The Rituals of Purification and Mummification in the Old Kingdom: Sequence, Time and Location

By

Mohamed Zein

Faculty of Tourism and Hotels, Luxor University, Egypt
ال الملخص:

أعطى المصريون القدماء أهمية كبيرة للخدمات الجنائزية للمنصوب من طبقة النبلاء، حيث اعتقدوا أنه من خلال هذه الطقوس والممارسات يمكن للشخص الوصول إلى العالم الآخر بأمان ومن ثم الخلد وتجعل هذه الورقة مجموعة من الأدلة الأثرية والنصوص والمصورة حول هيكليين وحنا خيمة التطهير (الابو) وورشة التحنيط (الوعيت) والتي من خلالها يناقش البحث ويستخلص وقت وسلسلة الطقوس التي تمت بعد وفاة أحد النبلاء خلال الدولة القديمة، كما يستنتج الموقع المحتمل لهذه الهيكلين في الجبانة وتم استخدام منهجية التحليل والمقارنة للأدلة المصورة بشكل أساسي إلى جانب الأدلة النصية والأثرية حول كل المكانين لبناء ترتيب زمني للخدمات الجنائزية.

تفرض هذه الدراسة أن خلال عصر الدولة القديمة، تم نصب خيمتين مختلفتين للتطهير في موقعين مختلفين، صنعت الأولي في اليوم الأول من التحنيط على حافة الماء على جانب الجبانة لتكون هذه المحتلة الأولى خلال المراسم الجنائزية الأولى حيث تم نقل الجثة إلى ورشة التحنيط أما الثانية فقد صنعت قرب ورشة التحنيط القبر والتي تم استخدامها أثناء عملية التحنيط ثم في تطهير الجسد خلال المراسم الثانية وهي يوم الذهني ويتضح هذا البحث أيضًا إلى أن الجثة تبقى عدة أيام قبل تسليمها إلى ورشة التحنيط لتحضيرها للمراسم الجنائزية بشكل مناسب وتمكين المحترفين والمسؤولين في خيمة التطهير من الحصول على الوقت الكافي للقيام بما هو ضروري لوظائفهم الشعائرية.
Abstract

The ancient Egyptians gave great importance to the funerary services for the noble deceased, as they believed that through these rituals and practices he could reach the safe afterlife and eternity. This paper brings together available archaeological, textual and pictorial evidence about two structures; the Tent of Purification “ibw” and the Mummification Workshop “wšt”. Through these evidence, it discusses and concludes the time and sequence of the rituals performed in the two funeral ceremonies that were made after a noble’s death in the Old Kingdom. It also deduces the possible location of these structures in the Necropolis. It uses descriptive analysis methodology for mainly pictorial evidence besides textual, archaeological ones about the both places for constructing a chronological order to the funerary services. This paper proposes that during the Old Kingdom, two different tents of purification were set up in two different locations. The first ibw was made on the first day of mummification on the edge of body of water on the side of the necropolis. This was the first stop during the first funerary ceremony in which the body was transported to the wšt. A second ibw was made near the wšt and the tomb. It was used during the embalming process and then in the purification of the body during the second ceremony which is the day of burial. This research suggests also that the body remains few days before being delivered to the wšt to prepare appropriate funeral ceremonies and enable the embalmers and officials in the ibw to have sufficient time to do what is necessary for their ritualistic jobs.
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Keywords:
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I. Introduction
One of the consequences of death of an Ancient Egypt elite is the funerary services and the care of dead body that insure an eternal and excellent Afterlife for the deceased. From, at least, the Old Kingdom until the Greco-Roman Period in Egypt, many elites’ tombs show the funeral procession iconography which contain these funerary rituals and services. These representations are always mingled and unorganized and do not show a precise chorological order for the events. However, in reality these rituals seems to be well organized, well prepared and has a usual timeline because of their importance for the deceased and his fate. Identifying the exact sequence of some funerary rituals is difficult especially with the paucity of evidence like in the case of the mummification and purification of the body. Although these two rituals are extremely important for the deceased, very rare archaeological evidence had been found about their locations and sequence in the funerary services and even the few textual or pictorial reference do not reveal clearly their order and structural composition. Therefore, it is not sure when that the both rituals were exactly performed after death and which of them precedes the other especially that the rare scenes showing them can be read by scholars in different ways because they do not have a certain regular direction. Furthermore, the places of these rituals also still ambiguous because no Mummification Workshop dating to this period had been
discovered yet. The first ever to be found Embalming Workshop in Egypt date back to the Late Period and was discovered by Dr. Ramadan Hussein.\(^1\) Some scholars studied the Old Kingdom funeral scenes like Wilson,\(^2\) Blackman,\(^3\) and others but their conclusion about the sequence of rituals were not accurate as they did not present a comprehensive overview of the funeral depictions. They focused on some scenes and ignored others. Other scholars studied the Purification Tent like Grdseloff,\(^4\) Brovarski,\(^5\) Hoffmeier,\(^6\) and others. Unfortunately their efforts have little increased our identification to the sequence of the rituals and their location because of for the scarcity of evidence. Therefore, the order and the places of purification and mummification process remained unknown.

II. The Embalming Time for the Body after Death:
In order to establish a chronology of events, it is necessary to trace what had happened after death. It is certain that by the occurrence of death, the dead body was taken to the Embalmers’ workshop “\(w\)^\(\textbf{ Ct}\)”\(^7\) in order to save it from decomposition and to preserve it for the Afterlife. However, it is uncertain when the deceased was transported from his house to the \(w\)^\(\textbf{ Ct}\). Textual evidence from the Ptolemaic Period show that the period of embalming of the body was counted from the fourth day after death.\(^8\) Some scholars like Cannata proposed that the four-day waiting time before the mummification of the body (if actually upheld in practice) was a tradition that was in use for confirming the death of an individual and allowing relatives and friends mourn the deceased.\(^9\) However, no textual or archaeological evidence about this custom during the Old Kingdom or
even the dynastic Periods has been found. For Cannata, this seems to be inspired from a parallel practice from Greece (classical period) where the deceased was displayed on a bed from the day after death until the morning of the third day when the body would be taken to the tomb. Nevertheless, in the Old Kingdom, the time for delivering the body to the \( w^{-}bt \) could be also from two to four days especially in the case of sudden death because the embalmers and other officiants has to be available to perform the rituals for the deceased. A well-provided funeral ceremonies and deceased are necessary too and need time, which can be a reason for delaying the time of taking the cadaver to the \( w^{-}bt \).

It is known that the mummification process in the \( w^{-}bt \) could take about 70 days or less or even more depending on its quality and price. After this process, the body was taken in a prestigious procession to the tomb and rituals were performed on the road to the tomb. The purification of the body in the \( ibw \) was another ritual that some few Old Kingdom funeral scenes show. Through these scenes, the purification ritual in this place could be understood as it was made after and/or before the mummification process. For revealing that, more discussions will be displayed in the following lines of this paper.

III. Textual and Archaeological Evidence about the Purification and Mummification Places and the Sequence of Rituals:

Textual Evidence: different funerary texts hinted at the Tent of Purification “\( ibw \)” as the Pyramid Texts (Pyr. 184a,
750 a-d, 1364-5, 2100, 2012), Coffin Texts (CT 44, 45, 60, 187d), and the Book of the Dead (BD 1). This place is also known from the later period text of the Apis Embalming Ritual Papyrus (P. Vindob 3873).\textsuperscript{14} This latter papyrus (P. Vindob 3873 recto 4.13) gives details about the form of this structure which is almost as it was represented in Old Kingdom funerary scenes.\textsuperscript{15} The structure was described seemingly as it had been shown with two doors at each end situated at the edge of a body of water. Some funerary texts described the materials of the structure of the \textit{ibw} as well as its components. CT Spell 44 indicates that the deceased will cloak himself in the \textit{w\texttextit{\texttt{b}}} shroud of \textit{ibw}, together with ‘He who-lives-in-its curtain.’ In CT Spell 60, several parts of the tent were identified with gods. The beams are identified as the arms of Nut, and its curtain is the cloak of Ptah, which Tayt herself has woven. For Roode, the form of determinatives of the word ‘\textit{ibw}’ in the tomb of Pepyankh Heny-Kem at Meir that shows clearly a tent-like construction.\textsuperscript{16} The Apis Papyrus also indicated that the \textit{ibw} was made of poles covered by linen (P. Vindob 3873 recto 4.13).\textsuperscript{17}

For better understanding the sequence of the mummification and purification rituals, the Apis Papyrus provides with an important evidence about the order of rituals after death. Although the papyrus dates back to later period than the Old Kingdom and it describes the embalming for a sacred animal, its content and the details show a great similarity between the funeral services and their order of the Old Kingdom scenes. The text is not indicating the accurate time that the bull was taken to the \textit{ibw}. Moreover, it gave no details about the description of the rituals that were performed inside this place or the
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length of time that the corps remained in it. Nevertheless, it defines that the dead bull was received through the western door of this structure and by the end of rituals inside the Apis was taken out through the eastern door as the body was carried to the embalming workshop (P. Vindob 3873 recto 4.14).

The papyrus indicates clearly that the Apis was not taken to the Embalming Workshop directly after death but rather to the *ibw*. For Vercoutter, the evidence confirming that come from a passage from two stelae of an Apis who died in the year 30 of Ramses II: *wḏ ẖm n ḫp r ḳbḥ.t r htp wšb.t* “the Majesty of the Apis went to the *kbḥ.t* to rest (afterwards) in the Embalming House”. In this context, the word *kbḥ.t* is more likely to mean “place of purification”. The time of construction of the *ibw* can also be identified from the Papyrus which mentioned that the *ibw* was made on the first day on the bank of the ‘Lake of Kings’. However, this day can be understood as the day of death or the first day of the mummification process period which seems to be some days after. It is mostly that this is the day in which the body was taken to the mummification place and not the day of death because as it was previously mentioned the body has to remain few days before being transferred to the *wšbt* for preparing all the arrangement for the deceased’s funeral. Thus, this *ibw* was used for a first purifying for the cadaver on a body of water which seems to be on the edge of the cemetery. This resembles the *ibw* shown on the Old Kingdom scenes that was used during the First Funerary Ceremony representing the day of delivering the body to the *wšbt*. Therefore, these evidence indicate that the
sequence was that the corpse was firstly taken to *ibw* and then to the *wabt*.

One of the interesting evidence that can lead us to know the order of the rituals and the space of time between taking the body to embalming workshop and the day of burial exist in the 4th Dynasty tomb of Queen Meresankh III. On both sides of the tomb’s entrance, two vertical inscriptions tell the dates of the death and the date of transportation of Meresankh to the mortuary workshop (*wabt*). The text on the North Side can be read:

\[Z3t\text{nswt} M_r.s^-5\text{nh} \text{rnpt} Zp \text{tpj} 3bd 1 \text{smw} \text{sw} 21 \text{htp} k3.s \text{hpt} s r \text{w}^5\text{bt}\]

“King’s daughter Meresankh, Year 1, 1st of Shemu (i.e. 1st day of the summer season), day 21, going to rest of her *k3*, her going to the *wabt* (embalming).”

While the text on the South Side can be read:

\[hmt\text{nswt} M_r.s^-5\text{nh} \text{rnpt} (m)-\text{ht} \text{zp} \text{tpj} 3bd 2 \text{prt} \text{sw} 18 \text{htp}s r jz.s \text{nfr}\]

“King’s wife Meresankh, Year after 1 [Year 2], 2nd of Peret (i.e. year 2, 2nd day of the winter season), day 18, her going to her beautiful tomb on the south” \(^{20}\)

Thus, the text shows that the span between the date of her death and that of her burial is thus 273 days\(^{21}\) which is longer than the traditional 70 days known for the mummification. This confirms that there were two processions, one for transporting the deceased to the mummification place and the other for collecting the
mummified body to the tomb. The texts indicate only the departure to the embalming workshop and then after a span of time the burial of the body. Translating these texts literally can lead to understand that chronologically the deceased was collected and directly taken to his tomb without performing any funerary ritual before the burial. This is not consistent with the known funerary customs and beliefs of these times which impose necessary rituals on the day of burial on the way to and before/upon the tomb as some Old Kingdom funeral scenes and texts show. It is clear that the text did not mention other rituals including purification and only highlighted mummification as it is the most significant ritual for the deceased.

Archaeological Evidence: it is unfortunately that rare evidence about Embalming Workshops used for human mummification have been definitively found in the archaeological record of the Old Kingdom. Although that some discovered structures at Saqqara were suspected to be workshops for human embalming, the only confirmed one from all periods dates back to the Late Period as previously mentioned. The embalming house of the Apis bull in Memphis of the late Period represents also an archaeological example of a functioning mummification workshop that enhance our knowledge about this place and its components.

As the archaeological information about the ibw are rare, some scholars suggested that this construction was mostly a portable and perishable, such as a tent. This was supported by the texts previously mentioned and the reality that the putrefying body emits volatile gases which make difficult to habit in an enclosed structure completely made of stones
so a tent can be more comfortable for the embalmers.\textsuperscript{25} A reconstruction of this place (Figure 1) based on the Old Kingdom tomb depictions has been introduced by Badawy.\textsuperscript{26} What confirmed that the \textit{ibw} has to be a lightweight structure is what was mentioned in the Apis Embalming Ritual Papyrus (P. Vindob 3873).\textsuperscript{27} The text hinted that this construction was made in the first day, which means rapidly, that could be the day of death itself or mostly, as the researcher suggests, the day of delivering the body to embalmers. Brovarski believes that the tent is the scene place for a ritual cleansing and washing-ceremony. He suggests that “the most essential and constant element in all the drawings of the Old Kingdom is not the temporary booth where the ritual took place but the terrace upon which the booth was erected with its slipway leading to the water’s edge”.\textsuperscript{28} 

![Fig. 1. Hypothetical reconstruction of the Tent of Purification. (After, Badawy 1954, p. 67, figure 49).]
The *ibw* structure of the Late Period found at Saqqara gives more information about the place and the form of these structures and how they were look like. The results showed that the walls are made of irregular, local Saqqara limestone blocks and mudbrick so it seems that the Old Kingdom *ibw* was maybe not a portable structure made from complete subject to destruction materials as it was believed. The *ibw* was described in the funerary texts as it has beams, curtain and a framework of poles covered by linen or reed matting but the new discovery suggests that stones were maybe used too in the construction of this structure. The rectilinear layout, side entrance, two rooms (one of them contains deep basin), and middle mudbrick ramp dividing the rectangular layout of the structure into two equal spaces resembles the depictions of the *ibw* found in Old Kingdom mastabas of Qar and Idu at Giza,\(^29\) Mereruka at Saqqara, and Pepyankh Heny-Kem at Meir. It seems that there is a slight difference in the architectural design of the *ibw* of the Old Kingdom and Late Period as the new discovered one at Saqqara has only one side entrance while the Old Kingdom depicted *ibw* has two side entrances.\(^30\) The objects found in this *ibw* structure, particularly the two jars with the black resinous substance and soiled linen in the eastern room propose that it was associated with the preparation of embalming bandages by soaking them with that substance, while the basin room is a place that was used for the dehydration of the body with natron. Also, the clay objects, including the beakers and red bowls that are similar to those found in near Shaft M 23-II, refers to a connection with the mummification process.\(^31\) A distinction must be made between this Purification Tent which is located near the
place of embalming and the tomb, and the other one which was set up near the water on the edge of the necropolis.

Although Hassan documented what he believed to be the remains of a Tent of Purification in front of the valley temple of Khafre’s pyramid, his map of the area has since been found to be inaccurate and the features he described inconsistent with other archaeological investigations of the area around the valley temple. Reisner, Ricke and Grdseloff proposed that the valley temples themselves represent the place of the purification used in the mummification of kings. Hassan introduced textual and pictorial evidence about the existence of the ibw from the 4th Dynasty which he claimed to be a 'washing-tent'. He also believed as other scholars like Grdseloff that the sh ntr was the royal counterpart to the ibw. This is supported by the existence of only the term sh-ntr in the Pyramid Texts while no direct mention for the ibw. This confirms the difference between the royal Purification place sh-ntr, and the private one ibw. Grdseloff supposed that the ibw was used twice; one as the location of the mummification process and the other as the location of the ‘Opening of the Mouth’ ceremony.

Altenmüller suggests firstly that the term sh ntr refers to a separate funerary structure used in the ritual voyage to Sais. This was rejected by Hoffmeier who suggested that the term ibw n wḥb (or ibw) was replaced at the end of the Old Kingdom by the term sh ntr that refers to the same Tent of Purification. The Pyr. 1293, 1395 and 2012 mentioned also the purification rites related to sh ntr and the term sh can refer to a canopy or tent structure. He added that the term ibw can be found after the Old Kingdom in only few
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Middle Kingdom Coffin Texts\(^41\) and the Apis Embalming Ritual of the Late - Ptolemaic Period.\(^42\) It seems that the term \(s\text{h} \text{ntr}\) was used during the New Kingdom by the nobles as it is appeared in the funeral procession scene of Rekhmire’s tomb.\(^43\)

With the textual and archaeological evidence previously mentioned, it can be concluded that two ceremonies were held for the deceased. In the first ceremony, in which the body was transported to the embalmers, an \(ibw\) was constructed on the edge of a body of water which was crossed by boats. In the second ceremony, there was another \(ibw\) that was constructed near the \(w\text{\textasciitilde{cbt}}\) where multiple rituals related to the embalming and purification were held. After the embalming and before the burial, the last purification was performed in this place.

III- Old Kingdom Pictorial Evidence about the Purification and Mummification Places and the Sequence of Rituals:
The Purification Tent was represented in some mastabas dating back to 5\(^{th}\) and 6\(^{th}\) dynasty and Middle Kingdom coffins.\(^44\) The Old Kingdom representations of the \(ibw\) come from the mastabas of: Qar and Idu at Giza (Figures 2 & 3), Mereruka (Figure 4) and Ankhmahor at Saqqara\(^45\) and Pepyankh Heny-Kem at Meir (Figure 5).\(^46\) The general outlines of the represented tents show an oblong structure, with a door on each end and two pathways leading from each door to the waterfront. Funerary objects and food offerings were shown as they were purified therein before being taken to the tomb (Figs. 4 & 7).\(^47\) They were maybe used also during the rituals of the Opening of the Mouth and Eye Ritual.
In general, the rituals and their sequence can be understood mainly from the Saqqara and Giza Old Kingdom private tombs and the Theban New Kingdom private tombs. It is uncommon that the Ancient Egyptian represented the *ibw* and more the *wšt* and therefore the rituals that were performed inside both of them. It is just in some Old Kingdom funerary depictions that these two places can be recognized. Although that the New Kingdom tombs has a plethora of funeral depictions showing more details of the funerary rituals, the two structures had never been shown. It seems that during the Old Kingdom, the *ibw* and *wšt* were two separate entities, even if they were near each other, as the pictorial evidence show while during the Middle and New Kingdoms they were maybe in a single structure.48

The funeral iconographical details in the nobles’ tombs always introduce different rituals and ceremonies that were made for the deceased noble after his death and during his burial day.49 These depictions do not separate the events of transporting the deceased’s body to the purification and the embalming places, which were after death, and the events of day of burial. They show all the rituals and services for the deceased as if they were performed in just one day. The few depictions from Old Kingdom private tombs confirm that the transportation of the body was to the three separate places; two Purification Tents and a Mummification Workshop. Having three different locations for these rituals must have a religious and ritualistic significance.50 Through the scenes, it can also be concluded that the burial rites for the deceased were performed in two necessary ceremonies, separated by a considerable space of time as the corps was left during the
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embalming process and then was collected after this period for being buried.\textsuperscript{51}

One of the best examples showing these ceremonies is in the tomb of Pepyankh Heny-Kem at Meir which are depicted on the eastern wall and western wall of Room F.\textsuperscript{52}

This paper will use and compare mainly these two depictions with some other scenes showing the two ceremonies for constructing the sequence of Old Kingdom funerary rituals. The scenes in Pepyankh Heny-Kem show the funeral cortège heading to and from the \textit{ibw} and \textit{w\textsuperscript{c}bt} and allusions to the rituals conducted therein. Showing the two places and the rituals performed is rarely depicted in the ancient Egyptian art as previously mentioned. The actual interpretation of the two funeral scenes in the tomb of Pepyankh Heny-Kem is different from that of Blackman as he suggested that the eastern wall and western wall represent two ceremonies of one funeral procession; one for delivering the body to the embalmer’s workshop and the other for collecting the body to be buried during the funeral day.\textsuperscript{53} This research supposes that each funeral scene in each wall contains the two ceremonies in the same time without separation of their events.

**The First Ceremony in Old Kingdom Funeral Services:** it aims mainly at transporting the body to the Embalming Workshop in the cemetery which is in the west. The sequence of the episodes of this ceremony can be constructed through the funeral scenes of Mereruka, Ankhmahor and Pepyankh Heny-Kem. **In episodes 1 & 2** of this ceremony, a procession was held to transport the corpse of the deceased, in a coffin, from his house to the river bank.\textsuperscript{54} These episodes are represented, partly or fully, in some funeral scenes from Old Kingdom as the Saqqara
6th Dynasty tombs of Mereruka (Fig, 2) and Ankhmahor (Fig. 3) and in which the funerary cortege get out from a property of the deceased in the east bank, containing some of his family members and mourners, called the "pr-dr". After wailing the deceased, the body in its coffin was carried from this place to the riverbank.

Fig. 2. The funeral procession scene in Mereruka, 6th Dynasty, Saqqara (After, Duell 1938, pls. 130).

Fig. 3. The funeral procession in the Ankhmahor, 6th Dynasty, Saqqara (After Kanawati, N., and Hassan 1997, II, pl. 56).

**Episode 3** (Figs. 4 & 5) of the first ceremony includes loading the funerary boats and traversing with the body of the deceased over the water while **Episode 4** (Figs. 4& 5) shows the arrival to the west bank and the heading to the
Ibw. In some scenes like that of Mereruka, the arrival of the boats was directly on a pier taking the form of ibw which is almost a choice by the artist for reducing the drawing space of this place. In the two funeral scenes of Pepyankh Heny-Kem, the ibw was not shown directly on the edge of the river as in Mereruka but little bit faraway as after the arrival of the boats, the participants are shown heading with the coffin to this structure. However, it can be confirmed that the ibw was used, after crossing of the water, to purify the deceased before entering the sacred area of the cemetery where he will be taken to the embalmers’ workshop. This is the first time of purification to the body before being mumified. The form given to the ibw as the hieroglyphs c.w.y p.t ‘doors of heaven’ in the funeral scene of Mereruka and the term ’portal of the horizon’ in CT Spell 60 of suggests that the ibw was the entrance to the netherworld on a metaphorical level. As the funeral show, this was the first stop for the funeral cortege after the crossing of the water which confirms that this is the entrance to the necropolis.
Fig. 4. Part of the funeral scene in Mereruka, 6th Dynasty, Saqqara (After, Duell 1938, pls. 130).

In Episode 5 & 6 (Fig. 6), the funeral procession leaves the ibw with the coffin and arrives at the wcht. The depiction shows that by the arrival to the place of mummification,
some rituals were performed and the food and drink offerings were presented to the body. By delivering the corps to the embalmers for being mummified during a certain period, the procession would return to the east which is end of the first ceremony. It is only in the tomb of Pepyankh Heny-Kem that this detailed sequence can be seen as the Egyptians tended to not to show the mummification place.

Blackman supposed that the funeral scenes in the East wall of the tomb F show only the first ceremony. He argued that “the bearers did not leave the sarcophagus with the embalmers, but took it away with them”. He proposed also that “the two figures on the third register may have formed a part of the group carrying the now empty sarcophagus”. This is obviously a wrong interpretation because the sequence of the episodes after the Embalmer’s Workshop, shown in the upper register, is incomplete and

Fig. 6. The episodes of purification and mummification places in the first ceremony in the east wall of tomb of Pepyankh Heny-Kem (After Blackman1953, Pl. XLII).
the remaining part, in almost the center, shows only two bearers carrying the coffin. The large spaces at the end and the beginning of this register most probably was showing directly some details of the second ceremony including collecting the body from wcbt and heading to the ibw and finally to the tomb. In the contrary of what Blackman said, the funeral scene on the east wall represent the two funeral ceremonies without a separation for the events which is usual in all the ancient Egyptian funerary scenes.

The Second Ceremony in Old Kingdom Funeral Services: (Figs. 7, 8 &9): this ceremony represents the funeral day in which the burial was conducted. It is just after the end of the embalming time. The dramatic episodes of this day can be identified via the funeral scenes of Qar, Mereruka and Pepyankh Heny-Kem.

In Episode 1 of this ending ceremony, the cortege firstly come to take the empty coffin from almost the house/property of the deceased where the household and friend of the deceased as well as other participants would regroup. Then, in Episode 2 the funeral cortege moves from the house of the deceased to the riverbank as what had happened in the first ceremony. After that, Episode 3 shows that by the arrival to the river, the coffin was mounted on a boat and ready for making the crossing to the west. The coffin was accompanied by many officiants including the lector priest, kites and embalmer. These episodes can be also understood from the first three episodes shown in the funeral scenes of Mereruka and Ankhmahor. It seems that the similar parts of the two funeral ceremonies, here the three first episodes, were most likely represented by icons bearing a dual meaning.
In episode 4, the cortege arrived to the west and moved directly to collect the mummified body, after being placed in its coffin, from the w<bt. At this time, the funerary officiants perform final rituals upon the mummified corps before leaving the w<bt. In episode 5, the procession leaves the w<bt by way of the back door with deceased on his coffin. This can be understood from the scene of Pepyankh Heny-Kem as the text above the bearers (Fig. 9-5 c2) says: “Behold, this is the escorting of an honoured one”. The sequence of events after that is clearly identified with the vertical text above the door, behind the Master-Embalmer, which says: “An escorting to the Tent of Purification. The distance between the ibw and the w<bt structures seems to be short” which is confirmed by the mummification complex of Saqqara.

In episode 6 (Fig. 9), the procession proceeds to the ibw as it can be seen in the tomb of Pepyankh Heny-Kem. In the tomb of Mereruka (Fig. 7), the cortege was shown leaving from the ibw directly towards the tomb. It seems that the artist wanted to show a part of the first ceremony and the last important part of the second ceremony including rituals before placing the deceased in his tomb. In episode 7, the arrival to the ibw where rituals related to the mummification were almost certainly performed upon the mummy that could contain the Opening the Mouth besides and/or the preparation of the body to the process. In this second installation of the ibw, the deceased was also prepared with the last purification ritual before entering the Netherworld which is mostly symbolic for the body. In episode 8, the procession leaves the ibw and proceeds to the tomb where before it some rituals would be conducted.
for the deceased who by placing him in his final rest, the second ceremony ends.

*Fig. 7.* Funeral procession in the tomb of Qar, 6th Dynasty, Giza (After Simpson, W. K., *The Mastabas of Qar and Idu G7101 and 7102*, vol. II, Boston, 1976, Fig. 24).

*Fig. 8.* Part of the funeral procession scene in the tomb of Mereruka, 6th Dynasty, Saqqara (After Duell 1938, pls. 130).
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Fig. 9. The two funeral ceremonies in the east wall of tomb of Pepyankh Heny-Kem (After Blackman 1953, Pl. XLII).
The sequence of rituals in the eastern wall of funeral scene in Pepyankh Heny-Kem (Fig. 9) seems to represent the two
funerary ceremonies. The first four episodes of the first
ceremony (C1) are represented in the lowest register and a
part of the second register as following:
In Episode 1: the funeral cortege arrives to the riverbank
In Episode 2: crossing to the west
In Episode 3: arrival to the west and heading to the Tent of
Purification
In Episode 4: heading to the embalmers’ workshop and
performing Rituals therein.
The word “ibw” in the right hand caption of the lowest
register (3 C1) confirms that the procession’s first
destination was to the Purification Tent, before entering the
cemetery. This means that the body was in his coffin and
will be purified before being transferred to the embalmers
in the first ceremony. However, these episodes could be
read as a part of the second ceremony too if it could be
suggested that the ibw was visited twice during the funeral
day; one by the empty coffin and the other with the
embalmed body and before placing the deceased in his
tomb. Thus, the artist seems to make iconographies with
double meaning as it had been mentioned before. This is
because of the repetitive events in the two ceremonies.
By comparing this scene with the other funeral scenes of
the Old Kingdom, it can be suggested that the last episode
in the left hand side of the second register represents the
fifth episode of the Second Ceremony (C2) and the upper
register depicted the rest of its events (Fig. 9) which
occurred during the day of burial:
In Episode 5: the procession leaves the Embalmers’ Workshop with deceased on his coffin
In Episode 6: the heading to the Purification tent
In Episode 7: arrival to the tent of purification and performing Rituals therein
In Episode 8: leaving the purification tent and proceeding to the tomb.

Conclusion

- This paper collects pictorial and textual evidence dating back to the Old Kingdom as well as the available archaeological discoveries from the Old Kingdom and later periods about the Tent of Purification ‘ibw’ and the Embalmers’ Workshop ‘wcbt’. The examination of these sources aimed at leading to a more developed understanding of the sequence of Purification and mummification rituals in the Old Kingdom funeral services for the deceased. It tried to conclude through the available archaeological records, especially the funeral scenes, the location of the two places in which these rituals were performed as well as the approximate time for each ritual in the necropolis.

- After the death of an elite, the body was the object of a series of rituals that guarantee for the deceased an eternal and perfect Afterlife for the deceased. These rituals and funerary services were mainly depicted in the funeral procession scenes but in non-clear chronological order. The funerary texts of the Old Kingdom do not indicate obvious
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details for neither the sequence nor the location of the ibw and the wabet. However, it seems that there was a usual arrangement that was respected by the individuals as it is inherited funeral beliefs and customs.

- The paucity of archaeological evidence about the ibw and the wabet dating to the Old Kingdom formed another obstacle for identifying the location and the nature of these structures as well as their sequence on the funerary services and rituals. However, with the first and only discovered human embalming workshop in Egypt by Dr. Hussein and the Apis Embalming Ritual Papyrus, an approximate comparison between these evidence and the funeral scene can be made for constructing the order and identifying the possible locations for the two places.

- By the death of a noble during the Old Kingdom, there were two elaborate funeral ceremonies were held. The rituals upon the deceased and their order were decisive details for his destiny in the Afterlife. The body was prominent feature during the first ceremony the body was taken from the house of the deceased to the wabet and in the second ceremony was taken from the wabet to be the tomb.

- It is unsure when the deceased was taken from his house to the wabet. Some scholars as Cannata believes that the dead body was taken to the mummification place after four days for confirming
the death and allowing the household, relatives and friends mourn the deceased which seems to be an inspired custom from Greece (classical period). By calculating the time needed for preparing appropriate and well provided funerary services for the deceased especially in the case of sudden death, it seems that there was a waiting period from two to four days before delivering the body to the w<bt. The waiting time would enable the embalmers and other officiants to be available for participating in the performance of the rituals for the deceased and preparing the the ibw. A replete and well supplied funerary services was significant for the deceased and need time that could delay the time of delivering the deceased in place of embalming.

- The period of the mummification process varied depending on the quality and the price payed to the embalmers but the traditional average number of days was about 70 days. After this period, the body was collected during a second funerary ceremony accompanied by different rituals on the road to the tomb and near it.

- The “ibw” is traced in some spells of the Pyramid Texts, Coffin Texts, the Book of the Dead and the later period text of the Apis Embalming Ritual Papyrus (P. Vindob 3873). The description in this papyrus shows that the ibw of the Old Kingdom, shown in the funeral scenes, and the Late Period one are almost identical. There is also great similarity
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between the described funeral services and their suggested order with that of the funeral scenes. After death, a first *ibw* was set up on the edge of the water, referred to as the ‘Lake of Kings’, for purifying the body and before the mummification process. This was in the first funeral ceremony in which the body was delivered to the *w*ꜣbt.

- It was always believed that the *ibw* was made of only lightweight materials because some funerary texts as CT Spell 44 referred that it has curtain and CT Spell 60 hinted to woven fabric. The determinative of the word ‘*ibw*’ resembles largely the form of a tent. The Apis papyrus indicated also that the *ibw* was made out of poles covered by linen and contained two doors.

- The Apis papyrus indicates that the dead bull was received through the western door of this structure and by the end of rituals inside the Apis was taken out through the eastern door as the body was carried to the embalming workshop (P. Vindob 3873 recto 4.14).

- Because of the rare archaeological evidence about the the *ibw*, it was thought to be a portable and perishable structure like a tent. Purifying a dead body subject to decomposition in such lightweight structure supports this suggestion. The construction of the *ibw* on the first day, as the Apis Papyrus referred, expresses a speed in implementation which
support the idea that this structure was a simple tent or a booth.

- The *ibw* of the Late Period found at Saqqara revealed that the walls of this structure are made of limestone and mudbrick which shows that parts of the Old Kingdom *ibw* could be made of the stones as well, with other materials. Therefore, it seems to be a simple structure but mostly not a portable one. The found evidence confirmed its connection with the embalming process.

- The inscriptions on the sides of the entrance of 4th Dynasty tomb of Queen Meresankh III indicates a span of time between the day of death and the burial. This proves that the funerary ceremonies were held one for delivering the deceased to the Embalmers and the other for the burial.

- The Old Kingdom pictorial evidence about the Purification and mummification places and the Sequence of rituals can be understood through funeral scenes the mastabas of: Qar and Idu at Giza (Figures 2 & 3), Mereruka (Figure 4) and Ankhmahor at Saqqara and Pepyankh Heny-Kem at Meir (Figure 5).

- The Old Kingdom depictions showed that the cortege take the body from the *wctbt* to another structure which the *ibw*. This confirms that the two structures were separated.

- Some of these Old Kingdom scenes show that the deceased’s household, relatives and friends as well
as the funerary officiant and other different participants come to take the deceased to the $w^\text{r}bt$. Then and after the period of mummification, a funeral cortege come to collect the body and carry it to the tomb.

- Nevertheless, these scenes are mixed and the archaeological about the place of purification and mummification are rare which represent a difficulty to determine the sequence of these rituals. Among all the ancient Egyptian funeral scenes, it is only in Pepyankh Heny-Kem that the sequence of rituals appears with more obvious details.

- After death, the sequence of Old Kingdom funerary services of the first ceremony can be identified via the funeral scenes of Mereruka, Ankhmahor and Pepyankh Heny-Kem which contains the most detailed funeral processions’ scenes of the Old Kingdom. The goal of this first ceremony was handing over the deceased to the Embalmers’ Workshop. The sequence of this ceremony can be concluded in six steps.

- **In the 1\textsuperscript{st} and 2\textsuperscript{nd} steps of the First Ceremony**, the cortege takes the deceased in his coffin and move from his house or his $pr-glt$ (property) to a body of water which is maybe a canal, a lake or a branch of the Nile River. In 3\textsuperscript{rd} step, a water journey of funerary boats with the body of the deceased crosses to the necropolis. Then in the 4\textsuperscript{th} step, the boats arrives to the west bank and takes its way to the $ibw$
where some rituals were performed. After that, in the 5th and 6th steps, the cortege leaves the ibw with the deceased in his coffin and arrives at the w’bt, where some rites were conducted for the body. By bringing the corps to the Embalmers’ Workshop, the participants would return back to their residences for continuing their daily life activities until the mummification period ends and the time of the Second Ceremony comes.

- In the first Ceremony, the body’s first stop after traversing the river was the ibw which was metaphorically on the entry-point to the realm of dead. The necropolis and its edge besides the river was like the gateway that lead to the Netherworld. In this gateway that separated the world of the living from the world of the dead, a first ibw was set up to prepare the deceased to enter this sacred world, purified and complete, which is a holy place but can be accessed by the living people. The second ibw was must be made near the tomb during the last rituals before that the deceased enter the Netherworld.

- The sequence of Old Kingdome funerary services of the Second Ceremony can be concluded from the tombs of Qar, Mereruka and Pepyankh Heny-Kem. This ceremony represents the day of burial in which the body was collected from the w’bt to conduct some additional rituals on the road and near the
tomb as well as in another ibw. It can be summed up in eight steps.

- In the **1st and 2nd step of the Second ceremony**, the funeral cortege takes the empty coffin from the deceased’s house and moves to the riverbank then in the **3rd step** the coffin is mounted on a boat for crossing the water. These steps can be understood from the funeral scenes of Mereruka and Ankhmahor. The repetitive funerary steps in the First and Second ceremony has maybe a double meanings.

- In **4th step**, the cortege arrives to the west and moves to the $w\text{"}bt$ for collecting the mummified body. Then in **5th step**, the cortege moves from the $w\text{"}bt$ with the mummified deceased and heads to another ibw as one of the texts in the funeral scene of the tomb of scene of Pepyankh Heny-Kem (Figure 9) indicated. This second ibw is used during this second ceremony and not far from the $w\text{"}bt$ as the mummification complex of Saqqara shows.

- In **6th step**, the cortege moves towards to the ibw as it can be seen in the tomb of Pepyankh Heny-Kem. In **7th step**, the procession arrives to the ibw in which rituals related to the embalming were conducted such as the preparation of the body which is confirmed by the discovery of Dr. Hussein in Saqqara and maybe the Opening the Mouth ritual. The Old Kingdom scenes shows that the last visited place, before the burial of the deceased in his tomb,
is the *ibw* which proposes that the deceased was purified for the last time before moving to the Netherworld. The *ibw* was clearly not a part of the embalming workshop or in its same structure as some scholars claimed. The funeral scenes especially of Pepyankh Heny-Kem separated clearly the structures and even showed that there are two purification tents in two different locations and an independent workshop.

- After that, in the 8th and last step, the cortege moves from the *ibw* and head to the tomb where near it some rituals is performed for the deceased.
- In sum, this papers concludes that during the funerary services of the Old Kingdom, the sequence of purification and mummification rituals is separated in two funerary ceremonies; the day of transporting the deceased to the embalming workshop and the day of burial. The purification was made one time before the mummification and another one after it as two *ibw* tents of purification were made in two different places. On the first day of mummification, the first one was constructed on the edge of a body of water on the necropolis’s side. This was used during the first ceremony dedicated to the transportation of the body to the *wabt* which was after few days of death of the noble. A second one, during the second ceremony which is the day of burial which was after the end of the mummification of the body. This tent was installed...
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near the wabt and tomb. It was used during the mummification as well as most likely symbolic purification rituals included in the Opening the Mouth on the day of burial.

4 Grdseloff, B., Das ägyptische Reinigungszelt: archäologische Untersuchung, Études Égyptiennes 1, IFAO, le Caire, 1941.
7 The word wabet literally translates as ‘a pure place’; Wörterbuch I, p. 284.
8 There are two Ptolemaic texts (stela Cairo CG 31099 and stela BM 886) that indicate the dates of an individual’s death and the day that the embalming ritual started, in both the date of death is recorded as being four days before the commencement of mummification process. See more about this discussion in; Shore, A. F., ‘Human and divine mumification’, in A. B. Lloyd (ed.), Studies in pharaonic religion and society in honour of J. Gwyn Griffiths, London, 1992, p. 226-235. Another administrative document in demotic (P. Leiden 374 (73 BC)) indicate that the embalmers agree that if a corpse is given to them by mistake they will ensure it is returned within four days; Cannata, M., The realia of Egyptian burial practices in the Ptolemaic Period (332-30 BC), Oxford, 2009, p. 331.
11 The importance of provision to the dead can be understood in the funeral scene caption of Qar (pl. 3) at Giza šms m ḫtp šḥbt jmnḥw snwr wʿty Qr, “conducting in peace to the Shabet-boat the well-provided sole companion Qar.” See more in Zienelabdein, M., *The Funeral Procession: A Comparative Study between Saqqara Old Kingdom and Theban New Kingdom Private Tombs*, unpublished PhD thesis, Minia University, 2016, p. 24-44.

12 Shore suggests that this was inspired by the 70 day period when the star Sirius (identified as Osiris) disappeared from the night sky, indicating the time between the mythical death and revivification of Osiris; Shore 1992, p. 226.

13 The purification rites seem to be solar in origin, but after that, they were a part of the ceremonial that was mainly Osirian; Griffiths, J. G., *The Origins of Osiris and His Cult*, Brill, 1980, p. 69.


15 See the funeral scenes of Mereruka (Figure 2 &4) and Ankhmahor at Saqqara (Figure 3), Qar and Idu at Giza (Figures 7), and Pepyankheny-Kem at Meir (Figure 5, 6 &9).


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19 The exact identity of this place is uncertain. Vos suggests this is Lake Abusir for more see; Vos, 1993.
22 This can be concluded through the Old Kingdom funeral scenes of Pepyankh Heny-Kem.
23 Some rituals were made on the top of the tomb which is mentioned on the false door of tomb of a Ptahhotep I at Saqqara see; Urk., I, p.189; B Urk., I, p. 199, 200; and the the false door of the 6th Dynasty Mastaba of Neferseshemre at Saqqara see; A & B; Kanawati, N. and Abdel-Raziq, M., The Teti Cemetery at Saqqara III. The Tombs of Neferseshemere and Seankhuipthah, ACE Reports; 11, Warminster, Aris and Phillips, 1998, p. 35-36, pl. 58
24 It is important to know that the Theban building (Grave IX) was suggested to be a Late Period embalming workshop was reused as a burial place later in the Ptolemaic Period; Budka, J., Bestattungsbrauchtum und Friedhofsstruktur im Asasif; eine Untersuchung der spätzeitlichen Befunde anhand der Ergebnisse der österreichischen Ausgrabungen in den Jahren 1969-1977, Vienna, 2010, p. 135-142.
27 See more in Vos 1993.
29 Simpson 1972, figs. 24 and 35.
30 Hussein 2021, p. 24-25.
31 Hussein 2021, p. 25.
33 Roode 2003, p. 3.
36 Hassan 1943, 69 ff.
37 Roode 2003, p. 5.
38 Grdseloff 1941, p. 39-40.
41 The (CT Spell I, 188a [44]) is a Middle Kingdom Text that shows the *ibw* as it was used as to an Embalming Workshop too.
42 Hoffmeier (1981: 168-173)
44 This Tent has disappeared from the funerary scenes of the New Kingdom.
45 According to Badawy, the funeral scene in this tomb contains also an *ibw-tent*; see more in Badawy, A., *The tomb of Ny-hetep-Ptah at Giza and the tomb of 'Anchm'ahor at Saqqara*, University of California Press, 1978.
47 Roode 2003, p. 3.
48 A clear indication for this can be found in CT Spell 60 that deals with the hourly vision around the mummification bed; see Willems, H., *Chests of Life: A Study of the Typology and Conceptual Development of Middle Kingdom Standard Class Coffins*, MVEOL 25,

49 The most of funeral procession scenes come from Theban nobles’ tombs for more about the funeral procession scenes in the Old and New Kingdoms see; Zielenlabdein 2016.

50 In the funeral scene in tomb of Qar (pl. 7) at Giza, the embalmers’ workshop contain a caption saying; hrt-jb n wcbt s’h 3w, “inner room of the wcbt of attending” which shows that there is a room of purification inside the embalming place; Simpson 1976, p. 6.

51 Grdseloff 1941, p. 4; Blackman 1953, p. 50.

52 For the plan of the tomb; see Blackman 1953: Plate 1.

53 Blackman 1953, p. 50-56.

54 As Memphite and its cemeteries exists in the west, the crossing seems to be for a canal


56 Blackman 1953, pl. 42, 43.

57 This is almost a choice of the artist to limit the needed space for this ritual to enable him to continue the rest of the funeral ritual sequence. It seems also that the tent was installed on the edge of the west bank where the purification ritual can be made easily because of the abundance of water that will be used for the purification.

58 It is important to note that the necropolis (B qsr) was a sacred place and performing purification rituals upon the body, funerary equipment and food offering, people, etc. had to undergo the prescribed ablutions. Some texts in old Kingdom tombs warn unclean people from entering the tomb; Urk. I, 49. 1-2; 50.16; 122.14

59 Blackman 1953, p. 53.

60 Blackman 1953, p. 50.
61 Blackman 1953, p. 53.
62 The coffin was maybe really taken by the bearers to keep it in safe for the second journey or for making with it the so-called pilgrimage to the sacred cities of Delta.
63 The funeral scene represented on the lower register of the west wall of the tomb of Pepyankh Heny-Kem had the rest of the word *ibw* above the last man dragging the boat that arrived to the west. This maybe means that a purification Tent was set up for the empty coffin as it has to be purified before entering to the sacred cemetery and it will contain the purified body of the deceased.
64 The sequence episode including the arrival and direct heading to the mummification place was only depicted in the Old Kingdom tomb of Qar; Simpson, W. K., *The Mastabas of Qar and Idu G7101 and 7102*, vol. II, Boston, 1976, p. 6 & Fig. 24.
65 In the tombs of Qar and Idu, the Purification Tent was shown as an oblong structure while more details appeared in the tomb of Mereruka and Pepyankh Heny-Kem.
66 The newly found evidence about the two structures in Saqqara from later period support that both structures were in a Mummification Complex in the cemetery; Hussein 2021, p. 23.
67 Hussein 2021, p. 24-25.