Nomarchal Culture: Political, Administrative, Social, and Religious Aspects

“Wer und was ist überhaupt ein ‘Nomarch’?”

The title “nomarch” goes back to the Graeco-Roman period. Literally translated, it means “leader of a nome (or province),” but that is not in keeping with the real role of such officials within the province. In the early Ptolemaic period, the nomarch shared power with the *stratègos* (i.e., the military commander of the nome), an official that, as of the reign of Ptolemy III, also held civil responsibilities, while the nomarch title referred to an official of secondary rank. Although the Graeco-Roman nomarchs thus were not provincial governors in the full sense of the word, the term is generally used by Egyptologists as a designation for the most high-ranking administrators of a province.

Defined this way, the term “nomarch” is accordingly an Egyptological invention. However, even among Egyptologists, not everyone attributes the same meaning to this word. Moreover it is important to clarify from the outset what we know concerning what a nome and what a nomarch were. These concepts are unfortunately less easy to circumscribe than one might expect. On top of this, we shall see that the “real” nomarchs, i.e., those officials whose titles explicitly qualify them as provincial governors (i.e., the *ḥr.y.w-tpꜤꜢ n nome*), were members of a broader social stratum, which also included officials who,

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1 D. Franke, *BiOr* 62 (2005), col. 466.
2 For the provincial administration in the Graeco-Roman period, see Bowman, *Egypt after the Pharaohs*, p. 56–88; Hölbl, *Geschichte des Ptolemäerreiches*, p. 59 and *passim*. As regards the age of the earliest Ptolemies, the situation is not very well understood (information kindly provided by my colleague Willy Clarysse).
3 See for example the following remark by K. Baer: “it is only the *ḥrj tpꜤꜢ* who seems in all cases to be an official heading the administration of a nome; only this title should therefore be translated ‘nomarch’” (*Rank and Title*, p. 281). See also Moreno Garcia, in: *Des Néferkarê aux Montouhotep*, p. 220. In a recent publication, Moreno Garcia has downplayed the importance of the title, suggesting that *ḥr.y-tpꜤꜢ* only indicates the informal power wielded by certain local potentates, and that it is not really a title (in: *Ancient Egyptian Administration*, p. 139–146). However, apart from vaguely circumstantial indications, he offers not a shred of evidence in support of this new hypothesis. The fact that the sudden introduction of this title in the later Old Kingdom coincides with numerous other administrative reforms discussed.
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despite the fact that they did not bear the nomarch title, played very similar roles in their communities. Therefore one should distinguish between the “nomarchs” in the narrow sense of the word, and the more encompassing mode of social organization that B. Kemp has referred to as the “Nomarchy.” It is this latter nomarchal culture, rather than the nomarchs in the narrow sense of the word, that I intend to study here. Yet even if one wishes to study the problem of the nomarchy in this broader sense, it is impossible to penetrate very deeply unless the concept of nome (and nomarch) can be defined more precisely.

The Origin of the Nomes

In soubassement inscriptions of temples of the late and Graeco-Roman periods, one frequently encounters lists of nomes (fig. 1). They usually take the form of processions of men or women, personifying the nome indicated by the symbol on their head. The basis of these nome symbols is usually a sign depicting a group of square agricultural fields separated by small dykes (𓊕𓊕𓊕𓊕), of a type still widespread in Egypt today. This hieroglyph denotes “district,” and in the case of the nomes, it supports a symbol characterizing a specific region. For example, the fifteenth Upper Egyptian nome, with the nome capital al-Ashmūnayn and the cemetery Dayr al-Barshā, was the “Hare nome.” The symbol of the hare is carried by one of the nome embodiments depicted in fig. 1.

The nome lists encountered in late temples present a fossilized and traditional image of regional units which, in most cases, had little to do with the administrative districts of the day. However, these lists have more ancient

by Martinet (L’administration provinciale II, p. 232–235) does not leave a shadow of doubt that it constituted an important systemic change.

5 The documentation on these nome lists is conveniently compiled in Beinlich, Studien zu den “geographischen Inschriften,” p. 1–19.
6 Each of the nomes and their names is discussed in Helck, Die altägyptischen Gaue; for an easily surveyable list of nome symbols, see W. Helck, s.v. “Gauzeichen,” LÄ II, col. 423–424.
7 Schenkel, Bewässerungsrevolution, p. 28. The common idea that the grid represents canals (still found, for instance, in Martinet, Nomarque, p. 8; Eadem, L’administration provinciale II, p. 38), is incorrect, because the lines would then be rendered in blue. Instead, in coloured hieroglyphs, the colour is invariably black.
8 See the remarks by Yoyotte, Orientalia 35 (1966), p. 46. Several authors show they are the victims of Egyptological jargon, stating, for example, that the nomoi of the Graeco-Roman period were “the established geographic divisions from time immemorial” (Bowman, op. cit., p. 58–59). The confusion may be due to the fact that even Helck, one of the greatest specialists
ancestors. One of the most beautiful examples can be found on the *Chapelle blanche* of Senwosret I at Karnak (fig. 2). Here, the nomes are designated not by personifications, but only by their names. The list provides details about the surface of the nomes, the level reached by the annual Nile flood, and the

in this domain, offers an incoherent account of the issue. On the one hand he maintains that the “nomes” (Egyptian: *spꜢ.t*) had disappeared in the Middle Kingdom, being replaced by other regional units (“towns” and other districts like the *w.w* and the *kꜢh.w*, and, finally, the *nomoi* of the Graeco-Roman period, which, moreover, could be extended, reduced, fused, or abolished). On the other hand, he describes all these rather varied units (with the exception of the “towns”) as “Gaue,” the word generally used in German for “nomes”: see Helck, s.v. “Gaue,” in: *LÄ* II, col. 385–408; this gives a condensed overview of the book *Die altägyptischen Gaue* by the same author. In the present study, the term *nomos* will be used to designate the provinces of the Graeco-Roman period, while the word “nome” stands for Egyptian *spꜢ.t*.

Or perhaps rather the level at which the dykes were opened so as to let the floodwater into the irrigation basins. For the occasion of opening the dykes (called *sèmasia* in the Graeco-Roman period), see SeidlMayer, *Historische und moderne Nilstände*, p. 93–103. This level is not indicated for every province, but for Elephantine, Per-Hapy (at the apex of the Delta), and Tall al-Balamūn at the northern end of the Delta.
Part of the list of the Upper Egyptian nomes on the White Chapel of Senwosret I at Karnak (after Lacau and Chevrier, Une chapelle de Sesostris Ier à Kamak, pl. 3).
length of the reference cubit preserved in the main temple of each nome. This suggests, at least for this period, that there were close links between civil administration and the temple.\footnote{Admittedly, the picture about this relationship is complicated by the consideration that the nome lists on the \textit{Chapelle blanche} may not reflect the current situation in Egypt, but may have been based on earlier (Old Kingdom) sources; \textit{Seidlmayer, loc. cit.}}

An even more ancient example is the procession of ladies impersonating the royal domains (\textit{hw.w.t})\footnote{In the absence of a better alternative I will continue to use the translation “domain” for the Egyptian word \textit{hw.t}. \textit{Moreno Garcia} suggested in his interesting monograph \textit{Hwt et le milieu rural} that the \textit{hw.w.t} were royal institutions established all over the country. The central building would have been a tower-like palace, which formed the nucleus of a regional administrative unit managing not only the production, but also the storage and distribution of products, and also controlling settlements subordinate to the \textit{hw.t}. Moreover, the \textit{hw.w.t} would have functioned as fortresses. They were directly subordinate to the Crown and were certainly not private property, as has often been suggested. I accept these conclusions, but despite his criticism, I find the translation “royal domain” very appropriate for such an institution.} of pharaoh Snofru depicted in relief on the columns of that king’s valley temple (fig. 3).\footnote{\textit{Fakhry, The Monuments of Sneferu at Dahshur II.1}, p. 17–58. Recent excavations by the \textit{DAI} have not only revealed more remains of the domain procession, but also suggest that a second group of domains linked to nomes were also depicted there, at a different scale (\textit{Alexanian, Blaschta, Kahlbacher, Nerlich, Seidlmayer}, \url{http://www.dainst.org/sites/default/files/media/abteilungen/cairo/projekte/asae_autumn2010spring2011_for_web.pdf?ft=all}). These excavations also show that the causeway continues beyond the temple into the floodplain. Although it has been plausibly suggested that the temple discovered by \textit{Fakhry} is therefore unlikely to be a valley temple (\textit{Oppenheim, in: Structure and Significance}, p. 458, n. 18), intensive research has revealed no trace of the “real” valley temple near the “harbour basin” that was recently discovered.} The domains are evidently presented in regional clusters, each of which is preceded by the name of a nome. This is the earliest list of nomes that has come down to us, but even earlier references to isolated nomes are known.

According to a hypothesis formulated long ago by \textit{K. Sethe}, the nome symbols had, in the predynastic period, designated independent political units, which were absorbed in the emergent state in the course of the unification process. In the historical period, these polities would have survived in the form of the nomes, the latter thus being the rudiments of the prehistoric chiefdoms.\footnote{\textit{Sethe, Urgeschichte und älteste Religion}, § 38–68. The idea was already rejected by \textit{Helck, Verwaltung}, p. 194.} Archaeological data currently available suggest that this account is unlikely to
be correct. Today, the nomes are usually considered rather as an aspect of early pharaonic history than as a survival from the predynastic era.

One of the few scholars still arguing for an early emergence of the nomes is J. Kahl, who believes that certain inscriptions dating to as early as “dynasty zero” would contain nome symbols. A slightly more cautious stand is taken by E.-M. Engel, who has suggested that a monogram showing a scorpion on top of a sign, inscribed in ink on a cylinder vase from Abydos tomb U-j, is similar to the later nome signs. To her, these early texts may not yet contain

14 For a good account of the predynastic regional polities, see Kemp, Ancient Egypt. Anatomy of a Civilization, p. 73–92; 98–99.
references to nomes in the true sense of the word, but to territorial units of a type ancestral to them. In my view, Kahl’s idea is definitely not supported by the evidence, as none of the pertinent signs corresponds to any of the nome signs known from the pharaonic era. Engel’s idea is less easy to counter, but in this case as well, we will see that the evidence is simply too slender to say anything definite about the issue.

W. Helck has suggested that the nomes were originally administrative districts subordinate to the royal domains established throughout the country. For him, this evolution would have taken place during the first two dynasties, and probably not before the second. In one of his later publications, he has even suggested that the nomes only appeared under king Djoser, during whose reign jars inscribed with mentions of nomes were deposited in the underground corridors under his step pyramid. According to him, the creation of the nomes resulted from the urge to meet the requirements of the great pyramid construction projects, which started around this time. E. Martin-Pardey on the whole accepts this reasoning, but she adds that great building projects (although on a less vast scale) were already carried out during the first two dynasties. In her view, it is therefore likely that the nomes would have appeared already then.

This is certainly likely. Some ink inscriptions found on stone vessels under the Djoser pyramid mention officials responsible for (parts of?) the Oryx nome. Helck dated these texts to the same period as the building under which they were found: the third dynasty. However, I. Regulski has shown that these inscribed vessels belong to a larger group dating in its entirety to the reign of Khasekhemwy, the last ruler of the second dynasty. Another seal impression

16 Engel, MDAIK 62 (2006), p. 159, cat. 19. The earlier French edition of this book was already in the proof stage when her article appeared. Although I included a reference to it, this had to be very brief in order not to alter the layout significantly. As a result, my account was not really adequate. For the present edition, this part has been thoroughly revised.

17 Note that the nome signs belong to the hieroglyphic writing system, but that the vase “inscriptions” from the U-j tomb discussed by Engel have been plausibly argued not to be hieroglyphic, but to belong to another, non-textual, early notation system (Regulski, in: Egypt at its Origins 2, p. 985–1009).


20 Martin-Pardey, Provinzialverwaltung, p. 14–40, followed by Wilkinson, Early Dynastic Egypt, p. 142, who later remarks that he considers a date of introduction of the nomes in the second dynasty the most likely option.

mentioning a nome, and belonging to the same reign, was known already a long

time, and ENGEL has recently compiled more evidence antedating the third
dynasty. Almost all of this material dates again to the reign of Khasekhemwy.
I am somewhat skeptical about some of ENGEL’s identifications, but she has
convinced me that the evidence proves the existence of the Upper Egyptian
nomes 9 and 16, and the Lower Egyptian nomes 2, 3, 6 and 16, while the
Lower Egyptian nome 3 and the Upper Egyptian nome 8 are definitely attested
in texts from the reign of Djoser. According to her some sources predate the
reign of Khasekhemwy. Her number 16 was found in the tomb of Peribsen, but
whether it really mentions the first Lower Egyptian nome remains to be seen.
Her number 17, dated with certainty to the reign of king Den of the first dynasty,
would mention “eastern” and “western nomes.” This reading is not impossible,
but in view of the fact that hieroglyphic writing at the time was still in an emer-
gent stage, it is difficult to accept it without supportive evidence. Recently,
a seal impression dating to the reign of Ninetjer and certainly mentioning the
eighth Upper Egyptian nome was found. Thus, quite a collection of nome
symbols can be traced back with certainty to the late second dynasty, but for
some nomes, earlier indications exist.

This brief introduction shows that the nome symbols are of great antiquity.
However, it is equally certain that their meaning has not remained equally
resistant to change as their shape. In the Late Period, the traditional nomes
only played a role in the religious topography of Egypt. Previously they had
designated administrative units, but Egyptologists do not agree on the date
when other types of administrative districts replaced the nomes. It seems clear
that they were real administrative units towards the end of the Old Kingdom,
but the origins of that system are less easy to discern. The first source that
presents the nomes in a network spanning all of Egypt is Snofru’s list of domains
already mentioned. As shown in fig. 3, this source operates on the basis of two
different kinds of regional units at the same time: a system of royal domains
and a system of nomes. This happens in such a way that one nome usually
corresponds to a group of domains, and this possibly means that the domains

22 See KAPLONY, IÄF III, fig. 781. REGULSKI has drawn my attention to a still unpublished seal
impression from Abydos showing a nome standard supporting a bull of the same date.
p. 31 and p. 40.
24 ENGEL’s numbers 6, 11 (Upper Egypt), 1, 2, 3 (Lower Egypt).
25 Her numbers 13 and 14.
26 The same reservation is held by MARTINET, L’administration provinciale II, p. 67.
lay within the pertinent nome. The same situation seems to prevail in the fourth dynasty ostracon Leiden J 426, which mentions a number of domains of the tenth nome of Upper Egypt. Also, the Snofru list already arranges the nomes in the later canonic order. This renders unlikely HELCK's idea that the nomes were *subordinated* to the domains.

For most authors the existence of nomes establishes a definite link with a provincial administrative system. HELCK, for instance, writes

> The most ancient mention of a nome and its administration occurs on a sherd from the step pyramid, where a “leader of the nome of the gazelle”... is mentioned. Hence, under Djoser there existed a nome division and thus a nome administration.29

The fact that this text includes a sign that would later on designate a province is accordingly interpreted as an indication

1) that it already had the same significance under the third dynasty as it had later, and

2) that concurrently all Egyptian regions were organized according to the same model.

Both hypotheses are obviously possible, but the documentation available in HELCK's day did not afford any certainty in this regard, as it was based on information concerning one nome only. We have seen that the information recently compiled by ENGEL provides a new basis for discussion, as she proves that there were several nomes across Egypt at least as early as the late second dynasty. From this evidence she draws the same conclusion as HELCK did, that is, the entire territory of Egypt was subdivided into nomes.

However, since the documentation leaves room for speculation about the exact date when the nomes were introduced, it is rather difficult to assess

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28 Goedicke, *JEA* 54 (1968), p. 24–26 and pl. V.1. Administrative papyri recently discovered by P. Tallet in harbours on the Red Sea coast suggest that, by the time of Khufu, nomes played a part in the administration (personal communication), but the structure of that administration is still unclear.

29 HELCK, *Beamtentiteln*, p. 78: “Die älteste Erwähnung eines Gaues und seiner Verwaltung ist auf einer Scheibe aus der Stufenpyramide, auf der ein "Leiter des Gazellengauses ... erwähnt wird. Unter Zoser bestand also eine Gauverwaltung mus dem zu Gauverwaltung". The same reasoning has been widespread. It is still found, for instance, in MARTINET, *Nomarque*, p. 8 and *passim*. In her more recent *L’administration provinciale* II, p. 334–340 she offers a different account, with which I am fundamentally in agreement.
the politico-historical (?) reasons as to why they were created. Even though it cannot be doubted that nomes existed during the second and third dynasties, their significance from an administrative point of view seems quite uncertain to me. And although Engel’s account has increased the likelihood that there was a network of nomes spanning all of Egypt as of the late second dynasty, the evidence is still too sparing to be acceptable as conclusive evidence.

Such evidence is only forthcoming in Snofru’s list of domains and nomes, because here we find consecutive series of nomes spanning the whole country (the only missing parts being due to damage to the walls on which the list had once been inscribed). Yet, even here, there is nothing to prove that the nomes functioned as provinces, i.e., as territorial subdivisions of the state being created for administrative purposes, and headed by a governor. It seems equally possible that the domains were grouped together in regional clusters referred to by a symbol that might have been chosen because—for reasons no longer known—it already played a certain part in local culture. But it remains possible that the rest of the region, i.e. the area outside the domains, was governed by other “administrative” systems that have not left behind tangible archaeological or written traces of their existence. Other explanations are also conceivable. Thus, Pardey has recently suggested that the nomes, being associated with symbols that have some likelihood of being religious in origin, were initially regional units focused on religious centres.30 From this perspective, one might envisage the emergence of religious regional entities that, in the course of time, were transformed into administrative units. On the basis of currently available information, it is not clear when this transformation would have started, and when it would have reached its completion. It is also possible to imagine that the nomes always retained a religious aspect even after their conversion into “provinces.” This would, for instance, explain why the later nomarchs frequently combine civil tasks with responsibilities in local temples. But, in fairness, all these options belong to the realm of speculation, and there is therefore little point in pursuing this line of reasoning.

It is true that many early Old Kingdom texts mention all kinds of officials linked to nomes, such as the ‘ḏ.w-mr, the ḫkꜢ.w ḫw.t-Ꜣ.t, the ssꜢ.m.w-Ꜣ.t and the ḫkꜢ.w ṣpꜢ.t. This has often been interpreted as direct evidence for the existence of “nomarchs.”31 However, as will appear below, it is hard to prove that any

31 See, for example, Martin-Pardey, Provinzialverwaltung, p. 43–63, who interprets at least the titles ‘ḏ-mr, ssꜢ-m-Ꜣ.t, and ḫkꜢt (+ nome designation) as nomarch titles. But her interpretations insufficiently take into account the hesitations of K. Baer, who pointed
of these titles designated an official with overall responsibility for provincial administration.

The reason why it is so difficult to grasp the principles underlying the administration in these early times is that texts offering unambiguous and relevant information hardly exist. Undoubtedly the various regional entities were managed by local chiefs, but it is not certain at all that these persons were already completely integrated in what Kemp has called “formal culture,” i.e., the official culture that adopted hieroglyphic writing and a typically “pharaonic” material culture. In the early Old Kingdom, namely during the third and fourth dynasties, very few provincial tombs seem in fact to have been built according to the principles of “formal” architecture developed in the Memphite region. These are the known examples:

1. Mastabas of the third and early fourth dynasties at al-Kāb.
2. A fourth dynasty tomb at al-Jabalayn. Nothing is known about the tomb itself or about the identity of its owner, but the presence there of a wooden box containing the “archive” of the Jabalayn papyri shows that the tomb owner must have been an official integrated in a network of officials who had at least partly embraced “formal” culture.

Recently, a mastaba dating in all probability to the fourth dynasty was also discovered at the site. Moreover, in al-Jabalayn there also existed a temple dedicated to Hathor, of which the earliest remains date back to the third dynasty, or perhaps even to the second. The reliefs of the temple are executed in the “official” residence style.

out that various titles of regional officials of this period might reflect less encompassing responsibilities than those of a provincial governor (Rank and Title, p. 274–285). Even though his suggestion does not specifically concern the titles ḍ-mr and ḫkꜢ (+ nome designation), it might well be valid here as well.

For the same reasoning, see Moreno Garcia, RdE 56 (2005), p. 98; Idem, in: Des Néferkaré aux Montouhotep, p. 219–220.
Quibell, El Kab, p. 3. Several texts found in the tombs published here mention king Snofru.
Bergamini, asae 79 (2005), p. 34–36. This mastaba is closely comparable to those discovered at al-Ṭārif.
3. Early fourth dynasty mastabas at al-Ṭārif (Thebes).\textsuperscript{39} The names and titles of the deceased are unknown. Not far from here, on the hill to the north of the Valley of the Kings, there also existed a temple dating possibly to the Early Dynastic Period.\textsuperscript{40} However, in a reanalysis of the available evidence, Bußmann now dates this structure to the eleventh dynasty.\textsuperscript{41}

4. Mastabas at Abydos that can be dated to the third–fourth dynasties (although the only inscribed object, a cylinder seal, refers to king Sahure of the fifth dynasty). The names and titles of the deceased are not known.\textsuperscript{42}

5. Mastabas at Bayt Khallâf.\textsuperscript{43} The tombs have yielded a mass of inscribed material, most of it in the form of seal impressions dated to the reigns of Djoser and Sanakht. Today, the hypothesis that the largest mastaba belonged to Djoser himself is no longer accepted. The tombs more likely belong to members of a very high, local elite, of which it unfortunately remains impossible to determine the nature.\textsuperscript{44} It is not clear whether the titles found in the sealings, and which include both sacerdotal titles and others that may be purely administrative, refer to the tomb owners.

6. Third and fourth dynasty mastabas at Najʿ al-Dayr. The names and titles of the tomb owners are unknown. One tomb contained an object inscribed with the name of Snofru.\textsuperscript{45}

7. Third and fourth dynasty mastabas at al-Raqaqna. The names and titles of the deceased are unknown.\textsuperscript{46} Several of the tombs are very large. Only few objects bear inscriptions, but these include a graffito mentioning king Snofru and a seal impression with the name of Khafre.

8. A mastaba was recently discovered by the author’s research team at Dayr Abū Ḥinnis. In type it resembles fourth dynasty mastabas, but it occurs in a cemetery area with smaller tombs of the third Dynasty. This tomb is still unpublished.


\textsuperscript{40} At the site which, on a proposal by Vörös, is often referred to by the completely inappropriate name “Thoth Hill”; see Vörös, Pudleiner, \textit{MDAIK} 53 (1997), p. 283–287; Vörös, \textit{Temple on the Pyramid of Thebes}, p. 55–64.

\textsuperscript{41} Bußmann, \textit{Die Provinztempel Ägyptens}, p. 75–76.

\textsuperscript{42} Peet, Loat, \textit{The Cemeteries of Abydos III}, p. 8–22.

\textsuperscript{43} Garstang, \textit{Mahâsna and Beit Khallâf}, p. 8–27.

\textsuperscript{44} See Wilkinson, \textit{Early Dynastic Egypt}, p. 97; 324; 357.


\textsuperscript{46} Garstang, \textit{The Third Egyptian Dynasty}, p. 31–60.
The cemetery of Nuwayrāt (pl. 1). This site is located about 10 km to the south of Zawīyat al-Mayyitīn, which is well known because of the miniature step pyramid that was erected there in the third dynasty (but probably before the reign of king Huni, who reigned at the end of the dynasty). The cemetery of Nuwayrāt contains a large number of rock tombs, but the site has hardly been studied thus far. Garstang attributed it to the third and fourth dynasties. This dating was contested by D. Kessler, who instead proposed a date in the fifth and sixth dynasties, probably primarily on the basis of the consideration that the custom of burying the provincial elite in rock tombs is generally assumed to have started then. However, early results of a survey carried out there by the Leuven University mission to Dayr al-Barshā has shown that the ceramics

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47 Piacentini, *Zawiet el-Mayetin*; for the pyramid, see p. 37–43. The pyramid of Zawīyat al-Mayyitīn is usually considered to be part of the group of miniature pyramids built by Huni across Egypt. However, G. Dreyer and W. Kaiser already long ago expressed doubts, because the pyramid of Zawīyat al-Mayyitīn is provided with a limestone casing, as a result of which the pyramid is also larger than the other pyramids attributed to Huni (Dreyer, Kaiser, *MDAIK* 36 [1980], p. 50–54). According to Piacentini, the dimension of all pyramids might well have been the same if they originally had a casing, but she is hardly able to provide any supportive arguments for the hypothesis that they had such a casing. Moreover, during recent excavations carried out by the Supreme Council for Antiquities, it has become clear that there exists a chamber below the pyramid core (personal observation made in 2006 and 2011; note that a hypothetical drawing of this pyramid made by J.-P. Lauer already features a chamber [*Histoire monumentale des pyramides* I, fig. 62]). Since this feature is apparently absent in all other miniature pyramids, the one under discussion clearly occupies a place apart. This renders likely that it dates to a period different from the Huni pyramids. It could be earlier, or like the miniature pyramid at al-Sayla, it could be of a later date, during the reign of Snofru. However, since the pyramid at Zawīyat al-Mayyitīn differs typologically from the one at al-Sayla (see the list of Dreyer, Kaiser, *loc. cit.*), the former option seems more likely. The consequence would be that it dates to the reign of Djoser, of Sekhemkhet, or of Sanakht (for the position of Sanakht in the late third dynasty, but before Huni, see Seidl Mayer, in: *Haus und Palast*, p. 198–200, n. 14; Ćwiek, in: *Chronology and Archaeology in Ancient Egypt* [The Third Millennium B.C., p. 87–103; this includes a refutation of a recent proposal to date Sanakht to the beginning of the third dynasty by Incordino, *Chronological Problems of the IIIrd Egyptian Dynasty*; similar criticism in Pätznick, in: *Et in Ægypto et ad Agyptum*, p. 566, n. 20]. Ćwiek’s argumentation for dating all the miniature pyramids to the reign of Snofru cannot be accepted, as the argumentation for dissociating the “name-stone” mentioning Huni from the Elephantine pyramid sounds somewhat forced.


from the tombs dates homogeneously to the third and early fourth
dynasties.\textsuperscript{50} Nuwayrāt can thus be considered the earliest known rock
tomb cemetery in Egypt. Several of these rock tombs have false doors,
and one has remains of painted decoration in “formal” style. Unfortunately
the names and titles of the people buried here are completely unknown.

In the case of the two last cemeteries, the discussed tombs lie high up the hill
slopes, overlooking vast cemeteries with roughly made, small rock circle tombs,
which obviously belonged to less prominent strata of the society. This offers an
interesting insight in the social hierarchy of the buried populations: the rock
tombs and mastabas in the nine cemeteries just passed in review undoubt-
edly belonged to local elites, who during life must have had “administrative”
responsibilities of some sort. Unfortunately, we in most cases have no texts
informing us about their social position. One could consider the possibility
that they were charged with the administration of the nome, but this is not at
all certain. It is in any case striking that almost all these cemeteries are located
at places different from the later nomarch cemeteries. Also, where information
on the profession of the tomb owners is available, there is no clear link with
nome administration. The following cases can be noted.

The owner of one of the tombs at al-Kāb bore the titles ‘iry-ı̇h.t-ı̇nsw.t and
ım.y-r ūm.w-ntr (“overseer of priests”), another was ‘iry-ı̇h.t ınsw.t and šḥḏ ūm.w-
nı̇tr (“inspector of priests”).\textsuperscript{51} Nothing in these titles suggests these men were
nomarchs.\textsuperscript{52} They clearly derived their status from their role in a local temple.

The al-Jabalayn papyri frequently refer to an official entitled ḥḳꜢ “chief,”\textsuperscript{53}
and to the “son of a chief” (sꜢ ḥḳꜢ). According to the editor of these documents,
the title ḥḳꜢ here is undoubtedly an abbreviation of ḥḳꜢ ǹw.t “chief of a town/

\textsuperscript{50} De Meyer, Vereecken, Vanthuyne, Hendrickx, Op de Beeck, Willems, in: \textit{Under the

\textsuperscript{51} Quibell, \textit{El Kab}, p. 3–4; pl. XVIII.

\textsuperscript{52} See also Moreno Garcia, in: \textit{Séhel entre Égypte et Nubie}, p. 9–10. According to Martinet
(\textit{L’administration provinciale II}, p. 356–365, these officials are not nomarchs, but itinerant
officials linked to the Residence. Unfortunately, her account is somewhat confused;
evidence as to their being officials linked directly to the residence seems to depend only
on the literal translation of her reading of the title (as rḥ nsw.t “acquaintance of the king”).

\textsuperscript{53} I have hesitated about how to translate this term into English. The verb ḥḳꜢ denotes
leadership, and the noun derived from it can refer to leaders at different hierarchical
levels. Thus it can refer to the king, to heads of tribes, or to persons of a relatively high
administrative position. I wish to avoid the impression that, by translating the word with
“chief,” there is necessarily an implication of tribalism.
village,” the latter being understood to be a royal domain. She argues that all these documents concern the domain (pr d.t) mentioned in papyrus IV, recto C. This interpretation is possible, but two other alternatives likewise merit being considered, based on the content of the archive itself:

1) P. al-Jabalayn I recto D refers to the construction (?) of a “temple of Snofru” (ḥw.t-nṯr n.t Snfrw), which could, according to Posener-Kriéger, be either a chapel for Snofru at al-Mu‘allā, or his domain Ḥw.t-Snfrw, of which the ancient name survives in that of the modern village of Aṣfūn al-Mata‘na. I wonder, however, if it may not refer rather to an enlargement of the temple of al-Jabalayn itself, where there is archaeological evidence of royal interest already under the third, or even the second, dynasty (see n. 38). An inscription in the tomb of Metjen shows that he bore the title ḫk3 ḥw.t-nṯr n.t Snfrw “chief of the temple of king Snofru.” The papyrus al-Jabalayn I refers to a religious institution of the same class as the one directed by Metjen, who claims to have been its ḫk3. It could well be that the ḫk3 mentioned in the al-Jabalayn papyrus was a colleague of Metjen.

2) A passage on the recto of papyrus al-Jabalayn III mentions deliveries to the ḫk3 just beside others to the ḥw.t ẖ.t, the latter term designating, according to Moreno Garcia a kind of palace directing vast agricultural Crown institutions comprising domains, settlements, cattle and workmen; institutions that were established in regions that were poorly organized from an administrative point of view or which had great agricultural potential, in places where the Crown had an interest in affirming its presence and in developing local resources.

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54 Posener-Kriéger, RdE 27 (1975), p. 219: “responsable d’un villag(e) (c. à d. domaine).” Her interpretation has been accepted by Moreno Garcia (Ḥwt et le milieu rural, p. 95; 113), although his interpretation of what a domain was differs significantly from that of Posener-Kriéger.
55 Posener-Kriéger, I papiri di Gebelein, pl. 3.
58 Posener-Kriéger, I papiri di Gebelein, pl. 20.
59 With this, he means a royal palace.
According to him, several villages could be dependent from a hw.t 3.t.\(^{60}\)

The managers of such institutions bore the title of hk3 hw.t 3.t. Even though this title was still rare in southern Egypt at the beginning of the Old Kingdom, it would not be surprising if the director of a hw.t 3.t would have been referred to in his community by the short designation hk3.

It is not easy to choose between the hypotheses I have just proposed, but for our discussion the consequences remain the same. According to my first point of view, the hk3 was an official in charge of a local temple erected for the cult of the king, according to the other, he was in charge of a domain. The two villages of Inr.ty and Trw, of which the al-Jabalayn papyri provide the accounts, could have been subordinate either to the first, or to the second of the two institutions. Moreover, inscriptions in the tomb of Seshemnefer I show that the two hypotheses may not even be contradictory.\(^{61}\) They inform us that Seshemnefer not only held the position of priest in Inr.ty, but also that he partly financed his own funerary cult on the basis of income from a domain (pr d.t) called Trw. The exact functioning of such domains is not easy to grasp. It is often thought that they were private property, but according to the interpretation of Moreno Garcia they in reality depended on the royal administration, which asserted its presence in the countryside mainly through the royal domains (hw.t).\(^{62}\) It is accordingly not impossible that there was a hw.t-domain in the region, from which the village of Trw depended. It is also known that a royal domain (hw.t) could include a cult place for the king,\(^{63}\) which may have been referred to as a hw.t-ntr n.t Snfrw. The official entitled hk3 n hw.t-ntr n.t Snfrw might well have this background.

This demonstrates the presence, in the al-Jabalayn region, of officials closely attached to either the royal court, or to the local cult of the king, or functioning as managers of domains of the pr-d.t type (the hk3.w niw.t). No matter how the evidence is read, these persons were clearly integrated in the developing national elite culture, which was able to read and write. Nevertheless, there is not a shred of evidence to indicate the presence of a provincial governor in this

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60 Moreno Garcia, zās 125 (1998), p. 45–55; for the citation, see p. 55 (“une sorte de palais qui dirigeait de vastes exploitations agricoles de la couronne, comprenant des domaines, des localités, du bétail et des travailleurs; exploitations qui étaient fondées dans des régions peu organisées du point de vue administratif ou qui avaient un grand potentiel agricole, là où la couronne avait intérêt à affirmer sa présence et à développer les ressources locales”). It should be noted that one type of personnel attached to a hw.t-3.t, the hm.w nsw.t, frequently appears in the papyri from al-Jabalayn.

61 Kanawati, Tombs at Giza I, pl. 45 (Trw); pl. 50 (Inr.ty).


region. And the same holds true of all other cemeteries under discussion. At sites like Nuwayrāt, there are even strong arguments against viewing the owners of the elite rock tombs as provincial governors; there are simply too many tombs of this kind, and in the study referred to in n. 50, it is argued that it is rather more likely that the population reflects the presence of a royal domain (ḥw.t).

I have noted before that nomes first become really manifest in the sources in the later second dynasty, but also that evidence for this period is somewhat patchy. Although it cannot be ruled out that a country-wide network of nomes existed from the outset, this cannot be definitively proven from the sources. It remains possible that nomes were initially unevenly spread across the country. The information on the Oryx nome is in this regard rather interesting. It is not only one of the nomes mentioned from the reign of Khasekhemwy onwards, it is also, with eight references, by far the most commonly attested nome designation; the few other nomes that are mentioned at all in these early texts are attested only once or twice. This could be due merely to the coincidence of preservation. However, a sign of perhaps exceptional royal interest in this nome might be that this is the only region in Middle Egypt where a miniature pyramid has been found (see n. 47). A second indication might be the vast cemetery of Nuwayrāt in the same nome. This is certainly the largest early Old Kingdom elite cemetery known from Egypt outside the Memphite region, and one that “announces,” as it were, the emergence of the provincial rock tomb cemeteries of the later Old Kingdom. Finally, the number of royal domains is, according to the nome list of Snofru, nowhere in Upper Egypt as high as in this nome, where there were five.

Although I am unable to explain the situation in this region, it seems evident that the Oryx nome enjoyed an extraordinary prestige, which might be the reason why it appears so often in the texts from the Djoser complex in Saqqāra. These inscriptions testify to the existence of two different kinds of regional administrator: a ššm-ṭꜢ of the Oryx nome and a ḥḳꜢ of the Oryx nome (see n. 64). This suggests either that there was a hierarchical dependency chain between these officials, or a system wherein different officials had responsibilities for different segments of the regional administration. We

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64 Firth, Quibell, Step Pyramid I, p. 137; II, pl. 106 (5–6); PD V, pl. 28 (4–5), all in functional titles. The name of the nome also appears in a number of other vase inscriptions discovered under the Djoser pyramid, but not within the framework of an administrative title (PD V, pl. 28).

65 See the list provided by Kanawati, Governmental Reforms, p. 9, fig. 3.

66 Considering the uncertainty as to the nature of the administrative regime, I would advise to designate neither of these officials as ‘nomarchs’ (a nomenclature used e.g.
shall see that the latter model was probably in force under the fifth dynasty. In any case, it is still quite uncertain whether the other regions were already administered in the same way.

That the spread of the nomes across Egypt initially may have been patchy also finds some support in the spread of the miniature pyramids already discussed. Seven of these monuments are currently known, and based on architectural similarities, at least the five southernmost ones seem to be the result of one building project, probably dating to the reign of king Huni. The spatial distribution of these monuments suggests that each belonged to a nome.67 According to Seidlmayer’s convincing interpretation, the archaeological context surrounding the pyramid at Elephantine suggests that it was part of a royal domain (ḥw.t).68 The domain list of Snofru indicates that in most nomes there were several domains at the same time (two, three, four, or, in the case of the Oryx nome, even five). It seems likely that, within such regional clusters of domains, the ones provided with a pyramid may have been considered of greater importance than the other domains. One is tempted to ask the question whether such hierarchical groupings of domains may not have been the origin of the nome system as presented in the Snofru list.

I have dwelled long on these issues because detailed analysis reveals that, even where regional elites are clearly in evidence, there is no indication that it might concern (an elite surrounding) a governor of a nome. On the contrary, indications for the existence of such officials are completely absent, whereas there is clear proof that some of the regional elites were linked to a divine or perhaps royal cult place,69 or to the system of royal domains. When the first large, decorated, provincial rock tombs emerge in Middle Egypt later in the fourth and early fifth dynasties, the extensive title lists of the owners suggest

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68 Seidlmayer, op. cit., p. 205–214, with references to the pertinent literature on this and the other miniature pyramids.
69 The Hathor temple in al-Jabalayn was of course dedicated to a goddess, but considering the close ties between Hathor and royalty, a royal element is likely to have been in force here as well.
that the same situation still prevailed. This is the case for the owners of the Fraser tombs at Ṭiḥna al-Jabal, who span the latter half of the fourth dynasty and the beginning of the fifth, for Ia–Ib, who owned a monumental tomb dated to the reign of Neferefre in Dayr al-Barṣā, and for the earliest tombs at al-Ḥammamiya.

Some fourth dynasty officials holding administrative responsibilities in the nomes of Upper and Lower Egypt seem not to belong to the classes of administrators just discussed, and some authors hold that these persons were a kind of nomarch. This is specifically the case for the owners of three tombs of the early fourth dynasty: Metjen, Netjeraperef and Pehernefer. In all these cases, however, this concerns Residence officials who carried out specific missions in various regions of Egypt, all of which are designated with nome symbols. In my view, we are here not yet facing a category of governors, as such officials might be expected to be more or less permanently resident in a nome, whereas these three men only performed tasks of limited duration in the nomes. Possibly, their responsibilities were linked to the management of specific projects there. As far as I can see, there is not a shred of evidence to prove that this model would have been used universally across Egypt to steer the daily administrative affairs in the nomes. Perhaps these three officials represent rather special cases.

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70 For the interpretation of the texts from these tombs see Willems, in: GS Franke. It should be noted here that the tomb of Khenu-kai, probably dating to the latter half of the fourth dynasty, includes a list of the northernmost nomes of Upper Egypt, however without a preserved context (Fraser, asae 3 [1902], p. 75–76).
72 See now Martinet, L’administration provinciale II, p. 541–550, who, with little justification, refers to the owners of these tombs as "nomarchs".
73 For a more complete overview of such itinerant administrators, see Martinet, L’administration provinciale II, p. 118–119. On p. 220–222, she discusses these officials as an early form of nome administrators (in Eadem, Nomarchie, p. 116–123, she still calls them "nomarchs"). Although they were clearly officials, and definitely worked in areas designated as nomes, it is not certain whether it is justified to call them nomarchs, however, as the kind of administrative power wielded by them is far from clear. An interesting case of a permanently resident local administrator is that of Khufu-ankh at Elephantine, who can probably be dated to the mid-fourth dynasty. He held the titles of "overseer of Elephantine," sšm-tꜢ, īr.y-īḫ.t nsw.t, and īr.y-īḫ.t pr ḫḥt. Here we are, according to Seidlmayer, not facing a nomarch, but an overseer of a town. Note that in the same period and region, another (branch of the) elite responsible for the Satet temple is likewise in evidence (Seidlmayer, in: Texte und Denkmäler des ägyptischen Alten Reiches, p. 295–308; especially p. 296–299).
74 Moreno Garcia has recently developed the hypothesis that the activities of Metjen and Pehernefer might be related to "the very active policy of establishing ḫḥwt and ḫḥwt ḫḥt in..."
cases. I have to admit that this hypothesis remains to be proven, but this is also the case for the hypothesis that regards Metjen, Netjeraperef, and Pehernefer as typical representatives of the provincial administration of the fourth dynasty.\(^75\)

In view of these uncertainties, it seems most prudent for the time being to accept that the principles of regional administration are largely beyond our grasp for this early period. Consequently, the hypothesis that the nomes constituted the basic administrative units throughout the country remains highly doubtful, even though they are by now frequently mentioned in the texts. Although it must be admitted that they played a part in the administration, it is equally difficult for the fourth dynasty as for the preceding period to discern what kind of administration we are talking about.

### The Nomes during the Fifth Dynasty

Profound changes occurred in Egypt in the course of the fifth dynasty. Until then, the highest officials of the central administration had been important members of the royal family. By the reign of Niuserre, these seem to have been increasingly replaced by non-royals, who were professional administrators.\(^76\)

Moreover, the funerary inscriptions from this period, which are far more numerous than ever before, show that these officials held long series of titles arranged in coherent series, called “title strings” by K. Baer. These are generally understood as reflecting a policy of administrative professionalization.\(^77\)

During the fifth dynasty, the number of officials (or perhaps rather, the information concerning them) increases considerably. Their tombs remain concentrated largely in the Memphite region, but one also notices growing numbers of monumental tombs of high regional administrators outside the...
Residence. This evolution can be explained at least partly by a tendency of permanently stationing regional administrators in places far away from the Residence. However, one should not rule out the complementary hypothesis that the regional elites, who may have existed since time immemorial, increasingly embraced the “formal” Residence culture, of which the inscribed and decorated tombs—constituting the mainstay of the evidence—are a manifestation. An important implication of this hypothesis is that the visibility of the regional administrators in the documentation might reflect not only the implementation of changes in administrative structure, but also a formalization of the material culture, with which the already-existing local elites increasingly surrounded themselves.\footnote{For a comparable reasoning, see also Moreno García, *RdE* 56 (2005), p. 95–128 (particularly 109); *Idem*, in: *Des Néferkarê aux Montouhotep*, p. 215–228; *Idem*, in: *Séhel entre Égypte et Nubie*, p. 19–22; Martinet, *L’administration provinciale* II, p. 637.}

However it may be, in the course of the fifth dynasty one notes a large number of persons charged with regional administrative tasks, and frequently they utilize nome symbols in their titles. This is often understood as an indication supporting the existence of nomarchs, and thus of nomes functioning as provinces.\footnote{Recently, for instance, Moreno García, *Ḥwt et le milieu rural*, p. 238–239; Martinet, *Nomarque*, p. 143–176; Martinet, *L’administration provinciale* II, p. 220–231.} For instance, the tomb of Khu-nes in Zawīyat al-Mayyītīn contains the title string \textit{ı̓r.y-ı̓ḫ.t nsw.t MꜢ-ḥḏ, sšm-tꜢ, im.y-r wp.t}, which was interpreted by Moreno García as a designation of a nomarch.\footnote{Moreno García, *ZÄS* 125 (1998), p. 47. See also, for instance, Fischer, *Dendera*, p. 9–12; Martin-Pardey, *Provinzialverwaltung*, p. 43–63; 78–108; Martinet, loc. cit.} Studying the texts from this perspective, however, it is not easy to decide which titles characterize a “nomarch,” for the strings of titles that Egyptologists have linked to the nomarchy are not only very numerous, but also extremely unsystematic. It concerns titles like \textit{ḏ-mr (+ nome designation), ḫḥꜢ ḫw.t-Ꜣ.t, sšm-tꜢ (+ nome designation)}, \textit{ı̓r.y-ı̓ḫ.t nsw.t (+ nome designation), im.y-r wp.t, im.y-r swnw, im.y-r ššm-tꜢ}.\footnote{According to Moreno García, "une sorte de nomarque": *Ḥwt et le milieu rural*, p. 234. Note, however, that S.J. Seidlmayer remarks concerning one office holder with this title that it is unlikely to concern a nomarch ("Es wäre natürlich übertrieben, hier von einer frühen ‘Dynastie’ von Gauverwaltern zu sprechen"), and that this is more likely a town administrator: in: *Texte und Denkmäler des ägyptischen Alten Reiches*, p. 298. In another text, a \textit{sšm-tꜢ spꜢ.wt šmꜤ.w} “sšm-tꜢ of the nomes of Upper Egypt” is mentioned (Copenhagen, Ny Carlsberg Glyptothek ṾEIN 896a; see Jørgensen, *Egypt* I, p. 48–49). This official is not responsible for one nome, but for a whole series of them, so that the translation “nomarch” is inappropriate. Martinet now accepts that \textit{ḏ-mr} and \textit{sšm-tꜢ} do not designate nomarchs (*L’administration provinciale* II, p. 632). Still, somewhat}
im.y-r niw.wt mꜢw.t, and many others. Understanding these titles is a complex matter. On the one hand, some were used only in certain parts of the country, but not in others. On the other, certain titles that have been interpreted as nomarch titles probably have a different background. This is the case for the ḥḳꜢ hw.t ӻꜢ.t, who directed an institution coordinating the royal domains. Other titles attested for provincial administrators designate kinds of tasks that may be not exclusively of a regional kind. Here one should mention the title im.y-r wp.t, which means “overseer of a mission,” and which may be borne not only by “project managers” charged with a task in the provinces, but also with other kinds of tasks. Considering that the title strings found in the examples incongruously, she considers as a nomarch a sšm-tꜢ whose title is associated with a nome symbol—if this person also wields other territorial titles and/or if he is buried in the nome (p. 226–228).

82 ḏ-mr in the Delta, sšm-tꜢ in Upper Egypt. Note that, according to Moreno Garcia, in: Moreno Garcia (ed.), Ancient Egyptian Administration, p. 106, the title ḏ-mr was “in no way related to territorial administration.”


84 I can see no reason why some attestations of this title should be translated differently, viz. as “overseer of the division” or “Vorsteher der Teilung,” as was suggested for some examples of the title (Fischer, Dendera, p. 221–223; Valloggia, Messagers, p. 33; Martin-Pardey, sak II [1984], p. 231–251; now also Martinet, L’administration provinciale II, p. 378–379). The reasons why the same title, when linked to offerings (im.y-r wp.t ḫtp-nṯr) should contain a word wp.t different from wp.t “mission,” “charge,” as was proposed by H. G. Fischer, escape me. Likewise, I do not understand why the title “overseer of (a) mission(s)” would be insufficiently specific to designate an official working in a provincial context, as was suggested by Martin-Pardey. Moreover, according to her the translation “overseer of (a) mission(s)” would be inadequate, for this would imply that these officials would be sent on missions to nomes, and accordingly that the administrative network of nomes would not yet be operational (p. 235–236). This argumentation is far from compelling, and moreover it takes for granted that the nomarchal administrative system was fully established, which remains to be proved. Major premises of Martin-Pardey’s reasoning are accordingly of restricted value.

Numerous other authors hold that the title im.y-r wp.t followed by a nome designation (Fischer, Dendera, p. 9; Martin-Pardey, Provinzialverwaltung, p. 66; Kanawati, Governmental Reforms, p. 2; Martin-Pardey, sak II [1984], p. 231–251; now also similarly Martinet, L’administration provinciale II, p. 222; 227–228), was the most important title of a nomarch. From this perspective it is hard to understand why it seems not to have been accorded to the new official class of the ḥr.y.w-tp ḡꜢ “nomarchs” created during the great administrative reform of the early sixth dynasty (Moreno Garcia, RdE 56 [2005], p. 116). Moreover, if this was not the nomarch title proper, but only the most important of a nomarch’s titles, which other title meant “nomarch”? In this discussion one deplores the
are rather unstable, it seems clear that the way they were accorded to a degree differed from one case to another. This implies that they were linked to different responsibilities which could be covered in combination by a single individual, but which did not have to be. It is therefore justifiable to say that these officials were administratively active in nomes, but not yet that they were nomarchs, even though, in cases where one individual bore numerous different titles at the same time, the difference with a later nomarch would be minimal.

In order to understand the background of this system of regional administration, it is useful to consider the ideas N. Strudwick formulated on the development of the central administration. He shows that during the fifth dynasty five “directorates” or “ministries” emerged, which were directed respectively by an “oversee of scribes of the king’s documents” (im.y-r sš.w -nswt), an “oversee of the six great mansions” (i.e. minister of justice; im.y-r hwt-wrt 6), an “oversee of works of the king” (im.y-r kš.wt nswt), an “oversee of the two treasuries” (im.y-r pr.wy-hd), and an “oversee of the two granaries” (im.y-r šnw.ty). According to Strudwick, all of these titles could be borne by the vizier (tꜢy.ty zšb tꜢ.ty), but most are attested also with other persons. The ministry of justice is the only one to be specifically reserved to the vizier. The officials directing the other institutions were not necessarily viziers, yet it can be shown that they bore equally lofty rank titles as the vizier. In this period,

very vague way the terms “provincial official” and “nomarch” are used. Clearly a nomarch is a provincial official, but a provincial official is not necessarily a nomarch! Since many authors do not clearly make this distinction in their discussion, it is hard to follow which administrative level is being discussed.

The list published by Kanawati (Governmental Reforms, p. 2–4) clearly shows the variability of the title strings. In his more recent publications, Moreno Garcia seems to have changed his earlier position (see n. 80) in our direction, placing “la création du système des nomarques vers la fin de la Ve et le début de la VIe dynastie” (RdE 56 [2005], p. 106–107; Idem, in: Des Néferkarê aux Montouhotep, p. 220; Idem, in: Séhel entre Égypte et Nubie, p. 20). See now also Martinet, L’administration provinciale II, p. 220–231, who designates several fifth dynasty administrators as nomarchs, however without giving any clear criteria that would allow one to decide which officials are nomarchs and which are not.

Moreno Garcia now follows more or less the same reasoning in: Ancient Egyptian Administration, p. III; 120.

In a recent study, Krejčí also discusses this title (Ä&L 10 [2000], p. 67–75; particularly p. 71). He attributes a less prominent place in the hierarchy to this office than Strudwick. However, since Krejčí does not enter into a discussion of the dynamics of the administrative system, discussing the fifth and sixth dynasty attestations as a homogeneous block, I prefer to follow Strudwick.
one therefore notices the existence of a system of five more or less independent directorates, the vizier being apparently only a *primus inter pares* among their directors. In many cases, the vizier was in charge only of the directorate of Justice; in others, he bore one or more of the other director’s titles besides, or perhaps even all at the same time. Only in the latter case, he really stood at the apex of the national administration. This process strongly reminds one of the one we have proposed for the provincial level. In certain conditions, an individual might succeed in accumulating so many local titles that his power in reality approached that of a “governor,” but in other cases, several top officials were active simultaneously, and there is no proof that that the one was necessarily subordinated to another.

It is striking that the central administration displays an equally fragmented picture as the provincial one. There is no vizier with overall responsibility, nor is there a governor responsible for the administration of the nome in its entirety. I do not think that this analogy can be due to coincidence. It seems possible that the administrative subdivisions apparent at the central level may have been in fact the cause of fragmentation at the provincial level. This has been visualized in figure 4. Tentatively: this figure does not pretend to be exact in detail, but only offers a possible general model that might explain why responsibilities were so severely fragmented both at the central and the regional level. It shows a situation in which officials sent on mission to the nomes, or stationed there on a permanent basis, were all directly subordinate to one of the directorates of the central administration. At the regional level, this leads to an administrative segmentation that corresponds exactly to the one that is apparent in the autobiographical texts inscribed in the tombs of the regional administrators.90

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89 This is an anachronistic way of putting things, of course, because real governors (i.e. nomarchs) did not yet exist.
90 As a hypothesis, one might, for instance, envisage that a title like *im.y-r wp.t*, “overseer of (a) mission(s),” was borne by a person sent, for example, by the directorate of “works of the king” for a specific project. Thus, one can read in the autobiography of Nekhebu that this directorate directed the excavation of a canal in the Delta. Similarly, the directorate of the granaries might have been responsible of agricultural establishments. Fig. 4 is certainly too simple, because it is likely that the royal palace also had its own administrative network in the nomes. In this context, titles like *ḥḳꜢ ḥwt-ḥꜢ.t* and *im.y-r swsw* might be considered (see Moreno García, *zās* 124 [1997], p. 116–130). Recent efforts by other scholars also work from the assumption that the central administration directly intervened into local affairs, and the model proposed here could well explain some of the workings of this involvement (Moreno García, in: *Ancient Egyptian Administration*,...
Nome Administration under the Sixth Dynasty

Towards the end of the Old Kingdom, and perhaps as early as the reign of Djedkare-Isesi, one can perceive the emergence of a new structure in the central administration, a process that reached its completion during the sixth dynasty. The five directorates continued to exist, but the vizier obtained overall responsibility of the “ministry” of Justice and the “ministry” of royal documents, while the leaders of the other “ministries” lost their highest rank titles. Thus, all departments were from now on clearly subordinated to the vizier.

It seems important that—simultaneous with this transformation of the central administration—a new official appeared on the provincial scene: the nomarch, in Egyptian designated as ḥr.y-tp “overseer of a nome.”

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92 According to Baer, this change manifested itself already in the late fifth dynasty (*Rank and Title*, p. 274–284), but his most ancient examples, Isi of Idfū and Unas-ankh of Thebes, are nowadays often dated to the early sixth dynasty, or, in the case of the latter,
In most cases, the region for which the governor is responsible is designated by the nome symbol. The new title clearly expresses that a single official now directed this regional unit. Therefore, there can be no doubt that towards the beginning of the sixth dynasty, the nome was an administrative district functioning like a province. The title ḫr.y-tp ꜊ꜣ n ṣpꜣ.t/NOME suggests that the nomarch assumed overall responsibility for it. Thus, just like the vizier had obtained overall authority over all departments of the central administration, the nomarch had full powers in his nome. At both levels, governance was now organized on the basis of a top-down structure. Moreover, there were high officials functioning as intermediaries between the central administration and the nome governors: the “provincial viziers” and the “overseers of Upper Egypt (im.y.w-r Ṣmꜣ.w). For this reason I think it is justified to draw up the organization scheme of fig. 5.

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93 In the southernmost nomes, the title always takes the form ḫr.y-tp ꜊ꜣ n ṣpꜣ.t, without making explicit the name of the nome. For this reason, the title will be referred to on the following pages as ḫr.y-tp ꜊ꜣ n ṣpꜣ.t/NOME.

94 This system is apparently not attested everywhere in Upper Egypt. No nomarchs are textually attested for the northernmost nomes (17–22) of this part of Egypt. It is usually argued that, because of their proximity to Memphis, these nomes were directly supervised by Memphite officials (MORENO GARCIA, Ḥwt et le milieu rural, p. 242–248). However, a different explanation seems necessary, because this area is generally almost void of archaeological remains, at least before the second half of the New Kingdom: except in Tarkhān and al-Jirzā, no major sites dating to the Predynastic and Early Dynastic periods are known. With rare exceptions, the sources from the Old Kingdom are restricted to the cemetery of al-Sharūna. The region is similarly empty under the First Intermediate Period and Middle Kingdom, except in Iḥnāsiya/Sidmant al-Jabal and Kawm al-Khalwa, in the Second Intermediate Period, and in the early New Kingdom (except Madīnat al-Ghurāb). This paucity of evidence corresponds to another phenomenon: the fact that this “empty zone” during long periods in the Predynastic and First Intermediate Period and part of the Middle Kingdom constituted a transitional zone between more northerly and southerly areas with very different archaeological assemblages (SEIDLMAYER, Gräberfelder p. 394).

The most natural explanation for this enduring state of affairs to me seems to be that the region was much less densely occupied than other parts of Egypt. Under such conditions, the economic position of the local elites that must nevertheless have existed, are likely to have been much less comfortable than in other parts of Egypt. The relative scarcity of decorated and inscribed tombs here may be a consequence of their modest economic means rather than to testify to a complete absence of an administrative class.

95 In Egyptology, there is widespread agreement that the “provincial viziers” were usually nomarchs who, besides this, functioned as a second vizier beside the one residing at the Capital. Recently, however, E. MARTINET showed that only three of the viziers buried in
As in the case of fig. 4, it should be realized that the purpose of this scheme is merely to present the principles of this system of organization in an easily comprehensible way; it should not be considered as a completely accurate and detailed account of the system. Moreover, the administrative network dependent on the royal palace has not been integrated in it. Also, MORENO GARCIA has recently shown that in the case of the 9th nome of Upper Egypt, the real situation was far more complex than the description I have just given.96 Two branches of one family were here responsible for different aspects of the administration. One branch, which had the local temple as its power basis, provided the nomarch as well, while the other depended directly from some of the departments of the central administration. The background of this division of tasks is not entirely clear, but MORENO Garcia’s explanation is that in this system, the nomarchs should be controlled by the representatives of the other branch of the family. Similarly complex systems can now be demonstrated in the 15th Upper Egyptian nome, where different cemeteries serviced different parts of the elite, the members of which may, or may not, have belonged to

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the province also bore the nomarch title. This suggests that there is no systemic correlation between the “provincial vizier” and the nomarchy. She goes on to argue that, normally, all viziers resided in Memphis, and that the post might have been occupied for only a brief period of time, after which office holders with a provincial background returned to their home nomes, where they were buried. Additionally, the Overseers of Upper Egypt would have been officials responsible for carrying out in the nomes the policies that had been decided by the vizier (L’administration provinciale II, p. 65–142). However, in most cases her reasoning seems to rest on the assumption that persons attached to the central administration (both viziers and officials of lower status) were necessarily stationed at the Capital. In many of the cases she studies, however, this is far from proven. Here, the five central directorates are important, for it is remarkable that viziers buried in the province (op. cit., p. 124 ff.) never claim to have been the leaders of the Ministry of Justice (a position that, as PHILIP-STÉPHAN has stressed, is typically a vizier’s title [Dire le droit en Égypte, p. 55–56; see also STRUDWICK, Administration, p. 176 ff.]). This point is not addressed by MARTINET (op. cit., p. 161–163). Moreover, after his title string, including the title of vizier, Djaw remarks: “I did this in Abydos in the Thinite nome” (Urk. I, p. 188); the remarks put forward by MARTINET, op. cit. 133–134 in no way suggest that Djaw was not a vizier residing in the 8th Upper Egyptian nome. She also points out that in the 14th Upper Egyptian nome, the viziers buried there show themselves in their tombs as being surrounded by an unusually high number of officials linked to central state agencies, which suggests to her that those in power in that part of Egypt held administrative responsibilities exceeding the nome itself. The traditional hypothesis that these people were provincial viziers to me seems to explain the evidence better.

the same family. I subscribe to the view that family ties between such groups are inherently likely, yet it is less clear whether kinship was the primary factor explaining the social network. Conceivably, marital links were established rather for strategic reasons between groups that were primarily organized on a local basis.

The case of the 9th Upper Egyptian nome may not be unique. In fact, many other nomarchs bore not only the title of hry-tp ʿ3 n sp3.t/NOME, but towards the end of the Old Kingdom also that of “overseer of priests” (ım.y-r ḫm.w-nṯr) of the local temple. According to MORENO GARCIA the temple was, in fact, the power basis of the members of the local elite who during the sixth dynasty transformed into nomarchs. In his view, the importance of the regional cults was so great that the kings based their regional policy from the early Old Kingdom on alliances with local priesthoods.97

To me, this point seems doubtful as a general explanation. Moreno Garcia’s analysis does not explain why the divine cults were, in the early Old Kingdom, concentrated in temples of small scale and built according to irregular patterns that must represent local folk traditions.98 This situation is hard to explain if one assumes that these temples stood under direct royal patronage.99

98 I am referring to the temples in “preformal style” defined by Kemp; for a re-analysis of these temples, see Busmann, Die Provinztempel Ägyptens.
99 See MORENO GARCIA, RdE 56 (2005), p. 96–97. Note that Busmann draws a much more multi-faceted picture of the “preformal” temples than Kemp did; he i.a. shows that
A revealing example, which seems very clear to me despite Moreno Garcia’s reservations, is the case of Elephantine. Royal attention to the Satet temple and the king’s own cult were, during the third dynasty, of a totally different order of magnitude, and royal interest only becomes manifest during the sixth dynasty.\footnote{Seidlmayer, in: 
Haus und Palast, p. 207. See also Kemp, 
CAJ 5 (1995), p. 46–50; Busmann, 
in: Archäologie und Ritual, p. 25–36.} Both in this case, and in those of the early temples at al-Madamūd, Abydos, and Tall Ibrāhīm ‘Awaḍ, one can definitely find evidence of royal interest, but barely prior to the sixth dynasty.

Moreno Garcia has dealt with the same issue with a slightly different, and, I think, more likely approach in an earlier publication.\footnote{Moreno Garcia, 
Ḥwt et le milieu rural, p. 252–265.} He demonstrated that in certain nomes (the third, fifth, and ninth of Upper Egypt), the local temples played a very prominent role from the start of the Old Kingdom, and that their presence seems to have prevented the implementation of certain administrative innovations that commonly occurred elsewhere. In such a situation, the position of the local elites must have rested from very early on the temples.

However, it is much more difficult to perceive how and why the other temples reached the influential position that is so manifest from the documentation of the late Old Kingdom.\footnote{We have just seen that, in the early Old Kingdom, there were important elites in various regions: Elephantine, al-Kāb, al-Jabalayn, Thebes, Zawīyat al-Mayyitīn. But it seems clear that these were linked to the royal cult rather than to the cults of local divinities.} Whatever the explanation might be, it is certain that the local temples had achieved prominence by the end of the fifth dynasty, and not only in religious matters, but also on an economic level. Late Old Kingdom texts concerning personnel and landed property of the temples leaves no room for doubt in this regard. The heads of the temples accordingly had come to play a decisive role within their communities, a role they often combined with that of a nomarch.\footnote{Moreno Garcia has underscored that in certain nomes where there is no evidence for the presence of a hry-tpt ṣ n sp₂t/NOME, the installation of a nomarch might have been blocked by the local priesthoods (in: Séhel entre Égypte et Nubie, p. 20). Although the line of causality he suggests remains in the realm of speculation, the hypothesis is not impossible. In any case the documentation suggests that a) a degree of variability continued to exist between different nomes; and b) that the roles of nomarch and overseer of priests were to an extent of the same order in the local social network.}

The link between the supervision of a
Nomarchal Culture

nome and of a local temple may be of great relevance for advancing understanding of the “Nomarchy” in the Middle Kingdom.

During the sixth dynasty, provincial rule was organized along these lines. I have no intention to discuss here the conditions which may have led to the “fall” of the Old Kingdom, but it is clear that a ruling class was present at the beginning of the First Intermediate Period to fill the administrative void left when royal power evaporated.

Under the sometimes chaotic conditions of this period, the administrative system of the Old Kingdom lost its coherence. Some nomes, particularly in the south, seem to have disintegrated; others continued to exist, but with more autonomy than before; and yet others managed to conquer neighboring nomes. Without going into the details here, it seems that tendencies towards fragmentation were manifest particularly in the southernmost nomes of the country, whereas the situation in Middle Egypt was apparently much less chaotic.

Regional Administration during the First Intermediate Period and the Middle Kingdom

After the First Intermediate Period, the state of Egypt was reunited by the Theban king Mentuhotep II, inaugurating the Middle Kingdom. The reappearance of the nomarch title in the sources of this period might create the impression either of an administrative continuity, or of a kind of restoration of the Old Kingdom administrative system. One might in any case be led to believe that the provincial administration of this period worked on the basis of a monolithic system that would have existed throughout Egypt, with a subdivision of the country in nomes.

But this perspective would be certainly too simple. Most Egyptologists work on the basis of the model developed by W. Helck. He supposed that the system of regional administration of the Middle Kingdom was more or less identical with not that of the Old Kingdom, but of the New Kingdom, during increasing importance of the title of “overseer of priests” in the title strings of nomarchs, see also Martinet, Administration provinciale, p. 236–238; 287.

105 I have discussed this topic in somewhat greater detail in Phoenix 46.2 (2000), p. 76–78.
106 Helck, Verwaltung, p. 207–211. For a critical reevaluation of his theory, see p. 34–58 below. A more extensive critique of his theory is published in H. Willems, “Nomarchs and Local Potentates: the Provincial Administration in the Middle Kingdom,” in: J. C. Moreno Garcia (ed.), Ancient Egyptian Administration, p. 360–381.
which regional leaders were no longer the nomarchs, but rather the mayors of large towns. They bore titles like $hꜢ.ty$ $n$ ḏ$_r$.ty “mayor of al-Ṭūd,” a title which contains the name of a town but does not refer to a nome.\textsuperscript{107} This situation induced Helck to think that the nome was no longer an administrative unit; this role would by now have been taken over by the larger provincial towns. Within the framework of this administrative structure, the mayors were responsible both for the towns themselves and for the surrounding agricultural zones.

To Helck’s credit, it must be admitted that several Middle Kingdom inscriptions describe such a state of affairs. For instance, Ḥammamāṭ graffito 87, dated to the reign of Senwosret I, concerns a quarrying expedition mobilized by the mayor of Ḫmūf ($hꜢ.ty$ $n$ ḏ$bꜢ$) and other southern Egyptian mayors. No mention is made of any nome.\textsuperscript{108} Accordingly, it cannot be doubted that mayors existed during the Middle Kingdom.\textsuperscript{109}

It is however equally certain that rather a large amount of officials continued to bear the title of nomarch; thus, several regional leaders from Asyūṭ, Mīr, Dayr al-Barṣā, and Banī Ḥasan. Helck acknowledges the existence of this evidence, but he nevertheless believes that the persistence of ancient titles does not reflect an administrative reality, but only a “snobbish” desire of certain nomarchs, inducing them to adopt titles that were impressive, but did not conform to current administrative reality.\textsuperscript{110}

Accordingly it can be said that Helck replaced one monolithic theory (“the Egyptian provinces were administered by nomarchs”) by another (“provincial Egypt was administered by mayors”). Since the appearance of Helck’s book, the latter hypothesis has been accepted by numerous Egyptologists.

\textsuperscript{107} For a list of these office holders during the Middle Kingdom, see Fischer, Dendera, p. 71, n. 289; Gauthier, AsAE 26 (1926), p. 273; Czerny, Ä&L 11 (2001), p. 23–25; and, for the Nubian fortresses, Moreno Garcia, in: Séhel entre Égypte et Nubie, p. 165–166. Pardey has recently opted for translating this new kind of title also as “nomarch” (s.v. ‘Provincial Administration’, in: The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt, p. 18–19). Although arguments could be adduced in favour of this rendering (viz. that the nomoi of the Graeco-Roman period were also designated by the name of their capitals), her account obscures the real differences between the two administrative conceptions, which Helck has defined.

\textsuperscript{108} Hamm. no. 87. For a recent recapitulation of the question of the mayors, see Franke, Das Heiligtum des Heqaib, p. 10–12.

\textsuperscript{109} But the stelae discussed below in n. 129 show that the situation was probably more complex than Helck thought.

\textsuperscript{110} Helck, Verwaltung, p. 209–210: in cases where the mayor directed towns with a nomarchal past, ‘legten sie sich noch den Titel eines ‘Großen Oberhauptes’ bei, der aber nur eine historisierende Bezeichnung darstellt und kein Amts- oder Rangtitel.”
In 1987, L. Gestermann published a new study of the issue.\(^{111}\) Her very systematic collection of data makes it easy to verify for which nomes there exist mentions of nomarchs (ḥr.y-tp ⳁ₇ n spꜢ.t/NOME), and when they were in office. She also advances an interpretation, which on the one hand reproduces various elements of Helck’s account, particularly on the growing importance of towns after the end of the Old Kingdom, but which, on the other hand, adduces new points of view. For example, she demonstrates that, during the First Intermediate Period, the administrative system prevailing in the Heracleopolitan region (ninth–tenth dynasties) differed significantly from the one in the Theban realm (eleventh dynasty). In the former, in Middle Egypt, the nomarchal system of the Old Kingdom survived, while the Theban kings established a new régime in which there was no place for the nomarchs, and where the leaders of towns assumed an increasingly determining role. There was accordingly a great difference between the two parts of the country.\(^{112}\)

The disappearance of nomarchal rule in southern Egypt can probably be explained as a reaction to the grave problems witnessed by this part of Egypt directly after the end of the Old Kingdom. The inscriptions of Ankhtifi of al-Mu‘allā show on the one hand that there was tendency of certain nomarchs to enlarge their territory. Ankhtifi himself was nomarch of the third Upper Egyptian nome, but he apparently also took charge of the second and the first nomes. His texts describe a similar alliance of the fourth and fifth Upper Egyptian nomes, which opposed him.\(^{113}\) At the same time, a nomarch called Ab-ihu administered the sixth, seventh, and eighth nomes of Upper Egypt, while Inheretnakht commanded the eighth and ninth nomes.\(^{114}\)

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\(^{111}\) Gestermann, Kontinuität und Wandel.

\(^{112}\) Gestermann, Kontinuität und Wandel, p. 135–144; see also Willems, Chests of Life, p. 60; Franke, Das Heiligtum des Heqaib, p. 11.

\(^{113}\) Vandier, Mo‘alla, inscriptions 2 and 6.

\(^{114}\) For Ab-ihu, see Fischer, Dendera, p. 195. For the two coffin boards of Inheretnakht, see Goedicke, in: Gold of Praise, p. 149–152. He dates this person to the early Middle Kingdom, however offering only a single argument: the occurrence of the epithet mꜢꜤ hrw after the name of the coffin owner. In fact, however, this epithet is known at least since the late First Intermediate Period (see Schenkel, FmāS, p. 76, referring to TPPI § 23). A range of other arguments suggests that the coffin of Inheretnakht is far older than Goedicke suggested: 1) the content of the offering formula; 2) the occurrence of the title imy-r šmꜢ.w “overseer of Upper Egypt,” for which Goedicke is able to produce only examples dating to the late Old Kingdom and the beginning of the First Intermediate Period. Later examples are known, but these almost always include the addition mtꜢr-ḏr=f (Brovarski, ZÄS 140 [2013], p. 106–108); 3) the sequence of epithets of Osiris; 4) the very fact that Inheretnakht was a nomarch directing more than one nome, a situation
The texts also reveal a tendency in the opposite direction, leading to regional disintegration. For example, while Ankhtifi refers to the fourth and fifth nomes as units, his texts reveal that the “general of Armant,” who lived in a town belonging to the fourth Upper Egyptian nome, took an independent stand, entering into a military alliance with Ankhtifi. The situation in the region is further complicated by the existence of a nomarch called Ini, whose coffin was found at al-Jabalayn, a town which otherwise seems never to have been the seat of a nomarch. In the fifth nome, the fragmentation is also very evident, for numerous villages (al-Khuzām, Naqāda, Qīf [Coptos]) had their own chiefs whose titles suggest an extraordinary degree of independence. The image of the First Intermediate Period as a period of political problems, wars, and famines, has been construed largely on the basis of the autobiographies of these local chiefs. In fact, the geographical spread of the texts describing this

for which no securely dated Middle Kingdom analogies are known; and the implication that he would have been a nomarch (ḥr.y-tp ṣw) functioning in southern Egypt in the Theban territory—a case for which no certain analogies are known from the early Middle Kingdom. For all these reasons it seems clear that Inheretnakht lived at the latest in the early First Intermediate Period.

116 For the coffin (Turin 13.268), see Brovarski, in: Studies Hughes, p. 31–37. According to Brovarski, Ḣnī was an abbreviation of the name Ḣnī-it-f, which was borne by numerous kings of the eleventh dynasty and their predecessors, who still were nomarchs of the fourth Upper Egyptian nome. He believes that the owner of the Turin coffin was one of these Theban nomarchs, and that the decision to be buried in al-Jabalayn reflects a displacement of the Theban nomarchal court to the border with Ankhtifi’s realm. This is possible, but the fact that Ini bears another title of strictly local import as “overseer of priests in the temple of Sobek, lord of Sumenu” suggests he was rather an official responsible for the region of al-Jabalayn. If this is correct, his nomarch title must have had a greatly decreased value, as one occasionally encounters with other titles (like “overseer of Upper Egypt,” a title borne by leaders of almost every town in the Coptite region). Zitman has recently suggested a date under the reign of Mentuhotep II for Ini (The Cemetery of Assiut I, p. 96). This rests on a comparison of the pottery found with the coffin of Ini with pottery from Qurna. However, in fact, all the ceramic types to which he refers are attested from a very early date in the First Intermediate Period (Seidlmayer, Gräberfelder, p. 395). Moreover, if Zitman would be right, Ini would have been the only known nomarch functioning within the realm of the eleventh dynasty kings.
118 Moreno Garcia (in: Séhel entre Égypte et Nubie, p. 13–14) uses the same material to argue that the regional administration can in general (i.e. already in the Old Kingdom) not be understood as being based on a rigorous subdivision into nomes. Although I agree with
kind of difficulties suggests that the crisis did not affect all of Egypt in quite the same way, and that it concentrated in the southern part of the country. There are no indications that the same situation prevailed in the same measure of gravity in Middle Egypt. The Theban policy, which led to the eradication of the nomarchy in southern Egypt, is therefore understandable, and explains the appearance of a new type of official, of which two examples are known. The first is a man called Hetepi, whose tomb stela was found at al-Kāb. Hetepi, who lived during the reign of king Antef II Wahibre, writes:

The humble servant (i.e. Hetepi) pronounced his (i.e. the king’s) word within the seven southernmost nomes as well as (in) Abydos in the Thinite nome, while there was no-one (else) who pronounced his word in the third, second and first Upper Egyptian nomes.\(^{119}\)

Thus, Hetepi seems to have been the chief administrator in the whole region between Aswān and Abydos. Although the nomes are still described as an existing reality, the nomarchs (\(hry.w.tp\) ꜤꜢꜢ\(n\) ꜢꜢ\(t\)) are not mentioned. Hetepi had a particular responsibility for the three southernmost nomes. It seems significant that this region coincides exactly with Ankhtifi’s territory before the Theban conquest.

Just after the end of the First Intermediate Period, another official called Henenu declares in his autobiography that he levied taxes in the region of the eighth, ninth, and tenth Upper Egyptian nomes.\(^{120}\) Although being slightly later than the period we are currently concerned with, it is quite possible that Henenu is referring to the same administrative system, operating on the basis of supraregional administrators.

The disappearance of the nomarchs in southern Egypt coincides with the emergence of the large cemetery of al-Ṭārif, in western Thebes. Here one finds not only the vast tombs of the Theban kings of the First Intermediate Period, but also hundreds of other large tombs.\(^{121}\) In the rest of the Theban territory,

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\(^{120}\) Hayes, \textit{JEA} 35 (1949), pl. IV and p. 46, n. d.

\(^{121}\) Arnold, \textit{Gräber des Alten und Mittleren Reiches in el-Tarif}.
elite cemeteries disappear almost entirely.\textsuperscript{122} This, and the creation of a new type of supraregional administrator, seem to reflect a centralist policy of the Theban kings, which left no place for the nomarchs.

The Theban policy can thus be explained as a reaction to the events at the beginning of the First Intermediate Period, a period when the administrators of the southernmost nomes had played an active part in the developing political and economic crisis. For the Heracleopolitan kings, who were apparently not confronted by similar problems in Middle Egypt (and perhaps in more northerly parts of the country), there may have been no reason to abolish the nomarchy.

According to L. \textsc{Gestermann}, there are no indications for the existence of nomarchs in Middle and northern Egypt directly after the Thebans had taken power there, and this suggested to her that the Thebans also abolished the nomarchs in this part of the country immediately after the reunification of the country.\textsuperscript{123} We shall see later that this interpretation poses certain problems, but it must be admitted that the process as described would make sense. The evident success in the former Theban territory might have induced the Theban kings to impose a similar regime in the regions that they had just been able to add to their kingdom.

However, this interpretation is not compelling. Even in Germany after the Second World War, where the Allies pursued a fierce policy of denazification, many responsible posts continued to be occupied by former National Socialists. It seems unlikely that in Egypt after the reunification—a period that was undoubtedly less politicized and less conflictual than that in post-war Germany—the primary aim of the Thebans would have been to replace those who had been charged with administrative tasks under the Heracleopolitan kingdom.\textsuperscript{124}

Nonetheless, this would be exactly what happened according to \textsc{Gestermann}. She attempts to demonstrate that the nomarchs, who had disappeared in southern Egypt before the reunification of Egypt, also lost their positions in the north. However, less than twenty years after, towards the end of the eleventh dynasty, the nomarchs would have reappeared, as is shown by their tombs in the cemeteries of Middle Egypt.

\textsuperscript{122} For an interpretation of the situation in al-Jabalayn, see for instance the author’s remarks in his review of \textsc{Morenz}, \textit{Die Zeit der Regionen}, to appear in \textit{OLZ}.

\textsuperscript{123} \textsc{Gestermann}, \textit{Kontinuität und Wandel}, p. 138–139; 142–143.

\textsuperscript{124} In fact, the Thebans often engaged functionaries who state explicitly in their autobiographies to have started their careers under the Heracleopolitans. (For the pertinent literature, see \textsc{Jaroš-Deckert}, \textit{Das Grab des Nj-jj.tj.f}, p. 128, n. 794.)
Reading GESTERMANN’s doctoral thesis hence suggests the following evolution:

1) End of the Old Kingdom: monolithic administrative system; Egypt is subdivided into nomes governed by nomarchs and overseers of priests, the two functions being sometimes held by the same persons.

2) First Intermediate Period: emergence of different systems of rule in the Theban and Heracleopolitan regions; disappearance of the nomarchs in the Theban region, continuity of the nomarchal system in the Heracleopolitan region.

3) Reunification of Egypt under Mentuhotep II: again a monolithic system; the “Theban model” is introduced throughout Egypt. The nomarchs disappear everywhere. Towns become the most important regional units.

4) End of the eleventh dynasty and twelfth dynasty: new monolithic system; reestablishment of the nomarchs, but the role of the towns does not decrease. In the Oryx nome, for instance, the nomarchs coexist with the mayors of large towns; they are, in fact, members of the same family.

D. Franke worked on the basis of the same approach, suggesting that the nomarchs appointed under Amenemhat I and Senwosret I would have been appointed as “new men who before had not occupied positions of power in their home towns.”

Since the appearance of GESTERMANN’s publication, the issue has never again been the object of a systematic analysis, but to me it seems that her hypothesis, as well as those of HELCK and PARDEY, suffer from several weaknesses. For each of these authors, the nomes and towns are incompatible administrative entities, a stand that needs to be reconsidered. Certainly the nomarchs had always possessed residences in provincial capitals, and if, in a certain case, an official describes himself as a “nomarch,” this can therefore hardly mean that he was not in charge of the nome capital. Stated differently, the fact that the

125 Franke, Das Heiligtum des Heqaib, p. 12: “neue Männer, die bisher über keine Machtstellung in ihrer Heimatstadt verfügten.”

126 In her recent Nomarque, Favry defines the roles and responsibilities of the nomarchs of the reign of Senwosret I, based on a compilation of phrases in their autobiographies, but she does not really offer a historical study of the issue.

127 For Moret, the connection between a nomarch and the nome capital was in fact quite evident (in: Recueil des études égyptologiques dédiées à la mémoire de J.-F. Champollion, p. 339).
texts increasingly frequently mention towns, is not itself an argument proving the marginalization of the nomarchs or the nome.

Moreover, it seems that each of these scholars is driven by an urge to present the Egyptian administration as a rigorously organized system, in which every region was organized in exactly the same way. During the First Intermediate Period, when the country was in a state of fragmentation, this coherent conception would have temporarily broken down, but a similarly integrated system would have reappeared soon after the beginning of the Middle Kingdom.

In order to understand what really happened, we will reassess the sources on which Gestermann’s hypothesis rests. What matters most for us are the transformations that occurred directly after Mentuhotep II established power over the whole of Egypt, and during the rest of the Middle Kingdom. To get a clearer picture, we will study the information concerning each province for which evidence is available.

During the eleventh dynasty immediately after the reunification by Mentuhotep II, Gestermann finds no evidence for even a single nomarch in the entire country. The nomarchs of Asyūt, the staunchest supporters of the Heracleopolitan kings, would have disappeared immediately, and not one administrator entitled $\text{ḥr.y-tp} \ (\text{ṣ})$ appears in the documentation from the rest of Egypt. Yet she has to admit that several texts continue to mention nomes as administrative entities. It concerns a number of cases similar to that of Henenu, which we have already referred to, concerning men carrying out tasks in regions designated by nome symbols. Gestermann explains this phenomenon as follows:

At least in part, references to nomes to designate areas where officials were active, might go back to the title $\text{ḥr.y-tp} \ (\text{ṣ}) \ (n) + \text{nome}$, which remained in use during the Heracleopolitan period, and to the adherence to this form of organization, which can be deduced from this.128

This suggests that in the First Intermediate Period the nomes were a Heracleopolitan phenomenon. But we have just studied the case of Hetepi; he was a Theban official who was engaged in the administration of a whole series of nomes, none of which seem to have been individually led by a nomarch.

Stela Cairo CG 20543,10 ff., dated to the end of the First Intermediate Period,

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128 Gestermann, Kontinuität und Wandel, p. 139: “Zumindest teilweise dürfte die Nennung von Gauen zur Bezeichnung des Tätigkeitsbereiches auch auf den im Norden des Landes während der Herakleopolitenzeit noch gebräuchlichen Titel $\text{ḥr.j-tp} \ (\text{ṣ}) \ (n) + \text{Gau}$ und dem daraus zu erschließenden Festhalten an dieser Organisationsform zurückgehen.”
Nomarchal Culture seems to describe a process of reorganization in the ten southernmost nomes of Egypt, a process in which directors of royal domains (ḥw.t) are involved, but no nomarchs. Finally, one might also refer to the list of nomes that existed in the temple of Mentuhotep II at al-Jabalayn. Around the end of the First

129 For the stela, see Petrie, Dendereh, pl. XV. Stela Leiden V3 is also of interest, because, still under the reign of Senwosret I, it describes the case of an “overseer of fields” (im.y-r ḥw.wt) in the “Head of the South and in Abydos.” The text specifies exactly which zone within this area stood under his responsibility: the region between the sixth and the ninth Upper Egyptian nomes. The fact that the owner of the stela traces back the origin of the office within his family to the reign of the Theban king Antef II Wahkare, suggests that the territorial subdivision had remained unchanged between the late First Intermediate Period and the early twelfth dynasty (Boeser, Beschrijving I, pl. II). Although no nomarch is known for this region, lower ranking officials like the owner of the stela apparently could still describe the area for which they were responsible in terms of nomes. Moreno García has recently shown that the term spꜢ.t “nome” became increasingly common at the beginning of the Middle Kingdom. According to him this should be explained as reflecting “a new way of organizing space after the upheavals of the First Intermediate Period” (Moreno García, Ḫwt et le milieu rural, p. 148).

Here it is useful to briefly discuss an alleged nomarch from this period that should be skipped from the list. It concerns the general Ip, whose tomb in al-Ṣaff would, according to H. G. Fischer, contain the titles of a nomarch of the twentieth and twenty-first nomes of Upper Egypt (Fischer, The Tomb of Ip; for the dating, see p. 29–32). His interpretation would imply that Ip belonged to the Theban administration that had just been instated in the former Heracleopolitan realm. This hypothesis is highly unlikely. Firstly, it strikes one as unusual that this alleged nomarch of the twentieth and twenty-first nomes was buried in al-Ṣaff, which, as Fischer acknowledges, lay in the twenty-second nome (p. 29). Fischer also remarks that the name of the alleged nomes is written in an unusual way, lacking the normal sign of the arm, as well as the adjectives “upper” and “lower” that normally distinguish the two nomes (p. 25). Moreover, Ip’s “nomarch title,” read by Fischer as im.y-r NꜤr.t, does not conform to the model of hry-tp setChecked n Nome. I know of no other example of the model envisaged by Fischer. Moreover, the rank titles borne by Ip (ḥtm.ty-bı̓.ty smḥr-wꜤ.ty) are very modest for a nomarch. Finally taking into consideration that Ip himself obviously considers his title of general the most significant, it is hardly likely that he would have been a nomarch.

In fact, the word read by Fischer as the name of the nome would have been written in a very unusual way. I propose to replace the reading in Fischer’s publication by inim.y-r w “overseer of a district.” Some other bearers of this title also borne the title string htm.ty-bı̓.ty smḥr wꜤ.ty sḏm sḏm.t wꜤ.ı̓m.y-r Sn-tA also borne by Ip (see Willems, JEA 76 [1990], p. 31, n. d; Daoud, Corpus of Inscriptions, p. 72, who incorrectly reads the title as im.y-r hrp.w).

130 This list includes mostly Lower Egyptian nomes (Fiore Marochetti, in: Des Néferhotep aux Montouhotep, p. 147–148; fig. 2–8; Eadem, The Reliefs of the Chapel of Nebhepetra Mentuhotep at Gebelein, p. 62–66), but fragment Turin 7003/81 refers apparently to the
Intermediate Period, the nomes were apparently still considered to be administrative units, even in the Theban realm. By consequence, what happened is not the abolition of the nomes, but (in the Theban region) the abolition of the administrative class of the nomarchs.

Gestermann underscores that the nomarchs disappeared in the former Heracleopolitan territory immediately after this had been subdued by the Thebans, but that this class of officials reappeared towards the end of the eleventh dynasty.

The next chapter will show that this development certainly did not occur in the Hare nome, where an uninterrupted line of nomarchs is in evidence.

In the other nomes, the situation is less clear. For Asyût it is traditionally assumed that the line of nomarchs breaks off with the reunification of the country. In this particular case, it would certainly be understandable if the Thebans would have wanted to suppress them, as they had been the staunchest supporters of the Heracleopolitans, and had strongly opposed the Thebans. Also, it is often stated that the famous group of the Asyût tombs V (Khety I), III (It-ib), and IV (Khety II) of the late First Intermediate Period were not followed by others until the enormous tomb of Djefaihapy I was built during the reign of Senwosret I. However, M. Zitman offers a very detailed overview of the material, based on a mass of hitherto unpublished material. This overview clearly

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eleventh Upper Egyptian nome. According to the former study by Fiore Marochetti, the edifice would date to the early part of the reign of Mentuhotep II, because of the “early” artistic style and because his name would appear there in the first of the three forms that this king adopted in the course of his long reign. One has to admit that the reunification occasioned great changes in art style, among other things because artisans from Memphis now moved to Thebes, where they introduced the classical Egyptian art canon. However, the local style continued to exist for a long time alongside the classical Memphite style, so that this is not a strong dating criterion (cf. the remarks by Jaros-Deckert, *Das Grab des Ini-jtjff*, p. 135–136). Moreover, the royal protocol does not appear at al-Jabalayn in its first, but in its second, form, a fact that Fiore Marochetti acknowledges in her second publication, although it remains somewhat unclear in her later account whether the decoration is pre- or post-reunification. However, the presence of a nome list including the Lower Egyptian nomes suggests that the reunification had already been accomplished, a conclusion also drawn by other authors (Gestermann, *Kontinuität und Wandel*, p. 46, also referring to other literature; L. Morenz, *Die Zeit der Regionen im Spiegel der Gebelein-Region. Kulturgeschichtliche Re-Konstruktionen* [PdÄ 27: Leiden, Boston, 2010], p. 197–199). In fact, there is now very strong evidence supporting this interpretation. The second form of the protocol of Mentuhotep II was introduced at some point after year 14, because an inscription from that year still features the first form. However, it now seems certain that the reunification of Egypt predates year 13 (Gestermann, *ZÄS* 135 [2008], p. 1–15).
Nomarchal Culture
demonstrates that a large number of vast tombs that were hitherto not consid-
ered in this debate must date either to the First Intermediate Period, or to the
end of the eleventh dynasty, or later. In his reconstruction, there is no need
to suppose there was a gap in the tradition of monumental tombs coinciding
with the post-reunification period.

Recent research at the site undertaken by J. Kahl, M. Khadragy, and
U. Verhoeven has enabled a detailed on-site inspection of these tombs,
and has moreover led to the discovery in 2005 of a further one. This is
tomb NI3.1, and it belonged to an overseer of priests and general called It-ib-
iqer. From the inscriptions in his tomb, it is clear that he was the son of a man
called Khety, and the father of a Mesehti or Mesehti-iqer. Intensive research has
made it well-nigh certain that Khety is identical with the like-named owner of
tomb IV. Also, it is highly likely that It-ib-iqer’s son Mesehti(-iqer) is none other
than the Mesehti, whose tomb produced the famous tomb models rendering
two military platoons, and two of the most lavishly inscribed Middle Kingdom
coffins known (S1C, S2C). On this basis, an uninterrupted sequence of five suc-
cessive local rulers is now in evidence: Khety I, It-ib, Khety II, It-ib-iqer, and
Mesehti. Although, unlike Khety II, It-ib-iqer and Mesehti do not bear the title
\[ \text{hr.y-tp} \]

\[ \text{(5)} \]

it is clear that the same family remained in charge. They do boast
the title of an overseer of priests, however, which is also very frequently borne
by nomarchs.

Since Khety II mentions king Merikare in his autobiography, he is usually
regarded as the last First Intermediate Period nomarch, while Schenkel’s date
of Mesehti’s coffins in the late eleventh dynasty has gained wide acceptance.
This implies that there was no interruption in the nomarch line after the reuni-

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131 Zitman, The Necropolis of Assiut I.
133 el-Khadragy, in: Seven Seasons at Asyut, p. 33–37, with references to earlier literature.
bear the nomarch title.\textsuperscript{135} The large size of their tombs in my view leaves little

\textsuperscript{135} This discussion is based on the account of El-Khadragy, \textit{sak} 36 (2007), p. 105–135; \textit{Idem}, in: \textit{Seven Seasons at Asyut}, p. 31–46, but for one significant difference. El-Khadragy argues that It-ib-iqer, and probably Mesehti also, were in office before the overthrow of the Heracleopolitan kings. This is based on the fact that the former of the two was a general and had his tomb decorated with a scene of marching troops, while the latter owned funerary models depicting troops. The idea that this can be used as a dating criterion is based on the assumption that “military scenes reflect historical events” (\textit{sak} 36 [2007], p. 119). Of course tomb scenes can in principle depict things that are historical, but it is less easy to prove in specific examples, firstly that this is really the case, and secondly how the historical material was processed iconographically there. Also, we should not be overly confident that the little we know about ancient Egyptian history covers all the major historical events. Many episodes may escape our attention, simply for lack of pertinent evidence. Moreover, the troops in the Asyūṭ tombs are not depicted fighting, but marching; that a war is intended is therefore not evident. Far more telling military tomb scenes are known from the later eleventh and early twelfth dynasty tombs at Bānī Ḫasan, where attacks on towns are shown. Even here, it has been doubted whether a historical event from the time of the tomb owners is depicted in all cases, because exactly the same scene is duplicated several times at the site. By way of conclusion, if the military scenes in Asyūṭ are at all historical, they might depict an episode we have no knowledge of, or reflect real events (like military parades) that, while being illustrative of a martial frame of mind, may not be significant for historical reconstructions of events (for this approach, see Seidlmayer, in: \textit{Militärgeschichte des pharaonischen Ägypten}, p. 151–157).

Another problematic point with El-Khadragy’s reasoning is that in order to sustain his idea, he has to compress the tenures of Khety II, It-ib-iqer, and Mesehti into the final phase of the war between Thebes and Heracleopolis, which he situates between years 14 and 39 of Mentuhotep II. In order to accommodate these rulers into this period, he argues that all three were in office for a short period of time, because their tombs were unfinished, or because of evidence that a successor took charge of building the tomb of his predecessor. Two problems should be envisaged here. Firstly, while it is clear that an official’s early death might occur before his tomb was finished, it does not follow that it can be deduced from a tomb’s unfinished state that its owner died at a young age, or unexpectedly. Other explanations could be that probably not all individuals accorded the same degree of priority to finishing their tombs, and the fact that the cases here discussed date from unsettled times is a further point to take into account.

What complicates the issue further is that it is now known that the reunification took place not after year 14, but before year 13 (Gestermann, \textit{ZÄS} 135 [2008], p. 1–15), so that all three officials, each of whom at least succeeded in excavating (and partly decorating) really vast tombs, should be fitted into about twelve years. Moreover, following El-Khadragy’s reasoning, the so-called “northern soldiers tomb,” which clearly also belonged to a nomarch-like official, should also be fitted into this period, as it also contains depictions of marching troops. This tomb, however, El-Khadragy tentatively dates to the later reign of Mentuhotep II, but after the reunification (in: \textit{Seven Seasons at Asyut}, p. 31–46).
room for doubt that they were very high-ranking officials of a status comparable with a nomarch. Some of the other large tombs at Asyūṭ may also have to be fitted in somewhere between Mentuhotep II and Senwosret I.  

At Banī Ḥasan, the situation is somewhat less clear, due to the fact that several nomarchs cannot be dated individually. The plan (fig. 6) shows a row of rather large tombs, of which eight contain inscriptions indicating that their owners were nomarchs. Tomb 14 belongs to the nomarch Khnumhotep I, who states in his tomb that he was appointed during the reign of Amenemhat I. It is generally admitted that the owners of tombs 29, 33, and 27, who also were nomarchs, preceded Khnumhotep I in the office, and it is likely that the owners of tombs 15 and 17, Baqet III and Khety, did so as well.

The last point has been criticized by GESTERMANN, who maintains that Baqet III and Khety succeeded Khnumhotep I. But as HÖLZL has aptly pointed out, this is hardly likely, as the tomb of Khnumhotep (14) seems to have been cut out in a small corner that had been left open after the construction of Baqet’s tomb (15). HÖLZL has also adduced architectural arguments in support of the hypothesis that the tomb of Baqet III antedates not only the tomb of Khnumhotep I, but also that of Khety (tomb 17).

The fact remains that the dating of the individual tombs is problematic. However, even GESTERMANN’s minimal position presupposes that the nomarch Baqet I (tomb 29) was already in office during the eleventh dynasty. If one accepts that the very large tombs 15 and 17 predate that of Khnumhotep I, it is almost certain that the interval between the reunification of Egypt and the end of the eleventh dynasty can easily be filled, and this would imply that the sequence of nomarchs here was continuous, similarly to the situation in Dayr al-Barshā and Asyūṭ. One should also consider the fact—accepted by GESTERMANN—that several of the large anepigraphic tombs at Banī Ḥasan...
Figure 6 Plan of the central part of the Bani Hasan cemetery, indicating the location of the nomarchal tombs at the top. The small dots indicate the location of the smaller tombs on the slopes below the nomarchal tombs (after Willems, Chests of Life, plan 1).
may also have belonged to nomarchs. Therefore it seems to me that the temporary fall of the Banī Ḥasan nomarchs, argued for by GESTERMANN, is not very likely.

The certain cases of Asyūṭ and Dayr al-Barshā, and the likely one of Banī Ḥasan, suggests that in Middle Egypt nomarchal rule was not interrupted by the fall of the Heracleopolitans. It is not impossible that similar conditions prevailed in the other nomes of Middle Egypt. This might for instance well hold true for the governors of the seventeenth Upper Egyptian nome, whose tombs at Tīhna al-Jabal are so severely damaged that hardly anything can be said about the history of the officials.

During the twelfth dynasty, the existence of nomarchs is clearly in evidence in Middle Egypt. In the south of the former Heracleopolitan realm, at Akhmīm, there is only one reference to a nomarch, called Antef, and datable to the reign of Amenemhat I. In the eleventh nome, at Dayr Rīfa, there are two. The twelfth nome was ruled by a very influential family, whose enormous tombs at Qāw al-Kabīr are among the largest of the period, although they do not contain examples of the title ḥr.y-tp. For the time being, we will not concern ourselves with these people, therefore. In the enormous cemetery of Asyūṭ, there are only two individuals designating themselves as nomarchs (ḥr.y-tp): the famous Djefaihapy I, dated to the reign of Senwosret I, and Djefaihapi II, who, according to ZITMAN, would date to the same period. Several owners of

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140 Here it is necessary to call to mind the still unpublished fragment of a stela from Dandara, which mentions a <ḥr.y>-tp <n MꜢ-ḥḏ “nomarch of the Oryx nome.” Its dating is unfortunately not certain. The stela belonged to a man called Rediwikhnum, who, according to some, was a descendant of the owner of the famous stela Cairo CG 20543 (see p. 129). On the basis of this hypothesis, the second Rediwikhnum should have lived under Mentuhotep II (and in fact it seems less likely that a tomb owner in Dendara would refer to a nomarch from the Heracleopolitan region before the reunification) (GOMAÀ, Erste Zwischenzeit, p. 116; 152–153; GESTERMANN, Kontinuität und Wandel, p. 171). Confirmation of this dating would afford independent proof of the existence of nomarchs at Banī Ḥasan in this period.

141 This conclusion is implicitly accepted also by PARDEY, s.v. “Provincial Administration,” in: The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt I, p. 18, and RABEHL, Amenemhet, p. 11–17.

142 Stela Cairo CG 20024. For the dating of this document, see FRANKE, Personendaten, p. 112 (132).

143 Tombs I and VII at Dayr Rīfa: see MONTET, Kêmi 6 (1936), p. 138–143; 156–163.

144 For these persons, see GRAJETZKI, GM 156 (1997), p. 55–62.


146 Tomb II at Assiūṭ (or no. 013.1 in the numbering of the Asyūṭ project); see for the inscriptions GRIFFITH, Siūt and Dér Rîfch, pl. 10; MONTET, Kêmi 3 (1930–1935), p. 86–89;
other large tombs at Asyūṭ claim *im.y-r hm.w-ntr* “overseer of priests” as their most important title, which is also borne by many nomarchs. Considering the state of preservation of the tombs, and their still poor state of publication, it is possible that several high officials buried here also had the nomarch title, even if that cannot always be demonstrated. In Mīr, the major cemetery of the fourteenth Upper Egyptian nome, there is a group of tombs of the overseers of priests of Hathor, of whom one, dated to the reign of Senwosret I, designates himself explicitly as a nomarch.\(^\text{147}\) At Dayr al-Barshā and Banī Ḥasan there are about ten nomarchs, who are so well known that it is not necessary to highlight them in detail.\(^\text{148}\) The autobiography of Khnumhotep II at Banī Ḥasan also refers to his maternal grandfather, who would have been nomarch of the seventeenth nome.\(^\text{149}\) Understanding of the tombs of the highest elite of this nome has been considerably clarified by the recent Japanese excavations at Ṭiḥna al-Jabal, which have shown that the Roman temple cut into the rock promontory at Ṭiḥna is, in fact, a vast, reused Middle Kingdom tomb. Beside it there are several others. In one of the tombs, remains of what must have been a fairly impressive set of burial equipment was found, but unfortunately there are no texts to inform us about the names and titles of the men buried here.\(^\text{150}\) Further north, in the Fayyūm, the team of the University of Pisa has discovered two very large rock tombs at Kawm al-Khalwa. Unfortunately, these badly preserved tombs have not yet been published, but on the basis of preliminary articles it can be concluded that the owner Wadj was not only a \(hꜢ.ty-c^5\ im.y-r hm.w-ntr / im.y-r hw.t-ntr\), but also \(hry-tp Sḥ.t\). The latter title looks like a variant of the title \(hry-tp 3^n spt.t/nome\), the geographical term \(Sḥ.t\) “field,” undoubtedly referring to the Fayyūm.\(^\text{151}\) Finally, a false door

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\(^{147}\) It concerns Ukhhotep son of Senbi; see *Meir* II, pl. XII. Although the other officials buried at the same cemetery do not display this title, the cemetery seems to belong to a single family of administrators. It is clear that all, including those who do not bear the title \(hry-tp 3^n\), belong to the same social stratum. For the history of the family, see Willems, *Chests of Life*, p. 82–87.


\(^{149}\) If that is what the title “\(hꜢ.s\) of the Anubis nome” means (Beni Hasan I, pl. XXVI, 123).

\(^{150}\) *Akoris*, p. 27–33. For a plan of the zone of the tombs, see p. 44.

found at Heliopolis, and probably datable to the end of the eleventh dynasty or the very early twelfth dynasty, mentions a nomarch of the thirteenth nome of Lower Egypt.\textsuperscript{152}

It goes without saying that our documentation is very incomplete, but nonetheless it cannot be denied that nomarchs were not an exception in Middle Egypt, and, based on the last document, the same might hold true for the Delta, where the kind of cemeteries we are interested in are hardly preserved.

For southern Egypt, i.e. the former Theban realm, the situation is completely different. From this region GESTERMANN only lists three nomarchs,\textsuperscript{153} to which FAVRY has added a fourth.\textsuperscript{154} It is necessary to study this list in detail.

A stela in the Petrie Museum in UC London mentions a man called Mentuhotep, who would have been a nomarch of the fourth Upper Egyptian nome.\textsuperscript{155} The arguments why this should be the case are not quite clear. GESTERMANN and FAVRY\textsuperscript{156} attribute this interpretation to a study by O. BERLEV,\textsuperscript{157} but on verification it appears that that he stated nothing of the kind. Also, the stela does not designate Mentuhotep as a nomarch, his only titles being \textit{ı̓r.y-pꜤ.t hꜢ.ty-Ꜥ ı̓m.y-r ḫm.w-nty}. Moreover, his autobiography makes clear that he made his career in the town of Armant, a city, which as far as is known, was never a nome capital.\textsuperscript{158}

The case of Wepwawetaa, who, according to FAVRY, was a nomarch, raises similar questions. Her interpretation is based on line 12 of stela Leiden V4, which she translates as: “I am the son of a dignitary, an important (person) of the Thinite nome.”\textsuperscript{159} Although this rendering is possible, one could equally well translate “I am the son of a great dignitary of the Thinite nome.” In either case, the text certainly refers to an important man in the Thinite nome, but that does not necessarily imply it concerns a nomarch.

\textsuperscript{152} Publication: SIMPSON, \textit{JARCE} 38 (2001), p. 12, fig. 1; p. 14; 18; see also FRANKE, \textit{Das Heiligtum des Heqaib}, p. 13, n. 26. I express my gratitude to the late Detlef Franke for supplying me with the reference to SIMPSON’s article.

\textsuperscript{153} GESTERMANN, \textit{Kontinuität und Wandel}, p. 172–173; this was accepted by MÜLLER-WOLLERMANN, \textit{DE} 13 (1989), p. 112.

\textsuperscript{154} FAVRY, \textit{Nomarque}, p. 72–75.

\textsuperscript{155} Stela UCL 148333; see GOEDICKE, \textit{JEA} 48 (1962), p. 25–35; STEWART, \textit{Egyptian Stelae II}, p. 20; pl. 18. The most recent study of this document is BEYLAGE, in: Ägypten–Münster, p. 17–32.


\textsuperscript{157} BERLEV, \textit{BiOr} 38 (1981), col. 318–319.

\textsuperscript{158} FRANKE thinks Mentuhotep was a mayor of Armant: \textit{Das Heiligtum des Heqaib}, p. 13; IDEM, \textit{BiOr} 62 (2005), col. 464.

\textsuperscript{159} FAVRY, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 72–75 (citation from p. 75). For the text, see BOESER, \textit{Beschrijving I}, pl. IV.
A statue that is now kept in the Cairo Museum (CG 404) depicts a man called Horhotep, who is entitled ı̓r.y-pꜤ.t ḫꜢ.ty-Ꜥ ḥꜢ.ty-ḥb.t im.y-r ḥm.w-nṯr ḥr.y-tp ʿr n Nḥn. Without the slightest doubt, we are facing a person who designates himself as a nomarch. Unfortunately, the historical context is unclear. Although probably postdating the reign of Amenemhat I, the exact date of the statue is unknown, and, unlike the situation in Middle Egypt, no monumental Middle Kingdom tombs are known from Hierakonpolis. If, as seems likely, Horhotep really dates to the twelfth dynasty, the evidence suggests he did not descend from an ancient line of nomarchs, as this kind of officials seems to have been abolished during the First Intermediate Period in southern Egypt. We would accordingly be facing the case of an individual appointed as nomarch in the course of the twelfth dynasty.

There remains the important case of Sarenput I, the great chief of the first Upper Egyptian nome, who obtained his post during the reign of Senwosret I. The family in charge of Aswān is very well documented on the basis of their tombs and of the texts in the Heqaib chapel on Elephantine, but the title of nomarch is not encountered there prior to the tenure of Sarenput I. He, however, includes the nomarch title twice in the inscriptions in his huge tomb in Qubbat al-Hawā. Later, the same title is encountered also on a statue of Sarenput II (reign of Senwosret II), which stood in the Heqaib chapel at Elephantine.

The appearance of this title in the Aswān region during Sarenput I’s tenure is unlikely to be due to a coincidence. In his age, the Egyptian colonization of Nubia gained pace, of which the clearest archaeological manifestation is the construction of the Nubian fortresses. Aswān, Egypt’s southernmost town, must in this period have been of prime importance, not only as a staging post for military activity, but also for fortress builders and for the workmen exploiting the Nubian gold mines, to which the access roads were controlled by the fortresses. Sarenput’s autobiography leaves no room for doubt that under these very special circumstances close relations were established between him and

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161 Based on the occurrence of the writing for im.y-r, of which only one earlier example is known (J.P. Allen, “Some Theban Officials of the Early Middle Kingdom,” in: P. Der Manuelian [ed.], *Studies in Honor of William Kelly Simpson I* [Boston, 1996], p. 5–6, n. 14).
162 For a detailed discussion, see Franke, *Das Heiligtum des Heqaib*, p. 207–210.
164 Habachi, *The Sanctuary of Heqaib* I, p. 42, fig. 4 and II, pl. 37b.
the king. This explains why the king dispatched servants and hundreds of builders for the construction of nomarch’s monumental tomb. A passage of the autobiography in this tomb shows Sarenput’s self-confidence in an exceptional way:

The deities who stand behind Elephantine establish for me His Majesty in his position as a monarch, and fashion the king for me again, again, that he may repeat millions of sed-festivals for me.\textsuperscript{165}

Sarenput I seems to formulate his text with an arrogance almost unparalleled in the Egyptian documentation, since the monarch seems to be reduced to a creature whose only reason for existence seems to be the well-being of his governor in the first Upper Egyptian nome. The rest of the autobiography also draws the image of an official without compare. Even if we accept that the inscription is overstating things, the fact that such a publicly accessible text could at all be written, suggests that Sarenput’s status exceeded traditional boundaries, and here the context of the economic and military enterprises in Nubia are likely to have played a part. Therefore, it is probably not a coincidence that precisely Sarenput was invested with the nomarchy, and that the title reappears in the same family under his successor Sarenput II.\textsuperscript{166}

The administrative system thus displays a tendency towards variation: while the nomarchs at Asyūt, Dayr al-Barshā, and Bānī Ḥasan were members of a lineage of governors, of whom at least several demonstrably bore the title ḫr.y-tp ḫn NOME, the case of Sarenput I bears witness of a more dynamic system, because he did not originate from a nomarch family, but was appointed to this rank. The same phenomenon can probably also be observed in an example from Middle Egypt, at Mīr,\textsuperscript{167} and might explain the appearance of solitary nomarchs like Horhotep of Hierakonpolis, or Antef of Akhmīm, whom I have just mentioned. While I thus accept that it was probably possible to appoint nomarchs throughout Egypt, a quantitative comparison between Middle Egypt and the southernmost nomes has clearly shown that they were much rarer in the south than in the north. This difference can hardly be without significance.

\textsuperscript{165} Urk. VII, p. 4, 3–6. See the commentary by Franke, op. cit., p. 24, who translates the passages as a series of wish-clauses.

\textsuperscript{166} In its main lines, this account follows the analysis of D. Franke, op. cit., 8–27. However, I believe that he goes too far when he remarks that Sarenput I was a “parvenu,” none of whose ancestors had borne official titles. For a different interpretation, see Willems, Heqata, p. 18–20.

\textsuperscript{167} Willems, Chests of Life, p. 85–87.
Thus, it seems clear that provincial administration was not at all a monolithic system applicable everywhere in the same way. Rather, I think it is possible to recognize two principles that were partly counter-effective: traditionalism and dynamism.

Traditionalism: We have examined Gestermann’s idea, according to which the Theban administrative system would have been instated across Egypt for some twenty years, leading to the temporary abolishment of the nomarchs in the north. Subsequently, and again across Egypt, the subdivision into nomes would have been reintroduced. Our analysis has shown that this perception of things misrepresents the evidence. Firstly, the nomarchs can be shown not to have disappeared before the late twelfth dynasty. They uninterruptedly continued to exert their function in at least parts of Middle Egypt, and, perhaps, the Delta, which would correspond to the former Heracleopolitan realm. But in the south, one recognizes only very few nomarchs, and there is no evidence for the existence of lines of nomarchs in this region. It thus seems that the reunification of the country under Mentuhotep II hardly led to a systemic change in the administrative structure of the two parts of the country. In the south, no nomarchs existed before the reunification, and this state of affairs was largely maintained after the Theban victory. In the north, the provinces had been directed by the nomarchs prior to this event, and this situation also endured after. Thus it seems that even after the establishment of the Middle Kingdom, different administrative traditions can be discerned in the two parts of the country. There are no grounds to posit a monolithic system in the two halves of Egypt.

Dynamism: although I am convinced that the administrative system continued to differ in north and south, the distinction should be nuanced somewhat, for even within these areas, nothing proves the existence of a monolithic system. For various regions, there is no information whatsoever on the kinds of administrators who functioned there, and in the fourteenth nome of Upper Egypt, it is uncertain that nomarchs were present before the reign of Amenemhat I.\textsuperscript{168} We have also just seen that the nomarch Sarenput I was instated during the reign of Senwosret I, and in this isolated case it seems that a nomarch was appointed in a region where officials of that kind had never existed before—never, because even during the Old Kingdom, when nomarchs are often supposed to have been present everywhere in Upper Egypt, this evidently was not the case in the first nome.\textsuperscript{169} Accordingly, it has to be admitted

\textsuperscript{168} Willems, Chests of Life, p. 82–87.

\textsuperscript{169} Several Egyptologists have defended the hypothesis that an ink inscription on a bowl discovered on the Qubbat al-Hawā’ by E. EDEL features the title $fjr.y\cdot tp \ ‘\text{n spìt.t. However,
that special circumstances may have led to the appointment, or abolishment, of nomarchs. It remains clear, however, that real lines of nomarchs existed during the Middle Kingdom in different parts of Middle Egypt.

The Nomarch Title in Egyptian and in Egyptology

Our investigation of the nomarch problem has thus far concentrated almost entirely on the hrtywn-*tp h nt sprt/NOME, “great chiefs of a nome,” following K. Baer’s remark that only they were real nomarchs. However, it is perhaps not realistic to suppose that there was always a direct link between the literal meaning of official titles and the nature of the tasks effectively carried out. It might be useful to make comparison with the system of provincial administration currently in force in the Netherlands. Each province is here led by a governor with the title Commissaris van de Koning (“Commissioner of the King”). There is one exception to this rule: the official in charge of the province of Limburg, who has exactly the same responsibilities as his colleagues in the other provinces, can, for historical reasons, also be called “Governor [Gouverneur] of Limburg.” If, in a modern and thoroughly bureaucratic country such as the Netherlands, the same type of official can be referred to by different titles, would it not be likely that the administrative terminology in Egypt would have been even less homogeneous?

Very recently, S. Quirke has published a small monograph under the title Titles and Bureaux in Ancient Egypt, in which he makes a number of very significant remarks. He, with good reason, emphasizes that Egyptology has had a tendency to consider administrative titles as manifestations of a strictly formalized hierarchy. For him, however, it is likely that the real hierarchy to a large extent escapes us, because it is dominated by informal relationships, like those of kinship or status. It is in this scientifically almost invisible domain that the real power games were played, camouflaged by titles, which confer an

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170 See p. 4, n. 3.
171 This second title is mainly (but not exclusively) used by the provincial population. I am grateful to Troy Sagrillo for informing me that this is “because the former Duchy of Limburg was part of Belgium (where Gouverneur is used for the same role) until it was split in 1839 following the Treaty of London and became part of the German Confederation until 1867, after which it was made a full part of the Netherlands.”
172 Quirke, Titles and Bureaux, p. 4–5.
impression of formalism and impartiality. According to QUIRKE, the situation
is further complicated by the fact that scholars, in their desire to understand
“the system,” perceive structures that the Egyptians might themselves not
have recognized.

A total acceptance of this point of view would imply that official titles
would be near insignificant, and would not reflect the distribution of power in
the administration. It is evident that this position would be far too extreme.
Considering the amount of fundamental studies devoted to administrative
titles by QUIRKE himself, it is clear that he does not mean to say that titles
are devoid of meaning. What I think he does intend to say is that we have to
accept the Egyptian administration as a dynamic system that combines formal
and informal elements. This implies that study of the titles does not inform us
completely of what was occurring in the world of the administrators.

For example, in the later Old Kingdom many ḫr.y-w-tp are known, but
this title did not occur in the region of Aswān. There the highest officials, like
Harkhuf or Heqaib, were designated as “expedition leaders.” Their tombs dis-
play a monumentality paralleled in other provinces only by those of the pro-
vincial governors, and the tonality of their tomb autobiographies creates the
impression that these people belong to the same social stratum. Considering
the complete absence of the title ḫr.y-tp ṣ n ṣpꜢ.t in the Aswān region, is it not
likely that the responsibilities of the expedition leaders at Elephantine were
similar to those of officials elsewhere designated as ḫr.y-tp, although with
the additional task of organizing expeditions to Nubia? In the same fashion,
is it not reasonable to suppose that the ḫḳꜢ.w wḥꜢ.t “chiefs of the oasis,” who
resided in Balāṭ in the Dākhla Oasis, fulfilled more or less the same tasks as the
nomarchs, apart from their evident responsibility for caravans?

In these two cases, the conclusion I have proposed seems likely due to the
fact that no other high provincial officials were around. A case that is slightly
more difficult to assess is that of the im.y.w-r ḥm.w-ntꜢ “overseers of priests.”

173 Which comes close to the ideas formulated by MORENO GARCIA on the title ḫr.y-tp ṣ ṣ NOME; see n. 3.
174 The hypothesis that the nomarchs of the 1st Upper Egyptian nome resided at Kawm
Umbū goes, as FRANKE has pointed out, without proof (Das Heiligtum des Heqaib, p. II).
For the rather complex array of Old Kingdom titles in the 1st Upper Egyptian nome, which
includes, beside that of im.y-r ṣw “expedition leader”, also the titles im.y-r šmꜢ.w and for
instance ḫr.y-tp ṣ n nzw.t, see MARTINET, L’administration provinciale II, p. 542–555. The
first part of the latter title resembles the nomarch title ḫr.y-tp ṣ ṣ ṣpꜢ.t, but it is generally
assumed not to have the same meaning MARTINET, loc cit.; EDEL, SEYFRIED, VIELER, Die
Felsgräbernekropole von Qubbet el-Hawa bei Assuan 1/2, p. 1348–1349 and the literature
there cited.
During the Old Kingdom, it seems possible that they occasionally had a function distinct from that of the nomarch, because in some regions the two functions were borne by different people. However, it is generally agreed that this role division is not generally applicable, as towards the end of the Old Kingdom and increasingly during the First Intermediate Period, several “great chiefs of a nome” were simultaneously “overseers of priests.” By then it was apparently not uncommon for a nomarch to direct the civil and religious institutions in the nome at one and the same time. There are even indications that at the end of the Old Kingdom the temples in some cases constituted the basis of power of the nomarchs.175

After the First Intermediate Period, at least some nomes in Middle Egypt were directed by a hry-tp ꝡꜣ,176 but in other, and sometimes very important nomes, such as at Asyūt, this title is far less common, or even absent. Nevertheless, the enormous tombs in these cemeteries leave no room for doubt that their owners were the most influential officials within their provinces. Was the position of these overseers of priests very different from those of other officials elsewhere, who were explicitly qualified as “nomarch” (hry-tp ꝡꜣ)?177

Only two types of information allow us to gain an impression of the social position of these officials. The first is their very heterogeneous official style, which may vary from one province to another. A major fact can nevertheless be observed: the title of “mayor,” which, based on Helck’s theory, one would expect to be widespread, is rather exceptional until the later twelfth dynasty, except at Bani Hasan, but even at that site, there are also texts referring to “real” nomarchs (hry-tp ꝡꜣ).178

Secondly, no cemeteries of “mayors” are known that can compare to those often referred to as “nomarchal.” In my view, this situation leaves no room for

175 See p. 31–33. Martinet rightly points out that the combination of the two functions was not yet widespread in the late Old Kingdom, but became systematic under the eighth dynasty (L’administration provinciale II, p. 645; 653; 655).
176 These people were frequently at the same time overseers of priests.
177 To add to the complexities, is it certain that all “overseers of priests” had the same powers? In the Old Kingdom a difference in importance can be observed among the various temples, and this is reflected in the political role of the office holders. The same situation may well have obtained in the Middle Kingdom. For an “overseer of priests” who may not have been a nomarch, see the case of Mentuhotep of Armant, discussed above (p. 49, n. 155).
178 Several cases are known of persons entitled hꜣty š n Mnḫ.t Hwꜣ=f-wꜣ “mayor of Menat-Khufu.” It seems as though for several of these people, this title was carried in an intermediate phase of a career leading to the nomarchy; see the tabulation in GESTERMANN, Kontinuität und Wandel, p. 187.
doubt that the class of the mayors existed, but that it concerns a still restricted
group of persons of a social rank rather different from that of the nomarchs. If
these latter possessed funerary monuments of a vast scale, and of a type that is
unknown elsewhere, the same cannot be said of the “mayors.”

This way of viewing things runs counter to the opinion of many Egyptologists.
In a recent study, for instance, W. Grajetzki describes the owners of the great
tombs at Qāw al-Kabīr as “mayors” (ḥꜢ.ty-Ꜥ). The widely attested title string
ḥꜢ.ty-Ꜥ ḛm.w-nṯr has also been interpreted as a designation of officials
combining the office of “mayor” with that of “overseer of priests.” This style
is very common at Asyūţ and at Qāw al-Kabīr. The title ḩꜢ.ty-Ꜥ combined
with ḛm.w-nṯr or ḛw.t-nṯr also appears in the monumental tombs
recently found at Kawm al-Khalwa (Fayyūm).

At Qāw al-Kabīr, Asyūţ, and Kawm al-Khalwa we would thus have a social
group distinct from that of the nomarchs of Dayr al-Barshā and Banī Ḥasan. It
would concern sites containing the tombs of mayors who were also overseers
of priests.

I think this interpretation is based on a terminological confusion. I accept
Helck’s proposal that “mayors” entitled ḩꜢ.ty-Ꜥ n NAME OF TOWN existed dur-
ding the Middle Kingdom. However, this does not imply in any way that the title
ḥꜢ.ty-Ꜥ also had the connotation of “mayor” in other constructions, like ḩꜢ.ty-Ꜥ
im.y-r ḛm.w-nṯr. I think it is more in keeping with the evidence to assume

179 I have shown at greater length elsewhere that the mayors were effectively subordinate to
the regional nomarch (Willems, in: Ancient Egyptian Administration).
181 For instance Franke, Das Heiligtum des Heqaib, p. 11, n. 21, with references to other
literature.
182 See the list of principal tomb owners in Zitman, The Necropolis of Assiut I, p. 38–43,
where it will be seen that the title ḩꜢ.ty-Ꜥ also appears independently. For a “new” ḩꜢ.ty-Ꜥ at
183 In case the title ḫr.y-tp Sḫ.t is taken as a variant of the title ḫr.y-tp ḫꜤꜤ n ṣpꜤ.t/nOME, as was
suggested above (n. 151), the tombs of Kawm al-Khalwa should be skipped from this list.
184 Helck, Verwaltung, p. 208–210. The cited pages of this work have exerted an enormous
influence, but they fail to convince me. Helck describes a situation where one perceives,
on the one hand, the appearance of a ḩꜢ.ty-Ꜥ n Mn’t-ḫwꜧꜫ-wi, “mayor of Menat-Khufu”
at Banī Ḥasan, and, on the other, of the solitary title ḩꜢ.ty-Ꜥ being placed directly in front
of the name of an administrator. The position of this title immediately preceding the
name would be sufficient to prove that it concerns, not a rank title, but a functional
title, and that this functional title could only designate a mayor. This approach leads to
the recognition in the sources of a vast amount of mayors, since many members of the
elite are designated in their tombs as ḩꜢ.ty-Ꜥ N. However, the principle that a title placed
directly in front of a name must designate a profession, has never appealed to me.
that such persons were functionally the heads of temple priesthoods, and that, like other high officials, they therefore acquired the rank title $\text{ḥꜢ.ty-Ꜥ}$ “Lord”.\textsuperscript{185} In other cases, where the title $\text{ḥꜢ.ty-Ꜥ}$ is followed by a name, this could imply an abbreviation of any title string containing the element $\text{ḥꜢ.ty-Ꜥ}$. This implies that the title could in principle refer to a mayor, but does not necessarily always do so.\textsuperscript{186} Moreover, the combination of the titles $\text{ḥꜢ.ty-Ꜥ}$ and $\text{ı̓m.y-r ūm.w-nṯr}$ is rather normal in the title strings of nomarchs.

It remains possible that there was a functional difference between local rulers called “nomarch” (i.e. $\text{ḥr.y-tp ꜤꜤ}$) and “overseer of priests.” In the rather frequent cases where nomarchs were simultaneously also overseers of priests, it is conceivable that their range of tasks was more diverse than in others, where an official was “only” a $\text{ḥꜢ.ty-Ꜥ} \text{ı̓m.y-r ūm.w-nṯr}$ However, we have just seen that an approach based on literal translations of titles may lead to simplifications. The dimensions of the tombs at Qubbat al-Hawā’, Qāw al-Kabîr, Asyūṭ, Mir, Dayr al-Barshā, Bâni Ḥasan, Ṭiḥna al-Jabal, and Kawm al-Khalwa is unparalleled in the rest of Upper Egypt, suggesting that the tomb owners represent in a very real sense one social stratum, which seems to have been different from that of the mayors. It seems likely that the size of their tombs reflects their important position during life. All these

\begin{itemize}
\item I have discussed a particularly problematic case in Dayr al-Barshā I, p. 100–102. In the case of the title $\text{ḥꜢ.ty-Ꜥ}$, the situation is exceptionally delicate, because it is often used in a honorific sense (see the remarks by Fischer, Dendera, p. 71–72), and was used as a polite term of address (as in the Story of the Shipwrecked Sailor, line 2). While it is conceivable to assume (with Helck) that the polyvalent term $\text{ḥꜢ.ty-Ꜥ}$ may have been used as an abbreviation for e.g. $\text{ḥꜢ.ty-Ꜥ} \text{n TOWN}$, it is not clear why this particular use should be suspected wherever an owner of a large tomb for instance calls himself $\text{ḥꜢ.ty-Ꜥ} \text{ı̓m.y-r ūm.w-nṯr}$; rather, as in the Old Kingdom, the term $\text{ḥꜢ.ty-Ꜥ}$ is here a rank title. We will therefore only speak of a mayor in cases where the term $\text{ḥꜢ.ty-Ꜥ}$ is followed by the name of a town. See in more detail: Willems, in: Ancient Egyptian Administration.
\item My interpretation opposes that of, for instance, Quirke, who writes, “following regular Middle Kingdom practice, the post of temple manager was held by the leading official of the main settlement ($\text{ḥꜢ.ty-Ꜥ}$) to form a composite position $\text{ḥꜢt.y-Ꜥ imy.r ṭwt-nṯr/ḥm.w-nṯr}$” (Administration, p. 161).
\item For the variability of functions exerted by people entitled $\text{ḥꜢ.ty-Ꜥ}$, see Czerny, Ä&L II (2001), p. 23–25. One example still exists where the living environment of a $\text{ḥꜢ.ty-Ꜥ} \text{ım.y-r ūm.w-nṯr}$ can be perceived: the governorial palace of Tall Bastā (see van Siclen, in: Haus und Palast im alten Ägypten, p. 239–246; Idem, in: Akten des IV. int. Ägyptologenkongresses IV, p. 187–194. From these publications, it does not become sufficiently clear that possibly only a part of this vast palace has been unearthed). The house of the mayors of WꜢh-sw.t at Abydos is considerably smaller, suggesting that the mayors operated at a different level from (at least some of) the $\text{ḥꜢ.ty.w-Ꜥ} \text{ım.y.w-r ūm.w-nṯr}$.
\end{itemize}
considerations converge in suggesting that we are facing a group that may have been heterogeneous from the perspective of titles, but homogeneous in social status. Moreover, the geographical distribution shows that these regional overlords were active in particular in Middle Egypt.

In the next chapters, I will discuss these officials, not as administrators, but as members of a social class, as the representatives of what I will call, on the suggestion of B. Kemp, the “Nomarchy.”