

refer to a superior, and this is most likely to be the official for whom he acted as ka-servant.¹⁴ The atypical demonstrative *pn* suggests that the wording $\epsilon n\dot{h} n.j z pn$ derives from a standard repertory of authorities, and this would also explain the need for a specifying parenthesis. Of the four motives for the use of demonstratives discussed on pp. 88–91, the only one that seems applicable here is deixis to an unexpressed relative clause: i.e., $\epsilon n\dot{h} n.j z pn$ (*jrr.j n.f hm-k3*) “As this man (for whom I act as ka-servant) lives.”¹⁵ Since the referent is in fact unexpressed, however, Heqanakht then specifies it in the following parenthesis.

The likeliest explanation for the wording of Heqanakht's oath in Letter II is therefore that it refers to a superior of his named Ip(i). This individual, in turn, is most likely to have been the high official for whom Heqanakht acted as ka-servant. In that light, the association of the papyri with the tomb of the vizier Ipi is more likely to be significant than circumstantial, indicating that Heqanakht's employer probably was the vizier. Whether the statue Heqanakht served was located in Ipi's tomb or elsewhere is immaterial.

Heqanakht's papyri reveal little of a personal nature about him. At the time they were written, he was perhaps in his mid to late thirties (see Section B, below). As a ka-servant he was undoubtedly educated, and the probability that he wrote most of the papyri himself attests to his literacy (see pp. 82–84). His nonstandard dialect, however, may reflect a degree of uncertainty about his command of literary Middle Egyptian and its epistolary style, which could account in turn for his use of another scribe to draft the formal Letter III (see p. 101).

B. Heqanakht's Household

Letters I and II are addressed by Heqanakht to “his household,” of which he was clearly the head: “look, the whole household is just like my children, and everything is mine to allocate” (II 25–26). The salary list in II 7–22 provides a census of its members.¹⁶ The list includes allotments for twelve individuals and six or more additional members who are not named: two maidservants (*b3kt*: II 9–11) and the dependents of two men (*hnrw*: II 12–14), probably at least a wife and one child in each case.¹⁷ The total household therefore included at least some eighteen persons, apart from Heqanakht himself. Three servants mentioned in the papyri (I vo. 13, II 39) are probably not included in the salary list and were therefore not considered members of the household (see below).

The allotments in the salary list diminish in size from 0.8 sack, at the head of the list, to 0.2 sack, at the end, indicating that the names are arranged for the most part in order of diminishing importance.¹⁸ The list begins with a woman named Ipi (II 8), who is identified as Heqanakht's mother in the greetings in Letters I and II (I vo. 15; II 1); her precedence over the rest of the family is also reflected in the same greetings. The fact that she was part of Heqanakht's household almost certainly indicates that his father, who is not mentioned in the papyri, was no longer alive.¹⁹

14 For the term *zj* “man” referring to such an individual, see Siut I, 269 *hm-k3 n z*. The parenthesis rules out reference to the king or a circumlocution for the first person (for the latter, see *Wb.* III, 405, 15–18).

15 The demonstrative is not vocative, and the use of parenthetic *dd.j r jp* indicates that it is not conditioned by the common experience of the interlocutors. Anaphora to an individual previously mentioned is also unlikely: Ip Jr.'s son Khentekhtai is mentioned earlier in the letter (II 33), but the father is an improbable referent of II 40 *z pn* and may in fact be identical with the Ipi Jr. who appears in Account VI as one of Heqanakht's debtors (VI 5). If the similar phrase in Papyrus Ramessum I, B iii 10, noted on p. 46 n. 5, is an oath with the same authority, the demonstrative there may be anaphoric to an individual mentioned in the preceding lacuna.

16 For the allotments in this list as salaries rather than “rations,” see pp. 145–46. Golovina, *VDI* 1976 no. 2, 127, distinguishes between Heqanakht's “household” (*prjuw*) and his “people” (*r(m)t.j*: I 1, II 30), but the two terms certainly denote the same group of individuals, since Heqanakht speaks of giving “my people” *p3 qw* “this salary” (II 29–30), which must refer to the salaries allocated to the household in II 7–23 (see p. 146 n. 35).

17 The word *hnrw* has plural strokes in II 14 and a male and female determinative in II 13. For the term, see Franke, *Verwandschaftsbezeichnungen*, 231–44.

18 For this order, see Fischer, *JARCE* 10 (1973), 5–9.

19 For a mother as member of her son's household, see Griffith, *Kahun Papyri*, pl. 9, 3 and 17. Since ka-servants in the Middle Kingdom were rarely employed from the immediate family (Golovina, *VDI* 1992 no. 1, 8), it is unlikely

Heqanakht's family also included a woman designated as his *ḥbswt/ḥbsyt*, who was being mistreated by the rest of the household (I vo. 14, 16: II 41, 42, 44). This expression seems to be used elsewhere of a woman who was not her husband's original spouse, unlike the usual word for "wife" (*ḥjmt*, literally "woman").²⁰ Like *ḥjmt*, however, it probably denoted a true spouse: Heqanakht's question in II 42–43 ("Furthermore, will any of you bear having his *ḥjmt* denounced to him?") indicates that mistreatment of his *ḥbswt* was equivalent to denunciation of his *ḥjmt*.²¹ From the references to her mistreatment in Letters I and II, it is obvious that she was not a welcome member of the household, and this in turn suggests that she was a newcomer in their midst, replacing a previous spouse of Heqanakht, who was either dead or divorced.²²

Heqanakht usually refers to his wife only by the term *ḥbswt/ḥbsyt*, but in the passage discussing her mistreatment in Letter II he also uses two proper names, Hetepet and Iutenhab:

Now, before I came here, didn't I tell you (all) "Don't keep a friend of Hetepet from her, whether her hairdresser or her domestic"? Mind you about her. If only you would be (as) firm in everything as (you are) in this. Now, if you (Merisu) don't want her, you'll have to have Iutenhab brought to me. As this man lives for me—I speak about Ip—whoever shall make any affair of the wife on the battlefield, he is against me and I am against him. Look, that is my wife, and the way to behave to a man's wife is known. Look, as for anyone who will act for her, the same is done for me. Furthermore, will any of you bear having his woman denounced to him? Then I would bear it. How can I be in one community with you (all)? Not when you won't respect the wife for me! (II 38–40)

Both names refer to a woman who is the object of mistreatment: in the first case, denied access to her servants by members of the household;²³ in the second, unwelcome to at least one of them. The two names have been uniformly interpreted as those of two different women, but the passage indicates otherwise. From its first sentence it seems to be about the persecution of a single individual, and would probably have been understood as such were it not for the two different names. Heqanakht's use of the 3fs dependent pronoun *s(j)* "her" in II 40, however, indicates that both names in fact refer to the same person:

nj grt mr.k s(j), ḥr.k dj.k jn.t(w) n.j jwt-n-ḥb

Now, if you don't want her, you'll have to have Iutenhab brought to me.²⁴

The use of a pronoun before its referent is avoided in Egyptian.²⁵ The pronoun *s(j)* in II 40 therefore most likely refers to the proper name Hetepet, like the 3fs suffix pronouns in the preceding sentences (II 39 *ḥr.s* "from her," *nšwt.s* "her hairdresser," *prrt.s* "her domestic," *r.s* "about her"). Grammatically and contextually, however, the clause following *s(j)* should belong either to the

that the official whom Heqanakht served in this capacity was his own deceased father. As noted in Section A, above, Heqanakht's employer was probably the vizier Ipi. Heqanakht himself, however, apparently held none of the government posts or titles that might be expected of a vizier's son, and his inferiority vis à vis the Delta-overseer Herunefer, reflected in Letter III, indicates that his family was not of particularly high status.

20 The most recent treatments are by Ward, *Feminine Titles*, 65–69, and G. Robins, *Women in Ancient Egypt* (Cambridge, 1993), 61–62. The term is sociologically parallel to the English "stepmother," but with reference to the relationship between a woman and her husband rather than her husband's children by a former wife. It may mean literally "she who is clothed": "When you become established and found your house, your should love your wife (*ḥjmt.k*) with ardor. Fill her belly, clothe (*ḥbs*) her back" (Papyrus Prisse 10, 8–9): Žába, *Les maximes de Ptahhotep*, lines 325–27.

21 Noted by Ward, *Feminine Titles*, 66.

22 Suggested by Théodoridès, *CdE* 41 (1966), 298 and n. 2; see also Robins, *Women*, 61. Pace Goedicke (*Studies*, 15 and 33), it is unlikely that Heqanakht's *ḥbswt* was the second of two concurrent wives. The evidence for polygamy outside the royal family is inconclusive at best: Allam, *L'Á* I, 1166; Robins, *Women*, 64–67; E. Feucht, *Das Kind im Alten Ägypten* (Frankfurt and New York, 1995), 44.

23 Heqanakht's use of the plural (II 38–40 *n.tn*, *ḥj3 tn*, *nvd.tn*) indicates that more than one individual was seen as an actual or potential antagonist of his wife. For the term *ḥumst*, see the textual note to II 39 on p. 44.

24 For the grammar of this sentence, see the textual note on p. 45 and the discussion on pp. 98–99.

25 Gardiner, *EG*, § 507, 1. Heqanakht's letters provide two exceptions to this rule, but in both cases the pronoun's referent appears in the same clause: see the textual note to I 12–13 on p. 27.

same sentence, or at least to the same topic.²⁶ In any case, the fact that the sentence begins with a pronominal reference indicates that it was not intended to introduce a new topic. In this light, Heqanakht's use of the name Iutenhab in the second clause is understandable only if the name refers to the same individual discussed in the preceding sentences. The most likely reading of the passage from Letter II therefore indicates that Heqanakht's wife was known by two names, Hetepet and Iutenhab. Such double names are well attested in the Middle Kingdom.²⁷

As a member of his household, Heqanakht's wife should appear in the salary list of Letter II.²⁸ The name Iutenhab does not occur in the list, but two of its allocations are assigned to a woman named Hetepet (II 10 and 20). The first of these, which allots 0.8 sack to "Hetepet and her maid-servant," is the second entry in the list (II 10–11), following that of Ipi and her maidservant, who are given the same amount. This position and size of the allocation indicate that this woman was second in rank in the household after Heqanakht's mother. As such, she is probably the Hetepet greeted immediately after Ipi and before the rest of the household elsewhere in the letters (I vo. 15–16, II 1–2). The second Hetepet appears toward the end of the list, where she is identified as "May's daughter Hetepet" and allocated half a sack, reduced from an original 0.8¾ sack.

Heqanakht's wife was probably the second of these two women.²⁹ Despite the size of her original allocation, the largest in either version of the list, she is ranked below several members of the household who receive lesser amounts rather than with the other senior women, a position perhaps explained by her status as a newcomer. The filiation that precedes her name is probably meant to distinguish it from that of the other Hetepet, but it also points to her origin from outside the immediate family. Finally, the size of her original allocation indicates that she was of some importance despite her status in the household, and this is most likely to have been the case for Heqanakht's wife. Heqanakht's relationship to the first Hetepet is unclear, but judging from her status she may have been his sister or aunt; her presence in the household suggests that she was widowed, like his mother, or unmarried.

Both of the two senior women in the salary list receive an allocation for a maidservant (*b3kt*) as well as themselves, but Heqanakht makes no such provision for his wife. In Letter I, however, he orders Merisu to dismiss a housemaid (*b3kt nt pr*) who has been mistreating his wife:

Now, get that housemaid Senen put out of my house—mind you—on whatever day Si-hathor reaches you. Look, if she spends a single day in my house, take action! You are the one who lets her do bad to my wife (I vo. 13–14).

Although Senen is not identified specifically as the wife's maidservant, the order for her dismissal here would explain the absence of such a servant in the salary list. Her title is slightly different from that of the other two maidservants in the list, but the fact that it is followed by her name indicates that the title alone was not sufficient to indicate which female servant was meant, and that *b3kt nt pr* was therefore merely a fuller form of the title *b3kt*. Her absence from the salary list may also explain in part Heqanakht's reduction of his wife's original allocation.

Letter II mentions two additional servants of Heqanakht's wife, a hairdresser and a domestic (II 38–39). Heqanakht's instruction about giving his wife access to them indicates that they were not

26 The *lyr.f sdm.f* construction is used only in subordinate clauses or sentences that continue the discussion of a topic: Vernus, *Future*, 71.

27 One of the names is occasionally derived from the full name, but the use of two different names is more common: for women, see Vernus, *Surnom*, nos. 2, 11, 50, 68, 73, 76–80, 83, 92–93, 122, 127–28, 157, 163–65, 169, 174, 193, 195–97, 252–60, 268–69, 275, 289–92, 297–300, 310, 313, 316, 323, 338–40, 343, 347.

28 Baer ("Letters," 8–9 n. 63) suggested that Heqanakht made no provision for her in the list because she was to be sent to him. This is unlikely, however. The continued admonition against her ill-treatment in II 40–44 suggests that Heqanakht meant the sentence as a further warning rather than an instruction to be taken literally. Moreover, the list in II 7–22 specifies salaries rather than rations (see pp. 145–47), which the wife should have received even away from home, as is the case for Heti's son Nakht and Sinebniut (I 14–17; II 5b–6). Goedicke (*Studies*, 34) suggested that the wife might not yet have entered the household, but this is based on an unsubstantiated interpretation of *lpswt* as "bride," and is in any case unlikely in view of the subsequent references to her mistreatment in Letter II.

29 Suggested by Goedicke (*Studies*, 15), but as the first of Heqanakht's two wives, with Iutenhab the second.

part of the household itself, and as such they probably do not receive allocations in the salary list. Although the list contains the names of several women besides Ipi and the two Hetepets, the fact it mentions the maidservants of Ipi and Hetepet only by their title indicates that none of the other women named in the list are servants. One of the women in the list, Nefret (II 21), also receives greetings from Heqanakht in Letter I (I vo. 16), and is therefore unlikely to have been a mere servant. Since the hairdresser and domestic came from outside the household, Heqanakht's wife would have had to pay for their services from her own resources, and this may also explain in part the large allocation originally assigned to her in the salary list.

The nature of the mistreatment suffered by Heqanakht's wife has been a matter of some speculation. Most studies have understood the passage in II 40–42 as referring to sexual advances made upon her, most probably by Merisu.³⁰ This analysis is based on a misunderstanding of the phrase *jrt(j).f zp nb hr pg3 n hbswt* “whoever shall make any affair of the wife on the battlefield” (II 41) and of the connotation of *jjj n* “act for” in the sentence *jr jrt(j).f n.s nb mitt jr.t n.j* “as for anyone who will act for her, the same is done for me” (II 42).³¹ Heqanakht's comment to Merisu—“Now, if you don't want her” (II 40)—hardly reflects sexual desire, and in Letter I he uses nearly identical phrases—“do bad to my wife” (*jr.s bw bjn r hbswt.j* I vo. 14) and “doing bad things to my wife” (*jrt bjmw r hbswt.j* I vo. 16)—to describe the abuse by both the housemaid Senen and Merisu.³² In fact, the household is evidently culpable as a whole, as indicated by Heqanakht's use of the second-person plural pronoun in his reference to keeping outside servants from attending her (II 38–39) and in his reproaches “What did she do against you?” (I vo. 15) and “How can I be in one community with you? Not when you won't respect the wife for me!” (II 43–44).

The sum of evidence indicates that at least a few members of the household were subjecting Heqanakht's wife to harassment, perhaps because they viewed her as an interloper. The antagonism of the housemaid Senen (I vo. 13–14) could have had the same origin, particularly if she had been attached to Heqanakht's previous wife and was now reassigned to serve the new one. Merisu seems to have been guilty primarily of condoning or at least permitting the wife's mistreatment—“You are the one who lets her do bad to my wife” (I vo. 14)—but he may also have abused her verbally, judging from the normal connotation of the word *gr* “be silent, stop talking” that Heqanakht uses when he advises Merisu, at the end of Letter I, “How good it would be for you to stop” (I vo. 16; see the textual note on p. 36–37).

The names that follow those of Ipi and the senior Hetepet in the salary list of Letter II are those of six men (II 12–18),³³ each of whom is also named at least five times in the papyri: Heti's son Nakht, Merisu, Sihathor, Sinebniut, Anubis, and Snefru. The first of these is identified by filiation as well as name, as he usually is elsewhere in the papyri. This distinction is probably conditioned by the extreme frequency of the name Nakht in the Middle Kingdom, but it could also indicate that he did not come from Heqanakht's immediate family.³⁴ Although he was a member of the household, Heti's son Nakht also had dependents of his own, and his allocation is specified as being for them as well as him (II 12–13; also I 15–16).

The other five men are identified only by their own names in the salary list, as throughout the papyri. James used this feature to argue that the men were Heqanakht's sons, but the sum of evidence in the papyri indicates that this was true for perhaps only two of them.³⁵ Most telling is the

30 James, *HP*, 33 and 43; Baer, “Letters,” 9 and nn. 65–66; Wente, *Letters*, 62; Parkinson, *Voices*, 107. Goedicke, *Studies*, 34–35, is an exception.

31 See the textual notes to these passages on pp. 46–47.

32 The latter indicated by the following imperative *mh tw mht* “Have done with it,” addressed (in the masculine singular) to Merisu: see the textual note on pp. 36–37.

33 The name in II 19 is that of a woman: see the textual notes to II 18 and 19 on p. 40.

34 See Ranke, *PN I*, 209, 16. Other men named Nakht are also distinguished by filiation in the papyri (V 51; VII 7). The order of names in the salary list and their possible family relationships are discussed at the end of this section.

35 James, *HP*, 9–11. James's reading of *p3 msw 5* “you 5 boys” in I vo. 15, which he cited as additional evidence, is in error: see the textual note on p. 36. The identification of the five men as Heqanakht's sons was first suggested in print by Winlock, *Deir el-Bahri*, 64–65.

designation of Merisu, Sihathor, and Sinebniut in Account V as *ḥwtjw.f* “his (Heqanakht’s) farmers” (V 12), a term that seems to describe only individuals who were engaged in one way or another in farming and is never used of filial relationships.³⁶ Each man actually worked for Heqanakht: Letters I–II indicate that Merisu and Sihathor, along with Heti’s son Nakht, were engaged in *sk3* “plowing,” *jkn* “hoeing,” and *b3* “hacking” the land (I 1–2, vo. 6–7; II 30, 33, 36), and Account V entrusts Sinebniut with management of the cattle (V 18–19). Heqanakht also reminds Merisu that “this is not the year for a man to be lax about his master” (I 14) and “this is the year when a man is to act for his master” (I vo. 9), suggesting that their relationship is one of employer and employee.³⁷ The men were not mere fieldhands, however. The papyri indicate that they were also entrusted with responsibilities for the management of Heqanakht’s household and property.

Merisu is listed after Heti’s son Nakht in the salary list and after Sihathor in the list of *ḥwtjw* in Account V, but Letters I and II, which are addressed to him in whole or major part, show that he held a position of authority over other members of the household in Heqanakht’s absence. He directed their work (I vo. 13–14; II 31, 35–36), paid their monthly salaries (I 16–17, vo. 5; II 29–32), and could dispatch them on various missions (I 3, vo. 1, vo. 7; II 40). He was also responsible for Heqanakht’s property. In this capacity he negotiated the lease of land for Heqanakht even when the latter was present (I 9–10: see pp. 156–58), planted his fields (I vo. 10–12), managed his grain (I 2–3, 11, 13–14, vo. 1–4, vo. 17; also V 1–3 and fr. A), distributed bread to Heqanakht himself (V 30), rendered account to him for grain debts collected (I vo. 17), and was financially liable to him for the grain (I 1–3, 16–17; also V 34) and probably also for his livestock (V 25–28).³⁸ Heqanakht’s remonstration in Letter I—*n jw.k dj.t(j) ḥn^c.j m pꜣšy.j* “Have you been given equal rights with me?” (I vo. 17: literally, “Are you given with me as my sharer?”)—indicates that there were limits to Merisu’s authority; but the term *pꜣšy*, with its connotation of property division,³⁹ may also reflect his involvement with the management of Heqanakht’s goods. Merisu’s name is never preceded by a title in the papyri, but his responsibilities closely parallel those of the *jmj-r pr* “steward” in the households of Middle Kingdom officials and kings. Like Merisu, this functionary was the head of his employer’s household and responsible for its production.⁴⁰

In the salary list of Letter II, Merisu and his dependents are given an allocation of 0.8 sack, equal to those of Heqanakht’s mother and the senior Hetepet as well as Heti’s son Nakht and his dependents, Sihathor, and originally Sinebniut (the latter subsequently reduced to 0.7 sack). In Account V, however, his allotment of grain and flax is ten percent larger than those of Sihathor and Sinebniut, and may include an aroura of land in flax as well (V 13–16).⁴¹ Merisu’s authority over these men is reflected in the fact that he had sent Sihathor to Heqanakht (I vo. 1) and is instructed to send Heti’s son Nakht and Sinebniut on a mission to Perhaa (I 3, 14–15). His priority over Heti’s son Nakht is also clear in the second part of Letter II, which is addressed to the latter as subordinate (*ḥr^c*) to Merisu (II 29).⁴²

The mention of Merisu’s dependents in the salary list (II 14) shows that he had a family of his own and was therefore probably at least in his twenties when the letter was written.⁴³ Taken literally, the phrase *r ḏd jn ḥm-kꜣ ḥqꜣ-nḥt n mr.(j)-sw* “To be said by ka-servant Heqanakht to Merisu” in

36 See Golovina, *VDI* 1976 no. 2, 130–33, with references. Particularly illustrative in this respect is an early Middle Kingdom stela noted by Golovina, which shows six men, each identified as *ḥwtj*: S. Schoske, ed., *Staatliche Sammlung Ägyptischer Kunst, München* (Mainz, 1995), 97. These men, all named (and therefore representing real individuals), appear in procession below and after family members, and have the common label *n(j)-dt.f* “his personnel,” identifying them as employees (*Wb.* II, 369, 2; V, 511, 4).

37 Golovina, *VDI* 1976 no. 2, 128; the significance of this passage is discussed further at the end of this section.

38 For the last, see the textual note to V 25–26 on p. 55.

39 See the textual note on p. 37. The significance of the term is discussed further at the end of this section.

40 W. Helck, *Zur Verwaltung des Mittleren und Neuen Reiches* (PÄ 3: Leiden, 1958), 92–93.

41 For the last, see James, *HP*, 56.

42 See James, *HP*, 40. For the significance of Heqanakht’s statement that Nakht “is the one who sees to all my things” (III vo. 2), see below.

43 Most Egyptian men seem to have married only after embarking on their professional careers, and therefore in their late teens or early twenties at the earliest: S. Allam, *LÄ* I, 1163–64; Feucht, *Das Kind im Alten Ägypten*, 31–32.

Letters I and II (I 1; II 29) could indicate that the letters were to be read to Merisu by someone else and that he was therefore unable to read and write. But an employee with his responsibility for property would probably have been literate,⁴⁴ and that talent is perhaps reflected in Heqanakht's references to his "calculating" grain (*hsb*: I 10, vo. 4) and in the order that he send "a writing" of the grain debts collected in Perhaa (I vo. 17).

The responsibilities of Heti's son Nakht are less well attested than those of Merisu in the papyri, but where they are, they are similar. He could be empowered to negotiate the lease of land (I 3) and collect grain debts (III 4); he was also involved with Merisu in the distribution of monthly salaries (II 29–32) and shared with him financial liability for the management of Heqanakht's cattle (V 25–28). In Letter III, Heqanakht notes that Nakht "is the one who sees to all my things" (III vo. 2). Since Merisu's superior position seems clear from Letters I–II, this statement was probably intended not to reflect Nakht's responsibility in the household as a whole but to establish his authority in specific connection with the mission for which Letter III was written. Nakht's responsibility for the leasing of land and collection of grain debts, in fact, only appears in the context of this mission away from home. His involvement in the distribution of salaries may have been similarly restricted, perhaps to those of the other *ḥwtjw*.

These considerations might suggest that Nakht's position in the household was one of deputy to Merisu, since he exercised similar responsibilities outside the household. The fact that his name appears before that of Merisu in the salary list of Letter II, however, makes such a specifically subordinate relationship unlikely. Instead, he may have been something like an agricultural foreman, with immediate responsibility for the management of fields, fieldhands, and livestock.⁴⁵ This would explain both his status relative to Merisu, who had ultimate authority over Heqanakht's property, and his responsibilities mentioned in Letters I–III, which are related in one way or another to fieldwork.⁴⁶ As foreman he may have paid any hired hands, probably after receiving the necessary amounts from Merisu each month, and could also have distributed salaries to members of the household insofar as their pay depended on their agricultural labor (II 29–30).

Heti's son Nakht is not included among Heqanakht's "farmers" in Account V, but the same account assigns him financial liability for the management of Heqanakht's cattle (V 25–28). Since this section of the account is probably three years older than Letters I–III (see pp. 134–35), he may have received a promotion by the time the letters were written, perhaps from an original position as *jmj-r jḥw* "overseer of cattle." Like Merisu, he had dependents of his own (I 16; II 13) and was therefore at least in his twenties.

Sihathor, whose name appears in the fifth entry of the salary list (II 15), is also mentioned in Account V as one of Heqanakht's "farmers" (V 13), and Letter I makes reference to his fieldwork along with Merisu and other household members (I vo. 6–7). Apart from this his major role in the papyri is that of messenger. Letter I mentions that he had been sent by Merisu to Heqanakht with a quantity of grain (I vo. 1–2), and Letters I–II both refer to his projected return trip (I vo. 14; II vo. 1). He is probably also mentioned in Letter IV as messenger from the junior Sitnebsekhtu to her mother (IV 3–4), and this was most likely to have been planned in conjunction with the same return voyage.⁴⁷ These data do not tell us much about Sihathor's place in the household, but some indication of it can be gleaned from other evidence in the papyri.

44 See Newberry, *Beni Hasan I*, pl. 29, where an *jmj-r pr n pr dt* is shown writing.

45 If this position carried a title, it may have been *jmj-r t3zt* "foreman." Such individuals appear in Middle Kingdom tomb scenes in connection with livestock (e.g., Blackman and Apted, *Meir V*, pl. 41; see Helck, *Verwaltung*, 174), a component for which Heti's son Nakht also bore some responsibility (V 25–28), but the same title is also used of the foremen of crews of workmen (Simpson, *Papyrus Reisner II*, 41). The Middle Kingdom title *jmj-r 3ḥwt* "overseer of fields" (Ward, *Titles*, nos. 29–32) is not applicable: officials with this title seem to have had responsibility for the measurement and assessment of fields for tax purposes (Helck, *Verwaltung*, 112–13).

46 For the relationship of the collection of grain debts in Letter III to the leasing of land in Letters I–II, see pp. 153 and 155.

47 See the textual note on p. 52 for the probable restoration of Sihathor's name in IV 3–4. The relationship of Letter IV to the return trip noted in Letters I–II is discussed on p. 136.

Sihathor probably brought Account V with him on his trip to Heqanakht. This document seems to have been drafted at Heqanakht's home prior to his departure in Year 5 and was most likely retained there when Heqanakht left (see the discussion on p. 132). The entries of grain debts at the end of the recto, and probably also the inventory of wood on the verso, were added in Year 8 (V 34/37), and the need to convey this information to Heqanakht is ample reason for Sihathor to have brought the document with him to Thebes. Account V was written by the same scribe who wrote Letter III for Heqanakht and Letter IV for the younger Sitnebsekhtu (see pp. 78–80). Since the account was written at Heqanakht's home and the letters in Thebes, the scribe of Account V and Letters III–IV must have been present in both places. It is possible that Heqanakht had a personal secretary who had accompanied him to Thebes, but such an individual is neither mentioned nor provided for in the papyri, and it is far more likely that the scribe was Sihathor himself.⁴⁸ Sihathor thus seems to have served as the household's scribe, and in this capacity he may have worked for Merisu as well as Heqanakht, regardless of whether the former was literate himself. His role as the scribe of Account V could also explain the precedence given to his own name over that of Merisu in the list of Heqanakht's "farmers." Letter III indicates that he was versed in the language and formulae of standard Middle Egyptian, perhaps more so than Heqanakht himself (see p. 101).

The hand of Letter III is more competent than that of the earlier entries in Account V, and the same appears to be true of the later entries in the account.⁴⁹ The salary list of Letter II also indicates that Sihathor had no dependents. Together, these features suggest that he was fairly young and had perhaps just begun his scribal career when the documents were written.

The third man identified as one of Heqanakht's "farmers" in Account V, Sinebniut, seems to have been subordinate to the other two, Merisu and Sihathor. Letters I and III note that he was to accompany Heti's son Nakht to Perhaa to lease land (I 3) and collect grain debts (III 4), and in this role he was probably subordinate to Nakht as well. Apart from this mission, his role in the household is indicated only by Account V, where he is entrusted with the care of Heqanakht's cattle (V 18–19). This duty apparently carried no financial liability (V 25–29), which suggests that Sinebniut was essentially only a farmhand, without the administrative responsibilities of his superiors. Nonetheless, his allotment of grain and flax in Account V is equal to that of Sihathor and his salary in Letter II was originally the same as those of his superiors,⁵⁰ indicating that his duties were considered as important to the household as theirs. Like Sihathor, he appears to have been unmarried when the salary list was drawn up.

The last two men in the salary list are named Anubis and Snefru (II 17–18), the latter most likely a shorter version of II 35 Mer-Snefru.⁵¹ These were apparently the most junior men, judging from the size of their final allotment. Their roles in the household also seem to have been relatively subordinate: plowing with the other men (I vo. 6–7) and, in the case of Snefru, being given charge of cattle (II 35–36). Nevertheless, Merisu is ordered to take special care of them:

Mind you about Anubis and Snefru. You die with them as you live with them. Mind you.
Look, there is nothing more (important) than either of them in that house with you. Don't be neglectful about it. (I vo. 12–13)

In view of their junior position in the salary list and their minor roles in the household, the value Heqanakht evidently placed on these two men can only indicate that they were important to him personally, and this would suit the generally accepted conclusion that they were his sons.

48 As concluded by Baer, "Letters," 19. For the drafting of the letters at Thebes, see p. 132.

49 The latter noted by James, *HP*, 54; Baer, "Letters," 19.

50 See the textual note to II 7–23 on pp. 39–40.

51 See the textual notes to II 18 and II 35 on pp. 40 and 44. Omission of the nondistinctive element in "nicknames" is a well-attested practice: Vernus, *Surnom*, 110–15. A similar basilophoric pair is attested for a Middle Kingdom official named *ttj-m-z3.f*, also called *ttj:Vernus*, *Surnom*, 70 no. 322, 110. Since the latter is described as *m.f nfr n dd r(m)t* "his nickname in popular speech," Heqanakht's preference for Snefru's shortened name in Letters I–II may also reflect colloquial usage.

Such a conclusion is at least likely for Snefru, since Heqanakht greets him as “Foremost of my body, a thousand times, a million times” (I vo. 5–6), with the same addendum that is appended to Heqanakht’s greetings to his mother (I vo. 15). The phrase *hnt(j)-h(t).j* “foremost of my body” is unusual, but it echoes the more common expression *z3 n ht* “bodily son.”⁵² Taken literally, it could also indicate that Snefru was Heqanakht’s eldest son. This might appear to contradict the precedence given to Anubis in the salary list and the admonition cited above, but Anubis could also have been a younger brother of Heqanakht himself rather than an older brother of Snefru. As James and others have remarked, the papyri seem to reflect a degree of favoritism toward Snefru.⁵³ Besides giving him a special and affectionate greeting in Letter I, Heqanakht also fixed his salary as originally equivalent to those of the senior men,⁵⁴ and in Letter II he orders Merisu to cater to Snefru’s wishes: “Whatever else he might want, you should make him content about what he might want” (II 36–37). This would make sense if Snefru had been Heqanakht’s oldest (and only) son, but is perhaps less likely if he had been the younger of two sons. If Anubis was a younger brother of Heqanakht, he would naturally receive less preferential treatment than that accorded to Heqanakht’s son, while his close family relationship to Heqanakht would also explain his inclusion with Snefru in the passage from Letter I cited in the preceding paragraph.

Snefru’s identity as Heqanakht’s only son may also underlie Heqanakht’s desire to have Snefru with him in Thebes (I vo. 7; II 36), where he could be instructed as his father’s eventual successor in the role of ka-servant. In Letter I, Heqanakht orders Merisu to have Snefru help with the plowing and then come to Heqanakht with a supply of grain (I vo. 6–8), and in Letter II Merisu is ordered to put Snefru in charge of the cattle (II 35–36).⁵⁵ These duties indicate that Snefru was old enough both for fieldwork and for adult responsibilities when the letters were composed.⁵⁶ In Account V, written some three years earlier (see pp. 134–35), however, he is not included in the workforce, and responsibility for the cattle is assigned to Sinebniut (V 18–19).⁵⁷ This suggests that Snefru had only recently become mature enough to be considered an adult, and Heqanakht says as much in Letter I: “Now, didn’t I say ‘Snefru has grown up?’” (I vo. 5). Most probably, therefore, he was in his early to middle teens when the letters were written, the age at which the transition to adult responsibility seems to have occurred;⁵⁸ this also suits the evidence of the salary list that he was unmarried. As Snefru’s father, Heqanakht himself would then have been most likely in his mid to late thirties, contrary to the persistent impression that he was an old man.⁵⁹ Like Snefru, Anubis appears without dependents of his own in the salary list. He may therefore have been in his late teens or early twenties—in any case, no older than Heqanakht himself, if he was in fact Heqanakht’s younger brother.

52 *Wb.* III, 357, 6–7. See the textual note to I vo. 6 on p. 32.

53 James, *HP* 10, 16–17, 35; Baer, “Letters,” 7 n. 50; Goedicke, *Studies*, 32, 65. Originally also Winlock, *Deir el-Bahri*, 65–66.

54 0.8 sack, subsequently reduced to 0.4 sack: see the textual note to II 7–23 on pp. 39–40.

55 For the apparent conflict between the orders in the two letters, see pp. 140–41. Snefru’s increased responsibility with regard to the cattle may also account in part for the large salary originally allotted him in Letter II.

56 Tomb scenes show young children plowing and tending cattle (Feucht, *Das Kind im Alten Ägypten*, 309–15), but it is unlikely that Snefru would have been ordered to be sent with grain if he were only a child. There is no evidence that the wording of Heqanakht’s order in I vo. 7 (*zbb.k n.j sw*) implies accompaniment. The verb *zbj* can be used of “conducting” as well as “sending” someone (*Wb.* III, 431, 4–9), but in both cases it seems to be used only of adults. Apart from this instance, the Heqanakht papyri regularly speak of sending men on their own (*rdj h3y/jwt* “cause to go/go down”: I 3, vo. 1; III 4; IV 1) and of sending things or women accompanied (*rdj jn.tw* “cause to bring”: I vo. 3, 7–8, 17; II 40, vo. 1; P’ 3–4). The same distinction appears elsewhere: e.g., Möller, *Pal.* I, pl. 5 no. 2.

57 The transfer of this responsibility to Snefru does not necessarily signal disfavor toward Sinebniut, since the latter is given a larger (final) salary in Letter II. In any case, Sinebniut was to be seconded to Heti’s son Nakht on the mission to Perhaa, which was expected to take him away from home for a month (I 14–15), during which time someone else would presumably have had to tend the cattle.

58 Feucht, *Das Kind im Alten Ägypten*, 237–38.

59 See n. 43, above. In his initial discussion of the papyri in *Deir el Bahri*, 58–67, Winlock characterizes Heqanakht as “old” no fewer than 15 times. This impression is probably based on the identification of Merisu as his oldest son (see n. 35, above).

The last four individuals named in the salary list (II 19–22) are women.⁶⁰ Apart from Heqanakht's wife, Hetepet (II 20), their relationship to Heqanakht and their role in the household is mostly uncertain. Nefret, who follows the wife in the list (II 21), is also singled out for personal greetings in Letter I (I vo. 16). Heqanakht seems to have reserved other such greetings in Letters I and II for individuals to whom he was probably closely related: his mother, Ipi (I vo. 15; II 1); his aunt or elder sister, Hetepet (I vo. 16; II 1); and his son, Snefru (I vo. 5–6). Nefret may therefore have been a daughter of Heqanakht, perhaps by Hetepet, whose name precedes hers in the salary list. The same criterion would indicate that Snefru was Heqanakht's son by a previous wife rather than by Hetepet. The other two women, Si(t)inut (II 19) and Sitwerut (II 22), appear only here. Si(t)inut's order in the salary list, after Anubis and Snefru and before Heqanakht's wife, suggests that her relationship to Heqanakht was similar to those of the two men: that is, his younger sister or his daughter by a previous wife. Sitwerut may have been another daughter of Hetepet. She was probably not a servant, since no others are named in the list.

If the relationships and roles identified above for the members of Heqanakht's household are at all accurate, they indicate that the ranking of the salary list in Letter II was based primarily on seniority. Gender, family relationships, and status do not seem to have been major considerations: the women are named in two groups, at the beginning and end of the list (II 8–11 and 19–22); the two men who seem to have been of primary importance in Heqanakht's eyes (I vo. 12–13), probably his younger brother and son, are listed after his employees (II 17–18); and the entry for one of the employees appears before that of his superior (I 12–13). At least for the first nine entries (II 8–19), ranking by seniority also agrees with the evidence cited above for the ages of the various individuals. Its applicability to the last three entries (II 20–22) is less certain. It is not impossible that these names were also the youngest in the list. Marriage at the age of 13 was customary for Egyptian women in Roman times and is also attested earlier.⁶¹ If Hetepet had married Heqanakht at that age and had given birth to one or two daughters, she could have been no more than 15 or 16 years old when the salary list was drawn up, and therefore conceivably younger than Snefru and Si(t)inut, whose names precede hers in the list. If Nefret and Sitwerut were her daughters, however, this is unlikely: the fact that both these women were given salaries indicates that they were old enough to work, a condition that Heqanakht clearly ties to the reception of salaries (II 29–30). More probably, therefore, the position of Hetepet's name in the salary list is an exception to the general order of seniority, as it is to the descending order of allocations. This in turn indicates that the two women whose names follow hers were somehow related to her, most likely as her daughters.

The last three entries are thus appended to the list as a separate group, perhaps because Heqanakht considered them a distinct family unit. If Nefret and Sitwerut were Heqanakht's daughters by Hetepet, and Snefru his son by a previous marriage, Nefret could have been no older than Snefru, and the fact that she and Sitwerut drew salaries indicates that they were no younger than about seven years of age. This would put Hetepet herself in her early to middle twenties.

One final bit of evidence for the relationship of some household members to one another may lie in Heqanakht's admonition to Merisu in Letter I: "Look, this is not the year for a man to be lax about his master, about his father, about his brother" (I 14). As noted above, the precedence of the term *nb* "master"—repeated in the similar warning "Look, this is the year when a man is to act for his master" (I vo. 9)—reflects Merisu's status as Heqanakht's employee. The other two terms in this sentence, *jtj* "father" and *sn* "brother," can be used not only of blood relatives but also more loosely of unrelated individuals, denoting respectively a dependency relationship and social equality or association.⁶² The term "master" undoubtedly refers to Heqanakht himself, but the referent of the other two designations is uncertain. A priori, they most likely refer to Heqanakht as well. In that case, the word "father" must be meant only in the looser sense: if it had been intended literally, the

60 For the name in II 19 as female, see the textual notes to II 18–19 on p. 40.

61 Feucht, *Das Kind im Alten Ägypten*, 32–33.

62 *Wb.* I, 141, 18, and IV, 150, 11; Franke, *Verwandtschaftsbezeichnungen*, 311.

third term would then be meaningless. The same relationship of dependency underlies Heqanakht's statement in Letter II that "the whole household is just like my children" (*m njtt hrduw.j* II 25).⁶³ The term "brother," however, could have been used in its literal sense, since a fraternal relationship between Merisu and Heqanakht would not necessarily rule out the employment of a younger brother by the older. If the terms "father" and "brother" do not refer to Heqanakht, they may reflect Merisu's relationship to other members of the household: perhaps Heti's son Nakht in the first case (which could also explain the order of their names in the salary list), and Sihathor or Sinebniut, if not both, in the second.

Of these various possibilities, the identification of Merisu as a younger brother of Heqanakht seems the likeliest. His relationship with Heqanakht would then have been similar to that described between the two brothers in the Late Egyptian story:⁶⁴

Now as for Anubis, he had a house and a wife, [while] his younger brother was with him in the manner of a son, it being he (Anubis) who took care of him, while he was in charge of his animals in the fields, for he was the one who did the plowing. He was the one who harvested for him, and he was the one who did every chore for him in the fields.

In this light Heqanakht's question to Merisu in Letter I, "Have you been given equal rights with me?" (I vo. 17), takes on further significance. The root of the term *pzšy* "sharer" in this question (see p. 111, above) is used of the division of property between heirs.⁶⁵ The negative connotation of Heqanakht's question, together with his statement that "everything is mine to allocate" (II 26), would be particularly meaningful if he had been his father's sole heir.⁶⁶ His position would also explain the role of the younger brothers as his employees.

From the evidence of the papyri, the members of Heqanakht's household, as specified in the salary list of Letter II and including Heqanakht himself, can therefore be identified with some probability as follows:

- Heqanakht — head of the household, perhaps 35–40 years of age
- Ipi (II 8) — Heqanakht's mother, probably widowed
- Hetepet (II 10) — an aunt or older sister of Heqanakht, widowed or unmarried
- Heti's son Nakht (II 12–13) — Heqanakht's foreman, married with dependents, at least in his twenties and more probably older
- Merisu (II 14) — the household steward and a fieldhand, perhaps also Heqanakht's brother, married with dependents, at least in his twenties (younger than Heti's son Nakht)
- Sihathor (II 15) — the household scribe and a fieldhand, unmarried, probably in his late teens or early twenties (younger than Merisu)
- Sinebniut (II 16) — a fieldhand and in charge of Heqanakht's cattle, unmarried, probably in his late teens or early twenties (younger than Sihathor)
- Anubis (II 17) — Heqanakht's youngest brother, unmarried, probably in his late teens or early twenties (younger than Sinebniut)
- Snefru (II 18), more fully Mer-Snefru (II 35) — Heqanakht's son by a previous marriage, probably in his early to middle teens (younger than Anubis)
- Si(t)inut (II 19) — a younger sister of Heqanakht or his daughter by a previous marriage, probably younger than Snefru
- May's daughter Hetepet (II 20), also known as Iutenhab (II 40) — Heqanakht's wife, perhaps in her early to middle twenties
- Nefret (II 21) — Heqanakht's daughter by Hetepet, an older child or young teenager (younger than Snefru)

63 For *hrduw* as a term denoting a household employee, see O. Berlev, in *Древний Египет и древняя Африка* (Moscow, 1967), 12–13.

64 Papyrus d'Orbiney I, 1–3; A.H. Gardiner, *Late Egyptian Stories* (BA 1: Brussels, 1932), 9.

65 See the first textual note to I vo. 17 on p. 37.

66 For patterns of inheritance in families with several sons, see Feucht, *Das Kind im Alten Ägypten*, 210–23.

- Sitwerut (II 22) — another daughter of Heqanakht and Hetepet (younger than Nefret)
- two unnamed female servants of Ipi and the senior Hetepet (II 9/11).

The household had also included a female servant named Senen, whom Heqanakht orders dismissed (I vo. 13). She may have been the personal servant of Heqanakht's current wife and of his previous wife before his remarriage.

C. Heqanakht's Neighbors

Letters I–III and Accounts V–VI record twenty-eight men and one estate (VI 25) with whom Heqanakht had financial dealings. At least sixteen of the men, mentioned in Letters I–III and listed in Letter III and Account VI, can be called neighbors of his, because they are associated with place names in the area of Perhaa, a regional center near Heqanakht's own village of Sidder Grove (see pp. 122–24).

Heqanakht's most prestigious neighbor was evidently Herunef (I 9, III vo. 3), who is clearly addressed as Heqanakht's social superior in Letter III. The docket of this letter identifies him as *mr t3-mhw* "Delta-overseer" (III vo. 3), a title that seems to have distinguished state officials who had responsibilities in Lower Egypt but were not necessarily resident there.⁶⁷ The same letter indicates that he had a house in Perhaa (III 5). In Letter I, Heqanakht tells his men that Herunef is "the one who can put you on watered land of Khepsyt" (I 9). This may reflect his ownership of fields in the area, but it could conceivably mean only that he was able to serve as intermediary in locating leasable land there, just as Letter III presumes his willingness to facilitate the collection of debts owed to Heqanakht.

Two of Heqanakht's neighbors, Ip Jr.'s son Khentekhtai and Hau Jr., were apparently fairly prosperous landowners. The first had sold or leased fourteen arouras of land to Heqanakht (II 33) and evidently had more land available for rent (I vo. 11), and Heqanakht considered the second a likely source for the ten or twenty arouras he wished to lease in the future (I 8; II vo. 2). Heqanakht's other neighbors all owed him various amounts of grain. They are listed by name and in some cases also by locality, along with their debts, in Letter III (7–8), Account V (39–52), and Account VI (2–18).⁶⁸

The entries of Letter III and Account VI complement one another as a list of debts owed by twelve men and one estate in the region of Perhaa.⁶⁹ Two of the men appear in both papyri, with different debts in each (III 7; VI 5/7); one of these, Ipi Jr. (III 7; VI 5), may be the same man whose name appears in the filiation of Ip Jr.'s son Khentekhtai.⁷⁰ One of the debtors in Account VI is identified by the title *mnjw tzmw* "Custodian of Hounds" (VI 11) as well as by name;⁷¹ the other twelve debtors are listed by name only, and may have had no official titles. The four names at the end of Account VI (15–18), in a separate section, are recorded without specific reference to their locality.⁷² Since this account is a "written record of what is in Perhaa" (VI vo. 1–3), these debtors were probably also neighbors of Heqanakht, like the others in the account. The fact that they are listed without an attendant place name suggests that they were associated with Perhaa proper

67 For the title and office, first attested in the reign of Mentuhotep II, see Ward, *Index*, no. 415; Helck, *LÄ* III, 920; Helck, *Verwaltung*, 12 and n. 9; S. Quirke, *Rde* 37 (1986), 122 n. 44, 126.

68 For the identification of these entries as debts owed Heqanakht, see p. 163.

69 James, *HP*, 64–65; Baer, "Letters," 10–11. James suggested that the Neneksu of III 7 was the same as the unnamed brother of Sebeknedjem's son Nenrenef in VI 3 (*HP*, 65), but this is based in part on his attempt to explain the arithmetic of Account VI, which has been countered by the more plausible explanation of Baer: see pp. 12–13. If Neneksu was in fact the brother of Nenrenef it is curious that he is mentioned by his name alone, while Nenrenef is listed by filiation as well as name: contrast the consistent reference to Nehri's son Ipi in both documents (III 7, VI 7).

70 For the difference in spelling, see n. 12, above.

71 For this title, see Ward, *Index*, no. 796; H.G. Fischer, *LÄ* III, 77–78.

72 Goedicke, *Studies*, 87–88, interpreted VI 13 *ntt m nbsyt* as the heading of these names, but this is unlikely: see the textual note to VI 12–13 on p. 59.