & White, *Oil*, 396-397.

70 The LMP nos. are more or less chronologically ordered, following the dates given by Porter-Moss, Harpur, Cherpion and Kanawati (*Administration*), and subdivided locally. This explains why **SH** has a higher LMP number than **KMN**, although his tomb is older; Saqqara precedes Giza in the LMP system.

Table 3: Total number of tombs per sub-theme of main theme AG

Note. The sub-themes not found in the 4 selected tombs are marked in grey.

AG	Number of tombs	LMP numbering range
Hfl	31	042-232
Hg	48	002c-261
P	6	021-258
Ps	37	021-232
S	24	013-237
Td	42	042-237
Tr	41	013-258
W	31	013-258
M	10	013-235
Tc	6	048-227
Ts	2	054-182A

door is one of the most convincing ones, which is always found in the western wall of the cult room,⁷¹ the contact zone between the living (family and sacrificial officiants) and the land of the dead (the western desert, where the deceased's *ka* was to be found). One should realise, however, that there are cemeteries in the desert on both the eastern and western banks of the Nile, therefore, the lifeless character of the desert as such was the primary reason for burying the dead there. Only secondarily was the metaphorical or symbolic meaning of the West as the place of the "dying" sun so strongly connected to the tomb that the false door was always positioned on the west wall. This is an irrefutable example of a symbolic meaning for a particular orientation of an element in the complex artifact of an elite tomb; it was always obligatory and thus reveals an unnegotiable⁷² aspect of Old Kingdom funerary beliefs. No other architectural feature of an elite tomb has such a strict symbolic meaning. For instance, the entrance is most frequently located on the east, and this is often interpreted as a means of revivifying the decea-

sed, because of a presumed connection between the false door and the life-giving, rising sun. Yet this cannot be considered as a universally prescriptive location, for entrances are also found on the north and south. There are also tombs with an eastern entrance where no direct contact is possible between the false door and the rays of the sun.⁷³ We have to acknowledge that an absolute or homogeneous symbolic meaning can be attributed to only one of these two, equally indispensable, architectural entities of an elite tomb, and that the other one embodies at best a heterogeneous set of symbolic meanings,⁷⁴ or even (equally likely) none at all. One needs to be very careful in ascribing a metaphorical or symbolic meaning to the orientation of main/sub-themes in iconographic programs of the same tombs. This can be most easily demonstrated by comparing bar-graphs of the orientation distribution of the main themes and afterwards of some sub-themes.

Fig. M 5 shows the orientation spread of the main theme AG, where the east is by far the best represented (as also in **KMN**, cf. fig. M 2 and **KH**, cf. KH, Abb. 4-4B). This seems quite logical since the tomb is located with the agricultural soil to the east. From

71 *LÄ*, 4, 607-609; 5, 563-574, esp. 567. As far as I know there are no exceptions. Even in the tomb of Merefnebef where, so far uniquely for all Old Kingdom tombs of the Memphite area on the west bank, the entrance is in the west wall, it is flanked by two false doors, cf. Myśliwiec, *Sakkara*, figs. 39-40.

72 For the aspect of *negotiation* of meanings and change, cf. Shanks & Hodder, *Interpretative Archaeologies*, 9 and 17.

73 The issues are discussed more extensively in van Walsem, *Individuality*, [in press] and idem, *Meaningful Places* [in press].

74 For the theoretically possible, but on various grounds implausible, symbolic meanings of entrances in the North and/or South, see the preceding note.

this first impression one might conclude that there is a reasonably rigid coherence between this theme and the East wall.⁷⁵ This coherence is, however, far from absolute, as can be seen from the score of 31 registers for the West wall. In consideration of its function for the false door, it might be suggested that there was an indissoluble link with the West wall and the desert. But even though it is impossible to grow grain there, 17% of the registers with a certain orientation⁷⁶ are placed there. This is slightly less than one third of the 53.6% with an eastern orientation but high enough to need some explanation. It could be suggested that, because OF, the main theme for cereal offerings (loaves, beer, etc.) also occurs on the west wall (as food for the *ka*), reference to agriculture concerns a preceding and necessary phase, and thus, “magically”, implies that these offerings (in case they were damaged beyond recognition) were given an extra guarantee of a perpetual presence. This “interpretation” would gain plausibility if these were the only two orientations for AG, which is not the case. We are obliged to explain the scores for the north (13.8%) and south (15.5%, as in **H**, cf. fig. **M 3**). It is obvious that the hard numerical facts are distributed in such a way that defies any uniform metaphorical/symbolic interpretation concerning the orientation of AG.

As for sub-themes such as AG/FI, Ag/Hg and AG/Ps (figs. **M17-19**), the pattern remains essentially the same: an obvious preference for the east (58.6%, 55.1%, 53.5%), but the other orientations are all attested. The scores for the West are 10.3%, 16.3% and 20.9%; the last rather high score (for the subject of piling sheaves) is especially surprising.

The main theme AL (fig. **M 6**) shows a far more homogeneous spread over the orientations, but again the score of 16.4% for the west, in contrast to 25.4% for the south and 29.1% for both the north and the east, is high enough to be remarkable for agricultural activities other than AG, none of which can be linked with a desert environment. An exact balance between any two orientations (as seen here for east and north) occurs again only for the main themes HU (hunting) for east and north (fig. **M11**), MA (marsh scenes) for south and west (fig. **M 13**), and TR (trades) for north and south (fig. **M 16**). The pre-

75 As suggested by I.Müller, *Ausgestaltung*, 81 and *passim*, for other (sub)-themes.

76 By ignoring ? and E? 181 certain cases would be the result.

dilection for east can also be seen in the main themes FI and FO (figs. **M7-8**), but of the other orientations for FI the lowest score is for the west (12.3%), only a third of the score for east (37.7%), while for FO the west has the highest score (24.1%), two thirds of that for the east (36.6%). The lower percentage of FI for the west could suggest that there were less fish in the canals and back-swamps close to the western desert, but that there were abundant stocks in the Nile to the east. But in fact there are no canals or back-swamps to the west of the tombs on the west bank of the Memphite area. The suggestion could be correct only if the tomb itself as the central point of orientation, as stipulated for AG, is given up and an assumption is made that the various orientations relate to the *entire stretch of fertile land* from and including the Nile in the east to the border of the desert in the west. The higher score for FI for the north (31.1%) above that for the south (18.9%) seems logical, because one expects that there would have been more fish in the Delta than in the narrow river bed to the south. The same would hold true for birds, but for FO the north (Delta?) scores lowest (17%) against the south (22.3%) and the west (24.1%). The most logical, preliminary conclusion to be drawn is that, because of the ubiquitous presence of all four orientations for the activities reviewed so far, some tomb owners organized their orientation from the relatively stronger east-west geographical standpoint, but others from one which was north-south.

The main theme of FU (funeral) scenes (fig. **M 9**) is also surprising, for if any subject can be expected to be associated with the west it is this. Yet the score for the west is the lowest (20%), compared with 21.9% for the south, 23.8% for the east (!) and 34.3% for the north. Does the latter hint that there was a predilection for “Butic” funerary rituals rather than “Abydos”?⁷⁷ The high score for the east is particularly strange, if we maintain that this was geographical symbolism for the land of the living. Even more puzzling is the extremely high score for the south wall (48%; fig. **M 10**) for GA (games), twice as high as for the north (24.3%), and far more than for

77 Cf. *LÄ*, 1, 887 (Butisches Begräbnis); 42-47 (Abydosfahrt), but note that the latter is unequivocally known only from the Middle Kingdom. But who can tell for sure that the funerary boat on the south wall in the tomb of **KH** (cf. *KH*, Abb. 3) is not meant to be connected to Abydos, when it is not confirmed by any text?

the east (176%) and west (10.1%). HU (hunting), however, is much more logical with a score of 51.7% for the west, in contrast to 20% for both the east and the north and only 8.3% for the south. But the reason why KI (kitchen) scenes should score 36.4% for the west (fig. **M 12**) but only about 20% for the other orientations totally escapes me.

MA (marsh) scenes (fig. **M 13**) show a spread of orientations on the main theme level as: 34.2% (east); 27.9% (north); 18.9% (both south and west). On the sub-theme level of MA/Os (owner spearing fish, fig. **M 20**) the scores are: 29% (east); 38.7% (north); 22.6% (south); 9.7% (west). For MA/Ot (owner fowling with throw stick, fig. **M 21**) they are: 44.4% (east); 25.9% (north); 14.8% (both south and west). The considerably lower score for the east compared with the north for Os and the reversal for the same orientations for Ot should be noted, as well as the great difference between south and west for Os in comparison with the similarity of the two for Ot.

The main theme of SH (ships, fig. **M 14**) also shows the highest score for east (36.2%), but the west is again well represented (20.6%), but this is a little below that for the south (24.6%), and a little above that for the north (18.6%); more traffic would have been expected on the various Nile branches than on the western canals and back-swamps. For ST (stock breeding, fig. **M 15**) the higher score for the west (23.5%) against that for the south (16.2%) is remarkable, the more so since those for the east (29.1%) and the north (31.3%) are not dramatically higher. On the sub-theme level of ST/Ccr (crossing cattle, fig. **M 22**) this west-south relation (13.9% versus 8.3%) is maintained, but why there is a dramatic difference between the west and the north (13.9% versus 47.2%) is not clear. Another baffling statistic is the high score of the west (27.3%) for ST/Bc (birth of cattle, fig. **M 23**), which is equal to that of the north, but three times as high as that of the south (9.1%) and not too far below that of the east (36.4%).

The only place on the main theme level where the west is minimally represented is the orientations of TR (trades, fig. **M 16**): 3.3% (west); 23.1% (both north and south); 50.5% (east). But even so it is represented, and it can be seen from fig. **16 A** that the west is represented *everywhere* for the main themes, and this is true for all the other orientations. For OF the west scores the highest (34.8%, compared with the south (24.5%), the north (21.1%) and the east (19.5%).

It is exactly the same as the east only for SL (slaughtering): 28.9%, compared with the north (19.7%) and the south (22.4%).

The obvious (admittedly tedious, but for a more or less complete picture necessary) conclusion to be drawn from this dry presentation of exact statistics is that there is no *single* metaphorical or symbolic geographical meaning for an orientation to the west. The picture is extremely complex and certainly not restricted to a purely "negative" (i.e. funerary, related to death and sterility) interpretation. Such a complexity holds true, *mutatis mutandis*, for all the other orientations as well. On the level of main themes there are *no fixed or rigid rules*, there are only *stronger and weaker tendencies* in determining preference. Of course, on the sub-theme level the picture becomes even more intricate, as has been illustrated by the few examples discussed above. It is only on this level that a detailed and systematic inventory (which is impossible within the limits of the present study) will reveal for which sub-themes certain orientations are not attested at all, such as children's games (10 registers in only 6 tombs are recorded in MastaBase), which are not found on any western wall, but are distributed over the north (4 times), east (3 times) and south (twice), and once (?) orientations.

The numerical variation corresponds to the degrees of "importance" of the orientation of main and sub-themes, and it is for us to establish what *kind of importance* is being announced or implied: it may have a literal or metaphorical or (purely) symbolic content or meaning, or it may be aesthetically pleasing, or it may be a significant reflection of status or wealth, or it may be intended to attract the observer's attention, or combine any of these. In our quest of discovery I am afraid that we do not tread an easy, straightforward road to scientifically sound and well-founded answers and conclusions, and this may well be an understatement.

Our approach enables us to proceed from the tabulation of a purely quantitative inventory of the distribution of orientations towards an assessment of the various *degrees of importance*, to move from a description of quantity to one of quality. The clearly "erratic" or "chaotic" variations in distribution demonstrate irrefutably that no *fixed rules* existed here, but rather larger or smaller *tendencies* in choosing a specific orientation can be discerned.

3.5 Distribution on walls

The varying degrees in importance of attracting the observers' attention can be investigated by using the concept of wall *position index (WPI)*. It concerns the relative position of a main/sub-theme on an individual wall.⁷⁸ As demonstrated by fig. **M 4** SL is regularly located at the bottom of the wall (78.3%) rather than at the middle (12.8%) or top (7.4%); the others are negligible (1.2% [ML] versus 0.4% [UM]). It is obvious to conclude that slaughtering was a very frequent subject and one to be put right in front of the spectator, an important one, not one to be overlooked. The most likely intention of this message (or possibly one of the messages) was to confirm that there was an abundance of meat during and after the owner's earthly life. In other words it reflects economic wealth and by implication refers to his social success.

The *WPIs* of the main theme AG (fig. **M 24**) portray a considerably different picture. There the scores are 32.6% (L), 38.3% (M) and 29.1% (U), with no obvious predilection for any specific position. For the main themes FI and FU a lower position is preferred. Such an analysis can and should be repeated for the other main themes. One point is clear, that *WPIs* are useful for checking which themes were regarded as important for attracting the observer's attention and for adducing their implicit and consequential meanings.

3.6 Texts

At the lowest level text data is analyzed to establish the absence, presence or uncertainty (?) of texts accompanying representations. For instance AG produces scores of 19.2%, 69.2% and 11.6% (?) for the absence/presence/uncertainty of texts on the total number of registers, but AL produces 30.5%, 53.2% and 16.2% (?) and this may be interpreted as indicating different aspects. If the absence/presence ratio for these main themes in a particular tomb is compared with the other main themes, and the majority (or all of them) show a high score for absence, this may imply some *economy* in the owner's expenditure with regard to the representations found. The amount of work and the related costs involved in including more or less extensive texts should not be underestimated. On the other hand, the subjects sel-

ected, with or without text, may reveal a *ranking of relative importance*, at least for an individual tomb (and its owner). On a wider scale this may show that certain patterns of particular sub-themes were more frequently accompanied by texts than some others.

The texts themselves can be subdivided into *identifying* texts, which involves the identification of *persons*, perhaps only by *name*, or only by *title(s)*, or by *name and title(s)*, or the identification of *performances* or *actions* (cf. above p. 00[6]); these can be described as "captions". Other texts concern *utterances* by individuals (commands, questions, etc.) spoken by and addressed to characters in the representations; these can be described as "dialogues" or "speeches". *Personal statements* or "autobiographical" remarks, which are addressed by the individual (usually but not necessarily the tomb owner) to the observer, are assigned to a different category.

These categories are combined in the (more complicated) scenes. Again, different values may be revealed by the scores for presence or absence of such texts. Identifying someone by name only may stress the *personal* relationship between that person and the tomb owner. The social status of that person may be stressed by the tomb owner when one or more titles are added, and also his own status, for it shows the kind of officials with whom he is closely acquainted. Giving only titles suggests a personal emphasis on social standing, but it may also be a measure of economy.⁷⁹ One other characteristic of the texts is that the *identifying* ones can be considered as "static" or "durative", because they are simply *descriptions* of configurations of figures and objects, which is "eternally" valid. But the *dialogues* are fleeting utterances by individuals and can be considered "dynamic" or "momentaneous". We are dealing here with different aspects and approaches towards time.

The *length* and *degree of precision or detail* of both captions and dialogues reveal the *degree of importance* attached to particular topics. For instance, the number and variety of texts with the sub-themes SH/Fb and SL/C are significant. The former is known from 30 tombs and happens to have been found with 30 texts, including the identification of persons and dialogues. It is obvious that Ti

78 Cf. n. 65 for the abbreviations used.

79 The various statuses of servants is discussed in Vasiljević, *Untersuchungen*, 23-35, 76-85.

(LMP 049) has the most frequent and the most vivid and complex dialogues.⁸⁰ SL/C is known from 159 tombs and 642 texts, more than 5 times as many tombs and 21 times as many texts as SH/Fb. I would suggest that this is a convincing example not only of varying appreciation for a sub-theme but also of varying “sensitivity” for accompanying texts. The fact, discussed earlier, should not be forgotten, that by far most of the SL/C scenes are located at the bottom of the walls (cf. fig. **M4**), right in front of any visitor, and they were really meant to be seen and read, and were most impressive even for the illiterate.

Comparing our four selected tombs it can be seen that **SH** has no dialogues and the rest are only very terse identifying texts. **KMN** is also very sparing with texts. Dialogues occur in AG only, concerning harvesting grain and threshing with donkeys.⁸¹ **H** has more texts, a mix of descriptive (in the majority) and spoken texts. The latter occur with ST/cattle crossing waterways and with SL/domestic cattle. The same mix is found in **KH**, which even has the same subjects; but it should be noticed that in both tombs SL is rather exceptionally located on the upper half of the wall (**KH**) or above the entrance (**H**). **KH** also has dialogues related to SH/fighting boatmen.⁸²

H and **KH** are especially interesting because both have a “personal statement” or “autobiographical text”. Included in the statement of **H** is the observation that, although he had the means for building a multi-room tomb, the latter apparently more in line with the elite tradition, he chose just a single room, obviously implying that he put more value in quality than in quantity.⁸³ The artist responsible for the decoration of **KH** is allowed to state that he “...decorated the tomb of the count Kheni, and it was I who decorated this tomb; I being alone”.⁸⁴ Such texts underscore a sense of *individuality*.⁸⁵ A very unusual individual note is the caption in **KMN**’s tomb above

80 Cf. Herb, *Wettkampf*, 452, with all the other documents, op.cit., 445-470. Note that, because the LMP concerns tombs from the Memphite area only, the total number of cases collected by Herb is larger than in the LMP.

81 Cf. Altenmüller, *Dreschen*.

82 Cf. n. 80, op.cit., 466.

83 Kanawati, Abder-Raziq, *Hesi*, 37-38.

84 Kanawati, *Hawawish*, I, 19.

85 This is treated in more detail in van Walsem, *Individuality*.

For an excellent translated collection of such texts and some commentary on them, see Strudwick, *Pyramid Age*, 42-46, 261-378.

a group of transport donkeys (AG): “(A) herd of donkeys, very beautiful to see”.⁸⁶ This puts into words the *aesthetic* sensation to be experienced by an observer, which is a rare but not a unique feature. Other references to beauty are “Observing all good/beautiful distraction of the heart made in the entire land” and “Observing ponds, bird pools, back swamps, fishing and fowling, more beautiful to see than anything else”.⁸⁷ A most difficult issue concerning texts is their potential to transmit metaphorical “charges” i.e. deeper interpretations to iconographic entities, and this will be concisely discussed in the next section.

3.7 Evaluations on some recent interpretations of some sub-themes

In the light of the preceding theoretical and methodological considerations, comparative analyses on various levels of the selected tombs themselves and, with respect to the complete inventory of Memphite elite tombs, some consequential insights for a sound approach to iconographic entities will be applied to test concisely three sub-themes as interpreted in recent Egyptological literature. All three belong to the LMP classification VA (various) on the main-theme level, and on the particular sub-theme level of (**A**), B (bed making), (**B**), P (palanquin scenes) and (**C**), B (bull fighting). All three are found in the provincial tomb of **KH**, while palanquin scenes are found in the tombs of only **KMN** and **H** (cf. table 2).

3.7.1 (A) Bed (making) scenes

The occurrences of a bed making scene or a bed among other furniture are distributed over 22 registers in 15 tombs in the Memphite area. They are to be found on the wall schemes of fig. **M 28A-B**, in the list of fig. **M 30**,⁸⁸ and in the accompanying texts in fig. **M. 29A-B**. The recent systematic and penetrating studies on the sub-theme by Vasiljević⁸⁹ and Altenmüller⁹⁰ both also include provincial tombs.

86 Simpson, *Kayemnofret*, 18, translates “Herding”.

87 Cf. van Walsem, *Iconography*, 3 on “aesthetics”, and idem, fig. 2, text above the left figure; fig. 3, left column; cf. also Strudwick, op.cit., 410.

88 LMP 094, the tomb of Ankhmara at Giza, is missing from figs. **M 28A-B, 30**, but it will be inserted in the final version of the MastaBase CD.

89 Vasiljević, *Untersuchungen*, 97-109.

90 Altenmüller, *Geburtsschrein*, 27-30; id., *Isis und Osiris*, 3-7; id., *Auferstehungsritual*, 1-7.

The former conveniently illustrates in figs. 20-28 various components of the sub-theme: the activities of servants (placing a neck-rest; adjusting the mattress); the combination with a canopy; the presence of other items (various pieces of furniture; a chest for clothes etc.); and also some adjacent sub-themes.

An analysis on the level of orientations (cf. fig. **M 28A-B, 30**)⁹¹ shows that all appear to be present: of the 21 certain⁹² registers 8 (38.1%)⁹³ belong to the north, 3 (14.3%)⁹⁴ to the east and also 3 to the south⁹⁵ and 7 (33.3%)⁹⁶ to the west. There is no reason to assume that a metaphorical/symbolic meaning can be attributed to any of these orientations. It is striking that 235 is the only case where the subject is distributed over two orientations, west and south, but I can give no specific explanation for this.

Comparing the *WPs* (cf. fig. **M 28A-B**) demonstrates that the sub-theme as such is located in the upper zone (U) of 6 tombs,⁹⁷ in the UM zone of 2 tombs,⁹⁸ and in two other tombs once in the M and once in the ML zone;⁹⁹ it is in the bottom zone (L) of 3 tombs¹⁰⁰ and in one tomb in the UML (over the entire height of the wall).¹⁰¹ This shows an obvious preference (9 times out of 15: 60%) for the upper part (U/UM/M), a conclusion also reached by Vasiljević,¹⁰² and suggests that no *high* importance was attached to focusing a spectator's immediate attention to this theme. On the other hand in the oldest tomb, LMP 013 (Meresankh III), it is located in the bottom register, suggesting that here it was being given greater importance. That the individual tomb owners gave it different importance may also be deduced from the size of the wall surface reserved for the theme in proportion to the total surface available. It varies from a relatively small square surface (013, 018) to

long single registers (079), to double shorter registers (136, 217); once there are even triple registers over an entire wall (069). These differences not only reveal the varying degrees of importance for the tomb owner but also demonstrate the very great *artistic* flexibility in the layout of tomb walls, none of which is closely similar.

The variety of all kinds of adjacent (immediately above, below or flanking) sub-themes shows an extremely heterogeneous picture which includes making a statue (main theme TR, LMP 013), wooden rowing boats (main theme SH, LMP 043), offering bringers (main theme OF, LMP 145, 188), cooking in pots (main theme KI, LMP 079), fish processing (FI, id.), scribes (VA, LMP 235), offerings on display and offering rituals (OF, LMP 235), shepherds' meals (ST, LMP 235) and servants (OF, LMP 182A).¹⁰³ None of these suggests a specific metaphorical or symbolic meaning to be associated with or to be an extension of the idea of bed making. This is confirmed by the very few texts (fig. **M 29A-B**)¹⁰⁴ describing what is portrayed. In short, neither their orientation, their distribution over the walls, their adjacent sub-themes, their texts nor any iconographic detail suggest that the "real" meaning should be "deeper" than a demonstration of the tomb owner's wealth. Again, no fixed distributive rules are suggested, only tendencies for predilection.

Yet Vasiljević and Altenmüller interpret the scene as symbolising the funerary idea of resurrection, with the latter elaborating it into a (royal) birth ritual: "Die Szene ist als Andeutung des Schlafes, bzw. des Bereichs, in dem der Übergang aus der diesseitigen in die jenseitige Welt und umgekehrt stattfindet, zu verstehen".¹⁰⁵ A critical reading of their texts, however, reveals that the authors reach their far-reaching conclusions, concerning an ontological aspect essential for any ancient Egyptian individual, by means of a very speculative line of reasoning. This consists of several premises ("Annahmen") and suggestions (which are expressed in German with the conjunctive and not the indicative, because the statements are not based on strong evidence), and these are supported by unconvincing or rarely attested subsidiary "data". A few questions on a very

91 Cf. also Vasiljević, *op.cit.*, 99, 5.2.1.3.

92 LMP 258 is uncertain and was located at Dashur.

93 LMP 039, 069 (3 times), 136 (2 times), 217 (2 times); all are located in Saqqara..

94 LMP 018, 043, 094, 043 is located in Saqqara., the others at Giza.

95 LMP 013, 145, 235; all are located in Giza.

96 LMP 063A (2 times), 079, 182A (2 times), 188, 235; 235 is located in Giza, the others in Saqqara.

97 LMP 018, 079, 136, 145, 188, 235 (2 times).

98 LMP 063A, 217.

99 LMP 043, 182A.

100 LMP 013, 039, 258.

101 LMP 069.

102 Vasiljević, *Untersuchungen*, 106.

103 Cf. *op.cit.*, 99-100.

104 Cf., *op.cit.*, 100-101.

105 *Op.cit.*, 108; quoted, too by Altenmüller, *Auferstehungsritual*, 5, with n. 31.

limited selection of their arguments will illustrate this point.

Vasiljević interprets a door adjacent to the bed making scene as a transitional spot between existence in the sphere of the living and the dead¹⁰⁶ and suggests a symbolic meaning for the scene. But what is the evidence for this? Fig. **M 28A-B** shows that a door is present in only 6 of the 15 walls, so a *minority* (40%) of instances is being used to prove a point, while the fact that the *majority* (60%) of instances, which would suggest that the door is *not* prescriptively connected, is ignored. Moreover, that a door is adjacent to very many other sub-themes she completely leaves out of consideration, for this would suggest or “prove” little or nothing.¹⁰⁷

Altenmüller states that “Die Szene ist vielfach dargestellt”,¹⁰⁸ but is hardly correct to describe 15 out of 339 (4.4%) tombs from the Memphite area as “vielfach”. Even if this score were to be raised by those tombs where the scene has been destroyed, it would not be raised by much and would still be relatively unimportant, certainly not enough to make it a core iconographic entity. He also states that the context of the bed, similar to the bed in the royal birth cycle, indicates that it “...für die Regeneration des Grabherrn vorbereitet wird”.¹⁰⁹ But which adjacent main/sub-theme on the wall schemes of fig. **M 28 A-B** suggests such a line of thought? And is it true that the scene just concerns the “Grabherr” whose “...Ehefrau ist das Medium der Auferstehung für den Grabherrn. Sie reproduziert nach erfolgter Zeugung den Grabherrn im Sohn”?¹¹⁰ This still fails to explain the fact that two *women*, Meresankh III and Nebet, are also showing this scene. Meresankh is even the oldest attested example of this scene. Does the scene refer to her resurrection too, and if so, what is the role of the husband here? Is *he* the medium that guarantees *her* rebirth as a *daughter* by giving birth to *herself*? Or is there no need for women to be similarly reborn? If not, the regenerated men should be pitied in the hereafter.

106 Vasiljević, op.cit., 107.

107 Does it mean, for instance, that in fig. **M 28 B**, LMP 079, the sub-themes KI (kitchen scenes)/Cp (cooking in pots), Fp (food preparation), Pb (plucking birds), and FI (fishing)/Pr (processing of fish), and ST (stock cattle-breeding)/M (milking) imply deep funerary (“resurrective”) symbolism?

108 Altenmüller, *Isis und Osiris*, 3.

109 Idem, *Isis und Osiris*, 5.

110 Idem, *Auferstehungsritual*, 7.

Vasiljević and Altenmüller further try to bolster the funerary character of the bed by referring to the fact that in *some* (but not all) cases the canopy found with some bed scenes is decorated with a *kheker*-frieze; and they even suggest a link with the “Butic” funerary ceremonies.¹¹¹ A similar line is taken with the shrine-like artefact, behind the seated tomb owner and his wife, in the tomb of Chenty in Thebes (TT 405).¹¹² It is interpreted by Altenmüller as a “Bettenhaus”, identifying it with the bed and canopy scene behind the tomb owner (who is alone) in the tomb of Unasankh (TT 413).¹¹³ The shrine also shows *djed*-pillars, *tyt*-signs and a central *sa*-sign. Interpreting the *kheker*-frieze as funerary, because it is frequently found in funerary complexes (the earliest being that of Djoser), does not make it an attribute with a typical funerary “charge”. This completely overlooks the fact that it originates in the mat-and-wood building methods¹¹⁴ of ancient Egypt, and as such it is a completely *neutral, architectural* element. The appearance of funerary complexes refers to the actual architecture, so it is obvious that such a detail, besides the *cavetto* and *torus* mouldings,¹¹⁵ is included *without any metaphorical* implications. Taking a funerary context as the basis on which to ascribe a funerary meaning to a *kheker*-motif on a shrine reverses the order of things. This is not contradicted by the *djed*-, *sa*- and *tyt*-signs, which simply indicate “durability”, “protection”, and “life” (?).¹¹⁶ They could be easily integrated as useful and desirable elements in architecture and “architectonised” furniture, without construing those artefacts as religious or funerary objects. Does, for instance, the *bombé*-roof of a wig chest,¹¹⁷ because it is similar to the roof of the construction in which Anubis mummifies the deceased,¹¹⁸ turn it, the wig included, into an object with a “real” funerary meaning? Or do the two tied up, outward bending, lotus flower, on Heterpheres’ chair,¹¹⁹ because the motif is also found on

111 Vasiljević, *Untersuchungen*, 107; Altenmüller, op.cit., 3-4.

112 Saleh, *Old-Kingdom Tombs*, pl. 14.

113 Op.cit., pl. 4; Altenmüller, op.cit., 4.

114 Arnold, *Lexikon*, 49-50, 109-110.

115 Op.cit., 108.

116 In view of the problems concerning the exact origin and meaning of the last object (LÄ, 204, “Isisknoten”), a question mark is justified.

117 Baker, *Furniture*, 123, fig. 169.

118 Altenmüller, op.cit., 4.

119 Baker, op.cit., 38, fig. 28.

top of the “palace-façade” motif on Old Kingdom sarcophagi,¹²⁰ “actually” make it into a funerary artefact? The straight lotus in the centre on the chair (it is always absent from the sarcophagi) strongly suggests that the motif is used strictly aesthetically. Greek temple columns on 17th century Dutch linen-cupboards do not turn them into objects with a “real” Greek religious meaning, anymore than a house with a horseshoe over its door “symbolically” turns into a stable, to refer to the human “herd instinct”.

Finally, Altenmüller finds indubitable “proof” for the funerary interpretation of the bed¹²¹ by comparing two scenes of sailing ships in the tombs of Mereruka and Mehu. In Mereruka a servant is making the bed in a cabin by adjusting the head rest; in Mehu the body of the tomb owner is lying on the bed,¹²² and this is interpreted as a corpse.¹²³ This raises several questions.

First, is not it strange that *no* depiction of a corpse is ever found anywhere in the Old Kingdom except here? To my knowledge the earliest, really certain representations of deceased persons are found on 11th dynasty coffins from such places as Gebelein and the tomb of Djar in Thebes (TT 366).¹²⁴ Why should the interpretation not be that, here, even though for the first time, it is a *sleeping* person that is depicted? The ship is the last in a long row on the far left side of the wall, with Mehu observing from the far right side. Although the texts above the last two ships explicitly mention the west, this is far from being unambiguous proof that a funerary journey to the necropolis is represented. Such an inference cannot be drawn even from the “circumstantial evidence”, such as the “unsolemn”, distracting details as sailors rigging the tackle and the man holding a dog and a monkey by a leash. And in particular there is no sign of the two djertys, wailing women personifying Isis and Nephthys.

Secondly, if such a long row of ships really concerns a funerary journey, would it not be expected that at least one ship would display the turned head

of a hedgehog (“Igelkopf”)? Altenmüller himself admits that this type of ship was a typical funerary boat.¹²⁵ However, this motif is completely absent in all the large 6th dynasty tombs at Saqqara, though it is found in our small (!) tomb of **SH**. (**SH**, Abb. 5).

Thirdly, the text in front of Mehu, in a column over 3 registers, merely states that he is “Observing the arrival of ships, field labour and the coming of his estates” (without any specification of the kind of ships or any allusion to a funerary aspect).¹²⁶ To exclude one ship as funerary from what is otherwise a coherent, secular configuration is unlikely. Theoretically, it could be that Mehu is observing his own funeral, but we do not have any other examples of a standing or seated tomb owner where he is observing his own obsequies. Therefore, it is more logical to interpret Mehu’s scene as a subsequent “artistic” consequence or elaboration after the introduction of the unique bed-making scene in the context of travelling ships by Mereruka. The two men were more or less contemporaneous, so even the same artist may have been involved.¹²⁷ It is in line with the general tendency of art in the Old Kingdom to extend or elaborate one phase of a situation by another.¹²⁸

These are some of the questions arising about the interpretation of the bed-making scenes. In my view, all of them can be answered or be dismissed by considering the scenes as one of the themes, or rather “metaphors” or “symbols”, which demonstrate the *material wealth* of the tomb owner, irrespective of sex and/or supposed location, whether indoors or outdoors.¹²⁹ This is confirmed when we consider the additional furniture and personal paraphernalia which is also to be seen. It all goes to demonstrate, in various degrees, the patron’s attitude towards the ways of representing this sub-theme. Having a proper bed is already a sign of wealth, having a bed under a canopy shows off one’s wealth even better, so does a chair, a carrying chair, a fan and chests of clothes and ointments etc.¹³⁰ This idea seems parti-

120 Donadoni-Roveri, *Sarcofagi*, pls. 23,1; 24-25, 27; 30; 34.

121 “Über die Bestimmung dieses Bettes kann daher kein Zweifel bestehen. Das Bett ist für den Verstorbenen bestimmt und dient die Aufbarung des Leichnams”, op.cit., 2-3.

122 Duell, *Mereruka*, 2, pl. 141; Altenmüller, *Mehu*, pl. 19a.

123 Altenmüller, *Auferstehungsritual*, 2.

124 Lapp, *Typologie*, 187-188; Vandersleyen, *Ägypten*, 298-299, pl. 266.

125 Altenmüller, *Igelkopfbug*, 15: “In allen Fällen handelt es sich um eine Totenfahrt”.

126 Altenmüller, *Mehu*, 113, pl. 18.

127 Op.cit., 114; he quite rightly observes the almost exact identity of the legends above the ships.

128 Cf. e.g. Vasiljević, *Untersuchungen*, 120-121.

129 Discussed, op.cit., 104-105.

130 See Vasiljević’s list of objects extensively treated in her chapter 3, op.cit., 41-73, and her illustrations, esp. 20-21, 28.

culary marked in Khenty's tomb in Thebes, where bed making and two other beds under canopies are accompanied by a heap of cloth, some ointment and other vessels and even a scribe's palette (referring to the owner's literacy, so necessary for a successful career).¹³¹ Various details, such as a repetition of the elements, the size of the surface etc., all reflect the various possibilities (some even "contradictory") open to a tomb owner to deal with this sub-theme (rare as it is) in a *personal* manner. For one it is enough to show a simple bed to communicate the message, while another adds emphasis with extra personnel, luxurious furniture and personal commodities. This results in very different visual impressions of the walls, which may be "quiet" or "not-so-quiet". Again they reveal differing *aesthetic aspects* which were appreciated by the tomb owners, although it is quite possible that they themselves were not completely conscious of this.¹³²

The preceding example demonstrates that the conclusions drawn by Vasiljević and Altenmüller are much more frequently (perhaps exclusively) *associative* than they are *cogent*. Cogent arguments are the result of logical deductions from "hard" visual facts (the representations and the accompanying texts) as the basis for an interpretation, and do not rely on unproven assumptions.¹³³ These create all kinds of problems, which have to be remedied by adducing several other, often equally unproven, arguments. However, interpreting the various versions of the scene as an expression of the tomb owner's high social and wealthy position during his/her life, and also posthumously by extending this important aspect of commemorating him/her for posterity (the very reason for which the tomb was created), raises no (or at least less) questions and explains more of them. It should be noticed that the status suggested by many of the items accompany-

ing the bed-making scenes (sandals, carrying chair or palanquin, staff, fan, mirror, bed and chair) was recognized and stressed by Vasiljević herself,¹³⁴ yet this has been completely subordinated to what amounts to a speculative Egyptological funerary interpretation.

3.7.2 (B) *Palanquin scenes*

The second item listed by Vasiljević in the preceding paragraph is the carrying chair or palanquin, and this deserves a further brief discussion. It is treated in some detail by her and it has been the subject of the unpublished MA-thesis of one of my students.¹³⁵ It is found in **KMN**, **H** and **KH** (cf. table 2) and in 38 LMP tombs over 43 registers. In the first place, it should be observed that it is almost three times as frequent as the bed-making sub-theme, and so more important. Of the certain orientations (37 out of 43), the north is represented by 32.4 %, the east by 37.8%, the south by 13.5% and the west by 16.2% (fig. **M 31**).¹³⁶ It is sometimes found *three* times: once on the east, north and south, and twice on the east, north and west walls (LMP 048, "The Two Brothers" and 182A, Mereruka respectively). In one tomb (LMP 182C, Mereruka's son) it is found twice, on the east and north. Although on most occasions it is on the east, it is found also on all orientations, again indicating that there is no reason for ascribing any particular geographical symbolism to these scenes. Also all variations of *WPIs* are represented. Although the scene can be quite small and "tucked away" (cf. **KMN**, Abb. 7 on the lowest register, but right in front of the observer (!)), it is usually of considerable size, occupying the top or top-middle position (cf. **KH**, Abb. 5; **H**, pl. 55). The adjacent main themes comprise AG, AL, FI, FO, GA, KI, MA, OF, SH, SL, VA and EX; offerings are by far the most frequent, but since FU (funeral) is totally absent, any funerary connotation would be speculative.¹³⁷ What is very striking is that the scene is found adjacent to a door only 5 times. As it is obvious that the palanquin is associated with "typical" outdoor or "moving around" activity; one might have expected this would have been a more usual position for it than for the bed-

131 Saleh, *Tombs*, pl. 13; this scene is not commented upon by Vasiljević and Altenmüller.

132 Cf. Van Walsem, *Iconography*, 12.

133 See Vasiljević, *op.cit.*, 105, n. 553, quoting Rachewiltz and Hassan as authorities, who bluntly gave a funerary interpretation without proving it themselves. On p. 106 she states, because of a (supposed) strong connection of the scene with the offering list and "magazine representations": "...halte ich es für möglich [apparently it is not certain at all], dass sie ein relative selbständiges Thema aus dem Bereich der ägyptischen Jenseitsvorstellungen ist". Cf. also Weeks, *Art*, 59 on unwritten assumptions.

134 *Op.cit.*, 73.

135 *Op.cit.*, 56-63 with figures 10-19; H. Oost, *Palanquin-scenes*.

136 The figures are based on more recent data than Oost's study, so I do not give his figures.

137 Oost, *op.cit.*, 40-41, tables 5.15-20.

making scene. Oost made a careful study of the number of porters (varying from 2-20),¹³⁸ the presence of sun-blind carriers,¹³⁹ of a canopy¹⁴⁰ and of animals (68.8% were dogs and 31.3% monkeys).¹⁴¹

There are different types of palanquin, simple carrying chairs or litters¹⁴² and huge complex ones with canopies,¹⁴³ and two different types of accompanying texts. This supports Vasiljević's observation: "Den Belegen nach ist der Auszug in der Sänfte nicht eindeutig".¹⁴⁴ She refers to the text in the tomb of Nyankhkhnum and Khnumhotep (LMP 048, "The Two Brothers"), where it says that the tomb owner in the palanquin, carried by donkeys, is heading for the west, and connects it with the "palanquin song", which is concerned with the "...Rückkehr des Verstorbenen in das Diesseits..." and "...verweist auf die entsprechende Bedeutung der ganzen Szene."¹⁴⁵ (loc.cit.). This again elicits the interpretation as a funerary sphere. The interpretation of the "palanquin song", sung by the porters, as referring to the deceased's posthumous return to the land of the living, is based on an ingenuous but complicated analysis of this text by Altenmüller in *Sänftenlied*.¹⁴⁶

There is no space here to enter into a detailed comparative discussion of Altenmüller's translation and philological commentary. Therefore, I shall simply give my own translation with some notes; for the variants of the hieroglyphic text the reader is referred to pp. 20-22 of BSEG. Taking mainly variant **D**, from the tomb of Ipi (LMP 221, Pepi I), as the most complete but not necessary least corrupt text,¹⁴⁶ the following translation creates the fewest problems, if any:

"I go down^a to the carried one^b that I may be prosperous^c, I go down to the carried^b one that I may be

138 Op.cit., 44, fig. 5.13; 138, table 5.22; 12 porters were found, e.g. in LMP 182A (Mereruka); 14 with his son (LMP 182C); and 20 in Kagemni's tomb (LMP 183).

139 Op.cit., 51, figure 5.21, table 5.29.

140 Loc. cit., fig. 5.22, table 5.30.

141 Op.cit., 55, fig. 5.24, table 5.34.

142 Vasiljević, op.cit., figs. 10, 16 (carried by donkeys), 18; cf. also fig. 28, "Hetepheres-type" carrying-chair near bed-making scene.

143 Op.cit., figs. 12, 14-15, 17.

144 Vasiljević, op.cit., 95.

145 Her note 477 in the quotation refers to this; it was published in BSEG, 9-10, 15-30.

146 Altenmüller, op.cit., 24 supposes that **D** has kept the original text

healthy^c, (Oh) Sokar^d, who is upon his sand, grant (lit. give)^e that NN be protected^f. I act^g much^h like I wishⁱ; I prefer (lit. like) her^j to be (lit. being full^k than to be empty (lit. more than when she is empty^k)."

a) I take *ih3* as a 1st person emphatic *sdm.f* with *i*-augment (cf., Edel *Grammatik* § 451) referring to the porter, not an imperative, as understood by most translators (cf. Altenmüller, op.cit., 23-24; Edel, op.cit., § 602). However, Altenmüller chooses for the *deceased* i.e. the person carried, as the subject and the person addressed (op.cit., 24). In doing this he fundamentally differs from the other translators, because it obliges him to make the *mhnk* correspond with the porters through some convoluted reasoning, taking *wd3* and *snb* as participles (op.cit., 23-24).

b) Although the basic meaning of *hnk* is "to endow/present (someone) with, offer" *WB*, 3, 17, 5 ff., op.cit., 118, 4 quotes *PT*, 1628, where *hnk* with the preposition *hr* means "tragen", and Faulkner, *PT*, 244, translates it as "...that he may be burdened with you..." *Mhnk*, then, may be considered a nominal *m*-form of an *active* participle (Edel, op.cit., § 256), in the sense of "the one who burdens" < "the one who presents (his weight)" > "the one to be carried". Also, if one adheres to the standard meaning of *mhnk* as "the bestowed one, trusted one, confidant, intimate" (Altenmüller, op.cit., 24-25; *WB*, 2, 129, 7; Jones, *Titles*, 1, 449, 1680, where it is interpreted as a *passive* nominal *m*-form as cited as an example by Edel, op.cit., § 256), it does not affect the tenor of our translation, which is exactly in tune with the situation.

c) Here, too, I take *wd3* and *snb* as a 1st person *sdm.f*, implying that, by doing his job properly, as a consequence or reward, the porter will be prosperous and healthy. But, here again, one may prefer to take it as a 3rd person optative pseudo-participle (Edel, op.cit., § 591-592), referring to the wish that the person carried will be prosperous and healthy; carrying him avoids bodily discomfort or strain.

d) The reference to Sokar in variants **A** and **E**, and its variant *Dja* (**D**, Altenmüller, 25-27), does not necessarily give the scene a funerary meaning. Variant **A** is located in Giza, the original home of Sokar, and his the funerary association developed secondarily from his involvement with craftsmanship (*LÄ*, 5, 1056-1058, 1063). The address to Sokar by the porters is very close at hand and is most appropriate when one realises that the *henu-bark* containing his image (an analogue to the carrying chair) was originally drawn on a sledge but was

later *carried* (op.cit., 5, 1067, last paragraph). Incidentally, it may not be too far-fetched to see a pun between (m)hmk and hnw.

e) The spelling of *im* in the oldest variant **A** and the later one **E** with the arm with triangular loaf (X 8), Gardiner, EG, D 37, instead of the arm with bowl, D 39: *hmk*, in variant **D**, is a normal spelling of the imperative “give” (Edel, op.cit., § 607). Since both signs are interchangeable, the most logical explanation is to take D 39 in **D** as a misreading for D 37, avoiding Altenmüller’s “Beschenke nicht...” (see below f).

f) *Hw* is the normal passive *sdm<w>.f* following a form of *rdi* (Edel, op.cit., § 564). Since the oldest variant, **A**, has D 43 as the normal determinative for *hwi*, it is quite logical that D 37 in variant **E** stands for D 40 (arm with stick). As D 40 and D 43 are not too dissimilar, and because D 40 and D 37 as well as D 37 and D 39 are interchangeable, the latter in variant **D** should be interpreted as D 43. This solution eliminates the complex translation and reasoning of Altenmüller, op.cit., 26-27 on variant **D**, making *hmk* the subject of the preceding *hwi* (Edel, § 565): “...verhüte, dass beschenkt wird (der Grabherr) NN.!” My solution now means that all variants (including those in lacunae) can be identically translated. N’s “protection” logically concerns the wish that no accident might overcome him/her during the transport.

g) Understood as a 1st person *sdm.f*.

h) Taken as a normal adverb (Edel, op.cit., § 750, 2a; Gardiner, EG, § 205,4).

i) Understood as a 1st person imperfective *sdm.f*, which occurs regularly after the preposition *mi* (Edel, op.cit., § 50; cf. Gardiner, op.cit., § 170,5, where the same phrase is followed by *b3k im*, “this <thy> humble servant”).

j) “Her” obviously refers to the female noun *hwdt*, “carrying chair” of variant **F**. Altenmüller’s interpretation of “empty”, referring to a social low position in contrast to a high, “full”, position (op.cit., 28) is unnecessarily complicated and metaphoric.

k) Both taken as circumstantial pseudo-participles (Edel op.cit., § 584).

The preceding analysis places the palanquin song in the genre of “labour songs”, regularly found with workers who sing to pep themselves up and to reduce the stress of their labour;¹⁴⁷ it may include brag-

147 LÄ, 1, 379, s.v. “Arbeitslieder” (378-385); on 381, the author, Brunner-Traut, sticks to a funerary meaning of

ging, as when they claim that the heavier the job the more they like it. In the present setting, in my view, it is a completely ordinary, “innocent” song and has no deeper, metaphorical implications. It simply makes more concrete one aspect of the servants for the observer, whatever the destination of their journey without any specific allusion to the business of their lord. These scenes only refer to *secular situations* and the elite position of the owner.

This secular aspect has to be admitted by Vasiljevič,¹⁴⁸ too, referring to Simpson’s remarks and Roth’s specific study on the 3 examples of a second type of legend concerning the special business of the tomb owner.¹⁴⁹ Both authors, quite rightly, take the texts and scene literally as referring to the ordinary, secular activity surrounding any visits by the owner of the tomb under construction. In LMP 048 there is another variant, describing a visit “to see all field work”,¹⁵⁰ which falls under the same category of routine activity or “material” reality.¹⁵¹

Although it is obvious that the palanquin scenes are concerned with different activities and contexts, it is, in my view, undeniable that the main message connecting them all is simply to emphasize the *great wealth* and extremely *high social status* of the owner. This was demonstrated primarily by the palanquin, which originally was a privileged accoutrement of royalty. This high status is acknowledged and stressed by Vasiljevič,¹⁵² yet the metaphoric funerary interpretation is not given up. The reader who recalls Ockham’s razor should have no difficulty in deciding between the different merits of these two approaches.

3.7.3 (C) Bullfight

This case can be treated briefly. The most recent studies on this sub-theme are Kanawati’s and Galán’s.¹⁵³ Before turning to their approach and their

“empty” as referring to the death of the owner; Strudwick, *Pyramid Age*, 418 also sees a deeper meaning in the text.

148 Vasiljevič, *Untersuchungen*, 95.

149 Simpson, *Notes*, 495; Roth, *Carrying Chair*.

150 Moussa, Altenmüller, *Nianchchnum*, 129.

151 On the various categories or “spheres” of reality, cf. van Walsem, *Iconography*, 35-39.

152 Op.cit, 73, 95. It is interesting to note that “...in ancient Rome litters were reserved for empresses and senator’s wives, and plebeians were forbidden to travel in them”, *EB*, 7, 402.

153 Kanawati, *Bullfighting* (1991); Galán, *Bullfight* (1994).

results it should be noted that for the Old Kingdom (6th dynasty) the subject is found in only 11 of the 73 tombs (15.1%) recorded for the provinces by Harpur.¹⁵⁴ It certainly was not a key-scene. All orientations (these are not considered by those two authors) are present as well: west (3 times, 27.3%),¹⁵⁵ east (once, 9.1%),¹⁵⁶ north (twice, 18.2%)¹⁵⁷ and south (5 times, 45.5%).¹⁵⁸ The predilection for the south may be due to the fact that it is never found north of Deshasha, as was noticed by Kanawati.¹⁵⁹ Considering its varying positions on the wall surface,¹⁶⁰ and the different adjacent sub-themes,¹⁶¹ and the associated legends,¹⁶² we are not able to justify a metaphorical/symbolic “funerary” interpretation. Accordingly, Kanawati takes it as representing simply “...the entertainment of the tomb owner and frequently others.”¹⁶³

Although Galán, more or less, starts his article with the observation that this sub-theme is “...generally seen as part of the bucolic life that the deceased wanted to perpetuate in the afterlife”,¹⁶⁴ he interprets it as symbolizing how “The deceased, by overcoming his opponent, is enabled to claim his right to maintain his leadership in the Netherworld.”¹⁶⁵ However, here too, one is confronted with an admittedly ingenuous but tortuous way of reasoning; it multiplies stronger and weaker arguments dependent on suggestive and speculative “data”; even “cogent” supportive “evidence” is often itself hypothetical and drawn from various periods (Middle and New Kingdom) and text genres (Pyramid Texts, Coffin Texts, the Story of Sinuhe, New Kingdom royal epithets etc.) in an apparent attempt to convince the reader of the “essential” aspect for a posthumous “successful” mode of existence for, I

154 Harpur, *Decoration*, 279 (622)-282 (695).

155 Galán, *op.cit.*, exx. 1, 8-9.

156 *Op.cit.*, ex. 2.

157 *Ibid.*, exx. 5-6.

158 *Ibid.*, exx. 7, 10, 12-14.

159 Kanawati, *op.cit.*, 57.

160 *Ibid.*, 52.

161 *Ibid.*, 54.

162 *Ibid.*, 52, 57.

163 *Ibid.*, 57.

164 Galán, *op.cit.*, 81, 91 with n. 80. Note that Kanawati, quite correctly, does not mention the aspect of posthumously continuing earthly life by means of the decoration of tombs. This interpretation was already exposed as “one of the unwritten assumptions” of Egyptology, cf. Weeks, *Art*, 59. 165 *Op.cit.*, 81 (summary).

would say, every tomb owner. Here too, a few questions will suffice to clarify my point.

How does Galán explain away the low score of the subject in the provincial tombs? He states that (my italics) “It is *perhaps* significant that the tomb owners...were local chiefs, that is, regional social leaders.”¹⁶⁶ But the remaining 62 tombs were also owned by local leaders, and there were also local leaders in the north who needed this facility just as much. He seems to weaken his position by stating first “Only by relating the scene to symbolism concerning the afterlife as described in funerary texts can one understand the scene’s appearance in tombs,” but immediately follows with the admission that “Nevertheless, the reason behind the representation of bullfights on tomb walls remains uncertain, since not all the themes attested in funerary texts were depicted.”¹⁶⁷ If his interpretations were correct, the reason would be immediately obvious: because it was an absolute necessity. However, it was apparently not viewed as such by everyone, for we are still reckoning with the low score which has to be explained. In short the real problem *is our total ignorance of the criterion or criteria that determined the inclusion of any given scene*, except for those established earlier as being really omnipresent.

Furthermore, we have to remember that not all themes found in funerary texts are also found in tombs and, vice-versa, that many scenes found in tombs are not found in funerary texts. Surely this is watertight proof that not *all* scenes in tombs are to be interpreted symbolically with a funerary connotation or meaning. What should we do with the “innocent” scenes of market negotiations, fording cattle, children’s games, travelling by palanquin, making beds, catching birds with hexagonal and tree nets, making jewelry, furniture and papyrus mats etc.? None of these is found in the Old Kingdom funerary texts. And does the necessity to suggest or assume special nuances for the terminology of the legends strengthen the “proof” for such an interpretation?¹⁶⁸ And finally why, when quoting *LÄ*, 6, 16-17¹⁶⁹ as a support for “A general metaphorical aspect of the bull, symbolizing strength and courage...” as being in line with Galán’s interpretation, is the last sentence

166 *Op.cit.*, 93.

167 *Loc.cit.*

168 Galán, *op.cit.*, 90-91.

169 *Op.cit.*, 91, n. 80; “Stierkampf”.

omitted? From this it should become obvious that the author of the lemma, by denying ritual or quasi-cultic bullfights, does not show any preference for metaphoric or otherwise symbolic funerary interpretations of these scenes. In short, Galán's study, too, misses a convincing "parsimony of arguments". Therefore, unless strong, unambiguous, contemporary textual material demonstrating the opposite becomes available, I fully endorse the "simple" interpretation as given by Kanawati and others, who interpret the scene as referring to the "lived" reality of an elite tomb owner, demonstrating a sportive way of life, but also the wealthy way of life of someone who had fighting bulls at his disposal.

4 Conclusion

The application of these theoretical and methodological principles and their implications, as discussed in section 2, on the iconographic programmes of the four selected elite tombs leads to the following conclusions.

First, from the inventory an analysis of precise statistics irrefutably shows that there are no rigid rules whatsoever on the orientation in the tomb and the location on the wall for the main themes, nor are there for most of the sub-themes. However, this last point still has to be investigated in detail.

Secondly, the capacity for such erratic or "chaotic" variation in the distribution of the iconographic repertoire emerging from the quantitative analysis reveals a qualitative aspect: for the tomb owner there were *varying degrees of importance* of certain main/sub-themes.

Thirdly, these degrees of importance reveal certain *facets of the individual personality* of the purveyor of culture. For, although each total occurrence score of the main/sub-themes reflects an undeniable *collective* aspect, the equally undeniable fact that not a single tomb is identical to another demonstrates that *individual* incentives, stressing the *uniqueness of the person* involved, are the essential reason behind the observed variety.

Fourthly, this uniqueness/individuality, demonstrated by *visual* data, can (but apparently not necessarily must) be further expressed with *textual* evidence, such as found in what I call "personal statements", or in current Egyptological terminology

"(auto)biographical texts". Here one often finds elements of a personal reaction against collective norms, as exemplified by Hesi's statement about his single-room chapel.

Fifthly, a very important element in the "composition" of an Old Kingdom elite personality was stressing by all available means in the way a tomb was decorated his/her *social status*, most convincingly expressed by attributes of wealth. Expressing a high social status implied a person's success in life which would result in being granted a "good memory" by posterity. That this was the *dominant* meaning and, at least an important part of the motivation for the decoration of elite tombs, can be more easily grasped than a deep metaphorical/symbolic funerary interpretation, as exemplified by our analysis of three sub-themes.

Sixthly, this does not mean in principle that some possible metaphoric/symbolic interpretation is ruled out, not even for the examples discussed. But, as long as this cannot be proven even for very small iconographic areas, the idea *cannot* and *should not be generalised* beyond that area where they might be true, or where they *might* be applicable for only one or a limited number of individuals. As etic observers, Egyptologists can only hope to *partially* solve the presently still "...essentially unsolved general problem of the purpose of Old Kingdom tomb decoration."¹⁷⁰

Therefore, in order to come close to the original (= emic) possible meaning, whether it was consciously or unconsciously intended, the *sense* potential of the decorative programmes of the Old Kingdom monumental tombs, and to become aware of the cultural reality of their owners (admittedly mainly the elite are considered here), one has to show one's *sensibility*. This should be controlled by at least an equal measure of self-critical common *sense*, best expressed by parsimony of accessory arguments. The outcome of the interpretation will ultimately only be sanctioned by the ancient, contemporaneous, written statements of the Egyptians themselves. Individual or more generally accepted Egyptological "interpretations" ignoring this criterion are in varying degrees mere speculations. Researchers themselves should be able to identify these different approaches unambiguously.

¹⁷⁰ Baines, *Narrative Biographies*, 34, quoted more extensively in van Walsem, *Iconography*, xii.

APPENDIX 1

Abbreviations: *Main Themes*

A	General (larger) images of the tomb owner, including family-members
AG	Agriculture: grain and flax
AL	Agriculture: Land preparation and horticulture
EX	Extra categorical (not of special study for LMP: false door, offering list etc.)
FI	Fishing
FO	Fowling
FU	Funeral
GA	Games and music
HU	Hunting
KI	Kitchen scenes
MA	Marsh scenes
OF	Offerings
SH	Ships
SL	Slaughtering
ST	Stock and cattle-breeding
TR	Trades
Va	Various

APPENDIX 2

Abbreviations: *Sub-themes*

Note 1 The numbers in bold between () indicate the *discrete* sub-themes. The *indiscrete* sub-themes Sc, Va and ? have been struck through where they are not found by MastaBase under a specific main theme.

Note 2 All main themes have the sub-themes Va (Various) and ? (Unknown).

Sub-themes which can be recognised but do not fall within the existing categories will be found in Va (Various).

All unrecognisable sub-themes are placed in the category ? (Unknown) of the main theme they belong to. If this main theme cannot be recognised then these scenes fall under the main theme EX.

Note 3 * = Term is also used by Y. Harpur, *Decoration*, 355, 369.

Note 4 Ka-servants are grouped together with "Servants without attributes" (= OF/S).

Note 5 The manufacture of seals belongs to the category VA/Ma (Various/Market scenes).

A	General (3)
<A	Owner looking left, including family members
A>	Owner looking right, idem
A	Owner with unknown orientation, including family members

EX	Extra categorical (5)
FD	False door
FM	Family members
OF	Offering list
R	Royal iconography
T	Text
Va	Various (remainder)
?	Unknown

AG	Agriculture; grain and flax (11)
Hfl	Flax harvest
Hg	Grain harvest
M	Measuring of grain etc.
P	Putting papyrus on grain pile
Ps	Piling sheaves *
S	Storage of grain and other products
Sc	Scribes administrating
Tc	Threshing with cattle
Td	Threshing with donkeys
Tr	Transportation by donkey (to or from threshing)
Ts	Threshing with sheep or goats
Va	Various (remainder)
W	Winnowing grain etc. *
?	Unknown

AL	Agriculture; Land preparation and horticulture (18)
H	Horticulture
Hf	Fig harvest
Hfa	Fig harvest + rendering accounts
Hg	Grape harvest
Hi	Incense harvest
Ht	Tree-fruit harvest
Lh	Land preparation with hoe
Lp	Land preparation with plough
Sc	Scribes administrating
Si	Silo
So	Sowers (with bags)
St	Sheep covering or treading seed *
Va	Various (remainder)
W	Wine-growing, viticulture
Wa	Wine-growing, viticulture + rendering accounts
Wb	Wine-growing, beating a rhythm
Wf	Filling wine-jars
Wp	Pressing wine
Ws	Sealing wine casks
Wt	Treading wine
Wtg	Wine, transporting grapes
?	Unknown

FI	Fishing (8)
B	Fishing with basket
D	Fishing with dragnet *
F	Fishing with fyke
Fn	Fishing with fyke-net
H	Fishing with hand net or landing net
L	Fishing with line and fish-hooks
Pr	Fish processing
Sc	Scribes administrating
Tr	Transporting fish
Va	Various (remainder)
?	Unknown

FO	Fowling (11)
A	Aviary, birdhouse
Bc	Caging birds
Bs	Scaring birds
Bt	Transporting birds in cages
Cf	Care, feeding
Fw	Folding wings
H	Hexagonal net
Hn	Hand net (for quails)
Mn	Manufacture of bird-nets
Sc	Scribes administrating
St	Spring trap

FU	Funeral (8)
Cs	Cult of a statue
D	Funeral dance
Ds	Dragging statues
Ft	Funeral at tomb
O	Opening of the mouth
P	Pilgrimage by boat
Se	Scribes administrating
T	Tomb
Vp	Funeral voyage, crossing
Va	Various (remainder)
?	Unknown

GA	Games / pleasure (7)
B	Board games *
Bb	Boys with birds
C	Children's games
D	Dancing
E	Eating and drinking
M	Musical group, orchestra, including singing
S	Singing
Se	Scribes administrating
Va	Various (remainder)
?	Unknown

HU	Hunt (3)
D	Desert hunt
H	Hippopotamus hunt
L	Lasso
Se	Scribes administrating
Va	Various (remainder)
?	Unknown

KI	Kitchen scenes (9)
Ba	Baking bread
Br	Brewing beer
C	Carving meat
Cp	Cooking in pots
Fp	Food preparation, various kinds
G	Grinding flour
Mg	Measuring grain for baking bread
Pb	Plucking birds
R	Roasting on the spit
Sc	Scribes administrating
Va	Various (remainder)
?	Unknown

MA	Marsh scenes (10)
A	Attendants
B	Birds
Fp	Fabrication of objects out of papyrus
Hl	Lotus harvest and gathering
Hp	Papyrus harvest (never done by the owner, often adjacent to MA/Oh or MA/Ob; compare MA/Pp)
O?	Owner in Marshes
Op	Owner in Marshes: journey on papyrus boat
Opp	Owner in Marshes: pulling papyrus (= zcc wAD, never adjacent to MA/Os or MA/Ot; compare MA/Hp)
Os	Owner in Marshes: fishing with spear
Ot	Owner in Marshes: fowling with throwstick
Se	Scribes administrating
Va	Various (remainder)
?	Unknown

OF	Offerings (24)
E	Estates *
F	Furniture
G	Garments, linen *
M	Milk jars
O	Offerings on display
Ob	Offering bearers, including ka-servants and attendants with attributes *
Obb	Offering bearers on boats
Os	Returning shepherds with offerings
Ov	Offerings, vessels
Pb	Presentation of birds
Pf	Presentation of fish
Pi	Presentation of incense
Pj	Presentation of jewellery
Pl	Presentation of lotus
Pm	Presentation of pieces of meat
Pra	Procession of domestic animals
Prb	Procession of birds *
Prc	Procession of domestic cattle
Prd	Procession of desert cattle
Pt	Presentation of tree-fruits
Pv	Presentation of vessels
S	Servants without attributes (including ka-servants)
Sc	Scribes administrating
Sr	Sacrificial ritual
St	Storage of tree-fruits
Va	Various (remainder)
Vs	Vessels on sledge
?	Unknown

SH	Ships (10)
Es	Escort
Fb	Jousting scene, fighting boatmen *
Ft	Felling trees
O	Oil ships
Pb	Papyrus boat building *
Ps	Papyrus skiffs *
Se	Scribes administrating
T	Transport ships
Va	Various (remainder)
Wb	Wooden boat building *
Wr	Wooden rowing boats *
Ws	Wooden sailing boats *
?	Unknown

SL	Slaughtering (4)
C	Domestic cattle
D	Desert animals, cattle
Se	Scribes administrating
Sg	Skinning a goat
St	Slaughtering while hanging from a tree
Va	Various (remainder)
?	Unknown

ST	Stock / cattle-breeding (11)
Bc	Birth of domestic cattle
Bd	Birth of desert cattle
C	Covering
Cc	Care of domestic cattle
Ccr	Cattle crossing waterways
Cd	Care of desert cattle
Gb	Goat giving birth
Gg	Grazing goat
Gt	Goat browsing in trees *
H	Herd
M	Milking *
S	Shepherds meal
Se	Scribes administrating
Va	Various (remainder)
?	Unknown

TR	Trades (15)
B	Barbers
C	Carpentry *
Fr	Fabrication of ropes
L	Leather working
Li	Linen working
M	Metal working *
Mb	Manufacturing a bed
Mj	Manufacturing jewellery
Ms	Manufacturing statues
Msa	Manufacturing sarcophagus
Mst	Manufacturing sticks
Mv	Manufacturing stone vessels
O	Ointment or oil preparation
P	Pottery
Rw	Rewarding weavers *
Sc	Scribes administrating
Va	Various (remainder)
?	Unknown

VA	Various (15)
A	Attendants
B	Bed making *
[Bf	Bull fighting, <i>not in Memphite area</i>]
Ba	Banquet
D	Dogs
M	Medical scenes
Ma	Market scenes
MB	Monkeys and/or birds
Mm/d	Monkey + man (sometimes a dwarf)
P	Palanquin scene *
Ps	Painting personified seasons
S	Siege scene *
<Sb	Sun blind (with owner looking left)
Sb>	Sun blind (with owner looking right)
Sc	Scribes administrating
Scb	Scribes (bastonnade)
Sr	Scribes administrating
Tm	Transportation of offering cabinets (mrt)
Va	Various (remainder)
W	Walker
?	Unknown

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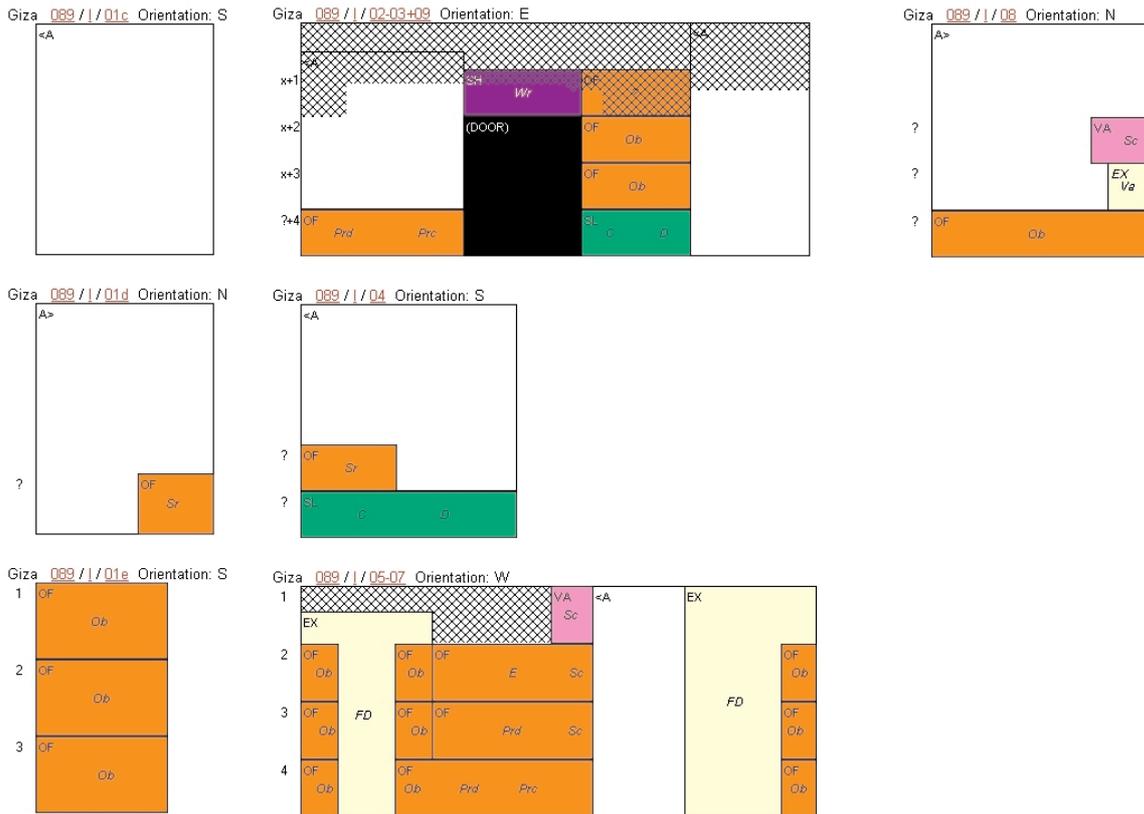


Fig M1

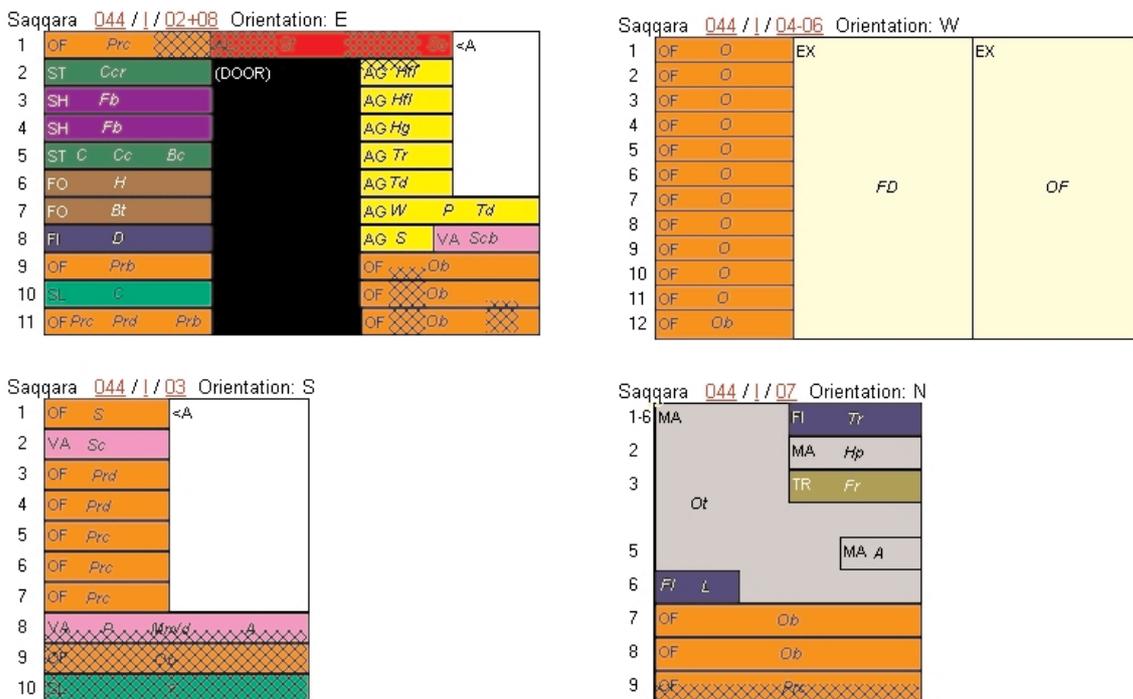


Fig M2

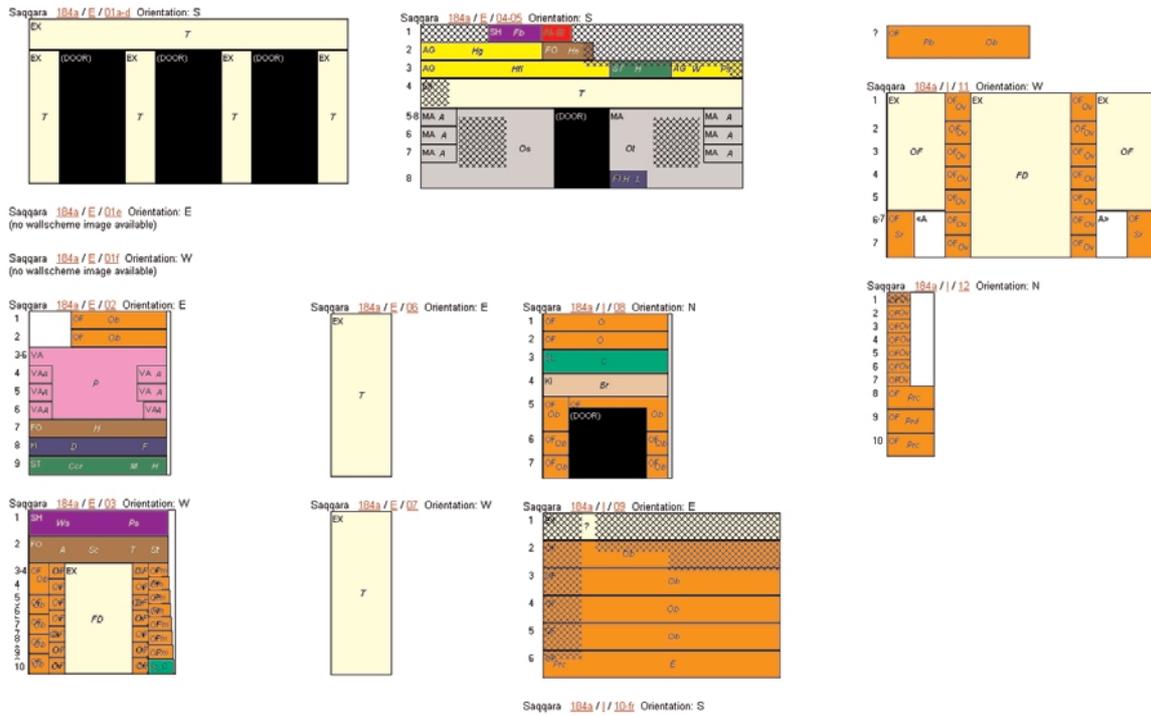
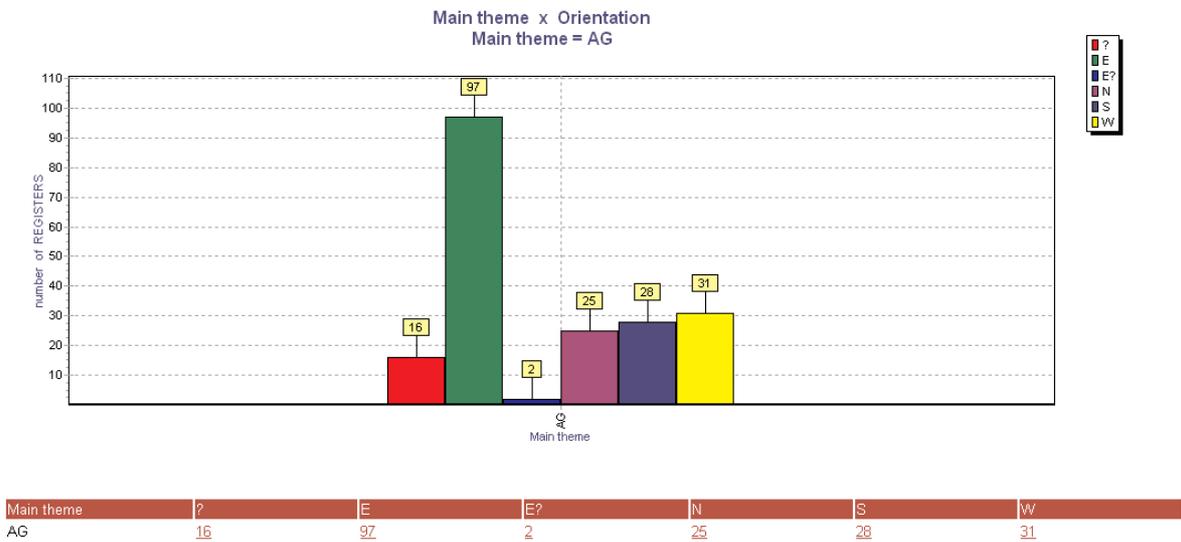
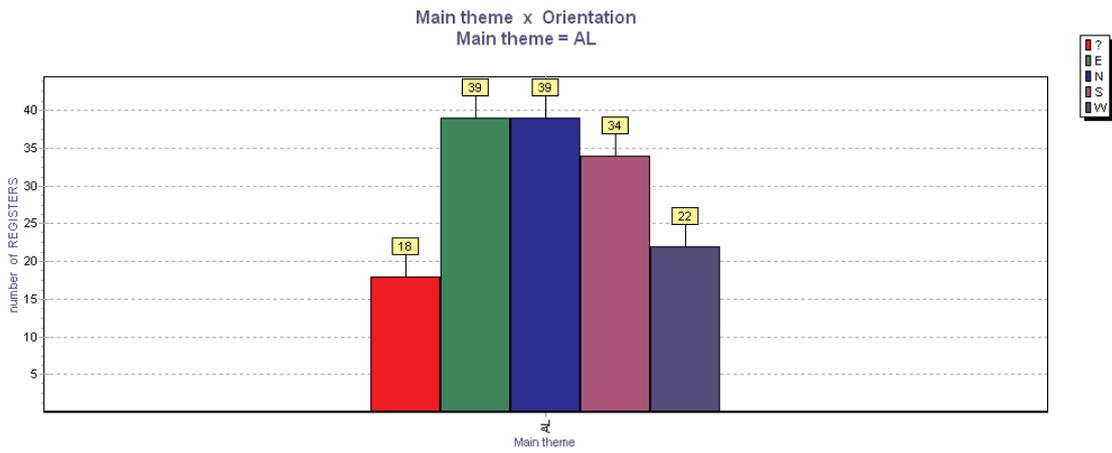


Fig M3



Please note that the values represent the number of REGISTERS.

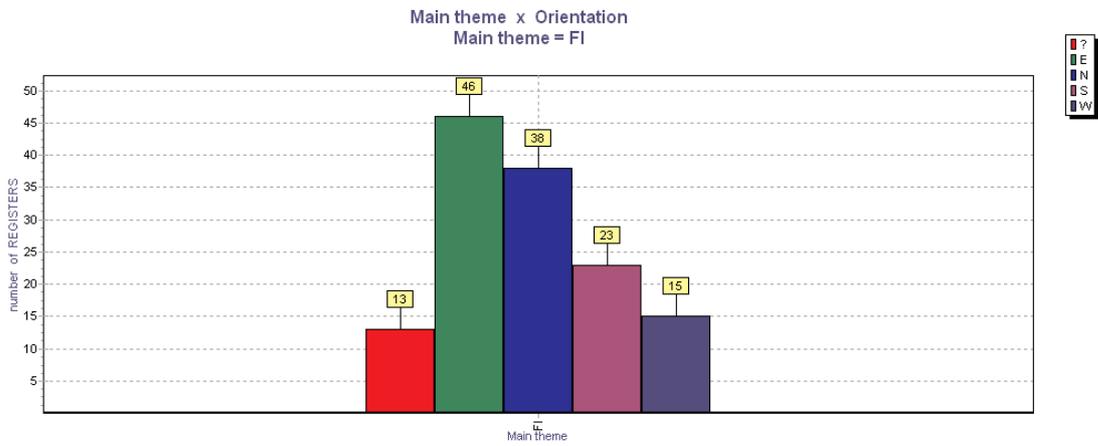
Fig M5



Main theme	?	E	N	S	W
AL	18	39	39	34	22

Please note that the values represent the number of REGISTERS.

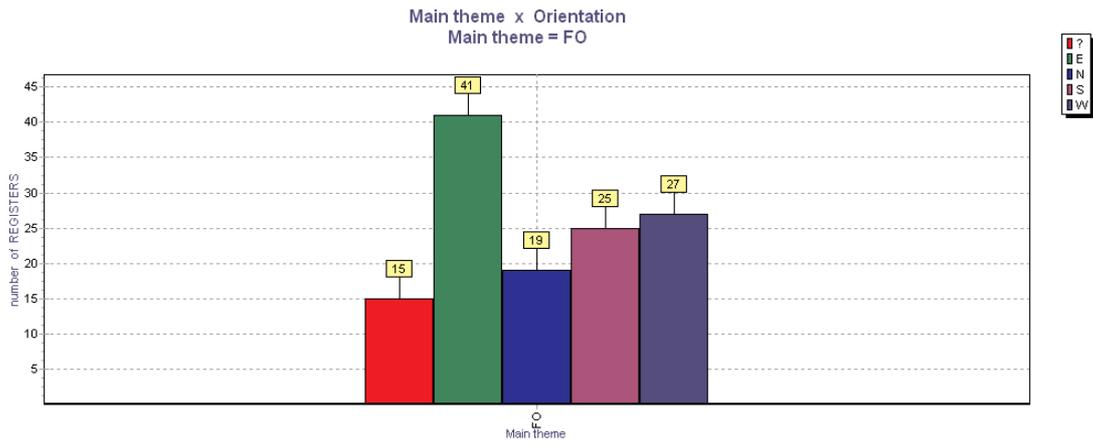
Fig M6



Main theme	?	E	N	S	W
FI	13	46	38	23	15

Please note that the values represent the number of REGISTERS.

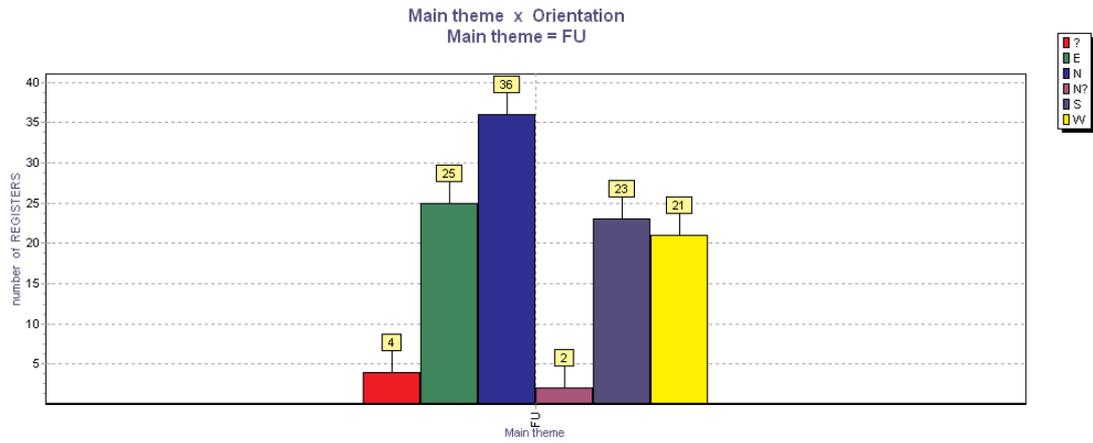
Fig M7



Main theme	?	E	N	S	W
FO	15	41	19	25	27

Please note that the values represent the number of REGISTERS.

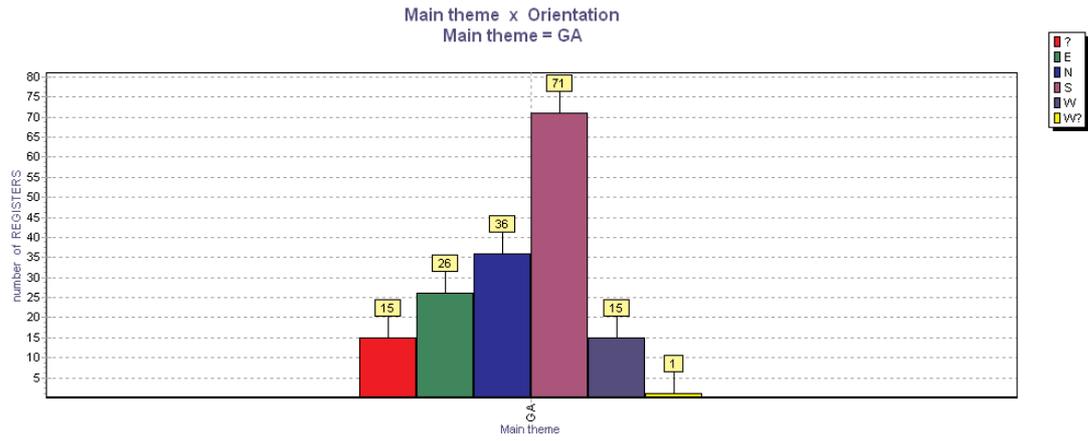
Fig M8



Main theme	?	E	N	N?	S	W
FU	4	25	36	2	23	21

Please note that the values represent the number of REGISTERS.

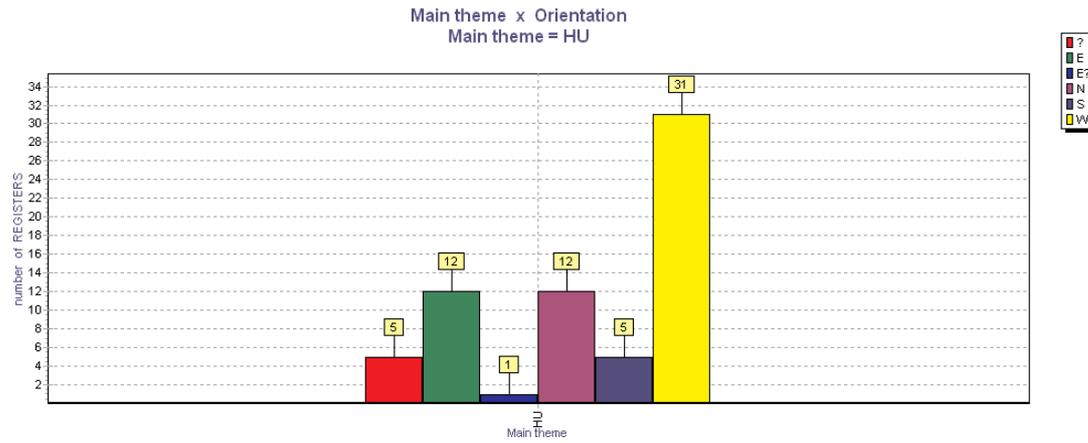
Fig M9



Main theme	?	E	N	S	W	W?
GA	15	26	36	71	15	1

Please note that the values represent the number of REGISTERS.

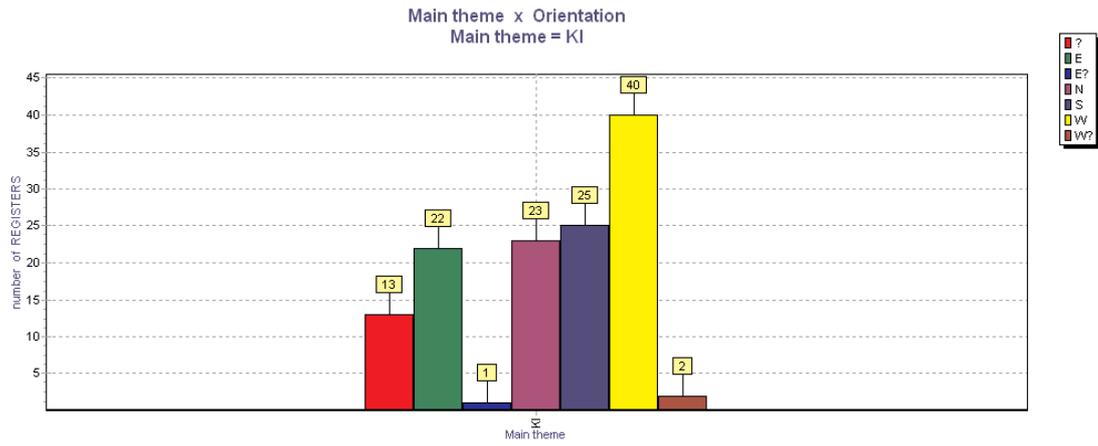
Fig M10



Main theme	?	E	E?	N	S	W
HU	5	12	1	12	5	31

Please note that the values represent the number of REGISTERS.

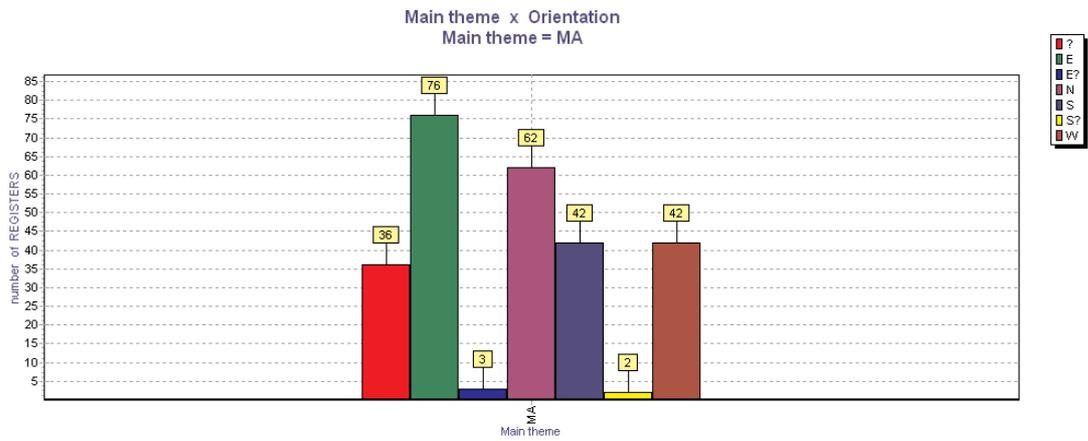
Fig M11



Main theme	?	E	E?	N	S	W	W?
KI	13	22	1	23	25	40	2

Please note that the values represent the number of REGISTERS.

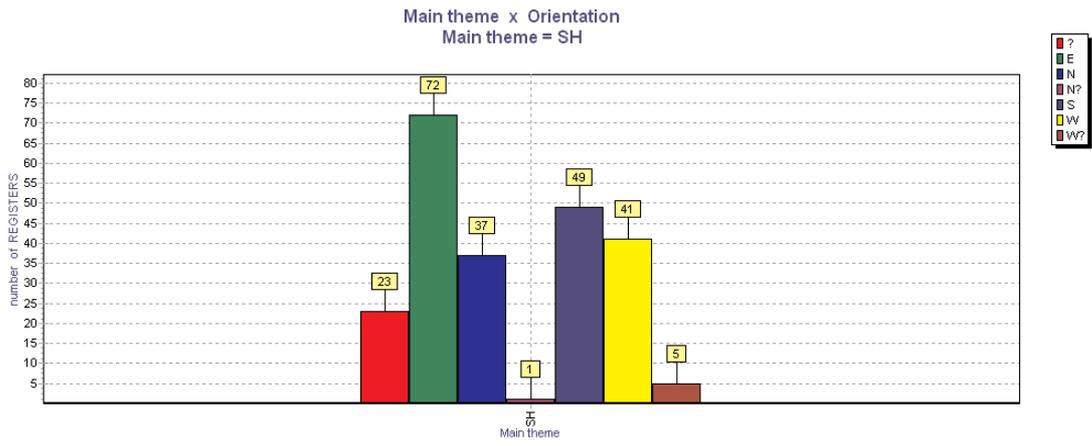
Fig M12



Main theme	?	E	E?	N	S	S?	W
MA	36	76	3	62	42	2	42

Please note that the values represent the number of REGISTERS.

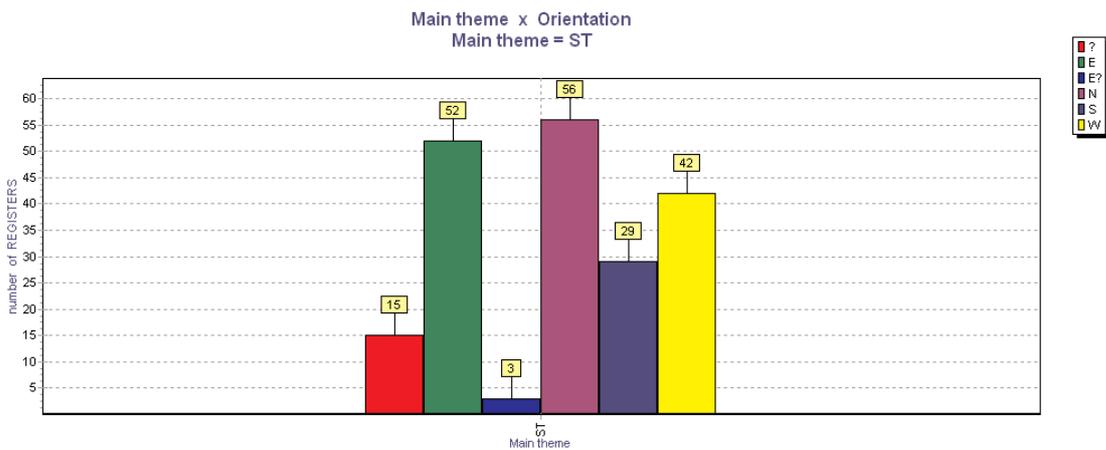
Fig M13



Main theme	?	E	N	N?	S	W	W?
SH	23	72	37	1	49	41	5

Please note that the values represent the number of REGISTERS.

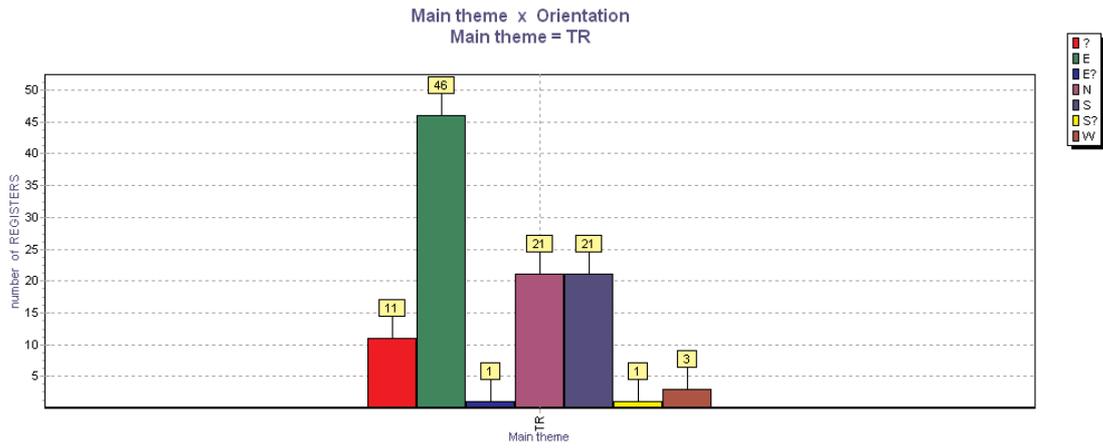
Fig M14



Main theme	?	E	E?	N	S	W
ST	15	52	3	56	29	42

Please note that the values represent the number of REGISTERS.

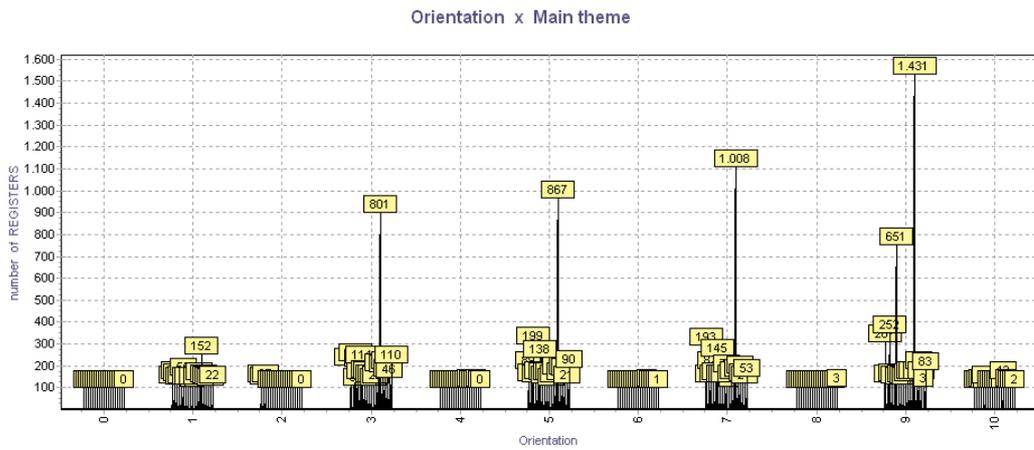
Fig M15



Main theme	?	E	E?	N	S	S?	W
TR	11	46	1	21	21	1	3

Please note that the values represent the number of REGISTERS.

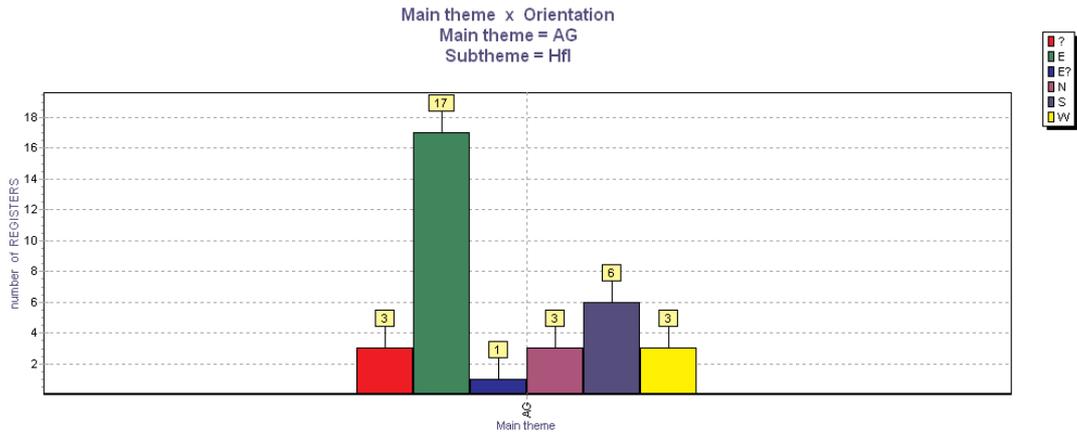
Fig M16



Orientation	?	A	A>	AG	AL	EX	FI	FO	FU	GA	HU	KI	MA	OF	SH	SL	ST	TR	VA
?	21	39	29	16	18	55	13	15	4	15	5	13	36	152	23	22	15	11	22
ALL	27	14	27																
E	102	8	123	97	39	114	46	41	25	26	12	22	76	801	72	88	52	46	110
E?				2		1					1	1	3	1		1	3	1	
N	89	30	199	25	39	138	38	19	36	36	12	23	62	867	37	60	56	21	90
N?	1					1			2					7	1	1			1
S	193	25	87	28	34	145	23	25	23	71	5	25	42	1008	49	68	29	21	53
S?	1					1							2	1				1	3
W	207	24	252	31	22	651	15	27	21	15	31	40	42	1431	41	88	42	3	83
W?	1		5			21				1		2		42	5	1			2

Please note that the values represent the number of REGISTERS.

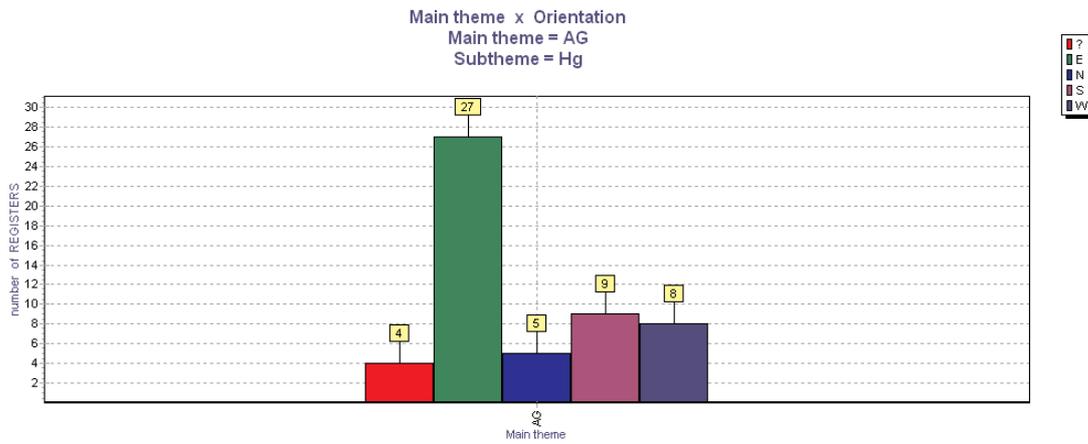
Fig M16a



Main theme	?	E	E?	N	S	W
AG	3	17	1	3	6	3

Please note that the values represent the number of REGISTERS.

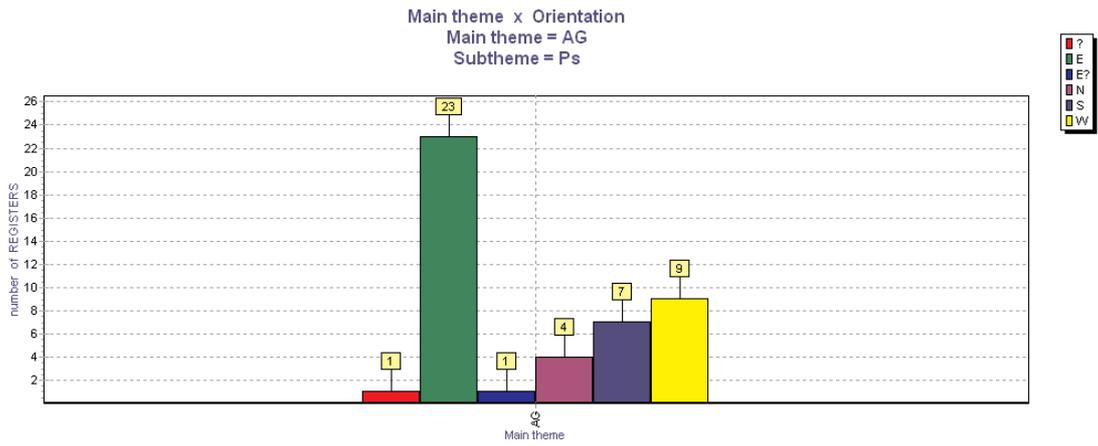
Fig M17



Main theme	?	E	N	S	W
AG	4	27	5	9	8

Please note that the values represent the number of REGISTERS.

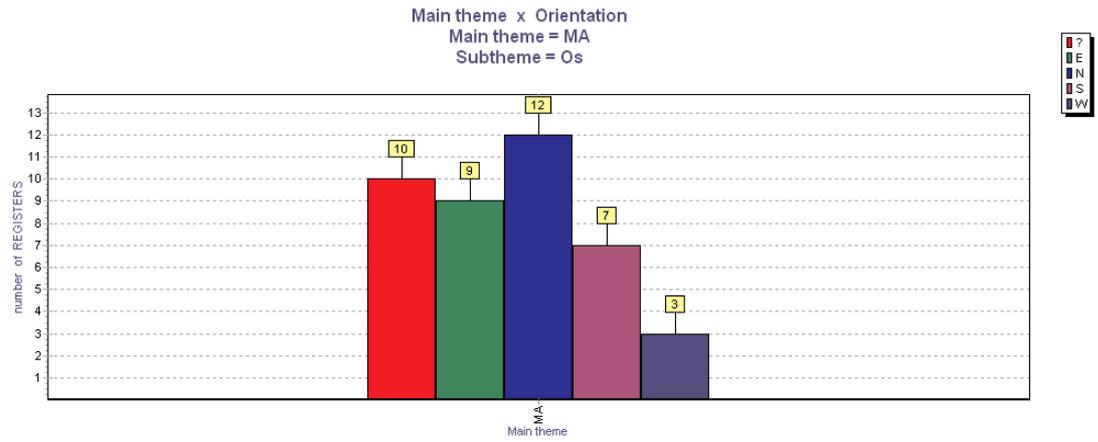
Fig M18



Main theme	?	E	E?	N	S	W
AG	1	23	1	4	7	9

Please note that the values represent the number of REGISTERS.

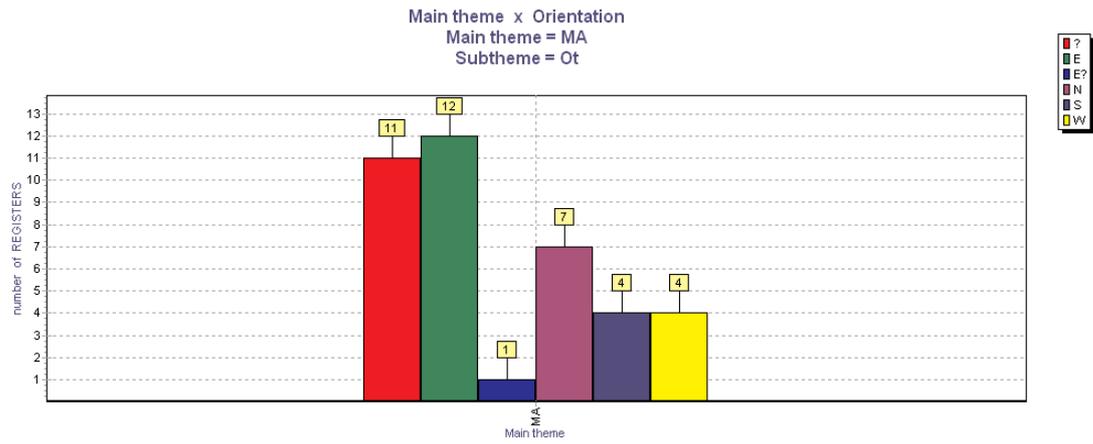
Fig M19



Main theme	?	E	N	S	W
MA	10	9	12	7	3

Please note that the values represent the number of REGISTERS.

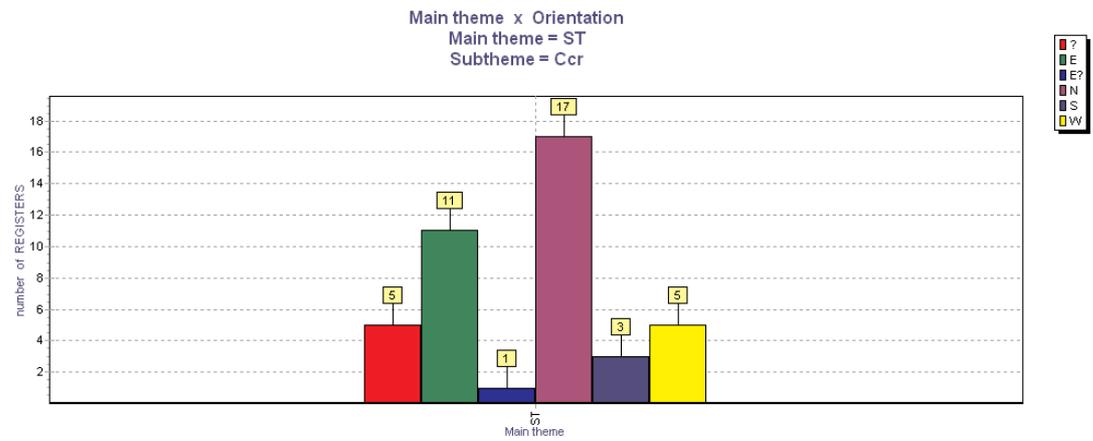
Fig M20



Main theme	?	E	E?	N	S	W
MA	11	12	1	7	4	4

Please note that the values represent the number of REGISTERS.

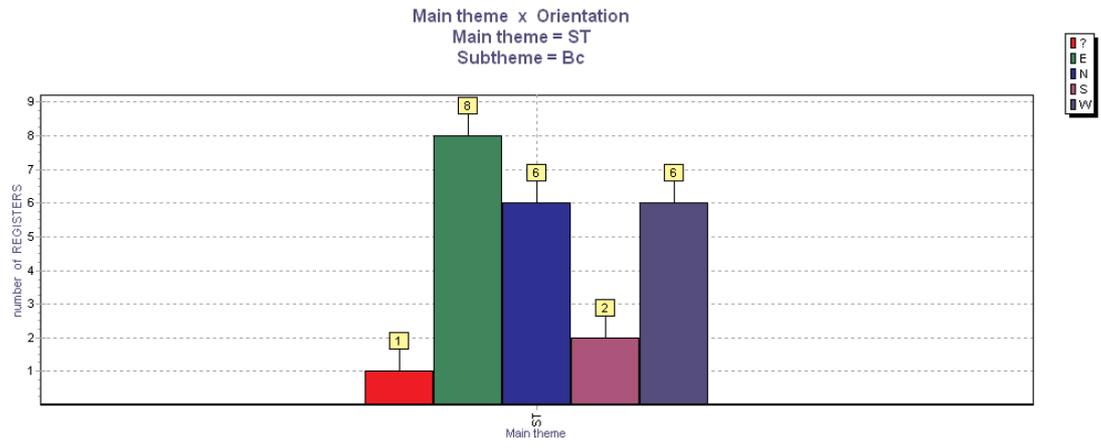
Fig M21



Main theme	?	E	E?	N	S	W
ST	5	11	1	17	3	5

Please note that the values represent the number of REGISTERS.

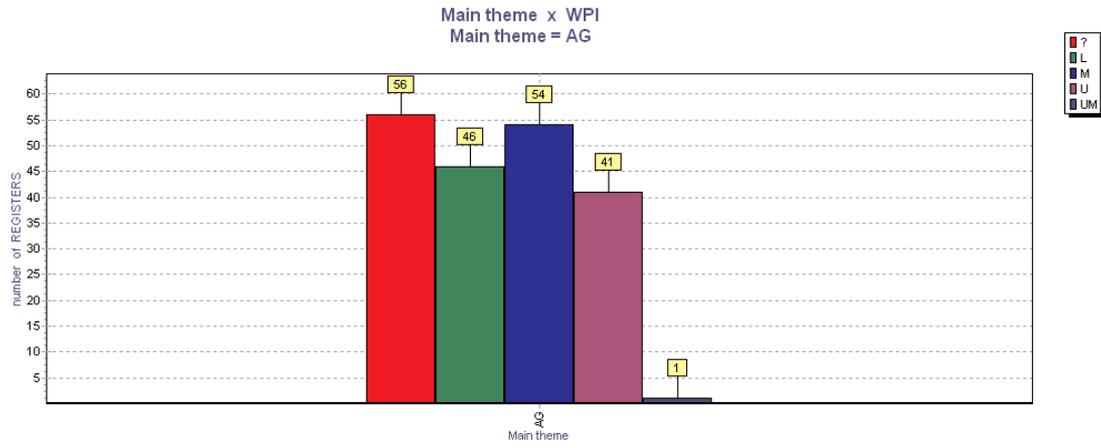
Fig M22



Main theme	?	E	N	S	W
ST	1	8	6	2	6

Please note that the values represent the number of REGISTERS.

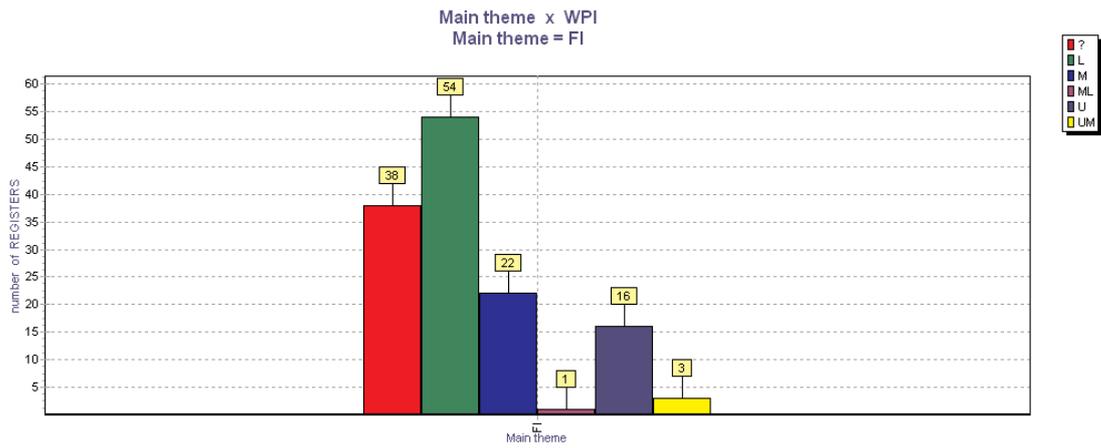
Fig M23



Main theme	?	L	M	U	UM
AG	56	46	54	41	1

Please note that the values represent the number of REGISTERS.

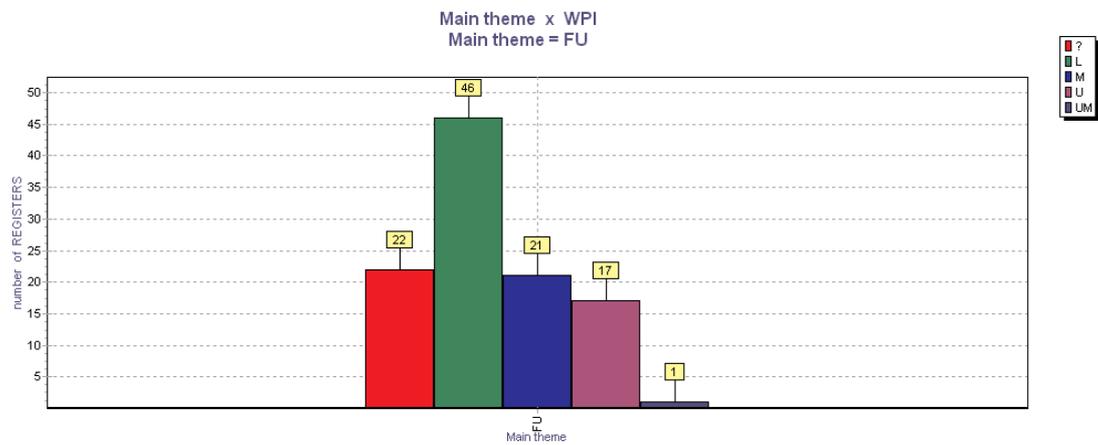
Fig M24



Main theme	?	L	M	ML	U	UM
FI	38	54	22	1	16	3

Please note that the values represent the number of REGISTERS.

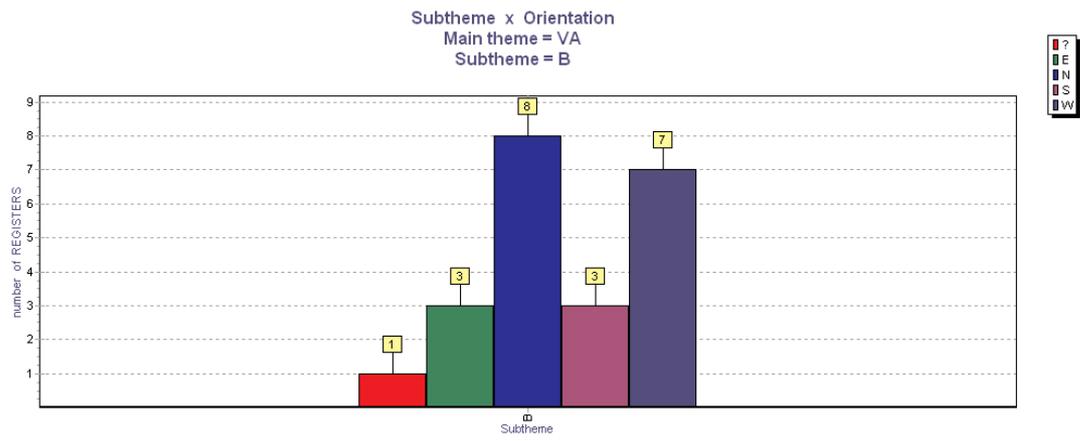
Fig M25



Main theme	?	L	M	ML	U	UM
FU	22	46	21	17	1	0

Please note that the values represent the number of REGISTERS.

Fig M26



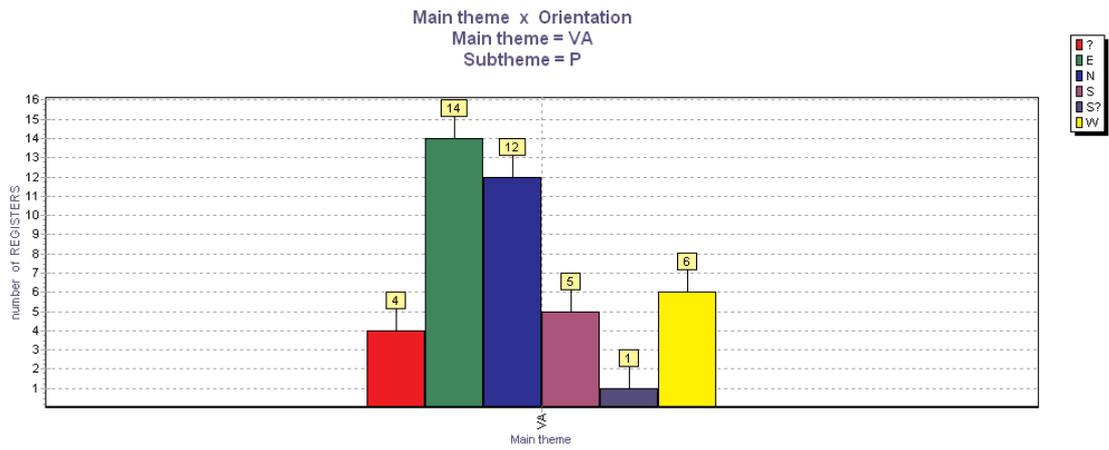
Subtheme	?	E	N	S	W
B	1	3	8	3	7

Please note that the values represent the number of REGISTERS.

Fig M27



Fig M28



Main theme	?	E	N	S	S?	W
VA	4	14	12	5	1	6

Please note that the values represent the number of REGISTERS.

Fig M29

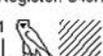
<u>043//02</u>	<p>Register: 02/4 (Various).</p>  <p><i>wđ st in htmTlt;wTgt;</i></p> <p>(Caption) " Bed making by the sealbearer(s). "</p> <p>LMS</p>
<u>079//03</u>	<p>Register: 03/1 (Various).</p>  <p><i>imy-r Tlt;...Tgt; N</i></p> <p>(Name(s)/Title(s)) " The overseer of (...) N. "</p> <p>Hassan, <i>Mastaba</i>, p. 98.</p>
<u>145//03</u>	<p>Register: 03/1 (Various).</p>  <p><i>Tlt;...Tgt; hr-ꜥpt</i></p> <p>(Caption) " (...) approaching. "</p> <p>Roth, <i>Palace attendants</i>, p. 131.</p>
<u>182A/X/049-051</u>	<p>Register: 049/x+2-4 (Various).</p>  <p><i>imy-r Tlt;...Tgt; N</i></p> <p>(Name(s)/Title(s)) " Overseer (...) N. "</p> <p>LMS</p>
<u>182A/X/049-051</u>	<p>Register: 049/x+2-4 (Various).</p>  <p><i>imyTlt;-r ...Tgt; N</i></p> <p>(Name(s)/Title(s)) " Overseer (...) N. "</p> <p>LMS</p>
<u>182A/X/049-051</u>	<p>Register: 049/x+2-4 (Various).</p>  <p><i>imyTlt;-r ...Tgt;</i></p> <p>(Name(s)/Title(s)) " Overseer (...). "</p> <p>LMS</p>
<u>182A/X/049-051</u>	<p>Register: 049/x+2-4 (Various).</p>  <p><i>imyTlt;-r ...Tgt;</i></p> <p>(Name(s)/Title(s)) " Overseer (...). "</p> <p>LMS</p>
<u>182A/X/049-051</u>	<p>Register: 049/x+2-4 (Various).</p>  <p><i>imy-r ššr</i></p> <p>(Name(s)/Title(s)) " Overseer of linen. "</p> <p>LMS</p>
<u>182A/X/049-051</u>	<p>Register: 049/x+2-4 (Various).</p>  <p><i>imy-r ššr</i></p> <p>(Name(s)/Title(s)) " Overseer of linen. "</p> <p>LMS</p>

Fig M29a

- 182A/X/049-051 Register: 049/x+2-4 (Various).

imy-r ššr N
 (Name(s)/Title(s)) " Overseer of linen N. "
 LMS
- 182A/X/049-051 Register: 049/x+2-4 (Various).

imy-r ššr
 (Name(s)/Title(s)) " Overseer of linen. "
 LMS
- 182A/X/049-051 Register: 050/x+1-4 (Various).

Tlt;...Tgt; nht hmTlt;fTgt;-ntr Tlt;...Tgt; N
 (Name(s)/Title(s)) " (...) priestess (of Hathor, Lady of the) sycomore (...) N. "
 The plate shows faint remains of the name and titles of the wife.
 LMS
- 182A/X/049-051 Register: 050/x+1-4 (Various).

h3tt hmt nbww mrht nbt hbsw
 (Caption) " First class sealed (things): golden (necklaces), all (kinds of) ointments, clothing. "
 LMS
- 188/III/16 Register: 16/1 (Various).

zwnw
 (Name(s)/Title(s)) " Arzt. "
 Altenmüller, *Die Wanddarstellungen im Grab des Mehu*, p. 163.
- 188/III/16 Register: 16/1 (Various).

N ngs
 (Name(s)/Title(s)) " N, der Jüngere. "
 Altenmüller, *Die Wanddarstellungen im Grab des Mehu*, p. 163.
- 235/II/06-08 Register: 07/1 (Various).

šwt
 (Caption) " Laying out the bed. "
 Kanawati, *Tombs at Giza*, vol. I, p. 33.
- 235/II/06-08 Register: 07/1 (Various).

wh3 st
 (Caption) " Fixing (?) the chair. "
 Kanawati, *Tombs at Giza*, vol. I, p. 33.
- 217/II/10 Register: 10/2 (Various).

imyTlt;-r ššr ?Tgt;
 (Name(s)/Title(s)) " Over(seer of linen ?). "

Fig M29b

Fig M30