

Family, ancestor cult and some observations on the chronology of the late Fifth Dynasty

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Introduction

The tombs of the Seshemnefer-family in the western cemetery at Giza belong to the best investigated tombs of the second part of the Fifth Dynasty at Giza. They are situated in the western field of Giza in the cemetery en échelon. The tombs which are concerned are tomb G 4940 of Seshemnefer I (Kanawati 2001, 51–65; pls. 38–51), tomb G 5080 of Seshemnefer II (Kanawati 2002, 51–64; pls. 58–65) and tomb G 5170 of Seshemnefer III (Brunner-Traut ¹1977, ²1995). In spite of various discussions on the architecture and the scenic representations of these tombs in the past years their dating is still problematic. One of the main problems concerns the dating of the mastaba of Seshemnefer III (G 5170) which is now kept at Tübingen. For this tomb different dates have been proposed, starting with a dating at the beginning of the Fifth Dynasty (Baud 1999a, 577 [220]: “première moitié de la Ve dynastie”), passing to a suggested dating under king Niuserre (Brunner-Traut ¹1977, ²1995, 15, n. 7: “aus der mittleren 5. Dynastie”) and ending with the proposal to date the tomb in the early or middle years of the reign of Djedkare Isesi (Junker 1938, 14; Baer 1960, 132 [478]; Porter & Moss ²1974, III.1, 153; Strudwick 1985, 139–40 [131]; Gamer-Wallert 1998, 60).

The intent of this investigation is to state more precisely the chronology of the tombs of the Seshemnefer-family at Giza. The research is concerned mainly with the prosopography of the different members of the family (Harpur 1987, 288 [18]). It is expected that an analysis of the string of this family delivers a useful criterion both for the chronology of the tombs of the Seshemnefer-family and for the chronology of the Old Kingdom in general.

The tombs of the Seshemnefer-family

The first relevant tomb of the Seshemnefer-family is the tomb of Seshemnefer I which is located in the first row of the cemetery en échelon (G 4940). A nearly complete series of the titles of the tomb owner is preserved on the west wall of this tomb (*fig. 1*). The titles attest a rather elevated rank of Seshemnefer I who officiated in the administration of his time. According to the inscriptions on the west wall of the cult chapel he holds the following titles (Kanawati 2001, pl. 42):

(SI-W1)¹ Royal chamberlain of the mansion of Djedefre (*hrj tp nzwt hwt Hr-hpr*)

(SI-W2) Khet-priest of Ha (*ht H3*)

(SI-W3) Prophet of Heket (*hm-ntr Hkt*)

(SI-W4) Priest of Horus strong of arm (*hm-ntr Hr km3-ꜥ*)

(SI-W5) Judge and boundary official (*ꜥd mr (n) z3b*)

(SI-W6) Great one of Upper Egypt (*wr šmꜥw*)

(SI-W7) Privy to the secret (*hrj sšt3*)

(SI-W8) Overseer of the king's works (*jmj-r k3t nzwt*) (Jones 2000, 262 [949])

(SI-W9) Overseer of the scribes of the document-case of the king (*jmj-r zšw hrt-ꜥ nzwt*) (Jones 2000, 209 [780])

(SI-W10) Chief of distribution in the mansion of life (*hrj wdb m hwt-ꜥnh*)

(SI-W11) Overseer of the two places of provisions (*jmj-r sty-df3w*).

Five of these titles are recorded a second time on the south wall of his tomb, where the tomb owner is sitting and looking eastwards. Two titles are inserted as supplementary titles at the fourth and fifth place of the titulary.

(SI-S1) Royal chamberlain of the mansion of Djedefre (*hrj tp nzwt hwt Hr-hpr*) (= SI-W1),

(SI-S2) Khet-priest of Ha (*ht H3*) (= SI-W2)

(SI-S3) Prophet of Heket (*hm-ntr Hkt*) (= SI-W3)

(SI-S4) Priest of Anubis of Gebelein (?) (*hm-ntr Jnpw jnrjt*) (Jones 2000, 506 [1893])

(SI-S5) Director of the Palace (*hrp ꜥh*)

(SI-S6) Priest of Horus strong of arm (*hm-ntr Hr km3-ꜥ*) (= SI-W4).

Seshemnefer's I son Seshemnefer II has a similar high social standing as his father. His tomb is situated in the second row of the cemetery en échelon in G 5080. The most prominent titles of Seshemnefer II are recorded in the central part of the west wall (fig. 2). They are arranged in the following order:

(SII-Wc1) Overseer of the scribes of the king's documents (*jmj-r zšw ꜥw nzwt*)

(SII-Wc2) Scribe of the king's documents of the royal instructors (*zš ꜥw nzwt n sb3jt nzwt*)

(SII-Wc3) Privy to the secret of the document-case of the king (*hrj sšt3 n hrt-ꜥ nzwt*)

(SII-Wc4) Scribe of the document-case of the king (*zš hrt-ꜥ nzwt*)

(SII-Wc5) Overseer of the house of weapons in the two houses (*jmj-r [pr] ꜥh3w m pr.wj*)

(SII-Wc6) Privy to the secret of all decrees of the king (*hrj-sšt3 n wdt mdw nbt nt nzwt*)

(SII-Wc7) Overseer of all works of the king (*jmj-r k3t nbt nzwt*).

¹ The abbreviations are as follows: SI = Seshemnefer I; W = west wall; S = south wall; the number at the end indicates the placing of the title inside the sequence of the titles.

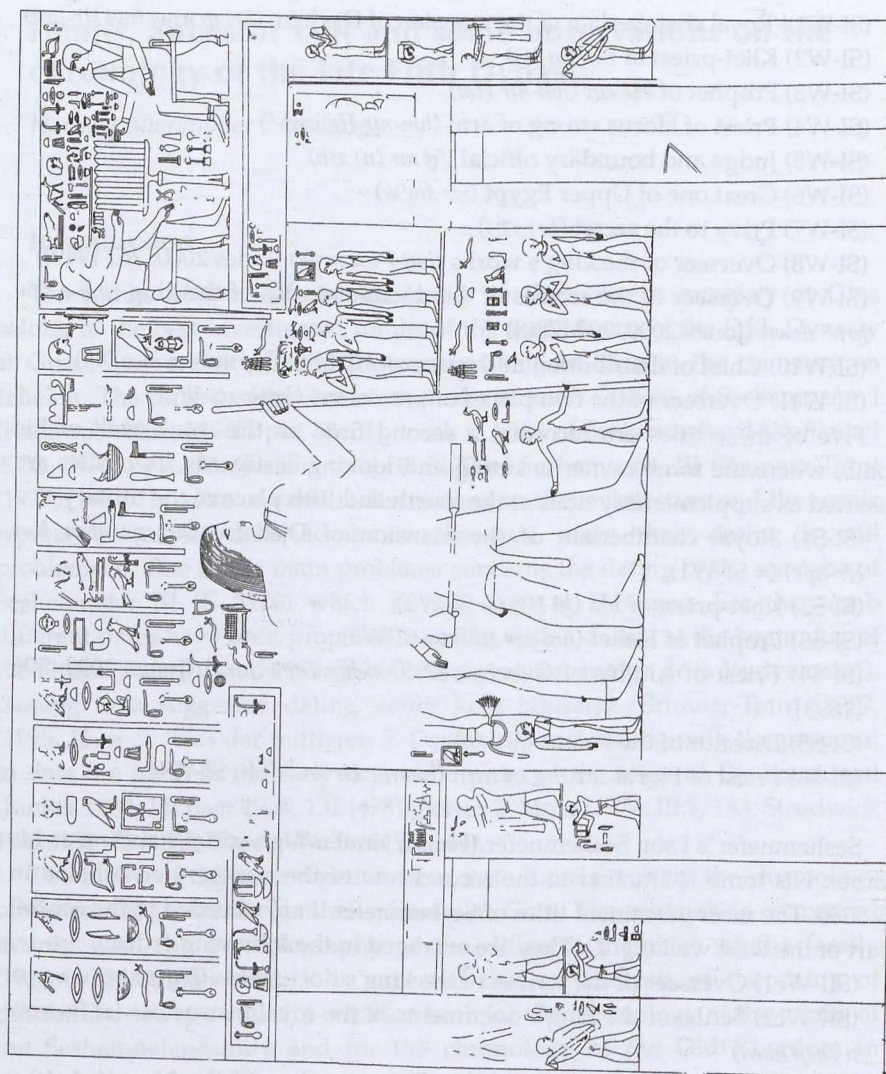


Fig. 1 West wall of the tomb chapel of Seshemnefer I (G 4940) (Kanawati 2001, pl. 42).

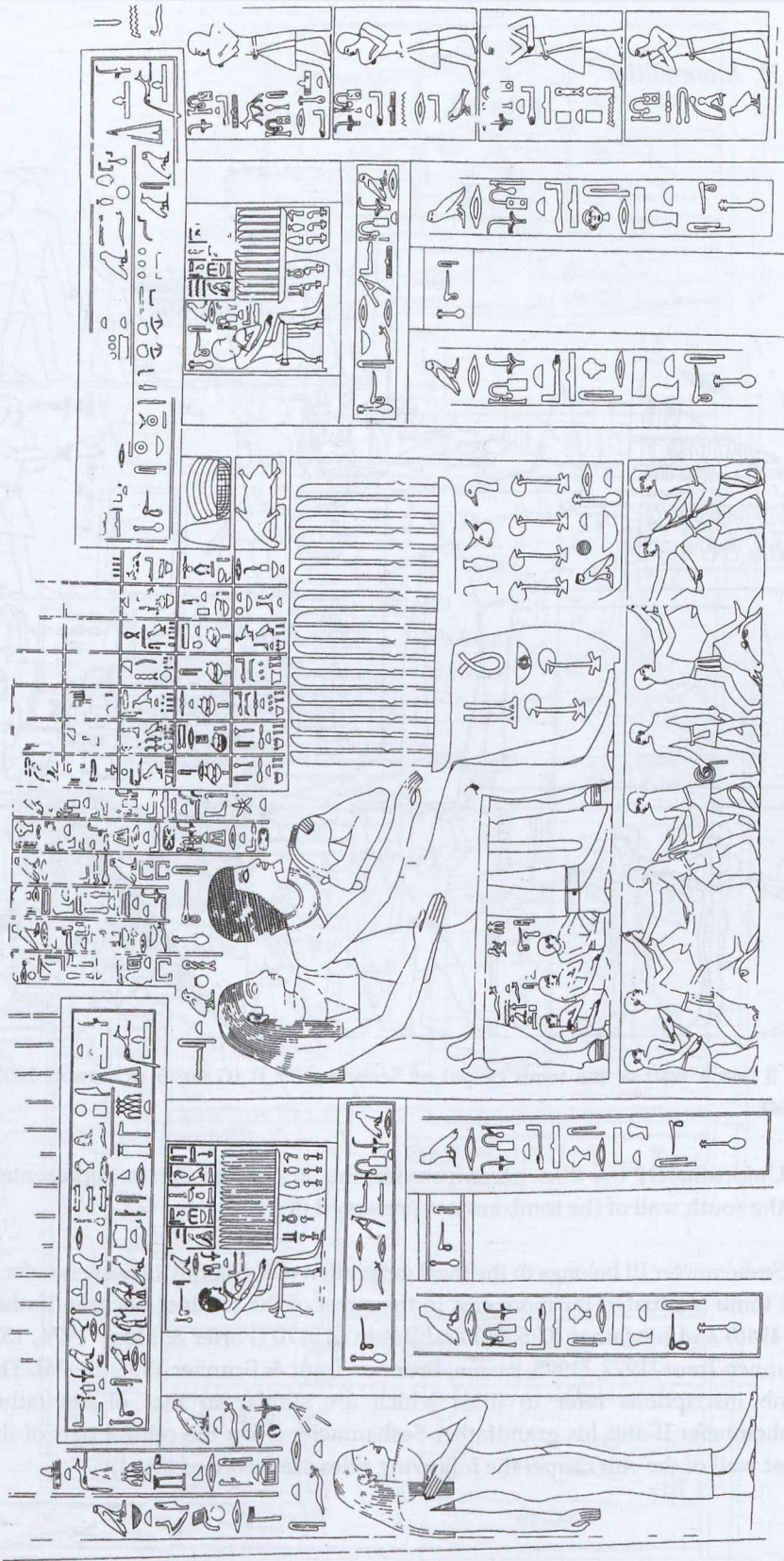


Fig. 2 West wall of the tomb chapel of Seshemnefer II (G 5080) (Kanawati 2002, pl. 63).

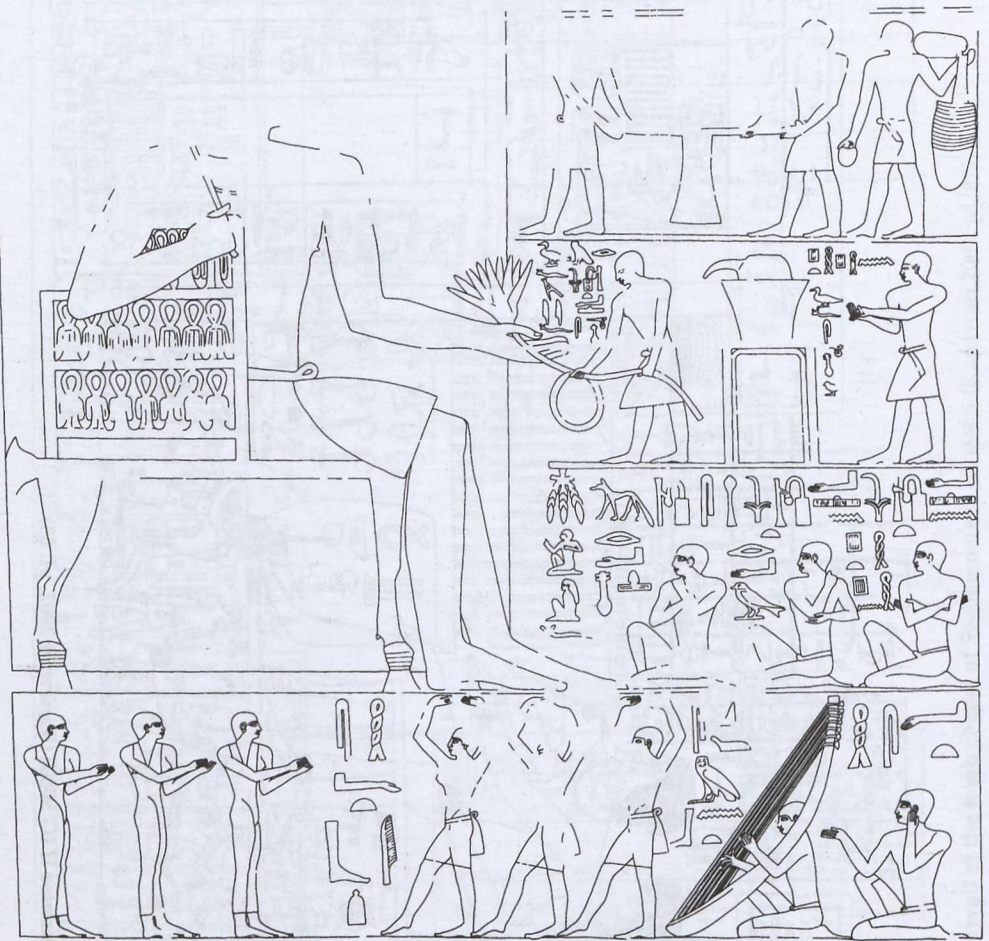


Fig. 3 South wall of the tomb chapel of Seshemnefer II (G 5080) (Kanawati 2002, pl. 64).

Unfortunately the titles accompanying the large-sized person represented on the south wall of the tomb are not preserved (fig. 3).

Seshemnefer III belongs to the third generation of the family of Seshemnefer I. His tomb is situated far more east to the street of the tomb of his grandfather (G 4940) and his father (G 5080) and lies in G 5170 (Porter & Moss ²1974, 152; Brunner-Traut ¹1977, ²1995, *passim*; Brunner-Traut & Brunner 1981, 13–26). The tomb inscriptions refer to titles which are similar to that of his father Seshemnefer II and his grandfather Seshemnefer I. On the central part of the west wall of the cult chapel the following titles are recorded (fig. 4):

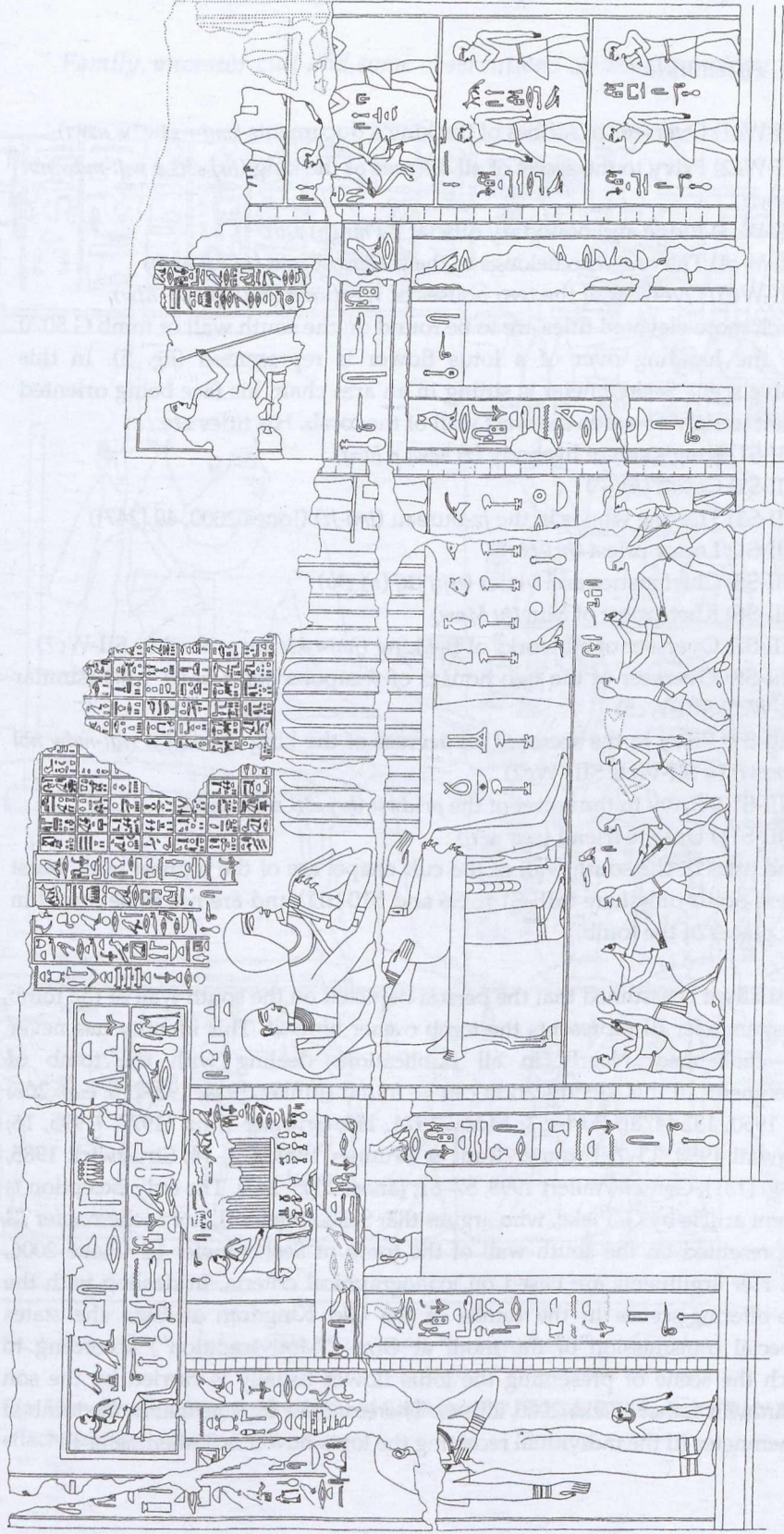


Fig. 4 West wall of the tomb chapel of Seshemnefer III (G 5170) (Brunner-Traut 1977, attachment-plate 3).

- (SIII-Wc1) Overseer of scribes of the king's documents (*jmj-r zšw ʿw nzwt*)
 (SIII-Wc2) Privy to the secret of all decrees of the king (*hrj sšt3 n wđt-mdw nbt nt nzwt*)
 (SIII-Wc3) Judge and boundary official (*ʿd mr (n) z3b*)
 (SIII-Wc4) The one who belongs to the foremost seat (*nj nst hntjt*)
 (SIII-Wc5) Overseer of the two houses of weapons (*jmj-r pr.wj ʿh3w*).

Much more elevated titles are to be found on the south wall of tomb G 5070 where the handing over of a lotus flower is represented (fig. 5). In this exclusive scene Seshemnefer is sitting in an arm chair, his face being oriented from left to right towards the west wall of the tomb. His titles are:

- (SIII-S1) King's son of his body (*z3 nzwt n ht=f*)
 (SIII-S2) Count (*h3tj-ʿ*)
 (SIII-S3) The one who is in the *jz*-bureau (*jmj-jz*) (Jones 2000, 49 [247])
 (SIII-S4) Lector priest (*hrj-hbt*)
 (SIII-S5) Chief justice and vizier (*t3jtj t3tj (n) z3b*)
 (SIII-S6) Khet-priest of Min (*ht Mnw*)
 (SIII-S7) Overseer of all works of the king (*jmj-r k3t nbt nt nzwt*) (= SII-Wc7)
 (SIII-S8) Overseer of the two houses of weapons (*jmj-r pr.wj ʿh3w*) (similar SII-Wc5; SIII-Wc5)
 (SIII-S9) Privy to the secret of all decrees of the king (*hrj sšt3 n wđt-mdw nbt nt nzwt*) (= SII-Wc6; SIII-Wc2)
 (SIII-S10) Privy to the secret of the *pr-dw3t* (*hrj sšt3 n pr-dw3t*)
 (SIII-S11) Unique friend (*smr wʿtj*).

The titles of the south wall of the cult chapel are of the highest rank. Most of them occur only here (SIII-S1 to S6 and S10-S11) and are not to be found in other places of the tomb.

Usually it is assumed that the person depicted on the south wall of the tomb of Seshemnefer III represents the tomb owner himself. This identity has never been challenged. Nearly in all publications dealing with the tomb of Seshemnefer III this identification can be found (Junker 1938, 192–216, esp. 206; Baer 1960, 132 [478]; Porter & Moss 1974, 153; Brunner-Traut 1977, 1995, 16; Kanawati 1980, 13–7; Brunner-Traut & Brunner 1981, t. I, 14; Strudwick 1985, 139–40 [131]; Gamer-Wallert 1998, 57–61; Jánosi 2005, 243). The only exception is a recent article by G. Pieke, who argues that Seshemnefer II, not Seshemnefer III is represented on the south wall of the tomb of Seshemnefer III (Pieke 2006, 273). Her arguments are based on iconographical criteria. In dealing with the lotus-offering-scenes in the tombs of the Old Kingdom at Giza she states a special transmission of the motif at Giza (“Motivtradition”) according to which the scene of presenting the lotus flower usually is carried by the son towards his father (Pieke 2006, 272–4). Therefore she expects that in the tomb of Seshemnefer III the individual receiving the lotus flower is Seshemnefer II.

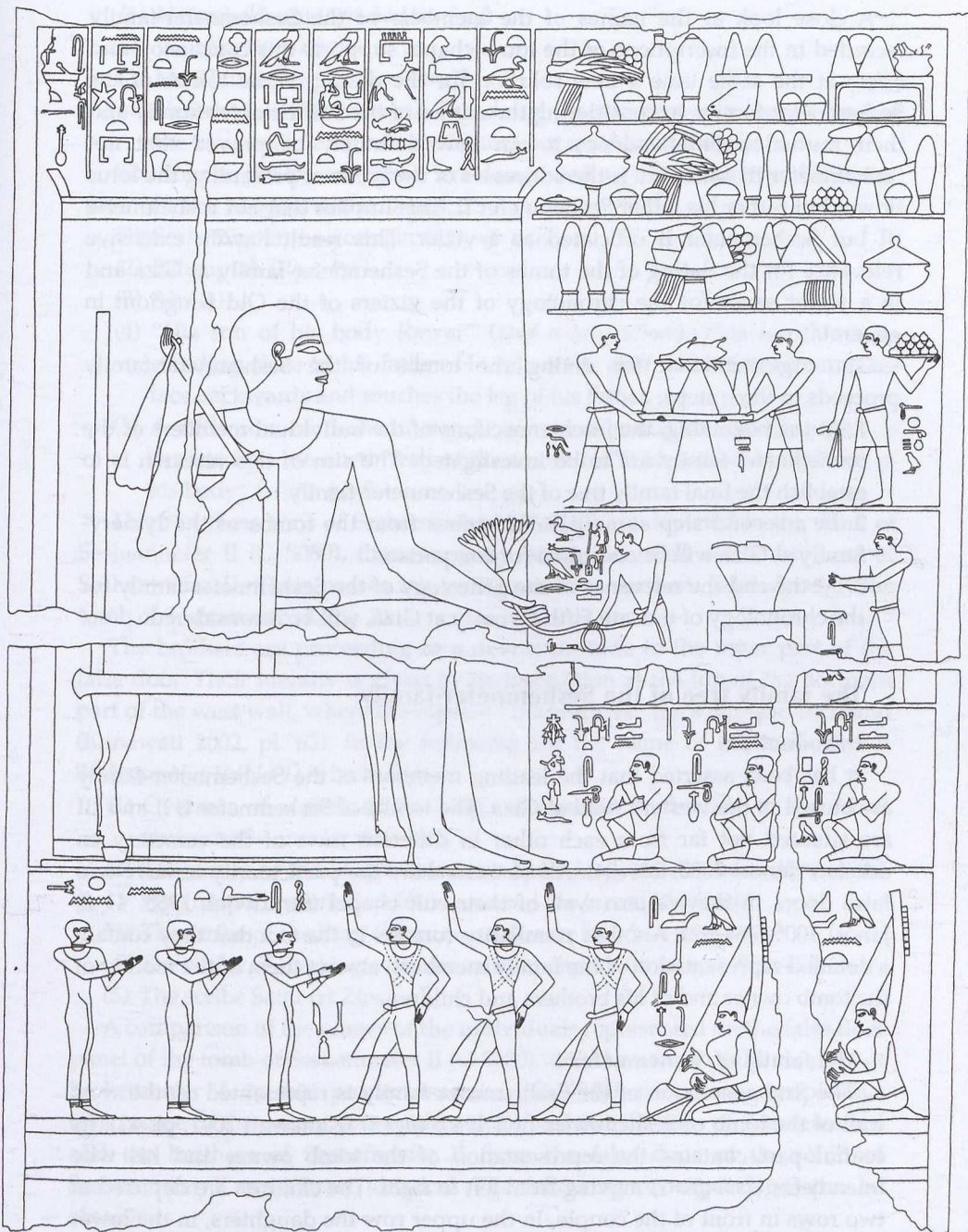


Fig. 5 South wall of the tomb chapel of Seshemnefer III (G 5170) (Brunner-Traut 1977, attachment-plate 4).

A close look at the names of the members of the Seshemnefer-family recorded in the inscriptions of the tomb chapel supports this conclusion and offers at the same time a new solution for the dating of the tombs of the Seshemnefer-family. In considering the names of the Seshemnefer-family and their mutual interdependence it can now definitely be proved that not Seshemnefer III of G 5170 is the addressee of the scene of presenting the lotus flower but rather his father Seshemnefer II. This implies that not Seshemnefer III but Seshemnefer II officiated as a vizier. This result has an extensive relevance for the dating of the tombs of the Seshemnefer-family at Giza and in a wider sense for the chronology of the viziers of the Old Kingdom in general.

The argumentation for dating the tombs of the Seshemnefer-family proceeds in three steps:

1. At the beginning, the interconnections of the individual members of the Seshemnefer-family are to be investigated. The aim of this research is to establish the final family tree of the Seshemnefer-family.
2. In a second step some parallel scenes from the tombs of the Iymery-family at Giza will be consulted for comparison.
3. At the end the relevance of the genealogy of the Seshemnefer-family for the chronology of the late Fifth Dynasty at Giza, will be reconsidered.

The family tree of the Seshemnefer-family

Introduction

It has been asserted that the leading members of the Seshemnefer-family are buried in the western field at Giza. The tombs of Seshemnefer I, II and III are situated not far from each other in different rows of the cemetery en échelon (Jánosi 2005, 236–54). All of them share the particularity to have two false doors in the western wall of their cult chapel (Strudwick 1985, 41–8; Jánosi 2005, 284–92). Another peculiarity consists in the fact that they contain a detailed representation of the family members, among them of the mother of the tomb owner and of his brothers and children.

The family of Seshemnefer I

The first generation of the Seshemnefer-family is represented on the west wall of the tomb of Seshemnefer I (G 4940) (*fig. 1*) (Kanawati 2001, pl. 42). Its central part contains the representation of the tomb owner and his wife Imendjefas (*Jmn-df3=s*) moving from left to right. The children are depicted in two rows in front of the couple. In the upper row the daughters, in the lower row the sons are to be seen.

The daughters in front of the tomb owner and his wife are labelled as “his children” (*msw=f*) and move from right to left:

(1) Nefrethakhufu (*Nfrt-h3-Hw=f-wj*)

(2) Weretka (*Wrt-k3*)

(3) Mesehermutes (*Msh-r-mwt=s*)²

(4) Neferhathor (*Nfr-Hwthrw*). This daughter is to be seen a second time on the west wall in the retenue behind her mother Imendjefas.

The sons in the lower register are designated as "his children of his body" (*msw=f n ht=f*) and have the names:

(1) Seshemnefer the younger (*Ssm-nfr nds*)

(2) Pehenptah (*Ph.n-Pth*)

(3) Ab (*3b*)

(4) "His son of his body Rawer" (*z3=f n ht=f R^c-wr*). This fourth son is standing close to his father. He seizes the staff of his father, turns his face backwards and touches the leg of his father.

(5) A fifth son of Seshemnefer I, named Khufuankh (*Hw=f-wj-^cn^h*), is depicted on the north wall of the tomb. He is identified as "his son of his body" (*z3=f n ht=f*).

Three of these sons of Seshemnefer I (G 4940) are depicted in the tomb of Seshemnefer II (G 5080), there correctly being identified as the brothers of Seshemnefer II. Their names are written on the northern false door of the tomb of Seshemnefer II (fig. 2).

The brothers are proceeding in a devote attitude to the inner part of the false door. Their identity is given by an inscription at the top of the northern part of the west wall, where the caption "his brothers" (*sn(w)=f*) is to be found (Kanawati 2002, pl. 63). In the following list the name of the tomb owner Seshemnefer II (No 1) is included.

(1) Overseer of scribes of the king's documents and privy to the secret (*jmj-r zšw ^cw nzwt hrj sšt3*)

(2) The scribe of the king's documents and inspector of the scribes of the *z3b*-group Raneferhotep (*zš ^cw nzwt šd zšw (n) z3b R^c-nfr-htp*)

(3) The scribe of the king's documents Rawer I (*zš ^cw n nzwt R^c-wr*)

(4) The scribe of the king's documents Pehenptah (*zš ^cw nzwt Ph.n-Pth*)

(5) The scribe Satju (*zš Zštw*).

A comparison of the names of the individuals represented on the false door panel of the tomb of Seshemnefer II (G 5080) with the names of the children of Seshemnefer I in his proper mastaba (G 4940) reveals a conspicuous congruence of the names. It is evident therefore, that the sons of Seshemnefer I and the brothers of Seshemnefer II from the false door of the tomb of Seshemnefer II are almost identical. The following correspondence can be observed:

² The name signifies: "The crocodile will be her death": Collombert 2006, 33–42.

Table 1 The sons of Seshemnefer I.

Sons of Seshemnefer I in the tomb of Seshemnefer I (G 4940)	Seshemnefer II and his brothers in the tomb of Seshemnefer II (G 5080)
(1) Seshemnefer the younger (<i>Sšm-nfr nḏs</i>)	(1) Seshemnefer (II) (<i>Sšm-nfr</i>)
(2) Pehenptah (<i>Pḥ.n-Pth</i>)	(2) Raneferhotep (<i>R^c-nfr-ḥtp</i>)
(3) Ab (<i>3b</i>)	(4) Pehenptah (<i>Pḥ.n-Pth</i>) ³
(4) Rawer (I) (<i>R^c-wr</i>)	(3) Rawer (I) (<i>R^c-wr</i>) ⁴
(5) Khufuankh (<i>Dw=f-wj-^cnh</i>)	
	(5) Satju (<i>Z3tw</i>)

The correspondence is not complete. On the one hand, the family members Ab (SI-3) and Khufuankh (SI-5) from the tomb of Seshemnefer I are not displayed in the tomb of Seshemnefer II, on the other hand the family members Raneferhotep (SII-2) and Satju (SII-5) from the tomb of Seshemnefer II are unknown to the tomb of Seshemnefer I.

It is surprising to find a representation of the sons of Seshemnefer I in a nearly identical order a second time on the south wall of the cult chapel of Seshemnefer II (G 5080) (fig. 3), this time however identified as "his son" (*z3=f*) and "his children" (*msw=f*) respectively. Unfortunately the name of the main figure receiving the lotus flower is lost. Therefore it is difficult to identify the large-seized person at first glance and to determinate the family relations. The names of the children are as follows.

- (1) Seshemnefer, overseer of scribes of the king's documents (*jmj-r zšw ^cw nzw*)
- (2) Raneferhotep, inspector of the scribes of the *z3b*-group (*shḏ zšw (n) z3b*)
- (3) Rawer, scribe of the king's documents (*zš ^cw n nzw*)
- (4) Pehenptah, scribe of the king's documents (*zš ^cw n nzw*).

For the names of the children are identical with the names of the brothers of the tomb owner on the west wall of the cult chapel of Seshemnefer II, it is clear that the individual who is receiving the lotus flower by his children, must be the father of the tomb owner, namely Seshemnefer I from G 4940. This is supported by the fact that the brothers of Seshemnefer II from G 5080 are identical by name with the children of Seshemnefer I from G 4940. The analysis of the family relations leads to the result presented in table 2.

The result can be summarized as follows:

- (1) The family members represented on the northern jamb of the northern false door and the family members from the south wall of the tomb of Seshemnefer II (G 5080) are identical. The difference consists in a different

³ Probably the tomb owner of G 5280; Porter & Moss ²1974, 158; Brovarski 1997, 261–73.

⁴ Probably the tomb owner of G 5270; Porter & Moss ²1974, 158; Junker 1938, 217–23.

Table 2 The family of Seshemnefer I.

Tomb of Seshemnefer I (G 4940)	Tomb of Seshemnefer II (G 5080)	
Sons of Seshemnefer I from the tomb of Seshemnefer I (G 4940)	Sons of Seshemnefer I in the lotos scene of the south wall of G 5080 ⁵	Brothers of Seshemnefer II on the northern false door of G 5080
(1) Seshemnefer the younger (<i>Sšm-nfr nḏs</i>)	(1) Seshemnefer (II) (<i>Sšm-nfr</i>)	(1) Seshemnefer (II) (<i>Sšm-nfr</i>)
	(2) Raneferhotep (<i>R^c-nfr-hotp</i>)	(2) Raneferhotep (<i>R^c-nfr-hotp</i>)
(2) Pehenptah (<i>Ph.n-Pth</i>)	(4) Pehenptah (<i>Ph.n-Pth</i>)	(3) Pehenptah (<i>Ph.n-Pth</i>)
(3) Ab (<i>ʒb</i>)		
(4) Rawer (I) (<i>R^c-wr</i>)	(3) Rawer (I) (<i>R^c-wr</i>)	(4) Rawer (I) (<i>R^c-wr</i>)
(5) Khufuankh (<i>Hw=f-wj-ḥnh</i>) ⁶		
		(5) Satju (<i>ʒtjw</i>)

nomination of the family relations. On the false door panel they are captioned as “his brothers” (*sn(w)=f*) and on the south wall of the tomb as “his son” (*ʒʒ=f*) or “his children” (*msw=f*).

(2) A solution for the different designations is given by the fact that the large-seized figure receiving the lotus flower on the south wall of the tomb is not – as hitherto assumed – the tomb owner Seshemnefer II, but his father Seshemnefer I of G 4940. The scene obtains a new sense in relation to some kind of early ancestor worship.

A minor problem remains in the fact that the mother of Seshemnefer II (G 5080) is named Meritites (*Mrjt-jt=s*), whereas the wife of his father Seshemnefer I (G 4940) is Imendjefas (*Jmn-dfʒ=s*).⁷ Both ladies share the same title as an “acquaintance of the king” (*rḥt-nzwt*). The discrepancy of the personal name of the wife of Seshemnefer I can only be explained by the supposition either that Seshemnefer I had two wives with different names (Junker 1934, 25; 1938, 11) or that the wife of Seshemnefer I changed her name from *Jmn-dfʒ=s* to *Mrjt-jt=s* at an date during her marriage with Seshemnefer I. In any case the identity of Seshemnefer II being a son of Seshemnefer I is not affected. It is clearly evidenced by the names of the brothers represented on the south and west wall of his tomb and therefore cannot be queried.

⁵ Unfortunately, N. Kanawati does not give a photograph of the south wall of the tomb G 5080.

⁶ Neither Ab (*ʒb*) nor Khufuankh (*Hw=f-wj-ḥnh*) of the tomb of Seshemnefer I can be identified with Raneferhotep who is depicted two times in the tomb of Seshemnefer II and therefore probably is of some importance.

⁷ Kanawati 2001, pl. 42, 51; the name *Jmn-dfʒ=s* of the mother occurs on two statues of Pehenptah at Boston: Brovarski 1997, 266 [2], 267 [4].

The family of Seshemnefer II

After having eliminated the “children” ($z3=f$, $m\text{sw}=f$) represented on the south wall of the tomb of Seshemnefer II (G 5080) as putative children of Seshemnefer II we have to ask for the genuine children of Seshemnefer II. Three children of Seshemnefer II and his wife Henutsen are depicted in the central part of the west wall of the mastaba G 5080 where Seshemnefer II and Henutsen are sitting in front of an offering table. The children are represented under the stool and identified as “his children” ($m\text{sw}=f$).

- (1) Seshemnefer ($S\text{šm-nfr}$)⁸, the son
- (2) [Merit]ites ($[Mrjt]-jt=s$), the first daughter
- (3) his daughter Nedjetempet ($Ndt-m-pt$), the second daughter.

The same children of Seshemnefer II and his wife Henutsen are found again in the tomb of Seshemnefer III (G 5170) where they are represented on the west wall of the outer panel of the southern false door (fig. 4). Similar to the representation in the tomb of Seshemnefer II (G 5080) the brothers of Seshemnefer III are depicted on the southern jamb of the southern false door of the chapel (Brunner-Traut ¹1977, ²1995, 29, colour plate IV, attachment-plate 4; Málek 1982b, 57). They are displayed in a devote attitude approaching to the inner part of the false door. Two of them are named Rawer, two others have the name Seshemnefer.

Table 3 The sons of Seshemnefer II.

Sons of Seshemnefer II from the tomb of Seshemnefer II (G 5080)	Brothers of Seshemnefer III from the tomb of Seshemnefer III (G 5170)
(1) Seshemnefer (III) ($S\text{šm-nfr}$)	(1) Seshemnefer (III) ($S\text{šm-nfr}$)
(2) Seshemnefer ($S\text{šm-nfr}$) (?) ⁹	(2) Seshemnefer ($S\text{šm-nfr}$)
	(3) Seshemnefer ($S\text{šm-nfr}$)
	(4) Rawer (II (?)) (R^c-wr)
	(5) Rawer (II (?)) (R^c-wr)

If we look at the south wall of the tomb chapel of Seshemnefer III, where the scene of handing over the lotus flower is illustrated (fig. 5), we meet the same constellation as in the tomb of Seshemnefer II (G 5080): “His brothers” ($sn(w)=f$) of the west wall of the cult chapel are designated as “his son” ($z3=f$) or “his children” ($m\text{sw}=f$). Evidently the same state of affairs as in the tomb of Seshemnefer II (G 5080) is to observe. The lotus flower is handed over to the large sized figure of the vizier Seshemnefer by “his eldest son Seshemnefer”.

⁸ A certain Seshemnefer appears a second time as “his son” ($z3=f$) in the scene of inspecting the $ndt-hr$ -gifts, seizing the staff of his father: Kanawati 2002, pl. 62.

⁹ The case of a second Seshemnefer in the tomb of Seshemnefer II (G 5080) is problematic. It is assumed that the second Seshemnefer is the one who is represented on the east wall of tomb G 5080: Kanawati 2002, pl. 62.

Underneath three more children are represented. They are squatting on the floor in a reverential attitude, all three are designated as "his children" (*msw=f*). Their names, which are mentioned in front of their representations, are identical with the names of the brothers of Seshemnefer III.

The situation can be summarized in the following table:

Table 4 The family of the vizier Seshemnefer II.

Seshemnefer II (G 5080)	Seshemnefer III (G 5170)	
Sons of Seshemnefer II from the tomb of Seshemnefer II (G 5080)	Sons of Seshemnefer II in the lotus scene of the south wall of G 5170	Brothers of Seshemnefer III on the northern false door of G 5170
(1) Seshemnefer (III) (<i>Sšm-nfr</i>)	(1) Seshemnefer (III) (<i>Sšm-nfr</i>) (<i>jmj-r zšw ʿw nzw</i>)	(1) Seshemnefer (III) (<i>Sšm-nfr</i>) (<i>jmj-r zšw ʿw nzw</i>)
(2) Seshemnefer (<i>Sšm-nfr</i>) ¹⁰	(2) Seshemnefer (<i>Sšm-nfr</i>) (<i>zš ʿw n nzw</i>)	(4) Seshemnefer (<i>Sšm-nfr</i>) (<i>zš ʿw nzw</i>)
	(3) Seshemnefer (<i>Sšm-nfr</i>) (<i>zš ʿw n nzw</i>)	(5) Seshemnefer (<i>Sšm-nfr</i>) (<i>zš pr md3t</i>)
		(2) Rawer I (?) (<i>R^c-wr</i>) (<i>zš ʿw nzw</i>) ¹¹
		(3) Rawer II (?) (<i>R^c-wr</i>) (<i>shd zšw (n) zhb</i>)
	(4) Neferseschemptah (<i>Nfr-sšm-Pth</i>) (<i>zš ʿw n nzw</i>)	

Some minor differences occur concerning the titles of the persons represented. Anyhow it is obvious that all persons belong to the family of Seshemnefer III.¹² The large-seized main figure of the south wall of the tomb therefore must be the father of the tomb owner. He is the vizier receiving the lotus flower by his eldest son Seshemnefer III. Perhaps we have here to do with an early instance of ancestor worship which elsewhere is unknown in Egypt of the Old Kingdom.

The scene of presenting the lotus flower in the tombs of the Iymery-family at Giza

If our conclusions are correct, the scene of presenting the lotus flower establishes the family relation between son and father perhaps on the basis of an

¹⁰ East wall of tomb G 5080.

¹¹ Possibly the tomb owner of G 5470: Junker 1938, 223–35.

¹² A problem is posed by the double representation of the scribe Rawer (*R^c-wr*) whose name occurs only on the false door of Seshemnefer III. It is not certain that the scribes represented and named Rawer are brothers of Seshemnefer III. They are omitted in the scene of receiving the lotus flower on the south wall of the tomb. So it is not to exclude that at least one of these scribes named Rawer could be an uncle of Seshemnefer III, for instance Rawer I from tomb G 5270.

early cultic worship of the ancestors of the tomb owner. This could be one of the reasons for the installation of a family tomb. A similar feature can be observed in the tombs of the Iymery-family at Giza, where the decoration of the south wall of the cult chapel exposes a close related family connection (Reisner 1939, 29–35).

The parallels are especially clear in the tomb of Iymery (G 6020). Similar to the depictions in the tombs of the Seshemnefer-family, the handing over of the lotus flower is applied to son and father: Iymery, the son, is offering the lotus flower to his father Shepeseskafankh, while further family members are attending the action. The argumentation line is particularly convincing because of the difference of the names of father and son. In the tomb of Iymery the name of the father is Shepeseskafankh and that of the son Iymery (Lepsius 1849–1859, II, pl. 53a; Weeks 1994, 52–3, fig. 43, pl. 29).

A parallel situation occurs in the tomb of Iymery's son Neferbauphtah (G 6010) (Lepsius 1849–1859, II, pl. 57b; Weeks 1994, 27, fig. 20, pl. 8). Here too, the son is presenting the lotus flower to his father. Although the name of the father is only preserved in faint traces (for unknown reasons), the name of Iymery has been identified confidently by K. Weeks (1994, 27, fig. 20, pl. 8). The confirmation is given by the sequence of the titles which are inscribed at the head of the large-sized figure represented on the south wall of the tomb and belong to Iymery.

Seshemnefer II, the vizier

It is strange to observe that the high titles of the vizier Seshemnefer II did not leave any traces in the earlier tomb of Seshemnefer II (G 5080) at Giza, albeit the tomb decoration is well preserved. This situation is difficult to explain. Perhaps we have to admit that the tomb decoration was already finished when Seshemnefer II took over the office as a vizier. Evidently there was no need to modify the tomb decoration, perhaps because other means existed to demonstrate the high rank of Seshemnefer II as a vizier. Similar instances are known from other tombs of the Old Kingdom where the title of a vizier does not appear in the inscriptions of the tomb decoration itself, but is preserved only in the statuary.

A well known example is provided by prince Khaefkhufu from the early Fourth Dynasty (Simpson 1978, 20, fig. 69; Cairo CG 46; Strudwick 1985, 122 [104]; Baud 1999a, 539–40 [179] ($Hw=f-wj-h^c=f$)). His titles of a vizier are completely omitted in his tomb on the Eastern Field of the Giza necropolis (G 7130+7140), but occur on a seated figure (CG 46) which once must have belonged to his tomb. It was discovered outside the tomb chapel in the Temple of Isis near the mastaba of Khaefkhufu.

The second instance comes from the tomb of Seshathotep Heti at Giza (G 5150). Here too, the titles of the vizier are not recorded in his tomb chapel,

but are preserved on a statue found in the serdab of his tomb (Wien 7788) (Junker 1934, 189–93; Schmitz 1976, 73–4 (*Htp-sš3t*); Strudwick 1985, 136–7 [126]; Baud 1999a, 576–7 [219]). Unfortunately this case is not very clear. The uncertainty is caused by the fact that the name of the owner of the statue is destroyed, so that the identity of this personage is left open to questions.

Similarly to the tombs of Khaefkhufu and Seshathotep, the serdab of the tomb of Seshemnefer II at Giza (G 5080) contained various fragments of the original statuary. At least fragments of four statues are recorded (Porter & Moss ²1974, 147; Gamer-Wallert 1998, pl. 23–4), but none of them have left any traces of inscriptions. Neither the name nor the titles of the individual represented are preserved. So they are not really helpful.

The only information relating to Seshemnefer II as a vizier is found in the tomb of Penmeru (G 2197) at Giza, dated to the late Fifth Dynasty (Grdseloff 1943, 39–43). In this tomb a contract is preserved concerning the funerary offerings of Penmeru. It emerges from the wording of this contract that Penmeru once was an employee or a subaltern colleague of the vizier Seshemnefer. It is regulated therein that the invocation offering of Penmeru benefits from of a reversion offering (*wdb-rd*) given to the vizier Seshemnefer stipulating: “as for my brother of my funerary estate, Neferhotep, and those born to him by father (or) mother, they are the ka-priests of (my) funerary estate for the invocation offering (*pri-hrw*) in (my) tomb [...] as they bring (to me) the reversion of offerings (*wdb-rd*) of (my) lord, the vizier Seshemnefer [...] etc]” (Simpson 1980, 24).

The tomb of Penmeru (G 2197) is located not far from the tomb of Seshemnefer II (G 5080). It is dated by G. A. Reisner and W. K. Simpson on the basis of its archaeological data to the late Fifth Dynasty (Reisner 1942, I, 292 [2]; Porter & Moss ²1974, 82; Simpson 1980, 24–7). This dating seems to be approved by the statuary belonging to this tomb, although W. St. Smith (1946, 53) and M. Eaton-Krauss (1995, 68 No. 5; 72 No. 24; 73 No. 27) propose an earlier dating than the late Fifth Dynasty. If we are right in dating the statuary to the end of the Fifth Dynasty, an approximate date for the life time of Seshemnefer II is gained. He could have officiated as a vizier in the early part of the reign of Djedkare Isesi, perhaps as the direct predecessor of Senedjemib Inti who may have succeeded Seshemnefer II in his office as a vizier in the middle of the reign of Djedkare Isesi.¹³

The chronological attribution of the vizier Seshemnefer II to the time of Djedkare Isesi remains nevertheless problematic. Perhaps it becomes clearer by considering the extant interconnections between the mastabas of Seshemnefer II (G 5080) and of Iymery (G 6020) at Giza. The epigraphical interconnections

¹³ A similar proposal has been put forward for the vizier Seshemnefer (II) who has been identified with Seshemnefer III on erroneous grounds by Strudwick 1985, 140.

between these two tomb installations result at first in the name of a domain of Iymery occurring in the mastaba of Seshemnefer II. The estate name concerned is that of a "foundation of Iymery" (*Grgt-Jj-mrjj*). This domain delivers a certain amount of offerings to the tomb of Seshemnefer II (Jacquet-Gordon 1962, 244 [20G5.12]; Kanawati 2002, 53, pl. 65).¹⁴ In considering the incorporation of this estate name in the list of domains of Seshemnefer II it is evident that the tomb of Seshemnefer II has to be dated later than that of Iymery.¹⁵

The tomb of Seshemnefer II (G 5080) must have been constructed and decorated prior to the appointment of Seshemnefer II as a vizier because otherwise it is not possible to explain why the highest titles of the vizier are missing in this tomb. On the other hand, if we consider that Seshemnefer II officiated as a vizier before Senedjemib Inti who officiated as a vizier beginning in the middle of the reign of Djedkare Isesi, Seshemnefer II must have died before the accession of Senedjeminb Inti as a vizier. Therefore the dating of the tomb of Seshemnefer II can be settled in the range between the end of the reign of Menkauhor and the middle of the reign of Djedkare Isesi. This late dating is corroborated by the date of the statuary of his brother Pehenptah, which on stylistic grounds has been convincingly attributed by E. Brovarsky to the end of the Fifth Dynasty.¹⁶

If we now place the tomb of Seshemnefer II at the beginning of the reign of Djedkare Isesi, and the tomb of his son Seshemnefer III later towards the end of the reign of Djedkare Isesi it is understandable that a seal impression containing the cartouche of Djedkare Isesi has been found in the tomb of Rawer II at Giza (G 5470) (Junker 1938, 226, fig. 45 [7]; Porter & Moss 1974, 163), who once may have belonged to the Seshemnefer-family and possibly was a brother of Seshemnefer III.

Conclusions

The new dating of the tombs of the Seshemnefer-family is not quite different to the usual dating of the Seshemnefer-family which has been proposed once by H. Junker, but hopefully it is more precise. Having the chronology of the whole Seshemnefer-family in mind, it will perhaps be possible to redate some other tombs of the cemetery en échelon, such as the tombs of the brothers of Seshemnefer II, Rawer (I) (G 5270) (Porter & Moss

¹⁴ This estates name is not recorded in the mastaba of Iymery.

¹⁵ Baer 1960, 54 [21]: "Neuserre or a bit later"; Weeks 1994, 5: Iymery lived from Sahure to Menkauhor. "He probably died and was buried in G 6020 in the reign of Menkawhor".

¹⁶ Brovarski 1997, 269–72 dates the statuary to the end of the Fifth Dynasty, whereas Smith, 1946, 54 proposes a dating to the middle of the Fifth Dynasty. Eaton-Krauss 1995, 59 and 74 No. 30 prefers a dating to the early Fifth Dynasty.

²1974, 163) and Pehenptah (G 5280) (Porter & Moss ²1974, 163), and the more the tombs of the brothers of Seshemnefer III as the tomb of Rawer (II) (G 5470) (Porter & Moss ²1974, 163; Junker 1938, 13; 227, fig. 45 No. 7).

The following table is to illustrate the chronology of the Seshemnefer-family. The arrows indicate the length of the assumed life time of the most important exponents of the Seshemnefer-family during the Fifth Dynasty. A life time of 60 years has been supposed for Seshemnefer I, II and III.¹⁷

Table 5 Proposal for the chronology of the Seshemnefer-family.

Chronology of the kings of the Fifth Dynasty ¹⁸	Seshemnefer I (G 4940) ca 2430–2370	Seshemnefer II (G 5080) ca 2405–2345	Seshemnefer III (G 5170) ca 2380–2320
Sahure (2446–33)			
Neferirkare (2433–13)	↕		
Shepseskare (2413–06)			
Raneferref (2406–395)		↕	
Niuserre (2395–64)			
Menkauhor (2364–55)			↕
Djedkare Isesi (2355–17)			
Unas (2317–2297)			

¹⁷ At the end it might be of some interest that a certain vizier Seshemnefer occurs in the causeway reliefs of the pyramid of Sahure at Abusir, as I was kindly informed by Dr. T. El Awady. Unfortunately it is difficult to admit that this vizier Seshemnefer is the same person as the vizier Seshemnefer II who officiated for a short period at the time of Djedkare Isesi. All given data render obvious that the vizier Seshemnefer II from G 5080 lived from the middle of the Fifth Dynasty through the reign of Djedkare Isesi and not under Sahure. The distance between the last years of Sahure and the middle of the reign of Djedkare Isesi amounts to 100 years. It seems therefore erroneous to suppose a link between the vizier Seshemnefer II of Sahure and the homonymous vizier of Djedkare Isesi.

¹⁸ Chronology after Von Beckerath 1997, 188.