A Case Study of Polygamy in the Old Kingdom: *Mtjt* and His Two Eldest Sons

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**Abstract**

The tomb of Metjetji, which was dismantled before 1947, depicts two “eldest sons” on the entrance doorway thicknesses. The presence of two eldest sons is usually an indicator of the premature death of the chronological eldest son with the second son taking over the role or an indicator that the tomb owner had more than one wife—either through death, divorce, or polygamy. Both Goedicke and Kaplony argued for the death of the eldest son, although they disagreed on which son died. Kaplony based his assumptions about the family on the groupings of the children on the entrance, but he incorrectly identified the left and right doorway thicknesses. Careful reexamination of the iconography of the children shows that Metjetji depicts two separate groups of children, as do many tomb owners who have more than one wife. He appears to have had two wives concurrently, practicing polygamy as his unidentified wife had both the eldest and the youngest of the children shown at the entrance to the tomb.

Throughout Egyptian history, the king could have more than one wife,¹ and during the Old Kingdom polygamy was routinely practised by the pharaohs.² Analysis of the decoration of the tombs of Old Kingdom high officials shows that while they usually had one wife or sometimes two consecutive ones due to death or divorce, from the time of Niuserre, a small number of the highest officials increasingly adopted the practice of polygamy.³ Polygamy was practised by a limited number of viziers, nomarchs, and high officials as a privilege of rank, influence, and wealth.⁴ Polygamy, which had previously been exclusive to royalty, would have been a status symbol.⁵

² Teti had three wives, Pepy I had seven known and another two possible wives, Pepy II had eight wives; V. Callender, *In Hathor’s Image* I: The Wives and Mothers of Egyptian Kings from Dynasties I–VI (Prague, 2011), 344.
⁴ N. Kanawati, “The Mentioning of more than one ‘eldest’ child in Old Kingdom inscriptions,” *CdÉ* 51 (1976), 235–51; See also McCorquodale, *Representations of the Family*, 123.

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and the adoption of it may have been related to the fact that from the latter part of Dynasty 5, viziers had greater power, as did nomarchs who were now buried in their provinces with their titles increasingly becoming hereditary, thus giving them more authority and autonomy. The examination of the Sixth Dynasty governors of Quseir el-Amarna and Meir in Middle Egypt, showed that these individuals were closely connected to the royal family and sometimes took on royal prerogatives. The vizier Merefnebef, who shows his four wives playing the harp together in his tomb at Saqqara, also adopted royal prerogatives. The two main indicators of polygamy are the representation of multiple wives in the same or complimentary scenes and the presence of two or more eldest children. Two eldest sons are represented in the tomb of Mttj (Metjetji).

The focus of this article is a re-examination of the available material from Metjetji’s tomb to establish whether he had two eldest sons due to the death of the chronological eldest son, or due to remarriage after the death or divorce of his first wife, or because he practiced polygamy.

Metjetji: The Tomb and the Man

Metjetji’s tomb was dismantled and a number of pieces were purchased by institutions in Europe and North America after they came on to the art market around 1947. In 1976, Kaplony published a monograph that examined all known pieces of the tomb that included stone, mud plaster fragments, and wooden statues. Among them there was a broken lintel in the Louvre, the two façades—the right in Berlin and the left in Toronto, the two entrance thicknesses (which each show an eldest son) in Kansas City, the false door in New York, and a block with a fowling scene in Switzerland. Forty-three painted mud plaster fragments are in the Louvre, and five wooden statues are in museums in Boston, New York, and Kansas City. Three stone blocks that probably also came from this tomb are in Hanover, Toronto, and Richmond. Subsequent to Kaplony’s publication, Silverman identified a large relief fragment in the Denver Museum of Art as complementing the broken lintel in the Louvre.

On the façade, the entrance thicknesses, and on the left part of the lintel in the Louvre, Metjetji’s titles were listed as Noble of the King and Overseer of the Department of Hnty(w)-$ of the Great House. This last title was held by the two polygamists Remni and the nomarch Qar/Meryre-nefer. On the right part of the lintel, identified by Silverman, Metjetji had the additional titles of Royal Chamberlain, Overseer of the Department,

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8 Myśliwiec says he was “desperately trying to imitate royalty in its various aspects”: K. Myśliwiec, Saqqara I: The Tomb of Merefnebef Text (Warsaw, 2004), 252. The vizier Ptahshepses’ tomb at Abusir possessed several funerary attributes normally associated with the king alone; M. Verner, Forgotten Pharaohs, Lost Pyramids (Prague, 1994), 179.
11 Louvre E 25681.
12 Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin 32190 (Berlin Museum 5/70).
14 Nelson-Atkins Museum, 52-7/1 and 52-7/2.
15 Metropolitan Museum of Art, 64.100.
17 Louvre E 25007-49.
21 The translation of all titles follows D. Jones, An Index of Ancient Egyptian Titles, Epithets and Phrases of the Old Kingdom, BAR 886 (Oxford, 2000).
22 McCorquodale, Representations of the Family, 76.
Companion of the House, Overseer of the Two Fields of Offerings and Overseer of *hwt-hjwrt.*\(^{23}\) Jones says this last title refers to the capital of the third nome of Lower Egypt, while Silverman translates it as Overseer of the Cattle Estate.\(^{24}\) On one of the painted mud plaster fragments, which must have been made later, Metjetji had the additional high titles of Royal Chamberlain of the Great House,\(^{25}\) Juridical *q-mr* Official of the Great House, Supervisor of Linen, and Privy to the Secrets of the King in all his Cult Places.\(^{26}\) The last title was held by the viziers Ptahshepses, Mereruka, Ankhmahor and Khenrika.\(^{27}\)

On the lintel and the false door he had the epithet Honoured by Unas, his Master. Due to this epithet, his tomb is thought to have come from Saqqara.\(^{28}\) The tomb has been variously dated from the reign of Unas to the early Middle Kingdom.\(^{29}\) The most comprehensive study, by Brovarski, convincingly dated the tomb from early Teti to the end of Teti or early Pepy 1.\(^{30}\)

Two Eldest Sons

The doorway thicknesses of the tomb of Metjetji show two “eldest sons,” *Pth-htp* (Pah-hotep) and *Hwn-Sbk* (Khuen-Sohek); one on each thickness. The presence of two eldest sons in a tomb is generally accepted\(^{31}\) as indicating either that the first-born son died prematurely and the chronological second son then had “eldest” added to his name, or they were the eldest sons of different wives through death, divorce, or polygamy.\(^{32}\) When there were children of more than one wife, it was necessary to identify the eldest son of each wife (or daughter if there was no son) so that he/she could inherit from their respective mothers.\(^{33}\) Another possibility for the presence of two eldest sons is the presence of twins but twins are usually shown together.\(^{34}\)

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\(^{23}\) Silverman, “A Fragment of Relief,” fig. 3.


\(^{25}\) Strudwick lists 144 men with the title King’s Chamberlain, twenty-five of whom were also viziers; N. Strudwick, The Administration of Egypt in the Old Kingdom: The Highest Titles and Their Holders (London, 1985), Table 30.

\(^{26}\) Louvre E 25 544.

\(^{27}\) Jones, Index of Ancient Egyptian Titles, 630–31 [2311].


\(^{29}\) Allam, using Late Period evidence, suggested that any child could be designated as eldest; S. Allam, “Notes on the Designation ‘Eldest Son/Daughter’ (ztens.s smsw: šr *šrles.t t’),” in Hawass, Der Manuelian, and Hussein, Perspectives on Ancient Egyptian Studies, 31–33. However, analysis of the iconography and titles of eldest sons proved that in the Old Kingdom the eldest child was the chronological oldest child; K. McCorquodale, “Recalling the Term ‘Eldest Son / Eldest Daughter’ and Inheritance in the Old Kingdom,” BACE 23 (2012), 78–80.


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\(^{32}\) Women could own and bequeath property; J. Johnson, “The Legal Status of Women in Ancient Egypt,” in A. Capel and G. Markoe (eds.), Mistress of the House, Mistress of Heaven: Women in Ancient Egypt (New York, 1966), 177–84. In the Old Kingdom, the eldest son inherited from his father and his mother unless an *m.jmyt-pr* document was witnessed and signed to bequeath property to someone else. See T. Logan, “The *m.jmyt-pr* Document: Form, Function, and Significance,” JARCE 37 (2000), 67.

Previous Explanations for Metjetji having Two Eldest Sons

Previous attempts have been made to explain the presence of the two eldest sons in the tomb of Metjetji. Goedicke suggested that Ptah-hotep died before his father because on the right thickness he is referred to as “his beloved eldest son, revered with his father.”\(^3\) Scheel-Schweitzer has suggested that this term is applied to an eldest son when he died prematurely and his sibling then became the eldest living male.\(^3\) Helck suggested it was a relationship entailing provision for the funerary estate by the one with whom the deceased is jmÃ­w.\(^3\)

However, Allen pointed out that while this may have been true in many cases, it can hardly have applied to instances in which the person is described as “revered with those who are with him,” or “revered with people” or even “revered with everyone.”\(^3\) He says the basic meaning is probably one of general association with the added connotation of worth, “worthy of being associated with his father.”\(^3\) Ptah-hotep does not appear to have died prematurely as he appears on the later mud plaster fragments where Metjetji has additional titles and children.

Kaplony used the sizes and placement of the children to account for the fact that two sons are described as eldest, concluding that the other eldest son, Khuen-Sobek, died prematurely, as he was not shown as a kȝ-priest or in the tomb, and the son Ptah-hotep then took over the position.\(^4\) He surmised that all the children were born to one wife as the depictions of the two eldest sons were linked by the presence of a younger son JHjj on either side of the entrance pieces. However, his identification of the left and right doorway thicknesses had the tomb owner facing into the tomb, while Porter and Moss list the thicknesses in reverse, with the tomb owner facing out of the tomb.\(^4\) The Nelson-Atkins Museum in Kansas City, where the entrance thicknesses are housed, has stated that they do not know which is the right or left.\(^4\) It is crucial to try to establish which is the left thickness and which is the right for the groupings of the children and our understanding of the family of Metjetji.

Orientation of the Tomb Owner on Entrance Doorway Thicknesses

Referring to Metjetji’s doorway thicknesses, Goedicke stated that it was easy to recognise the original layout as the tomb owner was directed outwards as if he had just left his tomb or wanted to greet the visitor at the entrance of his “House of Eternity.”\(^4\)

Harpur stated that major figures on entrance thicknesses “nearly always face outwards” but she lists eight exceptions.\(^4\) Further examination revealed that five of these exceptions are incorrect and that the tomb owner actually faced out of the tomb.\(^4\) The line drawing of another is probably reversed.\(^4\) Only two instances defi-

\(^3\) H. Goedicke, “Zwei Inschriften aus dem Grabe des Mṯṯj aus Sakkara,” Æ48 83 (1958), 27.
\(^4\) Kaplony, Studien Zum Grab des Methethi, 82–85.
\(^4\) PM II, 646.
\(^4\) The online publication of the Giza Archives by the Boston Museum of Fine Arts has made available previously unpublished photographs and documents that were invaluable in this investigation. Tomb owners face outwards in the tombs of Imiunek, Iti, Neferehotep, and Ipi. The double tomb of Kaemenu has two entrances for father and son, and it is the son who faces inwards on his father’s entrance thickness. See K. McCorquodale, “The orientation of the tomb owner on entrance doorway thicknesses in Old Kingdom tombs,” in C. Di Baise-Dyson and L. Donovan (eds.), The Cultural Manifestations of Religious Experience: Studies in Honour of Boys G. Ockinga, ÄAT 85 (Münster, 2017), 146–47.
\(^4\) Hassan’s line drawing of the right doorway thickness of Inkaef’s tomb, shows wear on the inner edge not the outer edge, as is normal. He reversed the line drawing of Niankhkhnum’s left doorway thickness in the same volume. See McCorquodale, “The orientation of the tomb owner,” 148.
nately show the tomb owner facing into the tomb, and both of these are tombs for more than one person and are in the G 8000 Cemetery in the Central Field at Giza.  

Considering that there are only two exceptions, which are tombs for multiple tomb owners at Giza, and given that Metjetji’s tomb comes from Saqqara where the tomb owner does not face inward, the depictions of the children of Metjetji, and the two eldest sons in particular, needs to be re-examined considering that Metjetji is facing out of the tomb. That is, reversing the doorway thicknesses as they were shown in Kaplony’s publication and placing them in accordance with Porter and Moss’s recording. This places Metjetji with his eldest son Ptah-hotep and his son Ihy on the right thickness and with Ihy on the right façade. On the left of the entrance, Metjetji is shown with his other eldest son Khuen-Sobek and his daughter Jrt-%bk (Iret-Sobek) on the left thickness and with his son PtH-sbw (Ptah-sabu) on the left façade. This gives two distinct groups of children.

Table 1. Position of children at the entrance of the tomb.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Children of Unknown Wife</th>
<th>Children of Inti</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lintel</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Left</strong></td>
<td>his beloved eldest son Ptah-hotep</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Doorway Thickness</strong></td>
<td>his beloved eldest son Khuen-Sobek</td>
<td>his [beloved] eldest son revered with his father [Ptah]-hotep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Right</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Façade</strong></td>
<td>his beloved daughter Jrt-Sobek</td>
<td>his [beloved son] Jhy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>his beloved son Ptah-sabu</td>
<td>his beloved son Jhy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 1. Façades and doorway thicknesses reconstructed with tomb owner facing out of the tomb. Line drawings with relevant sections redrawn by Leonie Donovan after P. Kaplony, Studien zum Grab des Methethi, figs. 5–8.

47 The tomb of Nimaatre and his female tomb partner Neferesres and the tomb of Sehkemankhptah and Nesutwesret; see McCorquodale, “The orientation of the tomb owner,” 149.
Depictions of Children When There Is More Than One Wife

In order to determine whether Metjetji had more than one wife, analysis of the iconography in tombs where the tomb owner depicts more than one wife (irrespective of whether the multiple marriages were due to death, divorce, or polygamy) can help establish criteria of how children were depicted in this situation.

- The chronological eldest son (or daughter if there is no son) of different wives was identified as ᵃ/s₁/s₁.t šmsw. ⁴⁸
- Children are shown in close contact with either the tomb owner and/or their mother, but not with other wives or with their father when he was with another wife.⁴⁹
- When children were shown with a wife, other than their mother, they were separated from her by orientation—children being depicted facing her, or being in a different register, or on a separate baseline.⁵⁰
- When in a separate register, children may be placed in chronological order or in family groupings.⁵¹
- Children who are full siblings or half siblings may have the same name.⁵²
- The relative sizes of children and whether they were clothed or not is an indicator of their comparative ages. This was ascertained in a previous study of sixty-nine Old Kingdom scenes where only one child in a group of children was described as eldest.⁵³ The eldest son was always depicted as larger or of equal size, only younger siblings were shown smaller in size. A naked child was younger than a child wearing a kilt.⁵⁴ The eldest son was always shown wearing a kilt when other children wore kilts and was only shown as a naked child when all other children were naked.

Tomb owners go to great lengths to separate or identify children of different wives.⁵⁵ Using these criteria it is possible to re-examine the depictions of the children of Metjetji.

Reconsidering Metjetji’s Tomb Decoration

Locating the left and right entrance thicknesses by placing the tomb owner facing out of the tomb, as was usual, reveals that there are two distinct groups of children on either side of the entrance (see Table 1).

The eldest son Ptah-hotep is shown standing with his father on the lintel as well as on the right doorway thickness with his brother Ihy. Ihy is also shown with his father on the right façade—either a second representation or possibly another brother with the same name.

On the left of the entrance there is a different group of children. On the left doorway thickness Metjetji stands with his eldest son Khuen-Sobek and his sister Iret-Sobek. The Sobek element in both their names is sugg-

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⁴⁸ For example, Isi of Edfu identifies two wives, Sesheshef and her eldest son Qar, and Sautit and her eldest son Her-nebu-ef. See McCorquodale, “Multiple Marriages and Polygamy,” 277–78.
⁴⁹ For example, Qar/Mery-Re-nefer shows three wives with their children in separate groups. Only on the lintel above the false door are two family groups shown, but the later addition of a wife and son is made obvious by them “floating” rather than being on a baseline; see M. el-Khadragy, “The Offering Niche of Qar in the Cairo Museum,” SAK 30 (2002), fig. 6.
⁵⁰ For example, Mery-aa had six wives. When his children were shown with him and his wife Isi, who had no children of her own, they were positioned facing her and their father and do not have any physical contact; see N. Kanawati, The Tombs of El-Hagarsa, vol. 3, ACE Reports 7 (Sydney, 1995), pl. 42.
⁵¹ For example, in the top register Mery-aa’s three sons from different wives are shown in chronological order, but the daughters in the middle register are in family groupings; see Kanawati, The Tombs of El-Hagarsa, pl. 42.
⁵² For example, Mery-aa had three sons named Nenu from different wives and three daughters named Shemat, two of whom had the same mother; see Kanawati, The Tombs of El-Hagarsa, pl. 42.
⁵³ McCorquodale, Representations of the Family, 88–89, Table P.
⁵⁴ In the Old Kingdom, children were shown naked only up until puberty. See R. Janssen and J. Janssen, Growing up in Ancient Egypt (London, 1990), 26.
⁵⁵ See for example the tombs of Mereruka, Mehu, and Merefnebef at Saqqara, Mery-aa at El-Hargasa, Qar/Mery-Re-nefer and Isi at Edfu. McCorquodale, Representations of the Family, 71–75.
tive of their close relationship. On the left façade, Metjetji is accompanied by their younger brother Ptah-sabu. He is the only one of the six children shown at the entrance who is naked; he is therefore the youngest of these children.

From inside the chapel, the fowling scene shows the eldest son Ptah-hotep as a naked child. Both he and the wife Inti are in close contact with the tomb owner, with an arm around one of his legs. Inti is therefore his mother, and by extension also the mother of the son (or possibly two sons) named Ihy. The daughter, Iret-Sobek, is shown standing on a separate baseline behind Metjetji, Inti, and Ptah-hotep. This may indicate that she had a different mother. While she is also naked except for a collar, she is taller than Ptah-hotep, indicating that she is older than him. The representations of these two naked children show them at an earlier age than on the entrance where Ptah-hotep wears a kilt and Iret-Sobek wears a long sheath dress and where there are also additional children (another three or possibly four) so this relief represents an earlier stage in the life of Metjetji when only one son and one daughter were born.

The painted wall fragments provide further details regarding the familial relationships. They show Ptah-hotep censing before his father, Ptah-hotep and his brother Ihy offering birds in a top register, and Ptah-hotep as a seated scribe in a lower register. Ihy stands in front of his father holding a dog on a leash, and he holds a $h$ jar containing the purification water for the funerary rites. A narrow vertical inscription to the right of Metjetji’s statue reads “his son whom he loves ...” Three daughters are shown as harpists, with only the second’s name being partially visible—she is named as Un[as]-merret.

The painted wall fragments also show two more possible sons, Kai-pu and Metjetji (junior) presenting geese behind Ptah-hotep and Ihy.

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56 Estimating her complete height, using the size of the head of both Ptah-hotep and Inti, she is 25% taller than Ptah-hotep.
57 Louvre E 25 507 and E 25 508.
58 Louvre E 25 524 and E 25 517.
59 Louvre E 25 525. Ziegler suggests that it is Ihy’s name beneath but there is only the top of a curved hieroglyph remaining on the right and it does not look like the top of a feather for the $h$ and in the other five instances where his name is written the $h$ is the same height and should therefore be visible; Ziegler, Catalogue des stèles, 136, 140 (drawing).
60 Louvre E 25 515.
61 Louvre E 25 508-9; Kaplony, Studien zum Grab des Methethi, 84.
Conclusions

It would seem from the sequence of children, and the several consistent groupings of them, that it was very likely that Metjetji’s household was a polygamous one. That he was not the only man who had such a family has been documented for several other high officials.\(^6^2\)

The fowling scene, that shows only two children, represents an earlier stage in Metjetji’s life as this is the only place where the eldest son Ptah-hotep is shown naked. Iret-Sobek is also naked but she is taller than Ptah-hotep—therefore older, making her the first-born child. The wife Inti is the mother of the eldest son Ptah-hotep as they are both in close contact with Metjetji. Iret-Sobek is on a separate baseline probably indicating that she had a different mother.

The entrance represents a later stage in Metjetji’s life, showing five (or six) children. The lintel, the façades, and the entrance thicknesses form a cohesive unit but the lintel was usually decorated first.\(^6^3\) Ptah-hotep is named as the eldest son on the lintel, which is consistent with him being the only son in the fowling scene. His depiction on the lintel gives him prominence over the eldest son Khuen-Sobek. He was born before Khuen-Sobek, as he is the only son shown in the fowling scene. The additional inscription of “revered with his father” on the right doorway thickness seems to indicate, as suggested by Helck, that he was responsible for the provisioning of his father, Metjetji’s, funerary estate. This would be consistent with him being the first born of the two eldest sons.

The children shown on the entrance are in two distinct groups. The eldest son, Ptah-hotep, is shown on the right side of the entrance with his brother Ihy twice, or with two brothers with the same name. As Inti is his mother, which is established by their close proximity in the fowling scene, by extension she is also the mother of the son or sons named Ihy who are shown twice with Ptah-hotep, once on the doorway thickness, and again on the painted fragment where they offer geese—thus confirming their close relationship.

To the left of the entrance is another group of children. The eldest son Khuen-Sobek is shown on the left thickness with his sister Iret-Sobek, who is older than him due to her presence and his absence in the fowling scene. Their younger brother Ptah-sabu appears on the left façade. As he is the only one who is naked, he is the youngest of the six children on the entrance.

Khuen-Sobek is named as an eldest son on the left entrance thickness, a surface that was decorated after the lintel. If he was dead at the time the relief was carved he would not have been depicted holding Metjetji’s staff, as the dead are not shown in close contact with the living.\(^6^4\) This indicates that Khuen-Sobek did not die prematurely resulting in Ptah-hotep then being named as eldest, as the lintel was decorated prior to the thicknesses and façades. Khuen-Sobek is absent from the fowling scene that was executed earlier, so the reason he is named as eldest son on the thickness is because he was the eldest son of a different wife. This was necessary to identify eldest sons because they inherited from their respective mothers.

The painted fragments from the chapel were completed last because more children are shown and Metjetji bears additional titles. Three daughters are shown as harpists. The first may be Iret-Sobek, the second is Un[as]-merret, and the third’s name is not given. There are also possibly two additional sons: Kai-pu and Metjetji.

Kaplony suggested that the eldest son Khuen-Sobek, and also probably the youngest son Ptah-sabu, died as they are not shown on the painted fragments. The scenes on the fragments preserve up to five registers, a minimum of one metre high. Ziegler states that they would have covered a wall area of at least seven meters in length.\(^6^5\) The fragments constitute an area of 3.99 square metres, so it is possible that these two sons did not die but they were shown elsewhere in the decoration. As they were full brothers, we would expect them to be shown together. Fishing and fowling scenes are complimentary, and their unidentified mother, also the mother of Iret-

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\(^{63}\) All eight tombs in the Teti Cemetery that were abruptly abandoned before completion have completed architraves. See G.-R. Harrington, “A Statistical Inquiry into the Titles from the Tomb of Hesi in Saqqara,” *GM* 261 (2020), 29–30.

\(^{64}\) In the Old Kingdom the dead are separated from the living by orientation, a line of hieroglyphs or an upright staff; N. Kanawati, “The Living and the Dead in Old Kingdom Tomb Scenes,” *SÄK* 9 (1981), 213–25.

Sobek, may have been shown in the fishing scene, much as Mehu shows one wife in the fishing scene and his other wife in the fowling scene.\(^{66}\)

Kaplony concluded that all nine children belonged to Metjetji and one wife Inti.\(^{67}\) However, this was based on the son Ihy linking all the children on the entrance. Given that, as has been shown, tomb owners always face out of the tomb on entrance doorway thicknesses at Saqqara, there are two distinct groups of children shown: the eldest son Ptah-hotep and his brother or brothers Ihy, and separately, the other eldest son Khuen-Sobek, his sister Iret-Sobek, and their younger brother Ptah-sabu.

Iret-Sobek was the first-born child to an unidentified wife, while the eldest son, Ptah-hotep, was the first-born child to the wife Inti and Metjetji’s first son. This would explain why he was given the prominent position on the lintel and was responsible for the provisioning of Metjetji’s funerary estate.

The unidentified wife had a second child, the eldest son Khuen-Sobek. The wife Inti had at least one, possibly two sons named Ihy. The unidentified wife then had the son Ptah-sabu who was the youngest of the children shown at the entrance, as he is the only child shown as naked there, a clear indicator that he was born later than Metjetji’s other children shown at the entrance. At least two daughters, one called Un[as]-merret, were born after this and possibly two more sons, Kai-pu and Metjetji, all of whose maternity is unknown.

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\(^{66}\) Mehu and his wife Neferkawes/Jkw are shown in the fishing scene and on the west wall of Room 3 with his eldest son [Meri] (chipped out) and his daughter Merut with them in close contact. Mehu is shown in the fowling scene with his other wife Nebet with his sons […] nesu […] (chipped out) and Hetepka; See H. Altenmüller, Die Wanddarstellungen im Grab des Mehu in Saqqara, AVDAIK 42 (Mainz am Rhein, 1998), pls. 13, 53, and 11.

\(^{67}\) Kaplony, Studien des Methethi, 80–85.
Of the children shown at the entrance of the tomb, the unidentified wife bore both the first child, the daughter Iret-Sobek, and the youngest child, the naked son Ptah-sabu. This means that Metjetji had two concurrent wives. The presence of two "eldest sons" was not due to the premature death of the chronological eldest son, nor did he divorce his first wife, nor did she die and he remarry. The evidence leads to the conclusion that Metjetji practised polygamy, and had two concurrent wives. This is consistent with him having high titles associated with the palace, administration, juridical and religious spheres, as well as his tomb dating from Teti to Pepy I, when other high officials increasingly began taking on royal prerogatives, such as polygamy.