

**Materialising kinship, constructing relatedness:
kin group display and commemoration in First
Intermediate Period and Middle Kingdom Egypt
(ca 2150–1650 BCE)**

Volume One: Text and Bibliography

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The Queen's College

Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the
University of Oxford

Trinity 2014

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Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to contribute to the understanding of ancient Egyptian kinship in the First Intermediate Period and Middle Kingdom (ca 2150–1650 BCE) by exploring how forms of relatedness were displayed in the monumental record. Kinship and marriage are contextually driven sociocultural phenomena that should be approached from the actors' perspective; such an approach can achieve some insight into emic notions of kinship, because monuments were integral to society and contributed to perpetuating and sustaining its fabric.

The introduction (chapter 1) presents the theoretical background on which the thesis is based, namely the notion of kinship as process, where relationships can be constructed and reconstructed throughout one's life. In addition, it provides a working definition of 'kin group', an analytical category that is taken as the primary unit of social analysis that can encompass several ways of being related. Chapter 2 offers a discussion of kinship terminology in the First Intermediate Period and Middle Kingdom. The focus is less on basic kinship terms than on the little understood terminology for kin groups and how these were presented in the written record. Chapter 3 treats stelae, which constitute the core corpus of material for the thesis. Stelae present a variety of images of kin groups and, moreover, they should be considered within the larger units of which they were part. Many of these stelae are unprovenanced but have been attributed to Abydos. At this site, memorial chapels have been identified archaeologically, and some stelae have been found in association with them. Thus, the site offers a materialisation of constellations of relationships. Possible reconstructions of such chapels – one from Saqqara and two from Abydos – are presented in chapter 4, and the impact they may have had on the social memory of visitors is assessed. Display, presence, and performance were some of the ways in which the social role of those groups was communicated. Chapter 5 is concerned with how change and time may be represented in apparently static objects. On the basis of the model of the developmental cycle of domestic groups first introduced by Meyer Fortes, the dynamism of the social fabric is explored through three case studies of groups at different stages of their developmental cycle. The strategies of survival can be seen pervasively in the monumental record, allowing for a glimpse into time and change in kin groups. The conclusion (chapter 6) offers a holistic approach to the material presented in the thesis, emphasising the ways in which the different theoretical approaches proposed intertwine with the material.

For Iñaki

Thank you for being there, now and always

‘When I try to define this asset which has been mine now for years, I tell myself that such a privilege, however rare it may be, is surely not unique; that in the whole adventure of bringing a book successfully to its conclusion, or even in the entire life of some fortunate writers, there must have been sometime, in the background, perhaps someone who will not let pass the weak or inaccurate sentence which we ourselves would retain, out of fatigue; someone who would re-read with us for the twentieth time, if need be, a questionable page; someone who takes down for us from the library shelves the heavy tomes in which we may find a helpful suggestion, and who persists in continuing to peruse them long after weariness has made us give up; someone who bolsters our courage and approves, or sometimes disputes, our ideas; who shares with us, and with equal fervor, the joys of art and of living, the endless work which both require, never easy but never dull; some who is neither our shadow nor our reflection, nor even our complement, but simply himself; someone who leaves us ideally free, but who nevertheless obliges us to be fully what we are’

Marguerite Yourcenar, *Reflections on the composition of Memoirs of Hadrian*

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And now, finally, we have got to Moscow.

Glossary

Age set: a group who passes through certain rites of passage as a unit and whose membership lasts for life.

Ancestor-centred group: kin group which is constituted with one or more ancestors as the centre. Also known as ancestor-focused group.

Cognatic descent group: a group that is based on any combination of male or female links.

Corporate group: group of people who share collective liabilities and rights to property and group name.

Cross-cousins: children of opposite-sex siblings.

Descent group: kin group with a common ancestry that could be claimed through the line of the mother, the father, or both.

Ego: the person in relation to whom a genealogy is elaborated.

Ego-centred group: kin group which is constituted with ego as the centre. Also known as ego-focused group.

Filiation: relationship between a person and his or her parents; in ancient Egypt it is normally given as a constituent of the name of a person. Both the filiation to the father and to the mother can be used for this purpose.

Generation +1 or ascendant generation: the generation of ego's parents.

Generation 0: the same generation as ego.

Generation -1 or descendant generation: the generation of ego's children.

Indigenous category: the term used in a given language, Egyptian in this case, to refer to an abstract kin type.

Kin group: a social group whose membership is defined by kinship.

Kin type: abstract designation of an individual relationship; it functions like a ‘label’ for family relations. The following table provides only ‘simple’ kin types which can always be combined into ‘compound’ terms. An example of how these compound terms are formed is given at the end of the table for MB and ZS.

P	Parents		
		F	Father
		M	Mother
G	Siblings		
		B	Brother
		Z	Sister
C	Children		
		S	Son
		D	Daughter
E	Spouse		
		H	Husband
		W	Wife
MB	Mother’s brother		
ZS	Sister’s son		

Neolocal: postmarital residence pattern in which the couple moves to a new location.

Parallel cousins: children of same-sex siblings.

Primary kin: those relatives who form the nuclear family of a person (P, S, E, and C). These individuals have their own primary kin some of whom are the secondary kin of ego.

Substance: a variable, contextually dependent notion that defines how kinship is constructed for the actors.

Conventions

Most names are rendered in their most widely employed English form for ease of reading, but the non-royal names that are directly relevant to the examples and case studies are left in transliteration in order to avoid confusion among various possible transcriptions. Translations from ancient Egyptian are mine unless otherwise indicated. Throughout this thesis, and especially in the appendices, traditional conventions for transliteration are used.

(...) omission in the original

[...] damaged text in the original, sometimes with suggested restorations

? reading uncertain, often due to the quality of the image

|...| superfluous insertion (often repetition of a term)

Abbreviations

CT: Coffin Texts; *The ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts* by A. de Buck (1935–1961), 8 vols

FIP: First Intermediate Period

MK: Middle Kingdom

OEB: Online Egyptological Bibliography

OK: Old Kingdom

PM: Topographical bibliography of ancient Egyptian hieroglyphic texts, reliefs and paintings by B. Porter and R. Moss (8 vols)

Wb: *Wörterbuch der ägyptische Sprache* by A. Erman and H. Grapow (1926), 8 vols

KG: kin group

ANOC: Abydos North Offering Chapel

TLA online: Thesaurus Linguae Aegyptiae

Urk. i: *Urkunden des alten Reichs* by K. Sethe (1933)

Urk. iv: *Urkunden der 18. Dynastie* by K. Sethe (1906)

Urk. vii: *Historisch-biographische Urkunden des Mittleren Reiches* by K. Sethe (1935)

1 Introduction: on families, kinship, and relatedness

‘How do you expect to communicate with the ocean when you can’t even understand one another?’

Stanisław Lem, *Solaris* (1961, trans. 1972)

1.1 Studying ancient Egyptian kinship

1.1.1 Social sciences, anthropology of kinship, and Egyptology

In the preface of *Egyptology and the Social Sciences*, Kent Weeks (1979: v) wrote:

‘we consider extremely encouraging the fact that Egyptologists are now, after half a century of reluctance, beginning to approach such fields as anthropology for ideas, while anthropologists are also beginning to realize that, beneath Egyptology’s staid and sometimes formidable exterior, there lies a wealth of data of great value for their studies’.

In the 35 years since that publication, the dialogue he hinted at back then has not been as lively as it would have been expected. Several authors have successfully incorporated theoretical models from the social sciences into Egyptology (survey: Baines 2011: 576–8), but very few of those proposals have been followed by engaged discussions in the literature (see section 3.3.2). Whether this is due to discomfort with rapidly changing disciplines (Weeks 1979: 21) or to mistrust of studies that go beyond a narrowly evidential basis (Baines 2011: 575), many Egyptologists remain reluctant to incorporate theoretical approaches into their work.

Anthropology, with its aim to enable a holistic study of humanity, is well suited to the analysis of ancient cultures, as a long tradition of scholarship on Maya studies demonstrates (recent examples: McAnany 1995; Robin 2000; Joyce 2003). However, as with other social sciences, there has been a history of missed chances in the relationship between anthropology and Egyptology. The two continue to be largely separate, although some scholars have attempted to bring them closer together (see O’Connor 1997: 18–22). Judith Lustig (1997b: 7) stated that anthropologists view Egyptology as an ‘antitheoretical, descriptive field’, in a volume in which William Y. Adams ruled out the possibility of a total reconciliation between Egyptology and anthropology:

‘While there is at present some reconvergence of interest between Egyptology and anthropology, the basic personalities of the two disciplines remain far apart. I see no reason to expect that this will change; the two fields simply appeal to people with different backgrounds, different interests and different ideological commitments’ (Adams 1997: 32).

In this thesis, I advocate that an understanding between Egyptology and anthropology is not only possible but also necessary. The rich data provided by Egyptology could be invaluable for anthropologists, while the methods and theoretical approaches of anthropology may offer fresh insights into Egyptian material. Egyptology, as an area study (Baines 2011: 573), needs to rely on methods developed by various disciplines, such as philology, art history, or historiography. Although anthropology is more commonly concerned with existing societies that can be objects of participant observation, some anthropologists rely on archival material for their enquires (cf. ethnography of the Nayar combining interviews and British archival material: Stone 2006: 152), and the use of ethnohistorical methods is also widespread (Carmarck 1972: esp. 229–36; Abler 1982; Trigger 1982; Silverman and Gulliver 2005; Harkin 2010). In addition, anthropological archaeology has become more popular over the last decade as a result of the growing awareness that anthropology and archaeology are ‘inextricably bound together’ (Gosden 1999: 11). The distinction between those societies that are prone to be observed through the anthropological lens and those that are not is blurred. Thus, my point of departure is that it is possible to study aspects of ancient Egyptian culture through an anthropological approach.

As with other disciplines within the social sciences, Egyptology has not been interested in anthropology of kinship and, with the exception of Franke’s comprehensive study (1983a), few systematic works have been published. Here I give a sample of the literature, treating topics such as kinship terminology and marriage patterns in more detail in other chapters. General works on ancient Egyptian kinship include those of Allam (1977a), Forgeau (1996 [1986]), Feucht (2001), Franke (2001a), and Campagno (2009b), as well as two edited volumes on kinship in several ancient societies also treating Egypt (Campagno 2006b; 2009c). These provide a useful point of departure, but kinship and marriage and their broader implications remain open to further research. Moreover, kinship and marriage in ancient Egypt have not usually been treated with an anthropological focus, and discussions on families or inheritance are rarely set in a broader theoretical framework.

Scholars tend to use pictorial sources to study kinship (Whale 1989; Lustig 1993; 1997a; Roth 1999; Myśliwiec 2010; McCorquodale 2013), no doubt because Egyptian visual culture is rich in depictions of social groups. In this thesis, I also rely on monumental sources and how they display kin relations. Such depictions have often been understood as reflecting social practices more or less directly, so that they could be used

to reconstruct kinship patterns. It is, however, necessary to ask first what those depictions do and how they may articulate concerns other than the simple representation of ‘reality’.

Rather than developing general approaches to kinship, scholars have tended to favour the study of specific aspects, such as marriage (see section 5.7) or kinship terminology (see section 2.2). Most attention has been given to those features that contrast strongly with contemporary Western ideas of family, for example consanguineous marriage (see section 3.2.2) or proposed matrilineal trends (Olabarria 2012: 879–80). The latter point, which is not treated further in this thesis, should be discussed briefly here. Although several scholars have demonstrated that ancient Egyptian society exhibited a clear patrilineal bias (e.g. Franke 1983a: 335–9; Forgeau 1996 [1986]; Bell 1996: 56; Franke 2001a: 246; Campagno 2009a: 36–9),¹ theories advocating matrilineality in pharaonic Egypt retain support particularly among scholars favouring an Africanist and Africologist approach (e.g. Obenga 1995–1996; Allen 2000; T. D. Allen 2009).² Although the importance of the African character of Egypt has been disregarded by traditional Egyptology and should definitely be claimed back, many Afrocentric authors often make the same mistakes as their Eurocentric counterparts. Egyptian society was influenced by Asian as well as African elements, producing a crucible in which it would certainly not be appropriate to describe any single trait as ‘exclusively African’. In keeping with Eric Wolf’s concerns (2010 [1982]), I believe that ‘the world of humankind constitutes a manifold, a totality of interconnected processes, and inquiries that disassemble this totality into bits and then fail to reassemble it falsify reality’. Thus, in line with his notion of global history, one should avoid compartmentalising cultures into isolated segments.

1.1.2 Research questions and aims

My doctoral project grows out of the research I did for my MPhil thesis (2010). In that work I was interested in the role of mother’s brother and sister’s son, since some publications assumed a high status of the former – usually to support ideas of matrilineality in ancient Egypt – without analysing the material in detail. I focused on Middle Kingdom stelae, using other sources where possible to substantiate my conclusions. In investigating this topic, I looked for representations and mentions of those

¹ Patterns of matrilineal succession have been proposed for Kush with certain idiosyncrasies (Török 1997), although this is also contested (Morkot 1999: 188–210; Khan 2005). This discussion cannot be treated here in detail.

² My MPhil thesis (Olabarria 2010) was a reaction to unfounded Africanist interpretations of the role of the mother’s brother in ancient Egypt (e.g. T. D. Allen 2009: 18), and further references to this discussion may be found there.

two kin types and analysed where they were situated on the monument, their captions, and the poses they were depicted in. I came gradually to realise that my approach was not entirely satisfactory. The people I was investigating had a given status and a given role, but this was always in relation to other people within their group. Moreover, the role of a group was not defined in isolation, but in connection with that of other groups. Thus, rather than looking at individual kin types, I concluded that it would be more productive to examine groups as a whole, and I adopted a group-focused approach to issues of social dynamics.

With this method in mind (see section 5.2), I aim to advance the analysis of kinship patterns in the First Intermediate Period and the Middle Kingdom through a study of the display and commemoration of kin in the monumental record, mainly on memorial stelae. The main challenge for such an approach is to establish and define an appropriate analytical category. Although in my previous research the sources suggested that the group and not the individual should be regarded as a minimal unit of analysis, it still needed to be determined what groups were relevant in emic terms. Preliminary research revealed that this would not be an easy task, as there are at least twelve terms that could be rendered as ‘family’ (Franke 1983a: 178–301). This diversity raises questions of what a family is and to what an extent the Egyptian conception of kinship may be unique. My methods have been largely inspired by anthropological approaches such as kinship as a process, and theoretical archaeology, for example the notion of material agency. The result is an interdisciplinary style of research with which I aim to address the sources from a fresh perspective because, as Bruce Trigger stated (2004: 46), ‘when scientific debates continue for a long time with no sign of closure, it is worth enquiring whether the wrong questions are being asked’.

Three main themes emerge in my doctoral thesis. First, I enquire into forms of Egyptian relatedness in the period of study, and propose an emic conception of kinship. I am particularly interested in how those notions of kinship are presented on contemporary sources, and whether and how they were articulated with other phenomena. For example, I investigate a possible strengthening of familial ties during a period of marked territorialisation and how kinship could also have an effect on the socio-political sphere.

Second, I test the validity and scope of an approach through groups to gain insight into kinship patterns in this specific socio-cultural context. While the individual is undeniably important, I use the category ‘kin group’ as a minimal unit of analysis that encompasses several forms of relatedness in the Egyptian context. Among the issues that

I am concerned with are inclusiveness – how did one become part of a kin group? – rights and duties – what did being part of a kin group entail? – and relevance – what did it mean to be part of a kin group and how was it perceived?

Third, on other level of general interpretation I explore the effect that the use of theories from a range of disciplines may have on the understanding of Egyptian material. Kinship is as a very promising area to showcase the potential of theory in Egyptology. I attempt to show how a holistic approach can be achieved by incorporating several perspectives into my research, including monumental display, the role of memory, landscape studies, and social relatedness.

1.2 Theoretical framework: families, households, and kin groups

1.2.1 Setting the terms

Kinship and marriage are components of daily life, and it is all too easy to take their meaning and the processes of their construction for granted. They are, however, culturally driven and socially contingent. The analysis of ancient families and social structure, thus, must take into account the variability of these categories, which adapt to the social environment(s), within which they must be defined. Study of how and why certain social categories came into being and became significant for ancient Egyptian actors is complex. Definition of what kinship and marriage meant for ancient Egyptians involves interpreting written, pictorial, and archaeological sources with all their inherent biases.

Different source categories may present diverging conceptions of kinship. Thus, the role of the nuclear family is highlighted in literary works, self-presentation inscriptions, and representations in elite tombs. The importance of founding a new household and taking a wife is emphasised in these types of sources. For example, the *Teaching of Ptahhotep* asserts: *jr jkr=k grg=k pr=k mr=k hmt=k m hn [r tp hsb=s]*, ‘if you are effective, you should found your household and you should love your wife with ardour [with due measure]’ (Papyrus Prisse 10,8–9: Žába 1956: 41–2, nos 325–6). The early 18th dynasty self-presentation text of Ahmose son of Abana narrates: *jw=j m šrj n jrt=j hmt jw sdr=j m smt šnw hr m-ht grg.n=j pr ḥḥ.n=j jt.kw r p3 jmw mhtj hr knn=j*, ‘while I was a young man, before I had taken a wife, I slept in a hammock of net (?). After I had established a household, then I was taken away to the “Northern Ship” because I was valiant’ (Urk. iv 2, 15–6 and 3, 2). The teachings also stress the father-son relationship, especially in terms of transmission of ideas and traditions: *nfr.wj šsp s3 dd jt=f*, ‘how

good it is that a son should receive what his father says' (Papyrus Prisse 16,5–6: Žába 1956: 58, no. 543).

By contrast, depictions and mentions of relatives on monuments such as stelae, offering tables and statuary, as well as multiple burials, private correspondence, and patterns identified in settlements, indicate that extended families may have been the basis of Egyptian society. For instance, some houses at Lahun that had been designed to accommodate small groups were modified to cater for larger groups (Kóthay 2001: 367; Kemp 1989: 156–7; 2006: 219, 221; Willems 2014: 205–6).

Thus, authors who rely mainly on discursive sources have argued that Egyptian society was based on nuclear families and that extended families played no role (Allam 1977a: 105, 108; Ritner 2008: 172; Flamarion Cardoso 2009: 90). By contrast, those who focus on the assessment of socio-economic processes emphasise the salience of extended families (Eyre 1992: 216, n. 58; 1994: 113; Moreno García 2005: 226–7; 2006: 127). This divergence is based on a dichotomy perceived between the 'ideal' and the 'real'/'factual' spheres of social interaction, in which the nuclear family would relate to the sphere of the 'ideal' while extended families may have been more important in practice. I would say that the articulation between the 'ideal' and the 'real' should not be disregarded (see section 3.2), as they are both interdependent, fluid categories. While some studies on ancient Egyptian kinship have focused on purely ideological and iconographic aspects (e.g. Lustig 1997a; McCorquodale 2013), I am more concerned with this interaction of the 'ideal' and the 'real' in the construction of notions of kinship.

Kinship is an immaterial, abstract concept that is particularly difficult to examine in relation to past societies. Discussions on what kinship 'really' is have taken place since the beginning of its establishment as an academic enterprise, and sometimes it has even been denied any independent status (for kinship as an untenable cross-cultural analytical category, see e.g. Schneider 1984).³ In a conventional understanding, kinship involves relationships between people based on descent and/or marriage. As Fox (1983 [1967]: 27) puts it alluding to T. S. Eliot, 'kinship and marriage are about the basic facts of life. They are about birth, and copulation, and death'. This type of biologist approach has been harshly criticised (Collier and Yanagisako 1987; Carsten 2000b) because it disregards that these 'facts of life' are also culturally constructed. Kinship is not only about descent and marriage, but also about the ideology of human relationships (Keesing 1975: 11;

³ Some general ideas about the 'essence' of kinship in First Intermediate Period and Middle Kingdom sources are suggested in section 5.8.

Stone 2006: 6).⁴ The cultural understanding of kinship affects various interrelated spheres such as reproduction, rights and duties, prescriptive or preferential marriage rules, kinship terminology, and patterns of residence.

This brief discussion brings two points into relief. First, the abstract notion of kinship needs to be approached through its material embodiment, that is, through the groups of people linked by kinship. Second, forms of kinship are not universal, and need to be studied within their socio-cultural context. A strategy to address ancient Egyptian kinship that takes these two premises into account needs to define its unit of analysis, and characterise it contextually.

Kinship is based on personal relationships and is best expressed through groups of people. The most widespread analytical category of kinship relations in the modern West is 'the family'. Yet, 'family' is a heavily loaded term and hence extremely difficult to define.⁵ In part for this reason it is barely used in anthropological vocabulary on its own as a category. When it is used, it is typically qualified as either a 'nuclear' or 'extended'. The definition of the former is similar to widespread modern ones (see n. 5), while the latter is often described along the lines of 'a domestic group or composite of domestic groups consisting of two or more nuclear families linked together through parent and child (patrilineal extended family, matrilineal extended family) or through siblings (fraternal or sororal extended family)' (Keesing 1975: 149). Such definitions imply a number of problems; for example, that co-residence is a core element, so that it would be virtually impossible to differentiate a 'family' from a 'household' (see below). I could offer my own definition for 'family' at this point and then employ the term throughout the thesis, but I have opted to use a different term instead because even if a new definition is given 'family' will always be seen through the filter of an emic category of modern Western society. In addition, 'family' is often quite restrictive a category and what it designates should rather be regarded as a type of kin group, which, as I argue below, is a more flexible and appropriate term to use.

In disciplines concerned with the study of the past, especially in archaeology, 'household' has been preferred to 'family' as an analytical term (Hendon 2004; Stowers

⁴ Kinship involves not only rights, rules, and obligations, but it is also 'a realm of new possibilities' (Carsten 2004: 9).

⁵ Even the researcher's personal experience may sometimes play a role in its characterisation. The Oxford English Dictionary defines a family as 'a group consisting of two parents and their children living together as a unit', but such a definition would not hold in a vast number of cases that would be described by the actors as actual families (i.e. a couple without children, a parent with his or her children, or even a couple whose children live elsewhere).

2008; Huebner 2011; Nevett 2011; Parker and Foster 2012; Müller 2014). This is probably because the physical traces of a household are easier to identify archaeologically than the arguably more elusive evidence for a family. The reason for this is that the households are, by definition, linked to dwelling places. In anthropological terms, a household necessarily implies co-residence (Parkin 1997: 28), although lately more nuanced definitions are being preferred in theoretical archaeology, with the point being made that ‘household’ should not be equated to ‘house’.⁶

Dwelling patterns are essential in anthropological enquiry, where domestic groups – and their internal changes – have sometimes been taken as a foundational category for certain types of research (e.g. Fortes 1970 [1949]; Goody 1958). However, they are not easy to approach in ancient Egypt, where settlements are rare in the archaeological record, and rather little studied. In any case, an examination of emic sources (see section 1.2.2) shows that co-residence is only one of the features that a kin group may (or may not) exhibit. Written sources attest to several types of kin groups (see section 2.3), and a shared dwelling space may not have been regarded as essential for all of them (that is, maybe only some of the groups may have been co-residential). Thus, as with families, a household is only a type of kin group.

The limitations of the terms ‘family’ and ‘household’ are avoided if ‘kin group’ is proposed as the minimal unit of social analysis in ancient Egypt. On the one hand, it can be used as an analytical category without the risk of its being understood as an emic category of the researcher. On the other hand, it does not assume the sharing of a dwelling space. It is, however, so broad as to require further specification if it is to be usefully applied.

By definition, a kin group implies connection by kinship, so its flexibility and implications depend on how kinship itself is understood. My anthropological perspective is largely inspired by the conception of kinship as process, as something that is constructed and reconstructed throughout life and often beyond. In the words of Janet Carsten (2004: 9), ‘kinship is far from being a realm of the “given” as opposed to the “made”’. This notion of kinship as fundamentally constructed has been designated ‘relatedness’ in order to convey ‘a move away from a pre-given analytic opposition

⁶ Cf. the working definition of the 9th Annual Symposium of the Oriental Institute of Chicago in 2013 on household archaeology: ‘household: a co-residential group of people that can be related by kinship and form a family or a single person or a number of people not related by living together for a specific purpose. A household can, however, also be spread over more than one house in the same way that a house can also accommodate more than one household’ (Müller 2014: 7).

between the biological and the social on which much anthropological study of kinship has rested' (Carsten 2000a: 4). Although I retain the term 'kinship', I understand it from this perspective of relatedness, that is, as a process of social negotiation that should be described in emic terms as far as possible.⁷

Since kinship is flexible and constructed, kin groups encompass several ways of being related, and those of one society do not necessarily correspond to the practices found in others. The definition of kin group, as the definition of kinship, must be linked to its specific socio-cultural context.

But what definition of kin group am I proposing? In a classic kinship reference book 'kin group' was described as 'a social group whose members define their relationship (or their eligibility for membership) by kinship or common descent' (Keesing 1975: 150; see also Schusky 1965: 76). Indeed, a kin group must, by definition, be a group whose members are linked by kinship. This definition has to be general in order to encompass the multiple forms that kin groups may adopt. Broad definitions that are useful for comparative purposes cannot cover the specificities that make each society unique. This thesis is about these specificities, and in the next section I propose a description of kin group that is directly linked to the Egyptian context.

1.2.2 Working definition of kin groups

Bearing all the mentioned complexities in mind, I have tried to devise a working definition of what a kin group might have been in the First Intermediate Period and the Middle Kingdom that may serve as a starting point for subsequent discussions. The usage of 'kin group' throughout this thesis is intended to fall within the definition proposed below.

Fixed and invariable definitions of processes that are essentially dynamic need to be avoided as far as possible: description of socio-cultural traits should be flexible, and should not be guided by any single criterion. Polythetic classifications formalised, for example, by Wittgenstein (1953) and Vygotsky (1962), and applied to the study of kinship by Needham (1975), are defined by a number of attributes, not all of which need to be possessed by every member of a class. Thus, although A, B and C may all belong to the same polythetic class, it may happen that only A and B, and B and C resemble each other, while A and C have little in common. Polythetic classes are essentially flexible and

⁷ Parkin (2013) criticises processual approaches – especially Carsten's – for disregarding biology in order to delve into more 'transcendental' notions of kinship. The processualists, however, do not ignore biology, but rather interpret it within emic cultural categories.

represent the immense variation inherent in societies more effectively than monolithic classes. Needham (1975: 351) provided an illustrative example concerning descent groups, stating that the most productive aspect of polythetic thinking is that ‘an insufficiently discriminative taxonomic concept was replaced by a set of criteria which might be matched only sporadically, and in highly various combinations, by the jural institutions of real societies’. As a polythetic class, ancient Egyptian kin groups include various social groupings that differ intrinsically while participating in a common core of kinship. What such a core may have been in ancient Egypt is a question addressed throughout this thesis.

I identify some attributes that can be associated with kin groups in First Intermediate Period and Middle Kingdom sources but they do not need to be present in all examples. These features are flexible and changeable, and they provide a starting point that is concerned with the characteristics of a particular society. As I discuss in chapter 2, an ‘emic’ approach should be preferred when social phenomena are being studied, and that is why I explore contemporary elite and non-elite sources – inscriptional, pictorial, and archaeological – in order to access what the actors may have thought about kinship and marriage.

I propose that ancient Egyptian kin groups are groups of people:⁸

1) *who live in the same household or area*. Some terms for kin groups, such as *whjyt*, have a geographical or local dimension. For example, in the *Teaching for Merikare*, the lord of a town seems to be equated with the lord of a *whjyt* (see appendix 2.6.10). This word is attested with a town determinative 𓂏 from the New Kingdom onwards (Franke 1983a: 210). The concept of the ‘house’ may have been fluid, and physical boundaries may not have meant separate residences, as Lisa Nevett has shown for Graeco-Roman Egypt (2011: 25–9), while members of more than one kin group may have been co-residents as well.⁹

2) *who are commemorated together on various types of monuments (e.g. stelae, offering tables, statuary)*. Middle Kingdom stelae include representations of increasing numbers of people. Although it is not always possible to ascertain what kind of relationships there was between these individuals, many captions accompanying figures refer explicitly to their kin relations. For example, one of the stelae (or possibly blocks)

⁸ The order of the following characteristics is arbitrary and does not reflect their relative importance of frequency.

⁹ For a cross-cultural treatment of the relation between houses and kinship, see Carsten (2004: 31–56).

of *jw-n=f-r=sn* (see KG 12.2 in appendix 4.1.2), presents four generations of the same family unequivocally. It is often difficult to define these relations from captions, because kinship terms are often used in extended or metaphorical ways. In addition, the possessive suffixes that indicate to whom a particular kin type is related (e.g. *mwt=f*, ‘his mother’) are often not precise enough, and there may be references to more than one ego on the same stela (Robins 1979: 199; Grajetzki 2005: 62; Olabarria 2012: 887–8).

3) *who can function as economic units and/or corporate groups*. Some kin groups may work their own lands and be largely self-sufficient. Eyre (1994: 111) states in reference to the case of the documents of Heqanakht that they represent a large family ‘acting as a joint farming enterprise’. Corporate ownership, however, can also comprise elements other than land. For example, offices often stay in the same kin group, as they are transmitted from father to son for generations (see Nelson-Hurst 2011).

4) *who share food and rations that may be distributed by a man in authority as head of the household*. The papyri of Heqanakht, though probably not typical, are explicit about how a man is responsible for distributing provisions among his dependants (*hrjw*): *mtn jj.n=j mj-n3 hntjt jrj.n=j ḳw=tn r-nfr jn grt jw ḥp ʕ wrt mtn jrj n=n ḳw=n r ḳd n ḥp whd mj rnw mtn ph.n=j p3 hrw jm=tn hr ṣnh=tn*, ‘look, before I came here sailing upstream, I set your rations well. Now, the flood has been very great. Look, our rations are set for us according to the flood, which one endures like the names. Look, I have arrived to provide for you until today’ (Allen 2002: 16; letter ii, 3–5a). This man regards himself as the father of his dependants, an expression that may be used metaphorically: *mtn pr r-dr=f m-mjtt hrdw=j jnk ht-nb*, ‘look, the whole household is like my children; everything is mine’ (Allen 2002: 17; letter ii, 25–6; see also appendix 2.2.8).¹⁰

5) *who are buried together in multiple burials or close to each other in the same area of the necropolis*. The First Intermediate Period necropolis of Dendera provides a clear example: 88% of the shaft tombs are distributed into groupings of two to sixteen tombs with a small mudbrick wall surrounding each cluster (Slater 1974: 204) [Pl. 2.1]. The presence of these walls suggests that certain groups, of unknown composition, that were significant for the Egyptians persisted after death.

6) *who have ritual obligations towards the deceased members of the kin group and interact with them*. Excellent examples of this interaction are the letters to the dead, in

¹⁰ I do not agree with Allen’s (2002: 41–2) suggestion to take the *r-dd* as part of this sentence and referring to the allocation of resources mentioned in a previous line (‘everything is mine to allocate’). This particle (*r-dd*) often introduces proverbs or sayings, and what comes next to it could be one: ‘half a lifetime is better than death at once’.

which living members of the household ask their deceased relatives to intercede on their behalf from the netherworld. Ancestor cult contributes to preserving the cohesion of extended families, with tombs acting as foci of collective memory (Adams 2010: 15; Moreno García 2010: 153; Richards 2010: 137–8). Relationships between the living and the dead are reciprocal, and counter-prestations were expected from the ancestors who received offerings, as is stated on the outside of the late Old Kingdom Qaw bowl: *jn jrr.tj r=j r-gs=t hrdw=j špt n s3=t jm mr jnm rf stj=f n=t mw*, ‘it is to your side that it is done against me, my children being angry at your son (me) while I am ill. Who will make libations for you?’ (Gardiner and Sethe 1928: pls iii–iiia, lines 3–4; Wente 1990: 212, no. 342).

7) *who may be connected by links that go beyond a biological conception of kinship.* It is not easy to determine which members of the family belonged to each type of grouping because the sources are silent in the matter. However, for term *3bt* such information is available, since a group of Coffin Texts (CT 131–146) uses it in treating the reunification of the family in the afterlife (see section 2.3.1). The final part of CT 131 reads: ‘[...] that my *3bt* is released for me immediately: my children, my siblings, my father, my mother, all my servants (*mrt*), and all my neighbours (*dmj*)’ (de Buck 1935–1961: CT ii 152 a–c; see also appendix 2.1.27). The wife and other affinal kin are not included in this set of categories, while servants and dependants are considered an integral to the *3bt*.¹¹

I use these seven characteristics to define the polythetic category of kin group according to available sources of the First Intermediate Period and Middle Kingdom that I model as far as possible according to emic perspectives. Each attribute would deserve further consideration, but some of them are extremely difficult to trace in detail in the record. For instance, while dwelling patterns are essential traits to describe a particular society, they are largely inaccessible for ancient Egypt. In a few cases, groups living in the same household may be reconstructed to a certain extent (e.g. through the *wpwt*-lists, see section 5.3 and [PI. 1.2]), but it is impossible to determine, for example, whether members of the same kin groups were dispersed in the same neighbourhood or in different segments of a village according to any fixed distribution patterns. Indeed, villages are almost completely unknown in the archaeological record. Thus, although we

¹¹ See brief discussion in Willems (2008: 214–5; 2014: 185). The term *3bt* occurs in Old Kingdom legal documents, where it excludes the wife (Franke 1983a: 277–9); thus, the meaning of *3bt* present in the Coffin Texts may be also applied to non-funerary contexts. See section 2.3.1 below for a more detailed discussion of this term.

may catch glimpses of social organisation and of the active role of kin groups, it would be impossible to retrieve a complete picture.

In any case, a detailed study of all these attributes lies beyond the scope of a doctoral thesis. Given the scarcity of material for some of them and the vast project that a comprehensive survey would entail, I focus on only one of them, citing other attributes when appropriate, not least because all of them are interrelated and interdependent. I concentrate on the second characteristic, namely display and commemoration of kin, considering its articulation with the other attributes. The decision to prioritise this particular point was prompted by the nature of the material. The majority of available sources for kinship and marriage from the First Intermediate Period and the Middle Kingdom can be considered monumental, in the sense that they were set up to be displayed and observed by an audience. This raises the question of the reliability of these sources for attaining a reconstruction of what kinship meant and how it worked. What kind of message about families and kin groups is being transmitted through monumental display? Does it differ from the working of kin groups in lived experience and, if so, does it matter? We are being presented with an image of kinship and marriage as filtered through display, and it is essential to bear in mind that character of the sources. In addition, the impact of the monuments on contemporary and later audiences and their role in the maintenance and/or dissemination of ideas of kinship are central to the discussion.

In summary, I focus on commemoration and display of kin on monuments not least because an understanding of display strategies may provide a point of access to other attributes such as participation in ritual activities. Monuments are fundamental to the ancient record, and it is thus essential to study how and why kin groups were represented in order to draw conclusions about their role.

1.3 Dating of the sources and characterisation of the corpus

Dating is a major issue that is particularly salient within the dynamic approach that I advocate (see chapter 5). An accurate chronology is necessary especially for establishing whether two kin groups were contemporary and for identifying their phases of development. Yet many objects are not securely dated and dating criteria are uncertain.¹²

¹² Moreover, dating criteria considered ‘secure’, such as royal names, may not be decisive, since the mention of a king is often only a *terminus post quem* and, thus, not a precise indicator of an absolute date.

I date material in my corpus on the basis of previous research,¹³ while proposing my own conclusions when previous suggestions clash and offering detailed discussions where appropriate.

Both the absolute and sometimes the relative chronology of the periods treated in this thesis are regarded as problematic. In terms of political history, the First Intermediate Period spans the poorly known Herakleopolitan period and the first half of the 11th dynasty (Seidlmayer 2006: 159), but there is more precise and abundant information about the latter part of this period. It is generally accepted that during the 11th dynasty Thebes became a major political centre, and that the First Intermediate Period came to an end when Mentuhotep II reunified Egypt in the second half of his rule (Willems 2010: 84). The length of the Herakleopolitan period has been a matter of debate, prompting two opposing hypotheses for a short chronology (Beckerath 1966) or a longer one based on Manetho's account. Beckerath argued that the relative absence of Herakleopolitan monuments could only be due to the brevity of this dynasty's rule. However, absence of evidence is not evidence of absence, and this idea of a short period has been largely abandoned. Seidlmayer (1990: esp. 378; 2000a; 2006: esp. 167) favours a larger duration on archaeological and typological grounds, and this is supported by prosopographic studies (e.g. Schenkel 1962: esp. 131–60; Spanel 1984; Brovarski 1989). In my work I follow the model of a longer Herakleopolitan period comprising at least 4 to 5 generations because the material culture of the period shows a clear ongoing continuity.

There is less academic consensus about the definition of the Middle Kingdom as a period. Some scholars see it as spanning the later part of the 11th dynasty to the end of the 12th (e.g. Marée 2010a: xi; Ryholt 1997), while others also include the 13th dynasty (e.g. Callender 2000: 148; Bourriau 2010: 13). The treatment of the period may vary according to which factors are regarded as crucial, such as the establishment of new 'capital' cities, the continuity of royal families, or stylistic traits of monuments. Most works on the chronology of the Middle Kingdom and Second Intermediate Period place an emphasis on reign lengths and try to reconstruct a list of kings (e.g. Schneider 2006; Franke 2008; Franke and Marée 2013: 7–13). This, however, provides only a political chronology, since the succession of rulers does not necessarily affect all aspects of life from a socio-cultural perspective. This was acknowledged by Franke (2008: esp. 260, n.

¹³ Some criteria used for dating Middle Kingdom stela are philological or epigraphic (e.g. Smither 1939; Bennett 1941; 1958; Vernus 1991; Spanel 1996; Franke 2003b), while other are mainly – though not exclusively – based on iconography and style (e.g. Hölzl 1990; Freed 1996; Marée 2009; 2010b).

5), who stated that the Second Intermediate Period can only be defined politically; thus, he argued for an inclusion of the Second Intermediate Period within the late Middle Kingdom on the basis of cultural continuity. Franke's proposal may be contested, since the Second Intermediate Period can also be treated as a self-sufficient historical unit,¹⁴ but it is valuable in challenging the other classifications.

I adopt here a view of the Middle Kingdom as including the 13th dynasty based on this latter approach, since social phenomena should not be constrained into a chronological framework based on political events. As Franke put it (2001b: 393), 'the Middle Kingdom, defined as a cultural-historical entity, has no sharp limits', and this statement can be supported by evidence for patterns of display of kinship and marriage. Although some differences between the 12th and 13th dynasties are discernible, these exhibit a gradual development and are not revolutionary changes that sharply interrupt the preceding social context.

Thus, in this thesis I adopt a definition of the period under study according to socio-cultural continuity rather than political events. Taking the chronological table on the volume edited by Hornung, Krauss and Warbuton (2006: esp. 491–2) as a starting point to which I add the 13th dynasty, most of the material in my corpus dates between ca 2150–1650 BCE (i.e. First Intermediate Period 2150–1980, and Middle Kingdom 1980–1650). The Second Intermediate Period should be regarded as distinct period, and I do not treat it in this thesis, but its material culture, especially stelae, is often difficult to date. Thus, some overlap with material of the later Middle Kingdom/Second Intermediate Period from sites such as Edfu can be expected.

Several types of First Intermediate Period and Middle Kingdom sources provide information on families to a certain extent, but this may not be sufficient for an accurate reconstruction of ancient kinship dynamics. The sources were not designed to explicitly communicate definitions of what a kin group is (Fitzenreiter 2005b: 85). Matters such as inclusion patterns, differences between kin groups, or the rights and duties of their members do not emerge clearly from the evidence. I address several different topics ranging from terminology for kin groups to reconstruction of their developmental cycle as reproduced in monumental display. Such a variety of concerns can be better investigated in some sources than in others.

¹⁴ For example, Bourriau (2010: esp. 35) argues for a sharp change in funerary material culture from the end of the 13th dynasty – or slightly later, depending on the region – to the Second Intermediate Period.

In chapter 2, which deals with terminology, I have used all possible sources that mention kin types and tried to be as comprehensive as possible in analysing terms for kin groups, which are poorly understood. I have circumscribed my collection of terms to the First Intermediate Period and the Middle Kingdom while extending when appropriate to earlier (e.g. *3bt*, *pr jt/pr mwt*) and slightly later sources (e.g. *h3w*). Most terms for kin groups start to appear in the record from the First Intermediate Period, but some are attested from the late Old Kingdom, and I have attempted to observe any changes (or lack thereof) in the meaning of terms for kin groups during the period under study. In addition, in a few occasions, sources from the Second Intermediate Period are included if they are revealing for a usage of a term or show an unanticipated development (e.g. see appendix 2.3.14).

Most of the thesis, however, centres on display of kin links and how display contributed to sustaining certain social values: the rest of the chapters focus on the monumental record, in particular stelae. Previous scholarship facilitates the selection of a sound corpus of stelae, and I use as my starting point mainly stelae from Naga ed-Deir (First Intermediate Period) and Abydos (Middle Kingdom), while other sources are brought in for comparison. I approach the sources contextually, consequently regarding clusters of stelae – termed chapels (see chapter 4) – as a minimal unit of analysis, since they may have related to groupings in the living society. Those groups, which are commemorated in chapels, can sometimes be ascribed to a particular stage in their developmental cycle, especially when they can be connected together with other contemporary monuments (see chapter 5).

The Abydene corpus is the principal focus of this thesis, because information related to kinship, marriage, and social structure can be obtained from stelae mainly of the Middle Kingdom and later. Material from Abydos is well suited for the reconstruction of kin groups and their developmental cycle. Simpson (1974b) organised Middle Kingdom stelae from Abydos or attributed to that site into what he terms ANOC groups (Abydos North Offering Chapel) on the basis of the individuals mentioned on each monument. The Abydos provenance of some monuments remains uncertain due to the complicated history of the site. Abydos had an enormous religious importance in ancient times and it was repeatedly redeveloped (see section 3.4.2). In addition, fieldwork since the beginning of the 19th century has yielded vast numbers of objects lacking a recorded location (see summary in O'Connor 2009: 26–9; Pouls Wegner 2002: 10–25). Stelae may be attributed to Abydos on the basis of internal evidence, such as family links with provenanced stelae,

references to the Osiris mysteries, mentions of Abydos, and/or the inclusion of increasing numbers of people related to ego. These criteria, however, may be problematic. Provenance is not a key issue at this stage of analysis, since I am attempting to establish kin groups and, even if it is determined that some specific stelae were from Abydos, it does not follow that the groups of people commemorated on them were from Abydos too.¹⁵ ANOC groups may have implications beyond Abydos, as objects relating to people who belonged to one or more of these groups have been found at other sites such as Elephantine (see section 5.5). The dossiers gathered by Franke (1984) and extended by Grajetzki and Stefanović (2012), which include material from outside Abydos, are a vital resource to facilitate associating of people with and into kin groups.

ANOC groups as understood by Simpson may have been connected with the North Cemetery memorial chapels that were built so that private individuals of different echelons of society could participate eternally in the cult (Wegner 2001: 10). Sometimes large and small chapels would constitute a group, and scholars have suggested that smaller chapels may have belonged to relatives, colleagues, or dependants of the owners of the larger chapels (Simpson 1974b: 4; see also O'Connor 1979; 1985). The archaeological context of the stelae in those chapels may point towards the existence of social units comparable to those displayed in their surfaces. Nevertheless, a direct, unequivocal correspondence between social trends and the monumental record is not plausible; the genealogical information extracted from these stelae is thus to be interpreted carefully.¹⁶

The corpus of ANOC objects compiled by Simpson has been corrected and extended by Berlev (1976), De Meulenaere (1977), El-Rabi'i (1977), and Franke (1984). The final list comprises approximately 300 objects divided into 109 groups ranging in size from two to eleven objects (see appendix 1). Some of these groups cannot be analysed with the method of koinography that I present in section 5.2. For example, ANOC 2 does not allow for reconstruction of kin groups because no filiation is given for most of the people shown. However, the majority of the groups are prone to be analysed koinographically, and that is why these stelae and chapels form the core of the corpus for this thesis. From

¹⁵ For further discussion on ANOC groups and how they compare to KG (kin group) and to the notion of workshop, see section 5.4.

¹⁶ The divergence between epigraphic record and composition of households in Graeco-Roman Egypt has been demonstrated by Huebner (2011: esp. 85–9). Some authors are reluctant to employ these data at all, and it has been suggested that 'unless extremely detailed historic data exists, the analysis of kinship is best left to the ethnographer' (Allen and Richardson III 1971: 51). I believe that a meticulous treatment of the sources is the key to understanding kinship in past societies. For a convincing example of kinship anthropology applied to ancient sources, see Robin (2000).

the extended ANOC list of appendix 1 I have selected case studies to explore how memory affects the construction of kinship ties (see chapter 4), and how these monuments display dynamism (see chapter 5). Each chapter also includes a final section that goes beyond the case studies. These have been chosen due to how illustrative they are of general trends observable in the whole corpus, while also offering chronological snapshots from the period because they are distinct and cover a short period each.

1.4 Structure of the thesis

This thesis is presented in two volumes. The first volume contains the main body of the thesis and the second comprises four appendices and the plates. The list of bibliographical references for both volumes is placed at the end of volume one. In this section I summarise the aims of each chapter and how they relate to each other. I then explain the structure of the second volume.

This thesis has been written with Egyptologists as the prime audience, but some of the theories and methods presented have an anthropological focus. For this reason, I have added a short glossary at the beginning of the first volume in which basic definitions for some of the key anthropological terms are provided. This is given for quick reference, but most of those terms are discussed in further detail in the thesis.

The first chapter (*Introduction: on families, kinship, and relatedness*) begins by addressing the scope of the dialogue between Egyptology and the social sciences concerning kinship and marriage. One section discusses the adequacy of terms such as ‘family’ or ‘household’ for the ancient Egyptian sources under study. I propose to use the notion of ‘kin group’ instead of these terms in order to encompass the flexibility of relatedness in the material. Issues of chronology and dating, and of the definition and delimitation of the main corpus, are also treated.

There is a modern academic vocabulary for discussing kinship and marriage, but the emic expression of relatedness also needs to be tackled in order to attain a better understanding of Egyptian society. The second chapter (*Relatively speaking: kinship terminology*) deals with the wealth of terms referring to kin types and kin groups in Middle Egyptian. Most lexicographical work in this area has centred on the translation of terms for individual types, whereas I focus on words used for groups of people that have often been rendered simply as ‘family’. To the twelve terms identified by Franke (1983), some of which I reassess, I add those referring to groups of ancestors. In antiquity there

was no sharp dividing line between the community of the living and the dead, and ancestors should be understood as active participants in the household.

The third chapter of the thesis (*Displaying kin, making kin*) addresses the question of how kinship is displayed and whether the main display patterns correlate with the conclusions drawn from the usage of terms for kin groups, exploring how far stelae can be used for the reconstruction of social groups. A consideration of monuments as agents that interact with viewers suggests that stelae contributed to the construction and transmission of ideas about society. It is impossible to know whether these ideas corresponded with lived experience, but the image of social groups that was being propounded and the reasons that led Egyptian elites to choose it deserve close examination.

The social fabric that is accessible through stelae is a construct which presented a conception of society that was intended to be sustained by them. But how could stelae maintain a given idea of social groupings? The fourth chapter (*The microcosm of memory: stelae, chapels, and technologies of remembrance*) examines the role of kin display as a medium for creating a collective social memory. The importance of stelae as tools for commemoration cannot be overstated, both for the individual and his (occasionally her) social entourage. Three case studies examine how stelae were set up in clusters in the First Intermediate Period to the late Middle Kingdom, strengthening the links of groups of people through a shared memorial space. These configurations created ritual landscapes of memory that may have reinforced ideas about the social fabric.

The fifth chapter (*A dynamic approach to kin groups: koinographies and the developmental cycle of the kin group*) approaches kinship dynamics through display of kin groups on stelae. Even if a few stelae may present a moment in time, a contextual analysis together with related monuments and comparison among different clusters may yield information about social trends. I focus on how time is represented on monuments and how far the expansion and recession of households may be identified. Starting from the model of the developmental cycle of domestic groups advanced by Meyer Fortes (1970 [1949]), I elaborate an approach that I term ‘koinography’, in which kin groups rather than individuals form a minimal unit for social analysis. Three case studies deal with groups at different moments of their development, and I complement that treatment with references to the general trends extracted from the corpus.

The final chapter (*Synthesis: kin groups, display, and remembrance*) synthesises finds, drawing connections between kin display, the construction of the social fabric, and

celebration of communal memory. In addition, I explore future possible avenues of research and further implications of the topic.

The second volume comprises four appendixes and all the plates, but no bibliography, since all the relevant references will be incorporated into the general bibliography at the end of volume one. The separation of the thesis into two volumes is intended to make it easier to find cross-references and check the plates while reading volume one.

The first appendix (*Updated ANOC list*) is an updated version of Simpson's original ANOC list, incorporating additions and corrections proposed by Simpson's reviewers. This table is meant to be used as a reference tool for museum numbers. At times I refer to a stela by its ANOC number (or KG number, see section 5.4 for a definition). The table correlates these numbers with corresponding museum numbers and with the other objects in each group.

The second appendix (*Kin group terminology*) gathers all the sources used for the discussion of kin group terminology in chapter 2. The information is organised into tables including approximate dating, selected bibliography, and transliteration and translation of the relevant passage. No translation of these terms is given in this appendix, since the more detailed argument can be found in the chapter proper. Each term receives a number in this appendix, and each attestation of the term is recorded as a separate, numbered entry in the table. For instance, *hnw* is numbered 2.7 because it is discussed in seventh place in appendix 2; under this term, stela Louvre C 167 is number 4, and the code used in the thesis to refer to this occurrence of the term would be appendix 2.7.4. Attestations are organised in chronological order as far as possible. Throughout the thesis, but especially in chapter 2, reference is made to these tables when I discuss an occurrence of a term in order to avoid duplication.

The third and fourth appendixes, which are similar to each other in layout, deal with stelae and memorial chapels. Each appendix features three case studies that comprise varying numbers of stelae (and a few offering tables for 3.1). The order of the components of each chapel follows the numbering given in previous publications, namely Abdalla (1992) and Daoud (2005) for case study 3.1, El-Rabi'i (1977) for case study 4.3, and Simpson (1974b) for all the rest. Each stela receives a separate number and is analysed in detail. A short description (i.e. dimensions, condition, and technique) and selected references are given, and the stela is then transliterated and translated line by line to facilitate cross-referencing in the first volume of the thesis. Each entry includes a photograph of the stela where the distribution of lines and depictions can be observed. A

possible genealogical diagram is presented, as well as some remarks on special characteristics relevant to the analysis of kin patterns on the stela or the group as a whole. Finally, information on the kin group obtained from combined information of all stelae is incorporated into a complete kinship diagram at the end of each dossier, together with a section outlining noteworthy features regarding kinship and marriage in relation to each case study. Appendix 3 (*Memorial chapels: a catalogue of three case studies*) includes the case studies treated in chapter 4, and Appendix 4 (*Kin groups: a catalogue of three case studies*) those explored in chapter 5.

The plates illustrating the first volume are placed at the end of volume 2 in single-sided pages. All plates are numbered with Arabic numerals and captions give the source of the image. Plates are cited in volume one in the format **[Pl. 1]** (in bold), or **[Pl. 1.1]** when there is more than one on the same plate.

2 Relatively speaking: kinship terminology

‘Esas ambigüedades, redundancias y deficiencias recuerdan las que el doctor Franz Kuhn atribuye a cierta enciclopedia china que se titula *Emporio celestial de conocimientos benévolos*. En sus remotas páginas está escrito que los animales se dividen en (a) pertenecientes al Emperador, (b) embalsamados, (c) amaestrados, (d) lechones, (e) sirenas, (f) fabulosos, (g) perros sueltos, (h) incluidos en esta clasificación, (i) que se agitan como locos, (j) innumerables, (k) dibujados con un pincel finísimo de pelo de camello, (l) etcétera, (m) que acaban de romper el jarrón, (n) que de lejos parecen moscas’

Jorge Luis Borges, *El idioma analítico de John Wilkins* (1942)

2.1 Exploring ancient terminology

The aim of this chapter is to explore ancient Egyptian terminology related to kinship and marriage. This has specific implications for my thesis because the investigation of emic expressions of relatedness might offer a crucial insight into understanding how Egyptians themselves conceptualised kinship and marriage. The first section treats terminology for individual kin types. These terms have already been treated in detail and reconsidered by Robins (1979), Franke (1983a: 11–177) and Willems (1983), and here I only point out the problems raised by traditional interpretations of kin type categories. The second section focuses on terms for kin groups. These have received less attention in the Egyptological literature; they all are often rendered simplistically as ‘family’, which elides their complexity and variety. To the list of terms established by Franke (1983a: 178), I add those related to ancestry. In my view, the boundaries between the living and the dead were not sharp or simple in ancient Egypt and ancestors could often be regarded as active members of the household. The final section of the chapter offers an interpretation of the usage of the terms addressed and how they shape the understanding of ancient Egyptian kinship and marriage.

2.2 Terms referring to individual kin types

Kinship terminology has long been at the centre of anthropological works dealing with kinship and marriage. The existence of widely varied terminological systems has caused confusion because the categories of kin types are not universal and some relatives who are encompassed under a single term in one culture may belong to separate categories in

another. Egypt is no exception, and its kin terms must be analysed in an emic manner in order to attain a proper understanding of social structure.

The first focused investigation on kinship terminologies in ancient Egypt was undertaken by Robins (1979), who determined that the terms *jt* and *mwt* were used for lineal ascendants, *s3* and *s3t* for lineal descendants, and *sn* and *snt* for collaterals of all generations, but that these terms could also be used in metaphorical extended sense (on how this extended meaning could range from ‘colleague’ to ‘rival’, see Revez 2003). Her conclusions were confirmed by subsequent studies (Franke 1983a: chapters 2 and 3; Lustig 1997a: 45–9; Campagno 2009b: 1–2; Lehmann 2012).¹⁷ Robins (1979: 206–7) also explored how some of these terms could be combined by means of a direct or indirect genitive to create a compound term. In this sense, the kin type ‘mother’s brother’ could be expressed as both *sn* – ‘male collateral’ – or *sn n mwt* – a male collateral explicitly related to ego through the mother (Olabarria 2012: 857–8).

Willems (1983) expanded on Robin’s results by incorporating some less well attested kinship terms into his analysis, such as *šmt* – understood as in-law (Roquet 1977), although so rare that should not be included in a basic list of kin terms – and *hnms*. His discussion on the latter term is particularly relevant, as he rejects the translation ‘sister’s son’ suggested by Piehl (1900), because the traditional rendering ‘friend’ could also account for those cases where the term seems to refer to relatives due to the fluid boundaries between relatives and acquaintances in ancient Egypt (see below).

One of the most significant conclusions from Willems’ article, and one which is not explicitly mentioned by Robins, is that the main distinction in ancient Egyptian kinship terminology is not between generations, but rather between lineals and non-lineals (Willems 1983: 162), because one term could refer to individuals of several generations; thus, *sn* could be a brother, a mother’s brother, or even a nephew. Ancient Egyptian kinship terminology does not fit into the Hawaiian paradigm, because lineals are more distinguished than in system where a F=FB=MB and M=MZ=FZ, that is, lineals are referred to by separate terms (*jt* and *mwt*) that differentiate them from collaterals. However, kinship should not be seen as a series of mathematical formulae, and some flexibility in the system could be assumed. Thus, I suggest that Egyptian kinship

¹⁷ It may be worth noting that Robins, Willems and Franke were working on a similar topic in ignorance of one another around the same time. Robins’ article was then published first, but these three authors arrived at similar conclusions independently.

terminology may be seen as a variation of the Hawaiian, especially if the cognatic-like character of descent groups is taken into account (see section 5.8).¹⁸

Classification of terminological systems allows certain social trends to be monitored and grouped together, but I would like to avoid seeing it as a fixed paradigm. Anthropology of kinship has often been criticised for presenting social relations as a set of almost mathematical principles that do not correspond to real human behaviour. Terminologies are indeed an important tool for classification and comparison, but the impact of individual responses should not be underestimated. Subjectivity is relevant, and one should not mistake terminology for an actual configuration of people. This does not mean that the study of terminologies should be abandoned, since they were often abided by as demonstrated by many ethnographies. In addition, the existence of some guidelines may be significant even if they are not universally practised in a given society.

The most comprehensive analysis of kinship and marriage in ancient Egypt is the doctoral thesis of Detlef Franke (1983a; reviews: Robins 1984; Willems 1985; English summary: Franke 2001a), in which he drew on a corpus of over 2,000 primary sources, predominantly stelae. It is this extensive collection of sources that makes Franke's work an excellent point of departure for investigation of Egyptian kinship of the Middle Kingdom and beyond. His conclusions in relation to kin types do not differ significantly from those offered by Robins and Willems (see comparison table in Franke 1983a: 172–3), but the variety of examples presented serves to reinforce the validity of the general model developed by those scholars.

One of the main difficulties that the study of kinship terminologies entails is that it is not always easy to determine to which individual a term may be referring in a particular context. Lustig (1997a: 46) argued that the complexity of kinship analysis has been overstated because

‘kin terms are not used in isolation. Texts on actual tombs and stelae also contain personal names, official titles and expressions of filial relationships. The labelled scenes and texts communicate specific details of genealogy and status which make kin relationships reasonably clear’.

This, however, is often not the case. Captions are not always present, names and titles may be indicative but never decisive of a relationship, and suffix pronouns may refer to a several people on a single stela (Olabarria 2012: 857–60). Consequently, genealogies –

¹⁸ Willems observed (1983: 162) that Egyptian terminology may fit better into Scheffler's (1972: 121–3) systems with intergenerational extension rules, but this would only account for the intergenerational extension in the case of collaterals, while generation would still remain important in the case of lineals.

and by extension the usage of terms – that may be reconstructed from the primary sources will necessarily carry a degree of uncertainty.

Regarding individual kin types, namely *jt*, *mwt*, *s3/s3t* and *sn/snt*, the traditional renderings suggested by Robins (1979), Willems (1983), and Franke (1983a) are mostly well founded, and I do not propose alternative translations in this section. I would, however, emphasise the methodological importance of taking groups of stelae into account when exploring kin relations, because this approach may diminish some of the difficulties mentioned in the previous paragraph.

First, some stelae in a group may clarify the reference of kin terms mentioned in others. ANOC 23 provides an excellent example of how stelae produced by the same kin group may present complementary information. This group consists of two stelae belonging to *hpr-k3-rʿ*, and possibly also a wall fragment. ANOC 23.2 is a complex composition featuring several relatives designated by the kinship term *sn/snt*. Two of them, *sr* and *jnj-jt=f*, have the same mother as ego, as is evidenced by their filiation (*jr.n sdmjt*), so these male collaterals would be full-brothers of ego in modern Euro-American terminology. The kin associations of the rest of the people captioned as *sn* on the stela are not clear, because their filiation links them to a different woman (*jr.n s3t-htḥr*). Without further consideration and taking *sn* as simply ‘sibling’, one could suggest that *s3t-htḥr* is a second wife of ego’s father, so that all those individuals mentioned on lines 5.2–5 and 6.3–5 would be half-siblings of ego. This interpretation would however be fundamentally flawed because ANOC 23.1 demonstrates that this *s3t-ḥrḥr* was born of the same parents as ego. In this case, when *sn* refers to children of *s3t-htḥr* the term corresponds to a nephew or niece in modern Western terminology. This is an example of how a group approach may clarify the interpretation of kinship terms and their identification within the group.

Second, the group approach may also bring to attention those examples where the traditional use of terminology is not observed, and sometimes even subverted. There are cases where a relative is captioned with a term that does not correspond to his genealogical position, mainly for ritualistic reasons. ANOC XII, for instance, features the kin group of *jkr-wr* and *jkr-šrj* on two stelae that provide complementary information. Thus, on ANOC XII.1 the role of a person named *jkr* is not mentioned, but ANOC XII.2 clarifies that *jkr* is the father of both *jkr-wr* and *jkr-šrj*. On ANOC XII.2 a certain *kmnj* appears, and his filiation and position indicate that he is ego’s mother’s brother. No children of this *kmnj* are mentioned, but he is shown in a position of high status receiving

an invocation offering. This offering was traditionally performed by the eldest son of the deceased (e.g. Franke 2003c: 73), but the lack of children of his own may have led *kmnj* to have it performed by a son of his sister, *jkṛ-šrj*. When *jkṛ-šrj* is fulfilling this ritualistic role he is presented and captioned as the lineal descendant (*s3*), of his mother's brother, as seen on line 2.2 of ANOC XII.2. Information from both stelae confirms that the father of this *jkṛ-šrj* is actually *jkṛ*. In addition, it cannot be argued from there that *s3* was the term used for a nephew because the full brother of *jkṛ-šrj* is mentioned in the same register immediately after his brother (line 2.3), with the expected caption for male collateral (*sn*). This example shows that Egyptian kinship terminology was flexible, and the position or role that a person occupied could determine which term was used to refer to them in a given context.¹⁹ However, this genealogical position was circumstantial – perhaps only for the duration of this ritual – and did not affect other relatives who occupy the same genealogical position as the individual whose kin term had been altered. The group approach proves to be fundamental if one is to grasp these nuances, since by analysing a single stela it could have been incorrectly suggested that *jkṛ-šrj* was a biological son of *kmnj* or that the line between collaterals and lineals is more blurred than initially thought.

Terms for kinship and affinity have been tackled in publications subsequent to that of Franke, but not as the main focus of research. For the Middle Kingdom, Lustig's doctoral thesis (1993; conclusions presented in abridged form in 1997a) focuses on the intersection of kinship, ideology, and gender in the tombs of the necropolis of Meir. The New Kingdom has generally received less attention before and after Franke. Kinship terminologies have been discussed by Bierbier (1980) on the basis of evidence from Deir el-Medina, and the work of Whale (1989) deals mainly with pictorial and iconographic features in 18th dynasty Theban tombs.

Terminological studies have contributed towards a better understanding of Egyptian kinship dynamics. Except for Franke (1983a), however, they have largely not focused on the terminology for groups which I believe to be fundamental to understanding the configuration of the society. The information that may be obtained from these terms may contribute to a fuller image of society because they do not centre on an individual approach. In the next section, I explore the various Egyptian terms referring to kin groups and their implications.

¹⁹ Another possibility is that *jkṛ-šrj* could have been adopted by his uncle *kmnj*, but this is less convincing because *jkṛ-šrj* is also presented as the *s3* of his father *jkṛ* in the previous register.

2.3 Terms referring to kin groups

Franke identified a dozen kin terms referring to groups in his doctoral thesis (1983a: 178). Some of these were only metaphorical and should probably not be regarded as kin terms *sensu stricto*. An example is *pg3*, which is traditionally rendered as ‘to open’ – it has the appropriate arms determinative  – but might refer to family or kin groups in specific contexts. In the first part of this section, I present and assess all of Franke’s terms, including those which only occasionally refer to kin groups and whose meaning is primarily metaphorical. I give the terms in order of perceived prominence; thus, those attested more widely in a variety of contexts and which have been treated more extensively by other authors are presented earlier on, followed by those whose meaning is disputed or whose relation to kinship is still unclear. Some characteristics reappear in most kin groups and could even be seen as ‘diagnostic features’ of relatedness in ancient Egypt, so that tackling the better known terms first allows for a better informed approach to those uncertain terms. Some terms that were not considered by Franke should, in my opinion, be treated as fully related to kinship and marriage. In ancient Egyptian there were several words to express notions of ancestry, and I argue that these are pivotal to understanding kinship because deceased members of the group were regarded as active in society. I therefore include terms for ancestor groups at the end of this section.

2.3.1 *3bt*

One of the terms for kin groups with most attestations from the First Intermediate Period and Middle Kingdom is *3bt*, and for this reason it has been regarded as one of the basic terms for ‘family’. The relation of the term with kinship is clear from the sources, but its etymology has led to some discussion (e.g. Meeks 1974: 63–5, root *3b*, ‘to brand’; Willems forthcoming: n. 10, Afroasiatic *ab*, connected with fatherhood). While the number of instances is larger than for any other term during this period, the range of contexts in which it is featured is fairly restricted, being broadly divided into two groups: stock phrases in self-presentation inscriptions and religious texts. Another remarkable feature of this term is that it is the only one for which a list of group members is available in some Coffin Text spells. Thus, it could serve as a model for understanding other groups since it demonstrates that strict Western-style kinship categories are inappropriate to the study of Egyptian society. Nonetheless, it is debatable how far one can extrapolate the composition of this group to other contexts.

First, *3bt* occurs in what is arguably the best attested formula in self-presentation texts in the First Intermediate Period: *jnk mrjj n jt=f ḥsjj n mwt=f mrrw snwt=f jm3 n 3bt=f*,²⁰ ‘I am/was one beloved of his father, favoured of his mother, whom his siblings love, pleasant to his *3bt*’ (appendix 2.1.3–9 and 2.1.11–14).²¹ Even though most attestations of this phrase including *3bt* are from the beginning of the First Intermediate Period, the formula has forerunners in some shorter inscriptions in late Old Kingdom mastabas, such as that of Idu (see n. 123 below). The term *3bt* is also attested in the Old Kingdom (appendix 2.1.1–2), although outside the *jm3 n 3bt* formula that became popular in later times.²² Some inscriptions exhibit the topos of the caring patron frequently associated with kin groups; appendix 2.1.4, 2.1.10, 2.1.16 and 2.1.34, for example, extol the virtues of ego towards his *3bt* within an idealised biography. In addition, appendix 2.1.29 instructs against the greediness of wanting to surpass one’s *3bt* in a way that echoes the usage of *h3w* in the *Teaching of Ptahhotep* (see appendix 2.3.9). This connection of *3bt* and *h3w* is explicit in appendix 2.1.34, and a further parallel of the former with another term for a kin group – *whjtt* – is also presented in appendix 2.1.32. This instance is remarkable, as one is said to be equipped (*ḥpr*) for his *3bt*, a verb that is often used in the context of the afterlife (cf. ‘an equipped spirit’), so that a link between this life and the next could be evoked in this inscription.

Appendix 2.1.2 is especially relevant in that it brings together the theme of the protector of the group and the importance of the *3bt* in the hereafter that is also explicitly addressed in the Coffin Texts. Spells 131 to 146, together with a couple of further examples (see appendix 2.1.17–31 and 2.1.35–37), delineate a series of spells for the reunification of the *3bt* in the hereafter.²³ The topic and ultimate purpose of these spells is stated in the title of many of them. Appendix 2.1.27 and 2.1.30–31 in particular bear a longer version of the heading that emphasises two fundamental aspects: a decree must be sealed concerning the *3bt*; and the *3bt* of a man would be reunited together with him in the

²⁰ Appendix 2.1.9 and 2.1.11–2 were transliterated by Dunham as *jm3 n 3bt msw=f*, because the sign  was added to the writing of *3bt*, but I read the term as only *3bt* because *msw* does not seem to be part of the fixed expression elsewhere (Clère 1950: 30, n. 7).

²¹ Franke (1983a: 279) pointed out that most of these examples come from a restricted geographic area, namely the 8th Upper Egyptian nome, but this is the case for most sources from this period, since Abydos is located there.

²² Appendix 2.1.1, however, could be seen as an experimental variation thereof. Father and mother are mentioned, the order of their associated verbs being inverted, and the *3bt* is not yet a group to whom one is pleasant, but simply a group that ego has contributed to forming.

²³ Appendix 2.1.19–20 also include references to the *hnw* (see section 2.3.7).

necropolis, that is, in the hereafter. These two features – the sealing of a decree and the reunion after death – deserve further examination.

References to the sealing of decrees (*htm wd*) fit with the quite common attestation of the term *3bt* in legal contexts. Even when it occurs in texts that are primarily composed with a funerary or religious purpose in mind, the formulation employed evokes that of decrees and similar documents. The legal character of this kinship term has been noted and commented on before (Franke 1983a: 277–9; Willems 2008: 194; forthcoming)²⁴ in connection with its attestations both in the Coffin Texts and in other sources. Appendix 2.1.2 outlines how a priest could delegate some of his tasks to a son, or, if this is not possible, either to his *3bt* or his wife, and appendix 2.1.15 also refers to the *3bt* in the context of a funerary endowment. Thus, the *3bt* group could be liable for an obligation of ego and it is explicitly stated to be separate from ego's wife,²⁵ a pattern that is also found consistently in the Coffin Texts.

The *3bt* was thus a group of people whom ego wished to meet in the afterlife. The Coffin Texts give a precise idea of who was encompassed in this denomination, as the members of the *3bt* are listed in a few spells: the father, mother, children, collaterals²⁶, and the *dmj*-people are often mentioned in a hierarchically organised list.²⁷ Appendix 2.1.28 even presents the members of the *3bt* in a tabular format, separating them from the rest of the spell. The wife, together with any affinal kin, is never included, and this cannot be a matter of chance. It is noteworthy that the wife is absent from a group that ego should be meeting in the hereafter, especially since scenes of husband and wife labouring together in the Field of Reeds are a common feature of the Book of the Dead and are also attested in New Kingdom tombs.²⁸ This hints towards a more nuanced understanding of these Coffin Texts spells not as a genuine, fixed description of the hereafter but rather as

²⁴ I am grateful to Harco Willems for providing me with a copy of his essay on the *3bt* spells before publication. My understanding of this term has also benefited from personal discussions with him.

²⁵ Both words – *3bt* and *hmt* – are even separated in split columns, reinforcing the idea that they are alternatives.

²⁶ Willems (forthcoming) argues that *snw* may refer only to siblings because *jt* and *mwt* are also used in their most restricted sense (father and mother). While the latter may be true because they are often not mentioned in the plural – although the ‘great ones of the *3bt*’ mentioned on appendix 2.1.37 could be understood as ancestors –, one should not assume that most collaterals should equally be excluded from the mention of *snw*, which is a notably inclusive kinship category by definition.

²⁷ Occasionally others such as *hnmsw* (‘friends’) are included, although Willems (forthcoming: fig. 2) has dismissed these as later additions when the group was no longer functioning as a social unit.

²⁸ These scenes, such as that of the tomb of Sennedjem (TT 1), and their counterparts in chapter 110 of the Book of the Dead, enable the tomb owner to carry out some daily tasks and activities in the afterlife, including ploughing the fields (Robins 1997: 185, fig. 218).

a further expression of a multidimensional Egyptian conception of life after death (Willems 2008: esp. 214–5).

On a different but related note, an ego-centred nature of the *3bt* is argued for by Willems (forthcoming) on the basis of his translation of appendix 2.1.25 as ‘the *3bt* of my father and (that of) my mother’. A similar interpretation was also preferred by Franke for appendix 2.1.26 (1983a: 282): ‘my *3bt* of my father and my mother’. As an alternative, both examples could also be taken as an enumeration (‘my *3bt*, my father, my mother’) in which a genitival connection does not need to be assumed. A stela of the 7th century refers to the *3bt* of the mother exclusively (Carnarvon and Carter 1912: 49, pl. xli); however, the term may have been fossilised, and thus no longer fully understood, at that date (Franke 1983a: 287; Willems forthcoming). Be that as it may, the *3bt* should be described as an ego-centred group irrespective of the preferred translation of the phrase mentioned above because, when the members of the group are detailed, this is always done from the perspective of ego. Thus, the organisation of these groups is not centred around ancestors, and it must be assumed that the *3bt* was formed anew for each generation.

The relation of *3bt* with other kin groups such as *h3w* in the context of biographical inscriptions has been noted above. In addition, *3bt* is also mentioned alongside *hnw* in funerary texts (appendix 2.1.20–21). In some cases, *hnw* may replace *3bt* in spell titles, and it is explicitly desired that both one’s *hnw* and *3bt* be reunited with ego in the hereafter. As one’s *hnw* could be punished on behalf of ego (see section 2.3.7), it could be suggested that this group is a natural complement to *3bt*, which was a group to which ego could delegate his or her funerary duties. In any case, both appendix 2.1.20–21 come from the same coffin from Saqqara and the addition of *hnw* to the inscription could either reflect a regional variant of a spell otherwise attested from Middle Egypt, maybe adapting to a regional usage of kinship terms at the time – given that a majority of instances come from Dayr al-Barsha or Asyut – or a case of scribal ‘creativity’.

I suggest below that the wife is absent from the kin group in relation to other terms (see section 2.3.3), but in the case of *3bt* this pattern is completely clear. The exclusion of the wife can be stated on the basis of different sources deriving from both religious and legal contexts. Therefore, descent is the key to understanding the *3bt*, and ego’s wife should be considered within her own descent group rather than within that of her husband. As Willems proposes (forthcoming), she would be part of her father’s *3bt* (as his daughter) and of her eldest brother’s (as a sister). The use of the term *3bt* in juridical texts

of the Old Kingdom points towards a model of this group as a corporate unit that had certain duties towards ego. Inheritance of land and other property may also be connected to the *3bt*, as some references to barley and grain and to labouring duties on the Coffin Texts suggest (see appendix 2.1.26 and 2.1.37); this possibility, however, cannot be pursued further with currently available sources.

As with all the other kinship terms analysed here, the rendering of *3bt* is a problematic issue, and it does not parallel closely any modern Western categories of relatedness.²⁹ The kin group *3bt* is first attested in legal documents towards the late Old Kingdom, becoming ubiquitous in idealised self-presentation texts of the First Intermediate Period and the Middle Kingdom. Later examples are either religious compositions (such as the Coffin Texts), or royal eulogies (e.g. appendix 2.1.38, and a later example from the time of Seti I). These are conservative contexts, suggesting that a fossilisation of the term may have taken place since the early Middle Kingdom. While Franke (1983a: 288) argued that the *3bt* may have been substituted by other ‘modern ways’ of referring to kin groups such as *mhwt*, it should be borne in mind that such a linguistic replacement may have been driven by social changes. Maybe a model of bilateral descent, possibly linked to inheritance, gained more significance in the troubled times of the late Old Kingdom and persisted during the Middle Kingdom, only to dissolve into a fossilised social unit when the situation stabilised.

2.3.2 *pr* and *pr jt/pr mwt*

The complex term *pr* needs to be included in a collection of words for kin groups. Although its most basic meaning is ‘house’, by extension it can also be used to refer to those living in or belonging to that household. The orthography of *pr* may point towards what specific meaning is being used in a particular context. While *pr* as ‘house’ has often a stroke as the only determinative, when it refers to people it generally features a seated man and woman above plural strokes , although examples of the writing with only a stroke are found when the context clearly refers to a group of people (e.g. appendix 2.2.25). By contrast, there are also instances where the seated man and the plural strokes are present in an inscription that could be understood as referring either to estates or to a group, such as in appendix 2.2.17.

²⁹ For a survey of the range of translations that has been suggested for this term so far, see Willems (forthcoming: n. 12).

These multiple meanings, which are only clarified through context, and the ubiquity of the term *pr* make its analysis quite complex. Thus, it is difficult to be exhaustive with such an omnipresent term, but I have collected as many instances of *pr* as kin group as I could find. It also features in a number of idiomatic expressions related to family life, which I have also considered. First, its usage in collocation with *jt* and *mwt* deserves special mention, since it was a constituent part of the so-called *smjt* formula, discussed below. There are less than a dozen known instances of this formula (see appendix 2.2.18–23 and 2.2.26–29), and they are attested during a limited period of time. Second, some fixed expressions featuring *pr* include *phwj pr*, *grg pr*, and *‘k r pr*. I deal with all of these briefly at the end of this section.

The letters of Heqanakhte, for example, are addressed to his *pr* (appendix 2.2.5–6), and this must denote a group of people. Given its basic meaning of ‘house’, it has generally been assumed that when *pr* is used as a collective it must refer simply to those who dwell in the house. This view, however, is simplistic, because it disregards another central meaning of *pr*, namely ‘property’. Appendix 2.2.14, for example, provides evidence for the links between *pr* and *ht*, as something that could be inherited from parents – both the father and the mother – to children. It may be more accurate to see the core meaning of *pr* as ‘household’, since it can include not only living quarters, but also gardens and fields, real estate, personal property, cattle, household staff and other relatives of the head of the group (Franke 1983a: 263, 273). As with other kin groups, the duties of the head of the *pr* must have involved protection of and provision for the group and associated possessions, as appendix 2.2.7–8, 2.2.12–13 and 2.2.15 attest. The provision of those people belonging to the *pr* with rations and grain is addressed in appendix 2.2.7, 2.2.12–13, and 2.2.15, while appendix 2.2.8 emphasises the paternal role of the head of the *pr*.

Inheritance is a complex issue that cannot be pursued here in detail, but some aspects of it are fundamental for attaining a better understanding of *pr*.³⁰ As is known from other sources, a wife could inherit from her husband, and both father and mother could bequeath to the children that they have together (Franke 1983a: 270; Toivari-Viitala 2001: 96–8, 107; Eyre 2007: esp. 229–33). The 20th dynasty will of Naunakhte (Černý 1945; Grandet 2002) demonstrates that a woman could distribute her possessions among

³⁰ The connection between *pr* and inheritance could have led to its extension to refer to a house in the sense of a line of descent, as in the expression *pr htjj* meaning the Herakleopolitan dynasty of the First Intermediate Period (Franke 1983a: 271).

her children without her husband's endorsement.³¹ Even though the property of the mother is usually mentioned in connection to the property of the father in inscriptions (appendix 2.2.14), the possessions themselves seem to have been legally and socially separate (Franke 1983a: 274). It is not very common to mention one's *pr* in this sense; by contrast, *pr jt* and *pr mwt* are more frequent. This separation into two different spheres may attest to different rights and duties in relation to possessions deriving from the paternal and maternal lines (*ht jt* and *ht mwt*). The stela of Intef (appendix 2.2.14) specifies how people – *rmt* and *mswt n pr* – are included within those possessions that can be inherited from the father and the mother separately, and these are different from the possessions that ego himself has acquired during his life by his own means.

Property may also have played a role in the so-called *smjt*-formula: *smjt nt pr jt nt pr mwt*.³² All known attestations of this formula (see appendix 2.2.18–23 and 2.2.26–29) date to the late 12th or early 13th dynasty, which is the time when the number of people represented on stelae increases very greatly. The evidence encompasses seven stelae (one with an attached offering table), one offering table and one graffito. Eight of them have been either retrieved from or are attributed to Abydos, and most of these stelae have a list of names laid out in short vertical columns at the bottom, where the *smjt*-formula is also featured. The formula could then be summarising those people mentioned on the stela or referring to others not featured. Appendix 2.2.19, an inscription that includes the word *smjt* but does not exhibit the *smjt*-formula, seems to favour the latter interpretation, as it alludes to those people who may have been forgotten.

The term *smjt* seems to refer to a place – desert or, in a more specific usage, necropolis – in some instances (Lange and Schäfer 1900) and to a group of people in others. As an example of the former, the inscription on stela Cairo CG 20057 (Lange and Schäfer 1902c: pl. vi; see appendix 2.2.21) says that an offering is performed for the ka of the southern and northern *smjt* of Abydos (*n k3 n smjt rsj mhtt nt 3bdw*). For the latter usage, stela Cairo CG 20536 (Lange and Schäfer 1902c: pl. xxxix) supplies a list of names of people of the *smjt* (*jmj rn=f smjt*), as does a stela in a private collection published by Clère (1985) and sold in an auction in November 2014 (<https://vimeo.com/110996767>; accessed 12 November 2014). The mention of *pr jt* and *pr mwt* together with *h3w* in appendix 2.2.19 could indicate that people in this group may

³¹ This case may be exceptional, as Naunakhte had been married once before and probably acquired most of her property from her first husband when he passed away. Her current husband could not therefore interfere with how she decided to distribute shares of her own property among her children.

³² I am preparing an article on the *smjt*-formula in which these ideas are expanded and the sources detailed.

have held some funerary duties towards ego (see further in the section 2.3.3), possibly linked to the necropolis of Abydos, as evidenced from the inscription on Cairo CG 20057 mentioned above.³³

From the sources it seems that an ego could have at least two *smjt*-groups, one from the paternal and one from the maternal line, and this may be related to the two distinct spheres of inheritance outlined above. One's *pr jt* and *pr mwt* include those people (relatives, servants, dependant, colleagues, and friends) towards whom one had certain rights and duties. Altogether the *smjt*-formula could be reinforcing the social persona of ego at the intersection between those two lines, both in terms of relations and possessions: the *smjt*-formula might emphasise the funerary dimension of the relationship of ego to his paternal and maternal line.³⁴ In any case, and given that there are examples of *smjt* in connection to ego without any mention of *pr jt* or *pr mwt*, I argue that this term may provide a further example of the tension between ancestor-centred and ego-centred groups that can be found in ancient Egyptian society (see section 2.4).

The term *pr* is also used in other fixed expressions that, although not directly related to its connotation of kin group, may help elucidate the role that the 'house' played in ancient Egyptian social groupings.

The phrase *ts(=j) m phwj pr jt(=j)* appears on two First Intermediate Period stelae from Naga ed-Deir (Dunham 1937: no. 69, 80–2, pl. xxiv; no. 78, 92–4; pl. xxviii) [Pl. 6.2]. Dunham (1937: 81) rendered it as 'I arose from the back of my father's house', in the sense that he ascended to his current status from a subordinate position.³⁵ According to his interpretation, the back of the house is where the servants' and women's quarters may have been located, so that the idea underlying the expression would be in keeping with the ideal of the self-made man that often appears in self-presentation inscriptions of this period. This understanding, however, does not seem plausible, since there is no evidence that the children of a house would have shared lodgings with servants, or that women may have lived in separate rooms of the house with their children. Conversely,

³³ While it could be argued that *smjt* may have been regarded as a general term and thus it needed to be explicitly linked to Abydos in that expression, in most cases *smjt* is not qualified with a reference to any specific place.

³⁴ A link between kinship, funerary duties and inheritance has already been noted in material from Deir el-Medina: 'existing kinship ties, and part-taking in the burial arrangements and their expenses were apparently of crucial importance if one wished to inherit from the deceased, at least in cases where no explicit will was drawn up. In one text a reference was even made to a law of the Pharaoh: *it is the one who buries who inherits*' (Toivari-Viitala 2001: 103).

³⁵ The verb *ts* could also be taken as a passive: 'I was raised from the back of my father's house', but I favour the active because a dynamic role of the individual as a successful man is often preferred in self-presentation inscriptions of this time.

Franke (1983a: 266–7) suggested that this *phwj* may refer to the private part of the house, where the *pr* live as a group, so it may be related more to maturity than to status, although these aspects may not be distinct (on the layout of houses and the idea of a ‘rear chamber’, see: Willems 2014: esp. 203–6).

Other instances of *phwj* in connection with *pr* may help clarify the meaning of this expression. The *Teaching for Merikare* states *jw dd.tw=k ḥd rk n mn jn ntjw m phwj pr htjj*, ‘you are called the destroyer of the time of woe by those who are behind the house of Khety’ (Papyrus Petersburg 1116A xiii 1–2: Helck 1977: 91; Quack 1992: 82–3, lines 11–12, n. f). In this instance, *phwj* clearly refers to a group of people rather than a place, namely the descendants or followers of the Herakleopolitan dynasty. If this meaning is applied to the Naga ed-Deir stela, the translation could be ‘I rose from among the descendants of my father’s *pr*’. If this rendering is correct, in these inscriptions *pr* would then not refer to the physical house, but to the kin group itself, and *pr* would have connotations of inheritance and succession here as well.³⁶ In the case of stela Dunham no. 78, for example, ego – *jndj* – could be claiming that among all those who could have succeeded his father as ruler of Thinis, he was chosen to do it with the endorsement of the god Onuris.

The usage of the expression *grg pr* in didactic texts such as the *Teaching of Ptahhotep* has long led to believe that the Egyptian ideal life involved founding a new house at marriage (neolocal residence): *jr jkr=k grg=k pr=k mr=k ḥmt=k m hn [r tp ḥsb=s]*, ‘if you are an excellent one, you should found your household and you should love your wife with ardour [lawfully]’ (Papyrus Prieis 10, 8–9: Žába 1956: 41–2, nos 325–6).³⁷ Although Toivari-Viitala (2001: 75–6) points out that at Deir el-Medina *grg pr* was used almost exclusively in literary texts, this may demonstrate that by the New Kingdom the usage of the phrase was fossilised, since there are examples from self-presentation inscriptions and letters to the dead from the First Intermediate Period and the Middle Kingdom.

Polotsky (1930: 198–9, n. 24) noted in a study of the stela of *ḥk3-jb* (EA 1671), that *grg pr* could have three meanings: ‘1) the householder, on his decease, leaves his house established [...]; 2) the son, having entered into his inheritance, establishes his father’s

³⁶ Neither the *Teaching for Merikare* nor the stela from Naga ed-Deir write a determinative with *phwj* that could clarify whether it refers to a group of people or a place.

³⁷ Compare with the autobiographical text of Ahmose son of Abana: *jw=j m šrj n jrt=j ḥmt jw sdr=j m smt šnw ḥr m-ḥt grg.n=j pr ḥḥ.n=j jt.kw r p3 jmw mḥtj ḥr kḥn=j*, ‘while I was a child, before I had taken a wife, I slept in a hammock of net. After I had established a household, I was taken away to the “Northern Ship” because I was skilful’ (Urk. IV 2, 15–6 and 3, 2).

house [...]; 3) to establish an independent household’ (on this stela, see also Morenz 2006: esp. 392 for *grg pr*). The first two meanings are effectively two sides of the same coin, while the only two attestations that Polotsky provided for the third one are those mentioned above, namely the *Teaching of Ptahhotep* and the inscription of Ahmose son of Abana. However, these two texts could also be understood in light of the other contexts in which the expression is featured, that is, they may refer to the provision for and/or endowing of an existing household.

Two letters to the dead (appendix 2.2.2 and 2.2.15) clarify that the term *grg* is not being employed in the sense of ‘founding’ or ‘establishing anew’; conversely, the continuity of the ‘house of the father’ is being emphasised. The writer of appendix 2.2.2 in particular warns against the danger of splitting a household and adds: ‘may your son provide for your house like you provided for the house of your father’. In this example I have rendered *grg* as ‘to provide for’, based on the context in which the term is employed in other sources. Along the same lines, the self-presentation text on the stela of *dmj* from Dendera (MMA 65.107) reads: *jw grg.n(=j) pr jt(=j) mh.n(=j)-sw m špss*, ‘I provided for the house of my father and filled it with riches’ (Goedicke 1960; Schenkel 1965: 116–7, no. 83; Morenz 2010: 316–9).³⁸ The stela of *rdj-hnmw* also features this expression in a context of idealised self-presentation in which ego extols his virtues in life: *grg.n(=j) pr m tp-nfr sꜣ3.n(=j) sbꜣt=f-nbt rd.n(=j) dj n dbꜣ-sw*, ‘I provided for the household successfully, I enlarged all its entrances, I gave a gift to the one who requested it’ (Petrie 1888: 51–3, pl. xv; Lange and Schäfer 1902b: 164–7; Schenkel 1965: 112–5; Lichtheim 1988: 42–6). These examples underscore the enhancement of an existing household, as well as the moral quality of the one who perpetuates the house of his father.

The last expression to be discussed briefly here is *ꜣꜣ r pr*, which is often rendered ‘to get married’, or on occasion ‘to have (illicit) sexual intercourse’ (Toivari-Viitala 2001: 74–5). Nonetheless, sources other than the ones studied by Toivari-Viitala suggest that its meaning may be slightly less specific. The following lines in the *Teaching of Ptahhotep* state: *jr mr=k swꜣh hnms m-hnw pr ꜣꜣ=k r=f m nb m sn m hnms r-pw m bw-nb wnn=k jm sꜣꜣ m tkn m hmwt*, ‘if you want to perpetuate a friendship inside a house to which you

³⁸ Goedicke (1960: 291) suggests a different interpretation of the inscription, proposing that *pr jt* refers to the tomb of the father. While the A53 𓂏 determinative after *jt* may suggest that the father of *dmj* was deceased when this inscription was carved *pr* does not necessarily mean tomb. Even though it could refer to a group with funerary duties toward ego, the meaning of tomb for *pr* would be only by extension and not intrinsically.

enter as lord,³⁹ as *sn*, or as friend, to any place that you may enter, beware of approaching the women!’ (Papyrus Prisse 9,7–9: Žába 1956: 37–8, nos 277–81). This fragment shows that a broader, all-encompassing understanding of *ʕk r pr* is to be preferred, since a simplistic rendering ‘to get married’ would not work in this context. This fragment could be understood in two ways: either ‘entering a house’ means simply to pay a visit, or it indicates other type of relationship, possibly addressing inclusion into a group. If this latter interpretation is correct, the passage would attest to the flexibility of the household (*pr*) as a group, since people could ‘enter’ into it and, effectively, change its composition.

In conclusion, the term *pr* plays a pivotal role in our understanding of kin groups of the Middle Kingdom. Like other words analysed in this section, it attests to the importance of the head of the group as protector and carer (e.g. appendix 2.2.8 and 2.2.13), as well as giving a further legal dimension to the social structure of the time. The existence of separate paternal and maternal *pr*-groups indicates that one’s wife did not give up all the kinship links that she held before marriage. This pattern may be related to inheritance and property as key defining features of *pr* as a kin group, because both men and women had independent rights to inherit from their parents. Possessions relating to the *pr* could have included real estate, personal property, animals, as well as people (appendix 2.2.14). These people seem to have held funerary duties towards ego, as probably expressed in the *smjt*-formula. This term points at how Egyptian kinship is bilateral and places the social persona of ego at the intersection between the paternal and maternal lines. Some expressions and stock phrases that include *pr* provide further indication of its range of meanings. For example, detailed analysis of *grg pr* demonstrates that neolocality may not have been as sought after as had been thought, while *ʕk r pr* illustrates the flexibility of the composition of a household. Thus, the term *pr* addresses aspects that are only hinted at with other terms, and makes the link between kinship, funerary duties, and inheritance of property – including people and group membership – more explicit.

2.3.3 *h3w*

The term *h3w* has two main meanings that are sometimes difficult to distinguish by context, rendering its analysis complex. One usage of *h3w*, followed by a seated man and woman on top of plural strokes  has been interpreted as referring to relatives. The term is attested from the late Old Kingdom onward with this meaning, becoming more

³⁹ The version on papyrus BM 10409 has *s3* (lineal descendant) rather than *nb* (lord).

common in the Middle Kingdom. In the second usage, *h3w* could mean corvée or work, often with a man with a load determinative . However, the collective determinative is also attested for groups of workers, so that the writing of the word can be indistinguishable from the one for relatives (appendix 2.3.1). Given that *h3w* could refer to a group of people not related to ego by genealogical links and that it is often employed together with terms for workers and servants, the boundary between the meaning ‘relatives’ and ‘workers’ might not be clear-cut.

From the Second Intermediate Period onwards, the term *h3w* in the compound *s n h3w* (discussed below) is often determined by the papyrus roll . Furthermore, *h3w* can also mean ‘proximity’, ‘vicinity’ in a spatial and/or a temporal sense.⁴⁰ Although the temporal meaning can have the sun determinative , the papyrus roll as used for abstract nouns is also common. In this perspective, the term *h3w* in reference to a group of people may have the broad meaning of ‘those who are around ego’, or ‘those who live in the time of ego’.⁴¹ Thus, it would be adequate to interpret *h3w* as meaning a (contemporary) ego-centred group. It is difficult to give a description of this kin group and its possible composition.

Hannig (2003: 745, nos 18748 and 18794) gives two separate meanings for *h3w* when accompanied by a collective determinative, in contrast to the *Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache* (Wb ii, 479.1–3) and its successor online *Thesaurus Linguae Aegyptiae* (lemma 97480),⁴² where only one entry is considered. It is not clear to me why Hannig’s distinctions are made, since it may not be possible to differentiate between a group of workers and a family if the latter is understood loosely (especially since some tasks may be expected from their members), as I argue in this thesis. The only example of *h3w* as family that Hannig includes for the Old Kingdom is from the tomb of Pepiankh Henykem at Meir (Blackman and Apted 1953: pl. 22.3, 3rd register). The context where the phrase occurs is the harvesting scenes of the eastern part of the south wall of room B: *jr wn dj=tn wnm h3w-pn t*, ‘hurry up, let this *h3w* eat bread’ (appendix 2.3.1). This appears to refer to a group of workmen rather than a family. On the same register, another man says *j t3jj wb3 m hwt=k*, ‘oh man, take care in your task’, where *hwt* is translated as ‘task’, ‘duty’ (but see Grunert 2001: 47–8: translation as harvesting action specifically). Franke (1983a: 211, although he misread the term as *h3t* rather than *hwt*; see also 214) argued

⁴⁰ A still broader sense is ‘matters’ or ‘topic’.

⁴¹ References to past and future *h3w* (Franke 1983a: 228, n. 1) support my view of ancestors as active members of one’s kin groups (see below).

⁴² <http://aaew.bbaw.de/tla/index.html>, accessed 23 April 2014.

that both family and work/worker derive from the same root and, if this assumption is correct, I suggest that the group of people denoted by *h3w* would have had to perform the *hwt* action. In this sense, it may not be more productive to distinguish between the two meanings. Even if *h3w* sometimes refers to a kin group based on the context, being a member of this kin group could imply some work duties that members had to fulfil together. From the Second Intermediate Period onwards *h3w* refers explicitly to funerary duties, but it is unknown whether this usage existed in the Middle Kingdom. If this were the case, the *h3w* could be a kin group whose members shared obligations towards the group.

The term *h3w* is mostly mentioned in idealised self-presentation texts that do not describe the make-up of the group and its main characteristics, and so offer little precision in the definition of the *h3w*. For example, appendix 2.3.4–5 emphasise the role of ego as a supporter and protector of a group, and mention the respect of the *h3w* towards ego. This topos of the caring patron (see appendix 2.3.3) is common in self-presentation inscriptions, particularly those of the First Intermediate Period (Moreno García 1997: 46; Franke 2006: esp. 159; Campagno 2014). The stela of Merer (appendix 2.3.3) deserves special mention, because Franke (1983a: 215) thought it provided the first attestation of *h3w*, while others see it as the first attestation of *mhwt*.⁴³ I agree with Franke’s interpretation, as it is more common to omit an *alif*, as in other words on the same stela (see (3)*hwt* on line 8), than to skip the initial *m*–, an interpretation that would assume the earliest attestation ever of the term to be in a defective writing. Moreover, *mhwt* is otherwise not attested until the end of the Middle Kingdom. The final *–t* is also present in other examples of *h3w* (e.g. appendix 2.3.4).

The sentence where *h3w* occurs on the stela of Merer (appendix 2.3.3) has been interpreted as a reference to a non-centralised basin irrigation system, but the reason why swimming is mentioned is not clear.⁴⁴ Occurrences of the verb *nbi* (or *nbb*), ‘to swim’ are almost exclusively limited to religious texts (see CT 188, CT 335, and CT 1007), with the exception of the self-presentation text of Khety II in Asyut (Brunner 1937: 67, line 22).⁴⁵ Since learning to swim in a group emphasises the familiarity of Khety’s family with the king, it could be argued that Merer’s reference to swimming is related to that closeness,

⁴³ Appendix 2.3.2, from around the same time, is fragmentary, but the term *h3w* seems to appear in the bottom line of the inscription.

⁴⁴ In fact, Willems (2013a: 349–50) eliminates any reference to swimming in his discussion of this source: ‘I did not allow them to flood for anyone else, being how an able commoner acts for his family’.

⁴⁵ *jw dj.n=f sb3.t(w=j) r nbt hn^c msw nsw*, ‘he allowed (me) to be taught to swim with the royal children’.

in this case among the members of the *h3w*. Apart from the importance of ego as a quasi-paternal figure whose task is to ensure the well-being of the kin group, nothing further is said about this kin group in this type of source.

In addition to self-presentation inscriptions, *h3w* can occur as a kind of formula in captions to relatives and groups of people (appendix 2.3.7 and 2.3.11). It is worth examining references to other kin groups and kin types that are used in conjunction with *h3w*.⁴⁶ In appendix 2.3.11, the formula mentioning *h3w* is placed in the middle of a large list of names that seems to combine people who are related to ego in various ways (e.g. collaterals, subordinates, lineal descendants). The location of this phrase is unusual, since other formulae that summarise the people mentioned on stelae and/or add more people who are not referred to by name are often inscribed at the bottom of the stela, where they are easily identifiable (see discussion of *smjt* formula above). In appendix 2.3.11 the groups that are mentioned together with *h3w* are collaterals (*snw*), friends (*hnmsw*), and subordinates (*dt*).

Appendix 2.3.7 provides a second instance of *h3w* being mentioned on a monument featuring people who do not seem to be genealogically related, with further references to male and female servants (*b3k*, *b3kt*), the house of the father and the house of the mother (*pr jt*, *pr mwt*), friends (*hnmsw*), and people (*rmt*). The expression *s n h3w*, which occurs here (see also appendix 2.3.14), becomes more common in legal contexts from the Second Intermediate Period onwards, often with a papyrus roll determinative (Franke 1983a: 220–2). It is frequently present in ‘exclusion clauses’ in which lineal descendants and collaterals are also mentioned but the wife is never singled out (Vernus 1978: esp. 135). It could be argued that *h3w* does not refer to a group in those cases, but rather to ego’s possessions, because it has the papyrus roll determinative. However, the fact that some earlier attestations of the same expression exhibit the people determinative (appendix 2.3.5 and 2.3.7) suggests that it may allude to a group. An example in an exclusion clause in appendix 2.3.13 refers to people who could inherit or obtain an office from ego.⁴⁷ Therefore, at least in a legal context, *h3w* might be the group of people who could claim from ego some sort of succession of office after death (see appendix 2.3.13) or maybe allowance during life (see appendix 2.3.4, presenting the notion of caring patron). This economic aspect of the *h3w* could explain the shift of the determinative to

⁴⁶ Sometimes it may be also contrasted or compared with other groups of people, such as *3bt*, in self-presentation inscriptions (appendix 2.3.5).

⁴⁷ Appendix 2.3.11 and 2.3.14 suggest that the *h3w* did not have to be subordinate, but that this kin groups would include collateral peers as well.

some extent. This interpretation is supported by appendix 2.3.10, in which Ptahhotep instructs his son not to be greedy next to one's *h3w* and advises against diminishing their share. It is not known whether members of the *h3w* had to fulfil obligations in order to have a legitimation to that claim, but the meaning of *h3w* as 'work, task' mentioned above could be intertwined with the nature of the group as such.

While these two sources may give us the impression that *h3w* is a group of people possibly comprising subordinates rather than genealogical relatives in our own modern sense of the term, the graffiti from Kumma present another aspect of usage (appendix 2.3.8). These three almost identical inscriptions of *s3-mntw* address passers-by by evoking the theme of the man on an expedition who returns home to be reunited with a joyful wife and embrace his *h3w*. Although Franke (1983a: 228) mentioned this example in support of the view that the wife was part of the *h3w*, these examples also fit the hypothesis that the wife was not part of this group, forming a separate affinal category instead. The absence of the wife from the *h3w* should not be surprising, as the same is found with *3bt*, a term that implies the fulfilment of certain working obligations (see section 2.3.1).⁴⁸ The analysis of this latter term showed that the wife seems not to have followed her husband to the hereafter, as appears to be the case also with her exclusion from the *h3w* (the 'place where one is' mentioned in appendix 2.3.11 is the netherworld), perhaps because she belonged to a different descent group from her husband and that would have had a stronger influence on her expectations of the afterlife.⁴⁹ The children and other relatives, however, could be part of the *h3w*, so that they did not need to be mentioned individually in appendix 2.3.8. If that is correct, *h3w* could be understood as household, following from the mention of house (*pr*) at the beginning of the sentence.

Attestations of the term *h3w* from the New Kingdom onwards, which are not discussed in depth in this thesis, focus on the funerary duties of the *h3w* towards ego (see further Franke 1983a: esp. 224–7). These examples complicate the hypothesis of the absence of the wife further. The funerary procession scene in the 19th dynasty tomb of Roy (TT 255) is the clearest example (Foucart 1928: 11–3, figs. 6–8, 28–34, ins. 2–19) [Pl. 3.1]. The caption to the men leading the coffin says in inscription 10, line 5: *jw*

⁴⁸ The fact that husband and wife may not have same *h3w* or *3bt* does not mean that the wife would not be part of other ego-centred kin groups. The array of term for kin groups indicates that there may have been several possibilities in their composition and associated duties.

⁴⁹ Men and women may have shared a burial space, but to affirm that they were husband and wife solely on that basis is an assumption probably prompted by our socio-cultural bias. Be that as it may, it is important to note that the afterlife preparations are often focused on the man leading to quantitative and qualitative inequalities, as noted by Meskell (1998: esp. 373) in relation to the 18th dynasty tomb of Kha and Merit.

h3(w)=k-nb m s3=k, ‘all your *h3w* is behind you’, which may refer to all the people behind the coffin they are dragging. The wife of Roy stands just next to the coffin, what may indicate that she is actually part of the *h3w*. However, this view may be nuanced by inscriptions 3 and 5. The former reads *j h3w dd.n rmt ntj hr st3 hr mrht r jmntt*, ‘oh *h3w*, said the men who are dragging (the coffin) and carrying the unguent, to the West’. The caption to the mourners runs: *dd.n p3 h3w ntj m s3 p3 krs r jmntt*, ‘the *h3w* who are behind the coffin said to the west’. Thus, one could understand that the wife needs to fulfil certain funerary duties towards her husband while not being entirely integrated in the *h3w*.⁵⁰ It is in any case difficult to produce a definitive answer encompassing all these pieces of evidence, taking into account that the term *h3w* could have a different meaning in legal and funerary contexts, or the sense of the term may have changed throughout time.

In summary, a *h3w* is an ego-centred kin group with flexible boundaries. Inclusion does not seem to be determined by any kind of fixed biological links, and subordinates are important members, but it is also composed of (lateral) peers. The term *h3w* often occurs together with other terms for groups denoting dependants, and ego is often portrayed as supporter and carer of his group.

In addition to self-presentation inscriptions and stock phrases, two further groups of evidence contribute to an analysis of *h3w*. On the one hand, legal inscriptions suggest that this group could have some rights of succession from ego. On the other, occurrences in funerary contexts in the New Kingdom, especially scenes of funerary processions, indicate that the members of the *h3w* had a duty to participate in the burial rites of ego. It is difficult to say whether these two meanings are linked, since the same term could have independent meanings in different contexts, and its meaning could have shifted through time. More broadly, rights of inheritance went with certain duties, which may have been funerary in this case. Thus, there may have been a reciprocity between ego providing support and security for his *h3w* in life and their performing of the necessary rites in his funeral.

The possibility that ego’s wife may be related to but not part of the *h3w* as such seems to derive from inscription in appendix 2.3.8. If this is the case, descent may have been an important element in ancient Egyptian kinship groupings, as I explore further below.

⁵⁰ Another example that may point towards this is found in the 19th dynasty tomb of Mose, where the mourning wife is separated from the rest of the mourners. It is the latter group who refers to Mose as one who left his *h3w* behind (Gaballa 1977: 16, pls xxxiv–xxxv).

While a woman was likely subordinate to her husband, she may retain her links to her descent group in some occasions for the performance of certain tasks. There is thus an interplay between affinity and descent that should not be disregarded.

2.3.4 *mhwt*

Unlike the rest of the terms considered in this section, *mhwt* is first attested in the sources towards the end of the Middle Kingdom (appendix 2.4.1),⁵¹ but it then becomes the most widely attested term for kin groups in later periods (see Chicago Demotic Dictionary, letter M 10:1, 167). Middle Kingdom examples are not entirely informative when it comes to analysing the composition of this particular kin group, but they put it in relation with others that are better attested around the same time.

The first attestation for *mhwt* is disputed, because some authors consider that the word *h3w* on the stela of Merer (appendix 2.3.3) should rather be read (*m*)*hwt* (Černý 1961: 8, n. m; Schenkel 1965: 63), but I agree with Franke (1983a: 215) that this is a less plausible reading (see section 2.3.3). In Papyrus Brooklyn 35.1446, where *mhwt* is next attested, the term has actually been restored by the first editor (Hayes 1955: 56; pl. vi). The *m* and the *h* are visible, and the tail of the *t* is partially preserved. There is a gap before the next word, but the usual collective determinative for this term (the seated man and woman with plural strokes) fits well, so the restoration seems quite reliable.

The ubiquity of the term *hrjw* in Papyrus Brooklyn 35.1446 may be a further reason to suggest that *mhwt* has been correctly restored in appendix 2.4.1. These two terms for kin groups occur in the same expression in appendix 2.4.4–5, while in 2.4.1 *mhwt* seems to have been used in a sense that is otherwise reserved for *hrjw*, as in lines 54–7 (Hayes 1955: pls iv, vi). In the case of appendix 2.4.1, *mhwt* is employed to refer to people who will need to stay in custody until a person who is a fugitive – and who is presumably related to them – is found or returns. The reason why *mhwt* is preferred over *hrjw* in this particular case is not known, but it could be that the crime committed was of a different nature – perhaps considered more serious – and thus another set of measures was to be taken. Franke (1983a: 180) proposed that *mhwt* encompasses a wider range of people, so that more individuals would have been held in custody as a surety for the misdeed perpetrated by one of their relatives. The terms *mhwt* and *hrjw* are also contrasted in

⁵¹ The Wörterbuch does not record any attestations of this term before the 18th dynasty (Wb ii, 114.7), whereas the TLA online (<http://aew.bbaw.de/tla/index.html>; accessed 23 April 2014) only goes back to the Second Intermediate Period (appendix 2.4.3–5). The section of the Papyrus Brooklyn 35.1446 where the term occurs is dated to the end of the reign of Amenemhet III on palaeographic grounds (Hayes 1955: 11, 15–6).

appendix 2.4.4–5, but the context of an idealised self-presentation does not provide insight into the nuances of their meaning beyond the fact that they are linked. Appendix 2.4.6 is damaged, but the beginning of a construction quite close to appendix 2.4.3–5 is preserved, so an expression featuring *mhwt* could be a plausible restoration. This example fits with the linguistic evidence that people from the region of Edfu were living in Buhen during the Second Intermediate Period (Uljas 2010). The use of *mhwt* here could be a further relevant example of a localism.⁵²

The etymology of *mhwt* has also been disputed, since it has been suggested that it could be an *m*-formative derived from *h3w* (Givón 1971: 256). Franke (1983a: 230) rejected this view, proposing that they both derive independently from the same root *h3w*, ‘time’. Even if they derive from the same root, they two differ from one another in meaning and usage. First, the only determinative that *mhwt* features is the collective one of the seated man and woman with plural strokes , whereas *h3w* sometimes has the papyrus roll  when it refers to a group of people. Second, the kin group designated by *mhwt* seems to be slightly more circumscribed than that denoted by *h3w*. Unlike *h3w*, *mhwt* is only ever used for a kin group. Even though the determinative specifies that it refers to people, it is never used for the circumstances of ego, as is the case for *h3w* in some occasions. In this sense, the term *mhwt* is more specialised, unequivocally denoting a kin group. How that group relates to ego is not easy to define with the evidence available.

The members of a *mhwt* are referred to unambiguously as *snw* (collaterals) in altogether later Demotic teachings such as Ankhsheshonqy (Papyrus BM 10508) or Papyrus Insinger. The mention of collaterals next to *mhwt* in appendix 2.4.3 suggests that this could have been the case in earlier periods, but the sources are not as explicit. A person may have acted as the head of the *mhwt*, all of whose members should be kind to one another (Papyrus Insinger 26,14–15: Lexa 1926: 84; Lichtheim 1983: 224; Papyrus BM 10508 10,15: Thissen 1984: 23). In a set of parallel sentences, *mhwt* is compared to town, nome, and temples (Papyrus Insinger 34,6–10: Lexa 1926: 109; Lichtheim 1983: 233), so this kin group could have had a local dimension. Papyrus Insinger 8,5 (Lexa 1926: 24; Lichtheim 1983: 204) appears to state that a woman should ‘marry out’ from her *mhwt*, but it is not known whether she remains part of her original *mhwt* or becomes a

⁵² An argument for reading the term on Merer’s stela as *mhwt* is that this object may come from Edfu as well. If this were accepted, the use of this word could be a regional marker, but I can find no explanation of why this particular term later became the most widespread one, at least in Upper Egypt.

snt in the *mhwt* of her husband. In any case, *mhwt*, which may denote a larger group than other terms, appears in the sources at the end of the Middle Kingdom, when the number of collaterals on monuments increased, and these two developments – namely the representation of collaterals and the generalisation of *mhwt* to refer to kin groups – may be linked: there may have been wider social developments of which the use of a more encompassing term and the more inclusive display trends would have been different manifestations.

Finally, *mhwt* is often used in connection with foreign groups of people, especially in sources of the 19th and 20th dynasties (Franke 1983a: 197–202). Although it sometimes refers to a group of foreign people without specifying their origin, in most instances it explicitly denotes groups of Palestinians or Libyans (e.g. Givón 1971: 255–8). Franke (1983a: 201) suggested that this term may be related to the segmentary lineage system described in traditional ethnographies of African groups (for social structure in the Third Intermediate Period in Egypt, see e.g. Ritner 2009: esp. 333–5, with references to other literature). There is not enough evidence, however, to affirm that *mhwt* is comparable to these segments. These segmentary lineage systems are not uniform, so it would be impossible to determine what the ‘typical’ segment may be, and whether the *mhwt* resembles to it in any way. A second reservation is that we may actually be imposing modern characterisations (and prejudices, for that matter) onto ancient social models. To contrast a supposedly ‘tribal’ society of the Libyans with a ‘family-based’ milieu of the Egyptians owes too much both to the use of biased sources produced by the Egyptians (not by the groups they designated) and to our own expectations. Be that as it may, the use of *mhwt* in this context does not provide insight into how it was understood in Egypt, as the Libyan social unit may have been given this Egyptian name due to its resemblance to a pre-existing Egyptian group.

The term *mhwt* is used exclusively for kin groups, but these are generally difficult to define. Although all members of a *mhwt* seem to be treated as *snw*, so that the focus is on collaterality, detailed patterns of inclusion are not clear from the sources. The group denoted by *mhwt* seems to encompass a larger number of individuals than *hrjw*, with which it is often contrasted in the sources, both in self-presentation inscriptions (see appendix 2.4.4–5), and administrative records such as Papyrus Brooklyn (see appendix 2.4.1 and compare with section 2.3.5). Although not attested before the Middle Kingdom, *mhwt* ended up becoming the most widely attested one for kin groups in later periods.

2.3.5 *hrjw*

As a term for a kin group *hrjw* has often been misunderstood, possibly due to its etymology. Previously translated as ‘dependants’ (e.g. Allen 2002: 15–6), ‘underlings’ (e.g. Parkinson 2012: 103), or even as simply ‘the people of’ (e.g. Hayes 1955: 27), all these renderings contribute to complicating the interpretation of the term.

The term *hrjw* occurs in a variety of contexts, and this probably obscures the picture even further. It is first attested in the First Intermediate Period or early Middle Kingdom and remained in use until the Late Period. In Demotic it seems to have been replaced by *mhwt* instead. Morphologically, *hrjw* is a nisba of the preposition *hr* (‘under’, ‘below’), which would translate as ‘those who are below’. This has long been understood as referred to servants, but as Franke (1983a: 244) pointed out, the sources indicate that servants were not necessarily part of the *hrjw*. Indeed, rather than referring to ‘those who are under’ a man as his subordinates, the term may designate those of whom he had to take care, thus placing the emphasis on the role of the head of the group as a carer. Although Franke argued that *hrjw* may have excluded the servants, I see it as broader and more flexible term. While maidservants (*b3kt*) are featured in entries separate from the *hrjw* in the Heqanakhte letters (Allen 2002: letter ii, lines 8–11; 16, pl. 30), that does not exclude them from being part of the *hrjw*. Since the two maidservants in question are assigned to *jjj* and *htpt* – Heqanakhte’s mother and wife respectively – they must be people for whom he had to provide: the maidservant would not be part of the *hrjw* of *jjj*, but rather *jjj* and her maidservant belonged to the *hrjw* of Heqanakhte. The rendering of *hrjw* and its associated preposition occur in a fragmentary context in appendix 2.5.15; Collier and Quirke’s rendering of this passage (2002: 39) would fit with servants (*b3kw*) being included among the *hrjw*.

The aspect of nurturing and protection, which is a recurring theme in the usage of many of the terms analysed so far, is present for *hrjw* in appendix 2.5.1. The letters of Heqanakhte show how the head of a household manages rations. In letter ii, lines 24–9, he assures: *mk-tn prw r-hr=f m-mjtt hrdw=j jnk ht-nbt*, ‘look, the household in its entirety are like my children; everything is mine’ (see appendix 2.2.8 and see n. 10 above). The letters include lists of people and the amount of rations assigned to each of them and their *hrjw*. This role of provider can also be enacted by an official, as in appendix 2.5.3, where the nomarch Ameni claims to have been able to sustain and stock provisions for all his nome’s inhabitants.

In relation to provisioning, the *hrjw* are also mentioned in Lahun documents, particularly on letters and administrative texts (appendix 2.5.6, 2.5.14–17 and 2.5.20). While the context of the letters is often difficult to understand, and I leave these aside here, the *wpwt*-list may have served as a type of census of people living in the same household or being provided for by the same group head (for the potential administrative biases of these documents see section 3.2.1; Kóthay 2001). In the case of the soldier Snefru (appendix 2.5.20), the list features his mother, his paternal grandmother, and three sisters of his father [Pl. 1.2]. No wife or children of Snefru are mentioned, and servants or assistants are also absent from the list, whereas they appear in other *wpwt*-list from Lahun (Collier and Quirke 2004: 116–7). Since appendix 2.5.20 possibly states that a given *hrjw* was sworn as the *hrjw* of a dead man, this list may enumerate those people for whom Snefru's father Hori was directly responsible. Perhaps after the death of Hori these women came under the tutelage of Snefru and thus becoming his *hrjw*.⁵³

As with *mhwt* and *h3w* (see sections 2.3.3 and 2.3.4), the obligations of the head of the group are matched by those of members of the *hrjw* towards him. In particular, the *hrjw* of a man can be held responsible for a misdeed of his. As in appendix 2.5.6, when the perpetrator has disappeared, someone else from his *hrjw* must take his place until he is found again. In Papyrus Brooklyn 35.1446 the *hrjw* are listed separately from the servants (*dt*). Perhaps among the different categories of servants some, like the *b3kw*, were included in the *hrjw* while others were not.

The Coptos decree (appendix 2.5.21) also confirms that a man's *hrjw* could be punished for his misdeeds. In this case, not the *mhwt* but rather the *h3w* of a person is mentioned in connection to *hrjw* and the punishment, which seems to be less common. Another unique detail in this text is the mention of a paternal and a maternal *hrjw*. This need not mean that the father and the mother themselves have a *hrjw* but rather that one could 'inherit' a *hrjw* from one's father's and mother's side, as could have been the case in appendix 2.5.20. This reference to succession of the position of head of the household could support Franke's opinion that servants were excluded from the *hrjw* as they probably would not be eligible for this succession. However, father's sisters can also be included in the *hrjw*, as seen with Lahun documentation (appendix 2.5.20), and they are certainly not known to succeed their nephews in other sources. Thus, the *hrjw* does not consist only of people who could succeed ego, so that the servants could have been

⁵³ Whether this situation can be linked with the peasant's claim in appendix 2.5.12 is only open to speculation.

included in this category. In any case, intersecting categories are known from legal texts both ancient and modern, so it may be futile to try and avoid any overlapping at describing the categories cited in texts like the Coptos decree.

The *hrjw* occurs in some fixed phrases in self-presentation texts, such as appendix 2.5.19 and 2.5.22. These two examples support the connection between *mhwt* and *hrjw* already mentioned in the previous paragraphs. Indeed, only a member of the *mhwt* or a member of a *hrjw* could be called upon to stand in for the head of a group, should he disappear after having committed some kind of misdeed. At the same time, the *mhwt* and the *hrjw* are mentioned together in appendix 2.5.19 and 2.5.22, which suggests that they are related, but slightly different in meaning. The extent of that difference is difficult to interpret, because conclusions should not be based on stock phrases. A second type of formulaic expression including *hrjw* is known, but only in one example: 2.5.23 is a stock phrase used by officials who are returning home from expeditions. In other inscriptions (see appendix 2.3.8), officials are said to come back to their house, wife, children, and occasionally siblings. In appendix 2.5.23 only the *hrjw* is mentioned as the group of people to whom ego should return safe and sound.

The final context in which *hrjw* is used in the Middle Kingdom and beyond is in military accounts and reports of plundering after battles. In appendix 2.5.4–5, 2.5.11 and 2.5.13 the term refers to those foreign people who were carried away by Egyptian troops. In appendix 2.5.11 and 2.5.13 the *hrjw* is paralleled to cattle (*mnmnt*), so they are probably sought-after loot items (also in later periods: Franke 1983a: 239–40). Franke (1983a: 238) suggested that *hrjw* is used as a collective noun for a groups of foreigners in military texts. Although this is valid in context, I propose that *hrjw* refers not to any group of foreigners, but specifically to those people who were under the responsibility of the foreign leaders that were taken prisoners or killed, thus inhabitants of their lands. In addition, the usage of *hrjw* in appendix 2.5.11 could be compared to that in appendix 2.5.3, where Ameni refers to the inhabitants of the nome as *hrjw*, since both examples mention ‘its *hrjw*’ rather than ‘his/their *hrjw*’, thus linking the group to a place, not to a person.

In sum, the *hrjw* may be those people for whom a man needs to care and provide, and they may include the closest relatives as well as servants or other dependants. This aspect of provision and protection is associated with most of the terms for kin groups, but in the case of *hrjw* the examples are in a wider range of texts than just self-presentation inscriptions, instead encompassing letters and administrative texts that confirm this duty

of the head of the group to provide for subordinates. In addition, some members of the *hrjw* could succeed ego in his office (appendix 2.5.21).

A man's *hrjw* had to fulfil some duties towards him, the most salient of which in the sources is that they were liable for misdemeanour of his master. Thus, if he should disappear, one or more members of the *hrjw* may have needed to be detained until his return. A similar usage is attested for the term *mhwt*. Finally, this term is employed in military accounts, as Egyptians are said to plunder the *hrjw* of those they defeat. Rather than considering this a special, contextually-defined usage of *hrjw*, I suggest that it may have the same meaning as for Egyptians, so that Egyptian soldiers would be carrying away subordinates whom their enemies would have provisioned for.

As usual, it is not possible to render with a single English word a rich term that may include the closest relatives, several people in the paternal and maternal line, unmarried relatives, and even servants. If we opt for the general rendering 'the people of' as Franke (1983a: 242–3) suggests following Hayes, we could end up with the same translation for every single one of the terms for kin groups, and they would all lose their distinctiveness. This is further illustration of why I have chosen to leave all these terms untranslated in this thesis.

2.3.6 *whjtt*

The boundary between kin group and other social units is sometimes blurred, as *whjtt* demonstrates. This term denotes a form of social organisation of foreign peoples, especially in the region of Syria-Palestine. Since *whjtt* may have encompassed individuals related by genealogical links, it may designate a kin group, although its determinative may also point towards a territorial categorisation. However, these two options need not be mutually exclusive. The fact that territory and kinship are often separate spheres in our culture does not mean that some groups in ancient Egypt could not combine both features.

The territorial aspect of the *whjtt* is made explicit in the New Kingdom, when the city determinative 𓌗 becomes common in the writing of this term (Franke 1983a: 207–8). In addition, *whjtt* is sometimes set in parallel to *njw* and/or *dmjw*, such as in the annals of Thutmose III (Urk. iv 697, 1–9). It is not so clear from the orthography whether this spatial dimension of the *whjtt* was fundamental to its definition in the Middle Kingdom. A semi-nomadic nature of the groups described in the *Tale of Sinuhe* could be implied in certain passages, such as in the reference to the use of 'tents', *jm* (B 144–6; Koch 1990:

53). If this were the case, the territorial characteristic of the group could derive from the fact that they move around; perhaps the group itself was defined by the space within which they could settle temporarily. As Franke noted (1983a: 209), in modern Egypt places are often related to a particular kin group, and this is reflected in the toponyms, while territorial units may be related to marriage rules, although the nature of these is unknown for ancient Egypt (see section 5.7). In addition to *Sinuhe*, appendix 2.6.10 highlights the connection of the *whjyt* with a place, in this case with a settlement (*njw*).

Although the *Tale of Sinuhe* is a literary piece and its implications may not be taken for granted, it remains the most important source for the study of *whjyt* in the Middle Kingdom, and the text seems to emphasise the parental aspect rather than the locational one (appendix 2.6.4 and 2.6.8).⁵⁴ Moreover, in appendix 2.6.1 *whjyt* is presented in connection with the term *3bt* rather than with a place. Some of the small number of Middle Kingdom references to *whjyt* from outside the *Tale of Sinuhe* (appendix 2.6.1 and 2.6.9) also seem to emphasise the social role of support of the group that the chief of the *whjyt* performs. In appendix 2.6.1, this is in the context of an ideal self-presentation inscription, as in the case of *h3w* above (e.g. 2.3.5), so the sense of this term as denoting a type of kin group is evident.

All the attestations of *whjyt* in the *Tale of Sinuhe* refer to groups of people in Upper Retjenu. The term might therefore be one of those used for the social organisation of foreign groups, but appendix 2.6.1, 2.6.10 and others show that it was not used exclusively in that context. According to appendix 2.6.3–4 each *whjyt* would have had a ruler, who would fulfil a role similar to that of the head of other kin groups ensuring their protection and providing for them. However, decisions might not have been made unilaterally by the leader: appendix 2.6.5 is permeated by the idea of a council assembling and partaking in the decision-making process. The status of head of the *whjyt* may have been passed on from father to children (appendix 2.6.4 and 2.6.8), and *Sinuhe* becomes chief himself only after he has married Amunenshi's eldest daughter (B 78–9: Koch 1990: 40). The ideal scenario seems to be that a capable man establishes his own *whjyt* (appendix 2.6.4), although the eldest son could inherit his father's together with all its associated resources, including servants and cattle (appendix 2.6.8).

⁵⁴ The term continued to be in use until the Greco-Roman period, when the kinship associations are still present. In Papyrus Bremner-Rhind, not having a *whjyt* is equated to not having children, family (*hnw*) and heirs (Faulkner 1937: 174, 28.8–10).

In relation to such features, *whjtt* has been rendered ‘tribe’, ‘clan’ (or a ‘sub-clan’ within it), ‘lineage’, or ‘great family’ (Franke 1983a: 322). While all these translations may capture aspects of the *whjtt*, I wonder whether it is necessary (and arguably impossible) to find a single term to convey its meaning. As has been argued for the use of ‘family’ in section 1.2.1, I think that it is simplistic – and potentially risky, since we could unwittingly be adding some connotations – to insist on finding a correspondence with modern terminology.⁵⁵

In summary, the term *whjtt* denotes a kin group with territorial associations. Although the Middle Kingdom sources available use it mainly in relation to foreign groups, it may also occur in Egyptian contexts (appendix 2.6.1). The *whjtt* had a ruler who had to ensure the wellbeing of the group. This position could be acquired through worth – although this might have been a literary elaboration of the topos of a self-made man in the *Tale of Sinuhe* – or by father to son succession patterns. The usage of this term demonstrates that a sharp distinction should not be made between kinship, territory and political organisation, because sometimes groups based on kinship could be the foundation for the political organisation of an area.

2.3.7 *hnw*

While the term *hnw* has often been translated as ‘family’, Franke (1983a: 254–6) argued that it should probably not be considered a kin group as such, but a group of a different nature that could include co-residents, neighbours, and friends in addition to relatives. In relation to my working definition of kin groups, *hnw* is indisputably a kin group, even if it is not composed exclusively of genealogically linked people.

The term *hnw* is sparsely attested before the New Kingdom, the earliest example being a spell group in the Coffin Text that occurs only in the coffin of *snnj* from Saqqara (Firth and Gunn 1926: vol. i, 246–53). These spells can be categorised within the so-called spells for the reunification of the kin group in the hereafter,⁵⁶ which often centre on the *3bt* (see section 2.3.1). In appendix 2.7.6–7, *hnw* is parallel to *3bt* as a kin group that ego would like to rejoin, and the phrasing is the same as that used in spells in which only the *3bt* is mentioned.

⁵⁵ For example, one of the most distinctive features of a clan is the common descent of all their members from a single (real or often imaginary) ancestor (Stone 2006: 311), and there is no evidence to affirm this from the sources on *whjtt*.

⁵⁶ Franke mentioned that the term *hnw* also occurs in a version of the CT 1130 (de Buck 1935–1961: viii, 470), but parallel versions and the determinative show that a warrior is meant instead.

The term becomes more common during the 18th dynasty, sometimes even replacing other terms for kin groups. In a 18th dynasty copy of the *Teaching of Ptahhotep* (British Museum Papyrus EA 10509) the term *h3w* is systematically substituted by *hnw* (appendix 2.7.8–9).⁵⁷ This indicates that the two terms are related: although they may not be identical and their meaning may have changed over time, the consistency of these replacements shows that they were not incidental and, thus, both terms could have referred to kin groups. The *Teaching of a man for his son* is preserved only in New Kingdom copies, but its composition has been dated to the 12th dynasty (Fischer-Elfert 1999: 417–21; Parkinson 2002: 319). The term *hnw* appears in the fourth stanza (appendix 2.7.3), although the Ostrakon Gardiner 317 reads *h3y* (Fischer-Elfert 1999: §4,6 of synoptic edition), which could be a variant writing of *h3w* or a misspelling of *hnw*.⁵⁸ This passage emphasises how having a *hnw* does not depend on any other possessions. The version on Ostrakon Louvre 23561 adds the noun *t3* (land) as what the person who has a *hnw* may lack. This may be a textual contamination, as it appears in only one manuscript, but it could also be pointing towards the non-corporate nature of the *hnw*, which would encompass only people, not land, cattle, or other possessions, in contrast with other groups such as *mhwt* and *whjtt*. Although Franke (1983a: 254) stated that *hnw* relates to farming and land ownership, this is not clear from the sources. For example, appendix 2.7.8 details how the fruits of the land should be shared with the *hnw*, but the proprietor seems to be ego rather than the group as a corporate unit. Similarly, appendix 2.7.2 suggests that the *hnw* may love its lord on account of his lands, which may imply that they do not have a direct share of them.

Most examples of *hnw* in literary texts include a contrast between the pairs many and few or abundant and lacking (often *ʕ33* versus *ʕnd*), to the extent that it appears to be a literary topos. This is also the case in the extremely damaged papyrus of appendix 2.7.5.⁵⁹ In appendix 2.7.2 a small *hnw* is contrasted to having numerous *mrw* (‘servants’) who love their lord on account of his possessions. This substantiates the idea that the *hnw* and the servants appear to be separate categories, so that the former could be identified with a kin group. The text goes on to explain how one’s *hnw* could be destroyed and children

⁵⁷ Franke (1983a: 254) suggests that *hnw* could be related to neighbours, and derive from the same root as the kin group *h3w*, namely from *h3w*, ‘time, circumstances’ where the *3* should have changed to an *n*. The other option that Franke (1983a: 256) proposes is that the group *hnw* could be linked to *hnw*, ‘to jubilate’, thus referring to people who have a positive effect on ego.

⁵⁸ In addition, some versions are completely different, featuring a variant of *hnw* with a jubilation determinative  followed by the usual man and woman above plural strokes .

⁵⁹ For the history of the Ramesseum papyri, see Parkinson (2006: 138–72; 2011).

slain on account of a crime committed by their lord, while the *mrw* would only need to be expelled (compare with the use *mhwt* and *hrjw* on Papyrus Brooklyn 35.1446). This passage supports the understanding of *hnw* as a kin group despite Franke's reservation.

In addition, *hnw* appears in some idealised self-presentation inscriptions in phrases often used for kin groups. The inscription on a stela of Amenemhet, found in a chamber of his 18th dynasty tomb in Sheikh abd el-Qurna (TT 82), extols the vizier User as a role model: *jw jr.n jmj-r3 njwt t3tj wsr [mr] p^ct rhjtt nd m3jr hn^c wsrw nh h3rt jwttj hnw sndm jb jm3hw j3w dj.n=f [šrjw] hr swt jtw dj.n=f s-nb m htpw*, 'the overseer of the town and vizier User did what the *p^ct* and the *rhjtt* love, protecting the poor and the rich, caring for the widow who had no *hnw*, making content the heart of the venerable ones and the aged ones. He placed the sons on the seat of the fathers, and made every man to be satisfied' (Davies and Gardiner 1915: pl. xxv, line 6). Franke (1983a: 250–1) used this inscription to argue that widows had no *hnw*, and hence that married women had one. However, this expression should be understood as a formulaic statement of the concern of administrators for the disadvantaged that had existed since the Middle Kingdom.⁶⁰ The inscription suggests that taking care of a widow was her *hnw*'s responsibility, so for a vizier to assume this social duty would be a sign of his virtue and elevated moral standards. It is therefore difficult to judge whether a vizier that would care for widows was a literary topos rather than something that actually occurred in lived experience. Be that as it may, the inscription does not specify whether a husband's *hnw* or her own should provide for the widow. Furthermore, the inscription states that the vizier would look after those widows who had no *hnw*, not that widows did not have a *hnw*.

Although post-Middle Kingdom sources deserve to be treated with caution in this discussion, as the relevance and meaning of some concepts could have changed, two further New Kingdom texts may help clarify the nature and function of the *hnw* group. A late Ramessid hieratic letter in British Museum Papyrus EA 10416 shows that a woman (possibly unmarried, but not certain) could indeed be related to a *hnw*. This source records the scandal of a married man who is known to have been having extraconjugal relations with a woman, and the letter relates how she and her *hnw* were at risk of being beaten up due to her behaviour (Janssen 1988; 1991: 28–32; vso. line 5, pls 17–8), implying that the *hnw* may have been accountable for its members. Although it is not explicitly said that the woman had a *hnw* (that is, it is not presented with a possessive in

⁶⁰ Widows in particular were not part of the self-presentation discourse until the Middle Kingdom (Kóthay 2006: 154–5).

reference to her), the text clearly refers to a group to which she belonged. In relation to this, an inscription of the reign of Amenhotep III states how a child did not yet have a *hnw* (Urk. iv, 1794.12). This does not mean that he did not belong to a *hnw*, but perhaps that he was not the head of one. The group may have been acquired during one's lifetime.

A possibility could be that men in charge of land might become lords of such a kin group, with their responsibilities including provisioning for its members, who would live from the produce of the land. In this way the *hnw* could then be similar to the *h3w*, which would account for the replacement of the term in the *Teaching of Ptahhotep*, but no funerary duties are attested for the *hnw*. It is not explicitly stated whether the wife was a member of her husband's *hnw* or she belonged to her own one on the basis of descent. Again, the mention of *hnw* together with *3bt* in appendix 2.7.6–7 as a group with whom ego may reunite after death may suggest that the wife was not a member of the *hnw* and that, after her husband's death, she might have passed into the tutelage of her descent group: such a pattern is recorded in the Lahun papyri for the family of Hori (Kóthay 2001: 353–5). Even though the term *hnw* is not employed in the case of Hori's *wpwt*-lists, where the group is referred to as the *hrjw* of a dead man, the close relationship of the *hnw* and the widow, as shown in the inscription of the tomb of Amenemhet above, could indicate that this group was meant as the *hnw* of a living man.

Although Franke was hesitant to consider *hnw* a kin group, it fully complies with the definition that I present in section 1.2.2. It may encompass people who are not genealogically related to ego – for example co-residents –, but the fact that it is paralleled to *3bt* in appendix 2.7.6–7 indicates that it would include some close relatives. The chief of a *hnw* was responsible for providing for and protecting the group, as appendix 2.7.1 clarifies. In addition, the *hnw* could be punished on behalf of its chief, as was seen above for *mhwt* and *hrjw*. A *hnw* was not assigned to a chief from his birth, but was acquired during the course of life instead. It was regarded as positive to have a large *hnw*. The term *h3w* is systematically substituted by *hnw* in later versions of some texts, suggesting that the two terms are close in meaning. In any case, the nature of *hnw* as a kin group is evident, and it should rightfully be included in this compilation of kinship terms.

2.3.8 *ht*

ht is another problematic term with a wide range of meanings. The need to include it in a compilation of terms for kin groups may be debatable, especially since Franke stated (1983a: 298) that the contexts in which it occurs do not indicate that it refers to any kind

of kin group. Despite disparity of its core meanings, I argue that one of them should be certainly regarded as a term for kin groups.

The basic meaning of *ht* is ‘body’, and it is usually determined by a piece of flesh  or simply by a stroke. However, sometimes *ht* is accompanied by a seated man and woman with plural strokes , giving the impression that it should refer to a group of people. The term is used mainly in two contexts that can be classified broadly as religious and non-religious. The former include several spells in the Pyramid Texts and Coffin Texts, a few stelae, and a temple inscription at Tod, and they clearly refer to a group of gods that has at times been identified with an Ennead. In some of the Pyramid Texts they denote groups of stars and occasionally a primeval group of deities. All these instances have been translated as ‘corporation’ or ‘generation’, as they refer exclusively to gods, so that they are not included in the table of sources in appendix 2. Attestations of *ht* from non-religious texts present a different set of features, and this is the usage of the term that is analysed in this section.

Instances of *ht* in non-religious contexts are known from the First Intermediate Period onward, but they are rare in later periods. These examples seem to designate a group of people living at the same time, possibly a generation, which fits in with one of the connotations of *ht* in religious texts and with its core meaning of ‘body’. Appendix 2.8.5 supports this rendering, since it explicitly states that one *ht* comes after another on earth. Similar expressions, with almost identical wording, occur in so-called harpists’ songs of the New Kingdom, supporting the translation derived from that source but not adding any information. Generation is a suitable rendering of other, less explicit attestations as well (e.g. appendix 2.8.2, 2.8.4 and 2.8.6). As with other terms for groups, a *ht* needs a leader (appendix 2.8.4), although his duties are not clearly outlined; references to providing for the group, common in the definition of other terms for kin groups, are not found, being replaced by trust (appendix 2.8.3) and protection (appendix 2.8.2).

These examples focus on the contemporaneity of the people that compose the *ht*, but they do not specify how they are related. This lack of information may be what led Franke (1983a: 298) to discard *ht* as a kinship term and choose the more general translation ‘Körperschaft’ (‘corporation’); his inclination to seeing it as a broad-ranging group rather than a type of family has been generally accepted (e.g. Parkinson 2012: 185).

However, *ht* cannot be disregarded as a term for kin groups if appendix 2.8.1 – absent from Franke’s corpus – is taken into account, as it clearly refers to people who are connected by birth. This self-presentation text of the First Intermediate Period relates the military prowess of *htpj*, and a few lines of the inscription are devoted to his family life. There *htpj* mentions that his wife gave birth to twelve members of a *ht*, and that his children will be enabled to prosper. Thus, the *ht* is used in this text precisely when family matters are being mentioned, and when other kin, such as the paternal grandmother and the maternal grandfather, are described as playing an important role in ego’s life. While this inscription does not justify understanding *ht* as exclusively some kind of kin group, it shows that at least some members of a *ht* could be related by kinship.

In conclusion, although the primary meaning of *ht* does not relate to kinship and marriage, some attestations indicate that it should be included in a compilation of terms for kin groups if kinship is of the flexible, all-encompassing sort I advocate in this thesis. *ht* comprised a contemporaneous group of people that could include some born from the same mother. The head of this group needs to be a figure of authority, equated to, for example, the ruler of a town, but his specific duties are not attested.

2.3.9 *wndwt*

I find it difficult to justify Franke’s (1983a: 289–95) inclusion of *wndwt* in his list of terms for kin groups on the basis of Middle Kingdom evidence. The tem *wndwt* is found with two different determinatives, namely the one for cattle  or the seated man and woman with plural strokes for a group of people . No attestations of this word referring to a group of people are known from before the Middle Kingdom, so that it may originally have been a designation of cattle. The idea of mankind as cattle is not unfamiliar to Egyptian literary texts, as examples are known from the *Teaching for Merikare* (Papyrus Petersburg 1116A xi,10-xii,1)⁶¹ or Papyrus Westcar (line 8,17)⁶². Even though *wndwt* often has been employed in this same sense (e.g. appendix 2.9.13), it is less clear how it can be understood as a kin group.

The Middle Kingdom sources that feature *wndwt* as a group of people can be divided roughly into religious (appendix 2.9.1–9 and 2.9.12) and literary (appendix 2.9.10–11 and 2.9.13). Those Coffin Texts spells featuring *wndwt*, as well as some Book of the Dead

⁶¹ *hnn rmt j3wt nt ntr*, ‘people are looked after, the cattle of the god’ (Helck 1977: 83; Quack 1992: 78–9, line 1).

⁶² *mk n wd.tw jrt mnt jrj n b j3wt špst*, ‘look, it is not commanded to do such a thing to the noble cattle’ (Blackman 1988: 10).

chapters based on these such as BD 1, often use the term to refer to followers of the gods (see appendix 2.9.4, 2.9.9 and 2.9.12). None of these seems to refer clearly to kin relations, although appendix 2.9.9 has been understood in this manner. In this spell the god Thoth says that both he and Horus are the sons of Nut, adding later that he belongs to the *wndwt* of Horus. This has been taken as evidence to argue for a translation of this term along the lines of kin group.

Literary texts do not help elucidate the definitive meaning of the term, but in appendix 2.9.11 it is in parallel to *mrt*, which is often rendered as ‘dependents’ or ‘workers’. Appendix 2.9.10 confirms this connection of *wndwt* with terms for colleagues or co-workers, as it equates this group to the entourage of a lord, among which there could be relatives, although this is probably not the only application of the term.

However, *wndwt* is found not only in connection to servants but also to terms for kin groups. The New Kingdom Papyrus Anastasi I mentions *tpj jrjw=f h3tj m wndwt=f*, ‘the first one of his *wndwt*, the one in the midst of his *mhwt*’ (§15.2: Fischer-Elfert 1986: 17; 1992: 15), where it is also said that one may want to be buried in the midst of his or her *wndwt* (§81.2: Fischer-Elfert 1986: 71; 1992: 81). Similarly, the *Teaching of Amenemope*, also from the New Kingdom, sets *wndwt* in parallel with *msw* (‘children’): *n s3=f ktj n msw=f ndst n wndwt=f*, ‘for his son, the youngest of his children, the smallest of his *wndwt*’ (line 2,14: Vernus 2010: 399). Whereas the relationship between *wndwt* and other kin groups seems easier to verify from the New Kingdom onwards, it is complicated to tell whether it had the same meaning in the Middle Kingdom. Changes in the meaning of words are common, and, in fact, *wndwt* had already undergone such a change when it started to be used for groups of people at the beginning of the Middle Kingdom.

In conclusion, the primary meaning of *wndwt* as cattle was expanded to a group of people from the Middle Kingdom onwards. To ascertain the nature of that group of people is a difficult task, since most sources stem from funerary texts. In this context, the *wndwt* seem to be the followers of a god (appendix 2.9.4 and 2.9.9), a similar meaning to the ‘entourage’ that one finds in literary sources (appendix 2.9.10–11). This entourage could include relatives, although clear attestations of that meaning are from the New Kingdom or later. Franke noted (1983a: 295) that *wndwt* was mainly used in an Abydene context, particularly the Osirian cult, so that the people designated by the term *wndwt* could be employees of the temple of Abydos. Some examples in the corpus, however, do not comply with this rule (e.g. appendix 2.9.10). It is difficult to determine whether this

denotes a kin group or a group of people without defined kinship links. I include it here in order to allow for comparison with other terms and future study, should further attestations of the term be identified.

2.3.10 Other terms

Most of the terms analysed thus far – perhaps with the exception of *wndwt* – refer to some kind of kin group. The primary meaning of some of them falls within the sphere of kinship (e.g. *mhwt*), while for others this is just one of their very common usages even if their core meaning is not directly related to families (e.g. *pr*). In this section, I consider some other terms that may refer to people from the same household and could then theoretically include a number of relatives. I examine these within a separate category because they can hardly be regarded as intrinsically designating kinship groups. However, with a flexible approach to ancient Egyptian concepts of kinship and marriage in mind, these terms may be relevant as covering some people of the household who may have been regarded as relatives.

The terms treated in this section can be divided into two types. First, there are a few words whose main meaning is not necessarily related to social groupings, but that are claimed to have been used in that context in some cases. Both *hnw* and *pgʒ*, discussed by Franke (1983a: 300–1), fit into this category, as their main meaning is ‘Residence’ and ‘to open’ or ‘to spread’ respectively, and they can only be considered as references to kin groups in particular circumstances when a metaphorical extension of that primary meaning takes precedence. However, their inclusion in a list of term for kin groups is to be regarded with caution.

It could be argued that other terms such as *ht* or *pr* should also be included in this category because they are ultimately metaphorical extensions of other core meanings. However, I have decided not to analyse them here for two main reasons. First, it is easier to justify semantically why usage of *ht* or *hrjw*, for example, could denote a kin group: indeed, ‘those who belong to my body’ or ‘those who depend on me’ fit easily into the definition of kin groups, as they emphasise the idea of a common substance and/or the role of protector and carer of the head of the group. However, *hnw* and *pgʒ*, ‘those who are inside’ and ‘those who are open or spread out’ respectively, can only be reconciled metaphorically with Egyptian kinship notions (i.e. by understanding ‘the inside’ as the inside of the house and reading the ‘being open’ as being part of a group). Second, these two terms, when they refer to kin groups, are much less frequent than any of their

counterparts, and the contexts in which they occur are less unequivocal, suggesting that they were not terms for kin groups *per se*, but contextually contingent constructions only occasionally used to designate relatives.

The term *hnw* means literally ‘the interior’, but a common usage, accompanied by the house determinative $\square$, is linked to either the palace or the royal Residence. In the Munich stela of *wpw3wt-ʕ3* this association with the palace is clear: *jst-wj ḥd=j r nd ḥrt r hnw-pf wr n ḥm=f*, ‘then I sailed downstream in order to pay homage at that great Residence of his person’ (Munich Gl. WAF 35: Dyroff and Pörtner 1904: pl. 2, line 15; Sethe 1924: 73–4).

In a few instances it has the collective determinative 𓂏𓂏𓂏 , indicating that it refers to a group of people. Given its primary meanings, it could be understood as ‘those who live in the palace’ or ‘those who live in the Residence’, but it has been suggested to mean family as well on the basis of the expression *rmt n hnw* in Papyrus Brooklyn 35.1446 (Hayes 1955: pl. VI, insertion C, line 5), although other references to the Residence in the same passage suggest that *hnw* may designate the place here, as the paragraph seems to denounce the capture of Egyptians by the Hyksos. Other instances of *hnw* with people determinative include Hatnub graffito 25 (Anthes 1928: 56–9, pl. 26). In this example, the *hnw* could be people from the Residence as well, as the fragment emphasises the authority and standing of Neheri over bureaucrats, officials, and rulers. The *hnw* is also mentioned in association with the king, who asks Neheri to gather a troop that may be acclaimed by the people, possibly including those in the Residence. The final attestation of *hnw* that is relevant here is on the stela of Merer in Cracow (MNK-XI-999: Černý 1961: line 5), which significantly also features the term *h3w*. This is the only example where I believe that a reference to the Residence is not clear from the context. In the inscription Merer is said to please those around him: *jw jr.n(=j) mrrt ʕ3tjw ḥsst hnw*, ‘I did what the great ones loved and what the *hnw* favoured’. The parallelism of *hnw* and the ‘great ones’ makes it unlikely that *hnw* may refer to other people in the household.

The term *pg3* occurs in the Heqanakhte papyri, and was thought to mean family by Kaplony (1969: 32) and proposed to have sexual connotations by Baer (1963: 9, n. 65), but reassessments by Franke (1983a: 301) and Allen (2002: 17, 46) suggest that it rather should be rendered respectively as ‘courtyard’ or ‘battlefield’, both deriving from its core meaning of ‘to open’. The context indicates that Heqanakhte is preventing some members of his household from upsetting his wife: *ʕnh n=j s pn dd=j r jp jrtj.fj sp-nb ḥr pg3 n*

ḥbsjt[=j] jw=f r=j jw=j r=f, ‘as this man lives for me, I am referring to *jp*, he who will create any incident upon the *pg3* of my wife, he is against me and I am against him’ (Letter 2, MMA 22.3.517, lines 40–1: Allen 2002: pl. 10, 30–1). Neither the context nor the determinatives suggest that *pg3* should be considered a term for a kin group. Allen’s translation, which is fairly literal, is based on his understanding of the quarrelling that this passage refers to, while Franke’s rendering emphasises where the scene may have taken place. None of these published translations is unassailable. If we take into account that *pg3* features elsewhere in connection with provisioning of a widow,⁶³ the term might have been used specifically in contexts of family disputes, but the character of these is difficult to determine.

In conclusion, although both *ḥnw* and *pg3* could theoretically refer to relatives in a metaphorical sense, the attestations do not support such an understanding clearly, so that one could wonder whether the Egyptians would have regarded them as designations of kin. Given that none of the attestations is presented in a text together with any of the most typical characteristics of kin groups – inheritance, funerary duties, role of the head as a protector and carer – I think the answer to that question is likely to be no.

The second type of term encompasses those which refer to groups often linked to the household and may or may not include some relatives. They are too common to be analysed in detail here, but a quick review of the evidence confirms that often occur in combination with other terms for kin groups and for individual kin types.

Some of the relevant terms in this category are those that refer to groups of people working in a household, namely *drjw*, *mrw*, *ḥmw*, *b3kw*, *jḥms*, *ḥkt*, *pṛt*, *ḥsbw*, *dt*, and possibly *ḥrdw*. Among these, *drjw* deserves special mention, since the contexts in which it is found are connected with the organisation of the funerary cult which, as we have seen, is one of the main duties of the members of several kin groups. Four Old Kingdom attestations of *drjw* are known, the most eloquent of which is probably that in the tomb of *nj-k3-ḥnh* at Tihna (see Willems 2013c). This official describes the organisation of his funerary cult among his children, who should work under the command of *nj-k3-ḥnh*’s eldest son, and he adds: *n rd(=j) ḥm n[t] s [-nb m rdjt jrt].n(=j) n=f m jmjt-pr m rd n drjw=f nb wpjj r ḥpr s3=f dj=f n=f*, ‘(I) do not allow [any] man to have power to assign what I have done in his behalf through deed of transfer or through sale to any of his *drjw*

⁶³ *ḥḥ hr pg3 n ḥ3rt dr=f d3rw=s*, ‘one who stands on the *pg3* of the widow that he may drive away her needs’ (Griffith 1889: north wall of tomb 3, pl. 11, line 5; Brunner 1937: 16; transcription on 42).

except if he has a son, to whom he may give (it)’ (Urk. i, 162,7–10; Goedicke 1970: pl. xv; Strudwick 2005: 195; Thompson 2014: 74, pls 36, 64a).⁶⁴

This inscription shows that sons can be regarded as part of the *drjw* (i.e. something cannot be given to the *drjw* except when they are one’s sons). I have not found instances of *drjw* used in this manner in the Middle Kingdom, and other examples from the Old Kingdom are unclear either in terms of context (mastaba of Mereruka: Sethe 1933: 88, 5; probably as people who can enter into one’s tomb [*js*]) or reading (Papyrus Boulaq 8, Cairo CG 58043: Baer 1966: fig. 2, n. h).⁶⁵ Although Franke (1983a: 299–300) argued that one should not render *drjw* as ‘family’, the references to the funerary cult and the involvement of a son in it point towards the involvement of some family members in this group, as also emerges from the inscription of *nj-k3-ḥnh*.

It is difficult to make such a direct link between other terms for people and duties often associated with family groups, and most of them are rendered singly as ‘servants’ – although such a simplistic translation probably deserves being revised – and they may not include relatives. However, the flexibility of family links is evident in some sources. The letter to the dead on the Cairo bowl demonstrates that a *b3kt* would receive the same treatment as a family member, with members of the household requesting their ancestors to intercede for her health (see appendix 2.2.15). The Durham stela N.1942 supports this interpretation because its text mentioned the male and female *b3kw* together with other kin groups: *rh.n=j hm.n=j sh3.n=j b3kt b3k s-nb n h3w pr jt pr mwt hnmsw=j rmt=j-nbt*, ‘(those whom) I have known, (those whom) I have not known, (those whom) I have remembered, (those whom) I have forgotten, female workers, male workers, every man of the *h3w* (of?) the house of the father and the house of the mother, my friends, all my people’ (see appendix 2.2.19 and 2.3.7) [Pl. 17].

Others groups, such as *hmw* and *mrw*, can be mentioned alongside other terms for kin groups and even some kin types. Stela Cambridge E.9.1922 features some lineal and collateral relatives together with a few *hm* and *hmt* (Martin, Clackson, and Norman 2005: 20–2, no. 16). On its part, *mrw* is often used in contexts where confidence and/or support

⁶⁴ Another tomb from a *nj-k3-ḥnh* at Tihna features the term *drjw* as well among the people who should perform invocation offerings for the deceased: *jn jgr rmt-jpn prt-hrw n rh-nsw hnw-k3 jt=f mwt=f msw=f dr=f-nb*, ‘it is these people who will perform an invocation offerings for the acquaintance of the king *hnw-k3*, his father, his mother, his children and all his *drjw*’ (Urk. i 27, 4–6; Goedicke 1970: pl. xiv; Thompson 2014: 46, n. 151, pls 23b, 57). It is debated, however, whether this is a second tomb of the same *nj-k3-ḥnh* mentioned above or of one of his relatives.

⁶⁵ If the example in Papyrus Boulaq 8 were to read *drjw*, the context would be equally disputed, as it has been interpreted as the earliest reference to a deed of endowment (Baer 1966), to an illness (Goedicke 1967) or, alternatively, as an example of nepotism (Goedicke 1988).

are emphasised. The *Teaching of Pathhotep* states that one should secure confidence and loyalty among one's people: *jr wnn=k ḥnṛ rmt jrj n=k mrw n kf3-jb*, 'if you are with people, you should make for you the *mrw* of a trustworthy man' (Papyrus Prisse 8,6: Žába 1956: 34, nos 232–3). Along the same lines, those who grieve for the champion killed by Sinuhe in battle are pictured as his *mrw*: *rdj.n=j ḥknw n mntw mrw=f h3b n=f*, 'I gave praise to Montu as his *mrw* mourned him' (B 141–2: Koch 1990: 52). Whether this reference from a literary work may hint towards funerary duties held by the *mrw* more widely is only an assumption.

As the words considered in this section show, it is difficult to draw a dividing line between kin and non-kin groups, especially dealing with people who were linked by a common occupation. A categorisation that separates strictly between workers in a household and family members probably does not respect the ancient context, in which the boundaries of who was and who was not a relative might have been mediated by principles other than 'blood', including a collective dwelling space, shared funerary duties, and entitlement to inheritance.

2.3.11 Terms for ancestors

It is essential to finish this section on lexicography for kin groups considering terms referring to ancestor groups. As I argue throughout this chapter, ancestors were regarded as active participants in the life of the kin group, as evidenced, for example, by appeals to them to intercede in mundane matters in letters to the dead. A variety of terms denote groups of ancestors, and it might be expected that they would be very common in contexts relating to relatives. Yet a closer look at the sources reveals that this is not the case. I have collected a number of sources of the First Intermediate Period and the Middle Kingdom in which terms for ancestor groups occur, namely *jtw*, *tpjw-ṣ*, *jmjw-ḥ3t*, *jswtjw*, *dfn* and *drtjw*. A comprehensive analysis of all their attestations is beyond the scope of this section, but two main usages emerge: connecting with these groups and surpassing them.

A connection with ancient times is sought in inscriptions in order to legitimise claims.⁶⁶ It strengthens one's standing to be linked to an old household, as exemplified in the self-presentation inscription in the stela of Intef son of Tjefi: *nb p3t dr rk tpjw-ṣ*, 'lord

⁶⁶ Effectiveness was often claimed in magical texts on the basis of their having been successfully used often since primeval times. The initial and final lines of the story of *Isis and the secret name of Re* are testimony to this: 'spells for warding off poison from the primeval period, when beings came into existence ... It is an excellent means to kill (the effects of) poison, proven an infinite number of times' (translation by Borghouts 1978: 51, 55).

of primeval times since the time of the *tpjw-ꜥ* (MMA 57.95: Fischer 1960; Lichtheim 1988: 49–51). The *Teaching of Ptahhotep* underscores the wisdom of the ancestors as something that should be passed down the generations: *jḥ ḏḏ=j n=f mdw sḏmjw šḥrw jmjw-ḥ3t p3ww sḏm n ntrw*, ‘then I told him the words of those who were listening and the plans of the *jmjw-ḥ3t* who heeded to the gods once’ (Papyrus Prisse 5,3: Žába 1956: 17–8, nos 30–2). This reverence towards ancestors is also present in the standard version of the Abydos formula. Although this refers to gods rather than to human ancestors, the link with the past – and with primeval deities in particular – may have been motivated by a desire to enhance one’s standing as well: *s3ḥ-sw ḥnmw ḥkt tpjw-ꜥ ḥprw ḥr ḥ3t mshnt tpt 3bdw prw m r3 n rꜥ ḏs=f m ḏsr 3bdw ḥr=s*, ‘may Khnum and Hehet, the *tpjw-ꜥ* who existed before in the first birthplace of Abydos and who came out from the mouth of Re himself in the sanctity of Abydos on its account, glorify him’ (stela of Mery, Louvre C 3: Vernus 1973a; Lichtheim 1988: 85–8).

The deeds and capacities of the ancestors should, however, be surpassed and their performance enhanced. This theme, which Vernus has studied exhaustively (1995: esp. 54–121), became particularly common from the time of Senusret I onwards, although instances are known from the Old Kingdom (Olabarria 2013: 712). The Semna stela of Senusret III uses this topos for a king: *jw jr.n=j t3š ḥnt=j jtw=j jw rd.n=j ḥ3w ḥr swḏt n=j*, ‘I created my boundary out-southing my forefathers. I exceeded what was handed down to me’ (Berlin ÄM 1157: Sethe 1924: 83–5; Eyre 1990: lines 4–5). Even though the idea of exceeding what had been done in the past is a common thread, the ancestors are not always explicitly mentioned (Vernus 1995: 62–70 for non-royals, 76–88 for royals). These two motifs are not linked exclusively with one’s forefathers and may relate more broadly to Egyptian conceptions of the past and to self-presentation and display as a whole.

These two treatments of groups of ancestors may seem difficult to reconcile, and almost diametrically opposed, but quite a few sources combine them. The stelae of *wpw3wt-ꜥ3* (see ANOC 20) constitute an excellent example, as the owner showed great concern with the way his relationship with his forefathers was presented. *wpw3wt-ꜥ3* was an overseer of priests who served under Senusret I and Amenemhet II. Stela AP 69 from Leiden shows his desire to find a connection to his ancestors: *jr js-pn jr.n=j m smjt nt t3-ḏsr m ḥr-jb jtw=j km3 jwf=j sꜥḥw nw sp-tpj*, ‘as for this tomb that I built in the *smjt* of the necropolis among my forefathers who created my flesh, dignitaries of the primeval time’, a theme that is picked up later in the same text: *jtw=j nbw ḏr tpjw-ꜥ*, ‘my forefathers were

lords since the time of the ancestors' (Simpson 1974b: pl. 30 [ANOC 20.1], lines 3, 13). In addition, the theme of surpassing those who existed before is also present: *jn jb=j shnt st=j sn.n=j r jrt jtw=j*, 'it was my heart that advanced my position: I surpassed the deeds of my forefathers' (Simpson 1974b: pl. 30 [ANOC 20.1], line 6), and is extended in his Munich stela Gl WAF 35: *shnt hmst=j-nbt r jtw=j hprw hr-h3t*, 'every position of mine was advanced over those of my forefathers who existed before' (Simpson 1974b: pl. 30 [ANOC 20.2], lines 18–9).

Was *wpw3wt-3*'s attitude towards his ancestors contradictory? To consider these two themes as literary topoi of self-presentation helps understand their function. They describe ego's standing as one who is respectful towards his relatives while also mobilising the motif of the self-made man whose deeds are extraordinary and memorable. However, one should not dismiss references to ancestors as a topos that does not provide any reliable information about their position within the kin group; it may be more productive to contrast these with cases where appeals are addressed.

The most eloquent sources for the relationship between the living and the deceased members of a kin group may be the letters to the dead. These documents are known from the later Old Kingdom onwards, but only around sixteen have been identified (Gestermann 2006: 304–6).⁶⁷ These letters were inscribed on a variety of media, including papyrus, linen, and stelae, with the most common medium being pottery (mainly bowls), as they amount to half of the total number of examples. Although addressed to particular ancestors, and quite possibly placed in tombs to facilitate communication,⁶⁸ the display quality of the letters to the dead needs to be reconsidered when their oral dimension is taken into account, as they could have included a performative aspect of recitation and communal rites.

Letters to the dead, as is the case with contracts or other administrative documents in pharaonic Egypt, might not have been the rule; instead they may have been written only in unusual circumstances that required intervention from deceased members of the household. However, the prolonged existence of this practice, with certain examples spanning the Old Kingdom to the New Kingdom and even possible survivals into modern day Egypt (El-Leithy 2003), would indicate that a larger number of attestations ought to

⁶⁷ Eight uncertain ones are also known (Harrington 2012: 34, citing S. Donnat's unpublished doctoral thesis).

⁶⁸ The two only letters for which an archaeological context is known – the Qaw bowl and the Naga ed-Deir papyrus – were placed inside a tomb or in the courtyard of the tomb of the addressee respectively (Donnat 2010: 52, n. 9).

be expected. This could be due to accidents of preservation, but alternative explanations have been suggested: the oral dimension of communication with the dead should not be overlooked, and many petitions may not have been done in writing (Donnat 2002: 225; Pinch 2003: 445). In addition, some instances may not have been recognised, as letters to the dead seem to be a particularly elusive genre; in fact, some examples of letters to the dead were not identified as such when they were first published (e.g. Buchberger 1991), and others are still regarded as uncertain cases (e.g. Donnat 2007). Finally, letters may have been removed and destroyed once they had served their purpose (Harrington 2012: 35).

Known letters to the dead are all written to members of the household who are asked to intervene in earthly matters, including pleading for health (Cairo bowl: Gardiner and Sethe 1928: 7–8, pls vi–via; Wente 1990: 215–6, no. 350) and asking for a protection against misfortune (Louvre bowl: Piankoff and Clère 1934; Wente 1990: 214, no. 346), or mediating in conflicts involving inheritance (Cairo linen: Gardiner and Sethe 1928: 1–3, pls i–ia; Wente 1990: 211, no. 340). It is significant that ancestors are involved in the latter, since inheritance is one of the topics most widely associated with members of the kin groups, as seen above. Sometimes they are explicitly asked to defend the living in an otherworldly tribunal, giving a legal flavour to the claims: *mk-sw ḥn^c=k m njwt w^ct jr n=k jrt wd^c-mdw ḥn^c=f dr-ntt shw=k ḥn^c m njwt w^ct*, ‘look, he is with you in the same city; mount a case against him since you have scribes there in the same city’ (Qaw bowl: Gardiner and Sethe 1928: pl. ii, lines 8–9; Wente 1990: 211–2, nos 341 and 342).

The appeal to the deceased appears to be limited to the most immediate ancestors, namely spouse, parents or, collaterals. For example, the Cairo linen features an address by two family members in split columns: *snt ddt hr sn=s s3 dd hr jt=f*, ‘it is a *snt* who speaks to her *sn*, a son who speaks to his father’ (Gardiner and Sethe 1928: pl. i, l. 1). This pattern of appealing only to close ancestors may be linked to the funerary duties of the living toward relatives (O’Donoghue 1999: 97). Donnat (2010: 54–5) notes that the cultic acts performed for the deceased by the living are always mentioned in these letters, thus suggesting that a reciprocity was being expected by the latter.

In addition references to groups of ancestors are seldom encountered (see below); specific persons are addressed instead, and these are, in many cases, mentioned only by name: *r-dd jn mr-jrtj.fj n nbt-jt=f*, ‘a communication by *mr-jrtj.fj* to *nbt-jt=f*’ (Wente 1975/1976: 596, line 1). The lack of further specification shows that the living were well known to the deceased. As Quirke has pointed out (1988: 107), the letters to the dead are

never addressed to the ka or the ba of a person, but to the deceased as an individual. This usage contrasts with that of terms for ancestors in general, which are employed in a less specific and personal way. The only known mention of an undetermined ancestor group in a letter to the dead is in the Cairo linen, and it is presented as almost a proverb or stock phrase: *sh3 nw dd.n=k n jr.tj s3 jj prw jtw tw3w m dd=k pr s3 sp-sn*, ‘remember this that you said to *jr.tj*’s son *jj*: “the houses of the forefathers need to be provided for”, when you said “a son’s house and a son’s house”’ (Gardiner and Sethe 1928: pl. 1, line 12; see also appendix 2.2.2).

Many other sources attest to an active interaction between living and dead relatives, especially artefacts that may have been charged with the essence of the deceased. The so-called ancestor busts of the New Kingdom should be included in this category, although some authors claim that these did not necessarily represent only ancestors and that a more encompassing approach should be preferred (Keith 2011: 89–90). Although no examples of these busts are known from before the New Kingdom, the 11th dynasty sarcophagus of Ashayt has been suggested to bear a depiction of one (Harrington 2012: 55). Most busts are uninscribed, and the rare captions are not revealing about their function (Keith 2011: 70–4). They have been understood as having a protective function on the basis of similarly shaped amulets (Harrington 2012: 59, n. 293). The conceptualisation of ancestors as carers and protectors features also in letters to the dead and fits in well with the role of the head of some kin groups as protector and provider of his group as explored through the terminology above.

Another indicator of the permeability of the blurry boundary between life and death is provided by the *3h jkr n r* stelae, which were dedicated to deceased relatives (Demarée 1983: 282). All known examples have been found in or attributed to Deir el-Medina, and they have been associated with the domestic cult of ancestors. In this case the connection is not sought by a private communication, as with the letters to the dead,⁶⁹ but rather by display and celebration of a relationship. This may be related to the fact that those letters often deal with specific problems that require the intervention of deceased relatives, whereas *3h jkr n r* stela may be associated with a regular (i.e. non-exceptional) cult.

Even though these stelae are known from the late New Kingdom, their function can be compared to that of the memorial chapels of the Middle Kingdom at Abydos, in which display of relatedness played a pivotal role (see chapter 4). Whether some stelae in those

⁶⁹ Although see comment on performativity of these letters above.

memorial chapels were erected in the memory of ancestors is not proven, but the widespread reference to and depiction of lineal ascendants show the high esteem in which at least close ancestors were held. The importance of a reciprocal relationship between the living and the dead is evident also from inscriptions such as appeals to the living, but these busts and stelae support that such communication with ancestors in particular – and not just random passers-by – was deemed essential.

As a summary, the importance of the ancestors in the life of the Egyptians is undeniable, particularly as individuals in the context of the kin group. The terms for groups of ancestors in general were not used in the same way as those for kin groups which are analysed in this chapter; rather, they occur almost exclusively in stock phrases and in generalising claims in self-presentation inscriptions. The relationship with ancestors could be highly personal; for instance, one would not contact ancestors in general in a letter to the dead but a specific person who could help over a given problem due to his or her closeness to the petitioner. One can therefore understand how the topic of surpassing one's forefathers could feature in general statements about ancestors, as it describes an idealised feature of one's character, not any real situation. Ancestors were revered, respected, even feared, as the 19th dynasty letter of a widower to his deceased wife on Papyrus Leiden I 371 shows (Gardiner and Sethe 1928: pls vii–viii; Wente 1990: 216–7, no. 352).

This limited and stereotyped usage of terms for ancestor groups might lead one to think that they should not be likened to kin groups, or included within them. Terms for groups of ancestors were the basis of the topos described in this section, but that did not affect the emic conception of the deceased, who were active members of the household as documents such as letters to the dead show. The type of requests that they would receive, often relating to issues of inheritance, protection, and fulfilment of funerary duties, identify them unmistakably as functioning members of the kin group.

2.4 Conclusions: the significance of terminology

In this chapter I attempt an approach to emic constructions of kinship and marriage in ancient Egypt, focusing on terms for individual kin types, and especially on terms for kin groups. I do not advocate the notion that an object or idea only materialises when it has a separate name; in other words, I believe that terms need not invariably represent an underlying classification. As Baines (2007 [1985]: 259) suggested for colour, ancient Egyptian datasets can be 'simultaneously linguistic and non-linguistic', and colour

classification could be refined with no correspondence to an existing terminology. The same point applies to kinship terminology, because the nuances of lived experience are not necessarily reflected in the system of terms. Why, then, rely on terminology in order to approach societal phenomena?

Numerous terms existed and were used in particular contexts, but trying to understand folk taxonomies from our scholarly perspective has an inherent bias. As Wendrich puts it (2013: 89–90), ‘the “emic” classification therefore may be an attempt at reconstructing ancient classificatory principles, but it is still very much an “etic” approach’. The use of determinatives in hieroglyphic script indicates an Egyptian shared classification – of groups of people in this case – and this shows that they can be taken as an actor’s category. However, determinatives often refer to categories that are too broad for detailed analysis. In this case, I rely on the context in which those terms appear to create further subdivisions in the ‘group of people’ category. On the basis of the attestations of terms for individual kin types in relation to the terms for kin groups and on the presence of some recurring features, I propose that a number of terms encompass a flexible understanding of kin members. While this approach may impose some of my own beliefs – my own ‘etic grid’ – on the material, I attempt to contextualise each attestation of the terms and, in Meskell’s words (2004: 42), to restore some emic meaning to the classifications.

With this caveat in mind, this chapter has explored terms that I believe fall within the fluid definition of kinship presented in section 1.2.2. Most conclusions about the individual terms have been summarised at the end of each corresponding section, but here I offer some more general conclusions on the significance of kin groups in the social fabric of the First Intermediate Period and the Middle Kingdom.

In first place, in my analysis I favour a group approach, which I believe to offer the possibility of an improved assessment of kin relations. In addition, relationships were displayed on objects that sat in archaeological context and should not be regarded in isolation. The contextual approach brings out the fluidity of kin relations, notably because some kin denominations are prone to changing according to the role that a person performs towards a given ego. This group approach goes hand in hand with the idea of *koinographies* that I develop in chapter 5.

An examination of terms for individual kin types reveals that the denomination for collaterals of any generation (*sn* and its feminine counterpart *snt*) becomes more ubiquitous in the later Middle Kingdom, coinciding with a vast increase in the number of

people depicted and/or named on stelae. The reasons for this explosion of collaterality are not entirely clear, but a link with political changes that took place during the 13th dynasty, namely the patterns of inheritance of the throne in the royal sphere from father-to-son to sibling-to-sibling, has been suggested (Nelson-Hurst 2010: esp. 23). It is, however, risky to compare general social trends with royal succession patterns because elite and non-elite culture may not simply reflect the royal domain. This topic is further explored in chapter 3; here I remark only that there is no apparent need to imitate kin patterns conceived as ‘exclusively royal’. Although sources relating to kings seldom mention extended family groups, these are omnipresent in other social tiers. Moreover, nuclear and extended family links should not be regarded as opposed but as articulated and interdependent. I would argue that a change in royal succession patterns should not have affected conceptions and practices of kinship among the non-royals, since the former had never been conceived as a model to be replicated by the latter.

This phenomenon is better approached together with the usage of terms for kin groups. These terms, whose analysis constitutes the core of this chapter, appear increasingly and in a wider variety of contexts from the First Intermediate Period onwards. The dating of some sources is problematic, but even so it is clear that most terms are first attested in the late Old Kingdom (e.g. *3bt*) and First Intermediate Period (e.g. *h3w*, *whjtt*), while some start to be used in inscriptions in the Middle Kingdom (e.g. *hnw*). This pattern is unlikely to be an accident of preservation, as most terms appear first around the same date. The fact that they do not appear in written sources from earlier periods, however, does not mean that they did not exist, but they may have begun to be used in writing for a variety of reasons. The term *mhwt* is particularly revealing here, because it is not known from before the Middle Kingdom, but it then becomes the most widely used and most encompassing term for family members at the same time as the representation of collaterals on monuments increases. I suggest that this could be related. On the one hand, kin relations and practices change in society, and this may have inspired a change in monumental display. On the other, at the same time changes in display may have contributed to modifications in the way kin were conceived (see chapter 3), and the increase in representations could have favoured a word that expressed that transformation. In this manner, there is a parallel and mutually reinforcing change in social practice and monumental display. Emic notions of kinship and marriage are ever-changing and may evolve through time, as was certainly the case in ancient Egypt.

The peculiarities of each type of kin group have been explored above. It is, however, not possible to determine the precise composition of any group (except perhaps for *3bt*, where the lists on some Coffin Texts provide some basic guidelines for interpretation). Rather than seeing this as a hindrance to our understanding of family ties, I think we could welcome it as an opportunity: an unambiguous description of each group may lead us to try and compare them with groups which are known to us in our cultural milieu forcing them into our own etic grids, while the state of our knowledge invites us to rely more on contextual information and to pay more attention to the function and roles of each group. The analysis of terms in this chapter reveals two aspects that seem to be common to all kin groups. First, the figure of a head of the group who takes decisions and has duties of protection towards other members of the group is ever-present. This is particularly evident in self-presentation stock phrases, as well as in the letters of Heqankahte and the letters to the dead. In return, members of the kin groups often had funerary duties towards their head, as illustrated especially by *h3w* and *3bt*. In addition – and probably in relation to those funerary duties – inheritance was essential in defining who was and who was not a relative.

These features made ancient Egyptian kinship an extremely flexible system, since kin inclusion does not seem to be reduced to ‘substance’, as in many other societies, but rather to compliance with a series of obligations.⁷⁰ In this sense kinship was not given but made: even if by birth one had specific obligations, the individual could still decide which ones to observe. Some features of the system, however, may have been less subject to changing, and one should account for a complex interplay between ‘fixed’ and ‘variable’ characteristics; in fact, the balance of these two poles may shift depending on, for example, the role played by the state. While I do not agree entirely with an alleged opposition of state-based society and kinship-based society since I rather see them as articulated and mutually interdependent (see also Campagno 2006a: 36; 2014: 22–4), it is true that the structural position of kinship is different in these two scenarios. However, the capacity of the individual to interact with fixed organisations is not necessarily reduced in state societies: kinship rules in particular may be less flexible in the absence of a state, as demonstrated by complicated kinship systems of societies in which the state is not fully developed (e.g. the Australian Kariara: Fox 1983 [1967]: 243–50).

⁷⁰ It may be interesting to consider the will of Naunakhte (cited above) under this light, as she seems to be able to disinherit some of her children, probably because they failed to fulfil duties towards her.

The subjective component, which is often omitted from traditional ethnographies (see chapter 1), is important to understanding ancient Egyptian kinship and marriage: kin relations were constructed because they had a component of choice. The emphasis on the topos of the caring patron in self-presentation inscriptions can be directly related to this structural characteristic, since it may have served to underscore the integration of ego in his family group. These inscriptions, as well as those representations of people fulfilling funerary duties towards a deceased relative, indicate how the articulation of a kin group was an explicitly goal that would complement and nuance those fixed features mentioned above. Moreover, the inclusiveness of the term *sn* fits with in such a flexible system where one earned one's status as relative through one's deeds.

An alleged relation between kinship and political changes has been alluded to above in connection with individual kin types. Such link was also postulated for the proliferation of terms for kin groups around the First Intermediate Period, suggesting that it could be due to generalised instability of the central authorities (Franke 2001a: 247); thus, the political situation may have propitiated an increased interest in family links. While this hypothesis may be appealing, it does not explain why that attention to kin ties remained visible and even strengthened through the Middle Kingdom, which can hardly be characterised as a politically unstable period.

The main problem with this interpretation is that it imposes onto the ancient record a division between politics and kinship that is typical of modern Western societies. Such an ethnocentric approach obstructs a more nuanced assessment of kinship and politics as interdependent and inter-reliant, which would undoubtedly be more productive in this context. It is too often assumed that politics prevailed over any cultural domain, and thus drove changes in other fields. In contrast, I would argue that both politics and kinship contributed mutually to shaping the social fabric. In this manner, the decline of a centralised authority may indeed have favoured the growth of other types of solidarity networks that involved family links. Some political models common in this time may in turn have been modelled on kin relations. The best example for this is the patron-client relationship, which, I suggest, is inspired by the protective role of the head of the group (see Moreno García 2005; 2009–2010: esp. 43, n. 127 for kin terms used in relations of clientelism).

Terminological analysis may contribute to attaining an emic notion of kinship, as the contextual examination of the terms reveals nuances that would be otherwise difficult to identify. However, Egyptians did not only record their ideas in their written sources,

which is why an examination of how they displayed their kin relations in visual terms will enhance the picture of their notions of kinship and marriage. I address that question in the next chapter.

3 Displaying kin, making kin

‘Finally, and this is much more worrying, the old settlement has kidnapped the notions of construction and fabrication, turning them into weapons in a polarized battle against truth and reality. All too often the implication is that if something is fabricated it is false; likewise, if it is constructed it must also be deconstructible’

Bruno Latour, *Pandora’s hope* (1999)

3.1 Introduction

For the study of Middle Kingdom kinship, I advocate a flexible, non-exclusive approach in which text, iconography, and archaeology are integrated and complement each other – without giving primacy to any one of them. The monumental record plays a pivotal role, because a high percentage of the available sources belongs to this category. However, the monumental record has been understood as inadequate for tracing ancient kinship, because the commemorative and display-oriented conventions that govern certain monuments may interfere with our search of ‘true’ kinship. As Huebner (2011: esp. 88–9) has demonstrated for Roman times, the results of analyses of epigraphic inscriptions do not correspond with data obtained from other sources such as administrative documents like censuses.

In this chapter, and bearing Huebner’s caveat in mind, I argue that the Middle Kingdom monumental record, in particular stelae, is an essential primary source for the reconstruction of Egyptian kinship during that period. A deep understanding of the rationale behind the works is needed, and their purposes must be taken into account in order to use them as a tool for interpreting social trends. The messages the Egyptians convey through their monuments may not be representative of how kinship ‘really’ worked in practical terms, but they should be analysed as a contemporary witness of their concerns and expectations.

In the first section I explore conceptions of the ‘ideal’ and the ‘real’ and how a supposed dichotomy between these notions is not present in certain sources. Stelae in particular exhibit a combination of the ideal and the real in the way they display family relations. The second section of this chapter focuses on the material dimension of stelae and discusses how far they can be used to reconstruct social relations in the past. I argue that stelae contributed actively to the construction of the social fabric. In the final section

I analyse changes in kin display from the First Intermediate Period to the late Middle Kingdom, principally the increase in the number of relatives depicted. I argue that these changes do not imply a shift in the role that kin groups played in the late Middle Kingdom but are likely to reflect transformations that had already begun many generations before – probably up to twelve generations – at the beginning of the First Intermediate Period.

3.2 The ideal and the real

3.2.1 The monumental record: a supposed dichotomy between the ‘ideal’ and the ‘real’

The main problem that we encounter when working with the monumental record is that it is difficult to assess in what way it relates to social practices. This dilemma of the ideal as opposed to the real impinges on all approaches to Egyptian civilisation,⁷¹ but it may be especially evident when dealing with social trends. Whereas in areas such as kingship, works focusing on ideology are common (e.g. Hornung 1992; O’Connor and Silverman 1995; Baines 1998), many analyses of Egyptian society were attempted with a more practical focus (e.g. Allam 1977b; 2010; T. D. Allen 2009; Flamarion Cardoso 2009). In my view, interplay between the ideal and the real in kinship should never be neglected. An interpretation that combines both the real and the ideal aspects of kinship and recognises particularities derived from each of them would provide a more cohesive picture of the phenomenon in ancient Egypt.

The dichotomy between the ideal and the real deserves more attention, as it is a ubiquitous feature of Egyptian civilisation that raises a methodological issue: how reliable are the available sources for the reconstruction of a given aspect of Egyptian society? In addition, what research strategies may be employed to obtain as much information as possible from them? Eyre (1999; 2000) explicitly addresses this matter in relation to the analysis of central and local powers.⁷² He is concerned with the disparity of evidence available for assessing the effectiveness of administration in Egypt, for which the modern picture of a firmly controlled central organisation clashes with that of groups of individuals manoeuvring to their own benefit (Eyre 1999: 52). This conundrum leads

⁷¹ The terms ‘ideal’ and ‘real’ (or ‘actual’) are employed in this thesis in a broad, impartial sense. The use of ‘ideal’ does not imply any connotations of its being better or desirable but rather that something should be situated in the realm of abstraction, whereas the ‘real’ corresponds to actual practice.

⁷² Other authors who have tackled this dichotomy include Fitzenreiter, who led a workshop dealing with genealogies (2005c; see esp. his introduction to this volume, 2005a), and Nelson-Hurst in her doctoral dissertation (2011).

him to state that ‘différencier la réalité de l’idéologie est donc le problème central’ (Eyre 2000: 17). But now we are left with the problem of determining whether some sources reflect the ‘ideal’ and others the ‘real’.

On the one hand, the realm of the ‘ideal’ has traditionally been equated to the monumental record, whose principal purpose may be to disseminate the official discourse in accordance with strict rules of decorum and display (Baines 1990; 2007; on literary decorum, see Parkinson 2002: 91–8). On the other hand, the ‘real’ sphere may presumably have communicated mundane day-to-day matters more objectively in the non-monumental record, more or less without any selective propagandistic purposes.

This division could be regarded as an implicit trend among scholars, but it presents a rather simplistic view of ancient Egyptian sources. The non-monumental record is not a homogenous and unbiased cluster of sources; for example, administrative texts tend to offer an oversimplified image of society serving bureaucratic needs such as taxation (Kóthay 2001: 351–2; see also Frandsen 1990: esp. 172). Not only written sources are prone to be manipulated to adjust to ‘ideal’ views.⁷³ Studies of assemblages in tombs show that they too adhere to an ideal and may not provide a good basis for a reconstruction of daily life (e.g. Seidlmayer 2001: esp. 246). Thus, rather than easily accessing to an objective reality – if such a thing exists –, it is possible to identify various domains and degrees of idealisation in different sources.

In addition to this idealisation, the recovery of archaeological material too often depends on decisions taken by excavators; as Bredon Wilkins (2012: 53) puts it:

‘there was once a time when archaeologists could rebut all criticism of their professional judgement with the simple retort: “the spade never lies”. Whilst history is written by winners, archaeological excavation reveals the past as it was, unsullied by the duplicitous meaning of words. At least that was the holding line until Philip Greigson pointed out that even if “the spade cannot lie, it owes this merit in part to the fact that it cannot speak”. The essential materiality of the archaeological record (and its resistance to subjectivity) belies the fact that everything we find requires interpretation’.

Any clear-cut division of sources between ‘idealistic’ and ‘realistic’ suggests that they possess such a character intrinsically, disregarding the input of modern researchers. Eyre (1999: 55, my emphasis; see also Eyre 2000: 19) notes that ‘in the study of Egyptian society, ideology has usually had the advantage over reality, whether it is *the ideology of the historian* or the ideology of the Egyptian ruling class itself’. That ideology is more

⁷³ See, for example, the propagandistic endeavour of the Semna-Uronarti stelae of Senusret III, where the Nubian is described as a coward kept at bay by an invincible king, but the stelae were actually set up in the context of an impregnable fortress (Eyre 1990: 138; Baines 1996: 357; Seidlmayer 2000b; Parkinson 2002: 86; on the idea of opposition and the characterisation of enemies, see Parkinson 2005).

traceable than reality in the sources may be deceiving, since we may be unwittingly constructing a new set of beliefs and/or transferring our own concerns to ancient sources.⁷⁴

In summary, I argue that the distinction between the ideal and the real does not derive from the monumental or non-monumental nature of the sources themselves but is rather a heuristic construction intended to help us interpret Egyptian records. As these two categories may have been interrelated in antiquity (Muhlestein 2007: 116), and the degree to which a source correlates with lived experience is unknown, analyses should integrate them in order to reconstruct any aspect of Egyptian civilisation. To describe the practicalities of First Intermediate Period and Middle Kingdom kinship without an associated understanding of underlying ideologies – if at all possible – would produce a dry, uninteresting, and thoroughly incomplete picture.

3.2.2 In search of kinship (ideal and real)

For the study of Middle Kingdom kinship an articulation both of the ideal and the real is thus essential in order to achieve a better sense of how society of that time functioned. Through this integrating approach there is no need to categorise a source as either ideal or real in itself, because it is likely to participate of both. However, this Platonic conflict between ‘how things are supposed to be’ and ‘how things are’ is a fundamental landmark that has long attracted the attention of human beings. This divergence between a model and its realisation is also tackled from ethnological perspectives in the study of many types of societies. For example, Nadel identified a distinction between ideological or public history and objective or private history among the Nupe of Nigeria (1942: esp. 72); this separation between an ideal, general domain and another, more concrete one, that is subject to distortions and related to the particularities of certain groups, is also ubiquitous in today’s Western world.⁷⁵ Thus, a distinction between an ideal and a real concept of family remains useful from an instrumental perspective, even though it is often impossible to determine whether a given source relates to the ideal or to the real.

Several authors have posited that allusions to both nuclear and extended families are present in pharaonic documentation (e.g. Kóthay 2001: esp. 349–52; Moreno García

⁷⁴ The division between the ‘ideal’ and the ‘real’ in emic terms may have not been as compartmentalised as in modern Western thought. See Muhlestein (2007: esp. 118–20) on how the identification with the preternatural was used to consciously find connections between several spheres.

⁷⁵ A thought-provoking style of analysis explores how people develop their online presence, as there is a tendency to edit daily imperfections out of blogs, which end up being a showcase of an ‘ideal’ lifestyle, often from Goffman’s perspective of life as performance (Scheidt 2006: 198, 204; Miura and Yamashita 2007: 1455, 1467).

2006). No clear-cut distinction is evident between these two models, both of which are integral to Egyptian culture, and it would thus be inappropriate to identify one of them to the ‘ideal’ sphere and the other exclusively to the ‘real’. Although they are often viewed as opposed and competing social models, I prefer to see them as non-exclusive and both are integrated in my work.⁷⁶

Sources cannot be ascribed immediately to one of these spheres either; nevertheless, the notion of *maat* hints at motivations incorporated in certain documents. Adherence to *maat* is a constant in sources that extol normative values, for the concept, as it is generally understood, embodies the cosmic order and the balanced state of nature and society, whereas its absence would result in dissolution of society (e.g. Assmann 1990; cf. Quirke 1994). *Maat* is an elite concept (Baines 2007: 20) that should be central to definitions of ‘official discourse’, that is, a non-exclusive set of notions that institutions holding power and authority propose, spread, and uphold. In the case of Egypt, *maat* was the foremost stimulus behind the actions of institutions such as kingship and the priesthood.

The reason why scholars normally identify monumental record with official discourse is that the dissemination and defence of such matters usually include an element of display. Topics and objects that are to be displayed may conform to principles of decorum that apply also to the concept of *maat*.⁷⁷ Decorum ‘has much to do with enacting and representing the proper order of the world’ (Baines 2007: 16; see 14–29 for in depth discussion), an order that is usually presented in a generalised, timeless way.⁷⁸ However, generalisation is not exclusive to monumental display; a variety of sources and genres exhibit conventionalism and formalism to a great extent. According to Parkinson (2002: 86), in the textual record ‘ideology is manifest in what can be termed official discourse – not just in legal and moral texts, but also in religious and elite texts of commemoration and display (“monumental discourse”)’. The ideological quality of this official discourse extends also to pictorial and archaeological materials.

The two paradigmatic areas that epitomise the concerns of official discourse are the realms of the gods and of the king. The maintenance of *maat* depended in principle on the

⁷⁶ See Eyre (1992: 216, n. 58) on how people may have lived in separate houses as a nuclear family, while socio-economic ties could have bound a larger family together beyond the confines of a single house.

⁷⁷ Although here we are left with the difficulty of identifying which objects were conceived for display and which we are just assuming were displayed.

⁷⁸ See also Baines (1990: 20) for a definition of decorum as a ‘set of rules and practices defining what may be represented pictorially with captions, displayed, and possibly written down, in which context and in what form’ which, he emphasises, correspond with an actors’ perspective.

king's fulfilment of his functions and on the consequent contentment of the gods. The relevance of these three levels – the royal, the divine, ordinary people – and their interaction has been acknowledged by Baines (2007: 17): 'decorum is one means by which people negotiate relations among themselves, between themselves and the royal, and also between themselves and the divine'. Thus, it is appropriate to explore an 'ideal' definition of the family through how it was presented in royal and divine contexts.

There is a striking absence of references to extended family groups in sources dealing with gods and kings. Rather, affirmation of (unilineal) descent is the norm, especially in relation to the eldest son. The prototypical representation of the gods is in triads, in which the image of the nuclear family is prominent. Lineal ties, such as that of Osiris and Horus, were also fundamental for mythological narratives. It is not meaningful to ask whether this mythical image was informed by real-life royal practices or kings adapted their customs to emulate the mythical model; the two spheres should rather be seen as mutually reinforcing. Several authors have noted differences between royal/divine families and the rest of Egyptian society (Allam 1977a; Feucht 2001: 503–4). Brother-sister marriage, for example, which was ubiquitous in the mythical context and is well attested among royalty, appears to be absent from the non-royal reality until the Greco-Roman period. Thus, a vision of ancient Egypt as the only historical society where the rule of avoidance of incest was broken does not hold, as it only corresponds with the practices of a very small percentage of population – that is, the royals, and even in this case it may have been limited (Robins 1993: 26–7) – in pharaonic times. In later periods, brother-sister marriage was practised especially among the ethnically Greek part of the population (Frandsen 2009: 126–9), and this indicates that it could have been regarded as a mark of identity as well as an economic strategy, as argued by Shaw (1992: esp. 290–3; see critique in Huebner 2007: esp. 24–5). In any case, the possibility of a widespread custom of incestuous marriage has been rejected for demographic reasons (e.g. Scheidel 1995), and arguments for marriage between natural and adopted children – a practice extended throughout the Eastern Mediterranean – have also been advanced (Huebner 2007: 27). Other authors, while admitting that adoption must have been more prevalent than previously assumed, negate the correlation of adoption practices and brother-sister marriages (Remijsen and Clarysse 2008: esp. 59–61). The debate remains open.

The official discourse accentuating nuclear families is also visible in non-royal contexts, such as private tombs. A survey of depictions of family members in Middle Kingdom tombs demonstrates an emphasis on lineality, especially on the father-son

relationship (Olabarria 2010: 45–52). The role of the tomb owner’s wife was also salient, while other relatives, in particular collaterals, were often disregarded. This could be understood as fundamental in the tomb context, in which the deceased and his wife and children might be symbolically playing the role of certain deities to convey a message of regeneration (Lustig 1997a: 59, 62). The structure of the tomb and the distribution of scenes refer to a set of cosmological connections that characterise the tomb as a locus where the cycle of renewal perpetuated itself. The purpose of these funerary scenes was most probably not to provide a socially significant description of a family, but rather to ensure the correct functioning of the tomb as an instrument of eternal creation and renewal. The elite was emulating the realm of the divine and appropriating symbolic resources to ensure that their tombs would fulfil their functions. Therefore, the image of families derived from tombs, while valuable for understanding ideology, should not be regarded as reflecting social practices in any straightforward way. Failures to differentiate the real and the ideal in the study of tombs have led to misconceptions about the definition of family groups (e.g. Whale 1989).

Together with tomb scenes, a second group of evidence that engages with the notion of *maat* is that of literary teachings, which are widely attested from the Middle Kingdom (survey in Parkinson 2002: 235–77). These are not normally considered in terms of display because they were mostly written on papyri in this period, but a version of the first half of the so-called Loyalist Instruction occurs on the stela of Sehetepibre, a high official of the time of Amenemhat III (CG 20538: Lange and Schäfer 1902c: pl. xl; Posener 1976). Teachings are usually presented in a narrative frame in which a father instructs his children in proper behaviour and ethical conduct. As Parkinson in particular suggests (2002: 236–8), this frame is a literary topos: the instructions are not pragmatic guidelines and are not set in an educational context, but rather present a reflection on the ‘ideal’. In general, teachings, like tomb scenes, focus on lineal relationships rather than on the role of social groups. They also emphasise the position of the wife and expressly refer to neolocal residence as desirable.⁷⁹ This is a fictional paradigm that contrasts with evidence like the letters of Heqanakht (Allen 2002; see also chapter 2), which include references to a large number of people co-residing under the rule of a single head of the household (see further references in sections on *pr* and *hrjw* in chapter 2). If neolocality

⁷⁹ Cf. the *Teaching of Ptahhotep*: *jr jkr=k grg=k pr=k mr=k hmt=k m hn [r tp hsb=s]*, ‘if you are effective, you should found your household and you should love your wife with ardour [with due measure]’ (Papyrus Prisse 10,8–9: Žába 1956: 41–2, nos 325–6).

was a widespread custom, it may not have corresponded with the practicalities of household administration.

Other sources that mainly conform to this ideal representation of the family as a primarily nuclear unit are self-presentation inscriptions, administrative texts sanctioned by authorities, and some funerary texts. However, the heterogeneity of the evidence should not be overlooked. Spells in the Coffin Texts show how even texts within the same corpus may combine allusions to both types of familial organisation just mentioned. On the one hand, the often quoted Spells 38–41 centre on father-to-son inheritance and lineality.⁸⁰ Another set of spells, however, highlights the relevance of the *3bt* (discussed in section 2.3.1), which is one of the several terms referring to social groupings. A similar disjunction can be seen in legal texts, since the small units described in the household listings of Lahun (Collier and Quirke 2004: 110–5) do not correspond with evidence derived from dwellings of the same site, some of which may have been modified to accommodate larger groupings (Kóthay 2001: 367; Kemp 2006: esp. 217, 223).

This lack of a clear differentiation between ideal and real, between images and what was practised in everyday life, may raise the question of whether such a distinction is worth exploring, since it might be impossible to determine on what end of the spectrum a given piece of evidence should be placed. Is a description of a family that adhered to what was propounded by official discourse less real than a type of social grouping that fell outside the normative ideology? Could both the ideal and the real family be just constructions devised by Egyptologists, as Fitzenreiter (2005a: 20) has suggested for genealogies? This question is explored in the next section in relation to stelae. Artefacts that are intended to be displayed but do not always conform to the official discourse about the family offer a promising case study in which these discrepancies between the ideal and the real are brought to the forefront.

⁸⁰ *dd.n=f jt=j st=f nhm=j s^ch=f m t3-pf dsr ntj=f jm=f jn dd.n=tn jn.tw=j n=tn r s3r n=j jt=j-pf r jw^c=j st=f r nhm=j s^ch=f*, ‘He has said that I may grasp his place and take his dignity in that sacred land where he is. Have you said that I should be brought to you so that that father of mine may be in need (?) of me, that I may inherit his place, that I may take his dignity?’ (de Buck 1935–1961: CT i, 159b-h; see also Faulkner 1962; de Jong 1994).

3.3 Approaches to stelae

3.3.1 Stelae: research strategies and monumental record

Stelae are slabs of stone or wood bearing depictions and/or representations on at least one of their sides. Several categories of stelae have been identified, such as commemorative, border, magic, temple, votive, and funerary (for general surveys, see Martin 1986; Digital Egypt 2000; Hölzl 2001). However, there is no sharp distinction between these categories, which are conventional rather than exclusive.

The Middle Kingdom has been regarded as the period of ‘classical stelae’ (Hölzl 2001: 320), partly due to the large numbers of them that have either been retrieved from Abydos or attributed to this site. Their ubiquity in museum collections has stimulated a wide variety of works dealing with stelae from this period (e.g. Pörtner 1911; Müller 1933; Pflüger 1947; Shoukry 1958; Simpson 1974b; Rosati Castellucci 1988). The social implications of the objects, however, have not been fully explored.

Stelae can be regarded as a means of expression of personal or group choices. Some authors have overemphasised the uniformity of representations on stelae (e.g. Rosati Castellucci 1988: esp. 108; Bright 2006), in part because some design elements recur in most of them – for example, the depiction of a laden offering table in front of the person in whose memory the stelae is made (ego). But although some themes are persistent, stelae vary considerably in composition, so that the weight of individual decisions is pivotal (Franke 2003b: 57; Backes 2007: 14).

For Abydos, stelae should be regarded as a fundamental component of the cultic landscape. Probably thousands of commemorative stelae were erected alongside the processional route leading from the temple of Osiris to Umm el-Qaab. Many were clustered into groups, and there would have been a myriad of memorial chapels with associated dependent structures filling the site.⁸¹ A study of individual stelae would risk downplaying this relational aspect. I therefore explore stelae from a holistic perspective (see further chapters 4 and 5).

Many stelae show a limited group of people accompanying ego, and the criteria for selecting who should be included are elusive. It is often impossible to tell whether they are relatives or subordinates because their captions are laconic. I study the composition of

⁸¹ The existence of such chapels at Abydos was first postulated by Simpson (1974b) on the basis of excavated mudbrick structures, and he proposed a number of such groups on the basis of internal evidence from the stelae (see appendix 1). Simpson’s work was reviewed by Cooney (1974), Spaul (1975), Berlev (1976), De Meulenaere (1977), El-Rabi’i (1977), Silverman (1977), and DeVries (1977).

family groups and their transformations throughout the period in the third section of this chapter; here I consider how far these representations of people can be used to reconstruct the social structure of that time. For this purpose it is necessary to evaluate different approaches to stelae as well as possible ways in which the ancient actors themselves may have engaged with them.

3.3.2 Stelae as artistic products and the issue of agency

Stelae can be regarded as works of art, and their aesthetic qualities should not be overlooked. Since they started being purchased by European museums in the early 19th century they have constituted one of the key object types in their collections. Art, however, is a multifunctional phenomenon which should not be understood from the individualistic, subjective, and ostensibly non-functional perspective often applied to Western art. Egyptian art had implications for the society as a whole and, as defined by Baines (2007 [1994]: 301), it exhibited ‘a surplus of order and aesthetic organisation which goes beyond the narrowly functional’. A possible way to approach stelae is thus to treat them as aesthetic-functional products of Egyptian material culture that were created for an array of different purposes, including the purely symbolic. In this section I discuss and assess their possible functions and how art was used to accomplish these.

Stelae set up in Abydos may have had the double function of presenting the individual and his group while perpetuating their roles and status through memory, and assuring their participation in the mysteries of Osiris at the site. The artistic dimension of these objects may have fulfilled an instrumental function beside a purely aesthetic one. Stelae, in particular those commemorative stelae that provide the corpus for the present work (see appendix 1, 3 and 4), can be seen as agents that have effects on people and that actively create universes of meaning.

Discussions on agency have transcended the boundaries of sociological and philosophic studies in the last decades, and here anthropological and archaeological discussions of agency are particularly relevant. Agency is the capacity of a being to perform actions (or *happenings*) in its vicinity and, thus, to become an actor in the world.⁸² A major issue is whether agency is an exclusively human prerogative or whether it can be attributed to objects. In relation to art, this idea was developed by Alfred Gell (1998), although it can be useful for analysing any domain of material culture. Gell

⁸² Some authors emphasise intentionality: ‘agency may be defined as the human capacity for motivated, reflexive action having some consequence (if not always an expected or intended outcome)’ (Ross and Steadman 2010: 1).

(1998: 7) conceived the anthropology of art as ‘the theoretical study of social relations in the vicinity of objects mediating social agency’; he also asserted that for the study of art to be considered a form of anthropology, it needs to assimilate art objects to social agents. He conceded that this approach could seem initially bizarre, ‘but only if one fails to bear in mind that the entire historical tendency of anthropology has been towards a radical defamiliarization and relativization of the notion of “persons”’ (Gell 1998: 9). This is, I believe, one of the keys to Gell’s theory: persons – not a straightforward category to define – have agency, but some objects too are imbued with person-like qualities. This is obvious, for example, with Egyptian cult statues, which had to be dressed, fed, and attended to on a daily basis, as is stated explicitly in some texts.⁸³ Even when it is agreed that an object has person-like qualities, only in few circumstances could one affirm that it acts *de motu proprio*. If intentionality is a prerequisite to envisage objects as agents (see n. 82 above), then object agency is usually rejected. However, agency may also be defined as the performing of actions with specific – often unintended – consequences surrounding the agent.⁸⁴ I agree with Marian Feldman (2010: 149) that ‘since people often act without any conscious evaluation of what their actions mean and their actions often have unintended consequences, a definition of agency that rests on intentionality is too restricted’: intentionality does not need to be regarded as a fundamental feature of object agency.⁸⁵

Gell’s theory opened up possibilities that have been pursued in several areas (Dobres and Robb 2000; Gardner 2004; Pattison 2007) and have been applied increasingly to civilisations of the ancient Near East over the last years (Bahrani 2003: esp. 75–84; Feldman 2007; Winter 2010 [2007]; Steadman and Ross 2010; McCorriston 2011: esp. 207–16; Evans 2012: esp. 143–5). However, such approaches have permeated Egyptology only to a limited extent (Wengrow 2006; Kjølbj 2007; 2009; Exell 2009: esp. 131–5; Frood 2013). It has been observed that scholars dealing with ancient Egypt do not engage strongly with theoretical discussions,⁸⁶ which may be one reason why

⁸³ These actions are part of the daily temple ritual that is described in some papyri in Berlin (P 3014, P 3053, and P 3055) and in some inscriptions from the temple of Abydos. With these sources Moret (1902) was able to reconstruct the main guidelines of the daily ritual. Some evidence for the performance of a similar ritual in the Old Kingdom has been found in the Abusir papyri (Vymazalová and Coppens 2009).

⁸⁴ For example, see revival by Bourdieu of the notion of *habitus* as the result of a given socialisation of a human being, who ends up unconsciously acting as it is expected of him (Bourdieu 1990 [1980]: esp. 52–65).

⁸⁵ Agency as independent of intentionality has been also treated by Giddens (1984: 9; see also Kjølbj 2009: 33, n. 12).

⁸⁶ In Baines’ words (2011: 583), ‘Egyptologists – or Egyptian archaeologists if that term is preferred – do not engage so actively with general and theoretical archaeology or produce works that speak to general

these approaches are not often encountered in Egyptological literature. A second reason may lie in the difficulty inherent in the definition of terms such as agency, which can lead to scepticism about the relevance and usage of some theoretical constructs. For example, Meskell (2004: 4) dismisses Gell's concept of agency as an appealing theory that cannot be uniformly applied.⁸⁷ However, she does not address the relational aspect of Gell's treatment of agency, that is, that a thing is an agent only insofar as something else is a patient.⁸⁸ Gell too admitted certain limits to his theory, envisaging objects as 'secondary agents' that cannot be detected before they act (1998: 20); this restriction does not weaken his arguments, but rather gives them a further dimension, pointing towards a non-universal, contextually-driven definition of agency.

3.3.3 Identifying agency and constructing meaning

In his analysis of how art objects interact with society, Gell employed three key ideas that can be applied to stelae: technologies of enchantment; distributed personhood; and object biographies. These concepts are very valuable for gaining a better understanding of the reciprocal relationship that people have with many categories of works of art, and they have proven to be fruitful in the analysis of agency in several cultures.

Enchantment is defined as the captivation felt by the observer of a work of art (Gell 1998: esp. 68–72; Gosden 2005; Garrow and Gosden 2012; on early Egypt, see Wengrow 2006). In his exploration of what he termed 'technologies of enchantment', Gell underscored the psychological impact of art while also emphasising its practical functions.⁸⁹ Technologies of enchantment imply the use of art to manipulate social conduct; thus, the object acts in the world – as an agent – promoting certain actions or feelings in the viewers – the patients in this case.

Stelae participate in these technologies of enchantment, with their aesthetic value complementing and even driving attention toward their practical role as perpetuators of

archaeologists. That is the Egyptologists' loss at least as much as it is a loss for the archaeologists'. For an account of how increasing awareness of theory in Egyptology has not led to the inclusion of more theory in publications, see Horbury (2009: 5–6).

⁸⁷ Although she is not entirely coherent, as she goes on to affirm that Egyptian objects could be analysed as religious fetishes, given that 'through veneration or devotion the object is attributed power or effectiveness, and may appear to act independently of its manifestation' (Meskell 2004: 48; further critique of Gell's theory on 51–5).

⁸⁸ 'The aim of anthropological theory is to make sense of behaviour *in the context of social relations*' (Gell 1998: 11, my emphasis).

⁸⁹ 'The decoration of objects is a component of social technology, which I have elsewhere called the technology of enchantment. [...] The world is filled with decorated objects because decoration is often essential to the psychological functionality of artefacts, which cannot be dissociated from the other types of functionality they possess, notably their practical, or social functionality' (Gell 1998: 74).

memory. Stelae possessed also a strong socio-political dimension as status markers.⁹⁰ Agency can be created through strategies such as use of colour, variation in shapes, scene composition, or repetition of certain patterns to gain the viewer's attention. Scale was one of the most obvious visual devices used to direct the eye towards the most important part of the object, that is, the representation of ego (Schäfer 1986 [1919]: 230–4). Stela ANOC 4.4 is a characteristic example of how some figures take a pre-eminent role in relation to those who are depicted in subordination to them [Pl. 3.2]. Once the attention of the literate observer was on the object, the inscriptions may have played an important role, because they often appealed to the passer-by to act on behalf of the person in whose memory the stela had been erected.⁹¹ One of the stelae of *nfr-n3-jjj* (ANOC 44.2: see appendix 3.3.2) includes an appeal to the living that urges the observer to pronounce an invocation offering for *nfr-n3-jjj* because 'it is more beneficial for the one who acts than for the one for whom one acts' (lines 1.4–5). Even if the inscription itself was not understood, the presence of writing on the object enhanced its status and enjoined admiration and respect towards it, because hieroglyphic writing had a quasi-sacred character (Baines 2007 [1983]: esp. 35, 37–8).

The concept of distributed personhood was inspired by Mauss' treatment of the gift as well as Marilyn Strathern's analysis of how people in Melanesia are both individually and divdually conceived (1988: 13–5). For Mauss the Maori concept *hau* represented a kind of internal force of the given object that connects it to past owners and that demands that it be returned to its original possessor. By means of distributed personhood it is possible to extend presence and agency through space and time, even after an individual's death. In principle, an object could have many spatially separated parts with different micro-histories (Gell 1998: 221; see also reference to anti-personnel mines, 20–1) that need to be brought together to gain a full picture of a person and his or her agency (Gosden and Marshall 1999: 173). Thus, Gosden (2004: 171) focuses his analysis of distributed personhood on 'assemblages of objects' that have shared properties through a dense network of relationships that link them physically and aesthetically to other objects.

The notion of distributed personhood has been applied to Egyptian material culture, for example in Annette Kjølbj's (2007; 2009) analysis of New Kingdom non-royal statues. For elite Egyptians there was a constant concern – inherent in their cosmovision –

⁹⁰ In his analysis of 1st dynasty monumental mastabas, Wengrow refers to it as 'enchantment of authority' (2006: 39). On the political nature of enchantment, see also Meskell (2004: 61–2).

⁹¹ On the use of the ankh on Middle Kingdom stelae as a device to capture the attention of literate and non-literate alike, see Hill (2010: esp. 229).

with materialising the self, as exemplified by the desire to preserve the body after death (Meskell 2004: 124–30; 2005: 58–62). A principal function of mummies may have been to construct a ‘perfect image’ of the deceased that would provide a material basis for the ba to be able to return to the appropriate tomb every night (Taylor 2001: 16, 20; Riggs 2014). Statues share the mummy’s function as a material basis where personhood may reside:

‘to the ancient Egyptians statues materialized the essence and presence of the individual depicted. The identity and person of the statue owner were thus distributed or extended through time and place by the choice of motif and inclusion of his name, title and in some cases biographical data on the statues’ (Kjølby 2009: 36).⁹²

Middle Kingdom stelae provide an excellent example of distributed personhood because they are externalised constituents of a self that are spread in time and space. It is the personhood of the owner of the stelae (ego) and of those with whom he is represented that constitute the object of analysis. In Gell’s words (1998: 103), ‘as social persons, we are present, not just in our singular bodies, but in everything in our surroundings which bears witness to our existence, our attributes, and our agency’. The social persona of the Egyptians manifested itself through these stelae, which also fulfilled a memorialising function (comparable to that of some statues). Gosden’s assemblages are also relevant, since Abydos stelae often clustered into groups (see chapter 4). These groups constitute material, tangible attestations of networks of relationships among objects and, consequently, among people.

The stela group KG 12 can illustrate this argument (see appendix 4). The group includes five stelae – two of them from Abydos, two attributed to Abydos, and one from Elephantine. The man *jw=f-n-r=sn* is present on all five monuments. Since at least some of them were found in different, distant locations, they instantiate his distributed personhood. In addition, some people depicted and/or mentioned on KG 12.5 are related to other groups. For example, *nhjj* son of *hrt-jb* is also depicted on a stela belonging to ANOC 54. These two stelae bear witness to connections between two groups of people, so that the links between the objects enhance the agency of these two individuals and their stelae. I argue below that some of these social connections may have been constructed through the representation of these people on the same monument, and the

⁹² It is difficult to overemphasise the importance of materiality, but the textual dimension of these objects is also of capital importance for the reaffirmation of personhood. In my view, Kjølby’s argument would have benefited from a closer attention to textual sources as a further domain of materiality.

question of their existence in the lived world is less important than the fact that they were addressed to on stelae.

Object biography has been widely pursued in archaeological theory and anthropology, especially since the publication of *The social life of things: commodities in cultural perspective* (Appadurai 1986b), which investigates the interaction between objects – *commodities* in that book – and humans.⁹³ As defined by Chris Gosden and Yvonne Marshall (1999: 169), this approach explores the way human and object histories inform each other through the convenient metaphor of biography. Such biographies emphasise how interrelations of humans and objects create meanings that are prone to change as time goes by because objects accumulate further layers of meaning – some of which may be approached through assessing their contexts (Hodder and Hutson 2003: 156–205). It is necessary to assess the life history of artefacts in dynamic terms because their meanings and functions change. Objects are not static entities; on the contrary, they acquire varied meanings and functions and, as they move through time and space, they gain multiple biographies (Pattison 2007: 180).⁹⁴ The agency of those objects evolves as those new meanings provoke new effects on people (Gosden and Marshall 1999: 177), an aspect Gell (1998: 11) explored by locating things in their biographical contexts within the different stages of the life cycle. Meskell (2004: 56–7) remarks that Appadurai (1986a) and Kopytoff (1986) do not seem to be interested in objects *per se*, but rather in underlying cultural and historical processes. Yet there may not be such a thing as ‘an object *per se*’ – except maybe from a purely processual perspective – because objects exist *with* society, in the same way as society exists *with* objects.⁹⁵

Middle Kingdom stelae exemplify how the life histories of objects and of their owners become entangled and influence each other. Thus, *ḵw=f-n-r=sn* in KG 12 holds different titles on each monument that may be showing how he accrued status throughout

⁹³ Object biographies have been used to gain a better understanding of museum collections. For an example of a project engaging both university staff and students with the collections at the Pitt-Rivers Museum in Oxford, see <http://web.prm.ox.ac.uk/rpr/index.php/object-biography-index>. A similar initiative was launched by the curator of the Egyptian collection at Manchester Museum in January 2012: <http://egyptmanchester.wordpress.com/2012/01/03/object-biography-1-a-vessel-naming-nesi-khonsu-acc-no-6736/>

⁹⁴ A philological counterpart to these archaeological approaches may be ‘new philology’ (also known as ‘material philology’), which analyses manuscripts as artefacts, thus taking into account their use history and the impression they may have had on the readers (general introduction: e.g. Driscoll 2010; in Egyptology: Parkinson 2006: 6–8, 272–3).

⁹⁵ In my work I am not explicitly addressing the difference between objects (natural) and artefacts (intentionally built), because they are both integral parts of society. What is more important, in my view, is the existence of layers of meaning that are attached to both objects and artefacts, because these determine the place they take in society at any given time.

his lifetime. Since he was a draftsman, one could argue that the experience that he acquired producing stelae may have influenced the progression in his position. Be that as it may, the actual artefacts and the life history of this person are interrelated.

For Middle Kingdom stelae from Abydos, however, to focus only on the material biographies of individual stelae would provide an incomplete picture. It is rather memorial chapel groups as wholes as far as we can reconstruct them that should constitute the minimal unit of analysis, since they are the material expression of connections among individuals and their kin, and they display the reciprocal informing of material and human biographies. A plan of the memorial chapel area at Abydos (Simpson 1995: 32, fig. 54) shows how smaller chapels were built adjacent to larger ones [Pl. 9.1]. The fact that the former fill up narrow spaces between the latter suggests that association with certain structures, and therefore with certain people, was sought after the largest chapels had been built. The biographies of those chapels, that is, the study of their construction and organic growth, materialise the biographies of the groups of people whose relationships the chapels commemorated. To reconstruct the complete ritual landscape of Abydos in its entirety is not possible because little of it has been excavated systematically (O'Connor 1979; 1985; Adams 2010; Effland and Effland 2010), but the kin groups presented in the catalogue may constitute a starting point. There are parallel similar clusters of stelae based on kin-ties from the First Intermediate Period (see appendix 3.1), and this trend could have persisted in the Middle Kingdom, as indicated by the layout of the chapels. Some of the largest groups, such as ANOC 1 (see appendix 3.2), could consist of a large chapel surrounded by several associated smaller ones, but other possible reconstructions in which stelae referring to the same groups of people were distributed around the site should not be ruled out.

An exploration of the role of stelae as agents through the notions of technologies of enchantment, distributed personhood, and object biographies exemplifies how objects and people are interconnected and mutually dependent. Objects have an effect on people, and people construct much of the meaning inherent in objects. Awareness of this interdependence is essential to evaluating stelae as objects that describe and define people and therefore provide significant sources for the analysis of social groups.

3.3.4 An entangled world: how stelae make people

It is obvious that Egyptians made stelae. They designed them, fashioned them skilfully according to different styles and trends, and set them up in tombs and memorial chapels

or along processional routes. But stelae also played a role in the formation of those who shaped them. Individuals are socialised into a given material culture that predates them and that will probably outlive them (Gosden 2005: 194–7). In the same way as we are socialised to know how to use a table and a chair, Egyptians would take the existence of stelae and their implications for granted. As Gosden observes (2005: 194), ‘objects set up universes of their own into which people need to fit’.⁹⁶ Changes in material culture occur gradually (with exceptions that should be matter of analysis), and innovations introduced by individuals require time to be standardised and fully incorporated into the material repertoire of a civilisation. Is it then possible to state that objects have a stronger influence on human lives than humans have on objects even if it is humans who produce objects?

This theoretical conundrum is the subject of a book by Ian Hodder (2012). He presents an alternative model for the analysis of human-thing interrelations, which he expresses in a formula (Hodder 2012: 88): Entanglement = (HT) + (TT) + (TH) + (HH).⁹⁷ His approach is similar to that presented for agency above, since he argues that human and material lives inform each other through processes of entanglement. The distinctiveness of Hodder’s theory lies in his understanding of dependence (reliance and contingency) and dependency (constraint) as two possible ways in which humans and things can be related (2012: 17–8). This enables an interdisciplinary approach that combines idealism and materialism, because ideas and materials are no longer seen as determining factors in human action. In his words, ‘what is determinative is the entanglement itself, the totality of the links which hold and produce individual events, things, humans’ (Hodder 2012: 112).

Insofar as elite Egyptians created stelae, those stelae and their universes of meaning contributed to the creation of Egyptians. Information obtained from stelae therefore offers a window on to the lived experience of people who produced them. This does not mean that what they show should be taken at face value, as this would disregard the weight of the ideal. However, they should not be rejected as purely imaginary and inadequate for

⁹⁶ Not only material culture shapes the individual’s experience of the world. In phenomenological terms, ‘from the moment I am born I live in a world of speech, customs, institutions and cultural objects that together form my actions and thoughts in a way that still allows my own individuality to develop’ (Spurling 1977: 86). This contemplates an articulation and mutual information of individual, society and material culture. San Martín Sala refers to this concept as ‘mismidad social’ (2005: 80), namely an individuality somehow mediated by society.

⁹⁷ Humans depend on things (HT), things depend on other things (TT), things depend on humans (TH), and humans depend on other humans (HH).

the reconstruction of the social landscape.⁹⁸ As Valerie Hope (2000: 181) describes for Roman stelae:

‘Each tombstone tells a story and within the cemetery the tombstones are united to tell a wider story still. The funerary monuments are thus a method for accessing the living society. Yet the insight gained is not always a direct reflection of that society. The tombstones are persuasive in the image they present of the world; they may not lie, but they do make claims of status, wealth and position which cannot always be sustained. The funerary monuments reflect not the realities of Roman society but the rhetoric of language and images through which that society was constructed’

Stelae are generally assumed to be made for display (although see section 4.5 on audience and accessibility),⁹⁹ and yet in the majority of examples family models distant from the nuclear one are exhibited on them; thus, KG 28a.1 shows a combination of children, collaterals, and subordinates on a single monument (see appendix 4.2.1). In other instances, only a limited number of relatives are present, as on KG 12.1, with a family consisting of ego, his wife and seven children. This attests to a greater variability in the idea(s) that they convey than that exhibited in tombs, which presented a higher degree of adherence to an idealised image of the nuclear family.

How reliable then are stelae as evidence for reconstructing familial structures of the Middle Kingdom? In terms of Hodder’s theory, it is not the monuments alone that give us the key to understanding social reality, but the emphasis should rather be placed on the links that produce the entanglement. It is the understanding of that entanglement – the mutual relationship between Egyptians and these monuments – that can contribute to a better insight into social trends. Stelae are agents that can produce an effect on their viewers, participating in the construction of a society that aspires towards the idealised forms incorporated in them. They have the capacity to present *a social picture* that is probably accepted and treated as stereotyped by those who are socialised into the world in which these products of material culture had a pivotal role.¹⁰⁰ The social picture that stelae actively produce should be the focus of attention, because it is central to the use of the evidence for a possible reconstruction of society. Stelae are not meant to present a trustworthy image of daily life and they are not legal documents (Grajetzki 2005: 62;

⁹⁸ For such a view, see Molyneaux’s work on late 18th dynasty private tombs. He states that representations are the owner’s ‘putative definition of the ideological situation, interpreted by artists’ (1997: 115), so that they should not be used for reconstructing social practices, since they are ‘fashioned with the fictive naturalism of the state that aspired to control both ideology and social activity’ (1997: 127).

⁹⁹ Other alternatives should not be excluded. For example, Baines (2009: 4) has suggestively emphasised the importance of the creation stages of Abydos stelae – which grant an immediate accruing of status among peers – over their role as visible marks in the medium term.

¹⁰⁰ I do not wish to underestimate the importance of individual responses to socially sanctioned situations and institutions, as a culture should not be seen as a monolithic whole, but dissenting attitudes are difficult to trace (Baines 1996: esp. 342–3). For the purposes of this section, I am referring to general trends.

Fitzenreiter 2005b: 80–5). Therefore, it is not plausible to pursue an actual composition and functioning of society on them because they are not *representing the reality*, but they are rather *creating a reality*.

It is not the case that both the ideal and the real family are constructions devised by Egyptologists, as the question posed at the end of the previous section suggests. The display of relatives presents a family composition that is produced and motivated by Egyptians themselves, even if it is an ‘idealised reality’. In this sense, even though a distinction between the ideal and the real is pertinent, it is rather restrictive. The extent to which the idealised reality shown on stelae corresponds to lived experience is not as important for the present discussion as the reasons behind the particular choices of what is shown and the attitude of the actors – as far as it can be glimpsed – toward those representations.

How far were stelae perceived as bearers of agency in an ancient Egyptian context? Perception is embodied and situational, and depends on the stance of the observer, but objects also manifest their connections with other objects as they are perceived by an individual or a group (Spurling 1977: 30–1; see also Merleau-Ponty 1962 [1945]). This relational perception could be understood as an example of human recursive thought in that ‘it takes its own output and the next input, a loop that can be extended indefinitely to create sequences or structures of unbounded length or complexity’ (Corballis 2011: 5–6). As ancient actors looked at stelae, they could create sequences of connections that charged the objects with further layers of meaning, one of which could have related to the constitution of the social groups as they were displayed on them.

The self-image that a person constructs as investigated by phenomenology depends fundamentally on the culture into which he or she is socialised (holistically understood, see n. 96) and shapes the understanding of his own life (San Martín Sala 2005: 81). For members of the Egyptian elites, that vision of the self must also have been mediated by representations on stelae and other display objects. The ‘law of recurrence’ postulated by Roger Bastide (1973 [1971]: 6) propounds that ‘the idea which we have of ourselves transforms us to the point where we end by becoming what we believe ourselves to be. Our concept of social reality suffices to cause us to change it until we are re-creating it when we believe we are only examining it’. Although this description refers to ideas of the self, representations of social groups on Middle Kingdom stelae can be interpreted through this approach, because society could have been influenced by a widely

sanctioned self-perception presented on stelae.¹⁰¹ Here, the words of Laurie Spurling ‘society is not a subjective reality, it is not even an objective reality; it is an intersubjective reality’ (1977: 87) remind us of the process of reciprocal construction of self and society.

A similar hypothesis about an almost symbiotic interaction of objects and people in the construction of social relations is presented by John Ma for Hellenistic honorific statues (2007). He discusses how the inscriptions accompanying the statues interact with the viewer and complement the information conveyed by the image itself (Ma 2007: 205–9).¹⁰² Ma’s example illustrates how social consciousness can be created through the materiality of the statues themselves and through the recursive thinking of people interacting with them: ‘The statue, in its shocking lifelikeness, says “Look at me”. The name caption (‘Herodotus’), in its deference, says “Look at him”. The honorific formula and decree, in their determination to speak of civic culture, say “Look around you”’ (Ma 2007: 220).

Similarly, stelae urge observers to look around them. They actively create a ‘social fabric’ or ‘social matrix’ (Münch 2009: 252) within which kinship and marriage constitute a privileged nexus with certain categories of relatives recurring in the content of stelae. The image of family and social relations displayed on these objects goes through different phases and changes through time. Transformations during the period under consideration are remarkable, as an increasing number of people, not all of them biologically related to ego, begin to be represented on stelae. These changes in what was displayed may have a correlate in actual social trends; this possibility is pursued in the next section of this chapter.

3.4 Changes in display from the First Intermediate Period to the Middle Kingdom

3.4.1 A change in display patterns?

The fact that material culture is less prone to change than is usually assumed has been mentioned in the previous section. People are socialised into a given culture that includes

¹⁰¹ The role of stelae in the construction of social cohesion could be compared to that of specific stories and narratives that become institutionalised, ensuring that shared information extends throughout the community (Corballis 2011: 124).

¹⁰² It is true that inscriptions contributed to contextualise statues (and other monumental objects in the Egyptian case), but the impact of their contents in the construction of social awareness should be nuanced due to the limited scope of literacy in ancient societies. For estimations of the percentage of literate population in Egypt, see Baines and Eyre (2007 [1983]: 64–73).

an array of customs, attitudes, environments, and objects. The pervasiveness of material culture challenges the view of objects as something passive that is modified at (humans') will, suggesting instead that people and objects belong to a complex in which each influences the other. This characterisation may seem striking in a modern society undergoing constant technological transformations, but it suits the ancient world, where the pace of change may have been less hectic. For certain phases it is nonetheless possible to trace variations in material culture within a quite short time span. The circumstances in which such a rapid change took place deserve special attention (Gosden 2005: 197), because they could signal anomalies in domains other than material culture itself. Egyptian stelae from the early First Intermediate Period to the late Middle Kingdom constitute a well documented case study of relatively swift changes in representational conventions.

A valuable collection of First Intermediate Period stelae is that – mainly from Naga ed-Deir – compiled by Dows Dunham (1937; for a larger collection of material from the same site, see Brovarski 1989). The 87 stelae, now scattered through a number of museums, mostly depict a limited number of people, as is typical in the First Intermediate Period [Pl. 6.1]. In many instances, ego – the person to whom the stela is dedicated – is alone (e.g. Dunham 1937: nos 69, 70, pl. xxiv),¹⁰³ but he may be accompanied by his wife (e.g. Dunham 1937: no. 83, pl. xxxi), children (e.g. Dunham 1937: no. 59, pl. xix), and/or a few other uncaptioned people, presumably attendants (e.g. Dunham 1937: no. 36, pl. xiv; Brovarski 1989: esp. 750). Filiations are rarely given,¹⁰⁴ hindering reconstructions of genealogies by contrast with what can be attempted for later Abydene material. Filiation formulae appear during the reign of Intef II and become common under Senusret I, especially in the form 'ego *jr(t).n* father's name' (Obsomer 1993: 177). Reconstructing genealogies along modern lines without a hint about filiation is not possible due to the way in which ancient Egyptian kinship terminology is structured, where the same term could refer to several distinct kin types (see section 2.2).

Stelae of the First Intermediate Period from other sites show similar conventions, where the wife and children of ego may be depicted, together with some subordinates, but filiations are generally absent; collateral relatives are seldom shown or mentioned. Among the large amount of First Intermediate Period inscribed material excavated at

¹⁰³ Several stelae are dedicated to women, usually holders of priestly offices (e.g. Dunham 1937: nos 57, 58, pl. xviii).

¹⁰⁴ The two exceptions, stelae nos 7 and 13 (Dunham 1937: pls v, viii), have been dated to the Middle Kingdom (see below).

Dendera (Fischer 1968; see also Musacchio 2008; 2010), the 11th dynasty stela of *nhtw* (Ashmolean Museum E.3927; Petrie and Griffith 1900: pl. xi), illustrates this tendency to include lineal descendants [Pl. 6.3].¹⁰⁵ Ego, whose higher status is marked by his privileged position and larger scale, is accompanied by his wife (*hmt=f*), and several lineal descendants (*s3=f* and *s3t=f*) offering to deceased members of the family. A smaller figure grinding grain in the right bottom corner is labelled as *hm jdj* ('the servant *jdj*') with no filiation.¹⁰⁶

The absence of figures of ascendant lineal relatives (parents, grandparents and beyond) and collaterals is consistent for the monumental record of the First Intermediate Period. There are, however, a few exceptions, where a brother of ego is depicted: the only two examples known to me are the stela of *jtj* from Gebelein (Turin Suppl. 13114: Fischer 1961: 45, n. 5; Kubisch 2000: 241, tab. 1, no. 20), and the stela of *tnnw* also from Gebelein (Turin Suppl. 1270: Fischer 1961: 61, tab. xiiia; Kubisch 2000: 241, tab. 1, no. 16). Different principles may have governed the inclusion of relatives on these stelae, due to the Nubian ethnicity of their owners.¹⁰⁷

These two features – the inclusion of collaterals and ascendant lineals, and the introduction of filiation formulae – constitute the main differences between presentations of kin on First Intermediate Period and Middle Kingdom monuments. Middle Kingdom stelae display an increasing number of people whose relationship to ego is clarified to some extent by kinship terms and filiations.¹⁰⁸ In the late Middle Kingdom the number of people depicted on stelae increases dramatically sometimes reaching around 50, and many of them are not biologically related to ego in the modern Western sense of the term [Pl. 18].¹⁰⁹ If stelae were used to construct the social fabric itself, one could conclude that these changes in display may correspond with an alteration in the emic understanding of social groups. If this were the case, family structure might have changed in the transit from the First Intermediate Period to the Middle Kingdom. This interpretation, which

¹⁰⁵ Examples from other sites include a fragment of an architrave of *httj* from Naqada (Vienna ÄS 5894: Fischer 1964: pl. vii), and the stela of *dhw* probably from the Thinite area (Louvre C 300: Fischer 1988/89: figs 1–2).

¹⁰⁶ The figure grinding grain is characteristic of monuments from Dendera, as are the cupbearers (Musacchio 2010).

¹⁰⁷ Kubisch argues (2000: 247–8) against a clear-cut iconographic distinction between Egyptians and Nubians, but she admits that there was a difference in their titles.

¹⁰⁸ As an example, see stela of *hr-hr-nht* (Turin Cat. 1613: Roccati 1988: 163), which depicts 19 people related to ego.

¹⁰⁹ The stela of *jbt* is a convincing example of such monuments (Cairo CG 20722: Lange and Schäfer 1902c: pl. liv). Most of the 47 people depicted on its surface do not seem to be related by what we would call 'blood-ties', but rather by a professional relationship, as most of them were sculptors.

would contradict the working hypothesis of chapter 2, is not, however, supported by closer examination of the material: the links to further relatives and to other kin groups are brought to the forefront when stelae are assessed within a wider framework.

3.4.2 Stelae in context: a view of changes in display

Most remarks in the previous section can be extracted from stelae analysed in isolation. However, a contextual study of these monuments challenges some of the general conceptions on the social setting of the period under study. For example, while individual stelae may point towards a prevalence of lineal relatives, an examination of ‘assemblages of objects’ demonstrates that wider groups may have been taken into account. In this section I explore the display of relatives between the First Intermediate Period and Middle Kingdom through contrasting display patterns of votive and funerary stelae, the importance of contextual assessment, and the articulation of inscriptions and depictions.

First, it may be misleading to compare display patterns of First Intermediate Period objects directly with Abydene Middle Kingdom stelae because their main functions may have been different. The most relevant categories of stelae for kin display are funerary and commemorative. Although the differences are not clear cut, the former were associated with burials, while the latter were erected in or by votive chapels and shrines. Stelae in Abydos were mainly commemorative monuments with a specific memorialising purpose, while most of the First Intermediate Period ones seem to have had a funerary function, as is shown by Dunham’s (1937: 4–11) description of six tombs where stelae were found in situ, usually set in mud-plaster in niches or resting against walls inside the main chamber of the tomb. In any case, the boundaries between funerary and memorial stelae are not sharp because both categories have some memorialising elements. At Abydos memorial stelae are not exclusively found in the chapel area, but late Old Kingdom tombs of certain high officials were also the focus of votive activity that served, among other functions, to maintain the connection with important ancestors (Adams 2010: 13, 15; Richards 2010: esp. 147–50); thus, the funerary and memorial dimensions of artefacts interact and shape each other.

Despite these overlaps, it may be prudent to distinguish methodologically between stelae clearly associated with burials and those apparently unrelated to them. Some functions of Abydene stelae have been suggested above – commemorating relatives within a kin group and forging links with others, acting as an expression of individual and group identity –, and in addition to these, the representation of an increasing number of

relatives accompanying ego on stelae may have served to ensure the eternal participation of that group in the mysteries of Osiris (Müller 1933: 194), a purpose that is also mentioned in a number of inscriptions collected by Simpson (1974b: 10–3).

It is difficult to compare stelae of the same type for the two periods, especially in the case of stelae found in tombs.¹¹⁰ The history of excavations at Abydos renders the provenance of most known stelae uncertain (Kemp 1975; Richards 2005: esp. 125–56). Even when a rough location can be assigned, the exact tombs or chapels in which an artefact was found were not recorded. Where the publications of excavations at Abydos give relevant information, they mostly state that stelae were recorded as found on surface sand (e.g. Peet and Loat 1913: 36, no. 3, pl. xiv, fig. 4) or in the loose sand fill of tombs (e.g. Peet 1913: 112, no. 3, pl. xxiv, fig. 3, found in the fill of tomb B 21).

There is also variability in records of stelae that are known to have been found in shafts or tombs. Some stelae bear depictions of ego and his wife, with other people only mentioned and not depicted (e.g. stela from tomb R2, Peet 1913: 112, no. 4, pl. xxv, fig. 2). Stelae with designs of this type can be compared with those from tombs of the First Intermediate Period, whose tradition therefore did not disappear completely. A minority of these stelae, however, show a relatively large number of people (e.g. two fragments of a stela from shaft of tomb X58, Peet 1913: 115, no. 13, pl. xxiv, figs 2, 4).

The majority of Abydos stelae featuring large numbers of people seem to derive from the North cemetery,¹¹¹ which is the area close to the memorial chapels [Pl. 7]. A few are from the temple of Osiris proper, from which the procession would have started. For example, Peet's area X is located in the southern part of the North cemetery, just next to the wadi along which the procession may have run (Peet 1913: xiv, fig. 1). Thus, tomb X58, just mentioned as one of the few examples of a stela with a large number of depicted individuals that was found in connection to a tomb, was located in the North cemetery. A relation between display patterns and the ritual landscape of Abydos could therefore be postulated.

It is worth reviewing material from other locations with this possibility in mind. Sites other than Abydos from which the majority of late Middle Kingdom stelae featuring a

¹¹⁰ Another approach, of course, could be to tackle memorial stelae from chapels from both the First Intermediate Period and the Middle Kingdom. This is attempted through case studies in chapter 4.

¹¹¹ For exceptions, see examples in Mariette's catalogue (1880b) with depictions of four or more people that are recorded as having been found in the Middle cemetery: 555 (non-specified; Cairo CG 20012), 895 (eastern area; Cairo CG 20310), and 818 (Cairo CG 20482), 823 (Cairo CG 20158), 831 (Cairo CG 20370), 879 (Cairo CG 20149) and 993 (Cairo CG 20257), all in the northern area. Their location in the Middle cemetery may correspond with the eastern side of the wadi.

large number of individuals are attested are Elephantine and Edfu. KG 12.5 (appendix 4.1.5) from Elephantine is a double-sided stela of *ḥꜥ-kꜣw-rꜥ-snb* (Habachi 1985: 73–5, pl. 123), which shows over 20 people who do not appear to be related by biological links. A stela from Edfu shows a large number of people, including many not genealogically related to ego (Warsaw 141262: Marée 2009: 43–50, 79, fig. 7).¹¹² All of these were set up in sanctuaries devoted to deified individuals, and they reaffirm a relation between display of acquaintances and commemoration. KG 12.5 was found in the forecourt of the sanctuary of Heqaib in Elephantine, while Warsaw 141262 lay against the south wall of room J of the mastaba of Isi at Edfu. Both Heqaib and Isi became recipients of a cult that contributed to the forging and strengthening of links between the most important families in their areas (Moreno García 2006: 135; 2010).

Funerary stelae such as the ones from Naga ed-Deir also served memorial purposes. However, the display patterns associated with funerary monuments may have been different from those of stelae with a non-sepulchral function. Stelae in memorial chapels may have commemorated the groups shown on them. In the process, the desire to reaffirm group adherence and create new groupings may have favoured the depiction of increasing numbers of people on these monuments.

Second, and related to the previous point, the chronological and geographic context in which stelae became popular should be considered. Although they had existed since the Early Dynastic period as self-contained monuments, stelae started to feature prominently around the end of the Old Kingdom, and they became more common in the Middle Kingdom, when they were primarily used for funerary and commemorative purposes as noted above.¹¹³

The provenance of stelae is important for their interpretation. It is sometimes difficult to ascribe an object to a particular site, especially in cases like Abydos, where excavations were not systematic as mentioned above. Naga ed-Deir, where many stelae have a recorded provenance and where some were found in situ, illustrates the importance of a contextual assessment of archaeological objects [Pl. 5]. Various features of the stelae can be used to develop a chronology for them. Although the bulk of the material seems to date to the First Intermediate Period, a ‘late’ – that is, a Middle

¹¹² See also Warsaw 141266 (2009: 84, fig. 11) and another stela now lost (2009: 87, fig. 14).

¹¹³ Vandier’s overview (1954: 432–98 for First Intermediate Period to late Middle Kingdom) demonstrates an enormous degree of variability among stelae.

Kingdom – dating has been proposed for ten stelae (Dunham 1937: 119–24).¹¹⁴ The appearance of some of these, however, is not very different from others which Dunham dated earlier.¹¹⁵ One difficulty here relates to regional trends and styles. Dunham’s chronology is supported by the fact that some stelae dated to the same period were found together, and several of them in the same tomb (e.g. Dunham 1937: pl. i for in situ photograph of nos 14 and 63 in tomb 5106 at Sheikh Farag) **[Pl. 4 and 5]**. Although sometimes stelae in the same tomb would refer to the same person, as in the case of *mrwj* whose good name is *jj* in tomb 3794 in Naqada (nos 35 and 36; Dunham 1937: pl. xiv, only no. 36 photographed), on other examples they connect people whose relation would not have been obvious otherwise – for instance, due to the lack of filiations or a shared occupation. In such a case, an analysis of individual stelae cannot uncover the social landscape they present, because the extent of the family groups will change if several contextually related objects are treated together.

Thus, objects should be tackled in groups in order to produce a fuller picture of the social reality they materialise. In context among other monuments, the message they transmit is heavily influenced by surrounding artefacts. If one were to rely exclusively on information obtained from their inscriptions, one would not realise that stelae nos 15 of *jnhrt-nht* and 16 of *jnj-jt=f* and *šnt-stj* were related (Dunham 1937: pl. ix), but they were deposited in the same tomb. Another noteworthy example is tomb 3900 at Naqada with five stelae featuring nine people (including two whose names are faded on no. 56) none of whom is repeated on a different stela. The names of the owners share some elements, such as *jtj* and *jnj-jt=f*, leading Dunham to suggest they could have belonged to a single family.¹¹⁶ It would be desirable to explore the landscape of the necropolis in order to see whether the location of tombs reflected familial or professional ties of those interred in them. Because inscriptions on First Intermediate Period stelae do not provide sufficient relational information, a spatial link would be the only point of connection between tombs, and that is not a solid basis on its own.¹¹⁷ In the case of Middle Kingdom Abydos,

¹¹⁴ Brovarski dates only nos 7 and 13 to the 12th dynasty (1989: 85, 378, n. 331) and the rest to the 9th to 11th dynasties (1989: no. 8, 717; no. 11, 582; no. 12, 542–5; no. 17, 545; no. 26, 793–4; no. 57, 685; no. 67, 794–5; no. 80, 700–2).

¹¹⁵ Compare, for example, the First Intermediate Period stela no. 63 (Dunham 1937: pl. xxi) and the Middle Kingdom stela no. 67 (Dunham 1937: pl. xxiii).

¹¹⁶ This group includes stelae nos 39, 40, 56, 58 and 73 from Dunham’s catalogue (1937: pls xv, xvii, xviii, xxvi; description of group in 52).

¹¹⁷ This approach is proving successful for periods such as the 18th dynasty, for which the location of the tombs can be checked against inscriptions that give the genealogy and titles of the tomb owners (Dorman 2003; Shirley 2010; Jiménez Higuera 2012).

the general lack of contextual information of this type makes such an approach very difficult, but the filiation formulae provide a complement that can help to identify further links among individuals and groups (see further chapter 5).

Third, the arrangement of images and inscriptions is a key feature that contributes to interpretations of kin display for the whole of the period under study here. Several authors have noted that increasing numbers of people are shown on stelae from the beginning of the Middle Kingdom onwards (e.g. Vandier 1954: 497; Martin 1986: 2). While figures of servants (often unnamed) appear regularly on First Intermediate Period stelae, lineal ascendants and collaterals generally seem to be omitted. By contrast, these people constitute a fundamental feature of later objects, which commonly include representations of the owner performing offering rituals for his parents. For example, stela UC 14345 in the Petrie Museum shows ego as a recipient of the offering ritual in the upper register, while he pronounces an invocation offering for his father in the second register (Stewart 1976: 27–8, pl. 29.1). Franke (2003c: 69) argued that this change occurred in the 12th dynasty because the symbolic functions of decorated tomb-chapels were transferred to coffins and stelae, even when the latter were dissociated from a burial. If this is correct, one does not need to assume that there was an alteration in the social structure: the change in display patterns would rather concern ritual and ceremonial practices.

Moreover, in the First Intermediate Period collaterals and lineal ascendants are absent only from images, while these relatives are often mentioned in inscriptions. For example, on stela no. 83 (Dunham 1937: pl. xxxi), where only ego and his wife are depicted [Pl. 20], the inscription states: ‘I was one beloved of his father, favoured of his mother, whom his siblings love, pleasant to his family and children’.¹¹⁸ Similar but shorter expressions include ‘one beloved of his father, favoured of his mother, whom his siblings love’,¹¹⁹ ‘one beloved of his father, favoured of his mother, whom his siblings love, pleasant to (his family)’,¹²⁰ ‘beloved of his father and favoured of his mother’,¹²¹ or just ‘pleasant to

¹¹⁸ *jnk mrj n jt=f ḥsj n mwt=f mrrw snw snwt jm3w n 3bt*; for the rendering of *3bt* as family, see chapter 2. Other Naga ed-Deir stelae featuring this expression are nos 73 and 78 (Dunham 1937: pls xxvi, xxviii).

¹¹⁹ Stelae nos 3, 12, 24, 55, 75, 84, 86 (Dunham 1937: pls iii, vii, xvii, xxvii, xxxii, xxxiii). A variant of this expression at Naqada is: *mrj n jt=f ḥsj n mwt=f 3w-jb n snw* (Fischer 1964: no. 41, pl. xxxv left). See also the fragmentary inscription no. 39 from Naqada (Fischer 1964: pl. xxxiii bottom).

¹²⁰ Stela no. 62 (Dunham 1937: pl. xx). The term *3bt* is absent from this inscription, but can be supplied from further parallels.

¹²¹ Stelae nos 29, 45, 65, 81 (Dunham 1937: pl. xxii, xxx). Also attested in Naqada (Fischer 1964: no. 40, pl. xxxiv) and probably Coptos (Fischer 1964: no. 42, pl. xxxv), although this latter example is not well preserved.

his family'.¹²² Forerunners of these less lengthy expressions can be found in inscriptions of Old Kingdom mastabas.¹²³ The fact that in most cases the stelae bearing these types of inscriptions show ego holding hands with or being embraced by his wife could lead to the suggestion that these stela owners were trying to emphasise their close relationship with their families. This hypothesis, however, does not hold, because many other stelae that lack references to other members of the family also feature a couple in an affectionate pose (see, for instance, stela no. 1 in Dunham 1937: pl. ii).

Collaterals and lineal ascendants not only feature in stock phrases which, it could be argued, are stereotyped and, therefore, uninformative, but they can also be dedicatees of monuments. Some dedications emphasise lineal links from father to son/daughter¹²⁴ and from son to father,¹²⁵ usually by means of a fixed formula (e.g. *jn jt=s mrj=s jr=ns jr n=s nn*).¹²⁶ Dedications by collaterals are also present in First Intermediate Period inscriptions. While there is a single example in Dunham's Naga ed-Deir corpus (1937: no. 40, pl. xv), we find five instances from Naqada. One of these is noteworthy as the only known First Intermediate Period case where a female collateral is said to have dedicated a stela.¹²⁷ Collaterality does not seem to be emphasised. Even when collaterals act as dedicators, they are not represented in the scene together with the recipient of their dedication. By contrast, a special place may be accorded to ego's lineal descendants, who are often present on stelae dedicated by collaterals. For example, Fischer's stela no. 36 (see n. 127) features ego's wife and son although neither of them dedicated it.

On First Intermediate Period stelae ascendant lineals and collaterals are often not represented, but rather alluded to in non-specific terms, that is, without specifying their personal names and filiations. Their love and respect towards ego were desirable and pleasing, as a mark of personal standing that enriched the praise of ego featured in his ideal self-presentation(s). These mentions indicate both the importance of relatives as individuals in connection to ego and that of the family as a group.

¹²² Stela no. 2 (Dunham 1937: pl. ii).

¹²³ For example, the architrave of Idu (G 7102) reads: *snd.n(=j) n jt(=j) jm? m mwt(=j) m shmt n(=j) jm*, 'I was respectful of my father, pleasant with my mother insofar as I could' (Simpson 1976: 20, pl. 15, fig. 33).

¹²⁴ Examples from Naqada (Fischer 1964: no. 35, pl. xxxi bottom; no. 40, pl. xxxiv; no. 41, pl. xxxv left) and Naga ed-Deir (Dunham 1937: no. 59, pl. xix).

¹²⁵ This type of dedication is also attested in Naqada (Fischer 1964: no. 25, pl. xxii; no. 32, pl. xxix) and Nada ed-Deir (Dunham 1937: no. 13, pl. viii; no. 70, pl. xxiv).

¹²⁶ 'It is her father, her beloved one *jr=ns* who made this for her' (for reference, see Fischer's no. 35 in n. 124 above).

¹²⁷ [*jn*] *snt=f mrt=f nbt-jt=f (?) jr n=f nn*, 'it is his sister, his beloved one *nbt-jt=f (?)* who made this for him' (Fischer 1964: no. 39, pl. xxxiii bottom). The other four attestations are nos 27, 30, 36, 38 (Fischer 1964: pl. xxiv, xxvii, xxxii top, xxxiii top).

Thus, I advocate a holistic approach to stelae that takes their purpose, context, iconography, and inscriptions into account. To study kinship through stelae implies treating them as social objects that have an impact on the social fabric in which they were produced, and that conveys meaning through the whole range of elements just mentioned, all of which must be incorporated into our analysis.

3.4.3 Presentation of kin in the First Intermediate Period and Middle Kingdom

The features analysed in the previous section are examples of how a nuanced assessment of changes in display between the First Intermediate Period and the Middle Kingdom might be developed. I consider that no radical change in the social fabric occurred between these periods; rather, continuity in the valorisation of a social ideology that privileged lineal relationships can be observed. Changes in display patterns during this time frame point towards a gradual unfolding of attitudes related to common elite conceptions of kinship and marriage.

The collective image of family that stelae present and contribute to sustain suggests that it was very important to display large, implicitly dependent groups as a vehicle for definition of individual elite identity. A stela serves as a showcase where ego presents himself and his social environment in a condensed way, so the choice to mention or depict a particular relative must be significant. The groups displayed on ancient Egyptian monuments are ego-centred, that is, constructed around a particular ego (Keesing 1975: 21–4; Fox 1983 [1967]: 163–4, 169–70), and this organisation is central to attaining a better understanding of kin display. Given the salience of the individual within his monument one cannot claim that the individual was subsumed in the family group. Sometimes the lack of informative captions makes it difficult to identify a figure, but it is always possible to determine who ego is in a given scene or inscription from his position in the upper part of the stela or his larger scale. Thus, the enlargement of the family groupings surrounding ego on stelae is not in opposition to the expression of individuality but reaffirms the importance of ego by connecting him to the largest possible number of people.

In the First Intermediate Period the only relatives with whom ego is commonly represented are his wife and children, while in the Middle Kingdom the number of collaterals seems to increase. Although this has been seen as a shift to an emphasis on collaterality over lineality (Nelson-Hurst 2010: esp. 20–1), I argue that this is not the case

since lineal relatives always occupy a more prominent position than collaterals. A study of the role of the two collaterals mother's brother and sister's son in the Middle Kingdom shows that emphasis is always placed on lineality, even when a position was transmitted to a sister's son, as in the case of Khnumhotep II in Beni Hasan (Olabarria 2012: 891–2).

Thus, a common thread underlying family display stresses lineality and individuality while also being concerned with promoting collaterality and the enlargement of the group. The conception of family that stelae create and recreate combines those elements, and their articulation should be incorporated into a study of kinship dynamics during the First Intermediate Period and Middle Kingdom. These patterns, combined with the analysis of kinship terms for groups in section 2.3, suggest that there was no identifiable shift in the configuration of the family in the period under consideration. The change in display patterns on stelae appears to be linked to an extension of their functions, particularly at Abydos, as tokens to ensure eternal participation in the festivals of Osiris. The communal component of these festivals tied in with a revalorisation of family links that may have started in the early First Intermediate Period, as the proliferation of designations for family groups indicates.

The fact that certain groups did not appear in sources from before the First Intermediate Period does not mean that they did not exist. Nevertheless, there must have been reasons why they received increased attention. I argue that the decentralisation of the government that started at the late Old Kingdom may have been related to this revalorisation of kin groups. The end of the Old Kingdom brought about a regionalisation and dismemberment of some governmental structures, leading to a search for new structures of power and dependence. The popularisation of relations of clientship in this period (Moreno García 2000; 2005: esp. 225–7; 2011a; Franke 2006: esp. 165–7; Lehner 2000) suggests that family relations were used as a prototype for patronage in other areas. Social structure should not be regarded as a sphere that would respond passively to changes in political circumstances, but rather contributed actively to the shaping of alternative solutions. The family offered a model for increased display of social groups and probably also for changed social relations in a period with altered structures of rank. Stelae serve as witnesses of social trends, and a gradual change in their conventional layout in the Middle Kingdom turned them into vehicles to express and celebrate the communal spirit that had been reinforced several generations earlier in a time of decentralisation.

3.5 Conclusions: stelae and display

This chapter deals with the information related to family groups that can be obtained from stelae, and how it may be used to reconstruct social reality. The first section focuses on the available sources for the study of elite social trends in the First Intermediate Period and Middle Kingdom and on how to assess their reliability. Supposed dichotomies between the ideal and the real limit the nature of the information that can be obtained. The ideal and the real are often articulated and inextricably linked. Thus, although the separation between these two realms may have a marked heuristic value, it does not correspond with a division of the sources into two separate groups. As all the sources analysed in this chapter are idealised to some degree, we could rather recognise different ‘idealisations’ of family groups in different contexts.

Two conceptions of the family, nuclear and extended, can be identified in the sources. While the former is ubiquitous on sources referring to kings, the higher elite and gods, the latter is not exclusive to the realm of the non-royal society. Rather, the display of ideas of nuclear and extended families coexist in the sources, suggesting that the two models were integrated in antiquity. Although the nuclear family seems to have been preferred in sources dealing with the royal and sacred spheres, this does not mean that it was less real for the Egyptians than the extended family. For a study of this question, a close examination of stelae is pertinent, because their designs seem to participate in both notions of the family.

The second part of this chapter analyses the agency of stelae through their technologies of enchantment, distributed personhood, and object biographies. This approach emphasises the active role of monuments, as people are born in and socialised into a particular practice of material culture that will probably outlive them. This means that material culture has a strong impact on the construction of social beings, who must fit into an existing network of object-human relations. Not only are objects created by people, but people are also created by objects.

In the case of stelae, they contribute to creating a social fabric through the representation of specific social groups in their compositions. In this sense stelae do not represent *the* reality but rather create *a* reality that perpetuates itself through celebratory and memorial practices performed in connection to these objects. Stelae embody social cohesion and contribute to a reciprocal construction of self and society. Significant

changes in their content could inaccurately lead to suggest that there were comparable changes in social reality.

Changes in display patterns of social groupings on stelae that have been proposed are the subject of the final main section of this chapter. Although the number of people depicted on stelae increases significantly from the Middle Kingdom onwards, analysis suggests that these changes did not correlate with alterations in the social structure.

If the decoration and inscriptions of stelae are studied in connection with their archaeological context, it can be shown that relatives other than those depicted on the stelae were referred to, and it was considered desirable to display their respect, affection and integration within the group.

Changes in display patterns may be due to developments in the purposes of stelae as memorial objects, especially in the cultic landscape of Abydos, rather than to any alteration in the composition of families. The lexicographical study in chapter 2 suggests that the real changes in social composition may have happened at the end of the Old Kingdom and beginning of the First Intermediate Period, when centralised power weakened, and local structures probably became more important. Within this historical context, family composition may have played a major part shaping and even inspiring some of those changes.

In conclusion, First Intermediate Period and Middle Kingdom changes arguably lay in modes of display rather than in any alteration of the social structure. Even if it is not possible to correlate representation of kin on stelae with ‘real’ kin groups, the social fabric embodied on these monuments was meant to be commemorated and celebrated as such. Stelae, by displaying kin, were in fact making kin.

4 The microcosm of memory: stelae, chapels, and technologies of remembrance

‘La vida no es la que uno vivió, sino la que uno recuerda,
y cómo la recuerda para contarla’

Gabriel García Márquez, *Vivir para contarla* (2002)

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discusses the construction of social fabric through display. In that perspective, monuments may have contributed to sustaining and perpetuating specific notions of kinship and marriage. The details of such processes, however, have not been addressed so far. What influence do monuments such as stelae have on people? What role do they play in the acceptance and dissemination of collective ideas that may eventually shape social structure? This, I argue below, is achieved not only by individual stelae but also by groups of stelae that are brought together in chapels which materialise those social connections. These chapels may have been perceived as ‘lieux de mémoire’ where commemoration played a crucial role in the shaping of social links.

In this chapter I analyse how these foci of memory are created and sustained. I then present three case studies – dating to the First Intermediate Period, the Middle Kingdom, and the late Middle Kingdom respectively – of how memorial chapels were integrated in landscapes and were agents in the construction of social memory. The purpose of this chronological approach is to analyse whether functions of these monuments and conceptions surrounding them changed over time.

4.2 Monuments as foci of memory

Whether focused on how people remember (Connerton 1989) or on how remembrance is created (Nora 1989), memory has long been a major theme of research in humanities and social sciences. As argued by Devlin (2007: 1), its draw might be due to its flexibility, as it can be applied to approaches in many disciplines, and I would dare to argue that it could be considered a new paradigm in Kuhn’s sense.¹²⁸ This often means that a term like ‘memory’, even simply within social sciences, may become devoid of any concrete

¹²⁸ For a literature review of theories of memory in social sciences, particularly and in archaeology and history, see Devlin (2007: 1–18).

meaning.¹²⁹ Indeed, memory may be understood differently by a psychologist, a sociologist, or a historian: the first may be interested in the way memories are ‘stored’, the second in how they may have an impact on identity, while the third may give more relevance to the uses of the past in the past and/or in the present. However, memory is ultimately human and cannot be defined and studied in a one-sided perspective. The lack of a unified understanding of memory should not deter us from using the term but rather encourage us to be more precise with our definitions.

4.2.1 Memory and materiality

My research is particularly motivated by the societal dimension of memory as developed by Maurice Halbwachs (1992 [1952/1941]: 53), who, inspired by his teacher Émile Durkheim, placed the process of remembering in the context of the group. For him individual memory exists, but only within the structure of a society. This approach has been criticised by many because it has been considered to downplay the role of the individual (e.g. Gedi and Elam 1996), but I suggest that it shows how social and individual memory are articulated and inform each other.¹³⁰ This may be especially true in an ancient society not mediated by the emphasis on the individual that is archetypal of current Western civilisation. For Halbwachs, individual memories are social phenomena, and people remember together because groups provide anchoring points for their memories; in this manner, a socially sanctioned image of the group is created and perpetuated, becoming a topos for the community itself.¹³¹

In Egyptology the topic of memory has not been discussed as often as in other ancient cultures, a few exceptions being Mesckell’s (2003; republished as a book chapter in 2004) treatment of commemorative practices at Deir el-Medina, Ragazzoli’s (2013: esp. 290–2) discussion of graffiti as creators of spaces of memory, and Garnett’s (2013) study of ‘placemaking’ in the Eastern desert. This is surprising if we take into account that what is arguably the most widespread modern theory of memory, namely the idea of cultural memory, was developed by the Egyptologist Jan Assmann (2011 [1992]). The scope of

¹²⁹ ‘If memory is everything and everything is memory, memory becomes such a catch-all phrase that it loses its significance’ (Vinitzky-Seroussi 2001: 495).

¹³⁰ ‘While the collective memory endures and draws strength from its base in a coherent body of people, it is *individuals as group members* who remember’ (Halbwachs 1992 [1952/1941]: 22; cited in the introduction from a posthumous unfinished work, my emphasis).

¹³¹ Connerton (1989: 17) presents an example of how a village constructs its own communal image and Coser, in his introduction to Halbwachs’ book (1992 [1952/1941]: 21), explains how his experience as a migrant to the US in the 1940s was made more difficult because he did not share a collective memory with his new colleagues.

Assmann's volume – originally conceived as part of a larger project in which cultural memory was to be tracked by Aleida Assmann up to postmodernism (Assmann 2011 [1992]: xii) – goes beyond ancient Egypt, and the concept has permeated into social sciences in general. Assmann (2011 [1992]: 5–7) differentiates four types of memory: mimetic, of things, communicative, and cultural; the last two correspond to Halbwachs' idea of collective memory. While communicative memory focuses on the interaction among people in relation to their recent past (almost like 'oral history'), cultural memory selects a number of fixed points in the past that become almost symbolic moments – real or imagined – to which remembrance is anchored. Luiselli (2011: 11) suggests that the communicative memory is based on communication and cultural memory on tradition. However, Assmann (2011 [1992]: 20) believes that 'tradition' is an inadequate label for cultural memory, because it leaves out the fundamental aspect of reception. Cultural memory condenses all other aspects of memory, since a ritual, an object, and even language or communication can allegedly be handed down as meaning. Mimetic memory, for instance, is expressed by ritual actions, but it is cultural memory, through the activities and persons of some special carriers,¹³² that gives meaning to those rituals.

Assmann's approach presents two major problems. First, a clear-cut distinction between four types of memory – but especially between communicative and cultural – is not meaningful. Even if it may be heuristically helpful to divide up complex situations into discrete units, Assmann's partitioning is potentially confusing, as it suggests that meaning can be stripped away from actions and objects. While it is true that meaning – for example, of ritual actions – can change through time, to believe that this process is mediated by 'carriers' of culture, as if meaning could be easily imposed by external sources, is debatable.¹³³ Meaning does not exist as an independent entity, and a scenario in which things, ritual actions, and people are enmeshed in a complex network of relations, including those of meaning, may be more accurate. Thus, it would be impossible to assign an absolute meaning to stelae and chapels in an abstract sense without considering them as parts of a mosaic of relationships between people, objects, and landscape. Indeed, one of the strengths of the work of Halbwachs is that he offered a unified theory of memory, that is, he did not artificially divide memory into different types. I therefore go back to Halbwachs' approach because it treats memory holistically

¹³² As carriers Assmann (2011 [1992]: 39) cites 'shamans, bards, griots, priests, teachers, artists, scribes, scholars, mandarins, and others'.

¹³³ It is true that social inequality in relation to access to knowledge may have played an important part (see e.g. Baines 1990), but it is his notion of transmission and how it worked that I find problematic (see below).

as a phenomenon mediated by society. There may be many ways of remembering and several kinds of memory,¹³⁴ but they are all conditioned by social experience.

The second problem with Assmann's characterisation of cultural memory concerns transmission and reception. Assmann seems to argue for a straightforward, direct transmission of memory, and he highlights the role of writing in this context. This approach seems to promote an almost computational description of the human mind, which would be shaped simply by inputs and outputs of information.¹³⁵ Social knowledge and memories cannot be handed down as if they were heirloom objects, and meaning is more difficult to manipulate and standardise than cultural memory suggests. This apparently simplistic view of the transmission of memories is reminiscent of the principle of memetics postulated by Richard Dawkins (1976: esp 189–201) for the transmission of culture. Although Dawkins' model is not cited in Assmann's volume, their ideas of the transmission of memories and culture respectively are closely similar. Memetics is an adaptation of Darwinian evolutionary theory to culture. Dawkins sought a cultural analogy to genes as he posited a minimal unit of transmission and carriers of inheritance, coining the term 'meme' for minimal units of culture that are transferred from individual to individual. An obvious criticism of this problematic model is that it is difficult to determine what a meme really is and how the transmission of such a constructed unit may work. Culture is a complex phenomenon, and a biological approach that downplays the importance of an articulation of culture and society should be taken with extreme care. These same caveats should apply, in my opinion, to Assmann's idea of the 'handing down' of memory. Memory, like social knowledge and like culture, is created in and by the interaction of people in networks of relations that involve people, things, and environment.

Together with the social dimension of memory, Connerton (1989: 4–5) makes the important point that the process of remembering may be facilitated by bodily practice:

'if there is such a thing as social memory, I shall argue, we are likely to find it in commemorative ceremonies; but commemorative ceremonies prove to be commemorative only in so far as they are performative; performativity cannot be thought without a notion of bodily automatisms'.

Such acts of remembrance could be newly created and reinterpreted (Yoffee 2007: 6) and hence essentially fictitious, but they hold people together reaffirming the collective

¹³⁴ For example, Halbwachs mentions autobiographical memory (1992 [1952/1941]: 24), which could be close to Assmann's communicative memory.

¹³⁵ In relation to this, see also Andrew Jones' (2007: esp. 5–12) criticism of the 'external symbolic storage' idea that conceives the mind as a container for a finite number of memories. Ingold (1993: 152–3; 2000a: 138, 146–8) also rejects the 'lines of common descent' of knowledge and memory.

character of memory. This quasi-phenomenological approach takes remembrance partly out of the mind and transposes it to the body (and vice versa), capturing it in a manner that may be accessible through material culture. Memory is expressed in rituals that have material expressions and that may be, in some cases, archaeologically retrievable; for example, votive objects crystallise a process of commemoration.

Joyce (2003: 109) suggests that the shift from oral to inscriptional practice in the Maya context can be understood in this framework of materialised memory, because it granted the potential for reiteration, which is essential to ritual practice. When studying artefacts the role of writing should not be overlooked, as it is an integral part of their materiality. As discussed in chapter 3, stelae constitute a representation of how the deceased wished to be seen and/or how his, occasionally her, entourage wanted him to be remembered. This idealistic representation, which Valerie Hope (2000: 156) calls the ‘rhetoric of commemoration’ in the Roman context, was achieved through a combination of images and writing. On stelae such as ANOC 44.2 (discussed below, see appendix 3.3.2), the writing exhorts the passers-by to interact with the monument – stelae, statues, or even tombs in other occasions – exemplifying the performative dimension of these artefacts. Passers-by are to contribute to weaving a net of memory by pronouncing invocations and/or performing offering rituals. To see traces of memory in the archaeological record, one needs to assume that these can be materialised (sometimes even inscribed) to some extent, and thus that they are not an exclusively mental practice.¹³⁶ I disagree with the statement of the philosopher Pierre Nora (1989: 7) that ‘we speak so much of memory because there is so little of it left’, because he disregards the material dimension of memory. Although objects do not embody memory on their own (Meskell 2007: 222), they are focal points in a network of relations and social practices.

The archaeology of memory and remembrance has received much attention over the last decade (e.g. Devlin 2007; Barbiera, Choyke, and Rasson 2009), especially in response to volumes edited by Van Dyke and Alcock (2003b) and Williams (2003b). Connerton’s notion of embodied commemorative performance has been well received by archaeological theorists because ‘material objects reiterate bodily practices’ (Meskell 2007: 224; see also Connerton 1989: esp. 37–9). The embodiment of memory provides a model for an active construction of memory that involves individuals, groups, objects – unquestionably including texts –, and landscapes. Andrew Jones (2003: 69) has

¹³⁶ Scholars who approach memory in absence of written records include Bradley (1998; 2002), Jones (2003; 2007), and Van Dyke (2004; 2009).

introduced the concept of ‘technologies of remembrance’ to refer to those processes of materialisation of memory. An example he gives is cremation in later Bronze Age Britain, which he sees as seeking to activate remembrance without the need of a monumental landmark (see further sections 4.5 and 4.6 on how these technologies of remembrance are materialised in stelae). Remembering is thus something that one does, not just something that happens (see also Ingold 2000a: 148; Jones 2007: esp. 41–5; Meskell 2007: esp. 218). While some authors have regarded memory as the passive and commemoration as the active dimensions of remembrance, such a distinction disregards the social mediation of memory.¹³⁷

The relationship between artefacts and remembering is fundamental to archaeological research. In the words of Jones (2007: 26), ‘memory is not a function of the internal processes of the human mind, but memory is produced through the encounter between people and the material world’. In this chapter, I analyse how monuments construct and sustain social practices. If we understand memory as a social phenomenon mediated through sensory experience, monuments will participate in that mediation among people and have an effect on the memory of groups. The present is likely to be legitimised through representations of the past (Connerton 1989: 3; Yoffee 2007: 4), and imagery and inscriptions on monuments may reaffirm a social trend by demonstrating that it has traditionally been done that way.¹³⁸ Moreover, performances that foster remembrance and forge social links are connected with these objects (see section 4.2.3 for how this may apply to Abydos), and the message communicated through them may crystallise into forms of collective memory. Petts (2003: 194–5) studied how stone memorials in the early Middle Ages not only helped to recall memories but also reproduced and recreated social knowledge. According to Halbwachs (1992 [1952/1941]: 188), there is no social idea that would not be at the same time a memory of the society, so that these monuments – or more precisely the message that they disseminate – would effectively be creating memory. Those ‘social ideas’ or that ‘social knowledge’ may refer to specific events or situations, but they could also denote and resemble more abstract social frameworks within which groups – such as families and kin groups – are situated (Halbwachs 1992 [1952/1941]: 59, 83).

¹³⁷ Joyce (2003: esp. 120) offers a more nuanced perspective, in which commemoration is seen as a public marking of a shared social memory, and memory is the embodied experience of an iterative process.

¹³⁸ Halbwachs (1992 [1952/1941]: 25–6, 34) said, after all, that the past is a social construction shaped by the concerns of the present.

However, not all monuments may have had this memorialising power, or not to the same extent. Their contextualisation may offer keys to understanding why some of these artefacts might have been considered influential in the fostering of social notions that affected, among other spheres, kinship and marriage. When consideration of place is added to the definition of memory in archaeology, it can be seen as situated and embodied, performative and actively constructed. Here, importance of contextualisation of memory in the landscape and how it relates to kinship studies deserves further consideration.

4.2.2 Memory and landscape

Although archaeologists are far from offering a unified idea of memory, they agree on the necessity of contextualising it. In the introduction to their volume, Van Dyke and Alcock (2003a: 2) note that memory can be explored through ritual behaviours, narratives, representations and objects, and places. The addition of ‘places’ to this list is indicative of this situated perspective in which the individual is perceived almost as the Heideggerian being-in-the-world.

The way in which natural and built landscape is experienced influences human actions, while landscape is also informed by human acts.¹³⁹ As Tilley (1994: 25) points out, landscapes acquire sedimented layers of meaning through the events that take place in them. It is, in a clear parallel with material culture as explored in section 3.3.4, into those layers of meaning that people are socialised. Landscape and place should not be regarded as passive and immutable but rather as an agent that is itself shaped by human inhabitation. This corresponds to the ‘dwelling perspective’ postulated by Tim Ingold (2000b: 185–7; see also 1993: 154), which emphasises the relational character of one’s surroundings and how one engages with them. The network of relationships between landscape, objects, and people is materialised in his concept of a ‘taskscape’ (1993: esp. 163), consisting of tasks that relate to one another contextually. The ‘land’ or the ‘space’ are not the core but rather the network of activities, namely the ‘interactivity’, constitutes the taskscape. Memory is integral to landscape because actions of previous generations have contributed to the construction and reshaping of the landscape so that perceiving and experiencing it effectively constitutes an act of remembrance (Ingold 1993: 152–3). Richards (1999: esp. 91) has explored the implication of this phenomenological

¹³⁹ ‘Even the landscapes that we suppose to be most free of our culture may turn out, on closer inspection, to be its product’ (Schama 1995: 9).

perspective in relation to Abydos as a conceptual landscape, where layers of topographical, political, mythical, and historical associations gave coherence to the site as a ceremonial centre.

Thus, in a phenomenological sense, ‘place is a sensual experience’ (Van Dyke and Alcock 2003a: 5–6) because it articulates human perception through presence and inhabitation. In addition, a sensory engagement with the landscape could have been further mediated by the emotions linked to a place (Halbwachs 1992 [1952/1941]: 193–235). For instance, the location of an accident or a terrorist attack may become particularly moving for those directly affected but will also have an impact on the collective memory of the community (Truc 2011: esp. 148). In the same vein, anthropologists have studied concentration camps as powerful centres of memory. These examples illustrate extraordinary cases in which a traumatic experience shapes the meaning of a place, but the experience of a place does not need to be as extreme in order to inspire feelings and create emotional links. In ancient Egypt, for example, the realm of the dead was part of daily lived experience (see section 2.3.11), and nevertheless necropolises and votive sites could be regarded as emotionally charged places where memory may be particularly potent and active, and hence liable to make an impression on visitors. Evidence for this is the emphasis on remembrance in inscriptions from some of these sites (see section 4.6). In the Egyptian context, Landgráfová (2011: xxi–xxii) used the term ‘memoscape’ to denote these places that are freighted with individual and social memory.

The spatial dimension of memory is fundamental to the understanding of kin groups because there is a close link between land and kinship. On many occasions kin groups work as corporate groups, for which matters of succession and inheritance are crucial. David Petts (2003: 205), for example, describes the grave as a metaphor for kinship in relation to land rights, as a testimony to a claim made over the land. Kin groups may reuse or rebuild monuments to reaffirm and reinterpret those claims, which may have been further emphasised through performance and commemorative ceremonies.

These successive reappropriations of space and landscape are what Patricia McAnany (1995: esp. 100–10) calls a ‘genealogy of place’ in relation to the Maya context.¹⁴⁰ This notion works well for other cultures where monumental memorialisation is significant. I

¹⁴⁰ In her own words, ‘places with long chains of transmission will also have long sequences of construction events punctuated by dedicatory and commemorative cache deposits as well as actual ancestor interments – in other words, the construction of genealogies of place’ (McAnany 1995: 104–5).

argue that a genealogy of place can be applied more loosely than proposed by McAnany and need not denote only inheritance of land in material terms but is also related to the display of a sense of belonging and the construction of symbolic space. The patterning of memorial chapels in Egypt shows that social relatedness can be sought progressively by association with space, namely by adding elements to a chapel (see section 4.3) or by building further chapels in connection with a principal one (Simpson 1995: 36–9, pl. 6b). These chapels create a symbolic space that is claimed by display. In the genealogy of place the social fabric is constructed through space as the monuments create and sustain generalised ideas of society within developing conventions of funerary and votive display.¹⁴¹

At Abydos, the built environment and its integration into and manipulation of natural spaces play a pivotal role in the understanding of place.¹⁴² Monumental spaces have been studied for the effect they have on their audiences, and ideas of monument location and visibility have deeply influenced the discussion (e.g. Hope 2000: 177; Ma 2007: 209–13). Joyce (2003: 111) claims that monuments are ambiguous, since they are exceptionally visible while encapsulating invisible spaces, thus triggering access to different levels of memories. This purported ambivalence is not problematic, but rather is a core feature of monuments, which exist on several different levels and may mean different things to different people. Joyce's idea of ambiguity may stem from a visual bias, but monuments are not only visible, but also audible, perceptible and in sum rendered distinctive by an array of sensory experiences. For example, the cheering of the crowd during a procession, or the physical touch of the desert sand could contribute to the experience of a monument and to the construction of its multiple layers of meanings. Built and natural environments afford a holistic experience, none of whose aspects should ideally be disregarded. This is another reason why monuments cannot be said to create memory on their own. The interplay of landscape, material culture (including inscriptions), and people, that is, a network of relations generates memory (Oliver 2000: 3; Petts 2003: 193–5; Jones 2007: 26, 124).

¹⁴¹ An ethnographic parallel is posed by Maurice Bloch's (1971: esp. 108–24) thought-provoking discussion on how monuments, particularly tombs, are used in the construction of social groups and their symbolic claim over the land among the Merina of Madagascar. This work is also illustrative of the importance of a group approach to monumentality and kinship.

¹⁴² Ingold (1993: 169; 2000b: 175–81) challenges the idea of a clear-cut distinction between built and non-built environment because the buildings themselves are not given, but rather eventually emerge from people's interaction with the landscape. As he puts it, a feature may be more or less a building in different periods, so the 'buildingness' of a space is relative.

Tombs are seen as having special relevance in studies of how memory is created. For instance, grave assemblages have been assumed to encourage particular ways of remembering (Williams 2003a: 16). In addition, tombs, as permanent landmarks, are thought to be more deeply linked to the landscape than votive objects.¹⁴³ As Pierre Nora (1989: 22) puts it,

‘statues and monuments to the dead, for instance, owe their meaning to their intrinsic existence; even though their location is far from arbitrary, one could justify relocating them without altering their meaning. Such is not the case with ensembles constructed over time, which draw their meaning from the complex relations between their elements’.

I strongly disagree with this statement, since the fact that a monument is portable does not make it less bound to the context it was devised for. As Petts (2003: 193) argues in his study of Welsh early medieval burial sites, stelae that are moved from the original location may continue to act as reminders of the deceased in whose memory they were created, and also of the social and physical landscape for which they were intended. Abydene stelae are also an excellent example of social engagement with objects linked to a particular space, as their essence can only be understood in light of the role they played in the celebration of the mysteries of Osiris, the desire of people to participate in them through their monuments. The relationship of stelae, chapels, visitors, memory, and construction of the social fabric constitutes one of the key issues in this chapter and is examined in the next section.

4.2.3 Stelae and memorial chapels

In this section I discuss the role that stelae in general, and memorial chapels in particular, played in group commemoration and how they were ingrained into particular landscapes, focusing on the site of Abydos (for which see section 3.3.1). First, it is necessary to define stelae and chapels, as well as how they are embedded in the Abydene context. The nature and purposes of stelae and chapels are often taken for granted and, moreover, the variety of terms denoting stelae has not been treated in detail. In this sense, the study of this aspect of material culture parallels the analysis of families, since the need for detailed definitions of the objects of study, while essential, is often disregarded. A better understanding of types of stelae and how these relate to their context may produce insight

¹⁴³ The extent to which an architectural landmark is fixed in the landscape can also be questioned, since some tombs and temples have been transported out of their original location in Egypt; for example, the Old Kingdom tomb chapel of Hetepemakhti currently in Leiden (Mohr 1943). Some architectural features, such as obelisks are also known to have been moved in antiquity.

into their conceptualisation as monuments and, in particular, into how they mediated commemorative practices.

In the Middle Kingdom four different terms for stelae are known, all of which occur in association with Abydos: *ʿb3*, *wḏ*, *šps* and *srḥ*. The number of attestations for each term that I have found – 29, 43, 19, and 1–2 respectively – is testimony to the variability in their usage.¹⁴⁴ Neither the particular term nor the determinative employed seems to be related to the shape of the stela on which it is inscribed. For example, round-topped stela Cairo CG 20093 features both *šps* and *ʿb3* – qualified by the demonstrative *pn*, which indicates that they were referring to that particular object – with the O20 shrine  to *šps* and a stroke to *ʿb3* as determinatives.

Stelae, however, should not be understood in isolation but as part of the larger setting in which they were embedded. At Abydos only one area has been excavated where preserved chapels have been found in situ (O'Connor 1979; 1985; Simpson 1995: 32, fig. 54), but sites such as Saqqara (see section 4.3) and Elephantine (see section 5.5) demonstrate that similar structures were built throughout Egypt. The creators of these chapels also perceived them as discrete units: some inscriptions state that stelae are part of chapels, so the chapel must have been understood as a separate but related category. For example, stela British Museum EA 202 reads: *jn jt(=j) jrj-pʿt smr wʿtj m-r ḥtmt jj-ḥr-nfṛt m3ʿ-ḥrw wḏ jr.t(w) n(=j) ʿb3-pn n mʿḥʿt=f nt m3ʿ-ḥrw*, ‘it is my father the *jrj-pʿt*, sole companion, overseer of the treasure *jj-ḥr-nfṛt*, justified who commanded that this stela is set up for me in his chapel of justification’ (see appendix 3.2.6, line 4).

The term *mʿḥʿt* is thought to denote such chapels (e.g. O'Connor 1985: 166), although in some cases it could also refer to a tomb.¹⁴⁵ This may point towards the particularities of taxonomies and classifications, as discussed in section 2.4. I argue that the difference between tomb and chapels may not always have been clear-cut in terms of function. The identifying principle of a *mʿḥʿt* was perhaps commemoration, and whether a body was interred in it or not may have been secondary. In addition, the active creation of a space for commemoration was a clear purpose of these chapels.¹⁴⁶ Of the 58 examples I have collected in which Middle Kingdom stelae feature the term *mʿḥʿt*, in 45 cases it has the

¹⁴⁴ The main difference in the frequency of the usage of these terms in the First Intermediate Period is that *ʿb3* is the most widespread.

¹⁴⁵ For example, the main stela of *jj-ḥr-nfṛt* gives a reference to the *mʿḥʿt* of Osiris (appendix 3.2.1, line 20).

¹⁴⁶ Etymologically *mʿḥʿt* means ‘place of standing’, and this may add a further dimension to the notion of commemoration, as it could refer to an assembly of people. I am grateful to Professor John Baines for this thought-provoking suggestion.

house determinative $\square$,¹⁴⁷ suggesting that a spatial dimension was intended for the chapel. A *mḥt* is often referred to as a landmark by which visitors may pass in the context of appeal to the living: *ḥnw tpw t3 rmt-nbt hrj-ḥb-nb sh-nb sw3tj.sn hr mḥt-tn*, ‘living ones upon earth, everyone, every lector-priest, every scribe who shall pass by this chapel’ (see appendix 3.2.5, lines 1.1–2). Texts sometimes locate the chapels within the wider geography of Abydos, and inscriptions on stelae cite places such as the terrace of the great god (*rd n ntr ʿ3*) or the district of great renown (*wrt ʿ3t hmhmt*). I argue that by relating the *mḥt* to those areas, it is being defined as a further landmark in the landscape.¹⁴⁸ Thus, commissioners were anchoring memories, which were prompted and sustained by those chapels, to the landscape.

Although *wḏ* is the most widespread term for stela with 43 attestations, it is not the most prominent one among ANOC groups, where *šps* appears most often in inscriptions. However, *šps* never occurs together with the term *mḥt* in the same inscription. This is striking, since the term *šps* boasts an obvious relation with memorial chapels given its recurrence within ANOC groups, but the two terms may have had different functions, *šps* emphasising the interaction with the passers-by, *mḥt* perhaps relating to the creation of space.

Lapp (1994) argues that *šps* may denote a miniature-chapel-stela (also called a coffin-stela) on the basis of the shape of its usual determinative, the O20 shrine 𓏏 . An example of such a stela is Cairo CG 20742 (Lange and Schäfer 1902b: 373–6; 1902c: pl. lvi), but *šps* does not occur in its inscription, so the only connection between the term and the stela is made on the basis of the shape the latter.¹⁴⁹ Moreover, several stelae whose inscriptions describe them as *šps* have completely different shapes; for example, stela ANOC 44.2 (Florence Inv. 2590, see appendix 3.3.2) is a traditional round-topped stela.

Analysis of the function of these self-designated *šps*-stelae and their integration into the landscape, rather than their form, may illuminate their significance for the ancient actors. Two main purposes can be identified. First, as with most other stelae, display is a

¹⁴⁷ The other thirteen did not include a determinative.

¹⁴⁸ For example, this variant of a common formula on stela Vienna ÄS 109 presents a concrete reference to the chapel in the landscape: *dd=fjr.n=j n=j mḥt tw s3h.tj smnh st=s rwd n ntr ʿ3 nb ḥnh hnt 3bdw hr wrt nbt htp*, ‘he says: I have built for myself this *mḥt*, it being made effective, and its place being made excellent at the terrace of the great god, lord of life, foremost of Abydos, in the district of the lady of offerings’.

¹⁴⁹ Only one miniature-chapel-stela – Vienna ÄS 186 – features *šps*, but without determinative, so the shape of the object is definitely not addressed in the writing. Determinatives, however, may not have been needed on objects that are what the term denotes, and when they are may have been considered ‘redundant’ (Fischer 1973). In addition, space constraints may have played a role sometimes in the decision whether to include a determinative or not.

fundamental dimension of the *šps*. Stelae were made to be seen, as is explicitly stated in ANOC 55.4: *j ṛnhw wṛb-nb šh-nb hrj-ḥbt-nb m33tj.sn šps-pn ḥs=tn pth swd=tn j3wt n hrdw=tn*, ‘o living ones, every priest, every scribe, every lector priest, who will see this *šps*, Ptah will favour you, you will leave your offices to your children’ (Toulouse 49.274: Ramond 1977: 5–9, pl. ii). Second and related, the outstanding characteristic of stelae bearing the term *šps* is their association with so-called appeals to the living, which are present on all the examples that I have collected. While stelae of other types also bear appeals, the consistent assertion of a stela’s relationship with viewers characterises *šps*. Appeals foreground the desire for interaction with the audience, asking all the living to recite invocation offerings in the memory of the person for whom the stela was erected and his group. A location of *šps*-stelae closer to the processional routes where they could more easily be admired and interacted with could be postulated in direct connection with the importance of the ritual landscape of Abydos.¹⁵⁰

Although it may be impossible to reconstruct the landscape of Abydos (see chapter 3.3.1), some indication of how the Egyptians conceptualised it may be gained through examination of stelae, memorial chapels, and their inscriptions, which show that these monuments were regarded as foci of memory that were created by and for performance and continued celebration. These actively constructed spaces of memory were mediated with the wider community because they sought the engagement of passers-by with those presented on the stelae. That interaction is anchored in the landscape as well, becoming a fundamental aspect of the ritual dimension of the site.

Memorial spaces can be identified at other sites, such as Elephantine or Saqqara, so the presence of these chapels was not exclusively linked to the sacred landscape of Abydos as a pilgrimage site, although its characteristics may have been particularly conducive to fostering remembrance. The definition of memory that I advocate, namely situated and embodied, performative, and actively constructed, is particularly relevant to Abydos. It is situated because the role of stelae and chapels cannot be understood without reference to the landscape in which they are inserted and the processional route towards which their siting aspired. It is embodied because personal sensory aspirations – such as the desire to see the festivals of Osiris cited above – were fundamental in the objects’ engagement with viewers and with the landscape. It is performative because interaction with the passers-by, who may even be explicitly requested to pronounce invocation

¹⁵⁰ I intend to expand this argument in an article in preparation.

offerings, is essential to the reinforcement of memory. Finally, it is actively constructed because the groups commemorated on stelae and memorial chapels may have not existed as such in lived experience, while still being regarded as real groups.

In the following sections I explore this definition of memory further through three case studies. By surveying memorial chapels of different periods and sites I aim to give more concrete evidence of how these spaces were used to consolidate social groups and to assess whether the mechanisms to do so differed from the First Intermediate Period to the late Middle Kingdom. A more detailed description of the components of these clusters, together with the transliteration and translation of the inscriptions they bear, is given in appendix 3.

4.3 The Saqqara chapel of *sk-wsht*

The precise location of the memorial chapel of *sk-wsht* in the Teti pyramid cemetery at Saqqara is known [Pl. 13 and 15], unlike that of most of the Abydene material. Thus, this case study illustrates how a memorial monument is integrated into the landscape and how it sustains ideas of kinship in relation to its surroundings.¹⁵¹

The chapel of *sk-wsht* contained five false door stelae (one single and four double) with their respective offering tables, and it has been dated to the First Intermediate Period on epigraphic and iconographic grounds (Daoud 2005: esp. 102) [Pl. 14]. The chapel was found, probably by Firth, at the end of the so called ‘Rue de Tombeaux’ (Capart 1907: esp. 15–6), almost adjacent to the northern enclosure wall of the pyramid of Teti and close to the mastabas of Neferseshemre and Ankhmahor (Silverman 2009: 95, fig. 31). The false door stelae and offering tables seem to have been set up inside a small structure, as remains of mudbrick walls surrounding the stelae and offering tables are visible in some excavation photographs (Posener 1940: fig. 2) [Pl. 13.2]. This suggests that these stelae and offering tables were perceived as unit. Although neither Capart (1907) nor Firth (1926) mentioned the chapel of *sk-wsht* directly, the latter included a drawing of the building in the plan of the site (1926: pl. 51). Moreover, the chapel is referred to in a letter to the Director of the Antiquities Service now in the Griffith Institute archive (Abdalla 1992: 93, n. 3 citing Gunn MSS notebook 12; Daoud 2005: 100).¹⁵²

¹⁵¹ I refer to the stelae and offering tables in this group by the code they receive in appendix 3.1, namely SqSt for stelae and SqOf for offering tables, followed by the numbers assigned to them by excavators.

¹⁵² The letter, cited by Daoud, reads: ‘the position of the chapel was to the SE of the SE corner of the southernmost mastaba of the street of tombs’. In the PM III²: 548, it is referred to as a cenotaph.

The single false door stela of *sk-wsh̥t* was numbered 1 by the original excavators (Abdalla 1992: 93–5; Daoud 2005: 90, 101; PM III²: pl. lvii). His name occurs on other monuments from the chapel, including the offering tables that were added to the structure possibly in the Middle Kingdom (see below). Unusually, *sk-wsh̥t* is not given a title on his stela (SqSt.1, see appendix 3.1.1), but his connection to the cult of Teti is implied by the titles he receives on the offering table associated with it (SqOf.1, see appendix 3.1.6). No further information about *sk-wsh̥t* is known from other sources, so it is difficult to reconstruct his family's genealogy (cf. different genealogical diagrams proposed: Abdalla 1992: 109; Daoud 2005: 102; see also appendix 3.1.11) and to determine relationships among the monuments in this group. A plausible reconstruction makes *sk-wsh̥t* the focus of an ancestor-centred group in which his name was reused to honour his memory (e.g. with *sk-wsh̥t* the elder, the middle, and the younger).

In addition to the typical representations of offering rituals, offering lists, and authority poses of ego (e.g. seated by a laden offering table), the false door stelae from this memorial chapel feature some scenes that are more typical of Old Kingdom tomb walls. Examples include the man lassoing a bull in the fourth register of the right side panel of SqSt.1, and the toiletry scenes in the fourth register of the right side panels of SqSt.2, SqSt.3 and SqSt.5. A parallel of the former is found, for example, in the 6th dynasty mastaba of Mereruka in the Teti cemetery at Saqqara (south wall, scene 3: Duell 1938a: pls 20 and 21),¹⁵³ while the latter is present in the 6th dynasty tomb of Ihi in Thebes (Saleh 1977: 24, fig. 56, pl. 15.).

Limitations of space required that some elements of self-presentation be condensed. Thus, the particular information that these scenes transmit must have been important for the stela owners. Franke (2003c: 69) argued that some symbolic functions of decorated tomb-chapels are transferred to stelae from the 12th dynasty onwards – as well as going down the social scale – but this is also known from earlier. I disagree with Daoud's (2005: 101) suggestion that this memorial chapel is actually a communal mastaba tomb of a type that would have become common when the necropolis of Saqqara started to be overpopulated and most people could not afford to have an individual tomb built, further remarking that 'the fact that Firth failed to find the burial shafts or burial places of these individuals does not mean they do not exist' (2005: 101). Although issues of space may

¹⁵³ For a ritualistic interpretation of the scene of a man lassoing a bull based on Pyramid Texts spells, see Baqué-Manzano (2002).

have been important,¹⁵⁴ other concerns, such as proximity to the pyramid or to a particular mastaba, must also have played a role. Tombs from approximately the same period and later are known in the same area,¹⁵⁵ such as the First Intermediate Period chapel of Khentu (Firth and Gunn 1926: 42) or the early Middle Kingdom mastaba of Hetep (Firth and Gunn 1926: 61–4; Silverman 2009: 48–72, esp. fig. 9b; PM III²: 550–1), next to the mastaba of Kagemni.

Excavations, both early (Firth and Gunn 1926) and more recent (Silverman 2009), have revealed that these stelae were not associated with burials, which is why Abdalla (1992) proposes that the structure was a cenotaph. Silverman (2000; see also Abdalla 1992: 107–8) initially suggested that there might be a link with the nearby Middle Kingdom tombs of *sk-wsh*t and *s3-ht*hr-jpjj, located to the east of the pyramid of Teti and beneath its pyramid temple, it was later shown that any direct connection can be rejected on stylistic grounds because the stelae seem to date to the Herakleopolitan period or beginning of the 11th dynasty, while the tombs are clearly from the end of the 12th dynasty (Daoud 2005: 101; Silverman 2009: 88–93). However, there might be a connection not between the stelae and the tombs but between the offering tables, which can be dated to the Middle Kingdom, and the tombs. If this is correct, *sk-wsh*t, the owner of stela SqSt.1, may have lived on in the memory of the region of Saqqara long after his death.

Offering tables are linked to commemoration, as they embody the material requirement for perpetuating one's life. The offering table scene is arguably the most common in both tomb decoration and stelae throughout Egyptian history, and stone offering tables were often set close to a niche in mastaba tombs or to stelae. Regular offerings were theoretically needed for successful survival in the hereafter, and the funerary cult had to be maintained if this was to be achieved. The cult of kings could be sustained for several generations, while that of elite individuals could die out relatively swiftly. In the case of *sk-wsh*t, I argue that his cult can be traced down to the late Middle Kingdom, when offering tables were added to a First Intermediate Period chapel, possibly by someone who was buried close to the chapel in the Teti cemetery.

¹⁵⁴ The map of the necropolis shows that space may have been available, for example to the west of the mastaba of Mereruka (PM III², pl. li; Kanawati et al. 2010: pl. 1a). However, there may have been some reason, either topographical or symbolic why building in that area was not encouraged.

¹⁵⁵ As Firth (1926: 37–8) pointed out, many of the tombs datable to the First Intermediate Period seem to have usurped and enlarged pre-existing ones due to the new trend of burying the dead in an extended position rather than contracted. In addition, in this period the cemetery extended to the east of the area excavated by Quibell.

Offering tables are very frequently associated with tombs, and they are particularly common in late Old Kingdom mastaba tombs. The nearby mastaba of Mereruka, for example, features an alabaster offering table on a pedestal in association with a large striding statue of the mastaba owner emerging from a shrine in the north wall of chamber 13 (Duell 1938b: pl. 123). The presence of the statue reminds visitors of their role in the perpetuation of the funerary cult, thus emphasising the interactional aspect of the offerings. Offering tables were not only connected to the stela or statue of an individual: some are also associated with larger clusters of burials. For example, the First Intermediate Period necropolis at Dendera excavated by Fisher (1917) included groups of two to sixteen shafts surrounded by small mudbrick enclosure walls [Pl. 2.2]. Up to 534 such clusters were identified by Ray Slater (1974: esp. 204–14), several of them with associated offering tables [Pl. 2.1]. It is difficult to establish the character of the groups to which these clusters related,¹⁵⁶ but in any case they express the desire for group commemoration.¹⁵⁷ Offering tables are also used in memorial chapels, and they are present in some of the kin groups studied in this thesis (e.g. ANOC 13.3, Cairo CG 23019: Kamal Bey 1909: 17–8; pl. x).

The offering tables associated with *sk-wšht*'s memorial chapel make this ensemble remarkable because they are dedicated to the egos of the stelae by someone else, adding a further dimension to the memorial aspect of the chapel. Thus, the dedicator *s3-ḥthꜣr-jpjj* is mentioned as having made an offering for his lineal ascendant (*jt*) *sk-wšht* (see appendix 3.1.6, top line). The same man also dedicated offering table SqOf.4 for *sk-wšht* the middle and *sk-wšht* the younger. The dedicators of the other three offering tables are not named, so it is possible but not certain that *s3-ḥthꜣr-jpjj* commissioned all these objects. Stylistic and epigraphic analysis has demonstrated that the offering tables are probably several generations later than *sk-wšht* himself, and are datable to the 12th dynasty (Daoud 2005: 102, esp. n. 1053; Silverman 2009: 90–1). In addition, excavation photographs show that all these tables were set at a higher level than the bases of the stelae, supporting a later dating (Daoud 2005: 101 and pl. xlvi).

¹⁵⁶ Family groups of course come to mind, and this possibility was suggested by Slater herself (1974: 212–4). While enticing, I believe the relationship of these people is too difficult to determine in the absence of complementary written or material evidence.

¹⁵⁷ It is possible that these offering tables were dedicated to the memory of one individual rather than to the group, but the scarce published excavation photographs suggest that they were not associated with a particular grave but rather to the overarching enclosure wall, since they were set up inside those enclosure walls that surround several tombs. The offering tables from Dendera are uninscribed, so it is necessary to rely exclusively on their archaeological context to interpret their function in the necropolis.

Silverman (2009: 91–2) identifies the dedicator of these offering tables with the owner of one of the Middle Kingdom tombs mentioned above. If the identification were correct, it would demonstrate that the kin group in this chapel was commemorated over several generations. The only known titles of the ancestor *sk-wšht* are inscribed on one of these offering tables (see appendix SqOf.1, inner panel left and right), which may indicate either that his role was remembered outside what was strictly indicated by display on his stela or that later generations working in the mortuary priesthood of Teti created ancient models for their role, that is, they could have ascribed fictitious titles to the *sk-wšht* of the First Intermediate Period in order to connect him to Teti’s cult. Either way, the connection with the past generated by *s3-ḥthꜣr-jꜣꜣj* in dedicating the offering tables is evident.

The tomb of a *s3-ḥthꜣr-jꜣꜣj*, quite possibly the dedicator of those offering tables, is adjacent to that of a certain *sk-wšht* within the mortuary complex of Teti and thus probably sought a connection with the long deceased king (Silverman 2000: 265–6; 2009: 80–4, esp. figs 23 and 24).¹⁵⁸ The kin terms in the inscriptions on the offering tables, and the names of *s3-ḥthꜣr-jꜣꜣj* and *sk-wšht* suggest that they were related to the *sk-wšht* of the memorial chapel, as does the spatial proximity to the enclosure of Teti at a time when positions in the mortuary priesthood of the king may have been hereditary. Silverman (2009: 92) suggests that *s3-ḥthꜣr-jꜣꜣj* could be the son of the *sk-wšht* whose tomb is adjacent to his and thus could be honouring his father by setting up monuments for his namesakes in a nearby chapel. Silverman’s interpretation may be based on a narrow reading of the kin term *jt* as ‘father’. On a broader and more accurate rendering ‘ascending lineal’, *s3-ḥthꜣr-jꜣꜣj* could have been honouring his ancestors, and his relationship with his contemporary *sk-wšht* may not have been particularly relevant to his action. In any case, *s3-ḥthꜣr-jꜣꜣj* added some elements to a chapel belonging to a group that existed several generations earlier. The chapel must have had an impact on him, probably contributing to his identification with the group represented in it.

The question of audience arises again in this context, because it is difficult to evaluate the impact of a monument on viewers if its accessibility is uncertain (see further section 4.5). If *s3-ḥthꜣr-jꜣꜣj*’s was involved in the mortuary cult of Teti, he would have visited the necropolis, especially the area close to Teti’s complex, quite often. There are, however,

¹⁵⁸ This connection is not evident in the inscriptions in the burial chambers, possibly for reasons of decorum, but it might have featured in the now lost tomb chapel, as in the nearby tombs of Ihy and Hetep (Silverman 2009: 84–6, n. 147).

further indications that the necropolis was still in use in the Middle Kingdom and visited by people not necessarily connected with Teti's cult. The find of a cluster of figurines bearing execration texts¹⁵⁹ has hardly been mentioned in discussions of the chapel of *sk-wsht* [Pl. 16.1]. The so-called Saqqara group, now in Brussels and Cairo, is not published, apart from a treatment of references to Nubia and Asia in its inscriptions (Posener 1940) that was intended as a preliminary study in advance of a full edition.¹⁶⁰ According to Posener (1940: 31–5), the material can be dated on palaeographic grounds to not earlier than reign of Senusret III.

Groups of figurines with execration texts have been found in necropolises such as Giza or Lisht, mostly in close connection to mastaba tombs (Posener 1987: 2–4). The Giza examples stand out as they were found in four different spots between rows of mastabas, with a westward progression that could correspond to some ritual action (Ritner 1993: 139; Diego Espinel 2013: 30, fig. 23) [Pl. 16.2]. The Saqqara figurines were found *inside* the memorial chapel of *sk-wsht*, above the floor level and wedged into a heap of earth in the north-east corner of the structure (Posener 1940: 16). Their texts are often quite specific, including the names and filiation of those people against whom the destructive magic was executed. Although only the foreign names on the Saqqara texts have been published, they also included names of Egyptians (Posener 1940: 12). It is impossible to say how or whether the execration figures related to those commemorated in the chapel, but they confirm that it was still being visited in the late Middle Kingdom and was a focal point for at least one ritual and thus was in use as a performative space. One may ask why this place was chosen for the deposition of the execration figures. If *sk-wsht*, or other members of his group,¹⁶¹ is mentioned among those to be destroyed, proximity could have been sought to enhance the effect of the curse. But if neither *sk-wsht* nor members of his kin group are mentioned, he could have been regarded as an important patron whose potency could enhance the effectiveness of the execration figures.

Abdalla (1992: 110) states that many fragments of offering tables and false doors were visible in the space surrounding the memorial chapel of *sk-wsht*. He therefore

¹⁵⁹ The precise number of these figurines is not stated, but there are at least 12 (maybe 13) in Brussels and 12 fragments or groups of fragments in Cairo (Posener 1940: 20).

¹⁶⁰ A project is to be launched by the Royal Museums of Art and History in Brussels to publish these figurines (M. De Meyer, personal communication).

¹⁶¹ From similar texts it is known, for example, that nurses (*mnꜥt*) were often mentioned (Posener 2013: 138). This may be relevant for the memorial chapel of *sk-wsht*, as nurses are quite prominent in several of the stelae (see appendix 3.1.3, right side, 3rd register).

suggests, without further references to substantiate his claim, that this could have been an area consecrated to the commemoration of the dead by means of memorial chapels. Many objects and fragments that could have once been part of memorial chapels are mentioned in the original publication of the Teti cemeteries (Firth and Gunn 1926), and have been republished by Daoud (2005).¹⁶² However, the lack of recorded findspots for the majority of the material ‘owing to the greatly disturbed nature of the burials dealt with’ (Firth and Gunn 1926: 85), means that it is uncertain whether they had been originally deposited in a burial or a chapel similar to that of *sk-wšḥt* or were surface finds.

It is hard to determine how large an area of chapels with clusters of stelae there was in the Teti cemetery. The inscriptions on surface finds included in Daoud’s catalogue are in general highly formulaic and thus not distinctively commemorative or funerary; moreover, the distinction between those two types is not clear-cut (see section 3.4.2). Most inscriptions on stelae and offering tables focus on titles of the dedicatee, and thus on self-presentation. Stelae in Daoud’s corpus are generally similar to stela SqSt.1 from the memorial chapel of *sk-wšḥt* in phraseology and layout, and the name and titles of a person may be inscribed several times (e.g. Daoud 2005: 32–3, stela of *jj-m-ḥtp*). This style of self-presentation is comparable with that on the roughly contemporary Naga ed-Deir stelae (see section 3.4.2). While these often commemorated only one or two individuals, analysis has demonstrated that they were probably clustered into groups that may have embodied discrete social formations [Pl. 5.1]. This might also have been the case for the Saqqara material, although the lack of recorded provenance makes it impossible to ascertain.

Occasionally the name and titles of ego are complemented by phrases reminiscent of the ‘Abydos formula’ (Lichtheim 1988: 86–8, esp. n. 8; see also 129). The false door stela of *snt-n=j* is a good example: *ḥpj=s ḥr w3wt nfrwt jm3ḥt snt-n=j krs.tj=s m ḥrt-ntr smt jmntjt jm3ḥt snt-n=j*, ‘may she travel on the beautiful roads, the venerated one *snt-n=j*; may she be buried in the necropolis of the western necropolis, the venerated one *snt-n=j*’ (Daoud 2005: 70–1). References to Osiris and Khentimentiu, lord of Busiris and Abydos respectively, are common in Daoud’s corpus,¹⁶³ but this does not necessarily

¹⁶² A publication of surface material and minor burials from an area to the north of the mastaba of Ankhmahor and close to the memorial chapel of *sk-wšḥt* does not include any material that could be identified with possible memorial chapels. The few remains from before the 18th dynasty do not include any false door or offering table fragments (Sowada, Callaghan, and Bentley 1999: 41–2, 51–5).

¹⁶³ One of many possible examples is the stela of *njt-ḥtp*: *ḥtp dj nsw wsjr nb ddw ḥntj-jmntjw nb 3bdw prt-ḥrw n jm3ḥw njt-ḥtp*, ‘an offering that the king gives, and Osiris, lord of Busiris, Khentimentiu, lord of Abydos, an invocation offering for the venerable one *njt-ḥtp*’ (Daoud 2005: 21).

identify the site as a northern counterpart to Abydos, as Abdalla suggests (1992: 110–1). Moreover, there is no evidence to affirm that Saqqara was a place of pilgrimage before the Late Period (Volkhine 1998).

Since the memorial chapel of *sk-wsht* was discovered by Firth and yet not mentioned in the excavation publication, it is possible that other similar structures were equally disregarded. Quibell (1907: 2) briefly mentioned a row of Herakleopolitan chapels, with false door stelae and offering tables, to the east of Teti's pyramid and adjacent to an Old Kingdom mastaba. He did not elaborate on the find or refer to any associated burial pits or shafts, but excavation photographs reveal similarities in distribution and layout with the memorial chapel of *sk-wsht* (Quibell 1907: pl. v, ix; see also plan on pl. ii).¹⁶⁴ Simpson (1972b: 8) refers to these clusters of false-door stelae and offering tables adjacent to or embedded into Old Kingdom mastaba tombs as stela-chapels and mentions that they were relatively common at south Saqqara in the First Intermediate Period.

This area of Saqqara was a major focus of votive activity in the First Intermediate Period and the Middle Kingdom (e.g. Legros 2009–2010), for reasons that are not clear. Daoud (2005: 8) has suggested that the popularity of local 'saints' such as *gmnj* or *jpjj* may have stimulated the area's development as a preferred place of burial, and this could have encouraged votive activity, as in Elephantine surrounding the figure of Heqaib. It could be argued, in comparison, that *sk-wsht* was considered as a kind of local 'saint' or 'patron' in whose memory objects would be dedicated, but such an interpretation disregards the power of kin ties. Alongside a cult of patrons, there was a reverence for ancestors, as demonstrated by the explicit dedication of offering tables by *s3-htjw-jpjj* to his forefathers (*jtww*) in SqOf.4, whose titles he supplies in SqOf.1 although they do not appear on their own monuments. The reference in the former inscription to offering festivals (see appendix 3.1.9, top line) suggests that there may have been regular occasions when this chapel would be visited. Its location close to the enclosure of the Teti pyramid is evocative [**Pl. 15.2**], and one could easily envisage a route to the necropolis during festivals in which this chapel could have welcomed visitors approaching the necropolis from the east, toward which its entrance faces, or it could have been the last stop for those strolling down the 'Rue de tombeaux' from the north to the south.

¹⁶⁴ A third possible example of similar votive activity in a First Intermediate Period necropolis could be Kom el Fakhry in the town site of Memphis, where a row of false door stelae and offering tables is found against the wall of an older mastaba (Jeffreys 1985: 68, pl. 19; Daoud 2005: 9–10, pl. v). A direct relationship of these objects with nearby burial pits is uncertain, because a mudbrick wall stands between them.

This case study contrasts with the ones that follow in that the archaeological location of the chapel is known, rendering it possible to study the relationship between memory and landscape. Although the individual stelae associated with the chapel do not exhibit a high degree of integration with the landscape – in contrast with many stelae from Abydos that explicitly mention different areas of the necropolis – the chapel as a whole embodies the assimilation of a kin group with their environment. They decide to be commemorated together close to the pyramid of Teti, in whose cult they may have been involved, and later generations of the same kin group choose to be buried in the vicinity of the chapel. Here, the memory of a kin group survived for several generations, and a connection with the landscape facilitated remembrance and relatedness.

One cannot know what specific influence the chapel of *sk-wsht* had on *s3-htḥr-jpjj*'s ideas of kinship because little information about the latter's household is available. Nevertheless, *s3-htḥr-jpjj* evidently linked himself to his ancestors. By commissioning an offering table and setting it up in their memorial chapel he probably both honoured them, and wished to be identified as a member of that group. Thus, this illustrates an active construction of kin relations: even if *s3-htḥr-jpjj*'s connection with *sk-wsht* was fictional, it was actualised and made real through display. In addition, it confirms that while some of these false door stelae may represent what is understood as a nuclear family in anthropological terms, a proper contextualisation of the material sets it in relation to extended groups.

4.4 The Abydos chapel of *jj-hr-nfṛt*

The chapel group of *jj-hr-nfṛt* comprises at least eleven stelae that were set up under Senusret III or Amenemhet III (on chronological problems, see Simpson 1972a: 52–3). This case study contrasts with the previous one in various ways. First, a large number of objects belonged to this chapel, and this may be indicative of the status of ego. Second, it cannot be linked to any specific place in Abydos, because its provenance was not recorded. Thus, the chapel has been entirely reconstructed based on evidence from the stelae. Third, it features a much more extended group than that of *sk-wsht* with many people related in a variety of ways. These points are explored in this section, while an analysis of the cluster and its inscriptions can be found in appendix 3.2.

It is complicated to postulate a possible physical reconstruction of the memorial chapel when none of the objects of ANOC 1 was found in situ, and may not have been set up together in a single chapel. The relationships analysed in this thesis inform us about

kin groups in social terms – hence the use of the abbreviation KG rather than Simpson’s ANOC in this thesis on some occasions (see section 5.4) – and do not address the archaeological expression of those groups. This chapter, however, deals with such physical (or symbolic) spaces where performative practices to foster remembrance may have taken place, and hence the concept of chapels needs to be retained. While someone like *s3-stjt* may have been socially related to *jj-hr-nfrt* (see below), it cannot be determined whether they erected their monuments in the same chapel, in two adjacent chapels, or even in physically separate chapels. Thus ‘chapel’ as used in this chapter refers to a hypothetical reconstruction based on internal evidence, although in the case of *jj-hr-nfrt* (or *nfr-n3-jjj* in section 4.5 for that matter) those reconstructions are difficult to prove.

Even though its archaeological findspot is not certain *jj-hr-nfrt*’s chapel was undoubtedly at Abydos. Most stelae in this group were found in Abydos (exceptions are ANOC 1.9 and 1.10 which are unprovenanced). The inscriptional evidence supports this provenance, as references to festivals and geographical features of Abydos are common, exceeding any allusions to other places.¹⁶⁵ The inscription of *jj-hr-nfrt* specifically features *pkr* and *ndjt*;¹⁶⁶ while the former has been convincingly identified with Umm el Qaab (e.g. Leahy 1984: esp. 47–8; 1989: 57–9), the latter has not been located with certainty (Montet 1961: 104–5; Gomaà 1986: 214–5). Some individuals linked to this kin group were from elsewhere in Egypt. For example, *ppj* from ANOC 1.5 had a mastaba tomb in Lahun (see below), *s3-stjt* mentions on ANOC 1.9 that he came to Abydos with *jj-hr-nfrt* implying that he was based elsewhere (see appendix 3.2.9, lines 4.3–6), and *jj-hr-nfrt* may also have resided in the region of the capital in view of his proximity to the king (see appendix 3.2.1, line 3). Nevertheless, the description of the mysteries of Osiris in ANOC 1.1 and mentions of festivals on some of the other stelae root this kin group firmly in Abydos.

In summary, a group, including people who are clearly from other places in Egypt, is commemorated in one or more memorial chapels at Abydos. While they are not unique in this, as some other stelae that demonstrate people from all over Egypt had their stelae erected at Abydos (e.g. Volokhine 1998: esp. 72–5), the extent of the group makes their

¹⁶⁵ The allusions to Kush and related toponyms such as Tasety in ANOC 1.1 (appendix 3.2.1, line 4) and 1.9 (appendix 3.2.9, lines 4.6) do not necessarily indicate a geographical connection to Nubia. In contrast, it probably fits into the anti-Kushite propaganda of the time of Senusret III, whose quintessential example is the Semna stelae.

¹⁶⁶ Although identified by a place by some, others have interpreted *ndjt* as a ritual based on its meaning ‘place of striking down’ (Schott 1945). In any case, its relationship to Abydos is clear.

memorialisation exceptional. Not only the amount of stelae but also the sheer number of people represented and/or mentioned on some of them make this group one of the richest for the study of social relations.

The inscription on the stela ANOC 1.1 of *jj-hr-nfrrt* is one of the most widely translated texts in Middle Egyptian, but not much is known about *jj-hr-nfrrt* himself. A long string of his titles is preserved in one of his monuments (appendix 3.2.1, line 2). Among other administrative titles *jj-hr-nfrrt* claims to be an overseer of the treasury (*m-r htmr*), which may seem striking given that most of the tasks mentioned in the narration on the stela are related to a partly secret celebration: his performance of actions deemed essential for a proper unfolding of the mysteries of Osiris as a commission of Senusret III. This festival is directly linked to the site of Abydos, where the tomb of 1st dynasty king Djer was identified with that of Osiris at least since the Middle Kingdom (Leahy 1989: 56–7). Most of the stages of this ritual were restricted to initiates of the cult (Lichtheim 1988: 100, n. 4 with further bibliography; Baines 1990).¹⁶⁷ The narrative on the stela begins with a royal commission for *jj-hr-nfrrt* to travel to Abydos to take part in the rituals in honour of Osiris. This indicated that the king trusted him, something that is stressed elsewhere in the inscription when the king mentions that he had known *jj-hr-nfrrt* since he was a young man (appendix 3.2.1, lines 3–9). Familiarity with the king is often emphasised in self-presentation texts alongside the character and personal qualities of ego, offering a nuanced view on the topos of the self-made man. This relationship is replicated for by *jj-hr-nfrrt* by his subordinates. The inscription then goes on to mention some stages of the festivals of Osiris such as the procession of Wepwawet (appendix 3.2.1, line 17), the battle against the enemies of Osiris (appendix 3.2.1, line 21), the adorning of the statue of Osiris (appendix 3.2.1, lines 15–6), and the preparation of the *nšmt*-barque (appendix 3.2.1, lines 19–20).

Although much of the interest in this stela has been driven by its references to the festivals of Osiris, ANOC 1 is also significant for the social implications of this group, as already noted by Schäfer (1904: 39–41) and Leprohon (1978). *jj-hr-nfrrt*'s is the most complex of all the kin groups explored in this thesis for the quantity of associated artefacts. ANOC 1 features at least eleven stelae,¹⁶⁸ while the next largest groups have only around six stelae, statues and/or offering tables (e.g. ANOC 50 and ANOC V in

¹⁶⁷ The celebrations included some processions in which those setting up a stela along the wadi wanted to participate forever, so not all parts of the mysteries of Osiris were concealed and secret.

¹⁶⁸ Berlev (see appendix 1) suggested that one of the stelae proposed by Simpson should be excluded from this group, and this indicates how difficult it is to determine the identity of ego in many instances.

appendix 1). In addition, some stelae in ANOC 1 relate in turn to further objects that extend the ramifications of the group. For example, ANOC 1.5 may be linked to a mastaba in Lahun and some statue fragments from that same site (Petrie, Brunton, and Murray 1923: 26–8; Fischer 1982: 45).

The stelae associated with this chapel exhibit much variation. All but ANOC 1.11 are round-topped,¹⁶⁹ but their layout and style differs greatly. For example, the sunk relief figures in ANOC 1.9 contrast with the more detailed ones in ANOC 1.4. The quality of the carving also varies, with some pieces featuring beautifully worked hieroglyphs (e.g. ANOC 1.9 and ANOC 1.8) while others have roughly incised signs (e.g. ANOC 1.10, whose bottom line is not as carefully planned as may have been expected).¹⁷⁰ This lack of homogeneity may suggest that the chapel was constituted piecemeal over many years, or that its building was neither centralised nor undertaken by a single workshop. No details on the stelae points to their having been commissioned and fashioned elsewhere and then brought to Abydos, although the connection of one object with Lahun mentioned in the previous paragraph keeps this possibility open.

All artefacts attributed to this chapel are stelae. While stelae are relatively easier to assemble into reconstructed ANOC groups because they often include more genealogical information, the absence of offering tables or statues of such a large group is striking. Two of the associated stelae, namely ANOC 1.2 and 1.8, feature statuettes in a small niche carved onto the surface. Only fifteen examples of this type of stela have been identified to date (catalogue: Whelan 2007: 144–54); it may therefore be significant that two of them belong to the same kin group. The exact function of stelae with a statuette in a niche is not known. ANOC 1.2 belongs to *jj-hr-nfrr* while ANOC 1.8 is dedicated to *s3-stjt*, who is prominent on ANOC 1.7 and 1.9 but not mentioned on ANOC 1.2. Perhaps *s3-stjt* wanted to imitate *jj-hr-nfrr* by commissioning a stela similar to his, thus crystallising his subordinate relationship?

Most stelae in the group have numerous offering scenes, probably highlighting their commemorative character. The offering scenes could perhaps have served as an invitation to passers-by to follow their example, as it is stated in an appeal to the living on ANOC 1.5 (appendix 3.2.5, lines 1.1–8). This possibility fits with the function of these chapels

¹⁶⁹ The clear preference for round-topped stelae may be due to a desire to imitate the stela of *jj-hr-nfrr* who was, after all, the main person in this kin group, but round-topped stelae are common in the wider corpus of Abydene material anyway.

¹⁷⁰ In addition, stela CG 20435, which was considered part of the group by Simpson but rejected by Berlev (see n. 168 above) is largely unfinished, although the quality of the carving is remarkable.

not only to embody a constellation of social relationships but also to encourage the celebration and memorialisation of those groups.

These relationships are complex, but the primacy of *jj-hr-nfirt* is obvious on all the stelae. His main stela is larger than all the rest at 1 metre high, the closest stela in size being only about 70 centimetres high (ANOC 1.5). Four stelae in the group belong to him (ANOC 1.1 to 1.4), and he is mentioned on most of the other ones, arguably because his status and closeness to the king made an association with him desirable. These two features confirm that *jj-hr-nfirt* was probably regarded as a kind of patron whose area of social influence was embodied in his memorial chapel. Client-patron relationships were essential in many ancient societies (for Egypt, see e.g. Campagno 2006a; 2014), and collectiveness and group identity will have played a role in structuring them, since those societies in which collective values prevail tend to value memberships in diverse social frameworks (Eisenstadt and Roniger 1984: esp. 300).

Although Moreno García (2013: 91) argues that networks of patronage provide vertical integration, in contrast to the horizontal integration already catered for by families and neighbours, I believe that this distinction is not adequate for Egypt. Separation between ‘family’ and other social relations is complicated, especially since kin terms were also used metaphorically. Moreover, the sources given in appendix 2 demonstrate that the structuring of family groups was anything but ‘horizontal’: status and social prestige were pivotal to the organisation of kin groups. A separation between vertical and horizontal integration may have more to do with how families are understood in today’s Euroamerican contexts than in ancient Egypt.

Little genealogical information is known for *jj-hr-nfirt* despite the large number of monuments associated with him. He mentions his mother in his filiation (e.g. appendix 3.2.1, bottom register left) and two *s3* are represented on the bottom register of stela ANOC 1.1, although there is no indication that they were lineal descendants in a genealogical sense. Most people shown on the monuments on which *jj-hr-nfirt* is the ego are not categorised with a kin term, probably because these stelae may have been set up to commemorate a professional connection (Leprohon 1978). Thus, the logic behind their relationship goes beyond a narrow interpretation of kinship.

The person with the highest number of mentions after *jj-hr-nfirt* is *s3-stjt*; indeed, Simpson (1974b: 17) referred to ANOC 1 as the chapel of both *jj-hr-nfirt* and *s3-stjt*. Two stelae of the latter are known (ANOC 1.7 and 1.8), and he is mentioned and depicted in ANOC 1.1 and 1.9 (see appendix 3.2.12). Stela ANOC 1.7 includes over 25 of his

kinsmen together with about 15 captioned individuals for whom a kinship term is not given. Even though *s3-stjt* does not seem to be genealogically related to *jj-hr-nfirt* in this stela, he is captioned as *jj-hr-nfirt*'s *s3*, that is, descendant lineal in another (appendix 3.2.1, bottom register lower right 1). This usage is probably metaphorical, reflecting his relation of subordination to him (Moreno García 2013: 91; see also use of *jt* as head of the household in the papers of Heqanakht).

Another possible example of extended usage of kinship terms within the group of *jj-hr-nfirt* is that of *mnw-htp*. This man is shown performing offerings for *jj-hr-nfirt* on the bottom register of ANOC 1.1 together with a *s3-stjt*, although the latter is instead seated in a position of authority. On stela ANOC 1.6, *mnw-htp* mentions his father *snfrw* in his filiation, but he dedicates the monument to the memory of *jj-hr-nfirt*, referring to him as *jt*. He also states that the stela would be added to *jj-hr-nfirt*'s chapel (appendix 3.2.6, line 4). While Schäfer (1904: 39) suggested that *jj-hr-nfirt* might be *mnw-htp*'s adoptive father, their relationship could also be understood in terms of subordination, along similar lines to *s3-stjt*. This stela may be unfinished because 22 out of 24 people on the bottom part are not named, but the lack of captions might have been deliberate, underscoring the importance of their number and presence rather than their identity (see further section 4.5).

The emphasis on these relationships is a unifying thread for most stelae in this group, but I disagree with Leprohon's suggestion (1978: 38) that *jj-hr-nfirt* presents himself with work colleagues; I suggest rather that these people invested considerably to associate themselves with him because of his high standing and his close relationship to the king. These stelae bear witness to the flexibility of the ancient Egyptian kinship system, aspects of which could be adjusted to accommodate specific messages of authority and status, often through strategies of display. These relationships were probably not created from scratch and manipulated, but the actors chose to emphasise different aspects of their social role (Olabarria 2012: 892–3). In the case of ANOC 1.6, for example, *mnw-htp* is concerned to display an intimate relationship with *jj-hr-nfirt*, using a kinship term to convey the message.

How does this chapel fit into the model of memory presented at the beginning of this chapter? Because the chapel has not been located archaeologically, its rooting into the landscape is difficult to judge – although the inscriptions acknowledge the importance of Abydos. Moreover, the dimension of performance of memory is perhaps not as clear as in the other examples presented in this chapter. For example, offering tables were added to

the chapel of *sk-wsht* at a later stage (section 4.3), and in the case of *nfr-n3-jjj* (section 4.5) the appeal to the living was integral to the chapel. Although appeals to the living exist in ANOC 1 (e.g. appendix 3.2.5), these were not the only or the most important way in which stelae in this group stimulated social memory.

Remembering is something that one engages with actively in the context of the group. Thus, the group represented in these stelae constitutes a unit of remembrance, both in terms of people who remember and who are remembered together. Even though it might be argued that this desire for remembrance has been imposed on the material by the modern researcher and was not part of the original intention of the actors, a phrase in ANOC 1.9 demonstrates otherwise. On this stela, dedicated to a certain *jmnjj*, several lineal descendants born of different women are featured. Among these, *s3-stjt* takes a prominent role standing next to the table of offerings in the first register, although it is known from ANOC 1.7 that his father's name is *hpr-k3-r* and not *jmnjj* (see appendix 3.2.7, line 2.3). This situation may be like that outlined for *mnw-htp* above, with kin terms used in an extended sense to express a relation of subordination. Perhaps the most striking feature of ANOC 1.9 is the phrase attributed to *s3-stjt* in the bottom register (appendix 3.2.9, line 4). He states that he accompanied *jj-hr-nfrr* in his journey to Abydos to fashion a statue of Osiris, showing that he had some knowledge of the mysteries of Osiris and what was to be performed in them, knowledge that was highly prestigious. In addition, *s3-stjt* wished to commemorate this particular event. He stepped aside from traditional self-presentation inscriptions by discussing a particular event rather than favouring formulaic epithets and phrases in order to emphasise the importance of his achievement.¹⁷¹ The stela belongs in a traditional memorial chapel in which a blending of the group is sought after, but, at the same time, *s3-stjt* reaffirms his individuality and the uniqueness of his life story by leaving a token for remembrance in this stela, whose ego is actually someone else.¹⁷²

This brief narrative illustrates how memories are actively created and socially constructed. First, *s3-stjt* influenced the information provided for remembrance by incorporating an unusual statement into a traditionally formulated and laid out memorial stela. As argued in section 4.2, memory is not something that happens but something that one does, both by those who want to be remembered and by those who remember them.

¹⁷¹ On the slight conundrum indicated by this phrase and its articulation with the role of the king as presented on *jj-hr-nfrr*'s ANOC 1.1 stela, see Baines (2013: 252).

¹⁷² There is, however, a close parallel to this line in the tomb of Khui at Qubbet el-Hawa (Edel, Seyfried, and Vieler 2007: 466–9, fig. 1a; Diego Espinel 2011: 198; see further Baines 2013: 251–2).

Relatively few people may have had a direct experience of *s3-stjt*'s visit to Abydos, but recording it on a stela objectifies that memory and realises it (see section 3.3.4). ANOC 1.9 includes a short appeal to the living as well (appendix 3.2.9, lines 1.2–7), demonstrating that it aimed for interaction. Second, the rest of the stela does not give an explicit connection with *jj-hr-nfrt*, but this element at the bottom of the stela displays their relationship and gives it due importance.

Memories enact groups by displaying their connections for posterity and as seen in this case, they are sustained by those who see the monuments. In chapels that are perceived as foci of memory (see section 4.2.3), the kin ties presented on those stelae may be regarded as especially influential, but the audience addressed is uncertain because it is not known who had access to these chapels (see section 4.5 for a discussion on audience). As Baines (2006: 290) points out in relation to some large-scale festivals, much of their symbolic incorporation must have been exclusionary. Sources for popular participation in processions and rituals are indeed sparse. The fact that, although some chapels had their entrance walled in, a small window could be fitted presumably to allow for the witnessing of the procession by the dead (O'Connor 2009: 95) suggests that many people may have frequented this area of the necropolis [Pl. 9.1 and 10]. Even though these walls may have restricted access to the chapels, it is possible that the actual presence of the stelae and the groups they embodied was sufficient to ensure their perpetuation.

The implications of this case study are paradoxical. The group is the largest in the corpus, bringing together eleven monuments and a very large number of people, but it is difficult to interpret the material because not much biographical information can be obtained about the owner of the objects (from these objects or elsewhere) and it can neither be located with certainty within Abydos nor identified as a single or multiple chapel due to the lack of a recorded archaeological provenance. In any case, ANOC 1 is an example of the flexibility of the ancient Egyptian kinship system, in which social relations could be reformulated in different ways in different contexts in order to get a message across. This communication of kinship ideas through display is a fundamental element in Egyptian material culture, influencing and being influenced by the social structure.

The chapel of *jj-hr-nfrt* shows evident dissimilarities with that of *sk-wshyt*. The latter featured fewer people, and their relationships seem comparatively easier to assess. ANOC 1, in contrast, presents many people not necessarily connected by biological or affinal

kinship. The chapel of *sk-wsh*, with its added offering tables, offers more possibilities for speculation on reception, accessibility, and response to monuments. While reception must also have been important for the chapel of *jj-hr-nfrt*, known evidence does not explicitly address this aspect.

The chapel of *jj-hr-nfrt* shows how memory is constructed by members of the group. While other case studies, such as that of *nfr-n3-jjj* (see section 4.5) may give more information on reception and memory as perceived by the viewers, ANOC 1 raises the issue of how and why certain events and/or relationships are selected for remembrance. Social memory is situated in the group, which these monuments help to define and reshape. Is it possible to link a kin group like the one(s) connected to *jj-hr-nfrt* to the terms for kin groups analysed in chapter 2? Some of the key features that define a kin group are present in ANOC 1, primarily the subordination to a man who acts as the head of the group and the importance of commemoration. Issues of inheritance and to a certain extent of funerary duties are not evident from the stelae (although some offering scenes are present), but this may be due to the nature of the sources rather than to the characteristics of this kin group. The notion of *hnw* could fit a group that is acquired through one's life, in this case that of *jj-hr-nfrt*, and in which subordination is particularly relevant. Another possibility is *mhwt* in view of its emphasis on collaterality and its generalisation from the Middle Kingdom onwards. But groups are not static; perhaps this hypothetical *hnw* or *mhwt* could have become a different type of kin group at a later stage.¹⁷³

4.5 The Abydos chapel of *nfr-n3-jjj*

This chapel of *nfr-n3-jjj* (ANOC 44), was only assigned three stelae by Simpson (1974b: 20) and was dated to the mid-13th dynasty king Sobekhotep III on stylistic grounds. The kin group comprises one further stela (KG 44.5: Boeser 1909: no. 27, pl. xviii) and perhaps a statue that does not offer any genealogical information (KG 44.4: Vernus 1973b).¹⁷⁴ As in the previous case, it is uncertain whether all these stelae belonged to the same chapel, but they mention some of the same individuals. The stelae have no known archaeological context, making it difficult to assess their relationship with the landscape:

¹⁷³ As discussed in section 3.2.2, different types of sources, such as administrative texts, might offer a completely different picture of a kin group. The configuration of kin groups was flexible and, thus, it might have been presented differently depending on the medium in which it was being displayed.

¹⁷⁴ These are neither treated here in detail nor included in appendix 3.3 because this chapter deals with ANOC groups rather than kin groups; they are, however, mentioned as KG 44.4 or KG 44.5 in those cases in which they provide complementary information about the group.

although the inscription on ANOC 44.2 may hint a potential location (see below), a specific reconstruction of the chapel is impossible.

Simpson established that *nfr-n3-jjj* was the ego of this kin group on the basis of his prominence on stelae ANOC 44.1, 44.2 and 44.3. The lack of kin terms on most of the stelae in the group makes it hard to determine who ego might otherwise be. These three stelae are stylistically very similar: the faces, the beards, the slightly square shape of the hands, and their layout with two coloured bands at the bottom indicate that they may have been made in the same workshop. In addition, the lunettes of ANOC 44.1 and 44.2 are identical, with two recumbent jackals, two shen-rings, and figures of Min-Hor-Nakht and Ptah-Sokar-Osiris. Related stela KG 44.5, although similar overall, presents stylistic differences, such as the straightness of the seated figures in contrast to the slightly forward shoulders of the others, and has been convincingly considered by Grajetzki (2000: 165) as part of a larger group fashioned in a single workshop possibly under Sobekhotep III.

On the three stelae that include *nfr-n3-jjj*, he holds the title *jrj pdt*, ‘bowman’; on ANOC 44.3 he also bears the title *šms skr*, ‘follower of Sokar’ (appendix 3.3.3, line 1) . His most recurrent title, namely ‘bowman’, is a low-ranking military title that became more common from the late Middle Kingdom onwards (Awad 2004: 61, n. 3; Stefanović 2005: 75). Fischer (1996: 105) suggested that ‘follower of Sokar’ may indicate a close relationship with the local gods, and this may explain the depiction of Ptah-Sokar-Osiris in the lunette of ANOC 44.1 and 44.2. The social background of the rest of the people on the stelae seems to be varied. Some do not have a title (appendix 3.3.2, line 2.2), some hold a low-ranking one such as *šms*, ‘follower’ (appendix 3.3.1, line 3.2), while others have high-ranking ones such as *hmtj-bjtj* ‘royal seal-bearer’ (appendix 3.3.1, line 2.1). The titles do not seem to be linked to the same occupation. Although a few of them are supervisory positions in different areas, such as *m-r s3 n hrtjw-ntr*, ‘overseer of the phylae of stonemasons’ (appendix 3.3.2, line 2.4) or the *m-r mšꜥ wr* ‘great overseer of the troops’ (appendix 3.3.1, line 2.1), others are described simply as *ḥꜥ*, ‘attendant’ (appendix 3.3.1, line 2.1). The person depicted in the most salient position in ANOC 44.1 next to *nfr-n3-jjj* is not a high-ranking individual, like the overseer represented in the second register, but a nurse whose filiation is not given (appendix 3.3.1, line 1.2). KG 44.5 also presents a combination of high and low-ranking titles even though *nfr-n3-jjj* is not directly named in this monument. Thus, it is a challenge to decide what brought these people together to display their connections.

The three main stelae are relatively small, with *nfr-n3-jjj* showing a position of authority and four to six people depicted and named on the lower registers. Captions are consistently present, a pattern that contrasts with earlier stelae where several people may be mentioned but not depicted (e.g. see appendix 3.2.11). No one in the three stelae on which *nfr-n3-jjj* appears is classified with a kin term, a striking characteristic of this group. Stela KG 44.5 presents a similar layout, with just one kin term included in reference to ego's son *hrj* who also appears on ANOC 44.3.

The social unit represented in these stelae contrasts with the previous case studies, as kin relationships do not seem to be foregrounded. The filiation of *nfr-n3-jjj* is not given on any of his monuments, and no genealogical information can be reconstructed from his stelae (see appendix 3.3.4).¹⁷⁵ This could suggest that *nfr-n3-jjj* did not have a family, but the fact that he chose to be represented with a heterogeneous group of people probably indicates that these monuments were closer to networking tools such as KG 12.5 (appendix 4.1.5) in which relations are manipulated and reinterpreted in order to convey a message of status. Whether these groups are kin groups is open to debate, but I suggest that a relation of collaterality is being expressed by analogy with the use of the kin term *sn* in comparable stelae of the same period.

Most figures are depicted in relatively equal terms on the stelae: no relation of subordination among them is evident beyond the obvious primacy of ego – and, on ANOC 44.1, the nurse sitting opposite him in the first register. I have studied this ‘undifferentiatedness’ in late Middle Kingdom stelae elsewhere (Olabarria 2012: 890–3), concluding that beneath this ‘egalitarian’ appearance these stelae affirm the individuality of ego by reinforcing his, sometimes her, connections. This is often done by categorising all others as collaterals. Some scholars have regarded this tactic as a revalorisation of relations of collaterality (e.g. Grajetzki 2007; Nelson-Hurst 2010), but I see it rather as a new way of exalting the individuality of ego, characterising him as someone with a large social following.¹⁷⁶

In terms of display, the stelae of *nfr-n3-jjj* do not diverge much from other late Middle Kingdom examples of ‘egalitarian’ appearance; except in the absence of the term *sn*. However, this is also lacking on other stelae of the same period that feature a large

¹⁷⁵ Stefanović (2005: 80–1, no. 18; 2006: 172, no. 919) suggests that his mother is the lady of the house *hnwt / tjfj*, because these names occur on both ANOC 44.1 and 44.3, but this connection cannot be proved. Awad (2004: 64) avoids including *nfr-n3-jjj* in the genealogical reconstruction that he proposes for this group.

¹⁷⁶ For an example of this emphasis on ego through collaterals, see ANOC XXII.1 (CG 20722: Lange and Schäfer 1902c: pl. liv) [PL. 18].

number of people where kin terms are also conspicuously absent (e.g. ANOC 32.1: Simpson 1974b: pl. 50). The presumed aim of giving ego an outstanding position accompanied by people who seem not to be genealogically related is the same. The audiences for these monuments could probably identify those represented on them as collaterals of ego on the basis of a shared social knowledge even when explicit captions that would make that relationship unequivocal were lacking. A tradition of stelae like that outlined in section 3.4.1 could ensure that references which are elusive to us would have been self-evident to people socialised into this culture of display and the associated social memory. Collaterality, which in Egypt is a flexible, constructed relationship, is immediately recognisable in these stelae. To use the terms of Andrew Jones (2003: 69), this strategy could be regarded as a ‘technology of remembrance’ that would help materialise social memory on stelae.

Audience, which is a fundamental component of memorialisation, is especially relevant for this case study. Mentions of relationships among the people depicted on the stelae are absent, and this implies that knowledge on the part of the viewers would be essential to interpret the monuments and expected by those who commissioned them. It could be argued that ANOC 44 may represent a visual image of the community’s constructed reality, a rhetoric of images through which kinship trends are expressed (on rhetoric of image and of language: Hope 2000: esp. 186).

The audience is addressed in ANOC 44.2 in an elaborate appeal to the living. While the pictorial treatment exemplifies the rhetoric of images, the appeal uses the rhetoric of language – in this case through formulae – to propagate and sustain an image of society. The upper half of the stela features *nfr-n3-jjj* and the appeal carved in large hieroglyphs in eight lines, while the four people depicted in the lower registers have captions in smaller signs. The appeal to the living is thus the focus of the composition, and this is accentuated by the assertiveness of the text, which includes phrases such as *t3 n r3 3h n s3h nn nw m wrdt hr=s*, ‘the breath of the mouth is beneficial for the blessed one; one does not become tired from it’ (appendix 3.3.2, lines 1.5–6). Such phrases ask the viewer forcefully to engage with the monument, emphasising its performative aspect. The composition of the appeal is nonetheless highly formulaic, possibly seeking a connection with similar language found in elite sources.¹⁷⁷ The phrases just mentioned are those of the so-called ‘breath of the mouth’ formula, which is first attested in the Middle Kingdom

¹⁷⁷ I am grateful to Chiara Salvador for discussing this inscription and for making available to me the unpublished doctoral thesis of Steven Shubert (2007).

and became especially common from the 25th dynasty onwards. Vernus (1976) compiled Middle Kingdom instances of this formula, and related them to similar expressions of the reciprocity of good actions attested in didactic literature. The appeal to the living in ANOC 44.2 concludes with an affirmation of the good character of *nfr-n3-jjj*, similar to expressions in self-presentation texts, and reiterates the benefits to be gained by performing an invocation offering to his memory. Shubert (2007: 426) interprets the ‘breath of the mouth’ formula and the viewers’ apparent ability to recite invocation offerings as an assertion of cultural identity, an idea comparable with the concept of social memory that I adopt in this chapter.

A final element that links the viewer to the monument is that the inscription refers to the stela itself as *šps*. As suggested above (see section 4.2.3), this term may have been chosen to address and enhance the stela’s function and it was probably not related to the physical shape of the object. Interaction with an audience was a vital feature of *šps*-stelae, and they may have been erected close to processional routes in the ritual landscape of Abydos to maximise contact with passers-by.

The role of audience, mentioned several times in the thesis, deserves a more detailed consideration here. This is a complex topic, since information on who visited these places and when is lacking, but the area of votive chapels excavated by O’Connor (1979; 1985) offers a unique opportunity to propose a tentative reconstruction of an audience’s interaction with these monuments. The plan and excavation photographs give an idea of a fairly overfilled space, where small chapels would have been built filling the space available between larger ones [Pl. 9.1 and 11.1]. From the plan it seems that mostly all chapels could be reached, although some of them would only have been accessible through an intricate maze of winding paths (see small chapels between F5–1 and F5–8 in [Pl. 9.1]). The area could quickly have become overcrowded if chapels were visited exclusively on a number of propitious days, but this is often expected from cultic festivities of many ancient and modern cultures, and is meant to enhance the feeling of being part of a community.

Two types of chapels were documented by O’Connor (1985: 102), some single chambered and others being solid masses of brickwork. In addition, some chapels had a courtyard with a solid mudbrick structure, presumably for stelae [Pl. 9]. Snape (2011: 124) suggests that the existence of a courtyard is an indication that visitors were desired and expected. Some of these chapels were quite low, and stelae installed in them might only have been clearly visible when crouching or squatting [Pl. 11.2 and 12], which may

indicate a further layer of interaction with stelae, as one would not contemplate them by pure chance but rather actively seek them. The size of some signs or figures may have been noteworthy in cases of small stelae which could otherwise go unnoticed. Stela ANOC 44.2 of *nfr-n3-jjj* is relevant in this respect, as the signs carved in his appeal to the living are about three times larger than those featured in the captions in the bottom register.

These interactions underscore the performative aspect of memory in the sense of Connerton (1989: 39) that bodily practices – wandering around chapels, crouching to gain access to a stela, setting up a stela,¹⁷⁸ listening to a recitation of the inscription on a stela – contributed to the social formation of memory. In addition, I suggest that these practices may have been ingrained in the sensory experience of the landscape and it is, thus, necessary to take them into account to attempt a holistic reconstruction of the site. However, the possibility of these interactions being more aspired than actual should not be ruled out. Even if this were true, the fact the actors referred to a hypothetical engagement of the viewer with the monuments is still relevant, because such situation may have been mobilised and actualised by being inscribed on the monuments (see section 3.3.4).

An intention to create a space of memory can be identified in the expected audience's understanding of social relations presented by *nfr-n3-jjj*, the address to passers-by in the appeal to the living, and the choice of a term for the stela that is usually linked to the interactional and performative aspects of remembrance. These foci of memory – or 'memoscapes' (Landgráfová 2011: xxi–xxii, 287) – contribute to the construction of individual and social identities. Loci of memory such as the votive area of Abydos may be charged with a special ritual and sacred quality, and they can also be modelled through terminology like *mḥt* or *šps*. All the groups studied here are likely to have created spaces of memory, but these can be seen clearly only for *sk-wsht*, where a delineated location has been identified. In the case of ANOC 44, the use of *šps* and an elaborate appeal to the living show that those who commissioned the stelae may have sought to create a space of memory that could have been sustained by those whose actions were later prompted by its inscriptions.

This case study exemplifies features of memorialisation of kin groups in the late Middle Kingdom, contrasting in some ways with the other two case studies. The chapel

¹⁷⁸ See n. 99 above for a brief discussion on the importance of the phases of fashioning and setting up of the stela as a possible focus of social practices.

of *sk-wsh* has the uncommon advantage that its location and delineation can be identified archaeologically. The chapels of *jj-hr-nfrt* and *nfr-n3-jjj* are more typical in that their locations are unknown, so that strategies for creation of memorial spaces must be studied through inscriptional and pictorial evidence. For *nfr-n3-jjj* the elaborate appeal to the living may reinforce the desire to engage with an audience, and thus creating a space that is both physical and symbolic where an actor invites others to *perform* memory. In this sense, the chapel of *sk-wsh* exemplifies one possible result of such performance, because offering tables were added to the primary monument at a later stage, while the deposition of the execration figures would extend further the meaning of that space. For *nfr-n3-jjj* such evidence is lacking, but perhaps there are some traces beyond the archaeological record.

The absence of detailed genealogical information in all three groups is also worth noting, not least because trying to reconstruct family links has been a priority in the prosopographical study of these monuments. All three are sparing in references to family members. Stelae in the chapel of *sk-wsh* feature a restricted number of people, while those represented (or mentioned) on stelae of *jj-hr-nfrt* and *nfr-n3-jjj* are relatively difficult to link together because captions give few or no filiations.¹⁷⁹ This lack of information may demonstrate that social knowledge (or social memory, to follow Halbwachs) was needed to understand these stelae. In the case of ANOC 44, the absence of kin terms, whether used in genealogical or extended metaphorical senses, shows that the genealogical position of those people represented was not as relevant as the fact that they were present. To use the evidence of stelae as genealogical tools may say more about unexamined presuppositions than about the way these artefacts were conceived by the actors; they were not administrative documents with a recording purpose, but monuments devised for display (see section 3.3). Comparison with contemporary stelae shows that undifferentiated subordinates of ego are often labelled as *sn*. A very similar display strategy is followed for instance in ANOC 44.1, and despite the absence of kin terms in this case collaterality may have been presupposed. This example illustrates two aspects of memory: a group was being commemorated together by sharing one or more monuments, while relying on the knowledge or memory of the audience in order to interpret the relationships celebrated on them. Memory was both prompted by the actors and expected from the audience for a full realisation of the act of remembrance.

¹⁷⁹ In contrast, large genealogies are set out in monuments of other periods, especially in the Third Intermediate Period (e.g. Jansen-Winkel 2005; Payraudeau 2013).

Finally, this case study confirms the growing importance of identifying captions. ANOC 44 is a representative example of how, in the late Middle Kingdom, a captioned figure was often preferred to one without a caption (see appendix 4.1 for further examples in KG 12). The labelling of individual figures does not necessarily include identification of kin types, possibly because they were regarded as obvious. I have argued that a different conception of kinship in which collaterality was emphasised gained primacy in this period (see section 2.4). Examples such as ANOC 44 suggest that the idea of collaterality permeated stelae focused on display of status and authority even when collaterality was not explicitly mentioned. Perhaps images were enough to remind viewers that the monument they were contemplating forged and actualised the memory of a kin group.

4.6 Conclusions: constructing remembrance

In this chapter I have explored the role that memory played in weaving the ancient Egyptian social fabric. Monuments such as stelae and chapels created spaces of memory that contributed to perpetuating ideas of authority and status as well as kinship and marriage. I rely primarily on Halbwachs' conception of memory as a phenomenon mediated by society that is actively constructed and performed. Stelae, which constitute the core of my corpus, are commemorative monuments, so that contemporary ideas about the function of and reasoning behind memory must have affected how they were fashioned.

The three case studies presented above stress different aspects of memory that link to one or more of the theoretical approaches outlined in section 4.2. The chapel of *sk-wsh* allows an analysis based on the genealogy of place and the appropriation of symbolic space (McAnany 1995: 104–5). In the case of *jj-hr-nfrt* a particular event is commemorated by *s3-stjt* and this illustrates the active role of the commissioners in the construction of memory that was later performed and possibly reinterpreted by audiences. The *nfr-n3-jjj* group presents the possibility of a technology of remembrance that would enable the audience to identify several individuals as a kin group even without captions.

These case studies span the period between the First Intermediate Period and the late Middle Kingdom, sampling the use of commemorative stelae over a couple of centuries. Chapels vary considerably and these ones cannot be taken as archetypal, but they are at least indicative of general trends. In the First Intermediate Period, as seen with the Naga ed-Deir material explored in section 3.4.2, it was common to represent a limited number

of people on stelae, and this number increases over time. This may be more a change in display than in the significance of kin groups. Although concepts of kinship no doubt evolved (see section 2.4), it is difficult to pinpoint developments in the monumental record. The growing importance of display of collaterality does not mean it was not relevant before the Middle Kingdom.

Overall, the mechanisms of commemoration, namely Andrew Jones' technologies of remembrance, remain stable throughout this time. While in other cultures such technologies could include, for example, inhumation practices or manipulation of natural spaces, in Egypt display had primacy in the creation of memory among elites. This link between display, memory, and monumentality is explicit in the early Middle Kingdom inscription of Intef: *gm.n(=j) ḥwt-k3 nt jrj-p^ct nḥtj jkr w3s.t(j) jnbw jsw twt=s-nb ng n wnt wn sh3-st*, 'I found the ka-chapel of the noble *nḥtj*, the excellent one, being destroyed, (its) walls being old and all its statues being broken, and there was no one who would remember it' (Berlin 13272: Landgráfová 2011: 32–4).¹⁸⁰

Although inscriptional and pictorial display was a fundamental memorialising strategy in ancient Egypt, this could be achieved by other means. For example, sometimes presence would be more important, like in the case of statues enclosed in a serdab, or the walled-in chapels in Abydos mentioned above. A third dimension to be considered in this context is the performative aspects of memorial practices, which may also give cohesion to a group and contribute to the creation of places of memory. Display, presence, and possibly performance are often linked and explicitly articulated, as in ANOC 44.1 and 44.3, where the presence of certain people is more important than labelling their relationships, which is only implied by the way they are displayed.

In chapter 2 I argued that in the study of ancient Egyptian kinship and marriage an emic approach should be preferred and attempted where possible. A similar question may arise here: am I overemphasising the importance of memory in the Egyptian context? Can one affirm that these strategies of display and presence were used because memorialisation was sought, or should other options such as ritual associations be considered? While other purposes should not be ruled out, there is evidence to support an essential role of memory in Egyptian stelae and clusters of stelae.

¹⁸⁰ In the bottom of the same stela, Intef also refers to the reason why he may have rebuilt the ka-chapel of *nḥtj*: *jr.n(=j) nn mj ḳd n mrwt nfr rn(=j) tp t 3wn sh3(=j) nrf m ḥrt-ntr*, 'I did all this so that my name may be good on earth and so that the memory of me may be good in the necropolis'. Desire for remembrance is, therefore, a driving force for good conduct and virtuous acts.

The texts on several stelae state that the owner wishes to be remembered, even though the particular technologies of remembrance – the mechanisms through which those memories are created – are not directly addressed. For instance, after an appeal to the living that asks visitors to perform an invocation offering for the butler Ipi, the advantage of that act for ego is stated: *k3 dj=tn sh3(=j) nn smht=j*, ‘you will cause that I be remembered without my being forgotten’ (stela Liverpool M.13846: Gardiner and Sethe 1928: pl. xi; Shubert 2007: 108–9). Remembrance was not positive only for those who are evoked but rather mutually favourable. The Middle Kingdom stela of Mentuhotep, for example, describes the benefits that remembering ego’s name could have for the one who performs the invocation offering: *jr grt sh3tj.fj rn=j nfr wnn=j m šd=f r-gs ntr 3 nb pt r-gs ntr 3 nb 3bdw*, ‘as for the one who will remember my good name, I shall be his protector in the presence of the great god, lord of heaven in the presence of the great god, lord of Abydos’ (CG 20539: Lange and Schäfer 1902b: 150–8; 1902c: pls xli–xlii).

Some of the stock phrases that point at the importance of having one’s name remembered employ the verb *sh3*, ‘to remember’. Variations of the formula ‘it is my good name that you should remember’ are relatively common. Shubert (2007: 364) suggests that this expression may be associated with the rites of Osiris because viewers are sometimes asked to remember the deceased at some particular festivals of this god. Some attestations of these formulae are associated with Abydos chapels. In ANOC 31.1 the embedding in the ritual landscape of Abydos is vital: *rn=j pw nfr sh3=tn r r-pr n wsjr*, ‘it is my good name that you shall remember at the temple of Osiris’ (Durham 1932: Simpson 1974b: pl. 48; Shubert 2007: 185). The site is thus a stage for memorialisation, and the festivals of Osiris and the proximity to his temple are regarded as potent complements to the perpetuation of memory by invoking offerings. The content and purpose of this formula is similar to that of the so-called vivification formula (*dj=f rn=f sʿnh*), which is attested from the First Intermediate Period onward, becoming ubiquitous in the later Middle Kingdom (Nelson-Hurst 2010: 13). An explicit example of how this formula would work is ANOC 5.3, in the first two lines of which ego declares: *jh dd srw sw3tj.sn jh dj=sn n=j 3h ʿnh=j m t3 n dd rmt sʿnh=sn rn=j*, ‘may the officials who will pass by speak, may they give me power that I may live from the breath that people give, that they may make my name live’ (British Museum EA 562: Simpson 1974b: pl. 12).

The name should be remembered (e.g. Vernus 1982a), and these formulae on stelae mobilise them to prompt that memory. Here, the inscriptions point at the performative side of technologies of remembrance: repeated utterance of a name was sought in order to

perpetuate one's memory. This illustrates, again, Connerton's conceptualisation of a memory that is anchored in iterative performance and it is ultimately done – that is, it does not simply happen – through embodied experience.

Although these formulae may suggest that remembrance of the group was disregarded in favour of the individual, the fact that kin groups are present and displayed indicates that they too were subject to remembrance even if this was not explicitly addressed in the inscriptions. This may be because while ego asked passers-by to contribute to keeping his memory alive, and this included his relationship with his kin group, it was he who had to mention his kinsmen on his stelae in order for his self-presentation to be complete. A phrase on stela Durham N.1942 states the desire to mention as many relatives as possible: *rh.n=j hm.n=j sh3.n=j smh.n=j b3kt b3k s-nb n h3w(=j?) pr jt(=j) pr mwt(=j) hnmsw=j rmt=j-nbt*, '(those whom) I know, (those whom) I do not know, (those whom) I remember, (those whom) I forget, female workers, male workers, every man of (my?) h3w (of?) the house of (my) father and the house of (my) mother, my friends, all my people' (see appendix 2.2.19 and 2.3.7). By including everyone he remembers and forgets, ego presents himself as someone with a large entourage, ultimately reinforcing the power of memory: when people are remembered (and those forgotten are mentioned) they remain present and thus continue to exist **[Pl. 17]**.

In this chapter I have taken chapels as foci of memory, because stelae should not be regarded as minimal units. Stelae always related to other forms of display that indicated a sense of belonging. Memorial chapels of different periods construct and/or materialise relationships that are perpetuated in the memory of contemporary visitors and of generations to come. The fact that some scholars still use Middle Kingdom stelae to determine how families *really* were constituted in ancient Egypt is testimony to the success of their strategy. In this sense chapels can be regarded as a microcosm of memory, since they make use of various technologies of remembrance on a small scale in order to sustain ideas that are fundamental in society at large, whether or not it changes over time. Kinship is not static and should never be regarded as such. A further question is how much of that flexibility and change can be observed in display on stelae and chapels; that is the main concern of the next chapter.

5 A dynamic approach to kin groups: koinographies and the developmental cycle of the kin group

‘A man who doesn’t spend time with his family can never be a real man’

The Godfather (1972)

5.1 Introduction

The preceding chapters have discussed what a family was, how it was displayed, and how it helped shape the social landscape of ancient Egypt. Ancient Egyptian kin groups were constructed and flexible entities, and an analysis of the sources shows that there were several ways of being related. With this approximate definition of the concept in mind, several types of kin studies may be undertaken. In other words, I have proposed what a kin group is, but now I want to explore what to do with that concept.

In this chapter I exploit the notion of kin group taking it as a minimal unit of analysis and examine its development over time, a process that I term koinography. Groups are necessarily depicted on monuments as static units, but as social products they were dynamic and flexible. This model for investigating the time factor in Middle Kingdom kin groups is based on the developmental cycle of domestic households originally proposed by Meyer Fortes (1970 [1949]). This approach is applied in three case studies and illustrated in the general trends presented at the end of the chapter.

5.2 *Koinographies*: kin groups as a basic unit of social analysis

Defining what a kin group is and how it functioned in a given society is not an easy task. My working definition, based on the way kinship is presented in the sources, has been discussed in the introduction to this thesis (see section 1.2.2), where I also propose the relevance of a group approach over one based on the individual, as traditionally preferred in Egyptology. In all the chapters of this thesis I have favoured a group approach, both in terms of people – kin groups rather than individuals – and monuments – chapels rather than stelae – and the reasons for adopting this model are elaborated upon in this section.

The last decade has seen an increase in analysis of the social phenomena in Egypt. Ranging from the diverging conceptions of Egypt as either a rather prescriptive or a more

flexible society (e.g. Kemp 2006: 241–4; Willems 2010: 93–4) to the elaboration of new models of analysis (e.g. Lehner 2000; Seidlmayer 2007; Baines 2009–2010; Fitzenreiter 2011), a variety of approaches has been attempted in order to try and shed new light onto social matters. For the Middle Kingdom in particular, analyses of social issues have taken root. In addition to the approaches just mentioned, others have been developed for this period in particular, such as investigating the supposed existence of a ‘middle class’ (e.g. Quirke 1991; Adams 2005; Richards 2005),¹⁸¹ or critical reassessment of the assumed ‘democratisation of the afterlife’ (e.g. Willems 2008; expanded in 2014; Smith 2009). As discussed in section 1.3, kinship studies have generally been centred around Middle Kingdom material (Robins 1979; Franke 1983a; Willems 1983; Lustig 1997a; Nelson-Hurst 2011; Lehmann 2012), although other periods have also been analysed (e.g. Whale 1989; Moreno García 2006; Campagno 2009a; Nelson-Hurst 2010).

One reason why social topics have been so much at the heart of Middle Kingdom studies is the wealth of data available. Textual, iconographic, and archaeological sources have been used and combined to try and build an improved image of Egyptian society. A comparable unifying approach is necessary for the study of stelae, which must take into account not only the inscriptions and pictorial compositions on the surface, but also the object’s archaeological context, where known.

Prosopography has long been a major approach to social studies for the Middle Kingdom in recent decades, and one in which stelae have played a pivotal role. In Egyptological practice, prosopography consists of collecting data about individuals in order to reconstruct their lives, especially their *cursus honorum*, and determine possible links with other individuals. The existence of several monuments that can be associated together and provide information about the same person has stimulated a wealth of publications of dossiers that assist the study of social networks in the Middle Kingdom (Franke 1984; Grajetzki 2000; 2001; Stefanović 2006; 2009; Grajetzki and Stefanović 2012). While such approaches are valuable for assessing transmission of titles or professional networks, their implications for the study of kinship can be questioned. The fragmentary state of the sources and restricted, inner-elite-oriented scope of the monuments in question (see Jurman 2012: 113), together with an overestimation of the autonomy of the individual by some researchers may undermine the value of traditional prosopography for kinship research.

¹⁸¹ This discussion is often related to the aforementioned view of Egypt as a prescriptive society (Grajetzki 2006: 141–2, esp. n. 8).

Since I argue that the potential of prosopography is limited, it is desirable to assess alternative group-centred methods of kinship analysis that could be applied to the sources. Kinship has traditionally been studied by ethnographers in living societies using participant observation. Given that this method is impossible for ancient cultures, attention should be turned to other possibilities.

Giorgio Ausenda (1999: 139) emphasises the fundamental role that legal codes can play in reconstructing kinship in no longer existing societies, but the absence of unambiguous evidence of a written legal code in Egypt from before the Late Period rules out this path (Lippert 2012: 3). Although some basic legal norms, such as those related to inheritance, could be theoretically reconstructed from information in administrative documents, reality is much more complex, since many such documents were probably drafted precisely in unusual circumstances. Administrative sources from the Middle Kingdom in general are scanty. Although some have been used successfully to investigate social issues (e.g. Kóthay 2001; Kemp 2006: 149–57; Ferhadjian 2008), it is difficult to extrapolate conclusions derived from them to the whole society. Indeed, most letters, wills, or household listings that are used to explore Middle Kingdom society come from the site of Lahun, which can hardly be regarded as a typical settlement.¹⁸² It was founded by Senusret II as a pyramid town, and the rigid structure of its houses testifies to its being a planned settlement [Pl. 1.1], in contrast with other towns like Elephantine that seem to have grown organically (Moreno García 2011b: 3).

A second approach has also gained prominence in social studies over the last decades: house societies (*sociétés à maison*). This model was first formulated by Lévi-Strauss to define Kwakiutl society; according to him, the main organisational principle of that society was the house rather than kinship. As Lévi-Strauss described it (1991: 435, my translation), a house is

‘1) a moral person, 2) holding an estate 3) consisting of material and immaterial wealth, which 4) perpetuates itself through transmission of its name, wealth and titles down a real or imaginary line, 5) held as legitimate on condition that this continuity can be rendered into the language of kinship, affinity, or, 6) most often, of both’.

The fact that Lévi-Strauss’ definition of house societies is not entirely precise – indeed, most societies could be analysed in terms of it – has led to a multiplicity of

¹⁸² The extent to which a planned settlement may be typical has been discussed in relation to Deir el-Medina. Some authors suggest that some particularities of the village could be projected onto a more general framework of Ramessid Egypt (e.g. Eyre 2009: 107, 116), but such a claim cannot be tested. The nuanced position of Loprieno (2006: 165–6), who sees Deir el-Medina as a social microcosm and argues that only methods employed to analyse it, but not the characteristics of the village itself, could be extended to the rest of the society, may be preferable.

characterisations. If it continues to be re-defined and expanded, the concept risks becoming devoid of meaning (González Ruibal 2006: 145).

This approach is popular among archaeologists who work on non-literate human groups (e.g. Kahn and Kirch 2004; González Ruibal 2006), as well as among those anthropologists who claim that kinship does not reflect socioeconomic behaviour reliably (e.g. Gillespie 2000a: 1).¹⁸³ The interpretations of the structure of house societies as a social mechanism to subvert kinship in response to tensions within houses are thought-provoking (Gillespie 2000b: 38; González Ruibal 2006: 145), because they imply that a sense of belonging to a kin group would be superseded by that of belonging to a house. However, I agree with Ensor's critique of the latter position (2011: esp. 212–4): a house approach does not need be regarded as a substitute for kinship theories but as complementary to them, because definitions of houses are often mediated by the understanding of kinship and marriage. Since I advocate a broad definition of kinship in which people who are not genealogically related may be part of the same kin group, the household will play an important role in the delimitation of kin groups.

Thus, the concept of the house can perhaps be regarded as a tool or, as Lévi-Strauss referred to it (1991: 436), a 'grille de lecture' that can be employed to solve apparent contradictions even in societies where the house model is not fully developed. In this sense, house societies are not so much an alternative approach, as one complementary to kinship studies: quite often the discourse of the house is about kinship (see points 5 and 6 of Lévi-Strauss' definition above; compare with Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995: 19).

In short, some of the most widely used approaches to ancient kinship cannot easily be applied to ancient Egypt with the currently available sources. On the one hand, the absence of legal codes and the scarcity of administrative texts prevent us from attempting Ausenda's method. On the other hand, Lévi-Strauss' house societies are more a complement than an alternative view. Here I propose a new method, which I term 'koinography', that expands the prosopographic approach by emphasising the role of groups of kin over that of individuals with the aim of exploring the dynamic component of kinship and the relational character of social constructions. The concept is based on the methodological achievements of prosopography, the limitations of which are discussed

¹⁸³ In the same vein, the case studies based on ethnographic observation and archaeological data, especially from Southeast Asia and Amazonia, collected by Carsten and Hugh-Jones in their edited volume on house societies (1995), highlight the properties of the house, which are linked to the way the body is understood.

above. These are addressed through two changes of perspective: the minimal unit of analysis and the introduction of time factor as part of an organic development.

The main difference between koinography and prosopography is that the minimal unit of analysis is not the individual but the group. This perspective has inspired the name of this model: I chose term koinography because the focus of my research is the group/community (κοινή in Classical Greek) rather than the person (πρόσωπον, which is the root of the term prosopography).¹⁸⁴ Wolfram Grajetzki (2009: 125–44) argues that the analysis of the role of the individual is the first step to comprehending larger social groupings, but I suggest that a study of kin groups as self-sufficient entities related to other kin groups in various ways should precede the analysis of the people who constitute those groups. A better understanding of groups within the social structure of the time should lead to a more profound and nuanced view of the role of the individual.¹⁸⁵ Thus, a group-centred approach, in which the whole kin group is taken as the minimal unit of study, is my preferred method of analysis, and I model such groups as holistic entities rather than as aggregates of individuals, as advocated by Marilyn Strathern’s work (1988: esp. 11–5) in her ‘redescription’ of Melanesian society (see further below).

The second change in perspective from prosopography to koinography is the emphasis on the diachronic dimension of the object of study. A kin group is a social phenomenon and, as such, it should not be regarded as static; however, kin groups and their interrelations from a dynamic perspective have not received enough attention. Prosopography certainly addresses time, since the accrual of status by holding successively higher titles is studied to evaluate the development of an individual in his career, and may play a role in discussions on chronology (e.g. Bennet 2006). However, in prosopographic studies time is often regarded as a series of individual moments (possibly influenced by the importance of appointments for the actors in Egyptian sources), and little attention is paid to the process that culminated in those status changes.¹⁸⁶ In contrast, I argue that an organic perspective in which birth, growth and decline are seen as integral parts of the development is preferable. I elaborate the theoretical background behind this idea and its implications further in section 5.3.

¹⁸⁴ I am grateful to Laura Miguélez-Cavero for discussions of the adequacy of this term.

¹⁸⁵ I do not disregard the individual, who is undoubtedly significant, but I try to avoid the individualistic bias to which these sources have occasionally been subjected.

¹⁸⁶ Some exceptions can be found in certain self-presentation texts focused on the career of ego, such as the late Old Kingdom inscription of Weni (Richards 2002). Diachronic change is generally easier to identify in inscriptions than in images, although the latter is also possible (see case studies below).

While these two models diverge in their conceptual approach, they share some concrete research strategies, but not always with the same outcomes. For example, whereas titles are analysed in prosopography to assess the progression of the individual in his *cursus honorum*, in koinography titles facilitate identification of individuals and sometimes also aid with the introduction of a diachronic dimension into the analysis (see case study in section 5.5). Prosopographical studies often use genealogical information to reconstruct long lines of ancestors holding the same or similar titles, notably for the Third Intermediate Period (e.g. Sheikholeslami 2009; Villar Gómez 2012).¹⁸⁷ Koinography also engages with genealogies, but it does not focus on a line of individuals and the title transmission within that line, but rather on the bilateral reconstruction of groups often taking the lines as a starting point because they are easier to isolate in the records.

Some methods are specific to koinography. First, the salience of the head of the group is almost always obvious, and represents both himself and the rest of the kin group: given that kin groups are taken as a minimal unit of analysis, this individual should be considered within the group to which he belongs. I argue that, as Strathern (1988: 13) suggested for Melanesia,¹⁸⁸ in ancient Egypt persons are conceived both individually and dividually, that is, their personhood involved many influences that include material culture and their own ‘substance’, which they could also share with and reproduce in other people. Conceptions of personhood and essence in ancient Egypt are complicated to assess. Strathern’s and others’ interpretations of Melanesian substance and the individual/dividual is based on extensive ethnography, and this is not possible for ancient Egypt, but perhaps a comparison may be attempted.¹⁸⁹ When, based on Egyptian sources, the kin group is taken as the minimal unit of analysis, Strathern’s words (1988: 14) may be relevant: ‘a group of men or a group of women will conceive of their individual members as replicating in singular form (“one man”, “one woman”) what they have created in collective form (“one men’s house”, “one matrilineage”)’. This notion lies at the heart of the koinographic approach, which does not oppose individual and society, seeing them as articulated and mutually dependant. Emphasis on the group counteracts and complements the bias towards the individual.

¹⁸⁷ Some cases from the late Old Kingdom are also known, for example the rock inscriptions with genealogical lists of the priests of Elkab that span up to six generations (Limme 2000; Vandekerckhove and Müller-Wollermann 2001: 291–3, 307–8, e.g. inscription O74 with six generations in pl. 146a).

¹⁸⁸ Although she acknowledges that the concept was initially formulated by Marriott for Southern India (Strathern 1988: 358–9, n. 7).

¹⁸⁹ Rune Nyord’s (e.g. 2009; 2012) work on personhood from a phenomenological perspective could provide incredibly valuable points of departure in this respect, but he is concerned with conceptions of the body rather than with social relationships and kinship.

Second, and directly related to the first methodological guideline, individual connections, whether with the head of a group or with any other person(s), are understood as relationships between kin groups as a whole. Thus, when someone is mentioned on a stela belonging to a different kin group, I interpret this as constituting a link between kin groups rather than between an individual and a kin group. This is a theoretical position based on the understanding of the individual as part of a compound. His (or her) representation on a stela can be taken as a *pars pro toto* in the sense that the individual embodies the group to whom he or she belongs.

Third, koinography recognises that different social realities could be represented simultaneously. Multiple versions of the individual could be addressed in Egyptian monuments. Different emic kin groupings existed in ancient Egypt, and a few of these may be represented at the same time on a stela. For example, a combination of ego-centred and ancestor-centred groups may be displayed, as suggested for some stelae featuring the *smjt*-formula (see section 2.3.2).

In this chapter I test koinography as it applies to kin display, but sources such as *wpwt*-lists and other administrative documents could be addressed from a dynamic and group perspective as well (see below). The importance of time in the self-presentation of groups and individuals has been overlooked as First Intermediate Period and Middle Kingdom autobiographies usually ignore ego's early years, focusing instead on his mature career and on his idealised conduct behaviour (Seidlmayer 2009: 49–50). However, some examples describe the early years of an individual vividly, notably in connection with fosterage at the royal court (Kubisch 2008: 46–51). Highly formulaic self-presentation inscriptions, while definitely important for group approach as well, need to be taken with caution as they are modes of display more than 'biographical' accounts as we understand them (i.e. describing successive stage of one's life). The preceding chapters paved the way for an interpretation of how display *works* in ancient Egypt, and in studying this issue, I focus mainly on kin group display – images, captions, and inscriptions – in order to investigate 'life histories' of those kin groups.

These four points are illustrative procedures that can be adapted to the individual characteristics of the sources. Koinography is intended as a flexible model to investigate social structure from a group perspective. Yet it is necessary to be aware of the type of group that is being studied. Here, the working definition of kin group presented in section 1.2.2, which is based essentially on ancient Egyptian sources, forms a point of departure. In my definition kin groups are taken as polythetic categories that include several emic

classifications. Therefore, all possible emic types of kin group should be included in the koinographic approach, making it less selective than a focus on just one particular type of kin group such as *mhw*t, or *h3w*, especially since these would be difficult to identify in the record in any case.

Beside the relevance of the group as a unit of analysis, koinography explores the diachronic aspect of kinship and marriage, as well as the interaction of kin groups. This essential dimension of the koinographic approach might be especially difficult to pinpoint in kin groups displayed on stelae, which are sometimes viewed by researchers as fossilised representations of everlasting moments. They might well be: some may even have been devised as being indifferent to time, and in any case they present the perspective of one kin group (or more) in a given moment in time. However, when brought together they may assemble a more complete picture of the kin group's diachronicity even in those cases in which they were probably not meant to do that. Groups are human entities that should be investigated in a dynamic framework. The way in which monuments and other sources adapt to and embody those changing circumstances deserves further exploration.

5.3 Dynamising kin groups: theoretical framework

The working definition of kin groups proposed in the introduction is fundamentally a heuristic tool to approach social studies. Although the traits associated with that definition may serve to describe a group as a bounded system at a given moment and in isolation, kinship as a whole does not fit with a static model. Dynamic changes play an essential role both in synchronic interaction among kin groups and in diachronic variation. Kinship, as a multifaceted and complex social phenomenon, should not be seen as linear and deterministic, but might better be contemplated in light of a model based on unpredictability such as chaos theory.

Complex systems are composed of so many variables that a minimal alteration in any one of them could lead to unanticipated results, an aspect known as the 'butterfly effect' (after Lorenz 1972; for its application in Egyptology: Walsem 1997). The human actors in the kinship system, are prone to introducing changes that contribute towards this unpredictability. Chaos theory is thus intrinsically dynamic and responsive to the variable 'time', and that is why it may be regarded an appropriate tool for assessing kinship.

Despite its importance, time was traditionally neglected in the study of kin groups, because ethnography did not normally concentrate on diachronic description. An

important scholar to identify the relevance of time was the anthropologist Meyer Fortes in a study of the Ashanti (1970 [1949]). This article inspired later efforts to incorporate time into the analysis of social structure (e.g. Gray and Gulliver 1964; Netting, Wilk, and Arnould 1984; Robertson 1991), including a collective volume about the developmental cycle in domestic groups with an introduction by Fortes himself (Goody 1958). This illuminating work has stimulated my own research and provides the theoretical basis of my method.¹⁹⁰

As Fortes put it (1970 [1949]: 7), ‘each domestic group comes into being, grows and expands, and finally dissolves’. Analysis of this developmental cycle explores the implications of the time factor in a living and, thus, changing social system in which human actors intervene. Fortes describes this developmental cycle thus (1958: 2):

‘The domestic group goes through a cycle of development analogous to the growth cycle of a living organism. The group as a unit retains the same form, but its members, and the activities which unite them, go through a regular sequence of changes during the cycle which culminates in the dissolution of the original unit and its replacement by one or more units of the same kind’

Although a model based on an organic analogy may be regarded as simplistic – and even as teleological, as there is no reason to assume that a group may find the need to develop and expand – ethnographies indicate that variations of this model may be found in many societies (e.g. Goody 1958). In addition, the development that this model assumes is not linear or fixed. For example, some groups may experience several developmental peaks, and this indicates that the comparison with an organism is only a convenient metaphor, and not an axiomatic principle.

This model is potentially fruitful because it allows for a multiplicity of approaches. First, it operates on two mutually dependent layers at the same time: the individual and the group, the developmental cycle of the former being intertwined with that of the latter. For example, the type of residence may be determined by the age of the people dwelling in a particular household. In societies with avunculocal patterns of residence, children usually reside with their parents until they come of age,¹⁹¹ when they move to their mother’s brother’s household. In the Ashanti case presented by Fortes (1970 [1949]: 24–6), the domestic structure is also determined by processes of social maturation, since older women tend to change their place of residence from patrilocal to matrilocal, so that

¹⁹⁰ Some of the principles postulated by Fortes have been superseded. For example, the heterosexual conjugal unit should not be regarded as the only possible nucleus of the developmental group (Fortes 1958: 8; see also Pine 2010: 278–80). Moreover, the boundaries between stages of the individual’s and the kin group’s life may also be less sharp than Fortes assumed.

¹⁹¹ These transitional situations are usually marked by the celebration of rites of passage.

general definitions that do not take into account the passage of time cannot capture all relevant features.

The composition of a household in pharaonic Egypt was affected by time, as it is possible to explore through the *wpwt*-lists of members of the household from Lahun (Kóthay 2001: esp. 352–63; Kemp 2006: 219, 221 with fig. 79) [Pl. 1.2]. The three surviving texts illustrate how Hori founded a household with his wife and son (Collier and Quirke 2004: 112–3). In a later document, Hori’s mother and five sisters were added to the initial members of the household (Collier and Quirke 2004: 114–5), presumably because his father Djehuti had died and Hori had to take care of his female kin. The latest preserved document referring to this household presents Hori’s son as the head of the household, perhaps after his father’s death. At this point, only three of Hori’s five sisters were still living with them, suggesting that two of them may have married and moved to their husbands’ household or to a newly established one, or died (Collier and Quirke 2004: 110–1).¹⁹²

Second, a static approach does not account for interaction of the macro and micro levels of the system, with which chaos theory is especially concerned. From this perspective, domestic groups are not fixed units but are composed of shifting, intermingling sub-groups whose function changes throughout the developmental cycle. In this manner, this model makes it possible to zoom in and out, as if social groups were being examined with a microscope, or as if it were studying the trees while not losing sight of the forest. In addition to this, the interaction of sub-groups within the system can also be assessed. The late Old Kingdom letter to the dead known as the Cairo Linen, for example, could recount an acrimonious fission of the household, since it implies that after the death of the head of the family some people whose precise connection with the deceased is not stated are founding a new household or incorporating the deceased’s into a larger one in which the deceased’s son would be in a subordinate position. The wife rebukes: *jn wn.n jb=k kbh r=s mrj(=j) jnj=k n=k wn ʕ3 r-gs=k m33 s3=k hr s3 jssjj*, ‘will your heart be calm about this? I want that you bring the one who is here to your side rather than to see your son subject to the son of Isesi’ (Gardiner and Sethe 1928: pls i–ia,

¹⁹² The analysis of demographic information derived from census documents of Graeco-Roman times and its comparison with contracts of sale and the evolving patterns of houses in the archaeological record also yield significant results (Nevett 2011: esp. 24). Recently published censal material from Deir el-Medina suggests that this approach may also be possible for pharaonic Egypt (Demarée and Valbelle 2011). For a discussion of documents and lists that describe the natural waxing and waning of kin groups in Deir el-Medina, see McDowell (1999: 51).

cols 8–9; Wente 1990: 211, no. 340; further to this text, see section 2.3.11 and appendix 2.2.2).

Third, reciprocal relations among domestic groups can also be productively evaluated, since the time factor is taken into consideration for each of them both separately and jointly, so that diverse times and developmental rhythms are recognised for different coexisting units. The three phases of development postulated by Fortes (1958: 4–5) become prominent here, since a domestic group in its initial stages may try to find support by aligning itself with other newly-formed ones on equal terms. Lehner (2000: esp. 308) describes the mechanisms of household expansion from an economic point of view, later remarking that ‘the default or bankruptcy of one household must have lent to the increase of another which subsumed its resources’ (2000: 334). Conversely, a mature group might stand in a privileged position or ally with other high-ranking kin groups. An expression of this intermingling with other kin groups in order to obtain specific benefits and prosper might be that of the Middle Kingdom nomarchs of Beni Hasan.¹⁹³ The autobiographical inscription of Khnumhotep II in tomb 3 emphasises the status of his mother, Baqet: ‘my mother proceeded to (the rank of) *jrjt-p^ct ḥ3jt-^c* as daughter of the ruler of the Oryx Nome [...] to become the wife of the *jrj-p^ct ḥ3tj-^c* [...] Neheri, justified, lord of veneration’ (Urk. vii 28, 15–9). In the text, Khnumhotep II states that he inherited directly from his mother’s father a title that he received from his mother’s brother instead, while also saying that the king sanctioned his title because he was the son of a *ḥ3tj-^c* (Urk. vii 29, 3–5; Lloyd 1992: esp. 28). His statements may give us an idea of the complexity inherent in succession and inheritance claims. In addition, such arranged marriages between high-ranking houses illustrate the importance of interaction between kin groups, as in any society. In this case, the inheritance of Khnumhotep II relates to the 16th nome, while a place called Merneferet, possibly located in the 17th nome, is mentioned in connection with the burial place of his father. As Lloyd (1992: 27–8) noted, the marriage of Neheri and Baqet may have created or sustained connections between the leading families of the 16th and 17th nomes.

However productive this model may seem, problems of definition remain. What was a domestic group in the ancient Egyptian context? Fortes (1958: 2) defined domestic groups vaguely as workshops of social reproduction, adding that the nature of the

¹⁹³ This example is outside the social range mainly treated in this thesis, but it is included here because it is illustrative of relationships among households.

domestic group must be assessed for every society that is studied.¹⁹⁴ In this thesis I use a broader concept of domestic group than the household unit, preferring the flexible definition of kin groups presented in section 1.2.2. I do not pursue Fortes' structural-functional concerns, focusing rather on the reciprocal interactions among kin groups and their implications in the Egyptian social context.

5.4 The sources: ANOC groups, kin groups, and workshops

Some Egyptian sources are well-suited to analysis from a dynamic perspective. The preceding section illustrates the theoretical model with a variety of sources of the First Intermediate Period and Middle Kingdom, ranging from administrative documents to self-presentation inscriptions in tombs. I now address how this dynamisation of kinship links can be applied to stelae and chapels, which constitute the core of the material corpus employed in this thesis. As discussed earlier, the abundance of these stelae is partly the reason why the Middle Kingdom has received most attention in kinship studies by Egyptologists (Robins 1979; Franke 1983a; Willems 1983; Lustig 1993), providing foundational work that is not available for other periods. However, the diachronic aspects of these monuments and their potential for studying the developmental cycle of kin groups have hardly been assessed. The introduction to koinography as a research model in section 5.2 presented the principles of this approach and how they may be applied to kin display in particular, but the way in which stelae and chapels may be adapted to this model deserves further attention.

Middle Kingdom stelae from Abydos should not be taken in isolation. Only when regarded in conjunction with other monuments and the wider landscape is their full potential for reconstructing kin groups revealed. Here it is important to differentiate between the kin groups depicted and/or referred to as social units on stelae and other artefacts on the one hand, and the archaeological assemblage of monuments that may provide that information on the other hand. This is the fundamental distinction between kin groups and ANOC groups.

Kin groups represent social units that may or may not be associated with monuments. Of necessity I focus on how kin groups are represented and displayed on stelae, so the

¹⁹⁴ Later authors emphasised that this theory refers exclusively to residential groups (Barnard and Good 1984: 84–5; Stone 2006: 17–8). I argue elsewhere in this thesis that boundaries between cohabiting and non-cohabiting groups are blurred for ancient Egypt; thus, I do not take co-residence as a prerequisite for the application of this model.

two are inextricably linked in my discussions, although in principle kin groups are related but not equated to material culture. Being displayed together can be considered a trait of kin groups (see section 1.2.2), and display sometimes may have contributed to consolidating and reaffirming those groups (see section 3.3.4). Because display is an important parameter in the identification of kin groups, it may then be difficult to draw a line between kin group and ANOC group.

ANOC ('Abydos North Offering Chapel') groups are assemblages of artefacts – stelae, statues, blocks, and/or offering tables – devised by Simpson (1974b: 1–16) for the votive area of Abydos. The groups were brought together on the basis of internal evidence, such as filiations or common titles. Those links are tentative, as recognised by Simpson himself,¹⁹⁵ in that they point to an archaeological context (i.e. those chapels) that is now completely lost, although O'Connor (1985; see also Simpson 1995) excavated probably comparable areas in 1979 [Pl. 8 and 9.1]. ANOC groups are thus hypothetical reconstructions of foci of memory (see section 4.2.3), since their function was to commemorate together, and in connection with the festivals of Osiris, certain groups of people many of whom formed kin groups. By definition, these ANOC groups include only material from Abydos, and this may be limiting if the ultimate aim is to reconstruct families as Simpson hoped (1974b: 13). Indeed, some of the kin groups represented on stelae and chapels from the site are attested on archaeological material from elsewhere in Egypt (see sections 5.5 and 5.6). While ANOC material may provide a detailed picture of commemoration at Abydos, for a characterisation of kin groups it often needs to be complemented with sources from other sites.

Besides kin groups and ANOC groups, a third categorisation into which the materials in the corpus have been traditionally cast is that of workshops (e.g. Freed 1996; Marée 1993; 2010b). According to Freed (1996: 298), a stela workshop should consist of 'three or more stelae sharing distinctive aspects of composition or style which collectively set them apart from others'. This approach is based on the compilation of 'artistic dossiers' that take into account distinctive stylistic, epigraphic, and technical features shared by several monuments with obvious chronological implications. Prosopographic information is often used to validate links (Marée 2010b: 241), but it is not the main concern of this method. Workshop analysis is in some respects complementary to koinographies – especially since it may provide dating tools based on observable traits that can be used to

¹⁹⁵ 'For convenience, it is assumed that two or more objects of the same man or family were originally incorporated into the same architectural unit' (Simpson 1974b: 14; original emphasis).

check postulated relationships among kin groups – but it cannot substitute it. The aim of this approach is to identify stylistic features from which to derive broader, sometimes socio-political, conclusions,¹⁹⁶ while the major aim of koinography is to attempt a reconstruction of social groups. It is of lesser importance whether these koinographies relate to political situations, although sometimes some conclusions may be inferred (see sections 2.4 and 3.5).

These three approaches are often applied to the same corpus, and their results may overlap. For example, a kin group and an ANOC group might be identical so far as can be ascertained from the sources. Although they differ in their main object of study – the reconstruction of kin groups, ANOC groups, and workshops respectively – the methods employed are rather similar, and this commonality could lead to unfounded assumptions, such as that stela workshops are the material expression of family groups.

In order to forestall such problems, I attempt to specify the different types of groups accurately, and this is especially important for the present chapter, where the reconstruction of a kin group from a dynamic perspective is intertwined with the understanding of ANOC groups and workshops. Appendix 1 is an updated version of Simpson's original ANOC list with additions by other authors and some comments on chronology; it remains an ANOC list, however, because it includes exclusively material that comes from or has been attributed to Abydos. In this chapter I speak about *kin groups* (abbreviated to KG) instead and consider material from elsewhere in Egypt as long as it can be connected to people commemorated at Abydos. My classification uses the group numbers of the ANOC list of appendix 1, with the acronym KG signifying that it is kin groups and not ANOC groups that are the focus.

Although stelae seem to depict a group of people in static form, that is, at a fixed point in time and few show clear signs of having been redesigned, it is possible to identify diachronic trends when several monuments are analysed together. This may be especially obvious where an archaeological context is known, as with the successive stages of additions to the chapel of *sk-wsht* in section 4.3, which gives an idea of monument use over time and may point to the consolidation or decline of kin groups. Because most material from Abydos is decontextualized, hints to diachronicity must be sought on stela groups themselves. The workshop approach is valuable in helping to give a precise date for stelae and so determine whether or not the same individual is shown on

¹⁹⁶ In some cases, a workshop approach may even help calibrate the duration of the reigns of some 13th dynasty kings (Marée 2010b: 261–77).

more than one stela. When other archaeological markers are missing, it is necessary to rely on stylistic, epigraphic, and prosopographic features to achieve an approximate dating of the monuments.

A trait that hints towards a diachronic development is the acquisition of higher titles; it is axiomatic that an ego would prefer to present himself with the highest available title at any given point. Thus, when he is attested with different titles, it is assumed that the monument on which the most prestigious one is mentioned must be more recent than the others. When this happens, titles cannot easily be used to identify people – although those higher titles are usually just more prominent versions of the lower ones, such as in the case study presented in section 5.7 – and ego must be recognised by filiations and accompanying people.¹⁹⁷

In conclusion, although the sources used for koinographic analysis do not address diachronicity explicitly as self-presentation inscriptions sometimes do, it is possible to obtain information on the development of kin groups and on their composition from them. This method is illustrated by three case studies in which kin groups at the beginning, peak, and decline of their developmental cycle are presented. While each example is unique, the techniques employed to extract relevant information from stelae may be applied to other instances (see section 5.8).

5.5 Theory into practice: the beginnings of development with KG 12

My first case study to test the potential of the developmental cycle model is KG 12, which includes several people related in a variety of ways, and possibly different kin groups being commemorated together. The group has been dated to a time from the reign of Neferhotep I to Sobekhotep IV on the basis of a related stela from Elephantine (see appendix 4.1.5) that features some people who may have served under Neferhotep I (Habachi 1980: 52; Franke 1993: esp. 69–71).

¹⁹⁷ Filiation formulae, especially of the Middle Kingdom, have received attention from a number of authors (Berlev 1962; Rosati Castellucci 1980; Satzinger 1987b; Obsomer 1993; Verbovsek 2004; Postel 2009). Changes in formulae have been seen as proof of changes in the social fabric, but one must be careful with such conclusions. The name of the mother was usually provided in Middle Kingdom filiation formulae, but that is a convention, not evidence for a matrilineal society, since filiation to the father with the formula ‘F s3 S’ is also widespread in the Middle Kingdom. Moreover, different filiation methods could be combined, as in the biographical inscription of Khnumhotep II in Beni Hasan: *nḥrj s3 ḥnmw-ḥtp m3^c-ḥrw jr.n s3t ḥ3tj-^c nbt pr b3kt m3^ct-ḥrw* (Urk. vii 25, 18). For a more detailed discussion of maternal filiation in Middle Kingdom stelae, see Olabarria (2010: 69).

Simpson (1974b: 18) identified three objects as part of this ANOC group: CGC 20039 (KG 12.1), CGC 20309 (KG 12.2) and Leiden AP 42 (KG 12.3). KG 12.1 and KG 12.2 are clearly related: they are stylistically very similar, and even their layouts could be seen as complementary (see appendix 4.1.1 and 4.1.2). They are probably not stelae, but wall block fragments that may have been set up in a mastaba or a memorial chapel. As Simpson (1974b: 23) proposed, KG 12.2 could have been the central part of a composition, with KG 12.1 and a missing block as side pieces. KG 12.2 is a square block with two registers featuring ego ($jw=f-n-r=sn$) performing the offering ritual for his father ($sh\dot{t}p-jb$) who is seated in the right part of the register; the name and title of ego's father's father ($jj-jb-r=f$) are mentioned in the filiation of ego's father. The same layout is found in the lower register, where ego's son ($nhjj-rdj$) is performing the offering ritual for ego. KG 12.1 is a rectangular block divided into two registers in which five daughters and two sons ($nhjj-rdj$ and $sh\dot{t}p-jb$) of ego are represented together with his wife and father.

Every person mentioned on the objects is easily identifiable within the kin group because detailed filiations are given. This fact may suggest that these blocks were tightly connected with the commemoration of the kin group as a bounded unit rather than with the display of links with other groups. Four generations of the same family are presented on these blocks and it should be noted that $jw=f-n-r=sn$ ('overseer of the guild of draftsmen', $m-r \ 3tw \ n \ sh \ kdw\dot{t}$), his father ('commander of draftsmen', $tsw \ n \ sh \ kdw\dot{t}$), and his grandfather ('draftsman', $sh \ kdw\dot{t}$) held similar titles,¹⁹⁸ so that the heads of the family continued in the same occupation through at least three generations. Shifts in their titles indicate that they acquired better positions over time. These blocks may provide a synchronic description of a kin group, who are 'fixed in time' in the representation (see above), while diachronicity is hinted at by the different titles. Whether some missing blocks presented a more dynamic vision cannot be known.

KG 12.3 is a much smaller and less finely carved double-sided stela, which Simpson (1974b: 23) suggested may have been set up in a courtyard of a chapel at Abydos. However, there is no reason to think that this stela was erected in relation to the blocks, since its analysis indicates that it may have belonged to an altogether different kin group. The person who had the stela made ($snb=f-n$) and the woman to whom it was also dedicated ($sddj-w3$) do not appear on KG 12.1 or KG 12.2. This suggests that two or more groups may have been connected through the people mentioned in the lowest register of

¹⁹⁸ See titles in Ward (1982: nos 117, 1596, 1444 respectively). No title of any of the sons of $jw=f-n-r=sn$ is attested.

the Leiden stela (*jnj-ꜥdwt* and *jw=f-n-r=sn*). These are the only people on the stela whose filiation is not stated (see appendix 4.1.3, lines 2.1–2), suggesting that they were outside the main kin group; the stela could therefore come from a different chapel from KG 12.1 and KG 12.2.

Franke (1984: no. 45) identified two further stelae associated with ANOC group 12. The first is British Museum EA 242 (KG 12.4), of unknown provenance and showing a dozen individuals without filiation. The second stela is from the shrine of Heqaib on Elephantine island (KG 12.5) and now probably kept in the Aswan Museum (see appendix 4.1.5, note 44).

KG 12.4 is difficult to interpret in relation to the other objects because all people appearing on it (apart from *jnj-ꜥdwt* and *jw=f-n-r=sn*) are otherwise unknown. These two people, who are depicted in its lowest register (appendix 4.1.4, lines 4.1–2), supply the link with KG 12.1 and KG 12.2, as well as with KG 12.3, where they are also shown in the bottom register.

Two features should be noted. First, while most of the people mentioned and/or depicted on KG 12.4 lack an explicit filiation,¹⁹⁹ the names of the mothers of *jnj-ꜥdwt* and *jw=f-n-r=sn* (*jkj* and *snb* respectively) are recorded, a feature that sets them apart from most of the people shown on the stela. This could indicate that both of them belonged to a kin group unrelated to the main group on the stela. However, filiation of the most significant people (dedicator and dedicatee) is usually recorded on other monuments, such as KG 12.3, where the filiation of *jnj-ꜥdwt* and *jw=f-n-r=sn* is omitted. In that case, filiation may emphasise membership of a kin group. In contrast, KG 12.4 may combine different kin groups with various patterns of inclusion, with filiation used not only to express the membership to a group but also to highlight the salience of certain persons on the monument.

Second, the titles of *jnj-ꜥdwt* and *jw=f-n-r=sn* on KG 12.4 are different from those they hold on other monuments on which they appear. While their titles on the other monuments in this case study are ‘overseer of the guild of sculptors’ (*m-r 3tw n kstjw*) and ‘overseer of the guild of draftsmen’ (*m-r 3tw n sh kdw*) respectively,²⁰⁰ on KG 12.4

¹⁹⁹ Sixteen people are mentioned on this stela, but only six of them are depicted. In the first register the owner of the stela (*s3-rrwt*) is seated in front of a laden offering table. Two women and one man are represented kneeling with a hand to the chest in the second register; *jnj-ꜥdwt* and *jw=f-n-r=sn* appear in the same pose in the fourth and last register, after a register with nine columns of text. The filiation of five people is given (*s3-rrwt*, *jnj-ꜥdwt* and *jw=f-n-r=sn* together with other two people who are only mentioned).

²⁰⁰ See Ward (1982: nos 118, 117).

they are ‘sculptor’ (*kstjw*) and ‘draftsman’ (*sh ḳdwt*).²⁰¹ Given that there seems to have been enough space for them to carve the longer titles and that they are among the few people depicted on the stela (and, thus, somehow in a privilege position), it is unlikely that they would use a less prestigious title unless they did not possess a higher one. This may indicate that this object was fashioned in an earlier stage of their careers when they held lower-ranking titles. The title ‘overseer of the guild’, referring to supervision over skilled workers, became more common in the late Middle Kingdom (Quirke 2004b: 75; 2003: esp. 93). Thus, *jnj-ḥdwt* and *jw=f-n-r=sn* seem to have been colleagues who probably belonged to different kin groups, a type of association that is known from other sources (e.g. BM EA 844: Quirke 2003: 97), and were promoted after having worked together from early in their careers. KG 12.1 and KG 12.2, the blocks on which *jw=f-n-r=sn* is more prominent, were completed once he had become an overseer of the guild of draftsmen. In this instance, the succession of titles may demonstrate the impact of time on kin groups, although this result cannot be taken very far because KG 12.4 does not provide any additional members of this kin group.

The representation of these two people in the bottom area of the stela, together with the meaning of their titles, suggests that they may have been involved in its creation.²⁰² This object is dedicated to two distinct groups of people: some of very high status and some household workers. A ‘deputy of the overseer of the treasury’ (*jdñw n m-r ḥtmtj*) and two ‘majordomos of the palace’ (*hrj-pr n pr-ḥ*) appear on the stela. The former is seated beside an offering table, while one of the ‘majordomos’ is depicted and the other is only mentioned in the first column of the third register.²⁰³ However, the bottom half of the stela gives names of household servants of a lower status, including a ‘brewer’ (*ḥfj*), a ‘baker’ (*ḳfnj*), a ‘cultivator’ (*ḥwtj*) and a ‘keeper of products’ (*jrj ḥnkjtt*), who are mentioned but not depicted.²⁰⁴ These workers without indicated filiations could have

²⁰¹ See Ward (1982: nos 1561, 1444). The tasks performed by *kstjw* and *sh ḳdwt* are related, since the former does the carving after the latter has made the preliminary drawing; the latter may also need to redraw after the carving (Gardiner 1947: vol. I, 71*). See also Baines (2007 [1994]: 305–9) and Stefanović (2012).

²⁰² Leprohon (1978: 36) considered this possibility, suggesting that craftsmen might lower their fees if they were permitted to inscribe their names on the stela. This, however, may be a too economically oriented perspective, and other factors such as social closeness or shared place of origin could have been as important.

²⁰³ For ‘deputy of the overseer of the treasury’, see Ward (1982: no. 576) and Quirke (2004b: 49–50). For ‘majordomo of the palace’ see Ward (1982: nos 983 and perhaps 993) and Quirke (2004b: 47). The former title refers to a position that Quirke (1990: 75) includes in ‘ranking-block 2’ on the basis of the commodities supplied to its holder in Papyrus Boulaq S17–18. The latter refers to someone who is a servant of the palace.

²⁰⁴ See Ward (1982: nos 73, 1542, 627, 531).

commissioned this stela in order to be commemorated together with the high-ranking individuals whom they served, their mentioning might have been a favour from the stela owner, or their presence may have been judged essential for the depiction of a complete household. In any case, the connection of *jnj-ꜥdwt* and *jw=f-n-r=sn* – who receive a special treatment by being depicted rather than just mentioned – with high-ranking officials might have had something to do with their promotion, since the titles they exhibit on this monument are of lower status than those in subsequent ones.

The last stela that Franke related to KG 12 was retrieved in 1946 from the sanctuary of Heqaib at Elephantine Island (KG 12.5: Habachi 1985: 73, no. 47). The chamberlain and controller of the works *hꜥ-k3w-rꜥ-snb* is shown in the uppermost register of both faces of this beautifully carved sandstone stela.²⁰⁵ In the second register of what Habachi termed the recto are four kneeling men, among whom are *jnj-ꜥdwt* and *jw=f-n-r=sn*. The name of *jnj-ꜥdwt* is barely legible, but he is probably the same person as on KG 12.3 and KG 12.4 because he is associated with *jw=f-n-r=sn* and holds the same title as the *jnj-ꜥdwt* of KG 12.3. The titles of these men are given, but not their filiation (see appendix 4.1.5, recto, lines 2.2 and 2.4).

The purpose of this stela may be different from those analysed so far, since several people are presented on their own without an offering formula, as noted by Franke (1993: 145). KG 12.5 was erected in the sanctuary of Heqaib, a site that is fundamental for the analysis of Middle Kingdom social networks. Pepinakht Heqaib was an expedition leader who lived under Pepi II and was ‘deified’ sometime after his death. His cult originated in the Old Kingdom,²⁰⁶ but the earliest known associated statue belonged to the 11th dynasty king Wahankh Antef I (Habachi 1977: 1121). The sanctuary, referred to as a ‘ka-chapel’, was rebuilt by Sarenput I in the name of Senusret I (Habachi 1985: 38–9, pl. 25, lines 12–4). From that point until it fell into disuse during the Second Intermediate Period, it was the locus of offerings from a local community that can be reconstructed through the more than a hundred objects recovered that had been deposited in honour of Heqaib (Habachi 1985: 164; Franke 1993; Moreno García 2010: 140).

It should be asked why *jnj-ꜥdwt* and *jw=f-n-r=sn* were depicted in connection with *hꜥ-k3w-rꜥ-snb* in the sanctuary of Heqaib. The owner of the stela is shown commemorating high-ranking officials, including the *h3tj-ꜥ* and overseer of priests *hnmw-htp* son of *hꜥ-*

²⁰⁵ This man should not be confused with *hꜥ-k3w-rꜥ-snb*, son of *stjyt-htp*, who built a chapel in the sanctuary of Heqaib at the end of the 12th dynasty (Habachi 1985: 55–60).

²⁰⁶ The area in front of the tombs of Pepinakht and his son Sabni in Qubbet el-Hawa may have been used for the celebration of Heqaib’s cult before the sanctuary was built (Habachi 1977: 1122).

k3w,²⁰⁷ the great overseer of the estate *nhjj*, and the scribe of the hall of offerings *hpr-k3*. No relative of *h^c-k3w-r^c-snb* is represented or mentioned, and this fact led Habachi (1980: 53) to suggest that the stela was dedicated to the friends of the owner.

This possibility is suggestive but problematic to prove. It seems unlikely that individuals holding such disparate titles would be brought together on the same monument simply because *h^c-k3w-r^c-snb* wanted it; in my view, networking may have prevailed over friendship, although the two are not mutually exclusive. These group representations, as postulated in section 3.3.4, may serve to commemorate a group as part of a social matrix, but they may also have contributed actively to constituting that same social matrix.²⁰⁸ In addition, no kin terms are present on this stela, and this may support my view of this stela as a networking tool: they may have attempted to actualise those networks by displaying them.

Four of these stelae probably come from Abydos,²⁰⁹ while KG 12.5 was found in Elephantine. Whereas Abydos was a national centre of cultic and ritual importance, the sanctuary of Heqaib was significant primarily at a local level.²¹⁰ It is difficult to establish people's place of origin, and, where possible, one should not rely exclusively on personal names, but the name of the wife of *iw=f-n-r=sn* gives an important clue. This woman is called *wsr-tnj*, as mentioned in appendix 4.1.1, line 1.2, and her name is an explicit reference to *tnj*, an alternative name of Heqaib attested since the time of Sarenput I onward (Franke 1993: 140; 2002; Franke and Marée 2013: 107–12, pls 23 and 24). Whether *jnj-^cdwt* and *iw=f-n-r=sn* were originally from the Aswan area (and devotees of Heqaib) or they had other kinds of relation with *h^c-k3w-r^c-snb* is unknown, but at least one of them had a clear connection with Elephantine. In any case, both sites – Elephantine and Abydos – should be taken into account in analysing these kin groups.

Franke (1993: 115) considered that *jnj-^cdwt* and *iw=f-n-r=sn* were royal craftsmen from the Residence who were active in several workshops. Quirke (2003: 96–7; see also Jay 2010: 74–5) agrees with Franke's view and suggests that teams of artists were sent to local centres to contribute to royal projects. Although these two people may have

²⁰⁷ *h^c-k3w* is possibly an abbreviated version of the name *h^c-k3w-r^c-snb*. Franke (1993: 45) postulated on chronological reasons that this is probably *h^c-k3w-r^c-snb* son of *stjyt-htp*, the builder of a chapel in the sanctuary (see n. 24); otherwise, *h^c-k3w* could have been the successor of *h^c-k3w-r^c-snb*.

²⁰⁸ A similar idea is suggested by Hans-Hubertus Münch (2009: 252) for creation of networks in the Old Kingdom. I am grateful to him for providing me with a copy of his unpublished DPhil thesis.

²⁰⁹ Only KG 12.1 and KG 12.2 have a secure provenance, but KG 12.3 and KG 12.4 have been attributed to Abydos on the basis of the mentioning of Abydene gods such as Osiris and Wepwawet.

²¹⁰ Although officials who were passing through may have contributed to the sanctuary with some monuments (Franke 1993), the scope of this site seems to remain fairly regional in comparison to Abydos.

collaborated in the same commissions and their tasks may have been complementary, there is no indication that they worked for the king or that the projects they undertook were royal; no king is mentioned in any of the stelae and their titles do not include references to the palace. KG 12.3, KG 12.4 and KG 12.5 have some features in common, such as the carving of some figures *en creux* (sunk figures without relief and no internal detail). This technique, however, is found on many other stelae and it is not unique to this period.²¹¹ KG 12.1 and KG 12.2 show a distinctive style, which differs from that of the other stelae, and may have been carefully designed by their draftsman owner,²¹² perhaps in order to graphically reaffirm the unity and distinctiveness of this kin group. Aesthetic motivations should not be ruled out either and, in any case, they could also be complementary to the intention of displaying the steadfastness of the group.

The relationship between these objects can be viewed in terms of kin group promotion and networking. The craftsmen *jnj-ꜥdwt* and *jw=f-n-r=sn* seem not to have belonged to the same kin group. The former is not mentioned on the blocks from Abydos, and his mother's name is not shared by any woman in the kin group of *jw=f-n-r=sn*. This suggests that *jnj-ꜥdwt* was not a lineal or collateral relative, but he could have been an affine. These objects may thus attest to a close collaboration between two kin groups in order to prosper and become more influential in their social context. The position of the kin group of *jnj-ꜥdwt* is open to speculation, since no other known sources feature this individual. The other kin group (that of *jw=f-n-r=sn*) seems to have risen in status over a couple of generations, because the titles held by the heads of the group show progression towards higher-ranking titles.²¹³ Thus, stelae of this kin group together give a basic sense of the diachronic perspective inherent in the developmental cycle of this kin group through the analysis of 'static' sources.

The synchronic interaction of kin groups is also accessible to a certain extent. On the one hand, the kin groups of *jnj-ꜥdwt* and *jw=f-n-r=sn* intermingled and may have cooperated on equal terms, since the scale and extent of their representations in the stelae

²¹¹ For example, Freed (1996: 317–8) attributed 'silhouette' figures of this type, sometimes combined with raised relief, to her 'incised false door' workshop, which could be dated to the first half of the reign of Senusret I. Her work and that of Marcel Marée (e.g. 2009; 2010b) provide invaluable resources for the understanding of Middle Kingdom workshops (see section 5.4).

²¹² Some details such as the braiding of the girls in KG 12.1 demonstrate a high level of craftsmanship.

²¹³ See n. 198 above. It is unlikely but not impossible that *jw=f-n-r=sn* invented the titles that his ancestors held; there are examples of autobiographical texts where the true origins of an individual are suppressed in order to stress his own personal merit, such as the case of Weni (Richards 2002: 90), who exemplifies the tension between praising one's ancestors and being better than them that recurs throughout Egyptian history (see section 2.3.11).

of other kin groups are very similar. On the other hand, the prominence of some titles shows that some of the other kin groups mentioned together with them were highly ranked (especially those of KG 12.4 and KG 12.5). This suggests that the two men had connections in disparate contexts, probably due to networking, which they used to reaffirm the position of their own kin groups and to assert their own influence. Thus, high-ranking kin groups attract other lesser groups that may benefit from being displayed close to them, but the latter are always presented in a position of subordination to the former.

5.6 KG 28a and the summit of the developmental cycle

While the previous group exemplifies how some kin groups emphasise their relations with others in order to accrue status, other stelae show that groups at the peak of their developmental cycle may not need to refer to other kin groups to affirm their influence. The example that I present here also illustrates how Simpson's ANOC list may be revised not only by adding new related objects but also by emending existing groups.

ANOC group 28 consists of stelae CGC 20549 and CGC 20580 (Simpson 1974b: 19). People shown on these monuments bore similar names or variations thereof that point towards a common origin in the area of Qaw el-Kebir (Simpson 1974b: 23; Wegner 2010: 449, n. 19). However, it was first noted by Berlev (1976: 325) and later confirmed by Franke (1983a: 21; 1984: 14) that these stelae belong to two different families.²¹⁴ These objects do not stand in isolation, but each can be related to a wider range of material, including statues and tombs. Thus, ANOC group 28 should be divided into two distinct groups, which I term 28a and 28b (see appendix 1).

In this section I deal with KG 28a, which includes CGC 20549 (KG 28a.1), CGC 20431 (KG 28a.2), CGC 20245 (KG 28a.3), Turin Suppl. 4281 (KG 28a.4), Berlin 21822 (KG 28a.5), and a wooden statue fragment from Qaw el-Kebir (KG 28a.6, location unknown; see appendix 4.2).²¹⁵ These objects have been dated to the end of the 12th

²¹⁴ Lange and Schäfer (1902b: 177, n. 1) first proposed that these objects belonged to members of the same family. In an analysis of these and other stelae, Wegner holds that CGC 20549 and CGC 20580 feature the same man (2010: esp. 441–4, 456, fig. 6; he does not mention Berlev's or Franke's treatments in his discussion). Both stelae are dedicated to *w3ḥ-k3*, husband of *ḥtpwj*, but the father's names are different in each case (*w3ḥ-k3-m-wsḥt* in the former and *ḥnw* in the latter), a fact that leads me to accept Berlev's and Franke's interpretation.

²¹⁵ Franke (1984: no. 484) suggested that CGC 20704 could be related to these objects (Lange and Schäfer 1902b: 331; 1902c: pl. liii), but the evidence to substantiate this claim is not conclusive. An overseer of sculptors *s-n-wsrt*, son of *s3t-ḥwt-ḥr* is mentioned in CGC 20704, while an overseer of sculptors *s-n-wsrt*

dynasty or beginning of the 13th (Franke 1984: nos 196, 197, 198, 202, 484). I suggest a date close to the reign of Amenemhet III, because some objects were found in association with material contemporary with Wahka II, who probably served under that king (Steckeweh 1936: 48–9; alternative dating of nomarchs: Grajetzki 1997: 62; Melandri 2011).

KG 28a.1 is a rectangular stela with a torus moulding dedicated to the overseer of the estate *w3h-k3* (ego), son of *hṭpwj* and husband of another woman named *hṭpwj*, and his father the retainer *w3h-k3-m-wsht*, son of *mwṭjj*. The first register features ego (on the left) and ego's father (on the right) flanking a laden offering table with their respective wives standing behind them. Variations of the names *w3h-k3* and *hṭpwj* indicate that this family was closely linked to Qaw el-Kebir (Wegner 2010: 449, n. 19 with references). Nevertheless, a connection with Abydos, and in particular with the South Abydos settlement of Wah-sut (a town originally built to accommodate workers who catered for the funerary complex of Senusret III) could be postulated on the basis of seal impressions studied by Wegner and his team. An incomplete impression seems to name an overseer of the estate *w3h-k3* (Wegner 2010: 455, fig. 5).²¹⁶ Another feature that suggests a link with Qaw el-Kebir is the use of an offering formula mentioning the local nomarch, Wahka in this case but Ibu in other instances, in the position where names of gods normally occur (Steckeweh 1936: 9).²¹⁷ This quasi-deification of the nomarch is further evidenced by the use of the name *w3h-k3-m-wsht*; which follows a pattern is usually constructed with names of deities (Vernus 1982c: esp. 335). The mention of the nomarch instead confirms his elevated position.

Ego's mother stands in the second register, together with four men labelled as *sn*, that is, a male collateral relative from any generation (see section 2.2). Their filiation is not given explicitly, but it is possible to infer the position of some of them from other monuments. One is probably *w3h-k3*'s brother, since he appears on stela KG 28a.2. Another is *w3h-k3-m-wsht*'s brother (thus, ego's father's brother), who is also mentioned

without filiation is mentioned in KG 28a.2. The name is too common to support a direct relation between these two individuals in the absence of further evidence.

²¹⁶ Wegner (2010: 442) admits that the association between these stelae and the seal impressions is tenuous, but the connection between Qaw el-Kebir and Wah-sut and North Abydos is supported by other seal impressions bearing names of people who belong to ANOC group 19 (also from Qaw el-Kebir) and a seal impression with the name and titles of the nomarch of Qaw el-Kebir Ibu (Wegner 2010: 452–3, figs 2–3, 457, fig. 7).

²¹⁷ The first line of KG 28a.1 reads: *hṭp-dj-nsw h3tj-ḥ w3h-k3 m3ḥ-ḥrw n m-r pr w3h-k3 m3ḥ-ḥrw jr.n hṭpwj [m3ḥ-]ḥrw*, 'an offering that the king gives and *w3h-k3*, justified, for the overseer of the estate *w3h-k3* made by *hṭpwj*, [just]ified' (appendix 4.2.1, line 1.1).

on KG 28a.4. The next three registers have seventeen people depicted and captioned, but the complete absence of filiations and the occurrence of the same name for more than one person make it impossible to specify their relation with *w3h-k3* or their position within his kin group. A noteworthy feature of this stela is that several servants or slaves (*ʿ3m* and *hm*) are depicted and named.²¹⁸ Named servants, who were surely a significant part of households, are not as common in the Middle Kingdom monumental record as one may expect.²¹⁹ Thus, one possible reason why they might have been mentioned here is to stress the magnitude and autonomy of this particular household and, by extension, of the kin group.

KG 28a.2 is a beautifully carved round-topped stela dedicated to *w3h-k3* and his brother *w3h-k3-snb*.²²⁰ While the latter holds the title ‘supervisor of clothing’ (*jrj hbsw*) on both stelae,²²¹ *w3h-k3* bears the titles ‘overseer of the estate’ (*m-r pr*) on KG 28a.1 (appendix 4.2.1, line 1.1) and ‘overseer of the storehouse’ (*m-r st*) on KG 28a.2 (appendix 4.2.2, line 1.2).²²² The reason for this discrepancy is not clear, but the use of one title with one group and a different one with another may bear witness to a desire for integration within a peer group. The usage of the kin term *sn* on this stela is complex, and the lack of filiations hinders our understanding of the way these people are related. I suggest that these individuals are connected by professional links rather than exclusively biological kinship, since most of them hold relatively high-ranking titles, and these relate in many cases to funerary roles, such as ‘overseer of the tomb’ (*m-r js*) or ‘lector-priest’ (*hrj-hbt*).²²³

A remarkable feature of this stela is the reference to the ‘family-tomb of the house (or estate) of his father’ (*smjt nt pr jt=f*) and the ‘family-tomb of the house (or estate) of his

²¹⁸ In many instances these servants may have been Asiatics (the original meaning of the term *ʿ3m*) who were given an Egyptian name directly related to Qaw el-Kebir. In the first register of KG 28a.1 a woman is captioned *ʿ3mt w3h-k3*. This probably means ‘the female Asiatic *w3h-k3*’ rather than ‘the female Asiatic of *w3h-k3*’ because the other Asiatics on that bottom register also bear names (appendix 4.2.1, lines 4.1–7). This shows that she had adopted (or had been given) the name of her master.

²¹⁹ On the presence of servants in Old Kingdom tombs as an integral part of the household as well as markers of status, see Münch (2009: esp. 56–8) and Baines (2009–2010).

²²⁰ Franke argued that *w3h-k3-snb* was *w3h-k3*’s son (1984: no. 202), but in my opinion this is unlikely for various reasons. First, a person with the same title as *w3h-k3-snb* is mentioned among the *sn* on stela KG 28a.1, and *sn* does never refer to a relation of filiation. Second, no *w3h-k3* or *w3h-k3-snb* is mentioned among the sons of *w3h-k3* in KG 28a.1 and a relation of filiation is not even suggested in KG 28a.2. Third, KG 28a.2 clearly emphasises collaterals (or other meanings of *sn*) over lineals, and it makes sense that the beneficiaries of the stela were also some kind of collaterals.

²²¹ Ward (1982: no. 529)

²²² Ward (1982: nos 132, 313).

²²³ Ward (1982: nos 42, 1202).

mother' (*smjt nt pr mwt=f*) in the last register (see appendix 2.2.28).²²⁴ In his treatment of the *smjt*-formula, Franke (1983a: 276) suggested that it commemorates in an Abydene context those relatives who are associated with ego through the maternal and/or the paternal line and towards whom ego holds rights and duties (see also Clère 1985: 85). The *smjt*-formula seems here to be used to condense all the relatives of *w3h-k3* and *w3h-k3-snb*. Although these people are not the focus of a stela, which is essentially devoted to their colleagues, the owners did not miss the opportunity to commemorate their family and to enable them to participate in the mysteries of Osiris forever. It was desirable to share this communal participation with one's kin group, friends, and colleagues who were honoured on the stelae.²²⁵

The next stela, KG 28a.3, is divided into four registers framed by two vertical lines.²²⁶ The people mentioned on it belong to a completely different kin group from that on KG 28a.1, and most of them are not given titles. The only connection of this stela with KG 28a is the mentioning of *w3h-k3*, son of *kmw* in the inscription of the left edge. This individual is depicted in a high-status position in the second register of KG 28a.2, where he is captioned as 'supervisor of clothing' (appendix 4.2.2, line 1.1). The title he holds on the present stela, however, is the general term *hnms* (appendix 4.2.3, right column), which is conventionally translated as 'friend' but could refer to a 'patron' in a context such as this where he is presented in a high-ranking position (Franke 1983a: 355–62; see also Satzinger and Stefanović 2012: 342–3; Verbovsek and Backes 2013: 81). In his treatment of the term, Franke suggested that *hnms* is often used in connection with the funerary cult, which fits with my interpretation (see above) of stela KG 28a.2 as dedicated to individuals who were involved in this task. All the other people mentioned on stela KG 28a.3 are otherwise unknown, so it is difficult to say why a member of the kin group related to *w3h-k3* of Qaw el-Kebir is shown among them. Nevertheless, it may serve to confirm the high status attached to the kin group on KG 28a.2, since the owner of KG 28a.3 regarded him as a 'patron'.

KG 28a.4 is the lower part of a hard black stone statue of a seated man and was found in the tomb of Wahka II at Qaw el-Kebir. This 32-centimetre high statue is elegant and finely carved, with a brief inscription on either side of the front part of the seat that

²²⁴ A survey of these terms shows that they usually occur in the bottom part of stelae. See list of attestations in appendix 2.2, and discussion in section 2.3.2.

²²⁵ For an interpretation of the different layers of meaning of the ritual activities that took place at Abydos, see Kucharek (2006: esp. 56–61).

²²⁶ There is no published photograph of this stela. The description in the Cairo Catalogue does not mention any images accompanying the inscriptions.

mentions the overseer of the treasure *w3h-k3* son of *mwtjj*, who appears also on stela KG 28a.1. A fragment of the kilt of a wooden statue that was found in the same context also bears an inscription mentioning the same person.²²⁷ These inscriptions do not provide any further details about the genealogy of this kin group, but they show that their members were closely connected with the nomarchs of Qaw el-Kebir. It is not possible to obtain genealogical information from stela KG 28a.5 either, but it mentions a certain *w3h-k3-snb* and a *w3h-k3* son of *htpwj* who may be the same people recorded on other objects of KG 28a and can be related to a specific archaeological context in Qaw el-Kebir. Most of the individuals commemorated on objects of KG 28a may have had their roots in places other than Abydos. Objects are not always explicit about the geographical origin of the people depicted or mentioned on them, but in some cases finds in other sites, personal names, toponyms and other characteristic regional features may provide clues to where their owners came from.

The regional diversity of people commemorated at Abydos does not mean that they all travelled to the site; in fact, the inscription on stela EA 101 indicates that one did not need to go to Abydos to have a stela erected for oneself (Blackman 1935: 5; Leprohon 1978: 36; see also Baines 2004: 36).²²⁸ The objects that constitute KG 28a suggest that this is not the case for *w3h-k3*'s kin group, which is well represented at both sites, on the one hand through stelae probably from the votive area of Abydos and the seal impressions from Wah-sut at South Abydos, and on the other hand through fragments of statues found at Qaw el-Kebir.

This kin group was very influential, possibly among the country's highest elite, since archaeological finds show that they were close to the nomarchs of Qaw el-Kebir, who were some of the right-hand men of the kings in Middle Egypt from the time of Amenemhet I to Senusret III or Amenemhet III (Steckeweh 1936: 6; Melandri 2011). The tombs of the nomarchs of Qaw el-Kebir, although fairly damaged, are among the largest non-royal tombs of the Middle Kingdom (Martellièrre 2008). Their extraordinary architecture, which columned porticoes on several levels (e.g. Petrie 1930: pl. vi),²²⁹ together with the royal pretensions of some of the damaged iconography (e.g. Martellièrre

²²⁷ PM v, 14 mentions this statue fragment as being in the Museo Egizio in Turin, without giving a museum number. The fragment is not mentioned in museum catalogues and it does not appear in the online database. Thus, Steckeweh (1936: 49, no. 5, pl. 14a) appears to be its only publication.

²²⁸ Text in columns 7–9 of middle section of stela BM EA 101: *hnt ʿb3-pn m-ʿ hrj-hbt wr jbj htf jj wnw t hwt-ntr r m33 nsw m hb nfr dt*, 'this stela went south in charge of the chief lector-priest *jbj* when the priesthood of the temple came to see the king in his perfect festival of eternity'.

²²⁹ For a 3d reconstruction of these tombs, see www.digitalegypt.ucl.ac.uk/3d/impact_qau.html (accessed 30 September 2014).

2008: 25, fig. 10),²³⁰ indicate that these nomarchs were indeed powerful officials under the favour of the king [Pl. 19]. Wegner (2010: 443–4) suggests that the fairly stable line of nomarchs may indicate a close royal patronage that could have been reinforced by the involvement of families from Qaw el-Kebir at Wah-sut, which was a major royal foundation at Abydos.

Some of the stelae discussed in this section bear witness to an articulation between Abydos and Qaw el-Kebir at the heart of this kin group. KG 28a.1, for instance, was found in the north cemetery of Abydos, but the Qaw el-Kebir flavour is apparent through the use of an offering formula mentioning the Qaw nomarchs and the repetition of names from their region. The provenance of KG 28a.2 is not secure, but the mention of Osiris-Khentimentiu and Wepwawet in the offering formula may point toward an Abydene origin. In addition, this stela features many people whose names are not typical of Qaw. KG 28a.2 appears to differ in purpose from KG 28a.1. While the latter displays the roots of this kin group in Qaw el-Kebir and highlights their autonomy, the former may have served to integrate local elites of Abydos: this object incorporates local Abydene features in order to reassert what these different groups of people had in common rather than what would set them apart.

The main difference between how the families analysed in these case studies were presented is their relation to other kin groups. KG 12 features several kin groups, either emergent or declining, that unite in order to emphasise and enhance their standing. By contrast, KG 28a features a kin group that stands at the peak of its developmental cycle and, thus, does not need to secure its position or improve its ranking through alliance with others. This second case study also shows the cohesion of a household unit commemorating servants on their stelae. Minor kin groups tend meanwhile to mention their connections with this major one on their stelae if they can, as acknowledged by KG 28a.3.

5.7 Displaying decline: KG IV and marriage matters

The last case study focuses on the elusive question of ebbing kin groups and how they may be represented in the monumental record. Displaying decline is in many ways a contradiction, because one would like to present one's group in the most favourable light possible. However, as seen in the case study of *jw=f-n-r=sn*, the rank of one group is

²³⁰ The architecture of the tombs itself can also be regarded as inspired by royal constructions, as it evokes the causeways of royal pyramid complexes (Willems 2014: 109).

sometimes emphasised at the expense of another. Through such treatments it is possible to catch glimpses of groups that may have been powerful once but have since started to wane. These groups are at the last stage in the developmental cycle of kin groups, and can be seen as the prelude to newly developed articulations with other groups, since sometimes they may unite with other people to create new kin groups or be integrated in old ones rather than simply disappear.

KG IV is one of the smallest groups of monuments in the corpus, with only two stelae attributed to it: CGC 20184 (KG IV.1) and CGC 20290 (KG IV.2). The absence of other artefacts related to them may, however, be due to the limited use of filiations in KG IV.1 rather than to the lack of further elements of this chapel. These two stelae are quite different in style and probable function, but they offer complementary information. KG IV.1 is a round-topped stela with traces of colour and with ten people depicted in three registers. The first register features ego – the draftsman *s3-w3dt* – and a woman *jwtt*, possibly his wife,²³¹ squatting to either side of a laden offering table and holding a lotus flower, with another woman, whose genealogical position is not certain also squatting behind ego's wife. Five men are in the second register, all of whom hold a lotus flower and share two titles (three 'scribe' and two 'embalmer'). The middle one, named *ppw*, deserves to be highlighted due to his rare pose with his right arm across his chest while facing right. He is not singled out for his title, since he is a scribe, like two other men in the same register, and his filiation is not given. Thus, it is only possible to guess reasons for his posture: a jest of the craftsmen fashioning the stela, an expression of his desire to break up the uniformity of the composition, or perhaps an indication of a physical peculiarity of this *ppw*? The last register is subdivided into two parts: to the left, a couple squat facing each other; to the right, three lines of text including four names, without filiation, and a *smjt*-formula.

Stela KG IV.2, conversely, has the shape of a low rectangle, also with traces of colour, and smaller than its counterpart KG IV.1. Only four men are depicted; they all stand and face right, and they are captioned with a kin term and filiation. The ego in KG IV.2, the draftsman *s3-w3dt* called *jw-snb* (depicted first in the row), is the son of *s3-w3dt*, the ego of KG IV.1. The relative size of the stelae may give the impression that the father's was slightly more important than the son's, although they both are quite small (see appendix 4.3). The figures in KG IV.2 are made in relatively rough raised relief, and

²³¹ The name that appears in the filiation is different to that in ego's filiation, so Lange and Schäfer's suggestion that this woman is ego's sister should be discarded (see appendix 4.3.1).

the quality of the carving of hieroglyphs is not high either. The shape of some of the signs – especially the birds such as the *w*- and the *s3*-signs – is very similar in both stelae of this group, suggesting that they might have been fashioned in the same workshop or in related ones where some artistic idiosyncrasies may have been shared. This stela is reminiscent of the wall blocks KG 12.1 and especially KG 12.2; on the latter, only ego, his father and his son were featured, with complementary genealogical information presented in the inscriptions. On KG IV.2, ego is accompanied by his three sons, and only ego is presented as a title holder. His higher status is affirmed by his being in first place of the row of people, and his adult iconography that contrasts with that of his children, all of whom have the sidelock as a symbol of youth. This stela is not rich in information about the kin group but, in conjunction with KG IV.1, it is an appropriate case study for assessing both the group's developmental cycle and marriage patterns.

This kin group has scarcely received any attention in the Egyptological literature – with the exception of a very brief reference in Franke's work (1983a: 259) – perhaps because it was not included in Simpson's compilation of Abydos material, being identified as a group later by El-Rabi'i (1977) in his supplement to Simpson's book (see appendix 1). The two stelae feature two generations of the kin group of *s3-w3dt*, and their relationships are only clarified when both stelae are taken into consideration. KG IV.1 presents a *s3-w3dt* in a position of authority in the first register, accompanied by others whose genealogical relationship to him is not stated. KG IV.2 shows that the fifth man depicted in the second register, *jw-snb*, is ego's son. Three other people on the stela hold titles related to funerary tasks, such as *wt* ('embalmer') and possibly *sh̄t ht* ('weaver'). This is significant, because I have identified other examples of the *smjt*-formula at the bottom of stelae as related to people engaged in funerary offices possibly as an expression of networking (see sections 2.3.2 and 5.6), so this could be a further example of that usage. KG IV.2, in contrast, features ego with three of his sons, for whom no titles are given. The ego of this second stela, *s3-w3dt jw-snb*, is mentioned under only one of his two names on the stela of his father *s3-w3dt* (appendix 4.3.1, line 2.5), which may have led to some confusion as to his identity on the part of researchers. His title in KG IV.1, *sh̄* (scribe), is of lower ranking than *sh̄ kdwt* (draftsman), the one he has in KG IV.2, and which was his father's title in KG IV.1 (appendix 4.3.1, line 1.1). He could have been promoted when his father died, or KG IV.1 could display a hierarchical relation to his father.

The occurrence of the woman *shm-htp* on both monuments confirms that they belong to the same family group, and her role is essential for attaining a better understanding of the group. Filiation captions on stela KG IV.2 show that she married *s3-w3dt jw-snb*, and had three surviving children with him. On stela KG IV.1 she is not represented with her husband but appears in the bottom register with her father *km3*, who is not genealogically related to *s3-w3dt*, and does not have a profession linked to funerary duties: he is the *jrj ʿ3 n t3tj*, ‘door-keeper of the vizier’ (appendix 4.3.1, line 3.1). This is a high-status title denoting proximity to the vizier, one of the highest office-holders (Quirke 1990: 58–61). The high standing of this person may suggest that he should be depicted closer to the top of the stela,²³² but he is represented on the bottom register instead. He may have been shown in the lowest register simply to keep him next to his daughter, who was married to *s3-w3dt*’s son.

Stela KG IV.1 seems to display an affinal union between two kin groups, one of which is at the beginning of its developmental cycle and the other one in decline. The presence of *km3* next to his daughter in a stela belonging to the head of the kin group of his son-in-law indicates that there may have been some interest in having *km3* associated with this monument, presumably due to his closeness to the vizier. It was quite uncommon to represent one’s son’s wife’s father on a stela, so there must have been a strong reason to do so. The respect for *km3* is further shown by the evidence of KG IV.2: one of the sons of *s3-w3dt jw-snb* is named after him, that is, after *s3-w3dt jw-snb*’s father-in-law (appendix 4.3.2, line 4).

If *km3* was considered a high ranking individual, it would have made good sense to have him represented on one’s stela. This would be especially relevant when taking into account that *s3-w3dt*’s kin group does not seem to be particularly elevated in status for several reasons. First, the highest titles of its members is *sh kdwt*, ‘draftsman’, held by *s3-w3dt* in KG IV.1 and by *s3-w3dt jw-snb* in KG IV.2, and this title does not accord a specially high status (if compared to that of *km3*). Second, the quality of the stelae is not the finest, and the carving of the hieroglyphs is modest. Last, no other monuments belonging to this group are known, which may not be taken as evidence on its own due to the paucity of the record, but reinforces the impression obtained from these two other factors. However, if the difference in status between *km3* and *s3-w3dt* is considered, it

²³² As Gay Robins (1997: 104) argues for Middle Kingdom stelae ‘higher registers take precedence over lower ones’. Assmann (2001: 263–5, fig. 39) also mentions this vertical hierarchy for the New Kingdom, when scenes of cult of gods are always above the scenes of cult of the deceased in both tombs and stelae.

would be expected that the former should be in a position of authority over the latter. I argue that the reason this is not so may be directly related to the situation of each of these kin groups in their own developmental cycle.

As discussed above, groups at the peak of their developmental point do not normally present themselves together with other groups because they do not need to accrue status by that means, and stelae in which this happens could be regarded more appropriately as tools for networking among peers. In KG IV, by contrast, two kin groups of differing standing are brought together; this is a common strategy already observed in KG 12.3, where those at the beginning of a developmental cycle may have wanted to associate themselves with individuals in other groups. In this instance, a low-ranking group at the beginning of its development may have sought association with a traditionally powerful one that was already in decline. That *km3*'s group had possibly seen better days is inferred from the high title of its head combined with the fact that his daughter was chosen as partner of a member of an apparently minor group who intended to marry up. *s3-w3dt* must have perceived this marriage as a considerable accomplishment – almost like a coup – and hence decided to have the connection commemorated on a stela that featured both his daughter-in-law and her father, who would represent the tradition and character of his group more explicitly than her, together with some of *s3-w3dt*'s own colleagues, who benefited by being linked to both groups.

Here it is desirable to briefly mention the difficult question of marriage patterns. Egyptologists have given more attention to adultery and its punishment in pharaonic times than to marriage (e.g. Eyre 1984; Manniche 1987: 20–2; Janssen 1988; Johnson 2003). Even in those works that focus on marriage, more space is often devoted to adultery than to possible marriage patterns (McDowell 1999: 46–50; Meskell 2002: 94–103; Szpakowska 2008: 214–6).²³³ Most of these studies offer only generalising descriptions of marriage, for instances, as ‘a formative ritual, changing life status with concomitant social reorganizations’ (Meskell 2002: 95), without further detailed assessment of the sources. This is due in part to a scarcity of relevant sources, so that discussion of choice of partner, negotiation among families, or marriage rituals are largely based on negative evidence (McDowell 1999: 32; Szpakowska 2008: 214).

²³³ Other works discuss specific aspects of marriage, such as inheritance and sucession (Pestman 1961; Allam 1981; Johnson 1994; 1999; Eyre 2007), polygamy (Simpson 1974a; Kanawati 1976), and divorce (Wilfong 2001).

Toivari-Viitala's discussion (2001: esp. 55–69, 84–90), based almost exclusively on New Kingdom sources, remains the most comprehensive study to date. Her method is exemplary as she avoids applying Western ideas of marriage to the Egyptian material and proposes an emic approach based on contemporary sources, reaching the conclusion that there may have been 'far more ways in which men and women could live together, instead of only having to choose from the two polar options of formal marriage versus informal cohabitation' (Toivari-Viitala 2001: 84).

In many ancient and modern societies, preferential and prescriptive marriage rules are important in the selection of partners. For Egypt, unambiguous evidence for kinship playing a role in partner choice has not been found. Forgeau (1996 [1986]: 137) states without supporting evidence that 'marriage between cross-cousins seems the most frequent'. Contemporary Egyptian society – as other Middle Eastern cultures – favours parallel cousin marriage, but this should rather be seen as an ideal resulting from arabisation with limited real implementation in daily life (Korotayev 2000; Bach 2004: esp. 177–8). In addition, the fact that all collaterals were designated as *sn* in ancient Egyptian kinship terminology (see section 2.2) indicates that differentiation between parallel and cross-cousins may not have been obvious. The difference between them may have come not from the term for the individual kin type, but rather from the kin group in which that *sn* is included in relation to ego. However, there is no evidence available to support this possibility.

Rank and status may have played an important part in the choice of partner in ancient Egypt, especially among those of a higher standing; an example of this is found in sources dealing with some cousin marriages in the family of *sn-ndm* in Deir el-Medina (Toivari-Viitala 2001: 59, n. 342; for a similar conclusion using Middle Kingdom sources, see Franke 1983a: 342–3). The union represented in KG IV.1 may have been of this high-ranking type. There is some indication from Deir el-Medina that the groom and the bride's household would enter negotiations about the marriage (Toivari-Viitala 2001: 60–1), although this impression may be due to biases in the sources, which may present the groom as an independent party while the bride would depend on her family for these decisions. KG IV.1 suggests that the family of the bride was involved in the decision, or else her father would not have been represented together with her; however, the role of the groom's father is emphasised over that of the groom. This may be due to the importance of the alliance between those two kin groups, which may have required the intervention of their respective heads. Moreover, the stela is hardly likely to reflect the

actual negotiation – after all, stelae are not administrative documents –, and may have served instead as a token to commemorate the group.

These stelae are also relevant to the relational nature of kinship in general and kin groups in particular: while one kin group is in decline the other is seeking to accrue status. In these cases, within a single ANOC group it is possible to identify several kin groups at different moments of their internal development that would, eventually, blend together into what could be considered a single kin group.²³⁴ This again raises the question of the type of group that is being displayed.

As seen above, it is difficult to determine what term for kin group would have been used to designate the social units presented on these monuments, especially in a case where a transition is being witnessed. Here the role of the head of the group is emphasised, which is a common feature of all kin groups, but the term *sn* is not much used, whether or not some of those people depicted are playing that role by means of the preferred Egyptian technologies of remembrance (see section 4.5). This pattern could, for example, rule *mhwt* out as a likely designation. The only indication of inheritance and handing over of property is that of the transmission of the title from the head of the household to his son; it is therefore impossible to characterise this kin group further. However, in keeping with the dynamic approach taken in this chapter it should be noted that these stelae may be commemorating more than one type of kin group.²³⁵ To attempt to fit these artefacts into a single designation of kin group may not be appropriate.

In conclusion, this case study illustrates the waning and waxing of kin groups. The two stelae display marriage/union strategies that situate both groups in an advantageous position. For those in early stages of their developmental cycle it is a way to accrue status, while for those who have peaked it is a survival strategy. The result of these tactics in the medium and long term is not known because no further documents of this kin group have been identified. Few stelae provide an opportunity to discuss affines and their incorporation into a group, but KG IV raises relevant questions. Marriage patterns are difficult to pinpoint in the Egyptian record, as there may not have been prescriptive or preferential marriage rules. Stela KG IV.1 is an instance of how such unions are sometimes displayed. Even if marriage ceremonies as generally understood in modern

²³⁴ In anthropological literature the wife is considered an affine in the husband's group until she becomes a mother (as in KG IV.2), when she transforms into a consanguineous lineal relative by means of her children (e.g. Aranzadi Martínez 2003: 79).

²³⁵ For example, there could be a combination of ego-centred and ancestor-centred groups. The former type of group could take *s3-w3dt* as its focus and then elaborate on his connections. The latter, on the other hand, could combine a focus on *shm-htp*'s and *s3-w3dt jw-snb*'s ancestors.

Euroamerican societies did not exist in ancient Egypt, the opportune union of two groups is an achievement that may deserve to be commemorated. Finding representations of decline in ancient Egyptian sources is not easy because most people would not desire to be depicted in an unfavourable light, but KG IV indicates that the articulation of groups at different stages of development grants to groups that may be in decline a somewhat unexpected visibility.

5.8 Conclusions: the dynamism of the social fabric

One of the unifying methodological threads in this thesis is a preference for a group approach that may contribute to a holistic study of people, monuments, and landscape. In this chapter I have offered koinography as a group approach alternative to prosopography as a model for social analysis. Koinography takes the group, that is, the kin group as defined in chapter 1, as a primary unit of investigation, and introduces diachronicity as a fundamental element to describe the social fabric. In practice, this postulation involves seeing kin groups almost as living organisms that are born, develop and eventually die. Thus, they should not be studied from a static perspective.

The focus on time and the interpretation of the kin group as an organism, is adapted from Fortes' concept of the developmental cycle, but my model differs from his in various ways: the emphasis is on the possibility of construction and reconstruction of kinship as process in which the individual is actively engaged rather than on the variability of dwelling patterns. This may be a process with no rigid boundaries between different stages of the individual's or the group's life, and that can develop unpredictably.

The koinographic model is indeed to provide a pathway to insights into ancient ways of understanding the construction of kinship. I have illustrated how this approach can be put into practice through three case studies that exemplify different moments in the developmental cycle of Middle Kingdom kin groups. First, KG 12 is an example of how emergent groups may seek connections with more powerful ones in order to enhance their status. In the case of KG 28a, a group at a peak of its development reaffirms its standing by having its members represented together, without connections to other contemporary kin groups. When such connections exist in a group at a developmental peak, they seem to be employed to integrate a group with peers rather than as sources of independent status for the kin group per se, as is also the case in KG IV.1. This latter group, in addition, shows how alongside the display of a group at the start of its rise, another one that is in decline can be glimpsed, making it possible to access such elusive groups. The

waning of these groups may be attractive to those who want to improve their position by association with a 'big name', and links may benefit them both.

Diachronicity, however, is not always easy to identify in the monumental record. Moreover, only some kin groups can be ascribed unequivocally to a particular stage of the developmental cycle, while in most cases it is not certain and in some cases plainly impossible to tell. Fortes (1958: 11) insisted on the importance of numerical data and deemed statistical analyses essential in order to study the effects of the developmental cycle in a society. Nevertheless, such an approach may be impossible where the material is fragmentary. It is likely that a majority of groups in the corpus studied here were at their developmental peak, probably because such groups would be in a position to set up a stela or to construct a memorial chapel at Abydos. Furthermore, it is very difficult to identify groups at the beginning, and, especially, at the waning of their cycle: it may well be that those at either end of the scale are as numerous as those at the zenith of their cycle, but just not perceivable in the record. In addition, of the thousands of stelae available, only a small minority have been linked together, possibly due to lack of information rather than to generalised isolation from other groups. Statistical analysis may be a useful tool for the study of social trends, but with a corpus such as this one qualitative information from some detailed case studies may be more productive, especially since it provides methodological tools for interpreting further examples of kin groups.

These case studies illustrate how the approach advocated here works with ancient Egyptian material and of how it may be possible to identify diachronic processes in an apparently static set of sources. It is worth also going beyond this idea to assess what implications this approach may have for the wider study of Egyptian society. That is, we know that the kin group can be studied in the framework of a developmental cycle and that this information can to a certain extent be accessed through display, but how does that affect our general interpretation of the social fabric? Here I assess dwelling patterns, age-groups, inclusiveness, and 'substance' in order to illustrate the potential of the model for broader societal concerns.

Anthropologists and ethnographers studying the developmental cycle from a Fortesian perspective tend to focus on residence patterns and household variability. An example is provided by the essays in the volume edited by Goody (1958), which favour this 'territorial' and/or 'dwelling type' approach by taking the domestic group as the minimal unit of analysis. Co-habitation, however, is only one of the features that define a

kin group, so this method is slightly limited (and especially for the Egyptian context where information on dwelling patterns is lacking). Moreover, it is difficult to assess changes in residence patterns of no longer existing societies, although the *wpwt*-lists may be analysed on those terms [Pl. 1.2].²³⁶ Thus, my examination of the developmental cycle through display has centred on the survival and adaptation strategies of some kin groups.

Learning to identify and interpret those strategies is an important outcome of the koinographic approach that could maybe be generalised: it may be possible to identify comparable strategies in other domains and thus obtain more detailed descriptions of group development. For example, association with groups of higher status that is sought after by those at the beginning of their development could be found in material other than display on stelae and chapels. Tomb location (e.g. Jiménez Higuera 2012), object distribution (e.g. Höveler-Müller 2011), or tomb decoration (e.g. Vischak 2007) are likely to have played a part in the identification of a group and its position. If data from all accessible domains is combined into a koinographic approach, a fuller picture of the society can be attained, in which genealogies of individuals become ‘genealogies of groups’.

Together with the interpretation of dwelling patterns, anthropologists also associate the developmental cycle of groups with the roles of those in society as a whole. Indeed, studying kin groups as an entity divorced from the socio-cultural milieu in which they act would be inadequate. For example, kin groups and their development may be considered in connection with the prominence of corporate groups (that is, a group of people that collectively share rights, privileges, and liabilities), and issues of inheritance. The dynamism of the social fabric is affected by and affects the transmission of property, and the link between groups and land is probably deeper than the Abydos evidence suggests.²³⁷

Scholars have studied how different types of social groups contribute both to the perpetuation and the fluidity of the social fabric.²³⁸ Fixed age groups – referred to as ‘age

²³⁶ For Middle Kingdom Egypt, examples of settlements are extremely limited, and most of them hardly provide information on changes of dwelling. The only exception known to date is Lahun, discussed above, where some of the houses seem to have been adapted to the varying size of the group residing in them.

²³⁷ This is evident in other societies, where the available dataset is more explicit in this respect. For instance, display of kin groups has been linked to the claim of space, becoming a visual metaphor in the case of tombs (McAnany 1995: 110; Petts 2003: 205). This grounding into the land is probably less important for votive Abydene material (although references to geographical areas within Abydos are often given in the texts), where the focus was on the eternal participation on the festivities of Osiris rather than on any claim to property.

²³⁸ Fortes (1958: 10) highlighted the importance of these rites of passage in the context of the developmental cycle of the group: ‘in these ceremonies the domestic group’s task of social reproduction is

sets' in anthropological vocabulary (Radcliffe-Brown 1929) – who would typically participate together in rites of passage offer a relevant example of this category. Although not much information on such groups is known from Egypt, some ceremonies marking physical maturity are attested, including haircutting and circumcision (Vischak 2003: 149; Eyre 2011: 181; Quack 2012; Willems 2013b). A stela in the Naga ed-Deir corpus mentions a circumcision ceremony in which a team of 120 men may have been involved: *jw s^cb.kw hn^c s 120 nn=s h^c(=j) jm nn=s h^c-w(j) jm nn 3h^c jm nn 3h^c-w(j) jm*, 'I was circumcised together with 120 men. There was none among them whom I struck and none among them who struck me; there was none among them whom I scratched and none among them who scratched me' (Dunham 1937: 102–4, no. 84, pl. xxxii, lines 4–5; Quack 2012: 581–6, esp. n. 163). It is problematic to interpret this inscription literally; for example, 120 could be a random number chosen to enhance the importance of ego on his stela, presenting him as someone with a large entourage. Nonetheless, this is arguably the most explicit known reference to possible age sets, whose members would have participated together in initiation ceremonies and hence acquired a collective identity, perhaps with some social, ritual, and/or corporate rights and duties. Age sets are particularly common in East Africa, and one of the classic examples is that of the Nuer (Evans-Pritchard 1936: esp. 245), among whom they are formed precisely during circumcision. The developmental cycle is pivotal to interpreting the role of these age sets, since their constitution and sustenance would be related to the life cycle of both the individual and the group. Thus, a study of kin groups from a koinographic perspective – that is, taking their variability into account – can also contribute here to the understanding of broader social trends in that it helps understand dynamically the role of the actors that take part in certain ceremonies and events.

The flexibility observed in the construction of and networking among kin groups raises the question of inclusivity. On what basis could someone be considered to belong to a group and how would that change throughout the life-time of the individual in connection to the development of the group? A full study on inclusivity is beyond the scope of this chapter. Different types of kin groups that may have had different patterns of inclusion would be difficult to identify in the sources. Even within the same group inclusivity may vary over the years, but the sources are too limited and ambiguous for such analysis.

terminated. Having bred, reared and educated the child, it hands over the finished product to the total society'.

Anthropologists have tended to study inclusivity – in the sense of one’s belonging to a group – on the basis of descent rules (Keesing 1975: 17; Aranzadi Martínez 2003: 81–2). Descent may be unilineal (patrilineal/agnatic or matrilineal/uterine), double-lineal,²³⁹ or cognatic (combination of paternal and maternal links), depending on the line(s) used to trace it. I am here concerned with descent as a basis for group formation rather than with patterns of recognition of relatives of a common descent (Stone 2006: 10–5). Identification of relatives was bilateral in ancient Egypt, as is demonstrated by filiation formulae, which often include both the father and the mother. Group formation does not need to follow that same principle, and cognatic descent should not be automatically assumed because of filiation patterns. Nevertheless, other features seem to point in the same direction, as some of the defining characteristics of cognatic groups, such as flexibility in group formation, have been identified for Egyptian kinship.

Cognatic kinship could allow for a large number of combinations, so several cognatic groups could exist simultaneously. This overlap does not need be problematic, since groups would often have different functions (Fox 1983 [1967]: 150–2; Dumont 2006 [1971]: 34; Stone 2006: 171), as suggested for the *3bt* and its possible involvement in agricultural activities (see section 2.3.1). In addition, cognatic groups are often associated to societies with a Hawaiian kinship terminology, and in section 2.2 it was argued that Egyptian kinship terminology could be regarded as a variant of it. Cognatic groups, furthermore, usually exhibit a ‘patrilineal bias’ (Fox 1983 [1967]: 152–6; Keesing 1975: esp. 94; Stone 2006: 172–3), which is also visible in Egyptian sources that as a general rule favour the father in display. Finally, some mechanisms may be used to pare down the number of groups one could be a member of – traditionally by residence (Keesing 1975: 92) or descent group endogamy (Stone 2006: 173) – but one may retain rights and duties to his or her other ‘line’. Ethnographies provide colourful characterisation of cognatic systems, such as Astuti’s (2000: 100) description of descent among the Vezo of Madagascar:

‘in life, Dadilahy resolved this problems by being a different kind of person from the one envisaged by unilineal descent theory: not determined by membership of *one* group, of *one* kind of people, but constituted through the multiple, infinite refractions of himself onto the many descendants captured in this cognatic net’.

The picture is essentially that of a fluid situation in which people’s group membership may switch during life, as I have argued for in the characterisation on Egyptian kinship

²³⁹ Double lineal descent is extremely uncommon. The Yakö from Nigeria are one of the rare examples of this descent model (Fox 1983 [1967]: 135–9; Keesing 1975: 74).

throughout this thesis. Within such a fluid context, I suggest that kin group in Egypt in the First Intermediate Period and the Middle Kingdom could have been closer to the cognatic model than to a unilineal one.

Last but not least, and related to the structure of descent groups, one may ask how Egyptians perceived and justified that sense of belonging that may have led them to represent themselves in a group on their monuments at different stages of their developmental cycle. How can this flexibility of kinship be explained in analytical terms? Here, it is necessary to tackle one the anthropological topics par excellence: the issue of ‘substance’.

Substance as an anthropological category was first proposed by David Schneider (1968: 23–4 for definitions; 1984) in his work on Euroamerican kinship, where he understood ‘blood’ as a symbol, a metaphor for ‘biogenetic substance’ forming the basis of Western notions of kinship. Schneider’s ideas have been criticised (e.g. Collier and Yanagisako 1987; Carsten 2000b; 2004: esp. 109–16), but his conception of substance has been keenly adopted by processual anthropologists such as Janet Carsten (1995; 1997). Definitions of substance are linked to ideas of personhood, body, and human relationships, and they have been adapted to different ethnographic contexts (sometimes becoming unspecific). As an analytical term, it implies transformability and a blurring of boundaries between kin categories, capturing ‘a tension between the givenness of inherited characteristics and the acquisition of identity throughout life’ (Carsten 2004: 131). Substance is linked more broadly to the idea that I use in this thesis of kinship as process; as something that is made rather than simply given. As an illustration, in Langkawi (Malaysia) the mutable relationship between rice, breast milk, and blood creates kinship, and thus the act of sharing rice is but one of the forms in which kinship can be constructed (Carsten 1997: 107–30).²⁴⁰

The ways in which substance may contribute to define kinship are a complex topic, and ideas of substance are not interchangeable between different areas, but a comparable notion could have existed in ancient Egypt. Substance is defined as ‘mutability, transferability, vitality, essence, content’ (Carsten 2004: 131), which is close to some of

²⁴⁰ Carsten’s approach has been harshly criticised by Shapiro (2011) as a Manichean misinterpretation of the evidence to serve moralising goals. However, when he states that ‘what the new kinship studies offers us instead is a millennial melodrama in which the people of the developing world are cast, with no real regard for their own life choices, as Pure Good (Pure Communal, Pure Feminist) and the West are Pure Evil, governed by narrow familial interests and “patriarchal” men’ (Shapiro 2011: 151), I wonder whether his own personal views are not biasing his comments beyond the purely academic discourse.

the definitions offered for the concept of the ka (e.g. Kaplony 1980; Bolshakov 2001).²⁴¹ The concept of the ka may have changed over the course of Egyptian history, but it is remarkable that it always remained the recipient of offerings.

That the ka may be related to kinship is noticeable from the link between funerary offerings (*k3w* is often attested in the context of offerings) – that are meant to sustain the ka of the deceased – and the role of kin groups in the funerary duties that ensure the provision of offerings. The eldest son, whose role in the performance of funerary rites for his deceased father was pivotal (Willems 2014: esp. 199–200), might have been depositary of a familial essence.²⁴² Further evidence to support a connection between families, funerary rituals, and the concept of the ka is the mention of the ka of a group in inscriptions requesting offerings (e.g. see appendix 2.2.23, which features the phrase *n k3 n smjt nt pr jt=f mwt=f*). In addition, Kaplony (1980: 275–6; see further Bolshakov 1997: 154–7) mentioned the continuity of the ka in the family through names that were usually transmitted from grandparents to grandchildren.²⁴³ This suggestion is tentative, but the perpetuation of the funerary cult by members of the family might be related to this category of substance. Koinography, by advocating the notion of kinship as process, is well suited to analysing kinship through substance, where one's state of belonging to a group may change over time through the continuous reworking of links of relatedness.

In this section I have discussed how the dynamic focus of koinography may bring to attention aspects of the social fabric that build up from the description of kin groups and their developmental stages. First, it gives prominence to survival strategies of kin groups that may be identified in other sources as well as stelae. Second, it addresses how kin groups may contribute to fostering social cohesion and thus perpetuating and reproducing the social structure. This is particularly relevant to phenomena such as dwelling patterns, corporate groups, and the role of age sets, which are to a limited extent identifiable in the sources. Finally, koinographies raise questions of inclusivity and of construction of kinship. The present analysis has led me to suggest that the construction of parental links

²⁴¹ Most discussion on the ka have centred around the royal ka, the most comprehensive treatment of the non-royal being Bolshakov (1997), who understands it as a 'double'.

²⁴² A phrase in lines 12–3 on the stela of *hr-m-h3=f* from Hierakonpolis (New York MMA 35.7.55: Hayes 1947; Willems 2014: 202) has been understood as a reference to the provisioning duties of an eldest son for his deceased parents: *jw nw.n=j pr mn3w=jkrs s3nh*, 'I have looked after the house of my nurturers, (they) being buried and revived'. However, I think this sentence does not relate to the provisioning for the deceased, but rather to the transmission of the role of head of the household to the eldest son who will then need to provide for those under his tutelage (see section 2.3.2).

²⁴³ For a discussion of transmission of this 'life force' through names of deities, see Helck (1954) and Hornung (1982 [1971]: esp. 49).

in Egypt may have had a cognatic character. In addition, I have tentatively proposed that the flexible essence of Egyptian kinship may be based on an idea of the ka as substance. In this manner, descent was traced cognatically, and one could participate in the construction of his or her kin group(s) to a certain extent. The question remains how the different kin groups would have been configured around the two parameters (that is, cognatic- and substance-focused) and how their influence can be assessed through the sources. But, as writer Michael Ende said, 'that is another story and shall be told another time'.

6 Synthesis: kin groups, display, and remembrance

‘I have come a long way where I started from but I’m still not even close to where I’m going’

Sentenced, *Broken* (2000)

This thesis deals with kinship and social structure in the First Intermediate Period and Middle Kingdom (ca 2150–1650 BCE), approaching this question through display and commemoration in the monumental record. I focus on kin groups rather than on particular kin types in order to try and address ancient Egyptian kinship from an actors’ perspective.

Each chapter tackles a different aspect of this analysis, ranging from terminology, display, commemoration, to a dynamic interpretation of the sources, including a section with some closing remarks. These final pages, therefore, do not summarise the main conclusions from previous chapters separately. Instead, I review how this thesis relates to the three aims outlined in section 1.1.2, with the purpose of drawing together the treatments in individual chapters to formulate a broader interpretation of Egyptian kinship in the period under study. In this chapter references to literature are kept to a minimum, since more detailed discussions can be found in the relevant sections. I also discuss some further questions that have arisen from work on this thesis.

6.1 Forms of relatedness in ancient Egypt

The initial aim of research for this thesis was to attain a better understanding of the forms of relatedness in First Intermediate Period and Middle Kingdom Egypt. It is difficult to describe kinship and marriage patterns in a no longer existing society, but the textual, archaeological, and iconographic sources available for this period make it possible to catch glimpses of the social structure of the time. The sources, however, were not created for that purpose of portraying family life (Fitzenreiter 2005b: 85), and one must ask what biases they contain: how far is the material an ideological construct rather than a presentation of social groups? (see section 3.2). Is it possible to use the available sources to approach how a social phenomenon actually worked in lived experience?

Even those sources that are often considered objective and neutral, such as archaeological remains, present biases and may not be representative of ‘reality’ but rather of the image that an individual or a group wished to convey (on construction of an image of the self in funerary record: Seidlmayer 2001). It is not always impossible to use

the sources for the study of kinship dynamics – despite their distancing from lived experience – provided that the ‘ideological’ or ‘imagined’ dimension of self-presentation likely existing in the sources is accounted for. As argued in section 3.1, an opposition between sources picturing the ‘real’ kinship patterns contrasted with those reflecting the ‘ideal’ is simplistic and inaccurate, because different patterns of kinship concur and may be articulated at different levels. For example, nuclear and extended households are not in opposition, as they both can coexist, probably having a complementary structural role in the society (cf. the extended household described in the papers of Heqanakht with the idea of a neolocal nuclear family posited in the *Teaching of Ptahhotep*). Although this thesis focuses on display and the representation of elite families in the monumental record, this does not mean that their image is exclusively ‘ideal’, rather, the monumental discourse participates in the construction of images of a reality by means of display. The approaches of material agency and entanglement discussed in section 3.3 provide a theoretical background for these ideas (Gosden 2005; Hodder 2012), as they assess the effect that monuments may have on people, who are socialised into pre-existing universes of meaning.

The sources may not report directly on the configurations of society, but they offer material for studying emic conceptions of kinship in the First Intermediate Period and Middle Kingdom. A minimal kinship terminology referred to individual kin types (i.e. *jt*, *mwt*, *sn/snt*, *s3/s3t*; see section 2.2) is problematic to reconcile with the salience of groups in the sources, since the latter seems to point to a diversity of forms of relatedness that is not clear from the former. While individual kin types have been more extensively studied – especially by Robins (1979), Willems (1983), and Franke (1983a: 1–177) – terms for kin groups have only been treated in detail by Franke (1983a: 178–301). However, these are essential due to the importance of those groupings in the Egyptian social fabric. In this thesis, terms for groups are framed within the notion of ‘kin group’, which should be understood as an etic grid that encompasses an array of emic terms for social groups possibly linked by notions of kinship (see section 1.2.2).

Kin group is regarded as a polythetic category (see Needham 1975) defined by several characteristics, including joint display on monuments or shared burial spaces, but these do not need all to be present simultaneously for a group to be categorised as a kin group. This is why kin groups should be understood as an overarching category with several sub-types of groups that may or may not resemble one another in functions or composition. A contextual analysis shows, however, that most types of kin group share

three basic features that could be considered as essential to their characterisation: a head of the group who acts as patron, protector, and provider; some shared funerary duties including the commemoration of the deceased and the provision of offerings; and inheritance patterns that may be linked to those funerary duties of a kin group. These features may be emphasised because of their inherent importance, but the nature of the sources obviously limits the range of criteria; thus, in a context of self-presentation, the caring role of the head of the household may have been prominent, as exemplified by the First Intermediate Period stela of Merer (see appendix 2.3.3).

Funerary duties seem to have been particularly important in the definition of kin groups. These included not only the commemoration of deceased members of the kin group by the participation in the funerary rites or invocation offerings, but also the provision of offerings. The latter was so fundamental that often an offering scene, and occasionally an offering list, would be depicted on stelae and other media in order to ensure its future presence. This idea of exploring the membership of a kin group through an emphasis on provision and nurturing has led me to propose that the *ka*, often defined as a ‘vital force’ of the individual (Kaplony 1980; Bolshakov 1997: 123–32), could be the ‘substance’ of kinship, analogous to the concept of ‘blood’ in modern Euroamerican society (Schneider 1968: 23–4). While this suggestion would need further investigation, it could explain why funerary duties, including provision of offerings, are considered pivotal in the definition of kinship. At the same time, it accounts for the flexibility inherent in the ancient Egyptian kinship system, in which an individual could belong to different groups simultaneously, and membership in a group could be actively sought and constructed.

This fluidity of the system makes kinship appear as pervasive and not bounded. When discussing these ideas, I have often been asked whether there was anyone in Egypt who was not a relative. This, in my opinion, illustrates the rigidity of some Western notions of kinship. Not everyone was part of the same kin group, and groups could not be extended *ad infinitum* in lived experience, but the possibility of change and fluctuation existed. Over time those who were related to an individual would differ: at times there could be a negotiation with fixed structures (the ‘given’) in order to incorporate further components of subjectivity and choice (the ‘made’) in Egyptian kinship (see section 2.4).

An analysis of how kin groups are represented in the sources and, especially, of how these may hint at dynamic social patterns addresses not only inclusiveness, but also patterns of group formation. Whereas either patrilineal or matrilineal descent has been

postulated for ancient Egypt, I suggest that cognatic groups were more common (see section 5.8). No clear evidence for unilineal descent is apparent, although a clear patrilineal bias can be seen in the sources. For example, the advantaged position of the male lineal ascendants and descendants in depictions on stelae is testimony to this patrilineal focus, but filiations to both the father and the mother (and in some periods to the mother only) show that the mother's line was not disregarded (see section 5.4).

Cognatic descent strategies pertain to group formation, and the variety of terms for kin groups analysed in section 2.3 is in keeping with the flexible rules of descent often expected of cognatic groups (e.g. Stone 2006: 10–5). Descent seems to have taken precedence over affinity in the constitution of at least some kin groups such as the *3bt* (see section 2.3.1), and ego may have had separate inheritance rights to his or her father's and mother's lines, as suggested by the compounds *pr jt* and *pr mwt* (see section 2.3.2). However, options for cognatic group formation are multiple, because the ramifications of a group that takes both the paternal and maternal line into consideration may be almost unlimited. Thus, there is always a component of choice for cognatic group formation which may be socially sanctioned, or, in some cases, individually pursued (ethnographic example: Astuti 2000). For example, the general rule was that a son would succeed his father, but cases of succession of the mother's brother are also known, such as Khnumhotep II in Beni Hasan (Olabarria 2012: 891–2; see also section 3.4.3).

A better understanding of the social structure is not the only aim of a study of the forms of Egyptian relatedness. Social phenomena should not be regarded as an independent sphere separate from other aspects of lived experience. However, they have often been regarded as almost subordinate to, for example, political phenomena. In this perspective, changes in the political situation may have prompted alterations in the social fabric, as often suggested for First Intermediate Period Egypt, when the power of a centralised government declined and, consequently, the individual might have sought refuge in those who were closest to him or her (e.g. Franke 2001a: 247). A more nuanced reading that takes into account the influence of social patterns may be preferable (see sections 2.4 and 3.4.3). Thus, while the political situation may have had an impact on all social groupings, kinship patterns may need to be taken into consideration for attaining an explanation of political phenomena. Two relevant examples, for which see further section 2.4, are the increasing generalisation of clientelar relations in the First Intermediate Period from a lesser prominence in the Old Kingdom (e.g. Campagno 2014), and the emphasis on collateral royal succession in the 13th dynasty (e.g. McCormack 2010). Such

an analysis acknowledges that kinship is embedded, and not subordinate to other areas, which can only be differentiated heuristically, but not in lived experience.

6.2 Group approach and koinography

The second unifying thread in this thesis is the importance of a group approach both for monuments and for studying people. If a holistic understanding of social phenomena is aimed for, monuments and people should not be considered in isolation: their articulation with each other and their relationship with the environment is a central matter to the study of any society.

Although stelae are sometimes studied individually, they should more appropriately be seen as parts of larger units. In section 3.4.2 I discuss how tombs at Naga ed-Deir provide an archaeological context for stelae that can demonstrate further connections between monuments that are not evident from stelae themselves because detailed filiations are not given. For example, stelae that might seem to be unrelated but were found together in the same tomb point to a link between the people represented on them (see tomb Sheikh Farag 5106 [Pl. 5.1]).

Most of the stelae studied in this thesis are from the site of Abydos, and quite possibly most of them were not associated to a burial space, although it is difficult to tell burial and votive stelae apart and they may not be typologically different (see section 3.4.2). While their archaeological context is mostly unknown, clusters of stelae could be reconstructed mainly on the basis of internal evidence such as names, titles, and filiations (Simpson 1974b). Excavations at Abydos have demonstrated the existence of mudbrick chapels of various sizes, occasionally with associated stelae in situ, so these groups of monuments that show a shared circle of people could have been originally set up in similar chapels that were in turn clustered into groups (O'Connor 1985; Simpson 1995). Although a complete reconstruction of the ANOC groups associated to the chapels cannot be attempted, research into stelae (and occasionally statues and offering tables that also were parts of those chapels) clearly benefits from a group approach, because the information that can be obtained from diverse monuments is often complementary.

Monuments need to be connected to their archaeological context, to one another, and, ideally, to the broader landscape. This task is often complex to undertake due to the lack of recorded archaeological provenance of some objects, but sometimes the monuments themselves hint at their anchoring in a physical or symbolic location. Many of the stelae studied in this thesis feature references to areas of Abydos, to processions that take place

at the site, or to structures where the stelae were located (see section 4.3.2). This indirect evidence about space contrasts with those cases where a fuller picture is available, notably the Teti cemetery at Saqqara (see section 4.3). Archaeology has shown that the First Intermediate Period chapel of *sk-wshyt* may have been a focus of performative practices such as execration rites and ancestor cult into the late Middle Kingdom. These practices also included some reinterpretations on kinship links, since a relationship with a powerful patron was enacted by using kin terms in an offering table dedicated to him (see appendix 3.1.6), demonstrating that one's position in a group (genealogically determined or not) could define one's engagement with the landscape (see 4.2.2). This superposition of further layers of meaning in the landscape over time is the focus of the genealogy of place (McAnany 1995: 104–5), which allows for a consideration of the role of emotionally charged places to be a context for and sometimes guide of human action.

Not only monuments should be studied in their settings: persons also need to be contextualised into their social and physical environment. Individual affirmation is an important aspect of Egyptian self-presentation, and much research focuses on it (discussion on the idea of individuality in the Middle Kingdom: Marée 2002). However, studying the groups into which individuals were inserted provides complementary information on their position in society. For this reason, I take kin groups as the social minimal unit of study, proposing an approach that I term koinography (see sections 5.2 and 5.3). Koinography is similar to the broadly used prosopographic model in that it extracts genealogical and professional information from monuments in order to reconstruct and individual's life and connections. The difference is the emphasis of koinography on the kin group as a unit, and on the diachronic aspects of relatedness taking as a point of departure the work of anthropologist Meyer Fortes (1958) on the developmental cycle of domestic households (see section 5.3). Kin groups are analysed from an almost organic perspective in that they emerge, expand and develop, and eventually dissolve by disappearing or by being integrated into other groups. Such patterns can be observed in display, but it is a process that must be set in the context of a group and in relation to other contemporary groups. Just as monuments existed simultaneously and were related to one another, kin groups interacted to give shape to the elite social fabric. Therefore, besides McAnany's genealogy of place, it is possible to devise a genealogy of groups that may give some keys to the understanding of social structure.

This diachronic group approach makes it possible to tackle topics mentioned above – such as inclusiveness, rights and duties, succession patterns – from a nuanced perspective in which groups at different stages of their development interact in the process and weave the social fabric together. Through various strategies, groups display themselves at different moments of their developmental cycle. Groups at the beginning of their development would seek association with more important people and exhibit as many connections as possible, even if that means being presented in a subordinate position for the sake of upward mobility (see section 5.5). At the peak of their development, they would not be represented with other groups, perhaps preferring to affirm the steadfastness of their own kin group. When people from other groups are present, they are either in a subordinate position to members of the main group or as lateral relations presumably seeking peer integration (see section 5.6). Groups in decline are more difficult to pinpoint in the record, because people do not normally display their group in an ebbing stage. They may, however, appear as counterparts of groups at the beginning of their development wanting to associate themselves with more powerful, in some cases older groups. Thus, several groups at different stages may be present on a single monument simultaneously (see section 5.7).

Display and representation of kin, especially in connection with emotionally charged places, solicits reactions from viewers and those who set up the monuments that are typically mediated by their social memory, that is, a shared social knowledge (see section 4.2). Stelae and chapels are said to have been set up to commemorate those mentioned and/or represented on them, but the identification of who is shown is not always straightforward. Identifying captions are not always present and, in addition, many of the viewers would be illiterate. These difficulties may be overridden by the use of technologies of remembrance that mobilised that shared social knowledge (see section 4.6). Display and presence and possibly performance constituted the basic means by which social memory was fostered. Passers-by were asked in inscriptions – the size of the hieroglyphs in appeals to the living, for example, may have played a role in catching their attention – to engage with the monument, and the social groups displayed may have resonated with their social memory, essentially creating a communal feeling of belonging (see section 3.3).

6.3 Theoretical approaches

Emic conceptions of kinship and marriage in Egypt appear to be flexible, and this flexibility renders rigid analysis inappropriate. I have drawn on various theoretical approaches with the aim of bringing a fresh perspective to this material. Core concepts of this thesis are the ideas of kinship as process, material agency, social memory, and holism.

An approach to kinship as process implies that it is not something given at birth, but something that is constructed and reconstructed throughout life (Carsten 2000a; 2004). The structural position of kinship in Egyptian society may have been relatively fixed, but there may have been some degree of choice for the actors. Subjective aspects of kinship and marriage may have been influenced by the defining features of kin groups presented above, such as the rights and duties of the group members and protection by the head of the group. Perhaps the non-fulfilment of some of these duties would lead to changes in those ‘fixed’ characteristics of kinship (see section 2.4). The existence of various types of kin group may point to such change: one had an array of social groupings to choose from and, while some functions may have been attached structurally to each of them, cases are known where this was modified. An example in the sphere of inheritance and succession of the higher elites of the country is that of the nomarchs of Beni Hasan, where an office was transmitted from mother’s brother to sister’s son rather than from father to son (Olabarria 2012: 891–2; see also section 3.4.3). The high status of these families may indicate that such strategies were not typical, but at least shows that the system could be subverted to a certain extent. Here, the wide array of terms for kin groups is worth exploring. Although phenomena do not have to have names in order to exist (Baines 2007 [1985]), the diversity of terminology for kin groups may point at particularities in function or usage of some of those social units (see section 2.4). Egyptian actors referred to various social units with different names and, although features of them may have overlapped, some differences are also to be expected.

Relatedness was displayed on objects, especially the clusters of stelae that are the objects of study in this thesis (although social groupings can found in tomb decoration as well). Monuments should not be understood as passive artefacts that people manipulate, but as contributing to the shaping of those same actors (Gell 1998: 5). Material culture precedes and will outlive the individual (Gosden 2005: 197), so its endurance and change have the power to influence people over the generations. Humans are born into a material

world where they interact with monuments, and that interaction contributes to monuments having an effect on people. In the case of kinship, stelae may have normalised and sustained some social groups displayed on them (see section 3.3). Thus, objects, by displaying kinship links, are in turn creating kinship links because they actualise the relationships that are being displayed on them.

Objects can have an impact on the social memory of viewers: depictions of social groups can shape the audience's understanding of society, as well as reaffirming the consciousness of a shared sense of belonging. In the latter respect, the identification of known social units on stelae is essential, which could be difficult if it were to rely exclusively on reading inscriptions, especially since many viewers may not have been fully literate (cf. Baines and Eyre 2007 [1983]). There are other aspects to take into account in the reception of these artefacts, such as performance (e.g. some inscriptions may have been read by others, or ritual actions in which people could participate may have been linked to these objects), location, or scale of representations (see section 4.5). There may have been a visual 'code' that would enable people to identify their groups, and I argue that this is achieved through display and presence (see sections 4.5 and 4.6). These two may be considered 'technologies of remembrance' (cf. Jones 2003), which would probably have been complemented and reaffirmed by performance and communal participation in commemorative practices (e.g. Connerton 1989: 37). While display is based on identification by captions – signs for kin terms could perhaps have been recognised by semi-illiterate people – and other inscriptions, presence relies more on an implied recognition of uncaptioned relatives and group members. A group may hence convey an image of itself that could become real and be remembered as such through display, presence, and possibly performance.

Finally, holism is a fundamental orientation in this thesis. The objects of study are to be seen as a whole, rather than a composite of different parts. Although some aspects may be considered separately for heuristic reasons (e.g. kinship), it is necessary to acknowledge that they belong within an all-encompassing system. Examples of a holistic approach in this thesis are the consideration of clusters of stelae in chapels, rather than individual stelae, as the unit of analysis (see section 4.3), as well as their integration into the landscape (see section 4.2.2), or the consideration of the kin group as a unit of analysis. The concept of koinography stems from this focus (see section 5.2). It might be adapted for other periods of Egyptian history, and possibly other societies, although its adequacy to them will need to be established.

Although theoretically oriented proposals have only to some extent crystallised in fully engaged discussions in Egyptological literature (see sections 1.1 and 3.3.2) their potential for gaining new insights into the material is considerable. In this framework, I hope this analysis of relatedness in the First Intermediate Period and Middle Kingdom may contribute to the study of kinship in its context of material culture.

6.4 Beyond this thesis

This thesis opens up research questions that I hope to pursue in the future. It would be desirable to expand the corpus of First Intermediate Period and Middle Kingdom material for the analysis of kin relations. I intended originally to include a chapter on kinship beyond stelae, dealing for example with literary sources, depictions in elite tombs, or the distribution of tombs in cemeteries. This, however, proved impossible within the confines of a thesis. Only some references to such sources have been included to support the argumentation, but a more thorough examination would be necessary. In addition, the question of the ritual landscape of Abydos and the integration of stelae and chapels therein also merits further investigation. Literature on the landscape of Abydos and the important role played by the cult of Osiris in the modelling of the site is relatively abundant (Richards 1999; 2005; 2010; Effland and Effland 2010; Adams 2010), but it is little understood how stelae related to cultic activities and how they contributed to shaping the landscape while in turn being influenced by it.

Some anthropologically oriented topics would also benefit from further research. A prime example of this is the tentative idea of substance in Egypt, and how the ka may have constituted an essential element of kinship (see section 5.8). If this were the case, food may have been regarded as key to the sustenance of common kinship (ethnographic parallel: Carsten 1995), and the importance of the presentation of offerings may be informed by this symbolism. In addition, the emphasis on provision through deeds of endowment (see e.g. Baer 1966; Johnson 1994), which have been understood by some as the equivalent of modern marriage contracts, may have had non-economic aspects as well: maybe the provision of a woman and her offspring would entail a membership in a type of group. The ka seems to have been a vital essence of the living and the dead (Kaplony 1980; Bolshakov 1997), and its transmission through a kin group may be postulated because it was essential that funerary rituals in which the ka is nurtured and sustained be performed by members of the kin group, usually the eldest son, who may

have been regarded as main keeper of the familial essence after the death of his father (see section 5.8). The ritual obligations of members of the family toward the deceased have been studied for funerary rites (Willems 2014: esp. 199–200), but they may also be examined as a strategy for strengthening kin ties. The role of the *ḥm-k3*, usually rendered ‘ka servant’ (Allam 1985; Russo 2007: 201–2, 207–9; Vischak 2007: 450), could be relevant here, because they might be understood as priests of the family essence.

Information on household economy is restricted for the First Intermediate Period and Middle Kingdom, and discussions focus on letters of Heqanakht and the Lahun papyri, together with some private letters. This material could be reassessed with the more flexible idea of kin group here proposed in mind. In addition, it could be interesting to initiate some comparative studies with other mainly peasant societies to see if some common patterns in the relationship of labour and kinship are noticeable, although such comparisons should be attempted with caution.

Names and naming patterns are relevant to the topic of this thesis. People were often named after a grandparent, naming from father to son(s) being a secondary pattern (Vernus 1982b; 1986). The importance of the name per se must be pivotal to such patterns, as well as probably a component that contributed to forging a sense of belonging in the group, as in many ancient and modern societies. Tracing name usage in a particular region, for example, may also illustrate ideas of anchoring in the territory that can only be hinted at in the absence of archaeological material with recorded provenance (Vernus 1982b: 328).

Study of emic conceptions of kinship and marriage is complex. While a complete picture of kinship in ancient Egypt is not achievable, exploration of the intricacies of kin groupings may contribute to a richer image of society that can incorporate what I propose are the flexible categories of Egyptian kinship. Sometimes it may matter less to find answers than to find questions that will offer a different perspective on the sources and open up new avenues of research.

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