

Breaking the *dšr.t*-Vessels

An Ancient Egyptian Fragmentation Rite

Elena L. Hertel



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Cover: Pyramid Text spell 244 in the pyramid of Unas (drawing by the author)



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Contents

List of Figures	iii
Acknowledgments	iv
Introduction	1
Goal and Definition	1
On the Necessity of a Re-Evaluation	1
Methodology and Structure	3
The BdV in Egyptological Literature	4
History of Previous Research	4
Phase 1: Identification	4
Phase 2: Contextualisation	6
Phase 3: Attribution of Archaeological Evidence	8
Interpretations of the BdV	9
The BdV as a Rite Against Evil.....	10
Proponent Arguments.....	10
Problems.....	11
The BdV as Disposing of Vessels	15
Proponent Arguments.....	15
Problems.....	16
How to Move Forward.....	18
The Concept of Intentional Damaging of Objects: Fragmentation Theory	19
Interpreting the Intentional Fragmentation of Objects	19
Implications of Fragmentation Theory for the BdV.....	21
Forms of Intentional Fragmentation of Objects in Ancient Egypt.....	22
The <i>dšr.wt</i> – Appearance, Use, and Purpose	25
<i>dšr.t</i> -Vessels in the Old Kingdom.....	25
<i>dšr.t</i> -Vessels in the Middle Kingdom	25
<i>dšr.t</i> -Vessels in the New Kingdom.....	28
<i>dšr.t</i> -Vessels After the New Kingdom	31
<i>dšr.t</i> -Vessels in Archaeological Contexts	32
Conclusion on <i>dšr.t</i> -Vessels	33

Contextualising the BdV	35
The Pyramid Texts	35
The Old Kingdom Private Contexts	37
The BdV in the Middle Kingdom	37
The BdV Scene in the Luxor Temple	39
The <i>dšr.wt</i> in the BdV	41
The New Kingdom Vessel-Breaking Scenes	42
Summary and Conclusion	48
Appendix	51
Appendix Table 1.....	51
Appendix Table 2.....	53
Appendix Table 3.....	54
Catalogue	55
A1 – <i>dšr.wt</i> in the Old Kingdom.....	55
A2 – <i>dšr.wt</i> in the Middle Kingdom	55
A3 – <i>dšr.wt</i> in the New Kingdom.....	64
A4 – <i>dšr.wt</i> after the New Kingdom.....	72
B1 – BdV in the Old Kingdom.....	74
B2 – BdV in the Middle Kingdom.....	79
B3 – BdV in the New Kingdom	80
B4 – Vessel-Breaking Scenes in New Kingdom Private Tombs	80
Bibliography and Abbreviations.....	88

List of Figures

Figure 1.	Comparison of PT 244 with spells for purification, anointing, the ritual offering of food and drink, and the Opening of the Mouth Ritual	12
Figure 2.	Chronological distribution of textual, iconographical, and archaeological sources of pottery fragmentation contexts	16
Figure 3.	<i>dšr.t</i> -Vessels on Middle Kingdom Coffins	26
Figure 4.	Shape of the <i>dšr.wt</i> depicted in the Middle Kingdom	27
Figure 5.	Shape of the <i>dšr.wt</i> classifier in the Middle Kingdom.....	28
Figure 6.	Shape of <i>dšr.wt</i> depictions and classifiers in the New Kingdom.....	30
Figure 7.	<i>dšr.t</i> -Vessels among tools for the Opening of the Mouth Ritual (above) and the offering of food and drink (below) in the forecourt of TT 75	31
Figure 8.	<i>dšr.t</i> -Vessels and <i>nms.t</i> -Vessels found in Giza	33
Figure 9.	Attestations of CT 926 on Middle Kingdom coffins	38
Figure 10.	Vessel breaking scene in the tomb of Horemheb at Saqqara	43
Figure 11.	Present and absent elements in the New Kingdom vessel-breaking scenes	44
Figure 12.	Shape of vessels in the New Kingdom vessel-breaking scenes.....	45

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Introduction

Goal and Definition

In ancient Egyptian thought, the funerary procedure played a key role in the transition to the afterlife. The Pyramid Texts and the depictions in private tombs show a highly evolved funerary ritual as early as the Old Kingdom. This ritual involved a great number of individual rites which, as a whole, would ensure a safe transition to the realm of the dead and a pleasant afterlife for the deceased. While some of these rites are well studied and understood, others have not been explored to a point where their meaning is entirely clear. One of these is the rite of ‘Breaking the *dšr.t*-Vessels’. The aim of this study is to provide a better understanding of this rite.

This study is centred on what the ancient Egyptian texts refer to as *sd dšr.wt* (*sd* ‘(to) break’; *dšr.wt* ‘(the) *dšr.t*-Vessels’). In previous literature, the vessels are generally referred to as ‘red vessels’ or ‘red pots’, but I have decided to use the Egyptian term due to the uncertainties in the etymology and translation of the name.¹ While the rite has been connected to several different contexts and primary sources, I argue that a careful differentiation between evidence identified as such is necessary. In this study I aim to demonstrate that there is a meaningful discrepancy between textual, iconographical, and archaeological sources, which is reason to question the initial identification as a *sd dšr.wt* context. On a level of terminology, I therefore choose to restrict my definition of the ‘Breaking the *dšr.t*-Vessels’ rite (subsequently shortened to BdV) to what the ancient Egyptian sources refer to as *sd dšr.wt*, providing a stable starting point for the study. Whether or not the iconographical and archaeological sources interpreted as ‘Breaking of the Red Vessels’ by modern scholars match the criteria to be a manifestation of the rite, and should therefore be addressed as BdV, is to be discussed only in a secondary step, after the core of the *sd dšr.wt* has been explored as thoroughly as possible.

On the Necessity of a Re-Evaluation

Despite the rather scarce number of attestations of the BdV, it is relatively often discussed in secondary literature. Being part of the final funerary rites, it is often mentioned in publications dealing with the topic of the deceased’s transition to the afterlife. Early interpretations of the BdV also connected it to execration rituals, causing it to occasionally appear in research on ancient Egyptian execration rites and magic. However, the BdV has never been the centre of a detailed study exploring its dynamics and evolution, which appears overdue by now, especially considering its entanglement with these different spheres of ancient Egyptian belief and the implications that a re-interpretation of the BdV may mean for them. Furthermore, recent scholarship has drawn attention to more and more contexts of intentionally damaged objects in ancient Egypt. As one of the few textual attestations of an ancient rite featuring the intentional damaging of an object,² a thorough investigation of the BdV is an important step towards the study of concepts of fragmentation in ancient Egyptian culture.

¹ Other common terms are ‘red vases’, or ‘redware’ in English, ‘Rote Töpfe’ or ‘Rote Krüge’ in German, and ‘vases rouges’ in French. I use the word ‘vessels’ due to its neutrality concerning shape and usage.

² In Egyptian context, one could add some ritual instructions such as the order to burn wax figurines in the context of a ritual against Apophis mentioned in pBremner-Rhind, or the instruction to burn and drink papyrus (Kühne-Wespi 2019b) as a form of fragmentation, see also below.

Even though the BdV frequently appears in scholarly works, the interpretations of the exact function and purpose of the rite are varied. This is due to the fact that none of the ancient Egyptian evidence gives any unambiguous information about the intention of the ritualists or the goal that the rite was supposed to achieve. This forces scholars to base explanations on the interpretation of the symbolic value of the vessels and the act of deliberate breaking. One reason for the ambiguity is surely that the study of intentional damaging of pottery is neglected in Egyptology. Due to the strong philological roots of the field, all such evidence – both in archaeological and iconographical form – has been associated with the BdV as the only rite mentioning such a phenomenon in texts. The fact that an increasing number of different sources are labelled as BdV has led to a conflation of different contexts, making a coherent interpretation of the act impossible. As a result of this, it is nowadays assumed that the rite served multiple purposes at the same time.³

The identification of the archaeological evidence of the rite has been one of the main trouble spots in terms of the interpretation of the BdV. In particular, the association with vessels inscribed with execration texts has caused a discrepancy of contexts in which the BdV is located. This discrepancy was – rightfully – addressed with caution, and even concern, by some scholars. Jacobus van Dijk stated:

Our understanding of this ritual is hampered by the fact that the archaeological evidence on the one hand, and the textual and iconographical evidence on the other, though doubtless related, are of a different nature and seem to refer to a different ritual setting in each case. The two categories are therefore best discussed separately.⁴

This separate treatment of the textual and iconographical sources, and the archaeological evidence, has become common practice among scholars discussing the rite.⁵ I argue that this differentiation between the sources – obviously a result of the scholarly struggle to cover all forms of evidence defined as BdV under one conclusive interpretation – is alarming and calls for a re-evaluation of the rite and the various sources and meanings assigned to it. By means of a critical evaluation of the secondary literature on the BdV, as well as returning to the primary sources and carefully differentiating between ancient evidence and modern interpretations, I aim to de-tangle the different sources and interpretative layers and provide a new perspective on the BdV in its original form.

In order to do this, it is of uttermost importance to judge the evidence in its proper context, considering the impact chronological differences may have on the sources and the rite itself. One of the main problems of recent research on the BdV is the focus on the evidence dating to the New Kingdom, which appears to be one of the latest stages of the rite. Since the BdV has its first appearances in the Pyramid Texts, apparently already fully incorporated in the offering ritual,⁶ it seems safe to assume that the origins of this rite can be dated to the early Old Kingdom, if not before. It is important to give all phases equal attention, but also to acknowledge the large time span – about a millennium – between the different sets of evidence, while considering the potential effects of this on the evolution of the BdV.

³ The theory of a multiplicity of meaning was, e.g., explicitly stated by Budka (2014: 646), who assumed that the rite had several different semantic layers.

⁴ van Dijk 1993: 174.

⁵ E.g. Seiler 2005: 173–180; Budka 2010: 390–393; El-Shohoumi 2004: 216–224.

⁶ I follow Harco Willems in his definition of the term ‘offering ritual’ as a superordinate term, including the ritual offering of food and drink (often referred to as ‘Speiseritual’), and the ‘object ritual’ (Willems 1988: 206).

Methodology and Structure

This study is divided into two main sections: A critical study of previous research and pre-existing concepts and interpretations and a new approach to the BdV, including a thorough study of the *dšr.wt*, the act of breaking, and the context of the rite.

In the first part of the study, a chronologically structured summary of previous research is given, showing the different stages of research and visualising general trends in academia. The different interpretations of the BdV are treated in detail. A thorough analysis of existing theories helps in understanding the reasons for the discrepancies in interpretation, including a discussion on whether or not it is possible to uphold these interpretations. The likelihood of these argumentations is questioned *viz-à-viz* present-day evidence, scholarly theory, and strength of cogency.⁷ This part also deals with the archaeological evidence assigned as the BdV by modern scholars.

The second part is focussed on the primary sources. The two main aspects of the BdV, the act of intentionally breaking an object, and the purpose and meaning of the *dšr.t*-Vessels (here also alternatively referred to in the plural form *dšr.wt*), are studied thoroughly. To gain a better understanding of the implications of the intentional damaging of objects, this topic is studied under the lens of fragmentation theory. An introduction to the concept of fragmentation is given before elaborating on its implications on the study of the BdV. I believe that the inclusion of fragmentation theory has several advantages over the method of cultural comparison adopted by some Egyptologists, the most prominent being the angling of the discourse. While the method of cultural comparison aims to fill in gaps in data and knowledge by transferring it from a comparable culture, the risk in this case lies in the confusion of several different acts of fragmentation due to an over-focussing on the intentional damage as a defining factor. Fragmentation theory researchers prefer to discuss how the question can be approached without imprinting modern perspectives on the results, an issue that is of great importance within the context of the BdV. To illustrate the plurality of fragmentation acts in ancient Egypt, the topic of other deliberately broken objects in Egypt is briefly discussed.

An entire chapter (*The dšr.wt - Appearance, Use, and Purpose*) is dedicated only to the *dšr.t*-Vessels. Since previous scholars have tried to interpret these vessels exclusively based on their occurrences in the BdV, I here choose a more holistic approach, one that considers all contexts in which the vessels appear. This chapter contains an examination of these occurrences, which are studied in regards to their purpose and symbolic meaning. By considering context and recurring themes and elements linked to the vessels, I provide a tentative interpretation of the meaning and ritual purpose of the *dšr.t*-Vessels.

Following this, all occurrences of the BdV are analysed concerning the contexts in which they appear. The evidence of each period is discussed separately in order to detect and interpret changes in the manifestations of the rite and to discuss the possibility of a change in ritual significance, context of use, and execution of the BdV. The primary sources most relevant for the study are listed in the catalogue at the end of the book and referenced in the text with their catalogue number (e.g. A1.1; B2.3).

⁷ The importance of this last point has been convincingly explained by van Walsem, and can be summarised in his interpretation of the philosophical principle commonly known as ‘Ockham’s Razor’: ‘In order to increase the likelihood of interpretative results [...] one should realise that the fewer sub-hypotheses are needed to uphold a covering hypothesis/interpretation the greater are the chances that such a hypothesis answers more questions than it generates.’ (van Walsem 2006: 283).

The BdV in Egyptological Literature

History of Previous Research

Studies touching on the topic of the BdV are numerous, but rarely exceed a few sentences, giving a general summary of sources, previous studies, and the most frequent interpretations. Different trends of approaching the topic can be observed over the hundred years or so that the BdV has been a subject of interest to academia. The research history can be divided into three different phases: Identification, Contextualisation, and Attribution of Archaeological Evidence.

Phase 1: Identification

The BdV was first discovered in 1924. While working on the Old Kingdom rock-cut tombs of Meir, Aylward M. Blackman noticed a feature in one of the offering lists in the burial chamber of Hetyah not recorded in any other list before.⁸ In this list, the words *sd dšr.wt* appeared and Blackman identified them as the same instruction mentioned in Pyramid Text spell 244. The spell, consisting of a recitation text and a ritual instruction, was translated as following:

This is the firm eye of Horus: it has been set for you that you may become powerful and he may become afraid of you. Smashing the Redware.⁹

To understand the meaning of the instruction, Blackman examined the spells in the physical surrounding of PT 244 in the Pyramid of Unas and similar contemporary examples illustrating the final ritual acts of the offering ritual. He proposed a hypothetical reconstruction of these last acts: a final pouring out of libation water, a ritual washing of hands, the burning of incense, followed by the removing of the footsteps left by the people performing the ritual.¹⁰ After this, Blackman reconstructed the breaking of some red vessels, which he suggested to be the vessels used for purification purposes.¹¹ In his view, this act was done to prevent the reuse of the vessels:

The origin of this performance is doubtless to be found in the deeply rooted objection prevailing among many people to putting to further use in daily life anything that has been employed for purposes connected with the dead.¹²

Blackman assumed that this act could be repeated after the daily ritual or other festivities including purification rites, therefore implying a use much broader than just the actual funerary activities.

The interpretation of the BdV was completely revised only two years later with a publication by Kurt Sethe.¹³ He published a corpus of inscribed potsherds that had been acquired by the Egyptian Museum in Berlin and for which he coined the term 'excretion texts' (German 'Ächtungstexte'). In Egyptology,

⁸ Blackman 1924: 50–51.

⁹ Allen 2005: 29. The translation of the term *dšr.wt* as 'redware' is not recommended due to it being used as terminus technicus in archaeology and therefore already loaded with interpretation.

¹⁰ Blackman 1924: 51.

¹¹ Blackman (1924: 51) described them as 'the four or eight used for lustration purposes'. The mention of these numbers instantly brings to mind the four *dšr.t*- and *nms.t*-Vessels used for purification in the New Kingdom sources of the Opening of the Mouth ritual. The fact that he quoted Schiaparelli (1890: '158 ff') as a source seems to suggest that he, indeed, referred to these specific vessels.

¹² Blackman 1924: 51.

¹³ Sethe 1926.

these texts are mostly associated with the so-called execration figurines, since they are commonly found written on them. Rather than actual continuous ‘texts’, the inscriptions consist primarily of lists of enemies.¹⁴ Sethe managed to reconstruct many of the 289 sherds into largely complete vessels. Recognising that they had been broken after being inscribed, he suggested a deliberate, ritual breaking of the vessels and interpreted it as a rite intended to magically harm the enemies named on the vessels.¹⁵ Due to his continuous work on a complete edition of the Pyramid Texts, Sethe was aware of PT 244 and its ritual instruction. Intrigued by the fact that his corpus of broken vessels indeed contained some¹⁶ which resembled the classifier used for the word *dšr.wt* in the pyramid of Merenre (𓆎 = Gardiner Number W11A; B1.2), he was convinced he had found the archaeological evidence matching this rite. Sethe interpreted the rite as a ritual conducted during the funeral and the cult of the deceased king.¹⁷ He concluded that the sherds had to belong to a royal tomb or funerary complex. Even though this specific interpretation would be proven to be unlikely by a later *in situ* find of a second corpus of execration texts¹⁸, Sethe’s interpretation of the BdV as an execration ritual was accepted by scholars and has developed into the most common interpretation of the rite.

In the following years, Sethe’s colleagues followed his research with approval and interest, discussing his interpretations and pointing out additional evidence. Siegfried Schott suggested to interpret the *ir.t hr rwd.t*, translated as ‘hard eye of Horus’ mentioned in the recitation text of PT 244, as the name of the mortar used to destroy the vessels, as suggested by the classifier of the whole expression in the pyramid of Merenre (𓆎).¹⁹ Wilhelm Spiegelberg and Blackman informed Sethe about the occurrences of the BdV in offering lists of private tombs, and Hermann Grapow pointed out that the instruction could also be found next to depictions of funerary rites in the tomb of Mereruka (B1.4–6).²⁰ Sethe, appearing slightly puzzled by the additional material, acknowledged Blackman’s interpretation, but continued holding onto his own.²¹ Furthermore, he suggested that the broken execration texts were a royal variant of the rite, and proposed that the BdV might be understood as a warning against enemies of the deceased, who would identify with the vessels due to their red, ‘Sethian’ colour.²²

The discussion was carried on by Ludwig Borchardt.²³ He pointed out several depictions from New Kingdom tombs in which vessels seemed to be purposefully dropped on the ground (B4.2, B4.4, B411–12, B4.16, B4.23). He noticed the visual differences between the depictions from Saqqara and the one from Thebes (B4.23), but attributed it to a different set of *Vorlagen* rather than regional differences in the rite.²⁴ Borchardt pointed out that the scenes exclusively appear in the context of the funerary festivities, which would result in one of two options: the breaking was done to avoid a profane use of the vessels used during the funerary banquet (‘Begräbnismahl’), or to dispose of the same vessels, which, having been in touch with the ghost of the deceased during the offering ritual, could potentially bear

¹⁴ Most thoroughly studied by Kühne-Wespi 2019a.

¹⁵ Sethe 1926: 19–20.

¹⁶ Nos 77–96, 104, and 105 (Sethe 1926: 12).

¹⁷ Sethe 1926: 20.

¹⁸ Vila 1963: 135–160.

¹⁹ Schott 1928: 101.

²⁰ All these communications are listed in Sethe 1928: 101–102.

²¹ ‘[...] wenn die ganz deutlichen Hinweise auf das Erschrecken der Feinde in den Pyr.-Texten nicht wären, so würde man darin, wie das auch Blackman getan hat (Meir IV Text S. 50/51), nur die Vernichtung der beim Opfer gebrauchten Geräte suchen, die damit unbrauchbar für andere Zwecke gemacht werden sollten.’ (Sethe 1928: 102).

²² Sethe 1928: 102.

²³ Borchardt 1929: 12–16.

²⁴ Borchardt 1929: 14.

danger for the living.²⁵ However, he decidedly rejected the idea that these scenes and the execration texts published by Sethe had anything to do with each other.²⁶

Another reference to further sources of the BdV was contributed by Alexandre Moret in 1938.²⁷ He pointed out that a singular scene of the BdV can be found in the Luxor Temple (B3.1). It shows Amenhotep III in the act of breaking two vessels in his hands by smashing them against each other. The title of the scene clearly identifies it as the same ritual act mentioned in PT 244 and the Old Kingdom private tombs. Moret explained this unique appearance of the rite outside the funerary sphere as ‘the usual parallelism between the funerary cult and the divine cult’.²⁸ Apparently only referring back to Sethe’s execration texts, he assumed that the rite was meant to ward off the same enemies of both gods and kings.²⁹

After this contribution, the study on the BdV rested for several years. The corpus of material connected to the rite so far consisted of the mentions in offering lists, next to depictions of the final funerary rites, and PT 244 in the Old Kingdom; Sethe’s execration texts in the Middle Kingdom; and the scenes from private tombs in Saqqara and Thebes, and the Luxor Temple scene in the New Kingdom. Suggested interpretations reached from a disposal of vessels used for purification (Blackman), during the food and drink offering to the deceased due to potential negative effects (Borchardt), and the ritual driving away of enemies of the deceased, king, or divinity (Sethe, Moret).

Phase 2: Contextualisation

A brief, but impactful, remark concerning the understanding of the BdV was given by Hartwig Altenmüller in 1972.³⁰ Studying the ancient Egyptian funerary rites, he claimed that the BdV was a ritual act taking place in the temple simultaneously with the rite described in PT 197.³¹ He interpreted it as a symbolic act representing the slaughtering of a bull, which, in his view, represented the destruction of the god Seth.³²

Another attempt to contextualise the BdV in the funerary ritual was given by Joachim Spiegel, who claimed that the smashing of the vessels would release ‘demonic powers’ which helped the deceased to reach the afterlife.³³ While his ideas seem to align to an certain extent with modern ideas of fragmentation acts describing a transition from one state to the other, it has to be noted that none of his extremely detailed descriptions of the proceedings are supported in any way by Egyptian evidence, nor were they supported by other Egyptologists. His contribution, therefore, is not taken into consideration here when discussing the interpretation of the act.

Altenmüller’s interpretation was accepted and extended by van Dijk.³⁴ By that time, further research on the offering lists³⁵ and the Opening of the Mouth ceremony³⁶ had revealed additional contexts in which *dšr.t*-Vessels were used. Most prominent were the newly discovered scenes from Saqqara, on the

²⁵ Borchardt 1929: 15–16.

²⁶ Borchardt 1929: 16.

²⁷ Moret 1938: 167.

²⁸ Moret 1938: 167.

²⁹ Moret 1938: 167.

³⁰ Altenmüller 1972: 198–100.

³¹ For the connection of PT 244 and PT 197, see below, *The BdV as a Rite Against Evil*.

³² Altenmüller 1972: 199. This interpretation is based on an erroneous translation of PT 197, see below, *The BdV as a Rite Against Evil*.

³³ Spiegel 1971: 35–42.

³⁴ van Dijk 1986, and 1993: 173–188.

³⁵ See Barta 1963.

³⁶ See Otto 1960.

basis of which van Dijk managed to compose a list of sixteen examples he attributed to the BdV.³⁷ In the scene from the tomb of Horemheb (B4.1), featuring the killing of a bull, he saw a confirmation of Altenmüller's theory.³⁸ van Dijk interpreted the BdV and the execration rite as the same ritual 'aimed at the destruction of evil forces lurking beyond the borders of the cosmos', intending to 'reassure and thereby protect the participants of the ritual when they approached the dangerous borderline between the ordered world and the domain of the powers of chaos'.³⁹

The same concept, but focussed on the deceased rather than the ritualists, is the centre of Jan Assmann's article on the BdV.⁴⁰ He argued that the transition to the afterlife was the reason for extensive purification and execration rites, to which he counted the BdV. Equally important for Assmann were the multiple semantic layers he ascribed to the rite. He distinguished the BdV into a sacred ('sakramental') and mundane ('realweltlich') aspect, unifying both main interpretations:

Der realweltliche Sinn liegt darin, das bei der Speisung benutzte und dadurch tabu gewordene Geschirr weiterem Gebrauch zu entziehen. Der sakramentale Sinn kommt in dem Spruch zum Ausdruck, in dem vom Erschrecken (des Seth) die Rede ist.⁴¹

This distinction has since then often been used to explain the contemporary existence of the BdV and the execration texts in completely different contexts. The first appears almost exclusively within the funerary setting. The latter, as proven by the finds from Mirgissa,⁴² is not connected to funerary rites but aims for the practical issue of averting physical threats posed by enemies. Assmann claimed that the act of breaking vessels inscribed with execration texts originally derived from the BdV. According to him, the act was disassociated from the BdV already in the early Old Kingdom. The original 'profane' notion of discarding vessels was forgotten, leaving the driving away of evil as sole motivation.⁴³

A different reconstruction was proposed by Joachim Quack, who saw a scenario in which the destruction of vessels used during the funerary rites and the execration rite were mixed up due to the notion of driving away evil forces present in both rites.⁴⁴ Referring to a papyrus dating to the Roman Period, he argued that the notion of driving away evil forces can appear before and after an offering ritual.⁴⁵ According to him, the BdV is an early attestation of this.

Several other researchers touched upon the topic of the BdV in the context of broader research. Within a contribution on ancient Egyptian magical practices, Robert K. Ritner discussed the BdV as a variant of the execration ritual carried out on figurines, exclusively following Sethe's interpretation.⁴⁶ He added two more mentions of *dšr:t*-Vessels (A2.31, B1.18) and pointed out that the rite was also attested in CT 926 (B2.2–B2.5). In the following years, the BdV appeared also in several works on ancient Egyptian funerary practices, most thoroughly discussed by Nadia el-Shohoumi (2004),⁴⁷ Christoffer Theis (2011),⁴⁸

³⁷ van Dijk 1993: 179–182.

³⁸ van Dijk 1986: 1392–1393.

³⁹ van Dijk 1986: 1393.

⁴⁰ Assmann 1994: 45–59.

⁴¹ Assmann 1994: 51. This differentiation is first seen in Altenmüller 1972: 199.

⁴² See Vila 1963: 135–160.

⁴³ Assmann 1994: 53.

⁴⁴ Quack 2006: 73–74.

⁴⁵ Quack 2006: 68.

⁴⁶ Ritner 1993: 144–147.

⁴⁷ El-Shohoumi 2004: 216–225.

⁴⁸ Theis 2011: 98–99, 168–172.

and Nicola Harrington (2013).⁴⁹ All provide a summary of research history and attestations of the rite, while apparently agreeing with the interpretations of both Sethe and Blackman.

Phase 3: Attribution of Archaeological Evidence

Contemporary with these later studies, another trend emerged. In recent years, more and more excavations produced evidence of pottery apparently broken and deposited in antiquity. Imperative for the identification of such a context of intentionally damaged pottery (as opposed to a naturally broken object), is to find all pieces of a broken object within a closed, undisturbed archaeological context. This could be within intact vessels, or a clearly undisturbed and isolated context, such as a pit or sealed enclosure.

In recent excavations in Egypt that, whenever such a context is found and deliberately damaged ceramics identified as such, they are almost exclusively interpreted as broken in ritual, and associated with the BdV. In 2002, Teodozja I. Rzeuska first suggested that the pottery found in the so-called false shafts of the Old Kingdom was deliberately smashed as part of the BdV.⁵⁰ The presence of organic material, textiles, and bones could suggest that these shafts were used to dispose of material used during the funerary offering and the embalming procedure.⁵¹ Of a different character, but equally attributed to the BdV, is a deposit of vessels published by Erhardt Graefe in 2005.⁵² The corpus of over 100 different vessels dating to the early New Kingdom was found in close proximity to TT 196, some of them showing so-called 'killing holes'. The excavator claimed that the act of punching a hole into a vessel would be a 'so far unidentified, older variant' of the BdV.⁵³ Similarly, Vera Müller interpreted the act of breaking and depositing vessels attested in offering pits at Tell el-Daba as the BdV.⁵⁴ She claimed that the content of the pits found close to tombs and temple areas was what remained of ritual festivities and offerings. According to her, the breaking and burying of the material was intended to avoid reuse.⁵⁵ Müller argued for a connection of the BdV and the ritual burning of offerings. Based on the occurrence of such scenes in the Luxor Temple, she interpreted it as a rite aimed at sustaining *mꜣ.t* in the context of the solar cult.⁵⁶

Most of the contributions on the archaeological attestations of the BdV were provided by Julia Budka. In 2010 she published preliminary results of the pottery survey from Umm el-Qaab and noticed the presence of red paint on many of the vessels.⁵⁷ The fact that occasionally only a few drops of paint were applied made her conclude that the symbolism of the colour was relevant. Therefore, she connected the vessels to the BdV and interpreted them as a part of the 'ritual burial (of Osiris) or part of the general offering cult'.⁵⁸ Although often discussing the BdV and vessels with 'killing holes' together, Budka seems to see them as different rites. She criticised colleagues who 'unthinkingly' connect the two⁵⁹ and stated in her latest contribution on the topic:

We must not summarize all of these acts under the label "Breaking of the Red Pots" or as a possible adaptation of this ritual [...]. Not every breaking of pottery has to bear apotropaic meaning like the well attested *sq dšr.wt*.⁶⁰

⁴⁹ Harrington 2013: 37–40.

⁵⁰ Rzeuska 2002: 385.

⁵¹ Rzeuska 2002: 385.

⁵² Graefe 2005: 413–419.

⁵³ Graefe 2005: 414.

⁵⁴ Müller 2006: 65–83, and Müller 2008.

⁵⁵ Müller 2006: 71.

⁵⁶ Müller 2008: 341–343. For a discussion, see below, *The BdV Scene in the Luxor Temple*.

⁵⁷ Budka et al. 2010: 41.

⁵⁸ Budka et al. 2010: 62.

⁵⁹ Budka 2010: 407.

⁶⁰ Budka 2014: 650.

Lastly, a more thorough study on the BdV, its meaning, and the implication of those was produced by Anne Seiler.⁶¹ Her work contributes to the study of the BdV not only by summarising previous research, but by discussing the social impact of the act. Most importantly, she pointed out the importance of differentiating between the deliberate breaking of vessels as a ritual act, and *after* a ritual act.

To date, the most common mentions of the BdV in literature appear in the context of new archaeological finds that are interpreted as evidence of this rite.⁶² They usually consist of a brief outline of previous studies, and an explanation of the rite following previously suggested interpretations. While this creates a long list of publications, contributions on manifestation and function of the rite rarely exceed a few sentences. Most scholars deem the interpreting of the BdV as the most important information, therefore often lining up all existing explanations regardless of their controversy. In the following chapter, the most commonly reproduced interpretations will be presented and analysed concerning their validity.

Interpretations of the BdV

The interpretation of the meaning and purpose of the BdV is without question one of the most controversial and problematic aspects of the topic. Two points, in my view, are at the centre of the confusion: on the one hand, the lack of clear information about the purpose of the act, and on the other, the diversity of contexts in which the evidence attributed to the BdV exists. Over the years, the texts mentioning the BdV have been linked to depictions of the breaking of vessels, as well as to archaeological finds from very different contexts, ranging from offering pits to so-called embalmers' caches. The rite seems to appear in both the royal and non-royal spheres, and in funerary and non-funerary contexts. Due to this varied nature of finds, the meaning of the rite was explained differently by every scholar, each slightly modifying the traditional interpretation to fit their own case. Additionally, the ambiguity of the textual and iconographical sources leaves the modern interpreter with highly malleable evidence. The texts do not mention a clear purpose of the act or function of the vessels, while the depictions equally situate the vessel-breaking within the funerary ceremony, but do not clarify any reasoning or dynamics.

Because of this ambiguity, it is impossible to prove or disprove any proposed theories with certainty, leading to a plethora of possible explanations for the purposes of the act. van Dijk listed several different interpretations of the breaking of the vessels: as symbolic destruction of enemies; to prevent re-use; as ritual 'killing'; 'to assimilate them to the state of the (deceased) owner'; to make them harmless for the living, since they were dangerous due to their contact to the dead; and to release 'magical potential' which they obtained due to their contact to the netherworld.⁶³ The ideas that the breaking produces a loud noise which could scare evil genii,⁶⁴ or that the breaking is a symbolic act of transference of the offering to the afterlife,⁶⁵ both proposed in later publications, could be added to his list. Correctly, van Dijk pointed out that 'none of these explanations are supported by Egyptian evidence.'⁶⁶

As a result, many scholars now opt for a multiplicity of meanings, allowing the act to mean several things at once. While this may seem like a safe option, since it does not exclude any of the proposed interpretations, I think it is a problematic solution. In particular, it transforms the BdV from a rite with a specific function (which may be unknown to us) into a multipurpose act – a difference that may have significant consequences in certain contexts of a delicate nature, such as the final funerary rites, during which the soul of the deceased passes to the afterlife. In such a situation, a rite that has the

⁶¹ Seiler 2005: 170–184.

⁶² E.g. Bárta *et al.* 2017; López-Grande 2013; Graefe 2005.

⁶³ van Dijk 1993: 184–185

⁶⁴ Theis 2011: 99.

⁶⁵ Harrington 2013: 37–38.

⁶⁶ van Dijk 1993: 185.

potential to produce different effects can change the whole dynamic of the ritual. Furthermore, on a methodological level, it may become complicated to decide which explanations should be accepted as additional levels of meaning and which should be rejected. Because of this uncertainty, I believe that a re-evaluation of the proposed interpretations is necessary. Even though it may be impossible to prove one or several interpretations as the correct one, some ideas have found more acceptance in academia. Specifically, the two most common explanation of the purpose of the BdV are 1) as a ritual act against evil, or 2) as a semi-ritual act of disposing vessels and rendering them unusable (for various reasons). In the following sections, these two main interpretations are discussed in detail.

The BdV as a Rite Against Evil

Proponent Arguments

In an historical perspective, Sethe's interpretation of the BdV as an execration ritual appears the most commonly accepted. Most scholars referred to his work and addressed the vessels inscribed with execration texts as archaeological evidence of the BdV. Unlike him, however, most seem to have assumed that the BdV was not aimed at physically harming specific enemies. Rather, the BdV was interpreted as serving a more general apotropaic function. In this context, a negative connotation is attributed to the *dšr.t*-Vessels, and the act of breaking is seen as annihilating the negative.

Several arguments have been brought forward to support the claim of the *dšr.wt* being negative and the *sd dšr.wt*, the *breaking* of the *dšr.wt*, i.e. the destruction of evil. Sethe's main reason for interpreting the *dšr.wt* as representative for something negative was, interestingly, not in any way connected to the nature of the *dšr.wt*, but seemed exclusively based on the act of deliberate breaking. At the time of his publication in 1926, no other physical examples of this practice were yet known from ancient Egyptian contexts. Logically, in absence of other sources, Sethe connected his vessels to the only other evidence of deliberate breaking of vessels: the text mentioning such an act in PT 244. Therewith, he not only assigned archaeological remains to the rite, but also attributed a symbolic meaning to the act. Only secondarily, when confronted with Blackman's contradictory interpretations, Sethe argued that the recitation text of PT 244 showed a clear opposition to the enemy ('he (= the enemy, Seth) may become afraid of you'), thus claiming that the ritual act following the recitation must reflect the content.⁶⁷

While this point played a central role in nearly all the discussions on the BdV, the most frequently quoted argument is found in the name '*dšr.t*' itself. The colour red (*dšr*), which is thought to be name-giving for the vessels, is often associated with a negative connotation. The general consensus regularly called upon when discussing the meaning of the *dšr.wt* is that red represents Seth and other evil things. First carefully proposed by Sethe,⁶⁸ the chain of argumentation *red = Seth = evil*, and therefore *breaking the dšr.wt = destroying evil*, has become part of the standard repertoire of BdV studies.⁶⁹ The colour red is also associated with blood (*dšrw*), which has also been used to support the argument. van Dijk noticed that several of the New Kingdom depictions show liquid being poured out of the vessels.⁷⁰ He suggested that this represents the blood flowing out of the throat of a slaughtered bull, as can be seen in the memphite tomb of Horemheb (B4.1). Since the slaughtered animal can represent an enemy,⁷¹ van Dijk interpreted the two ritual acts as rites happening simultaneously, both standing for the 'annihilation of the god's enemy'.⁷² Another connection between the BdV and the slaughtering of a bull had already been claimed

⁶⁷ Sethe 1928: 102.

⁶⁸ Sethe 1928: 102.

⁶⁹ E.g. van Dijk 1993: 187; Ritner 1993: 147–148; El-Shohoumi 2004: 216; Seiler 2005: 172; Budka et al. 2010: 62.

⁷⁰ van Dijk 1993: 186–187.

⁷¹ Summarised by Quack 2006: 74–75.

⁷² van Dijk 1986: 1393.

by Altenmüller,⁷³ although his line of argumentation was less direct than van Dijk's: Altenmüller recognised that the recitation text of PT 244 is identical to that of PT 197. The ritual instruction following PT 197 was interpreted by him as a rite of 'giving two ropes' ('Übergabe von zwei Stricken').⁷⁴ Reconstructing the latter as happening in the temple court simultaneously to the slaughtering of a bull, Altenmüller concluded that PT 244, and therewith the BdV, had to take place at the same time, the breaking of vessels representing the killing of the animal.⁷⁵

Closely related and undoubtedly based on the interpretation of the BdV as execration ritual is the theory advocated by Müller.⁷⁶ She connected the textual and iconographical evidence with the execration texts, but saw the BdV not only restricted to specific enemies but rather as general apotropaic rite or global act against the evil/chaos *isft*.

Problems

As shown, the root of the idea that the BdV is meant to drive away evil is based on Sethe's connection to the execration texts. After the initial criticism by Blackman and Borchardt, this theory has remained unchallenged and has slowly seeped deep into Egyptological literature as fact rather than a hypothesis – so much so that, even when noticing the problems, scholars chose to avoid the topic: van Dijk, Seiler, and Budka noted a discrepancy between textual/iconographical and archaeological sources (= execration texts), but avoided touching directly upon the inherent problems in interpretation by discussing the two separately before combining the simplified conclusions.⁷⁷ To explain the coexistence of the two rites that manifest in such different ways, even though supposedly being one and the same, Assmann and Quack proposed different evolutionary models. Both, however, are heavily based on reconstructed changes in ritual practice presumably taking place already during or before the early Old Kingdom, making them impossible to verify due to the lack of any transmitted evidence of that time. Similarly, the idea of the BdV containing different semantic layers, and thus allowing several interpretations to be 'correct' at the same time, does not clarify the role of the rite. Instead, it only serves to legitimise any interpretation made by modern scholars and therewith obscures its meaning even more. To understand the discrepancy in evidence, and decide whether or not it is possible to uphold this interpretation of the BdV, it appears necessary to review all the presented arguments.

Probably most obvious are those problems concerning Altenmüller's connection between the BdV and the slaughtering of a bull. Apart from the fact that his string of arguments is long and abstract,⁷⁸ Altenmüller's basic assumption appears to be that acts performed at the same time had to have the same symbolic meaning. This is in no way proven by Egyptian evidence. Most problematic, however, is his actual translation and interpretation of the ritual instruction following PT 197. What Altenmüller took to be *ḏwꜣw* 'rope, bandage' is interpreted as *ḏwꜣ* 'morning bread' in more recent editions,⁷⁹ thus making PT 197 a spell concerning a food offering, and therefore the connection to the temple court or the slaughtering of a bull invalid.

The fact that the connection between PT 244 and the slaughtering can no longer be upheld weakens van Dijk's argument that the BdV in the New Kingdom scenes is connected to the slaughtering of a bull shown

⁷³ Altenmüller 1972: 98–100.

⁷⁴ Altenmüller 1972: 104 n. 77.

⁷⁵ Altenmüller 1972: 99.

⁷⁶ Müller 2008: 343; 2006: 77–78; similar van Dijk 1993: 187–188.

⁷⁷ van Dijk 1993: 174; Seiler 2005: 170; Budka 2014: 645.

⁷⁸ Connection of PT 244 to 197 via the identical recitation text – assuming that PT 197 was performed in the court of a temple – connecting PT 197 to another act presumably happening there (= bull slaughtering) → leading to: bull slaughter = PT 197 = PT 244 = BdV.

⁷⁹ Allen 2005: 258; Hays 2012: 488.

in the tomb of Horemheb (B4.1). As previously mentioned, there is no compelling reason to assume that two acts taking place simultaneously must necessarily have the same symbolic meaning. On the contrary, it appears redundant to assume that the red vessels represent a slaughtered bull if an actual slaughtering is happening at exactly the same time, right next to it.⁸⁰ Moreover, the bull slaughtering is only one of many acts shown next to the breaking of vessels. Such elements include the pouring out of liquid, the burning of incense, the slaughter of a duck, and the act of mourning.⁸¹ It would certainly never be argued that the pouring out of liquid, the burning of incense, or an expression of grief stands symbolically for the slaughtering of an animal, based on nothing other than it being depicted next to it. Instead, I think it necessary to interpret these elements, even though possibly happening in the same setting, as individual acts. It is probably safe to assume that the general purpose of these acts conforms to the aim of the whole funerary procedure, namely granting a safe transition into, and a pleasant stay in the afterlife. This is also expressed by the text written next to the scene in the tomb of Hormin (B4.12): ‘To the West, to the West, O praised one!’.⁸² The exact mechanics of the individual practices, are, unfortunately not explained. One can assume that this will have been obvious to the ancient viewer.

PT	Recitation Text (Part 1)	Recitation Text (Part 2)	Ritual Object / Instruction	Context
47	Osiris Unis, accept Horus’ eye,	Which escaped from Seth, which you should take to your mouth and with which you should part your mouth.	One quartzite jar of wine	Opening of the Mouth
75	Osiris Unis, accept Horus’ eye,	Which he re-joined.	‘Re-joining’ oil	Anointing
89	Osiris Unis, accept Horus’ eye,	Which he pulled out.	One bowl of ‘pulled’ bread	Food and drink offering
109	Osiris Unis, accept Horus’ eye,	Which cleaned his mouth.	Two bowls of cleansing natron	Purification
160	Osiris Unis, accept Horus’ eye,	Which he took from Seth.	Two bowls of <i>jšd</i> -Berries	Food and drink offering
244	This is the persisting eye of Horus:	Let me give it to you that you are powerful (?) and that (he) is afraid of you.	Breaking the <i>dšr.t</i> -Vessels	Uncertain

Figure 1. Comparison of PT 244 with spells for purification, anointing, the ritual offering of food and drink, and the Opening of the Mouth Ritual⁸³

Returning to PT 244 and its notion of driving away enemies, a few observations have to be made on the broader context of the spell. As pointed out already by Blackman, the BdV appears in close connection to the offering ritual and always stands in direct proximity to the offering list in the private tombs. The same connection to the offering ritual can be seen in the Pyramid Texts. PT 244 always appears at the end of the offering ritual, starting at the north and continuing at the east wall of the burial chamber, and, in the case of Unas, into the passageway.⁸⁴ The structure of PT 244 shows considerable similarities

⁸⁰ Graefe’s proposal that the BdV is a symbolic killing of a bull used by ‘the simple people’ who could not afford the slaughter of a bull has to be dismissed, not only for the reason illustrated above, but also because all evidence of the BdV is attested only in royal or elite contexts (Graefe 2005: 414).

⁸¹ For a detailed discussion of the scenes, see below, *The New Kingdom Vessel-Breaking Scenes*.

⁸² See van Dijk 1993: 186.

⁸³ Translations of PT 47-160 by Allen 2005: 21-24, 26.

⁸⁴ Hays 2012: 81-82; in translation, see Allen 2005: 29 (W 138), 113 (P 193), 218 (M 218). Allen’s 2005 edition lists PT 244 also in the Pyramid of Pepy II (Allen 2005: 265 (N 321)). However, I assume that this is due to a reconstruction of the part, as none of the other consulted works (including (J.P.) Allen 2013) mention the presence of actual remains of PT 244 in the pyramid of Pepy II.

to a specific kind of spell which appears mostly in the food and drink offering, but also in contexts like purification, anointing, or the Opening of the Mouth. These spells generally show a composition made up of a recitation text and a ritual instruction which usually contains the presentation of the offering (Figure 1).

In most cases, the recitation text addresses the offering as ‘Eye of Horus’, a reference to the myth of Seth stealing Horus’ eye.⁸⁵ The recitation then continues with a specification, which usually connects to this mythical background and often mentions ‘the enemy’ or simply ‘him’. Even though the wording of PT 244 differs slightly, the structure and general theme match the spells in the offering ritual. The fact that the instruction ‘*sd dšr.wt*’ appears inside the offering list in the private tombs leaves no doubt that the rite has to be read and interpreted as part of the offering ritual. If seen in this context, the presence of the enemy in PT 244 is not surprising, as it is part of the structure of the text. Therefore, the recitation text cannot be used to justify a connection to the execration ritual – no more than any of the other spells of the offering ritual. Accordingly, Schott’s suggestion that the ‘persisting Eye of Horus’ should be seen as a metaphor for a weapon used by the king to kill his enemies, symbolised by a mortar with which the vessels were smashed, has to be dismissed in the face of this context.⁸⁶

By far the most popular argument in favour of the BdV symbolising the destruction of evil, however, is the interpretation of the colour red as evil and ‘Sethian’. There are several reasons to assume, however, that the – supposedly red – *dšr.t*-Vessels need not necessarily have a negative connotation. The first problem to bear in mind is that the etymology of the word is far from certain. The first mention of the *dšr.wt* known to me is the one in the Pyramid Texts, where it is already fully developed and inserted into a ritual composition, giving no indication of its origin or even how long it has been in use. Let us assume, for lack of alternatives, if nothing else, that the traditionally accepted etymology of the *dšr.t*-Vessels is correct. In that case, it would mean that the *dšr.wt* had at least originally a connection to the name-giving colour, either given on a purely descriptive basis or in combination with a certain connotation associated with the colour. Due to their already well-established presence in the Pyramid Texts, the name, like the whole BdV, must have evolved at or before the beginning of the Old Kingdom, if not much earlier. If the symbolism of the colour red played a role in the BdV of the Old Kingdom, the meaning of the rite needs to be assessed by the connotation and potential symbolism connected to the colour red in the early Old Kingdom. However, the negative connotation which Egyptologists tend to associate with red is mainly based on its use in magical texts from the Late Period onwards, which is connected to the reduction of Seth to an exclusively evil god.⁸⁷ In earlier periods, especially during the Old Kingdom, both Seth and the colour red had a much more ambiguous role. The multifaceted notions of the colour were already extensively discussed by Hermann Kees in 1943.⁸⁸ According to him it is more appropriate to classify red as a colour of the extraordinary, mysterious, and dangerous. Whether this danger is directed *against* the person in question, however, or acts in his/her favour by being dangerous to an enemy depends entirely on the individual circumstances.⁸⁹

Taking a closer look at the colour as used in the Pyramid Texts, they contain a few mentions of words with the root *dšr* ‘red’. Most occurrences refer to fire and flames, and stand in connection to the sun god Khepri (PT 346, 353, 401). Similarly, PT 456 and 692 refer to the sun god and his ‘redness’. The solar connection of the colour has been pointed out by several scholars.⁹⁰ Deriving from the same root, *dšrw* is one of the words for ‘blood’. In the Pyramid Texts it is used for the blood of the enemies killed by the

⁸⁵ For the identification of the offerings to the deceased as ‘eye of Horus’, see Rudnitzky 1956: 25–28.

⁸⁶ Schott 1928: 101.

⁸⁷ Turner 2013: 127.

⁸⁸ Kees 1943.11: 446–464.

⁸⁹ Kees 1943.11: 447.

⁹⁰ Most detailed Kees 1943: 448–452, but also Pinch 2001: 182–185; Ćwiek 2014: 119–133; Robins 2001: 291–294.

king (PT 254). In the context of the invocation to the sun at dawn, the king is said to be the ‘redness’ (= blood?⁹¹) coming out of Isis and Nephthys (PT 570b), probably again an allusion to the red colour of the sun. PT 549 mentions a demon with red (*dšr*) ears and red (*tms*) buttocks, in this case doubtless a sign of his dangerous nature. The same expressions *dšr* and *tms* appear as part of epithets of the mother of the king while he is ascending to the solar boat (PT 470). The only spell in which red is clearly associated with an enemy is PT 580, where a red-coloured bull, representing an enemy of the deceased king, is slaughtered. However, following the interpretation of Kees, the colour may not necessarily stand for ‘evil’ *per se*, but rather the danger posed by the mighty foe. Lastly, the name of the Red Crown of Lower Egypt is *dšr.t*, present in PT 468, 701A, 404, and probably PT 273 + PT 274.⁹²

Concerning the symbolism of *dšr*, PT 246 is particularly telling. In the commendation to the gods, the deceased king’s power is praised: ‘Beware of red-eyed Horus! The one with painful wrath—his *ba* cannot be barred.’⁹³ Again, *dšr* appears as colour of power and danger, but not directed against the deceased, but in his favour, as a protective symbol. The protective power can also be seen in the use of red-coloured amulets, as e.g. mentioned in P. Berlin P3055 (A4.2), and is even present much later in magical texts, where it is occasionally still used in its solar context.⁹⁴

Concluding, it appears safe to say that it is by no means clear what kind of association an ancient Egyptian living in the time the Old Kingdom would have had when confronted with a red object. The only conclusion admissible at this point is that in the religious context of the Pyramid Texts the colour had a notion of power and aggressive potential, without a clear definition of the beneficiary of target.

A final aspect that needs to be addressed is the very breakage itself. Often, especially in 19th and 20th century studies, the act of breaking an object is seen as destruction and an attempt to damage or destroy the object or what it signifies. However, scholars engaging with fragmentation now agree that this interpretation is outdated and should not be applied *a priori* to all situations of intentional damage.⁹⁵ Although none of the scholars who studied the BdV explicitly said so, in fact, they hardly ever dwell on the aspect of breakage and its interpretation, it seems that the breakage was never considered as anything other than a process of destruction and thus strongly influenced the interpretation of the whole ritual.

These points have the following implications for the BdV’s idea of a rite to destroy evil forces and/or enemies:

1. It must be taken into account that the etymology of the *dšr.t*-Vessels is by no means clear, and a connection with the colour red is possible, but not certain.
2. In the formative period of both the *dšr.wt* and the BdV, the colour red was associated with the notion of power and a potentially dangerous force, not with an antagonistic entity.
3. The association of the BdV with the ritual killing of a bull representing an enemy must be rejected due to several errors in translation and argumentation structure.

⁹¹ As translated by B. Topmann for the Thesaurus Linguae Aegyptiae online (<http://aew.bbaw.de/tla/servlet/GetCtxt?u=guest&f=0&l=0&db=0&tc=22093&ws=153&mv=3>, accessed 14.03.23).

⁹² In this last one, *dšr.t* could possibly be ‘blood’, see B. Topmann for the Thesaurus Linguae Aegyptiae online (<http://aew.bbaw.de/tla/servlet/GetCtxt?u=guest&f=0&l=0&db=0&tc=21319&ws=572&mv=3>, accessed 14.03.23). Considering the context (i.e. the Cannibal Hymn), it is rather likely that the term refers to the Red Crown.

⁹³ Translation by Allen 2005: 41.

⁹⁴ Pinch 2001: 184.

⁹⁵ See below, *The Concept of Intentional Damaging of Objects: Fragmentation Theory*.

In conclusion, it can be said that in the formative period of the BdV there is no evidence to suggest that the *dšr.wt* symbolised an enemy or an evil power, nor that the act of fragmenting them symbolised the destruction of the signified. Since most of the unambiguous evidence for the BdV comes from this period, this result cannot be ignored when interpreting the rite.

The BdV as Disposing of Vessels

Proponent Arguments

The second main explanation for the BdV is that it describes the disposing of vessels, the breakage being an additional measure to render them unusable. While it is one of the most commonly cited theories, scholars proposed different ideas concerning what kind of vessels were being disposed of and for which reason they should not be used again. When Blackman first proposed this interpretation, he seemed to assume that the *dšr.t*-Vessels of the BdV were the same ones used for purification from the Middle Kingdom onwards. Basing his study on the New Kingdom depictions rather than the textual evidence, Borchardt claimed that the vessels must be the ones used during the funerary banquet.⁹⁶ Assmann interpreted the rite as breaking of vessels used during the offering of food and drink ('Opferspeisung').⁹⁷ At the moment, this appears to be the interpretation accepted by most scholars.⁹⁸

The reasons given for why the vessels had to be made unusable are various, although generally related to the function of the vessels. It is often assumed that employing an object in a ritual was enough to make it unfit for any further use. Scholarly opinion seems to be divided on whether this was done out of piety for the dead (the ritual vessels being sacred and reserved for this purpose),⁹⁹ or due to fear of them (the vessels being seen as polluted and potentially dangerous for the living).¹⁰⁰

Especially in recent years, several archaeological contexts containing deliberately broken vessels were interpreted as evidence of the BdV (Appendix Table 1). Scholars making this connection tend to understand these contexts, and subsequently the BdV, primarily as disposal of vessels, although an additional notion of repelling enemies or collective evil is always acknowledged. Following Seiler's observation that the vessels smashed in the New Kingdom depictions appear to have different shapes, and therefore that only the colour would be the determining factor to qualify as vessel for the BdV, many scholars now seem to address any kind of vessel coming from a fragmentation context as potentially a *dšr.t*-vessel.¹⁰¹ It has even been suggested that, due to the naturally reddish colour of most native Egyptian sorts of clay, the term refers to un-slipped, reddish vessels disregarding their shape.¹⁰² The definition is sometimes even broadened to including all sorts of vessels from everyday use, even those painted with other colours.¹⁰³ Vessels showing so-called 'killing holes' are often addressed as *dšr.wt*, their shape or colour being dismissed as irrelevant.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁶ Borchardt 1929: 15. Followed by Rzeuska 2002: 385, and Theis 2011: 171–172.

⁹⁷ Assmann 1994: 50.

⁹⁸ E.g. Seiler 2005: 170–171; Budka et al. 2010: 62; Budka 2010: 391. Also El-Shohoumi 2004: 216 and n. 487, who seems to have drawn no distinctive line between the food and drink offering and other funerary rites, as she quoted the presence of the *dšr.wt* in Opening of the Mouth as evidence for the vessels being used in the food offering. Theis (2011) contextualised the BdV in the ritual food offering to the deceased (99) but later (171–172) seems to follow Borchardt's interpretation, claiming that the vessels were used by the participants of a feast in honour of the deceased.

⁹⁹ E.g. Seiler 2005: 171; Rzeuska 2002: 385; Theis 2011: 172; Harrington 2013: 37–28.

¹⁰⁰ E.g. Blackman 1924: 51; El-Shohoumi 2004: 220; Harrington 2013: 39; Budka 2010: 408.

¹⁰¹ Seiler 2005: 179.

¹⁰² First van Dijk 1986: 1391.

¹⁰³ E.g. Theis 2011: 172.

¹⁰⁴ E.g. Graefe 2005.

Problems

The explanation of the BdV as being a means to dispose of vessels results in several problems. Seiler already stressed the importance of distinguishing between an act of *ritual breaking* and *post-ritual breaking*.¹⁰⁵ The first describes a situation in which the act of breaking is a symbolic act and the central point of the rite, whereas the latter happens after the conclusion of the ritual, carrying no further meaning for the ritual and being motivated primarily by practical reasons. Interpreting the BdV as a simple way of getting rid of vessels would make it part of the second category. Problematic in terms of this interpretation is the appearance of the BdV in funerary texts of a highly religious and ritual function, such as the Pyramid Texts. Even though it would technically be possible that the remark to ‘break the vessels’ in the Pyramid Texts was included for purely practical reasons, this would, to my knowledge, be the only instance in which a non-ritual instruction was added.¹⁰⁶ Considering the sacred nature of the texts, it appears much more likely that, in the case of the BdV, the breaking was in fact a symbolically loaded act, and the whole procedure a rite with a meaning rather than a practical tip. This interpretation is supported by the fact that in the Pyramid Texts the *dšr.t*-Vessels are only mentioned in the BdV. If they had been used in another ritual act before the breaking, this would have been done without a specific mention in the Pyramid Texts, leading to the conclusion that the most important role of a *dšr.t*-vessel in this context was indeed to be fragmented during the ritual.

Another issue in the interpretation of the BdV as post-ritual acts to dispose of vessels arises when taking a closer look at the evidence identified as BdV. The chronological distribution of textual, iconographical, and archaeological sources shows some inconsistencies that are illustrated in Figure 2.

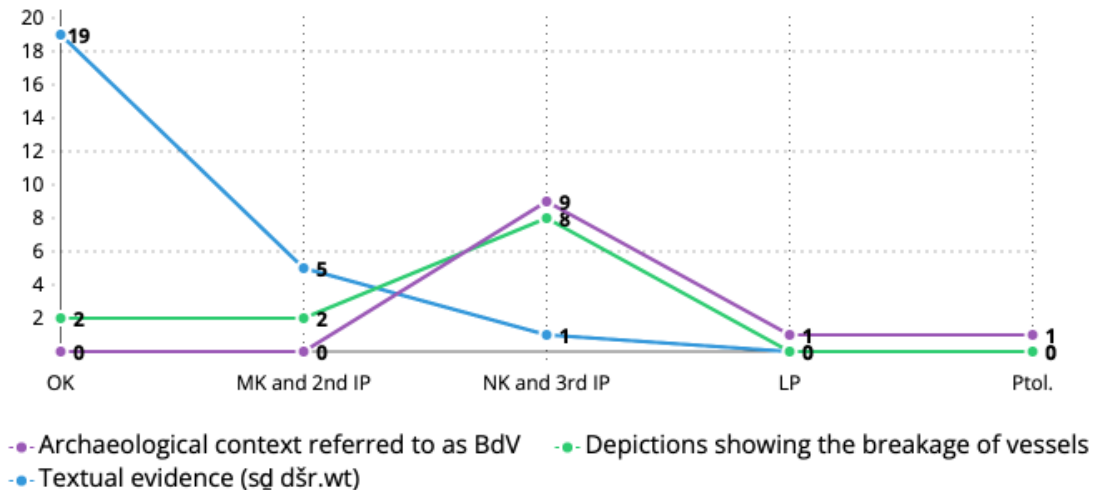


Figure 2. Chronological distribution of textual, iconographical, and archaeological sources of pottery fragmentation contexts.¹⁰⁷

The textual sources seem to suggest a peak of the BdV during the Old Kingdom. With the disappearance of the BdV from the offering lists in the Middle Kingdom, only the four mentions of CT 926 from Meir (B2.2–5) and PT 244 in B2.1 remain. Whether the absence of the BdV is due to a lack of sources or a decline in practice has to be left unanswered. Only one textual mention of the BdV remains in the

¹⁰⁵ Seiler 2005: 178–179.

¹⁰⁶ It would be possible that an originally practical act became ritualised before the Old Kingdom. However, such a scenario is in no way indicated in the current evidence and remains purely speculative.

¹⁰⁷ Since this graph combines data of a different nature, the numbers obviously have to be seen in a relative way.

New Kingdom (B3.1). During this time, a considerable number of depictions of vessel-breaking surface in private tombs.¹⁰⁸ The context, however, is entirely different compared to earlier times, as will be discussed in more detail below. After the New Kingdom, neither iconographical nor textual evidence of vessel-breaking is known.

The distribution and number of the textual attestations stand in direct opposition to the suggested archaeological evidence of the rite, which ranges from as early as the Old Kingdom until the Ptolemaic Period. The period in which the textual attestations decline is marked by an increase in traceable archaeological remains of deliberate damage of pottery. It would be possible that the BdV was carried out throughout Egyptian history but was reflected in text and depiction only in some periods. However, it appears strange that a rite important enough to be mentioned in a religious corpus such as the Pyramid Texts, which was still reproduced centuries after its creation, would be regularly performed, but not mentioned even once in the abundant textual material preserved from the last centuries BCE.

Most important, in my opinion, is to understand what kind of vessels were referred to as ‘*dšr.wt*’ by the ancient Egyptians. All scholars recently publishing on the rite seem to assume that the vessels broken were those used during the offering ritual or funerary banquet.¹⁰⁹ Judging by the archaeological remains interpreted as such, a wide range of different types of vessels was used during these activities: bowls, jars, cups, plates, beakers, and even *ḥs*-vases (see Appendix Table 1).

Consequently, the term ‘*dšr.t*’ would have to be interpreted as a collective term for pottery. However, this theory stands in direct opposition to the actual evidence. What the ancient Egyptians labelled as a ‘*dšr.t*’ is not a collective, but a proper name and reserved for a specific kind of vessel. Already in 1921, Gustave Jéquier gave a brief summary of their appearance and use,¹¹⁰ and even Adolf Erman and Hermann Grapow discussed the vessels in the *Wörterbuch* from 1931.¹¹¹ A comprehensive examination of the *dšr.t*-Vessels in contexts other than the BdV is given below. Actual vessels of the typical *dšr.t*-shape exist, even though they do not seem to be very common.¹¹² Textual evidence from the New Kingdom shows that by that time the *dšr.wt* could even be made out of metal (A3.17), showing that the term was attached to the form and function rather than material or colour. For these reasons it is, in my view, impossible to argue that the ancient Egyptian would have referred to the breakage of all vessels (e.g. after a banquet or a ritual food) as *sd dšr.wt*.¹¹³

To sum up, I consider it highly unlikely that all instances of intentional breakage of ceramics are a manifestation of the BdV. In all probability, the ancient Egyptians knew more than one situation in which vessels were broken or damaged deliberately.¹¹⁴ As Seiler correctly pointed out, the intention between a *ritual breaking* and a *post-ritual breaking* are entirely different.¹¹⁵ Unfortunately, her important considerations on the act of breaking an object and its function and dynamics in a culture such as the ancient Egyptian remain only brief. However, the concept of intentionally damaging objects has been in the focus of scholars of related fields for several years and can be used as an opening to introduce the discussion in Egyptology as well.

¹⁰⁸ Of all depictions in New Kingdom private tombs interpreted as the BdV, only eight undoubtedly show the breaking of vessels, see Appendix Table 3.

¹⁰⁹ Only Seiler (2005: 177) limits the corpus to vessels with a red slip.

¹¹⁰ Jéquier 1921: 311.

¹¹¹ WB V, 493.

¹¹² See below, *dšr.t*-Vessels in Archaeological Contexts.

¹¹³ This fact is also problematic for the evaluation of the vessels broken in the New Kingdom depictions, which do not show the typical New Kingdom *dšr.wt*-shape.

¹¹⁴ In her latest contribution on the subject, Budka (2014: 646) reached the same conclusion.

¹¹⁵ Seiler 2005: 178.

How to Move Forward

In my opinion, none of the previous studies were conclusive, and none of the interpretations entirely convincing and unproblematic. Therefore, it is necessary to change the angle of approach. Rather than trying to fit all previous interpretations and all instances previously identified as the BdV into one, it is necessary to return to core of the rite before studying it in depth. This core are the attestations which can be assigned to the BdV with absolute certainty: the sources which have been defined as *sd dšr.wt* by the ancient Egyptians.

The evidence is defined by two main elements that need to be discussed in more detail: The aspect of 'breaking', and the objects in question, the *dšr.t*-Vessels. The deliberate damaging of objects (fragmentation) has been studied in related disciplines, such as Archaeology and Sociology and will be taken into account in order to understand the implications of intentionally 'breaking' an object. Afterwards, the *dšr.t*-Vessels will be the centre of attention. As all studies of the BdV have been focussed entirely on the role of the *dšr.wt* inside the BdV, this work tries to gain a better understanding of the vessels by considering their occurrence in other contexts. Finally, the context of the BdV is studied more thoroughly. Combining the gathered information on the *dšr.wt* with that on the BdV, it will be possible to decide whether or not a coherent interpretation of the rite can be given.

The Concept of Intentional Damaging of Objects: Fragmentation Theory

Interpreting the Intentional Fragmentation of Objects

Several scholars working on the BdV have already noted that the act of deliberately breaking an object is not an exclusively ancient Egyptian phenomenon.¹¹⁶ The frequently cited archaeologist Leslie Grinsell is often seen as the forefather of studies on fragmentation. Although specialised in prehistoric archaeology, the latter had a broad field of interest, including what he referred to as ‘ceremonial ‘killing’ of objects’ in different cultures and times.¹¹⁷ In two articles he published a variety of examples, both ancient and modern, of ritual breaking.¹¹⁸ These articles remain broadly descriptive, listing a large number of different customs, from ancient cultures of the Mediterranean to pre-modern tribes of Oceania.

In Egyptology, Grinsell’s work is often referenced to justify an explanation proposed for the BdV via a comparison to other cultures.¹¹⁹ From a modern and Western perspective, the intentional damaging of an intact and functional object does not strike one as a logical act, raising an urge to find additional evidence to provide a global explanation for the act. However, such broad comparisons come with inherent danger. One problem is the fact that studies, like those made by Grinsell, tend to simplify matters at hand. To explain complex situations quickly to a broad audience, each example is broken down into a few words, taking interpretations provided by one scholar as fact and ignoring debates within academic fields. For instance, several of Grinsell’s examples are based on ancient Egyptian culture and the interpretations given by Egyptologists from the beginning of the 20th century.¹²⁰ Apart from the circular argument that the use of this kind of studies might create, it is not unlikely that, as in Egyptology, the interpretations of ritual breaking in other cultures given a hundred years ago may be outdated today.

The problems of conducting cross-cultural comparisons and thus breaking down complex social acts onto specific, pre-elected elements have been addressed by scholars of different fields. In his article ‘Some Problems in Cross-cultural Comparison’, the anthropologist Christopher Hallpike concludes:

The basic objections to cross-cultural research of the statistical type are therefore not so much that the data are vast, uneven in quality, difficult to codify without making arbitrary distinctions, that similar phenomena may be produced by different factors, or by diffusion, and that it is very difficult to obtain genuinely random samples, but rather, that social reality is not susceptible to being meaningfully broken down into correlations between two variables.¹²¹

And further:

A body of knowledge which claims to be explanatory as well as descriptive must be basically oriented to understanding the fundamental processes of the phenomena it is studying, and this cannot come from assembling large numbers of individual correlations.¹²²

¹¹⁶ E.g. van Dijk 1993: 185–186; Seiler 2005: 171; Budka 2010: 408.

¹¹⁷ Grinsell 1961: 475.

¹¹⁸ Grinsell 1961; 1973.

¹¹⁹ E.g. Budka (2010: 408) referring to modern rite of native American tribes.

¹²⁰ E.g. Grinsell 1961: 477–478.

¹²¹ Hallpike 1971: 138.

¹²² Hallpike 1971: 138.

To understand this social reality of the BdV, it is impossible to draw any interpretative conclusions from a direct comparison with another culture. Instead, as Hallpike pointed out, a better understanding of the basic processes and context surrounding the BdV is the key to grasping its meaning.

No doubt triggered by the Material Turn, recent studies in archaeology have incorporated both Grinsell's interests in the dynamics of deliberate breaking acts and the necessary anthropologic-philosophic approach. The term 'fragmentation' was introduced by the prehistoric archaeologist John Chapman in 2000.¹²³ Initially very specialised, the latter's studies soon shifted to a more theoretical nature, driven by the urge to discuss the *concept* of intentional damaging rather than specific examples. Several scholars have followed in his footsteps by refraining from traditional explanatory approaches, instead discussing how fragmentation contexts could be studied without imprinting modern perspectives on the act. While it is misleading to search for conclusive evidence and explanations for fragmentation rites in other cultures, a comparison of the dynamics of such rites can bring up important information. One imperative observation is the distinction between different forms of fragmentation. The general tendency of labelling every form of deliberate breaking as ritual 'killing' has been criticised by several scholars.¹²⁴ The archaeologist Michael Boyd remarks:

'Destruction' is a heavily loaded term, as is 'ritual killing'. Recognising that some change had been effected on an object is one level of interpretation; asserting that it has been destroyed, or killed, is quite another. It may well be that in many, or most, cases where destruction or killing is asserted, the interpretation thus offered has been skewed toward the self-evidently functional.¹²⁵

This point is crucial to the understanding of intentional breaking of objects. In a modern perspective, the act of breaking contains an inherent negative notion. 'Breaking' is equated with 'destroying', and a broken object is generally seen as non-functional and thereby useless, its value being reduced or rendered completely 'worthless'. This conception, however, is based entirely on Western ideals and thought patterns. To limit the influence of these modern perspectives on our interpretation, it is necessary to approach fragmentation in a more descriptive and less interpretative way. Here is Boyd again:

But when we are talking about non-discard contexts such as or individual graves, the objects we study, although damaged, continued as constituent elements of the contexts within which they were placed. Their remade form, far from implying uselessness, is often functionally apposite for the context within which they were now situated. Therefore, what we are studying is not so much destruction as physical transformation, often leading to altered functional characteristics and enhanced object histories.¹²⁶

Stratos Nanoglou, furthermore, went as far as to suggest that even the binary concept of 'complete, usable, functional' vs. 'broken, damaged, unfunctional' had to be dismissed entirely as such distinctions are based on modern views:

Unless we do that, we will continue to work on fixed categories, whatever the room for manoeuvre within them.¹²⁷

¹²³ Chapman 2000, and later Chapman and Gaydarska 2006.

¹²⁴ E.g. Nanoglou 2015: 49; Harrell 2015: 22.

¹²⁵ Boyd 2015: 155.

¹²⁶ Boyd 2015: 155-156.

¹²⁷ Nanoglou 2015: 49-50.

While this approach might seem drastic, Nanoglou's point is clear: in order to get new results not only the way of interpreting fragmentation has to change. Instead, it is necessary to dispose of traditional contemporary models of what appears 'logical' and open up to new perspectives viewing the problem from a different angle.

Implications of Fragmentation Theory for the BdV

In contrast to studies of fragmentation that deal exclusively with archaeological remains, the BdV presents an exception. Stating specifically that the *dšr.wt* were to be broken, the texts clearly assign this act as *intentional* damaging, thus clearly differentiating between 'damaged' and 'undamaged'. It has to be stressed, however, that the damaged object does not necessarily lose any value or usefulness.¹²⁸ In fact, it might be exactly this act of damaging which gives the object its purpose and effectiveness. A parallel can be seen in the occasional damaging of execration figurines.¹²⁹ Through their use in rituals and the act of maltreating them, the figurines are changed into their new, effective role as apotropaic objects. That these figurines, although damaged, were far from useless becomes clear when considering how they were carefully treated after the act. The burying of the figurines cannot be seen as merely disposing of them as useless, but as a way of preserving them in their new form and thereby securing their effectiveness.

In the same sense, deposits of other intentionally fragmented objects cannot simply be seen as discarding objects when they cease to be useful. On the contrary, the very fact that an effort was taken to bury them implies that these objects were still effective in some way and were, therefore, intentionally taken out of circulation. A rash dismissal of such contexts as 'discarded' will ultimately skew our understanding of the purpose of the objects found in offering pits, embalming caches, and other deposits.

Therefore, the understanding of the purpose of fragmentation calls for the understanding of the role of the objects before and after the act. This is usually done by studying the fragmented object, i.e. representing the object's history *after* the fragmentation act. Opposed to the study of archaeological remains, the BdV as defined here accounts only for the *exact moment* of fragmentation. While being in the unfortunate situation of lacking the actual fragmented object to study, the ancient texts still provide us with extremely valuable information about the object: its name. As long as no physical object can be securely assigned to the name, this information enables us to research the *concept* of the object and to understand its use and purpose, which might lead to an understanding of the purpose for which it was broken.

As for the implications of the act of breaking itself, it is clear that no universally applicable interpretation exists. A comparison to apparently similar contexts in other cultures is subject to the inherent fallibility of cross-cultural comparisons, making the understanding of the processes surrounding the BdV the most promising avenue to explore. As mentioned above, the traditional approaches of interpreting the BdV are subject to the notion whereby *breaking = destroying*. Due to the problems of this interpretation, I suggest that, for the time being, the *breaking* of the *dšr.wt* has to be seen as nothing more than a *transformation* of *dšr.wt*.

¹²⁸ As Renfrew (2015: 83) stated: 'As a result of deliberate damage, the value is usually modified, although not invariably decreased.'

¹²⁹ See below *Forms of Intentional Fragmentation of Objects in Ancient Egypt*

Forms of Intentional Fragmentation of Objects in Ancient Egypt

Intentional fragmentation of objects is attested in a plethora of different forms and variations. While most scholars point out the diversity of the practice on a global level, several different forms of fragmentation are attested in Egypt alone. Only a brief overview can be given here, as a thorough comparative investigation of the concept in ancient Egypt would exceed the scope of this work. However, such an endeavour would be highly wished for in the future and could most likely provide much needed insights into the role that object fragmentation played in the ancient Egyptian mindset.

Intentional fragmentation is attested from the earliest stage of Egyptian culture onwards. As such, the question of whether or not the general concept developed within the local communities, or can be attributed to an external impulse, cannot be answered. In some Pre- and Early Dynastic tombs, flint knives were found broken in contexts that suggest a deliberate breaking. Carolyn A. Graves-Brown pointed out that a broken knife would technically still be usable, therefore it can be assumed that the breaking was not exclusively functional or undertaken to avoid the reuse of grave goods.¹³⁰ This seems to be confirmed by the fact that undamaged objects were often found together with the knives, thus the fragmentation seems to be restricted to these specific tools. The same scholar addressed the problem of a lack of comprehensive studies of fragmented objects in Early Dynastic Egypt.¹³¹ To date I am aware of only one other example from this period, namely the presence of deliberately broken and systematically deposited stone vessels in the cemetery of Helwan.¹³² Vessels of different shapes and materials were broken and the fragments deliberately placed in specific locations inside the tomb.¹³³

Probably the most prominent context of deliberate damaging of objects is the execration rite.¹³⁴ The vessels which have been attributed to the BdV form only a part of the corpus, since the use of figurines in the shape of bound foreigners is much more common. These figurines of different shapes, materials, and sizes are often inscribed with the same name lists of enemies which were found on the vessels. Texts describing the execration rite (e.g. P. Bremner-Rhind (P. BM 10188) and CT 37) inform that the figurines are supposed to be inscribed with the name of an enemy, spat on, crushed with the foot, burned, and buried in the necropolis. One of the rare preserved examples of a New Kingdom wax figurine indeed shows marks of cutting on arms, legs, and torso.¹³⁵ Carina Kühne-Wespi argued convincingly for an intentional damaging of the head of several limestone figurines dating to the Middle Kingdom.¹³⁶ However, she also pointed out that, counter to general assumption, the archaeological evidence does not support the idea that all figurines were systematically broken, as a large number of them show no traces of damage at all.¹³⁷

Fragmented vessels appear regularly in connection with materials used for mummification in numerous deposits labelled 'embalming caches'.¹³⁸ Characteristic for these deposits seems to be the presence of linen, ointment, and material used for the embalming. The sherds of the broken vessels are often placed

¹³⁰ Graves-Brown 2010: 209.

¹³¹ Graves-Brown 2010: 291.

¹³² At the time of writing, the topic is being researched by Nora Kuch (Vienna) as part of her PhD dissertation.

¹³³ Kuch 2018.

¹³⁴ The information given below is taken from Carina Kühne-Wespi who studied the so-called execration figurines in the context of her PhD research. I am indebted to her for sending me her unpublished dissertation and for discussing the matter with me.

¹³⁵ Kühne-Wespi 2019a: 76–77.

¹³⁶ Kühne-Wespi 2019a: 93–94, 330–331.

¹³⁷ Kühne-Wespi 2019a: 46.

¹³⁸ Ben Amar (2007: 38–39) listed 68 caches. They date from the 12th Dynasty until Late Period and seem to become more common, in the later stages.

inside intact vessels, providing an undisturbed archaeological context.¹³⁹ The smashed pottery includes all kinds of vessels and dishes of different types of clay, and both decorated and undecorated ware.¹⁴⁰ Embalming caches have been identified exclusively in necropoleis. Due to the presence of linen and resin together with the pottery found in Old Kingdom false shafts,¹⁴¹ these contexts could also be interpreted as a form of embalming cache. If Teodozja Rzeuska's suggestion is correct, and the vessels were simply tossed into the shafts, the form of fragmentation would be a different one compared to the later caches, where the sherds were collected and deposited in an additional step.

Of a different nature are the deposits often referred to as 'offering pits'.¹⁴² Here, the closed context necessary to identify intentionally damaged objects is provided by the pits. Unlike the embalming caches, however, it is impossible to exclude a secondary breakage due to taphonomic processes. Since only a part of the pottery was found broken, it is possible that the vessels were thrown unbroken into the pit, with only some of them surviving intact. In this case, the breakage would have been accepted, but not specifically called for, making this form of fragmentation casual rather than intentional. Offering pits seem to be characterised by the presence of bones and organic material, occasionally showing traces of burning. Again, all sorts of pottery, including jar stands, are found.

A completely different form of fragmentation is the practice of the so-called 'killing-holes'. The term has become common to describe small perforations on vessels, made before and after firing. This practice seems to appear on all kinds of different vessels throughout all periods of ancient Egyptian culture, and, although quite common, it has received very little research. Even though often mentioned in archaeological reports and articles, to my knowledge no thorough study of this practice exists. Among Egyptologist there seems to be a silent understanding that this act is a 'ritual killing' of the vessel, stripping it from its purpose as a container and, thereby, of its usefulness. Due to this it is often associated with the BdV.¹⁴³ Being found in embalming caches, offering pits, but also outside of deposits (e.g. Abydos¹⁴⁴), this practice seems to stand independently from the above mentioned. None of the closed contexts show any systematic perforation of vessels. Being attested from Early Dynastic to Ptolemaic times, the 'killing holes' are the most long-lasting form of fragmentation attested in Egypt.¹⁴⁵ Following the more careful interpretations advocated by fragmentation specialists, I argue that an intentional perforation of a vessels can, but does not have to be 'ritual' nor 'killing'. Many practical reasons for this act are conceivable: A hole in the bottom part of a vessel can be made to allow a controlled flow of the content, or change its function to a kind of sieve.¹⁴⁶ Similarly, a small hole in the neck of a vessel can be used as an additional spout, as can be found on some jars.¹⁴⁷ An interesting case was recorded by Budka, where the 'killing hole' of a vessel still contained some remains of a textile that had been pulled through the hole.¹⁴⁸ This shows that, even more than the smashing of a vessel, the punching of a hole in it is less a *destruction* than a precise, controlled *modification*. However, the result differs greatly from the one resulting from smashing a vessel, and should therefore not be confused with the BdV.

¹³⁹ In the case of the embalming cache found in KV 63, not only large storage vessels but also coffins were used to contain the material (KV 63 online, <http://www.kv-63.com/ottosdigdiary200609.html>, accessed 14.03.23).

¹⁴⁰ Ben Amar 2007: 104–106.

¹⁴¹ Appendix Table 1, No. 1.

¹⁴² Appendix Table 1, Nos 3, probably 9, 11, and possibly also 6, 14, and 15.

¹⁴³ E.g. Graefe 2005: 413–414; López-Grande 2013: 262–264; Bárta *et al.* 2017: 1–21.

¹⁴⁴ Appendix Table 1, No. 5.

¹⁴⁵ The earliest example I am aware of is a vessel kept at the Egyptian Museum -Georg Steindorff- in Leipzig (ÄMUL 3494), from Abusir el-Meleq and dating to the 2nd Dynasty. No later examples than the Ptolemaic ones found in TT 36 (Appendix Table 1, No. 14) are known to the present author.

¹⁴⁶ See, e.g., Schiestl and Seiler 2012: 709.

¹⁴⁷ Schiestl and Seiler 2012: 603.

¹⁴⁸ Budka 2010: 411.

In a broad understanding of the concept, other phenomena more commonly discussed in Egyptology can be included within the scope of fragmentation. Deliberate damage to images, usually referred to as iconoclasm or *damnatio memoriae*, is a well-known act that can consist of partial damage to specific areas, such as the nose or eyes, or the complete fragmentation of the entire figurines.¹⁴⁹ It also extends to two-dimensional representations, such as those found in tombs and temples. A recent conference explored the topic of intentional damage to statues, and featured contributions within the fields of image studies and iconoclasm, as well as the interdisciplinary field of fragmentation studies.¹⁵⁰

Practices of intentional fragmentation can also extend to writing. The deliberate attack and removal of personal names from monuments applies both to the material and to the conceptual level, fragmenting the physical in order to affect the metaphysical, i.e. the person it represents.¹⁵¹ Another form of conceptual fragmentation is the well-known phenomenon of disabling potentially dangerous hieroglyphic signs in certain contexts by dismembering them.¹⁵²

In conclusion, fragmentation in Egypt is not only common, but also very diverse. Different forms and contexts of fragmentation strongly suggest that these acts should not be seen as one and the same. To understand the practice of fragmentation in Egypt as a whole, a careful study of each individual act would be necessary first.

¹⁴⁹ For an overview, see May 2012. On the topic of intentional damage on Egyptian statues recently, see Connor 2022.

¹⁵⁰ The conference proceedings (Miniaci 2023) were published too late to be included in this study.

¹⁵¹ Hertel, forthcoming.

¹⁵² E.g. recently Thuault 2020.

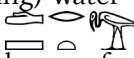

The *dšr.wt* – Appearance, Use, and Purpose

Even though being part of the BdV, and therefore having been discussed more often than many other vessels mentioned in text sources, the *dšr.t*-Vessels have never been subject to a comprehensive study. Since most interpretations of the BdV are heavily based on the *dšr.wt* – their identification, their purpose in ritual, the symbolism of their name, etc. – it seems only reasonable to take a more holistic approach and study the vessels in all their manifestations, not only in the BdV. This chapter provides a chronological overview of the appearance and use of the *dšr.wt*, illustrates their main characteristics, and proposes an interpretation of the role of the vessels in ritual contexts other than the BdV.


dšr.t-Vessels in the Old Kingdom

Appearances of the *dšr.wt* outside the BdV are very limited during the Old Kingdom. Based on sources from the Middle and New Kingdom, however, it is reasonable to assume that *dšr.t*-Vessels were already part of the so-called ‘Tent of Purification’, which is represented in some Old Kingdom tombs.¹⁵³ Bernhard Grdseloff suggested that scenes in the tombs of Idu (B1.12) and Mereruka (B1.4-B1.6) might show four *dšr.t*- and four *nms.t*-Vessels, the latter recognisable by their characteristic ovaloid shape. If correct, the *dšr.wt* are here represented in a plain, cup-shaped form. Since this seems to be a standardised, non-specific way of representing vessels – e.g. often found as a collective classifier¹⁵⁴ in offering lists – it might imply that, at this point in time, the *dšr.wt* were not yet exclusively associated with the characteristic form of the round-based, carinated squat jar they would be depicted as later.

dšr.t-Vessels in the Middle Kingdom

From the early Middle Kingdom onwards, the *dšr.wt* became part of the standardised offering list defined as ‘Type C’ by Winfried Barta, of which he counted 24 examples in Middle Kingdom.¹⁵⁵ The offering list Type C is mostly attested in private contexts, but also appears in the royal sphere (A2.22–23)¹⁵⁶ and may derive from an Old Kingdom model.¹⁵⁷ The list seems to represent a short version of the offering of food and drink to the deceased and is mostly found on stelae and in the chapels of private tombs. It generally shows the entry *mw dšr.(w)t* ‘water (in) *dšr.t*-vessel(s)’ or *dšr.(w)t n.tj mw* ‘*dšr.t*-Vessels (containing) water’ in two separate slots.¹⁵⁸ The orthography of the word *dšr.t* varies from extensive spellings  (e.g. A2.5) to simply  (e.g. A2.16). A remarkable feature is that in almost all cases, the vessels are referred to in the dual form, either by spelling *dšr.tj* (e.g. A2.2), the use of two classifiers (e.g. A2.13), or by indicating it in the slot containing the amount (e.g. A2.5).¹⁵⁹ Whether the ritual was carried out with a total of four vessels, or if the same two vessels were used twice, cannot be answered with certainty. The fact that depictions of *dšr.t*- and *nms.t*-Vessels often show them in groups of four respectively may give the former solution some preference, yet a ritual connection to the two red eyes of Horus¹⁶⁰ underlines the meaningfulness of the duality. The sources remain silent on the actual use of the water inside the vessels – was it to be used for libation, purification, or something entirely different? – as well as the reasoning for using *dšr.t*-Vessels as containers. That the choice of this specific vessel

¹⁵³ Grdseloff 1941: 2–3.

¹⁵⁴ Gardiner Number W10 .

¹⁵⁵ Barta 1963: 164. Barta’s list from 1963 could probably be augmented with more recent finds.

¹⁵⁶ These two are the only royal examples from the Middle Kingdom listed by Barta. Both are in a rather poor state of preservation.

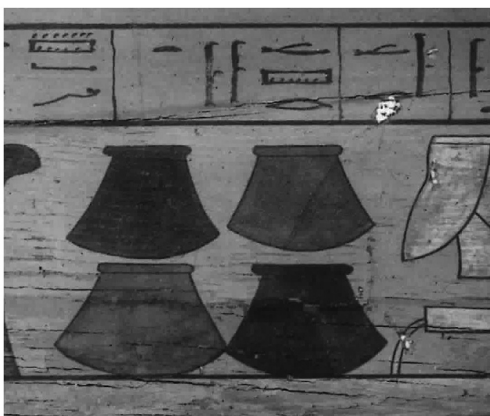
¹⁵⁷ Barta 1963: 112–114.

¹⁵⁸ Barta 1963: fig. 6.

¹⁵⁹ Exceptions are only A2.7 and potentially A2.20.

¹⁶⁰ Discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

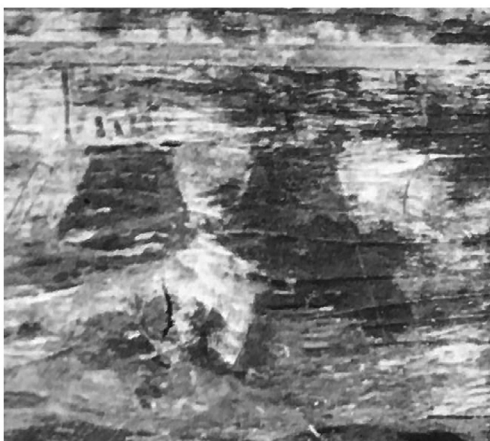
BREAKING THE *dšr.t*-VESSELS



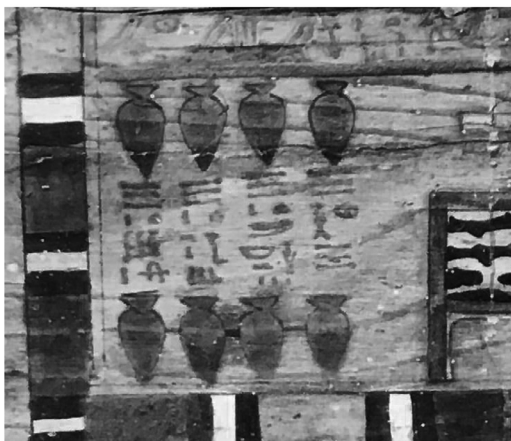
A2.26 (L1Ny)



A2.27 (Sq2C)



A2.28 (Sq7C)



A2.30 (S14C)



A2.29 (S10C)


Figure 3. *dšr.t*-Vessels on Middle Kingdom Coffins. Photographs © by the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, in the collection of the Netherlands Institute for the Near East, Leiden, De Buck archive

did play a role can be inferred from the mention of *mw* ‘water’, appearing twice on the list without specification of the vessel. Here, it seems, the container of the water was less important. Therefore, one has to conclude that the use of two or four *dšr.t*-Vessels was essential for this kind of ritual offering of food and drink.

The *dšr.wt* are also represented in the object friezes of some Middle Kingdom coffins. Although not frequent,¹⁶¹ *dšr.t*-Vessels are attested on coffins from Thebes (A2.24–25), Lisht (A2.26), Saqqara (A2.26–28), and Assiut (A2.29–30), showing that this feature was quite rare, but not locally restricted (Figure 3).

Unlike the depictions in the Old Kingdom tombs, the vessels in the object friezes can be unmistakably identified as *dšr.wt*, since most of them are labelled (A2.24, A26–27). Due to their appearance in groups of four, and the coupling with four *nms.wt* respectively, A2.25, A2.26, and A2.27 can be safely added to the corpus in spite of their poor state of preservation. A2.30 is difficult to judge. Unlike the other examples it does not seem to have been labelled, and is the only attestation in which the four *nms.t*- and *dšr.t*-Vessels (if correctly identified) are depicted identically. The identification as *dšr.wt* and *nms.wt* is therefore purely based on the context and the two distinctive groups of four vessels each.¹⁶²

Harco Willems argued convincingly that the object friezes did not only contain objects presented to the deceased for use in the afterlife.¹⁶³ They represented a combination of tools and objects used during the offering ritual and the other funerary ceremonies, such as the Opening of the Mouth and the rites performed in the Tent of Purification. This explains the presence of *dšr.wt* and *nms.wt* in this context, since by the time of the New Kingdom four *dšr.wt* and four *nms.wt* were part of the standard repertoire of the Opening of the Mouth ritual. Whether this was adopted from the rites of the Tent of Purification, or if the two are indeed to be distinguished, cannot be said.

There is one exceptional mention of the *dšr.wt* on a hieratic papyrus, dated to the 13th Dynasty by Alan Gardiner (A2.31).¹⁶⁴ The fragmentary papyrus seems to concern processions taking place in the necropolis. Unfortunately, the word *dšr.wt* is only mentioned on a small fragment, one which could not be directly joined to the main text, and thus does not provide much context. The remaining signs  have been interpreted as *[hr].w dšr.wt* (‘bearer of the *dšr.wt*’) by Gardiner.¹⁶⁵

A few notes can be made concerning the physical appearance of the *dšr.wt* in the Middle Kingdom. The overall tendency seems to suggest a small, spherical or bag-shaped form (Figure 4). A2.26 and A2.28 already resemble the shape of a carinated squat jar with a round base, which was standard in the New Kingdom.¹⁶⁶








A2.24	A2.25	A2.26	A2.27	A2.28	A2.29	(A2.30)
						

Figure 4. Shape of the *dšr.wt* depicted in the Middle Kingdom

¹⁶¹ I was able to collect five examples via a systematic survey of the photographic archive of Adriaan de Buck kept in Leiden, in addition to the two (A2.24–25) already signalled in other literature.

¹⁶² I would like to thank Harco Willems, who pointed this (potential) example out. He, too, was unsure about the identification as *dšr.wt* and *nms.wt*.

¹⁶³ Willems 1988: 206–208.

¹⁶⁴ Gardiner 1955: 9–17.

¹⁶⁵ Gardiner 1955: 16.

¹⁶⁶ Following the terminology by Schiestl and Seiler 2012: 631.




















A2.1	A2.2	A2.3	A2.4	A2.5	A2.6	A2.8	A2.9	A2.10	A2.11
									
A2.12	A2.13	A2.14	A2.15	A2.17	A2.18	A2.19	A2.20	A2.21	-
									

Figure 5. Shape of the *dšr.wt* classifier in the Middle Kingdom

Comparing these trends with the classifiers used to define the *dšr.wt* – with a certain caution, as they cannot be taken as representative and detailed as the depictions – seems to confirm this picture (Figure 5).

Some examples (A2.13, A2.18–19, A2.21)¹⁶⁷ match the round-based, carinated squat jar shape, but overall the appearances are too diverse to claim a standardisation in depiction as early as the Middle Kingdom.

dšr.t-Vessels in the New Kingdom

In the New Kingdom the number of attestations grows even larger. Due to the high number of sources and the limited scope of this present study, only an overview of the different contexts in which the *dšr.wt* can appear is included.¹⁶⁸ The small offering list¹⁶⁹ mentioning *dšr.wt* continues to be used in New Kingdom.¹⁷⁰ It is frequently shown in private tombs of the Theban necropolis (e.g. A3.4, A3.13), but also occasionally in the north (A3.18).¹⁷¹ While the list prevails in private contexts throughout the whole New Kingdom and into the Late Period, royal attestations appear less frequently and are only known from Hatshepsut, Thutmose III, and Seti I (e.g. A3.2).¹⁷²

An important phenomenon of the New Kingdom is the explicit appearance of the *dšr.t*-Vessels in the Opening of the Mouth ceremony, attested in textual as well as iconographical sources. In Scene 3 of the ritual (defined by Eberhard Otto¹⁷³), the vessels are used for the purification of the mummy or statue of the deceased (Thebes: A3.5, A3.9, A3.13; Saqqara: A3.20–21). The well-preserved scene in the tomb of Rekhmire (TT 100, A3.5) shows the purification of a statue. The text next to it informs:

Words spoken, four times: ‘Pure, pure!’ to the Osiris *imj-r njwt*, Rekhmire. Going around him four times with four *dšr.t*-Vessels filled with water. Your purification is the purification of Horus, Seth, Djehuti, (and) Duananwi. Take for yourself the water which is in the two red eyes of Horus. Djehuti, he unites him so that is completed¹⁷⁴ what belongs to him.

¹⁶⁷ Numbers A2.7, A2.16, A2.22, and A2.23 have been left out due to a lack of classifier, or their state of preservation.

¹⁶⁸ See Catalogue section A3.

¹⁶⁹ Barta Type C.

¹⁷⁰ Barta (1963: 117–119) lists occasional changes. Apart from this, the list is used in its canonical form.

¹⁷¹ See the list provided by Barta 1963: 164–165.

¹⁷² Barta 1963: 117–118, 165.

¹⁷³ Otto 1960 I: 6–7, and II: 42–43. According to Otto, textual attestations can be found in the tombs of Rekhmire (TT 100), Seti I (KV 17), and Twosret (KV 14), as well as on the coffin of Butekhamun in the Museo Egizio (Turin), and in the chapel of Amenirids at Medinet Habu. Variants of the scene are present in the tomb of Khonsu (TT 31), the temple of Umm Ebeida, and on P. Cairo 36803.

¹⁷⁴ Otto seems to have taken *tm* as negative particle and translated it as a negated existential phrase *ir tm wn* lit. ‘to make sth. not to exist’ viz. ‘to make sth. disappear’ (WB V, 303.2). A more fitting translation is reached by reading *tm* as ‘to make complete’ (WB V, 303), which fits well with the theme of re-joining the red eye of Horus which was lost to Seth.

From the New Kingdom onwards, a link between the Opening of the Mouth ritual and the offering list Type C can be found in the so-called Litany of the Eye of Horus. The most prominent example is found in the tomb of Seti I. The litany juxtaposes the objects from the offering list with recitation texts included in the Opening of the Mouth ritual. In the case of the *dšr.wt*, the recitation of Scene 3 is linked to the ‘two *dšr.t*-Vessels with water’ of offering list Type C. A comprehensive study on the litany was produced by Theresa Czok,¹⁷⁵ however a source not mentioned by her is briefly presented here: The small fragment of a limestone block found in Saqqara is inscribed with the recitation text of Scene 3 (A3.22). Unfortunately, not much of the text is preserved. The list form and the small figures at the end of the line, which are regularly found in offering lists, however, make it likely that the fragment was part of a Litany of the Eye of Horus rather than an Opening of the Mouth scene. If correct, this would be the only example of the litany found in Lower Egypt, apart from a papyrus fragment dating to the Roman Period.¹⁷⁶

The presence of the *dšr.wt* in the Opening of the Mouth and the Litany of the Eye of Horus brings an interesting addition to the interpretation of their meaning. The litany addresses the two *dšr.t*-Vessels as ‘the two red eyes of Horus’, which fits well with the fact that the *dšr.t*-Vessels mentioned on list Type C are referred to as dual.¹⁷⁷ The ‘red eye of Horus’ is also known from other sources that reveal more information about their meaning. It is attested in the Dramatic Ramesseum Papyrus (P. BM EA 10610.1–5) which describes a ritual involving the king.¹⁷⁸ After receiving pieces of red carnelian (Scene 25, Column 72–75), the king (in the role of Horus) addresses Seth:¹⁷⁹

(73) Horus speaks words to Seth: So that you get distorted with rage is why (I) have saved (my) eye // The eye // Carnelian // Letopolis

(74) Horus speaks words to Seth: Turn away, after [they] have confronted you // The eye // Carnelian [...] // [...] // Letopolis

(75) Horus speaks words to Seth: Bring (me my) eye that you have made distorted with rage, the one that was red in your mouth //The red eye // Carnelian // Letopolis

Here, the redness of the eye is explained by the mythological setting of Seth stealing Horus’ eye and chewing on it. More telling in relation to the function is the fact that the red eye is made angry by Seth’s abuse. Günter Rudnitzky has already pointed out that the colour red, usually associated with Seth, is in this case not his attribute, but represents the anger of Horus, which he uses against those who oppose him.¹⁸⁰ Represented by carnelian amulets, they are therefore to be interpreted as protective symbols. This fits well with the previously mentioned PT 246 in which the deceased king is described as the ‘red-eyed Horus, the one with painful wrath’. Here, too, the red eyes are an angry, powerful attribute. Identifying the *dšr.t*-Vessels with the ‘two red eyes’ would therefore imply that the vessels were seen as holding this aggressive/protective power. Through contact with the vessel, the water used for purification will then have adopted this notion, making it ideal to remove all negative, potentially dangerous effects from mummies and statues.

¹⁷⁵ Czok 2016. I am indebted to Theresa for providing me with a digital copy of her unpublished work.

¹⁷⁶ See Czok 2016: 48–52.

¹⁷⁷ This poses another question: has this offering list already in the Middle Kingdom been associated with the Opening of the Mouth, or is this connection a phenomenon of the New Kingdom? Unfortunately, the scope of this study does not allow an investigation of this question.

¹⁷⁸ The new edition by Christina Geisen proposes interpreting it as a statue ritual to commemorate Senwosret I’s accomplishments at Karnak (Geisen 2018: 247). For a discussion of previous interpretations, see Geisen 2018: 174–184.

¹⁷⁹ Translation by Geisen 2018: 114–117.

¹⁸⁰ Rudnitzky 1956: 29–30.







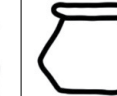





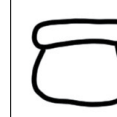



Depiction	A3.6	A3.7	A3.9	A3.10	A3.12	A3.14	A3.19	A3.20
								
Classifier	A3.2	A3.5	A3.9	A3.11	A3.17	A3.23	A3.24	A3.25
								

Figure 6. Shape of *dšr.wt* depictions and classifiers in the New Kingdom

By the time of the New Kingdom, both types of vessels are not only used in funerary contexts, but appear also in the temple cult. Wolfgang Waitkus was able to show that a version of the Opening of the Mouth ritual was regularly performed on statues of divinities in the temple cult.¹⁸¹ Similar to the purification of a funerary statue, several scenes show the king purifying the statue of a divinity with it (A3.3, A3.8, A3.14). Alternatively, the vessels can be presented to the god, usually depicted in a row of four vessels next to each other (A3.1, A3.15–16). Scenes of *dšr.t*- and *nms.t*-Vessels always appear in close proximity, the number of vessels is always four respectively.

As for their representation, sources of the New Kingdom depict the *dšr.wt* in a canonical way (Figure 6). Except for some offering lists where the same, unspecific vessel-classifier is used for all entries (e.g. A3.11 or A3.24), the New Kingdom evidence is very homogeneous. The standard *dšr.t*-form resembles a carinated, round-based squat jar¹⁸² and is so characteristic that the sign $\overline{\text{A}}$ (Gardiner Number W11A) can be used ideographically for the term (e.g. A3.5, A3.9). There seems to be no differentiation between the *dšr.wt* used in temples and the ones in royal or private funerary ceremonies. In addition to the scenes showing the *dšr.wt* in use, the vessels are also frequently depicted stacked up among the other tools for the Opening of the Mouth. Recognisable by their shape, their appearance in groups of four, and the coupling with the *nms.t*-Vessels, they are easy to identify (Thebes: A3.6–7, A3.10, A3.12; Saqqara: A3.19, A3.21).¹⁸³ Usually, these scenes are not accompanied by descriptive texts. One exceptional example is the one in the forecourt of TT 75 (A3.10, Figure 7). The scene shows not only all the tools of the Opening of the Mouth spread out and labelled next to each other, but also the necessities of the ritual offering of food and drink. Interestingly, the *dšr.wt* appear twice: four *dšr.wt* together with the Opening of the Mouth tools, and two with the items belonging to the offering. Both are described as containing water. It seems plausible that the purification with *dšr.t*-Vessels was a semi-independent rite which was not restricted to one specific ritual, but could be applied in various contexts.

The use of the *dšr.wt* in temple rituals is also represented by another type of list, emerging in the New Kingdom and used into Ptolemaic times. Labelled as Type E by Barta,¹⁸⁴ the list contains *dšr.t*-Vessels among other equipment of the cult. Even though the most common use of them was still as water containers, they are occasionally also used to hold wine (A3.28).

¹⁸¹ Waitkus 2008, I: 215.

¹⁸² Schiestl and Seiler 2012: 631.

¹⁸³ Saqqara scenes see Gessler-Löhr 2018: 39–47.

¹⁸⁴ Barta 1963: 140–146. See his list of occurrences (1963: 166–167).



Figure 7. *dšr.t*-Vessels among tools for the Opening of the Mouth Ritual (above) and the offering of food and drink (below) in the forecourt of TT 75. Photographs: Schott-Photos No. 1963 and 1964 © Schott Archiv (Ägyptologie Universität Trier)

Judging by the preserved evidence, it seems likely that by the time of the New Kingdom the *dšr.wt* were vessels primarily used in cultic activities. That in these contexts a connection between the colour red and their name had only symbolic character, at best, can be seen in tomb depictions with preserved colour. Here, the *dšr.wt* and *nms.wt* are usually rendered yellow or white, representing gold and silver (A3.7, A3.9). This finds confirmation in a list of Opening of the Mouth tools from the tomb of Merymery at Saqqara (A3.17), which specifically calls for four *nms.wt* made of gold and four *dšr.wt* of silver.

***dšr.t*-Vessels After the New Kingdom**

The evidence for *dšr.t*-Vessels after the New Kingdom is quite consistent. The Type C offering list continues to exist until the Late Period, although much less frequent than earlier times (e.g. A4.3).¹⁸⁵ *dšr.t*-Vessels were still used in the Opening of the Mouth, as can be seen in the depiction on the funerary papyrus of Makara (A4.1), where a row of four *dšr.wt* is shown together with four *nms.wt*. Sporadic examples of the *dšr.wt* are also found connected to the temple cult (A4.4).

¹⁸⁵ Barta (1963: 165) listed only two examples.

An important source of the Third Intermediate Period is P. Berlin P3055 (A4.2) which describes the daily rites carried out for Amun-Ra and mentions the use of the *dšr.wt* (Column XXVII, Lines 4–7):¹⁸⁶

Making purification with four *dšr.t*-Vessels filled with water. Words to be spoken while circling around four times:

Pure, pure, (5) is Amun-Ra, lord of *ns.t-t.wj*. Take for yourself what is in the red eye of Horus. United¹⁸⁷ is for you your eye. United is for you (6) your head. United are your bones. Your head is made to prevail over your bones under Geb. Djehuti, he unites him to complete¹⁸⁸ your protection.¹⁸⁹ Djehuti (7), he gives the eye of Horus to him. Pure, pure, Amun-Ra, lord of *ns.t-t.wj*, four times.

The similarities between the texts of the Opening of the Mouth ritual and the daily temple ritual have been pointed out by scholars; their exact relationship is still a disputed topic in Egyptological literature.¹⁹⁰ P. Berlin P3055 emphasises again the importance of returning the red eye to its rightful owner. The water in the red eye represented by the two *dšr.t*-Vessels seems to be important for this process of unification.

In the Graeco-Roman Period, the *dšr.t*-Vessels are often depicted in temple decoration (e.g. A4.5-7).¹⁹¹ They are used during the purification of the cult image with water, usually expressed with *swb* ‘to purify’, or *phr-h* ‘to circle around’, just like in New Kingdom.¹⁹² The scenes can be divided into three categories.¹⁹³ The vessels can be presented to the god (A4.5), poured out in front of the god (A4.6), or poured over the god (A4.7).

In the broader context of the decorative program of the temple, scenes with *dšr.wt* are paralleled with scenes featuring *nms.t*-Vessels. Horst Beinlich noticed that *dšr.wt* scenes were often, but not exclusively used in proximity to a door.¹⁹⁴ He also stated that, even though most vessels were depicted in their standard shape, there was no uniform way in representation.

***dšr.t*-Vessels in Archaeological Contexts**

Even though not particularly common, vessels identifiable as the *dšr.wt* are occasionally found in archaeological contexts; they seem to occur mostly in the Old Kingdom. During the excavation of the tomb of Hetepheres, for instance, George A. Reisner recorded over 40 examples of ‘bag-shaped’ vessels¹⁹⁵ that match well with the standard *dšr.wt* shape of a carinated squat jar with rounded base (Figure 8).

¹⁸⁶ The purification with the *dšr.wt* is only attested on P. Berlin P3055. The corresponding versions in Edfou and Dendera only show purification with four *nms.t*-Vessels (see overview in David 2016: 177–179).

¹⁸⁷ Against Moret (1902: 173), who translated ‘*b*’ as ‘to purify’ (Wb I, 175). Both spelling and context speak against this, as ‘*b*’ ‘to purify’ is in most cases spelled . Instead, ‘*b*’ ‘to unite’ (WB I, 174) fits well with the topic of the red eye which should be united with Horus.

¹⁸⁸ Reading *tm* as ‘to complete’ (WB V, 303–304), especially used for the uniting of body parts, and against Moret, who took *tm* as negative particle.

¹⁸⁹ Moret 1902: 173 seems to have ignored the in his translation.

¹⁹⁰ For a discussion, see David 2016: 172–176.

¹⁹¹ See the list in Beinlich 2008: 70. Scenes including *dšr.wt* are attested in the temples of Edfou, Dendera, el-Qal’a, Philae, Biggeh, and Tod.

¹⁹² Beinlich 2008: 69.

¹⁹³ Hussy 2007: 24–25.

¹⁹⁴ Beinlich 2008: 69.

¹⁹⁵ Reisner 1955: 64, figs 59–60, Pl. 46e.

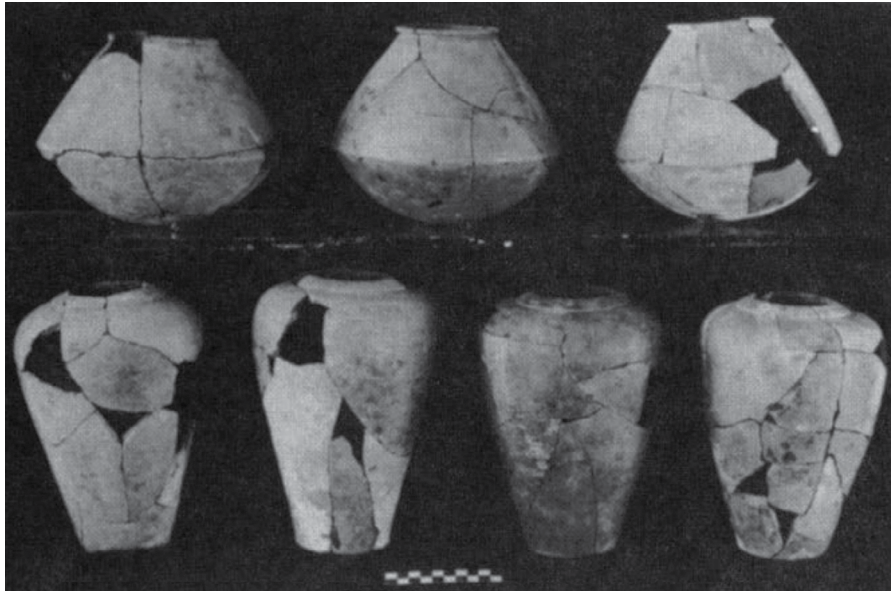


Figure 8. *dšr.t*-Vessels and *nms.t*-Vessels found in Giza (after Reisner 1955, Pl. 46e)

With them he listed more than 56 ‘flat bottomed neckless shoulder jars’ which show the typical ovaloid shape in which the *nms.t* are often represented.¹⁹⁶

Anna Wodzińska identified these vessels as *dšr.wt* and *nms.wt*.¹⁹⁷ This provides an interesting addition to the textual evidence of this time, showing that the connection between *nms.wt* and *dšr.wt* might already have been present in the Old Kingdom. Both types of vessels were made of fine Nile alluvium, occasionally red-coated, and roughly between 10–12 cm. high.¹⁹⁸ Both vessel types are occasionally found in the Middle Kingdom.¹⁹⁹ I am unaware of any ceramic forms dating later than the Middle Kingdom that match the depictions as accurately as these early examples. Even though spherical- and bag-shaped vessels are numerous, the characteristic carinated body in the examples from the Old to the Middle Kingdom seems to be less popular in the later periods. In script, this angular shape is the determining factor between the *dšr.t* sign $\overline{\text{𓄀}}$ (Gardiner Number W11A) and the similar, spherical *nw*-vessel $\overline{\text{𓄁}}$ (Gardiner Number W24). The same is true for depictions, where the *nw*-vessel can be differentiated from the *dšr.wt* thanks to the more triangular shape of the latter.²⁰⁰ This could be explained in two ways: either the shape of the physical vessels was changed, (e.g. to a slightly different, spherical form), but the depictions and texts continued showing the *dšr.wt* in their traditional form, or the material in which they were commonly made was changed into metal, as A3.17 suggests. This would explain the absence of these vessels in the corpus of pottery.

Conclusion on *dšr.t*-Vessels

Overall, the picture of the *dšr.t*-Vessels used in contexts other than the BdV is largely homogeneous. In most contexts they are used to contain water for the purification of mummies and statues, both in


¹⁹⁶ Reisner 1955: 65, figs 62–63, pl. 46e.

¹⁹⁷ Wodzińska 2009: 125.

¹⁹⁸ Reisner 1955: 64–65; Wodzińska 2009: 125.

¹⁹⁹ E.g. from royal and elite burials in Dahshur see (S.J.) Allen 2013: 280, fig. 3.1 (*nms.wt*), 3.2 and 3.5 (*dšr.wt*); Schiestl and Seiler 2012: 631.

²⁰⁰ Compare e.g. Brunner 1977: Pl. LXXVII (*nw*) and LXXVIII (*dšr.t*).

funerary and temple rituals. The connection to the *nms.wt* is present from the Middle Kingdom onwards and is subsequently one of the most characteristic elements of the *dšr.wt*. New Kingdom sources directly identify the two *dšr.t*-Vessels as the two ‘red eyes of Horus’, which seem to be powerful protective symbols, therewith explaining the purifying properties of the water. As for shape and colour, it is likely that the *dšr.wt* originated as (potentially red-coloured) pottery vessels. While an exact form is not identifiable in Old and Middle Kingdom depictions, archaeological sources suggest that the shape of a carinated squat jar with rounded base was already in use in the Old and Middle Kingdom. During the New Kingdom, this shape became characteristic, up to a point where the sign  could stand for the word *dšr.(w)t*. Being standard repertoire for the cult, the New Kingdom *dšr.wt* were at least in some cases made of metal. At this point, any potentially existing connection between the colour red and their name had either only symbolic value, or no importance at all. After the New Kingdom, the *dšr.wt* continue to be used for the same purification purposes.

Contextualising the BdV

In this chapter the attestations of the BdV are analysed. The focus is not on an immediate interpretation, but on the study of the context in which the rite appears, the interaction with surrounding rituals, connected elements, and the chronological and local distribution.

The Pyramid Texts

The most frequently cited evidence of the BdV is PT 244. The spell is attested in the pyramids of Unas (B1.1), Merenre (B1.2), and Pepy I (B1.3), and the Middle Kingdom tomb of Senwosretankh at Lisht (B2.1). In studies of the BdV it is usually assumed that it follows directly after the ritual offering of food and drink, however this is not entirely correct. While it is true that PT 244 tends to stand close to the end of the offering ritual, it does not necessarily seem connected to the offering of food and drink. In the Unas pyramid, the food offering is first followed by the insignia ritual (PT 224), then the reversion of the offerings (PT 199), a row of libations (PT 32, 23), and censuring (PT 25, 200), before the BdV is ordered.²⁰¹ In the pyramid of Pepy I, PT 244 stands at the end of a row of offering acts. However, more offering rites (including food offerings) follow afterwards.²⁰² The idea proposed by Blackman²⁰³ that the BdV is the breaking of the vessels used for libation seems appealing when only considering the pyramid of Unas, where PT 244 stands after PT 32 and 23 at the end of the concluding rites. In all the other examples, however, PT 244 stands before the libation spells, making it impossible to identify the libation vessels with the ones broken in the BdV if the sequencing is taken as that of a realistic ritual procedure. The only constant in all four attestations is that PT 244 follows the ‘reversion of the offerings’ (PT 199) and stands among other rites with the general theme of rendering a ritually pure setting. Judging only by its context, PT 244 would appear to be a rite contributing to this.²⁰⁴

As for the content of the recitation spell, a closer examination of the text is due. Since so much focus has been put on this text to understand the BdV, a more literal translation than the one provided by James Allen²⁰⁵ is necessary in this case.

ir.t nn hr rwd.t dj(=j) n=k s(j) (i)m(j)m=k²⁰⁶ nr=f n=k

This is the persisting eye of Horus: Let me give it to you so that you are powerful (?) and that (he) is afraid of you.

Several words pose problems. First, the term *rwd* (WB II, 410.13–412.9) has been translated as ‘hard’ by Sethe.²⁰⁷ A comparison with other attestations of the term in the Pyramid Texts shows clearly that in this context the word does not refer to physical hardness, but rather to persistence. *rwd* is used in PT 601 and PT 599 to wish the king that his name and his funerary monument may last for a long time. In these cases, a translation as ‘persistent’, or ‘long-lasting’ appears more fitting than physically ‘hard’ or ‘firm’.²⁰⁸


²⁰¹ For an overview, see Hays 2012: 677, Chart A.

²⁰² Hays 2012: 656, Plan 14.

²⁰³ Blackman 1924: 50–51.

²⁰⁴ Even though not directly expressed, Hays seems to have come to the same conclusion. He categorised PT 244 as ‘purification’ (Hays 2012: 677, Chart A).

²⁰⁵ Allen 2005: 29.

²⁰⁶ B2.1 omits the .

²⁰⁷ Sethe 1935: 232.

²⁰⁸ Similar to Hays (2012: 508), who translated as ‘enduring’.

The term *imjm* is equally difficult to translate. While the general sense is clear, the exact nuances of the term cannot be defined. It is exclusively attested in the Pyramid Texts and always used in the context of the king being wished to be *imjm* (PT 197, 364, 432). Unfortunately, none of these contexts helps making clear whether *imjm* means becoming strong, powerful, long-living, or any other positive trait.

That *di* is not to be seen as passive voice, but rather an active form, as already demonstrated by Hays.²⁰⁹ Several spells are structured in a way that addresses the beneficiary directly, expressed in second person.²¹⁰ The speaker, usually present in the first person =*j*, and presumably omitted in PT 244, is the priest directly speaking to the deceased. This structure is paralleled in P. Berlin P3055 (A4.2), where the spells are recited towards the image of the god. Hays argued convincingly that several Pyramid Text spells (including PT 244) were meant to be recited.²¹¹ Therefore, PT 244 needs to be interpreted as a performed text, just like many spells of the offering ritual, as well as libation and censuring spells. This has some implications for the actual performance of the BdV. Traditional interpretations see the BdV as a concluding rite which is of a different nature than the offering to the god. It has been assumed that it was performed after the other rites were concluded and probably on the threshold of the tomb.²¹² If Hays' interpretation of PT 244 is correct, however, then the BdV must have been performed at the same place as the preceding ritual acts, where a direct addressing of the deceased would be sensible. The most likely place would be in front of the offering table or false door, or the statue or mummy of the deceased.

As for the content of the recitation spell and its implication for the BdV, some observations can be made. As discussed above, if read within the context of the offering ritual, a reference to the enemy ('he') is part of the standard structure. The same goes for the juxtaposition of the eye of Horus with the object offered to the deceased. What exactly the 'persisting eye of Horus' represents, however, is still unclear. As pointed out by Altenmüller,²¹³ the same recitation text of PT 244 also appears in PT 197. He could see no obvious connection between the two spells, but if one considers the organisation of the texts in the pyramid then a certain pattern is visible. Both PT 244 and 197 are part of the offering ritual. While PT 244 calls for the BdV, the instruction of PT 197 concerns the offering of a special type of bread (*t dw; m-d r=f* 'Morning bread beside him',²¹⁴ a ritual instruction that is equally unique and hard to classify.²¹⁵ Both have in common, however, that they follow a spell which sums up and closes the aforementioned offerings: in the case of PT 244 it is the 'reversion of the offerings' (PT 199), for PT 197 it is simply the dedication of 'the offering' (*hnt*, PT 196). Moreover, the recitation of these two preceding rites explicitly wishes for the eye of Horus to be everlasting (*nhh*).²¹⁶

It must be concluded that the notion of the persisting or the everlasting eye of Horus is characteristic for the closing rites of a section of offering rites. It does make sense to wish for the eye – representing the offering for the deceased – to continue existing for eternity before concluding the ritual. Even though this does not give an exact explanation for the BdV, one could assume that a notion of eternal persistence might be associated with the rite.

²⁰⁹ Hays 2012: 127–131.

²¹⁰ See the list in Hays 2012: 128.

²¹¹ Hays 2012: 127–131.

²¹² Blackman 1924: 51; Theis 2011: 99.

²¹³ Altenmüller 1972: 198–100.

²¹⁴ According to Hays 2012: 488.

²¹⁵ Hays (2012: 488) listed it under 'Miscellaneous Action Instruction'.

²¹⁶ See Allen 2005: 26, 258; Hays 2012: 346–347, who translated literally 'the Eye of Horus Nekhekh'. Whether the eye of Horus is wished to be everlasting, or *nhh* it is part of its name does not have an impact on the argument made here.

The Old Kingdom Private Contexts

The Old Kingdom offering lists have received very little scholarly attention. The BdV finds its entry in the list Type A,²¹⁷ which describes a great food offering in the 5th Dynasty. Apparently, it disappeared again rather quickly, as there is no trace of the BdV in the lists known from the First Intermediate Period. Attestations of the BdV in private tombs are common in the 5th and 6th Dynasties. Most examples come from Saqqara (B1.4–B1.11, B1.13–B1.15, B1.17, B1.19), but singular attestations appear in Giza (B1.12), Meir (B1.16), and Deshasha (B1.18). In two instances (B1.18–19) it is recorded in offering lists painted on the inside of coffins. I located a total of 16 examples (B1.4–19) from private contexts. If appearing in list form, the phrase ‘*sd̄ dšr.wt*’ is added in one of the slots at the end of a list, among other ritual instructions. These instructions mark the closing of the offering ritual and correspond largely with the final acts of the offering ritual described in the Pyramid Texts. No strict order concerning the choice of rites, or their order of appearance, seems to exist. Generally, the BdV tends to come after the *ini.t rd* (‘removing of the footprints’) and the *ḥꜛ.t-wdḥ.w* (‘first of the offerings’). Following it often come libations (*di.t kbḥ*) and incense (*sd̄.t snṯr*)

Just like in the Pyramid Texts, this suggests a close connection between the BdV and the offering ritual. The above proposed idea that the BdV will have taken place with the other offerings in a place suitable to deliver offerings to the deceased resonates well with its appearance in the private tombs. While nearly all attestations of the BdV are found within offering lists, the tomb of Mereruka shows some of the acts performed, listing the BdV among them (B1.4–6). Unfortunately, it is only mentioned in the text, directly following the image of a man performing the *ini.t rd* and right above the figure of a man performing different food and drink offerings. The whole scene is directed towards a depiction of the seated tomb owner. The same is true for the instances in which the BdV is set in the offering list. As common for such lists, they are located at places in the tomb with a close connection to the deceased: facing niches or false doors, or depicted in front of the recipient. Everything in this setup suggests that the BdV was carried out together with these offering rites, at the location of the food offering.

The BdV in the Middle Kingdom

Attestations of the BdV in the Middle Kingdom are much rarer than in the Old Kingdom.²¹⁸ Apart from the singular appearance of PT 244 in the tomb of Senwosretankh (B2.1) the BdV is not attested in tomb decoration. It is, however, mentioned in CT 926:

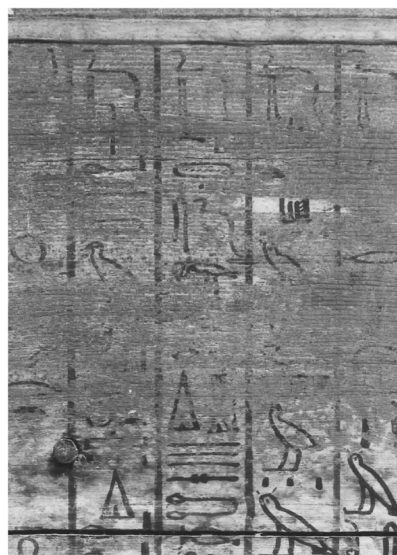
Wash yourself, sit down at the meal, put your hands on it; divert the god’s-offerings, break the red pots, give cold water, purify the offering-tables with [...], make libation; fire and incense are for N in all his dignities and in all his places which he desires [...] at [the temple (?)]. May you appear in the retinue of the king [...].²¹⁹

The appearance of the BdV in this Coffin Text spell has often been used to present a straightforward transition from the Old Kingdom to the Middle and New Kingdom. The assumption that the BdV was commonly performed in the Middle Kingdom, however, would be an extreme overstatement if the number and type of attestations are seen as representative. Among the 218 examples of Coffin Text attestations examined by Adriaan de Buck, only four contain CT 926 (B2.2–5, Figure 9).

²¹⁷ Barta 1963: 72–82.

²¹⁸ No examples from the First Intermediate Period are known so far.

²¹⁹ Translation following Faulkner 1978: 66.



B2.2 (M2C)



B2.3 (M4C)



B2.4 (M5C)



B2.5 (M6C)

Figure 9. Attestations of CT 926 on Middle Kingdom coffins. Photographs © by the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, in the collection of the Netherlands Institute for the Near East, Leiden, De Buck archive

All four coffins were found in the necropolis of Meir and date to the time between Senwosret I and Amenemhat II.²²⁰ Among the 63 coffins with the same provenance this represents only 6.35%, and from all the 216 coffins recorded, a small 1.83%.

In these four instances, CT 926 is always written on the front side, towards which the face of the mummy would be directed. The spell always appears closely following an offering list. In B2.5, the spell is even written inside the last slot of the list, just as in the private offering lists from Old Kingdom – the continuous evolution is clearly visible. Unlike the BdV in Old Kingdom private lists, CT 926 includes

²²⁰ Willems 1988: 97.


several rites previously listed individually: right before ‘*sd dšr.wt*’ stands ‘*wdb ḥtp.w-ntr*’, the reversion of the offerings known from PT 199. Libations (*sṯ*) and the burning of incense (*snṯr*) following the BdV are already known from PT 23 and 25, and occasionally appear after it in the Old Kingdom offering lists. The passages new to CT 926 – although quite heavily damaged – seem to contain the same topic of purification. Only on B2.2 does the spell end by wishing the deceased a successful afterlife.²²¹

In conclusion, it can be said that the BdV in Middle Kingdom sources seems to neatly follow the data from Old Kingdom. It appears at the end of the offering list, and is one of the concluding acts of the offering ritual. The scenario presented in the Middle Kingdom fits with the older sources: the offerings are presented with all necessary recitations, and handed over to the deceased in the ‘reversion’. Directly afterwards the *dšr.wt* are broken. In the Coffin Texts, the purifications with water and incense always follow this act and mark the end of the offering ritual.

It cannot be ignored, however, that the number and provenance of the attestations are problematic. The transmitted evidence, which by no means can be seen as entirely reliable in its representation of the ancient Egyptian culture, does, however, appear too uniform to be dismissed as coincidence. Based on the available evidence it appears as if the BdV has become much less prominent compared to the Old Kingdom. The exclusive appearance of CT 926 on coffins from Meir points to a local tradition. It is, of course, possible that the lack of attestations is due to the comparatively poor level of research into the tombs and funerary practices of the Middle Kingdom. It is equally possible that the rite was still performed, and just disappeared from the textual record. Until further evidence emerges, however, this has to remain speculation.

The BdV Scene in the Luxor Temple

The Second Intermediate Period has revealed no trace of the BdV. The only textual attestation in the New Kingdom is also the last recorded textual mention of the rite. This can be found in the Luxor Temple, on the east wall of room XVII (B3.1). The function of the room is related to the smaller surrounding chambers accessible through it. The primary purpose, reflected in the decoration, is the main offering ritual dedicated to the central cult image in room XIX.²²² Additionally, the decoration and architecture of the room hint at its significance for the solar cult. The room is also defined by its east–west axis, which, enhanced by depictions of the solar barque as the dawning and setting sun on the east and west walls, illustrates the solar cycle.²²³

The scene showing the BdV is located on the middle register, left of the door leading to room XV, which contained a cult image of Amun.²²⁴ Amenhotep III is depicted standing in front of Amun holding two (still intact) vessels. The depiction seems to capture the moment just before the vessels are broken by smashing them against each other. The inscription  in front of the king proves that this scene shows the BdV, which to this point has only been attested in funerary context.

The only scholar discussing the scene in more detail is Müller.²²⁵ She argued that the BdV was connected to the solar cult and, based on its interpretation as an execration rite, saw it as a rite against the general evil *isf.t*. Her argumentation is based on several scenes she identified as the burning of offerings.²²⁶

²²¹ De Buck 1961: 129.

²²² Brunner 1977: 79.


²²³ Brunner 1977: 80–81.

²²⁴ Brunner 1977: Pl. XVI.

²²⁵ Müller 2006: 73–74; 2008: 342–343.

²²⁶ According to Müller, the slaughtered animals on the altars are in the process of being burned. The depiction does not show flames to confirm this idea, but Müller (2008: 340) suggested that they could have been painted and are now lost. Note, however, that the king is shown pouring liquid over one of the offerings.

Stating that neither the burning of offerings nor the BdV have elsewhere been attested in the ritual of the cult image, she concluded that both scenes have to be connected to the second theme present in the room, the solar theology.²²⁷ However, since the BdV is also never attested in the context of the solar cult, an *argumentum ex silentio* alone is, in my opinion, not convincing enough to settle the case and would require further evidence to support the claim. That there is no reason to connect the BdV to the execration rites, as Müller assumed, has been discussed above.²²⁸

An attentive examination of the scene itself may prove more promising. While it does not provide an explanation for the presence of the rite, it still contains useful information. The surroundings of the scene are clearly structured: the upper register is occupied by a depiction of the solar barque, which is paralleled on the west wall, on the opposite side of the room. The second register contains scenes of the ritual of the cult image with the king presenting different offerings to Amun-Ra. The same theme is continued on the adjoining sections of the north and south wall. The lower register shows the king receiving recognition from the gods. Based on its position within the temple, the scene of the BdV appears to show the rite performed in front of a cult image of Amun. The texts above and behind the king and Amun contain standardised formulae, but the title of the scene continues after ‘*sḏ dšr.wt*’:  *ir=f dj.w nḥ*, ‘so that he may achieve “given life”’.²²⁹ This detail may not explain the exact dynamics of the rite, but it reflects an aspect of it: the king breaks the vessels in order to be given life by Amun. Subsequently, this act must have had a positive effect for the god. This means that this positive effect evoked by breaking the *dšr.wt* seems to be universal and applicable to deceased private individuals, kings, and even divinities. Waitkus has, indeed, argued that these scenes should be interpreted as funerary offerings to Amun.²³⁰ Even though in earlier sources the BdV appears only in funerary contexts, a setting within the offering ritual, performed in front of a cult statue matches well with the Old and Middle Kingdom examples. The tendency to exchange elements of funerary and temple ritual is particularly prominent in the New Kingdom. It is possible, however, that the journey of the sun shown above the BdV, particularly present along the east-west axis of the room, has additionally motivated the choice of depicting this specific scene.²³¹

The scene in the Luxor Temple serves another important function for the interpretation of the BdV. Apart from depicting how the *dšr.wt* may have been fragmented in this context, by smashing two of them against each other, this scene also clearly shows their shape: it corresponds perfectly with the standard *dšr.wt* form, particularly prominent in the New Kingdom. Moreover, the purification with *dšr.t*-Vessels is shown in the same room on three different occasions (A3.14–16), their shape matching the one in the BdV scene. This is of great importance for understanding how the rite was conceptualised at this time. It indicates that even in the New Kingdom the ancient Egyptians understood the vessels broken in the BdV as the same vessels common for purification rites. This insight has considerable implications for the interpretations of the scenes from the Theban and Memphite necropoleis, which will be discussed below.

²²⁷ Müller 2006: 73; 2008: 342. In the latter, Müller acknowledged that the scene of the BdV is integrated within the scenes concerning the ritual of the cult image. The absence of comparable scenes appears to have been enough for her to dismiss this context.

²²⁸ In this regard, I consider Müller’s argumentation problematic for another reason. The main argument for connecting the vessels to the execration rite is the colour red and its associations with the god Seth. In the mythological context of the solar journey, however, Seth appears as a powerful aide of the sun god against Apophis, not as the sun god’s enemy. Müller’s (2008: 343) literal equation ‘Apophis (= Seth)’ cannot hold in this context.



²²⁹ Following the translation of Waitkus 2008, II: 135.

²³⁰ Waitkus 2008, I: 95.

²³¹ A possible connection is presented below.

The *dšr.wt* in the BdV

Unfortunately, the scene in the Luxor Temple is the only one in which a depiction of vessel-breaking is unmistakably identifiable as the BdV, thanks to the inscription. This scene has already served to clearly define the form of the vessels broken in the rite: it seems to be the same round-based, carinated squat jars used for purifications in other contexts. The Opening of the Mouth tool list of Merymery (A3.17) informs that these vessels were, at least occasionally, made of silver. Smashing two silver vessels together, as in the Luxor scene, would certainly not break them. Assuming that the rite still involves the breakage, as the accompanying text claims, one would expect that at least in this instance ceramic vessels were still used.

Even though no iconographical evidence combined with a text clearly demarking them as *dšr.wt* exists from the earlier periods, it is possible to draw some information on the *dšr.wt* from the texts. The spelling for ‘*dšr.wt*’ in the pyramids of Merenre (B1.2) seems to use  as a classifier. This specific part seems to be damaged in Pepy I (B1.3). Unas’ writing (B1.1) is particularly interesting: ‘*dšr.tj*’ is written ideographically using  twice, but is followed by a classifier of a vessel similar to a funnel-necked jar lying on its side. The same jar is used as a classifier for *sḏ*, only this vessel seems to be perforated on the upper side. It also appears twice as the classifier for *sḏ* in the tomb of Hesi at Saqqara (B1.8). Another unusual classifier is used in Merenre’s example, not after *sḏ*, but following the whole phrase. This sign () and the damaged-pot classifier from Unas have led scholars to assume that in the BdV the vessels were smashed with a tool similar to a mortar.²³² Overall, the spellings of the BdV in private tombs are quite diverse. While the use of classifiers is generally rather scarce, a few lists include small depictions which represent the act described in each slot. Most show a standardised depiction of an offering man (B1.7–9, B1.11, B1.17). A single example from the tomb of Idu (B1.12) is more specific in this respect.²³³ The tiny image shows a man bent over a table-like structure. He seems to be holding only one small vessel in his hand, the other arm is reaching towards the neck of the vessel. Unfortunately, it is impossible to say what exact action is depicted, or if a tool is used.

Regrettably, the few Middle Kingdom attestations we have are of little help in determining anything about the vessels or possible breakages. As already mentioned, the vessels broken in the New Kingdom appear to be the same as the ones used for purification, in the typical carinated squat-jar shape. If the depiction from the Luxor Temple (B3.1) is to be taken seriously, one can assume that in the New Kingdom the *dšr.wt* were broken by smashing two together. It is possible, however, that the tradition changed over time, or that there was not even a uniform way of effecting the fragmentation. In the same sense, it has to be considered that it is not even sure what kind of fragmentation the term ‘*sḏ*’ describes²³⁴ – it could even refer to a perforation of the vessels, providing them with a ‘killing hole’, as the classifiers in B1.1 and B1.8 seem to suggest. Currently, I am unaware of any of the archaeological evidence of *dšr.wt*-vessels having a ‘killing hole’, or coming from a closed archaeological context, which would make it possible to identify them as BdV evidence.

Finally, the symbolism of the colour red must be readdressed. It has already been discussed that the common interpretation of the colour red as ‘Sethian’ and evil is mostly influenced by sources dating to the Late Period and later. Considering the use of the *dšr.wt* for purification, an association with an

²³² First proposed by Sethe (1935: 232).

²³³ The images of the lists of B1.7–9 and B1.12 show some of the final rites performed. The *ini.t rd* is visualised in B1.8–9, the *st* is elaborately shown in B1.7. The depictions in the tomb of Idu (B1.12) are by far the most precise.

²³⁴ The word *sḏ* can be used in very diverse contexts suggesting different forms of ‘breaking’, e.g. in PT 260 the king stops the war (*i-sḏ ‘h*), in PT 309 he declares his decrees (*i-sḏ wd.w=f*). A possibly comparable physical ‘breaking’ is mentioned in PT 476 where the scribe is told to break his writing tool (*sḏ mnhd=k*).

evil force seems unlikely. Although several studies of the perception of colour in ancient Egypt exist,²³⁵ thorough research into the meaning of the colour red in earlier periods of Egyptian history is still wanting but would exceed the scope of this study. It is possible, however, to recapitulate the observations on the colour red in the Pyramid Texts already presented above, and try and understand their associations in the periods to which the most secure attestations are dated.

A few examples carry the connotation of danger and destructive power (PT 256, PT 549). In an overall view, the most frequent association of the colour seems to be with the sun, especially in the moments of transition – morning and evening. PT 346, 353, and 401 concern the morning sun, Khepri. When the spirit of the deceased king joins the sun, described in PT 456, the latter is directly referred to as ‘Ba in his redness’ (*b; im(.j) dšr.w=f*). The ‘redness’ coming out of Isis and Nephthys in PT 570b stands in the context of the invocation to the sun at dawn and might again refer to the solar connotation of the colour. The word *dšr.t* for the Red Crown is directly associated with Ra in PT 404.

Of course, to determine the case it would be necessary to conduct further and more in-depth study, and include texts from private tombs. However, an association of *dšr* with the sun could fit well with what is known about the *dšr.t*-Vessels. The ever-returning, regenerative qualities of the dawning sun could match with the notion of continuity of PT 244, which is supposed to be repeated and stands in close connection to the ‘enduring eye of Horus’. A connection to the morning sun could also explain the exceptional presence of the scene in the Luxor Temple (B3.1). Its location on the east wall, directly below the depiction of the solar bark of the newly reborn sun god, fits well with the scenario. If correct, this could explain the unique appearance of the BdV in a temple context – the reason for this would then be the unusual decorative program relating to the solar cycle.

It needs to be kept in mind that the connotations of the colour red changed over time, especially in the New Kingdom. This might have influenced later stages of the rite, or even the way the Old Kingdom texts were interpreted in the following periods. A thorough study of colour symbolism in Egypt incorporating evolution over time would be necessary to explore these possibilities further.

The New Kingdom Vessel-Breaking Scenes

First pointed out by Borchardt, it has become commonly agreed that the BdV is represented in the decorative program of some New Kingdom tombs. One of the most prominent scenes is found in the tomb of Horemheb at Saqqara (B4.1, Figure 10), which unmistakably shows the deliberate breakage of large jars by smashing them on the floor.

More and more similar scenes have become known over the years, both from Saqqara and the Theban necropolis. To date, 25 scenes of this type are known (Catalogue section B4). The determining factor for identifying a vessel-breaking scene in secondary literature appears to be the presence of stands filled with vessels and food, which are often decorated with branches and bouquets and are placed under booth-like structures in the scenes from Saqqara.²³⁶ However, the breakage of vessels is not the only act represented in these contexts (Appendix Table 3). Several scenes show the pouring out of liquids from the same vessels (e.g. B4.5), the slaughtering of bulls and ducks (e.g. B4.18, B4.13), the burning of incense (e.g. B4.19), and the heavy mourning by raising the hands to the sky (e.g. B4.7), or crouching down to the floor (e.g. B4.4). The acts are performed by different people, who can often be identified as personal acquaintances of the deceased.²³⁷ In one case (B4.23), a vessel is smashed by one of the mourning women.

²³⁵ Most recently Warburton 2008: 213–259, and Schenkel 2016: 164–185.

²³⁶ See Barthelmeß 1992: 79–86.

²³⁷ van Dijk 1993: 186.



Figure 10. Vessel breaking scene in the tomb of Horemheb at Saqqara

The surroundings of the scenes vary. The action is mostly found next to scenes of the funerary procession, men carrying different objects, and groups of mourning women (Appendix Table 2). Occasionally, it appears close to different stages of the Opening of the Mouth ritual. Theis claimed that the BdV was embedded in different settings in Thebes and the Memphite region, interpreting it as part of the funerary procession in Thebes, and as part of a funerary meal held in the honour of the deceased at Saqqara.²³⁸

Examining the scenes in more detail, it is noticeable that the actual breakage of vessels is not the most prominent act shown in scenes with the funerary booths (Figure 11).²³⁹ Only eight of the 25 scenes feature depictions of broken vessels. In six the vessels are used to pour liquid.²⁴⁰ Quite common is the burning of incense (eight scenes), rather less frequent is the killing of bulls (five) and ducks (two). By far the most common act in connection with the booths is the mourning, depicted in 18 of 25 scenes. Consequently, the expression of grief has to be interpreted as one of the main motifs connected to this type of scene. The depictions of pouring liquid, breaking vessels, censuring, and slaughtering animals are alternating, thus probably less essential for the understanding of the scene. Therefore, the general trend common among Egyptologists to address all these scenes as BdV, and ignoring all other elements, should be reconsidered as it apparently does not reflect the ancient prioritisation. If these depictions

²³⁸ Theis 2011: 171. I cannot follow his reasoning, however.

²³⁹ For a breakdown, see Appendix Table 3.

²⁴⁰ Another three scenes include vessels, but their use is not clear. The fact that many of the designated BdV scenes do not actually show the breaking of vessels has already been pointed out by Barthelmeß (1992: 83–84).

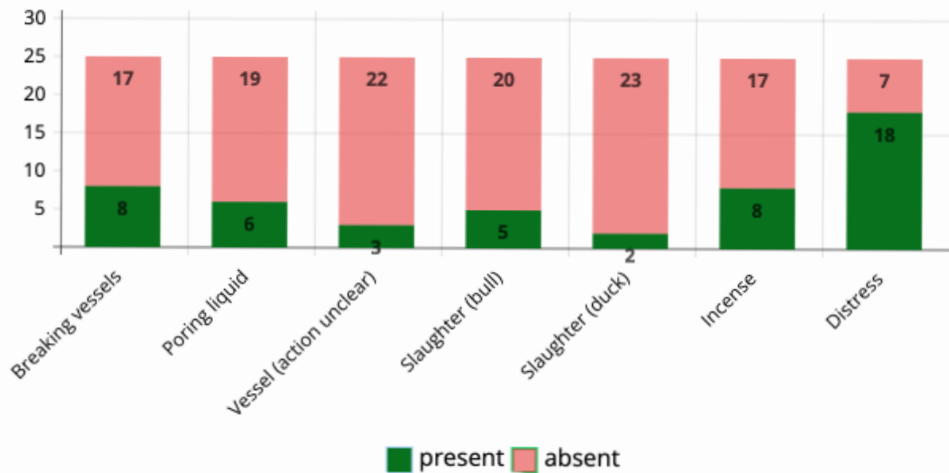


Figure 11. Present and absent elements in the New Kingdom vessel-breaking scenes

indeed represent the BdV, it is certainly not the main theme of the scene but only one of several different acts taking place.

This leads to another important point. The identification of these scenes as BdV, based on Borchardt's suggestion in 1929, has never been questioned since. However, connecting them to the textual attestations of BdV poses several problems. Already the apparent connection to the act of mourning is slightly confusing, as it does not seem directly to relate to the context of BdV from earlier times (purification, offering, etc.).²⁴¹ More complicated to explain is the context in which the scenes appear. While in texts the BdV is always set at the end of the offering ritual, it has never been embedded in the funerary procession.²⁴² A connection to the Opening of the Mouth ceremony would be plausible, even though one would expect the act to be performed in front of an image of the deceased in order to be effective. The vessel breakage next to the stands, however, seems completely random and not directed towards the deceased. If the piles of vessels and food on the booths are to be interpreted as offerings to the deceased it would be possible to see the breakage of the vessels at least within the closer context of the food offering, as in earlier sources. It has to be noticed, however, that the same stands with booths, including scenes of censuring and slaughtering of animals, can also be part of a festival, as in the tomb of Meryneith.²⁴³ The vessel-breaking scene in the same tomb (B4.3) shows the exact same elements, making the interpretation of these goods as part of a funerary banquet more likely. Confusingly, the vessel-breaking scenes in B4.1, B4.3, B4.15, and B4.25, do not take place in front of the funerary booths, but a solid structure. Is it to be interpreted that the vessel-breaking could be performed in different places? Or that the breaking and the festival took place at different locations? While the earlier (textual) attestations of the BdV suggest a ritual setting close to the tomb, these scenes seem to be occurring in different places. The same discrepancy is present when considering the people involved in the ritual. In the Old Kingdom, the rite was carried out by the same individuals involved in the surrounding rites – the *sꜣt*, the *ini.t rd*, the *wꜣb ḥtp-nṯr*, etc. These rites are generally performed by priests, like the *ḥri-ḥb*, as shown in the tomb of Mereruka (B1.4–B1.6). Again, this does not match with the New Kingdom tomb scenes, where the act seems to be carried out by friends and colleagues of the deceased. Moreover, the kind of Old Kingdom scenes in which the BdV appears still exist in the New Kingdom tombs, but in a

²⁴¹ Neither would it fit well with the previous – and here rejected – interpretation of repelling evil, an issue that has, to my knowledge, never been specifically addressed.

²⁴² This discrepancy has already been noted by Barthelmeß 1992: 84.

²⁴³ Raven and van Walsem 2014: 114 (No. 26).


















Breakage	B4.1	B4.2	B4.3	B4.4	B4.11	B4.16	B4.22	B4.23
								
Pouring Liquid	B4.5	B4.13	B4.15	B4.19	B4.21	B4.24		
								
Unclear	B4.6	B4.12	B4.25					
								

Figure 12. Shape of vessels in the New Kingdom vessel-breaking scenes

completely different setting than the vessel-breaking scenes. The tomb of Amenemhat (TT 82) contains a scene in which the *hrj-ḥb* and *ḥm-nṯr* present offerings to the deceased and perform the rites of *st*, *ir snṯr*, and *inj.t rd*.²⁴⁴ However, there is no trace of the BdV, neither in the offering list nor the depictions. If the vessel breakage shown in the depictions indeed represented the BdV, the rite must have been detached from its original context among the other rites and performed in a different setting, therewith possibly even losing its original purpose.

The final problematic part of connecting the New Kingdom vessel-breaking scenes to the BdV are the vessels themselves. We saw above that in the New Kingdom the vessels called *dšr.wt* are always depicted as carinated, round-based squat jars. The vessels smashed next to the stands and funerary booths do not match this shape at all. While the *dšr.wt* are small with a round-shaped body, the broken vessels in most cases resemble the common funnel-necked jars, or even large storage jars. Overall, their appearance is quite diverse (Figure 12). If the vessels used to pour liquid are also to be interpreted as *dšr.wt*,²⁴⁵ the diversity increases further. In B4.21 and B4.24 the vessels even show some sort of decoration, possibly representing the ‘brown-and-red-painted’ or the common ‘blue-painted’ styles, both used throughout the entire New Kingdom.²⁴⁶ The vessel in B4.15 is obviously made for libations, as it has a spout near the shoulder.

The tomb of Meryneith features both a vessel-breaking scene (B4.3) and one showing the purification with *dšr.wt* (A3.19). This illustrates that the vessels used for purification, which are referred to as *dšr.wt* in texts, are definitely not the same as the ones being broken here.

²⁴⁴ De Garis Davies and Gardiner 1915: Pl. XVIII.

²⁴⁵ Following e.g. van Dijk 1993: 183.

²⁴⁶ Arnold 1993: 99–100.

All these factors leave only two possible scenarios:

The BdV known from the texts underwent several serious changes and was reinterpreted in the New Kingdom. It was removed from the final rites of the offering ritual and reinstalled, possibly with another purpose, in the context of the funerary procession. The act no longer had to be performed by the priests, but could be done by acquaintances of the deceased. It was also disassociated from the *dšr.t*-Vessels regularly used for purification and could now be performed with any vessel. The association of the *dšr.wt*, and potentially with the colour red, mattered no more, as even decorated ware was used. Consequently, with so many changes in context, dynamics, and involved objects, it is possible, and even likely, that the original purpose of the act would also have changed. The scene in the Luxor Temple would represent a single, archaising example of the older version of the rite.

Changes and reinterpretations of older rituals are quite common in the Late Period and Graeco-Roman Period, but could also be proven for earlier times.²⁴⁷ However, as elaborated above, it is likely that what the ancient Egyptians referred to as '*dšr.t*' at the time of the New Kingdom was probably a carinated squat jar with a rounded base, possibly made of metal, and used for the divine, royal, and mortuary cult. This could explain why the New Kingdom depictions show other types of vessels being smashed, since the *dšr.wt* might no longer have been regularly produced in clay. Even if the depicted act was still perceived as the 'old' BdV, it might well be that the meaning of the rite had changed, too. It is likely that the 'old' BdV had already fallen largely out of use in the Middle Kingdom – the original meaning might even have been forgotten in most parts of the country over the stretch of the five hundred years between the end of the Old and the beginning of the New Kingdom. One could speculate that the transformation of red into a colour with more negative connotations might have influenced the reinterpretation.

It has to be noted, however, that the vessels called '*dšr.t*' still carried a positive connotation in New Kingdom. Personally, I consider it unlikely that their meaning would be changed if the act were perceived as a reinterpretation of a rite called 'breaking the *dšr.wt*' by the ancient Egyptians. This would end in an opposition, whereby both 'positive' *dšr.wt* and 'negative' *dšr.wt* would be used in the same funerary setting – a rather unlikely situation, surely. However, if the scenario of a change and re-interpretation is correct, it appears to have been a rather short-lived phenomenon of the New Kingdom.

The second option would be the following:

The New Kingdom scenes of vessel-breaking do not show the BdV. As suggested by the number of textual attestations in the Middle and New Kingdom, the use of the BdV started to decrease after the end of the Old Kingdom and became completely obsolete during the course of the New Kingdom. While the more popular surrounding rites like the *sṯ* and the *in.t rd* continued to be performed and depicted in tomb decoration, the BdV disappeared from the spectrum of funerary rites. Its last appearance in the Luxor Temple might have been motivated by the untypical decoration theme of room XVII and its connection to the solar journey – provided that the connection between the *dšr.t*-Vessels and the solar symbolism, tentatively suggested above, proves to be correct. Meanwhile, the decoration scheme of the private tombs now showed more scenes of the funerary festivities compared to their predecessors from the Old and Middle Kingdom. One of those is the breakage of vessels used during the funeral – be it during an offering ceremony or a feast of the bereaved. Here, mundane vessels of different types were smashed – whether motivated by the urge to make them unusable, as dedications to the deceased, as an

²⁴⁷ See Pries 2016.

expression of grief, or other reason – and potentially deposited, resulting in the archaeological contexts that reveal deliberately fragmented vessels of different kinds.

Connecting the BdV with the archaeological evidence of intentionally broken pottery has been problematic due to major discrepancies in the quantity of evidence and periods of attestation, as well as diversity, colour, and the inhomogeneous pattern of broken and non-broken pottery. However, if detached from the BdV and its ritual setting, the vessel-breaking scenes of the New Kingdom tombs could well be matched with the archaeological remains found in the offering pits. These pits contained some, but not exclusively, broken pottery of different types, incense bowls, animal bones, branches, and bouquets, and would therewith fit the depictions. The act of intentionally damaging vessels, attested archaeologically through almost the entirety of Egyptian history, might have found its way into the decorative programs of some private tombs for a brief period in the New Kingdom. Consequently, the vessel-breaking scenes and the BdV would be two different rites among the many fragmentation acts encountered in ancient Egypt.

Judging from the available evidence, both scenarios seem feasible. However, given the plethora of different fragmentation acts that seem to have existed in ancient Egypt, many of which have only been studied superficially, the second scenario seems the safer option for the time being. Studied independently of each other, the risk of projecting information from one fragmentation act to the other, and thus confusing and conflating what may be different rites, is reduced. It is to be hoped that further studies will provide a more complete picture of what the pottery fragmentation phenomenon was associated with, and thus more contextual information that can be used to decide this particular case.

Summary and Conclusion

First and foremost, it is to be hoped that this study has shown that the research of deliberate damage to objects in Egypt deserves much more attention than it has received in the past. It was demonstrated that the commonly accepted interpretations of BdV – as an execration rite against evil and as the disposal of vessels – are difficult to sustain given the evidence available today. Moreover, I hope to have shown that many of the problems of interpreting the rite arise only from the identification of several different forms of fragmentation as BdV. Looking at the wider field of fragmentation, studies have shown not only that the intentional damage of objects can take many different forms, but also that great care is needed when identifying and interpreting these acts. The general view of fragmentation rites in Egypt has suffered from outdated and overly hasty interpretations based on modern, anachronistic assumptions about what is ‘logical’. Therefore, a careful analysis of each element of the BdV was necessary.

A study of the *dšr.wt* outside the BdV has shown that the vessels became popular from the Middle Kingdom onwards, if not earlier, as vessels containing water for purification. Together with the *nms.wt* they were used in the Opening of the Mouth ritual as well as in rites performed on cult images in temples. Certainly since the New Kingdom, but probably earlier, the *dšr.t*-Vessels were associated with the shape of a carinated, round-based squat jar. Their use as purification vessels continued into the Ptolemaic period. Their appearance in the dual form often found in offering lists links them directly to the two red eyes of Horus, a motif which seems to be associated with purification, but also with strength and power used against opponents.

A closer look at BdV in the Old Kingdom showed that the rite always appears in a specific context. Typically, it follows the reversion of the offerings and is imbedded within different rites of purification. Analysing the recitation text of PT 244 and PT 197 has shown that both spells are concluding a section of offering rites and appear to have had the purpose of rendering the offerings persisting for the deceased. Based on the evidence of the Old and Middle Kingdom, it has been suggested that the BdV took place at the same location in which the offerings were presented: in front of false doors and offering tables, or directly in front of the mummy or a statue of the recipient. While the nature of the BdV seems to have stayed the same, the Middle Kingdom denotes an extreme decline in attestations, leading to the New Kingdom with only one secure attestation of the BdV. This exceptional scene at the Luxor temple seems to confirm the localisation of the BdV in front of a manifestation of the recipient, in this case the cult image of Amun. This specific scene proved that the vessels broken during the rite were indeed regarded as the same ones used for purification in other rites. It is possible that this exceptional appearance of the BdV in the temple context might not only be connected to the cult image ritual, but might also be motivated by the unusual notion of the solar journey present in the depictions and architecture of the room and an association of the *dšr.wt* with solar aspects in the Pyramid Texts.

Archaeological evidence from the Old and Middle Kingdom of vessels resembling the *dšr.wt* as depicted in the New Kingdom seems to suggest that this form was already typical for the vessels in earlier times. It has been elaborated that the understanding of the original symbolic meaning of the *dšr.t*-Vessels – provided that their etymology is indeed connected to the colour red, which is by no means certain – is tied to a more evidence-based interpretation of the colour’s meaning, which would require an in-depth study. A brief overview showed that a connection of the vessels with the morning sun might be an option for the Old Kingdom.

Comparing all the information gathered on the BdV with the vessel-breaking scenes in New Kingdom private tombs showed that the evidence is not consistent. Two scenarios were proposed: (1) either the

ritual underwent a number of changes, or is even a reinterpretation of an obsolete earlier version; or (2) the New Kingdom scenes actually show not the BdV, but a different form of fragmentation, one which could possibly be linked to some of the archaeological evidence of deliberately broken ceramics. Without further evidence, the question of which of the two, if either, is correct cannot be answered with certainty. From a perspective focused on the future of fragmentation studies in Egypt – and therefore judged by practicality rather than proximity to objective truth – it is probably safer to treat the evidence as distinct datasets for the time being. Given the plethora of different fragmentation acts that appear to have existed in ancient Egypt, many of which have only been studied superficially, more evidence and insights into fragmentation practices are bound to emerge. In this case, it seems wisest to present the current evidence as transparently as possible, in the hope that future work will provide more definitive answers.

Two questions remain open. Is there any archaeological evidence that can be safely identified as being linked to BdV? Considering the results of this study, it might be assumed that the physical remains of the rite – at least in its early stage in the Old Kingdom – are round-based, carinated squat jars that show some kind of deliberate damage. If a connection to non-fragmented *dšr.wt* exists, they might appear in groups of two or four. As for the find context, one would assume that, due to their involvement in important rituals, they were not seen as useless and thus carelessly discarded as rubbish after being broken. Therefore, one would not expect them to have been dumped carelessly or mixed with objects that may have been considered impure. A deposition with other items involved in the rites would be feasible, although I am not currently aware of a fragmentation context that would fit all the criteria. Generally, one would expect more contexts of this dating to the Old Kingdom than from later periods. If the rite was reinterpreted and applied to other vessels as well (as proposed in the first scenario), the possibilities are, of course, endless.

These considerations are purely hypothetical, however. It has to be considered that it is uncertain whether the *dšr.wt* ended up in a closed archaeological context where they would be recognisable as such. An illuminating example of a fragmentation rite, which is not archaeologically traceable, has been termed as ‘enchainment’ by Chapman, explained on the basis of the following anecdote.²⁴⁸ The aforementioned archaeologist Leslie Grinsell, who had been fascinated all his life by the concept of deliberate breakage, had left very specific instructions concerning his funeral in his will. He asked that a group of chosen friends should break a vessel into pieces on the day of his funeral. Each participant would then take home one of the pieces. The vessel, though broken, would bind these people together through a shared memory – they would be connected, *enchained* by the breaking.

This is only one of many different scenarios whereby no archaeological trace of such an act would remain to be found. At present, it appears as if none of the presented contexts fulfil the criteria to be convincingly identified as remains of the BdV as described in the texts. We must, therefore, leave this question open for the moment.

The second question concerns the interpretation of the element of ‘breakage’ in the BdV. It has been shown that, as far as can be gathered from the primary sources, the *dšr.wt* seem to have had an exclusively positive connotation. One might wonder why the ‘breaking’ of an object should be associated with something positive. By including the study of fragmentation in this research, the objective has been to try and demonstrate that modern ideas of what ‘breaking’ an object means are not necessarily related to any thought patterns connected to this act in other cultures. The simple and unbiased interpretation suggested by fragmentation researchers is that the damaging of an object represents a change, a transformation of it into another state of being. It is possible that this transformation represents the

²⁴⁸ Chapman and Gaydarska 2006: 1–2.

final 'handing over' of the relevant offerings, a point of 'no return' through which a transition from one world to the other is defined. It is to be hoped that future studies and new evidence will provide answers to this question, but for the moment, as with the previous one, it must also remain open.

Appendix

Appendix Table 1²⁴⁹

Nr	Context (as defined in the publication)	Dating	Type of vessels; Characteristics	Other finds	Publication; Adressed as BDV by
1	False shafts of mastabas in Giza and Saqqara	3rd – 6th Dynasty	Bowls, plates Some with red slip	Charcoal; burnt plants, bones, and pottery	Rzeuska 2002; <i>Id.</i> 2004 <i>Ibid.</i>
2	Mud brick structure north of the Mastaba AS 37 (Abusir South)	Old Kingdom	Beer jars (25), bread forms (9), platters (5), bowls (5), stands (2) Some with 'killing holes'; some with mud stoppers which occasionally contained a 'killing hole'	Animal bones (117 fragments); pounders with colour traces	Bárta <i>et al.</i> 2017 <i>Ibid.</i>
3	Offering deposits in Tell el-Daba	13th–18th Dynasty	Pots, jars, water vessels	Incense bowls; lamps; animal bones (partly burned); vessel stands	Müller 2006 <i>Ibid.</i>
4	Vessels with 'killing hole' found by the German mission in Dra Abu el-Naga	2nd Int. Period	Beakers, jars, bottles, <i>hs</i> -vases Red wash	– not in deposit –	Seiler 2005: Figs. 37, 40–41, 46–48; Pl. IVb Harrington 2013: 39 ²⁵⁰
5	Vessels found in Umm el-Qaab close to the Heqareshu-hill (Abydos)	Early 18th Dynasty	Beer jars, cups, bowls, beakers, bottles With red painted rim or splashes of red paint; some with 'killing hole'	– not in deposit –	Budka <i>et al.</i> 2010: 41, 61–62, Fig. 21 <i>Ibid.</i>
6	Deposit in Tomb I of the Austrian Concession in the Asasif	18th Dynasty	Cups, bottles, <i>hs</i> -vases, vessel stands, incense burners Some with red polish	Mummy wrappings (partly burned); two skulls; several long bones	Budka 2010: 92, 393 <i>Ibid.</i>
7	Pottery jars with 'killing holes' in Amarna South Cemetery deposit	Amarna Period	Jars With 'killing hole'	?	According to Harrington 2013: 39 ²⁵¹

²⁴⁹ Due to the scope of this study only a limited amount of secondary literature could be searched systematically. Archaeological contexts containing intentionally damaged pottery have come to light more and more often in recent years. Especially deposits identified as so-called embalmers' caches seem very frequent (see Ben Amar 2007.). Following the argumentation of previously mentioned scholars, these caches would all potentially qualify as archaeological evidence of BdV. Because of the abundance of the material only contexts identified as BdV by scholars are listed here.

²⁵⁰ The reference Harrington provided (i.e. 'Seiler 1995: 187, 191') does not refer to the information. I have collected all the evidence for 'killing holes' in the cited publication, assuming this is what Harrington intended.

²⁵¹ Harrington's reference ('Stevens 2009b: 58–9' = A. Stevens, 'South Tombs Cemetery', in B. J. Kemp, 'Tell el-Amarna, 2008–9', *JEA* 95, 1–34') appears to be incorrect.

BREAKING THE DŠR.T-VESSELS

Nr	Context (as defined in the publication)	Dating	Type of vessels; Characteristics	Other finds	Publication; Addressed as BDV by
8	Red pottery in the tomb of Tutankhamun	Tutankhamun	'red pottery stopper with blue decoration', 'red libation pot', 'red pottery jars'	'black substance', bones, fragments of an ivory box, wooden label, two clay seals	Carter's object cards Nos 175a, 177, 197, and 203 (<i>The Griffith institute online</i> (http:// www.griffith.ox.ac.uk/ perl/gi-ca-qsearch.pl , accessed 19.10.23) ²⁵² Wilkinson 1985: 334
9	Deposit in the court of TT 196	New Kingdom	Jars, bottles, bowls Partly with 'killing holes'; 'mostly red'	Leaves and branches	Graefe 2005 <i>Ibid.</i>
10	Cache in the forecourt of the tomb of Paser (Saqqara)	New Kingdom	beer bottles, funnel necked jars one sherd with 'killing hole'	Reused sherds as (paint and plaster pot, lamps, for drawings)	Bourriau and Aston 1985: 47–48 <i>Ibid.</i>
11	Deposit close to TT 11 (Djehuti)	Late New Kingdom – early 3rd Int. Period	64 jars, more than 12 dishes, some bowls Uncoated or whitish/ whitish-orange slip	44 flower bouquets; papyrus fragment; human bones; small piece of a statue; fragments of wooden coffins	López-Grande and de Gregorio. López-Grande 2013 <i>Ibid.</i>
12	Broken vessels found in enclosure walls of Ku. 19 and Ku. Tum 6 (el- Kurru, Sudan)	10th – 9th century BCE	Large amphorae, footed offering bowls Mostly red polished; decorations in white and black; 'killing holes' on the bottom	?	Kendall and Doll 1982: 22–23 <i>Ibid.</i>
13	Embalming caches around the tombs of Horemheb and Paser in Saqqara	Late Period	Jars, bottles, torches, stoppers, pot stands, plates	Scraps of demotic papyri; ashes; faience cup with resinous material	Bourriau and Aston 1985: 54–55 ? ²⁵³
14	Ptolemaic vessels the third court of TT 36 (Ibi)	Ptol. Period	7 storage vessels one with killing hole	Found empty	Graefe 1990: 30 Budka 2010: 408–409
15	Carnarvon/Carter vessels found buried in the Asassif	Ptol. Period ?	'amphorae' (=storage vessels)	2 papyri with demotic inscription; seeds; dates cakes; grain	5th Earl of Carnarvon and Carter 1912: 42–45, Pl. XXXIV Budka 2010: 408–409

²⁵² See van Dijk 1993: 185 and n. 61. He disagreed with Wilkinson's attribution: 'There is no evidence to suggest that any of these fragments had in fact anything to do with the ritual of breaking the red pots'.

²⁵³ Van Dijk (1993: 184–185) mentioned that 'a connection with the ritual of breaking the red pots has been suggested' for the embalmer's caches of Saqqara.

APPENDIX

Appendix Table 2²⁵⁴

Catalogue No.	Mourning women	Object carriers	Funerary procession (on land)	Funerary procession (on water)	Opening of the Mouth
B4.1	-	X	-	-	-
B4.2	X	-	-	-	-
B4.3	X	-	-	-	-
B4.4	X	-	-	-	X
B4.5	-	-	-	X	-
B4.6	X	-	-	-	X
B4.7	X	-	-	-	-
B4.8	X	-	-	X	X
B4.9	-	-	-	X	X
B4.10	-	-	-	-	-
B4.11	X	X	X	-	-
B4.12	X	X	X	-	-
B4.13	-	-	X	-	-
B4.14	Unpubl.	Unpubl.	Unpubl.	-	Unpubl.
B4.15	-	X	-	-	-
B4.16	-	X	-	-	-
B4.17	X	-	-	-	X
B4.18	X	X	-	-	-
B4.19	-	-	-	-	-
B4.20	X	X	X	-	-
B4.21	X	-	-	X	X
B4.22	-	X	X	-	-
B4.23	X	-	-	X	-
B4.24	-	X	X	-	-
B4.25	X	-	-	-	-
	14	9	6	5	6

White: Saqqara; Light Grey: Thebes; Dark grey: Akhmim

²⁵⁴ This table was compiled based on scenes defined as BdV by van Dijk (1993: 179–182), Raven (2017: 85), and Harrington (2017: 38, esp. n. 89). B4.18 has not been referred to as BdV, but clearly belongs to the same category of scenes as the others. No picture or drawing of B4.14 was available to me. The information that water was poured is taken from van Dijk 1993: 181–182.

Appendix Table 3

Catalogue No.	Break vessels	Pour liquid	Vessel (action unclear)	Slaughter (bull)	Slaughter (duck)	Incense	Distress
B4.1	X	–	–	X	–	–	X
B4.2	X	–	–	–	–	–	X
B4.3	X	–	–	X	–	X	X
B4.4	X	–	–	–	–	–	X
B4.5	–	X	–	–	–	–	–
B4.6	–	–	X	–	–	–	–
B4.7	–	–	–	–	–	–	X
B4.8	–	–	–	–	(?)	(?)	X
B4.9	[]	[]	[]	X	[]	[?]	[]
B4.10	–	–	–	–	–	X	X
B4.11	X	–	–	–	X	X	X
B4.12	–	–	X	–	–	X	X
B4.13	–	X	–	–	X	–	X
B4.14	– ²⁵⁵	X ²⁵⁶	Unpubl.	Unpubl.	Unpubl.	Unpubl.	Unpubl.
B4.15	–	X	–	–	–	–	–
B4.16	X	–	–	–	–	–	X
B4.17	–	–	–	–	–	X	X
B4.18	–	–	–	X	–	–	X
B4.19	–	X	–	–	–	X	X
B4.20	–	–	–	–	–	X	–
B4.21	–	X ²⁵⁷	–	–	–	–	X
B4.22	X	–	–	–	–	–	X
B4.23	X	–	–	–	–	–	X
B4.24	–	X	–	–	–	–	–
B4.25	–	–	X	X	–	X	X
	8	7	3	5	2	8	18

White: Saqqara; Light Grey: Thebes; Dark grey: Akhmim

²⁵⁵ According to van Dijk (1993: 182).

²⁵⁶ According to van Dijk (1993: 182).

²⁵⁷ Assignment as 'pouring liquid' based on the similarity to B4.24.

Catalogue

A1 – *dšr.wt* in the Old Kingdom

A1.1	
Object category	Tomb decoration (depiction)
Object	Tomb of Idu (Giza)
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Offering chamber, north wall
Provenance/location	In situ
Dating	Pepy I
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Tent of Purification tools
Text/action	–
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	8
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	Yes
Comments	Defined as <i>dšr.wt</i> by Grdseloff 1941: 26
Publication/image	Simpson 1976: Pl. XVIII

A1.2	
Object category	Tomb decoration (depiction)
Object	Tomb of Mereruka (Saqqara)
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Room A13, south wall
Provenance/location	In situ
Dating	Teti
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Tent of Purification tools
Text/action	–
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	2
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	Yes
Comments	Defined as <i>dšr.wt</i> by Grdseloff 1941: 26
Publication/image	Kanawati et al. 2011b: Pl. LXIV b

A2 – *dšr.wt* in the Middle Kingdom²⁵⁸

A2.1	
Object category	Stela (text)
Object	Cairo JE 1486 (Apati)
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Offering list
Provenance/location	Dashour, north cemetery, close to mastaba n. 27
Dating	12th Dynasty
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Offering list (Barta Type C)
Text/action	<i>mw dšr.t(j)</i>
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	2
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	–
Publication/image	De Morgan 1895: Pl. XI

²⁵⁸ Since the dating of most of the entries is uncertain, this part of the catalogue follows the sequence of Barta 1963: 164 for clarity reasons. The two lists in the tomb of *s3-is.t* referenced by Barta as being published in De Morgan 1895: Pl. XIV could not be identified.

BREAKING THE *dšr.t*-VESSELS

A2.2	
Object category	Tomb decoration (text)
Object	Tomb of Amenemhat (Tomb 2), Beni Hassan
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	South wall
Provenance/location	In situ
Dating	Senwosret I
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Offering list (Barta Type C)
Text/action	<i>dšr.tj n.t mw</i>
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	2
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	–
Publication/image	Kanawati and Evans 2016: Pl. LXIX, LXX

A2.3	
Object category	Tomb decoration (text)
Object	Tomb of Amenemhat (Tomb 2), Beni Hassan
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Shrine, north wall
Provenance/location	In situ
Dating	Senwosret I
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Offering list (Barta Type C)
Text/action	<i>dšr.tj n.t mw</i>
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	2
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	–
Publication/image	Kanawati and Evans 2016: Pl. LXXVII

A2.4	
Object category	Tomb decoration (text)
Object	Tomb of Amenemhat (Tomb 2), Beni Hassan
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Shrine, south wall
Provenance/location	In situ
Dating	Senwosret I
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Offering list (Barta Type C)
Text/action	<i>dšr.tj n[.t mw]</i>
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	[2]
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	–
Publication/image	Kanawati and Evans 2016: Pl. LXXIX

A2.5	
Object category	Stela (text)
Object	CGC 20754 (Anmerutes)
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Offering list
Provenance/location	Qurnah (?)
Dating	Middle Kingdom
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Offering list (Barta Type C)
Text/action	<i>dšr.t(j) n.t mw</i>
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	2
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No

CATALOGUE

Comments	–
Publication/image	Lange and Schäfer 1925: Pl. LIX

A2.6	
Object category	Stela (text)
Object	CGC 20523 (Ankhpuptah)
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Offering list
Provenance/location	Abydos, northern necropolis
Dating	Middle Kingdom
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Offering list (Barta Type C)
Text/action	<i>mw dšr.t(j)</i>
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	2
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	–
Publication/image	Lange and Schäfer 1902: 273

A2.7	
Object category	Stela (text)
Object	BM EA928 (Upai and Khati)
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Offering list
Provenance/location	Asyut
Dating	12th Dynasty
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Offering list (Barta Type C)
Text/action	<i>dšr.t</i>
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	1
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	–
Publication/image	Budge 1913: Pl. XXX

A2.8	
Object category	Stela (text)
Object	JE 51979 (Ptahhotep)
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Offering list
Provenance/location	Saqqara, from a tomb close to the pyramid of Teti
Dating	Middle Kingdom
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Offering list (Barta Type C)
Text/action	<i>mw dšr.t(j)</i>
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	2
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	–
Publication/image	Jéquier 1980: Pl. XII

A2.9	
Object category	Tomb decoration (text)
Object	Tomb of Neha, El-Qattah
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Burial chamber, west wall
Provenance/location	In situ (?)
Dating	Middle Kingdom
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Offering list (Barta Type C)
Text/action	<i>dšr.t(j)</i>

BREAKING THE *DŠR.T*-VESSELS

Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	2
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	–
Publication/image	Chassinat <i>et al.</i> 1906: 43

A2.10	
Object category	Stela (text)
Object	Stela in mastaba No. 25, Dashour (Nehesitankhetneni)
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Offering list
Provenance/location	In situ (?)
Dating	Middle Kingdom
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Offering list (Barta Type C)
Text/action	<i>dšr.t(j) mw</i>
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	2
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	–
Publication/image	De Morgan 1895: Fig. 80

A2.11	
Object category	Stela (text)
Object	CGC 20057 (Nekhti)
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Offering list
Provenance/location	Abydos, northern necropolis
Dating	Middle Kingdom
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Offering list (Barta Type C)
Text/action	<i>dšr.t[j] n.t mw; dšr.t (?) mw</i>
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	2 / 1
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	–
Publication/image	Lange and Schäfer 1902: 70

A2.12	
Object category	Tomb decoration (text)
Object	Tomb of Netjernerket (Newberry No. 23) (Beni Hassan)
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Main chamber, east wall
Provenance/location	In situ
Dating	12th Dynasty
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Offering list (Barta Type C)
Text/action	<i>dšr.t(j) n.t mw</i>
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	2
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	–
Publication/image	Newberry and Griffith 1893b: Pl. XXIV

A2.13	
Object category	Stela (text)
Object	CGC 20571 (Remenyankh)
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Offering list
Provenance/location	Abydos (?)
Dating	Amenemhat III (?)

CATALOGUE

Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Offering list (Barta Type C)
Text/action	<i>mw dšr.t(j)</i>
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	2
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	–
Publication/image	Lange and Schäfer 1925: Pl. XLVI

A2.14	
Object category	Tomb decoration (text)
Object	Parts of a tomb registered in Berlin in 1913 as Inv. 1119 (Hep)
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Offering list
Provenance/location	Unknown/lost ?
Dating	Middle Kingdom
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Offering list (Barta Type C)
Text/action	<i>mw dšr.t(j)</i>
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	2
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	–
Publication/image	Roeder 1913: 156

A2.15	
Object category	Tomb decoration (text)
Object	Parts of a tomb registered in Berlin in 1913 as Inv. 1118 (Hep)
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Offering list
Provenance/location	Unknown/lost ?
Dating	Middle Kingdom
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Offering list (Barta Type C)
Text/action	<i>mw dšr.t(j)</i>
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	2
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	–
Publication/image	Roeder 1913: 158

A2.16	
Object category	Stela (text)
Object	AP 64 (Kheperkare)
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Offering list
Provenance/location	Unknown
Dating	Amenemhat II
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Offering list (Barta Type C)
Text/action	<i>mw dšr(.tj ?)</i>
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Not specified
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	–
Publication/image	https://www.rmo.nl/collectie/collectiezoeker/collectiestuk/?object=22541 , accessed 19.10.23

BREAKING THE *DŠR.T*-VESSELS

A2.17	
Object category	Tomb decoration (text)
Object	Tomb of Khnumhotep (Newberry No. 3) (Beni Hassan)
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Shrine, north wall
Provenance/location	In situ
Dating	Senwostret II
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Offering list (Barta Type C)
Text/action	<i>mw dšr.wt</i>
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	2
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	–
Publication/image	Newberry and Griffith 1893a: Pl. XXXVI

A2.18	
Object category	Stela (text)
Object	Stela of Kemes found in Abydos
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Offering list
Provenance/location	Abydos, Kom el-Sultan
Dating	Middle Kingdom
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Offering list (Barta Type C)
Text/action	<i>mw dšr.wt</i>
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	2
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	–
Publication/image	Mariette 1880: 228–229 (No. 794)

A2.19	
Object category	Tomb decoration (text)
Object	Tomb of Djehutihotep (el-Bersheh)
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Shrine, 'left wall'
Provenance/location	In situ
Dating	Amenemhat II–III
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Offering list (Barta Type C)
Text/action	[]
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	2
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	–
Publication/image	Newberry 1894: Pl. XXXII

A2.20	
Object category	Tomb decoration (text)
Object	Tomb of Djehutihotep (el-Bersheh)
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Shrine, left hand wall
Provenance/location	In situ
Dating	Amenemhat II–III
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Offering list (Barta Type C)
Text/action	<i>[mw n.t] dšr.t ?</i>
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	?
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	–
Publication/image	Newberry 1894: Pl. XXXIV

CATALOGUE

A2.21	
Object category	Stela (text)
Object	Museum of Anthropology and Ethnology of the University of California, BT 15
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Offering list
Provenance/location	Unknown
Dating	Middle Kingdom
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Offering list (Barta Type C)
Text/action	<i>mw dšr.t(j)</i>
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	2
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	-
Publication/image	Lutz 1927: Pl. XXXVII

A2.22	
Object category	Temple decoration (?)
Object	Reused blocks
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Funerary chapel ? (Petrie)
Provenance/location	Abydos
Dating	Mentuhotep II
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Offering list (Barta Type C)
Text/action	<i>dšr.t mw</i>
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	[]
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	-
Publication/image	Petrie et al. 1903: Pl. XXIV

A2.23	
Object category	Temple decoration (?)
Object	Loose fragment found in town
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Offering list (?)
Provenance/location	Illahun
Dating	Senwosret II
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Offering list (Barta Type C)
Text/action	[]
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	[]
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	-
Publication/image	Petrie 1891: Pl. XII (9)

A2.24	
Object category	Coffin (depiction; text)
Object	T2Be
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Object frieze (foot)
Provenance/location	Thebes
Dating	12th Dynasty
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Object frieze
Text/action	-
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	4
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	Yes

BREAKING THE *DŠR.T*-VESSELS

Comments	–
Publication/image	Steindorff 1896: II, Pl. II

A2.25	
Object category	Coffin (depiction; [text])
Object	T1Be
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Object frieze (back)
Provenance/location	Thebes
Dating	12th Dynasty
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Object frieze
Text/action	–
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	4
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	Yes
Comments	Identification through <i>nms.wt</i>
Publication/image	Steindorff 1896: I, Pl. III

A2.26	
Object category	Coffin (depiction; text)
Object	L1Ny
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Object frieze (back)
Provenance/location	Lisht
Dating	Amenemhat III
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Object frieze
Text/action	–
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	4
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	Yes
Comments	–
Publication/image	Photograph of the De Buck archive, see Figure 3

A2.27	
Object category	Coffin (depiction; text)
Object	Sq2C
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Object frieze (back)
Provenance/location	Saqqara South
Dating	Amenemhat II or later
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Object frieze
Text/action	–
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	4
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	Yes
Comments	–
Publication/image	Photograph of the De Buck archive, see Figure 3

A2.28	
Object category	Coffin (depiction; text)
Object	Sq7C
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Object frieze (back)
Provenance/location	Saqqara
Dating	Amenemhat II or later
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Object frieze
Text/action	–

CATALOGUE

Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	4
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	Yes
Comments	–
Publication/image	Photograph of the De Buck archive, see Figure 3

A2.29	
Object category	Coffin (depiction)
Object	S10C
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Object frieze (foot)
Provenance/location	Assiut
Dating	Senwosret I
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Object frieze
Text/action	–
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	4
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	Yes
Comments	–
Publication/image	Photograph of the De Buck archive, see Figure 3

A2.30	
Object category	Coffin (depiction)
Object	S14C
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Object frieze (foot)
Provenance/location	Assiut
Dating	Senwosret I
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Object frieze
Text/action	–
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	4
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	Yes
Comments	–
Publication/image	Photograph of the De Buck archive, see Figure 3

A2.31	
Object category	Papyrus (text)
Object	BM EA10753, 3 (P. Ramesseum E)
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Loose fragment
Provenance/location	Thebes, Ramesseum
Dating	13th Dynasty (?)
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Funerary liturgy
Text/action	<i>[hr.j]w dšr.wt</i> 'Carriers of the <i>dšr.wt</i> '
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	(plural)
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	[...]
Comments	–
Publication/image	Gardiner 1955: Pl. VI

A3 – *dšr.wt* in the New Kingdom

A3.1	
Object category	Obelisk Decoration (Depiction, text)
Object	Karnak, obelisk of Hatshepsut
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	East side, third scene
Provenance/location	In situ
Dating	Hatshepsut
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Statue ritual (divine)
Text/action	<i>mw dšr.wt 4; pḥr-ḥꜣ sp 4; ḏd mdw sp 4 [wꜣ] sp 2</i> ‘Water of four <i>dšr.t</i> -Vessels; going around four times; words spoken, four times: “Pure, pure!”’
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	4
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	Yes
Comments	–
Publication/image	Lepsius 1972: Pl. XXIII

A3.2	
Object category	Temple Decoration (text)
Object	Deir el-Bahari, Mortuary Temple of Hatshepsut
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Upper court, west wall
Provenance/location	In situ
Dating	Hatshepsut
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Offering list (Barta Type C)
Text/action	<i>mw dšr.t(j)</i>
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	2
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	–
Publication/image	Naville 1906: Pl. CXXXV

A3.3	
Object category	Temple Decoration ([depiction; text])
Object	Deir el Bahari, Mortuary Temple of Hatshepsut
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Shrine of Anubis
Provenance/location	In situ
Dating	Hatshepsut
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Statue ritual (divine)
Text/action	<i>mw [dšr.wt] 4; pḥr-ḥꜣ sp 4; ḏd mdw sp 4: [] wꜣ sp 2; ir=s dj nḥ [nb mj r ḏ.t]</i> ‘Water of four <i>dšr.t</i> -Vessels; Going around four times; Words spoken, four times []: “Pure, pure!” She is given all life [like Ra, forever.]’ (reconstructions based on parallel scene with <i>nms.t</i>)
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	4
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	Yes
Comments	Recognition based on parallel scene with <i>nms.t</i>
Publication/image	Naville 1896: Pl. XLIV, XLV

CATALOGUE

A3.4	
Object category	Tomb decoration (text)
Object	TT 100 (Rekhmire),
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Passage, north wall, west half, second section
Provenance/location	In situ
Dating	Thutmose III
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Offering list (Barta Type C), (addressed to statue)
Text/action	<i>mw dšr.tj</i>
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	2/1
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	-
Publication/image	De Garis Davies 1943: Pl. CV

A3.5	
Object category	Tomb decoration (depiction, text)
Object	TT100 (Rekhmire)
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Passage, north wall, west half, third section
Provenance/location	In situ
Dating	Thutmose III
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Opening of the Mouth, Scene 3
Text/action	<i>phr-ḥ: = f sp 4 m dšr.wt 4 n.t(mw</i> 'Circling around him four times with four <i>dšr.t</i> -Vessels filled with water.'
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	4
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	Yes
Comments	For the entire Scene 3 see Otto 1960, I: 6-7, and II: 42-43
Publication/image	De Garis Davies 1943: Pl. CVII

A3.6	
Object category	Tomb decoration (depiction)
Object	TT 31 (Khonsu)
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Outer Hall, east wall, north side
Provenance/location	In situ
Dating	Thutmose III
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Opening of the Mouth; Opening of the Mouth tools
Text/action	<i>mn n=k mw im.jw ir.tj hr dšr.tj</i> 'Take for yourself the water which is in the two red eyes of Horus'
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	4
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	-
Publication/image	De Garis Davies 1948: Pl. XVI

A3.7	
Object category	Tomb decoration (depiction)
Object	TT 99 (Senneferi)
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	'Wall 9'
Provenance/location	In situ
Dating	Thutmose III

BREAKING THE *dšr.t*-VESSELS

Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Funerary equipment
Text/action	–
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	4
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	Yes
Comments	–
Publication/image	Strudwick 2016: Col. Pl. XX

A3.8	
Object category	Temple decoration (text, depiction)
Object	Temple of Kumma (Sudan)
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Main building, chapel H
Provenance/location	In situ (?), possibly now in the National Museum of Sudan, Khartum
Dating	Amenhotep II
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Statue ritual (divine)
Text/action	<i>ir.t ꜥb.w m dšr.wt 4 n.t mw ; pḥr-ḥꜥ sp 4; wꜥb sp 2 ḥnmw</i> ‘Making purifications with four <i>dšr.t</i> -Vessels with water; Circling around four times; “Pure, pure, Khnum!”’
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	4
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	Yes
Comments	–
Publication/image	Caminos 1998: Pl. LXVI

A3.9	
Object category	Tomb decoration (depiction, text)
Object	TT 56 (Userhat)
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Transverse hall, left wall
Provenance/location	In situ
Dating	Amenhotep II
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Opening of the Mouth, Scene 3
Text/action	<i>pḥr-ḥꜥ=f sp 4 m dšr.wt 4 n.t mw</i> ‘Circling around him four times with four <i>dšr.t</i> -Vessels with water.’
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	4
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	Yes
Comments	For the entire Scene 3, see Otto 1960, I: 6–7, and II: 42–43
Publication/image	Beinlich-Seeber and Shedid 1987: Pl. VIII

A3.10	
Object category	Tomb decoration (depiction)
Object	TT 75 (Amenhotepsise)
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	forecourt
Provenance/location	In situ
Dating	Thutmose IV
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Opening of the Mouth tools; Objects of the food and drink offering
Text/action	<i>dšr.(tj/wt) n.t mw</i>
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	4; 2
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No

CATALOGUE

Comments	-
Publication/image	Photograph: Schott-Archiv (Ägyptologie der Universität Trier, see Figure 7)

A3.11	
Object category	Tomb decoration
Object	TT 78 (Horemheb)
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Corridor, north wall
Provenance/location	In situ
Dating	Thutmose IV – Amenhotep III
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Offering list (Barta Type C)
Text/action	<i>mw dšr.(tj)</i>
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	2
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	-
Publication/image	Brack and Brack 1980: Pl. LXVI b

A3.12	
Object category	Tomb decoration
Object	TT 78 (Horemheb)
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Corridor, north wall
Provenance/location	In situ
Dating	Thutmose IV – Amenhotep III
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Opening of the Mouth tools
Text/action	-
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	4
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	Yes
Comments	-
Publication/image	Brack and Brack 1980: Pl. LXVI b

A3.13	
Object category	Tomb decoration
Object	TT 78 (Horemheb)
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Corridor, north wall
Provenance/location	In situ
Dating	Thutmose IV – Amenhotep III
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Opening of the Mouth, Scene 3
Text/action	-
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	4
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	Yes
Comments	-
Publication/image	Brack and Brack 1980: Pl. LXVI a

A3.14	
Object category	Temple decoration (depiction, [text])
Object	Luxor Temple
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Room XVII, north wall
Provenance/location	In situ
Dating	Amenhotep III
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Statue ritual (divine)

BREAKING THE *DŠR.T*-VESSELS

Text/action	<i>[ir.t ·b.w m dšr.wt 4; ḏd mdw wꜥb sp 4]</i> ['Making purification with four <i>dšr.t</i> -Vessels; words spoken: Pure! Four times'] (reconstructions based on parallel scene with <i>nms.wt</i>)
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	4
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	Yes
Comments	-
Publication/image	Brunner 1977: Pl. LIII

A3.15	
Object category	Temple decoration (depiction, [text])
Object	Luxor Temple
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Room XVII, south wall
Provenance/location	In situ
Dating	Amenhotep III
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Statue ritual (divine)
Text/action	<i>[ir.t ·b.w m dšr.wt 4 n.t mw]</i> ['Making purification with four <i>dšr.t</i> -Vessels of water'] (reconstructions based on parallel scene with <i>nms.wt</i>)
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	4
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	Yes
Comments	-
Publication/image	Brunner 1977: Pl. LXXVI

A3.16	
Object category	Temple decoration (depiction, [text])
Object	Luxor Temple
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Room XVIII, west wall
Provenance/location	In situ
Dating	Amenhotep III
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Statue ritual
Text/action	<i>[mw dšr.wt 4; ḏd mdw sp 4 n imn wꜥb sp 2]</i> ['Water of the 4 <i>dšr.t</i> -Vessels; words spoken, four times: Pure, pure!'] (reconstructions based on parallel scene with <i>nms.wt</i>)
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	4
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	Yes
Comments	The text has been intentionally erased, see Brunner 1977: 61
Publication/image	Brunner 1977: Pl. CLII

A3.17	
Object category	Tomb decoration (text)
Object	Leiden RMO Inv. AP 6-a
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	List of Opening of the Mouth tools
Provenance/location	Saqqara, Tomb of Merymery
Dating	Amenhotep III
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	List of Opening of the Mouth tools

CATALOGUE

Text/action	<i>ḥd dšr.(w)t : 4</i> <i>dšr.t</i> -Vessels made of silver: 4
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	4
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	Yes
Comments	The word <i>dšr.(w)t</i> contains a scribal error: instead of <i>d</i> the carving appears to be <i>r</i> ; however, the context makes it clearly identifiable as <i>dšr.(w)t</i>
Publication/image	https://www.rmo.nl/collectie/collectiezoeker/collectiestuk/?object=22546 , accessed 19.10.23

A3.18	
Object category	Tomb decoration (Text)
Object	Leiden RMO Inv. AP 6-b
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Offering list
Provenance/location	Saqqara, Tomb of Merymery
Dating	Amenhotep III
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Offering list (Barta Type C)
Text/action	<i>mw dšr.t(j)</i>
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	2
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	-
Publication/image	https://www.rmo.nl/collectie/collectiezoeker/collectiestuk/?object=22659 , accessed 19.10.23

A3.19	
Object category	Tomb decoration
Object	Tomb of Meryneith (Saqqara)
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Inner courtyard, north wall
Provenance/location	In situ
Dating	Amarna - late 18th Dynasty
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Opening of the Mouth tools
Text/action	-
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	4
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	Yes
Comments	Identification as <i>dšr.wt</i> , see Gessler-Löhr 2018: 42
Publication/image	Raven and van Walsem 2014: Fig. 28

A3.20	
Object category	Tomb decoration
Object	Havana, Museo Nacional 2 + Birmingham 688'66
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	unknown
Provenance/location	Saqqara
Dating	Late 18th Dynasty
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Opening of the Mouth tools
Text/action	Purification
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Unclear
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	-
Publication/image	Martin 1987: Pl. VII (No. 21)

BREAKING THE *dšr.t*-VESSELS

A3.21	
Object category	Tomb decoration (depiction)
Object	Chicago Field Museum 31291-2
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Unknown
Provenance/location	Unknown tomb, Saqqara
Dating	Late 18th Dynasty
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Opening of the Mout, Scene 3; Opening of the Mouth tools
Text/action	Purification
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	4
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	Yes
Comments	Identification as <i>dšr.wt</i> , see Gessler-Löhr 2018: 40
Publication/image	Martin 1987: Pl. VII (18)

A3.22	
Object category	Tomb decoration (text)
Object	Fragment found by EES 1964–1973
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Unknown
Provenance/location	Fill beneath the terrace of the temple of Nectanebo II, Saqqara
Dating	Late 18th – early 19th Dynasty
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Litany of the Eye of Horus
Text/action	<i>[mn n=]k mw im.jw ir.tj=k dšr.tj</i> ‘Take for yourself the water which is in your two red eyes’
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	[]
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	Yes
Comments	Column x+1: unclear Column x+2: giving water of the <i>mnt:t</i> -vessels (<i>mw mnt:t</i>) (see Czok 2016: 66) Column x+3: giving water in the two <i>dšr.t</i> -Vessels Column x+4: giving lower Egyptian wine (<i>irp mḥ.t</i>) (see Czok 2016: 27)
Publication/image	Martin 1987: Pl. XVI (No. 48)

A3.23	
Object category	Tomb decoration (depiction, text)
Object	KV 17 (Seti I)
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	4th corridor, left side
Provenance/location	In situ
Dating	Seti I
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Opening of the Mouth, Scene 3
Text/action	<i>pḥr-ḥ=fs p 4 m dšr.wt 4 n.t mw</i> ‘Circling around him four times with four <i>dšr.t</i> -Vessels filled with water.’
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	2/4
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	Yes
Comments	Entire Scene 3, see Otto 1960, I: 6–7, and II: 42–43
Publication/image	Hornung 1991: Pl. XCIX

CATALOGUE

A3.24	
Object category	Tomb decoration (text)
Object	KV 17 (Seti I)
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	4th corridor, right side
Provenance/location	In situ
Dating	Seti I
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	List of Opening of the Mouth tools
Text/action	-
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	4
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	Yes
Comments	-
Publication/image	Hornung 1991: Pl. CIX

A3.25	
Object category	Tomb decoration (text)
Object	KV 17 (Seti I)
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	4th corridor, right side
Provenance/location	In situ
Dating	Seti I
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Litany of the Eye of Horus
Text/action	<i>ḏd mdw: mn n=k mw im.jw ir.tj ḥr dšr.tj; mw dšr.(tj)</i> ‘Words spoken: Take for yourself the water which is in your two red eyes; Water of two <i>dšr:t</i> -Vessels’
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	2
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	-
Publication/image	Hornung 1991: Pl. CVII

A3.26	
Object category	Tomb decoration (depiction, text)
Object	KV 14 (Twosret and Sethnakhte)
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	4th corridor, beginning of the left wall
Provenance/location	In situ
Dating	Twosret
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Opening of the Mouth tools
Text/action	-
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	4
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	Yes
Comments	-
Publication/image	Lefébure 1889: Pl. LXVI

A3.27	
Object category	Tomb decoration (depiction, text)
Object	KV 14 (Twosret and Sethnakhte)
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	4th corridor, beginning of the left wall
Provenance/location	In situ
Dating	Twosret
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Opening of the Mouth, Scene 3

BREAKING THE *dšr.t*-VESSELS

Text/action	<i>pḥr-ḥw=f sp 4; dšr.wt n.t mw</i> 'Circling around four times; <i>dšr.t</i> -Vessels filled with water'
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	4
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	Yes
Comments	Entire Scene 3, see Otto 1960, I: 6–7, and II: 42–43
Publication/image	Lefébure 1889: Pl. 66

A3.28	
Object category	Temple inventory (text)
Object	Inscribed altar Torino Museo Egizio N. 22053 (= cat. 1750)
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Side E
Provenance/location	Memphis (?)
Dating	19th Dynasty (?)
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Offering list (Barta Type E)
Text/action	<i>dšr.t n irp rsj; dšr.t n.tj irp mḥ.w; dšr.wt 4 mw;</i> ' <i>dšr.t</i> -vessel with southern wine'; ' <i>dšr.t</i> -vessel with northern wine'; 'Four <i>dšr.t</i> -Vessels with water'
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	4
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	-
Publication/image	Habachi 1977: 152

 A4 – *dšr.wt* after the New Kingdom

A4.1	
Object category	Papyrus (depiction)
Object	Cairo JE 4007 (Papyrus of Makara)
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Central vignette
Provenance/location	Unknown
Dating	21st Dynasty
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Opening of the Mouth tools
Text/action	-
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	4
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	Yes
Comments	-
Publication/image	Werbrouck 1938: Pl. XLV

A4.2	
Object category	Papyrus (text)
Object	P. Berlin 3055
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Vso. Col. XXVII, l. 4
Provenance/location	Unknown
Dating	22nd Dynasty
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Daily Ritual for Amun
Text/action	<i>ir 'b.w m 4.t dšr.wt n.t mw</i> 'Making purifications with four <i>dšr.t</i> -Vessels with water'
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	4
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	Yes
Comments	-
Publication/image	Anonymous 1901: Pl. XXVII

CATALOGUE

A4.3	
Object category	Temple decoration (text)
Object	Chapel of Amenirdis (Medinet Habu)
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Eastern wall
Provenance/location	In situ
Dating	25th Dynasty
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Offering list (Barta Type C)
Text/action	[<i>mw dšr.t</i>]
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	1
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	-
Publication/image	Daressey 1901: 5

A4.4	
Object category	Temple decoration (depiction, text)
Object	KHM Vienna Inv 213
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Barricade from a New Year's pavilion
Provenance/location	Sais (?)
Dating	Psamtik II
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Statue ritual
Text/action	<i>ir ·b.w m dšr.wt 4 n.t mw</i> 'Making purifications with four <i>dšr.t</i> -Vessels with water'
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	4
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	[?]
Comments	-
Publication/image	https://www.khm.at/objektdb/detail/318038/ , accessed 19.10.23

A4.5	
Object category	Temple decoration (depiction, text)
Object	Temple of Denderah
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Sanctuary, west wall, 3rd register, 1st tableau
Provenance/location	In situ
Dating	Graeco-Roman Period
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Statue ritual (divine)
Text/action	<i>sw^wb m dšr.wt 4</i> 'Making pure with four <i>dšr.t</i> -Vessels'
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	4
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	Yes (SRaT No. 11056)
Comments	SERaT No. 110043
Publication/image	Chassinat 1934: Pl. LXVIII

A4.6	
Object category	Temple decoration (depiction, text)
Object	Temple of Edfou
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Sanctuary, interior, east wall, 3rd register, 1st tableau
Provenance/location	In situ
Dating	Ptolemy III
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Statue ritual (divine)

BREAKING THE *dšr.t*-VESSELS

Text/action	<i>sw^wb m 4 dšr.wt n.tj mw</i> 'Making pure with four <i>dšr.t</i> -Vessels with water'
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	4
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	Yes (SRaT No. 900521)
Comments	SERaT No. 900053
Publication/image	Chassinat 1897, 1: Pl. XII

A4.7	
Object category	Temple decoration (depiction, text)
Object	Temple of Edfou
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Wabet, eastern wall, 1st register, 2nd tableau
Provenance/location	In situ
Dating	Ptolemy III
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Statue ritual (divine)
Text/action	Purification (scene title in lacuna)
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	[]
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	?
Comments	SERaT No. 901651
Publication/image	Chassinat 1897, 1: Pl. XXXIII a

B1 – BdV in the Old Kingdom

B1.1	
Object category	Tomb decoration (text)
Object	Pyramid of Unas (Saqqara)
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Passage between the burial chamber and antechamber, south wall
Provenance/location	In situ
Dating	Unas
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	PT 244
Text/action	<i>sd dšr.tj</i>
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	2
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	-
Publication/image	The Pyramid Texts online (https://www.pyramidtextsonline.com/PassageSH.htm , accessed 14.03.23); (J.P.) Allen 2013: 284

B1.2	
Object category	Tomb decoration (text)
Object	Pyramid of Merenre (Saqqara)
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Burial chamber, east wall
Provenance/location	In situ
Dating	Merenre
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	PT 244
Text/action	<i>sd dšr.wt</i>
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Plural, exact number not specified
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	-
Publication/image	(J.P.) Allen 2013: 284

CATALOGUE

B1.3	
Object category	Tomb decoration (text)
Object	Pyramid of Pepy I (Saqqara)
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Burial chamber, north wall, east end
Provenance/location	In situ
Dating	Pepy I
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	PT 244
Text/action	[<i>sd</i>] <i>dšr</i> [.wt]
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	[...]
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	-
Publication/image	(J.P.) Allen 2013: 153

B1.4	
Object category	Tomb decoration (text)
Object	Tomb of Mereruka (Saqqara)
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Room A8, north wall (fragment)
Provenance/location	In situ (?)
Dating	Teti
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Concluding funerary rites
Text/action	<i>sd dšr.wt</i>
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Plural, exact number not specified
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	-
Publication/image	Kanawati et al. 2011a: Pl. LXXXVIII

B1.5	
Object category	Tomb decoration (text)
Object	Tomb of Mereruka (Saqqara)
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Room B5 (burial chamber of Waatetkhehor), west wall, south of the false door
Provenance/location	In situ
Dating	Teti
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Concluding funerary rites
Text/action	<i>sd dšr.wt</i>
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Plural, exact number not specified
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	-
Publication/image	Kanawati and Abder-Raziq 2008: Pl. XXXVIIIa

B1.6	
Object category	Tomb decoration (text)
Object	Tomb of Mereruka (Saqqara)
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Room C3, south wall
Provenance/location	In situ
Dating	Teti
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Concluding funerary rites
Text/action	<i>sd dšr.wt</i>
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Plural, exact number not specified
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	-
Publication/image	Kanawati and Abder-Raziq 2004: Pl. XLIX

BREAKING THE *dšr.t*-VESSELS

B1.7	
Object category	Tomb decoration (text)
Object	Tomb of Seankhuptah (Saqqara)
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Room 1, north wall
Provenance/location	In situ
Dating	Teti
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Offering list
Text/action	<i>sd dšr.t</i>
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	1
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	-
Publication/image	Kanawati and Abder-Raziq 1998: Pl. LXXIV

B1.8	
Object category	Tomb decoration (text)
Object	Tomb of Hesi (Saqqara)
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Offering room, false door niche, north side
Provenance/location	In situ
Dating	Teti – Pepy I
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Offering list
Text/action	<i>sd dšr.wt</i>
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Uncertain
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	-
Publication/image	Kanawati and Abder-Raziq 1999: Pls. XLIV, LXIV

B1.9	
Object category	Tomb decoration (text)
Object	Tomb of Hesi (Saqqara)
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Offering room, false door niche, south side
Provenance/location	In situ
Dating	Teti – Pepy I
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Offering list
Text/action	<i>sd dšr.wt</i>
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Uncertain
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	-
Publication/image	Kanawati and Abder-Raziq 1999: Pls. XLV, LXIV

B1.10	
Object category	Tomb decoration (text)
Object	Tomb of Ankhmahor (Saqqara)
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Burial chamber, east wall
Provenance/location	In situ
Dating	Teti – Pepy I
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Ritual instruction after offering list
Text/action	<i>sd dšr.(w)t</i>
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	[...]
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	-
Publication/image	Kanawati and Hassan 1997: Pl. LXIII

CATALOGUE

B1.11	
Object category	Tomb decoration (text)
Object	Tomb of Mehu (Saqqara)
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Burial chamber of Ankhmerire, north wall
Provenance/location	In situ
Dating	Pepy I
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Offering list
Text/action	<i>sḏ dšr.t</i>
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	1
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	-
Publication/image	Altenmüller 1998: Pl. LXXXVII

B1.12	
Object category	Tomb decoration (text)
Object	Tomb of Idu (Giza)
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Offering chamber, west wall
Provenance/location	In situ
Dating	Pepy I
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Offering list
Text/action	<i>sḏ dšr.t</i>
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	1
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	-
Publication/image	Simpson 1976: Pl. XXXII

B1.13	
Object category	Tomb decoration (text)
Object	Tomb of Penu (Saqqara)
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Burial chamber, 'left' wall, second tableau (Jéquier)
Provenance/location	In situ
Dating	Pepy II
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Offering list
Text/action	<i>sḏ dšr.tj</i>
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	2
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	-
Publication/image	Jéquier 1929: Fig. 48

B1.14	
Object category	Tomb decoration (text)
Object	Tomb of Seni (Saqqara)
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Burial chamber, 'left wall'
Provenance/location	In situ
Dating	Pepy II
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Offering list
Text/action	<i>sḏ dšr.t</i>
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	1+1
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	-
Publication/image	Jéquier 1929: Pl. III

BREAKING THE *DŠR.T*-VESSELS

B1.15	
Object category	Tomb decoration (text)
Object	Tomb of Shy (Saqqara)
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Burial chamber, east wall
Provenance/location	In situ
Dating	Pepy II
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Offering list
Text/action	<i>sd dšr(.t)</i>
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	1
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	-
Publication/image	Jéquier 1929: Pl. VI

B1.16	
Object category	Tomb decoration (text)
Object	Tomb of Pepyankh the Middle (Meir)
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Burial chamber of Hewetiaah, east wall
Provenance/location	In situ
Dating	Pepy II
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Offering list
Text/action	<i>sd dšr.t</i>
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	1
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	-
Publication/image	Kanawati 2012: Pl. LXVI

B1.17	
Object category	Tomb decoration (text)
Object	Tomb of Niankhpepy (Saqqara)
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Mortuary chapel, north wall
Provenance/location	In situ
Dating	Pepy II
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Offering list
Text/action	<i>sd dšr.(w)t</i>
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Plural, exact number not specified
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	-
Publication/image	Hassan 1975: Fig. 6

B1.18	
Object category	Coffin (text)
Object	Coffin of Nenkheftek
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Inside, 'left'
Provenance/location	Deshasha; current location unknown
Dating	5th Dynasty
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Offering list
Text/action	<i>sd dšr.t</i>
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	1
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	-
Publication/image	Petrie 1898: Pl. XXIX

CATALOGUE

B1.19	
Object category	Coffin (text)
Object	Coffin of Niankhpepy
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Inner coffin, 'eastern side'
Provenance/location	Saqqara; current location unknown
Dating	Pepy II
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Offering list
Text/action	<i>sd dšr.t(j)</i>
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	2
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	-
Publication/image	Hassan 1975: Fig. 9

B2 – BdV in the Middle Kingdom

B2.1	
Object category	Tomb decoration (text)
Object	Tomb of Senwosret-ankh (Lisht)
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Burial chamber, north wall, east part
Provenance/location	In situ
Dating	Senwosret I
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	PT 244
Text/action	<i>sd dšr.t</i>
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Unspecified
Comments	-
Publication/image	Hayes 1937: Pl. IV

B2.2	
Object category	Coffin (text)
Object	Cairo CJ 42947 (M2C)
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Front (after offering list)
Provenance/location	Meir
Dating	Senwosret I – Amenemhat II
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	CT 926
Text/action	<i>sd dšr[.wt]</i>
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	[]
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	Context of CT 926: offering list, CT 926, PT 2144b-215, CT 834 (according to Lesko 1979: 60)
Publication/image	Photograph from the De Buck archive, see Figure 9

B2.3	
Object category	Coffin (text)
Object	Cairo CJ 42950 (M4C)
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Front (after offering list)
Provenance/location	Meir
Dating	Senwosret I – Amenemhat II
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	CT 926
Text/action	<i>sd dšr.wt</i>
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	4
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No

BREAKING THE *DŠR.T*-VESSELS

Comments	Context of CT 926: offering list, CT 225, CT 926 (according to Lesko 1979: 61)
Publication/image	Photograph from the De Buck archive, see Figure 9

B2.4	
Object category	Coffin (text)
Object	Cairo CJ 42826 (M5C)
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Front (after offering list)
Provenance/location	Meir
Dating	Senwosret I – Amenemhat II
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	CT 926
Text/action	<i>sd dšr.wt</i>
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Plural, exact number not specified
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	Context of CT 926: offering list, CT 925, CT 926, CT 353, CT 204, CT 413 (according to Lesko 1979: 61)
Publication/image	Photograph from the De Buck archive, see Figure 9

B2.5	
Object category	Coffin (text)
Object	Cairo CJ 42827 (M6C)
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Front (integrated in offering list)
Provenance/location	Meir
Dating	Senwosret I – Amenemhat II
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	CT 926; offering list
Text/action	<i>sd dšr.wt</i>
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	4
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	Context of CT 926: offering list (according to Lesko 1979: 62)
Publication/image	Photograph from the De Buck archive, see Figure 9

B3 – BdV in the New Kingdom

B3.1	
Object category	Temple decoration (depiction; text)
Object	Luxor Temple
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Room XVII, east wall
Provenance/location	In situ
Dating	Amenhotep III
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Statue ritual (divine)/solar cult (?)
Text/action	<i>sd dšr.wt</i>
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Plural, exact number not specified
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	Located left of the door to the room with the cult image of Amun
Publication/image	Brunner 1977: Pl. LXXI (No. 34/1)

B4 – Vessel-Breaking Scenes in New Kingdom Private Tombs

B4.1	
Object category	Tomb decoration (depiction)
Object	Tomb of Horemheb (Saqqara)

CATALOGUE

Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Inner courtyard, north and east wall
Provenance/location	In situ
Dating	Tutankhamun
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Stands with food and drink
Text/action	Breaking
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Unspecified
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	van Dijk No. 1
Publication/image	Martin 1989: Pl. CXXIII

B4.2	
Object category	Tomb decoration (depiction)
Object	Ägyptisches Museum Berlin, ÄM 12411
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	-
Provenance/location	Tomb of Ptahemhat Ty (Saqqara)
Dating	Tutankhamun - Ay
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Stands with food and drink
Text/action	Breaking
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Unspecified
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	van Dijk No. 2
Publication/image	Arnst 1991: 136-138

B4.3	
Object category	Tomb decoration (depiction)
Object	Tomb of Meryneith (Saqqara)
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Inner courtyard, east wall
Provenance/location	In situ
Dating	Amarna - late 18th Dynasty
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Stands with food and drink
Text/action	Breaking
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Unspecified
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	-
Publication/image	Raven and van Walsem 2014: 94-95 (Nr 15)

B4.4	
Object category	Tomb decoration (depiction)
Object	Cairo TN 21.6.24.16
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	-
Provenance/location	Tomb of Ipuia (Saqqara)
Dating	Late 18th Dynasty
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Stands with food and drink
Text/action	Breaking
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Unspecified
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	van Dijk No. 3
Publication/image	Quibell and Hayter 1927: Pl. 10

BREAKING THE *dšr.t*-VESSELS

B4.5	
Object category	Tomb decoration (depiction)
Object	Muséé Rodin Inv. No. 235+104
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	–
Provenance/location	Tomb of Pay (Saqqara)
Dating	Late 18th Dynasty
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Stands with food and drink
Text/action	Pouring liquid
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Unspecified
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	van Dijk No. 8
Publication/image	Berlandini 1977: Pl. IV

B4.6	
Object category	Tomb decoration (depiction)
Object	Cairo TN 10.6. 24.12 (Ptahnefer)
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	–
Provenance/location	Saqqara
Dating	Late 18th Dynasty
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Stands with food and drink
Text/action	Unclear
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Unspecified
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	van Dijk No. 9
Publication/image	Werbrouck 1938: Pl. XXII

B4.7	
Object category	Tomb decoration (depiction)
Object	Detroit 24.98
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	–
Provenance/location	Saqqara
Dating	Late 18th Dynasty
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Stands with food and drink
Text/action	No vessels
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Unspecified
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	van Dijk No. 10
Publication/image	Martin 1987: Pl. XXV (No. 64)

B4.8	
Object category	Tomb decoration (depiction)
Object	Copenhagen AEIN. 38
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	–
Provenance/location	Saqqara
Dating	Late 18th Dynasty
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Stands with food and drink
Text/action	No vessels
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Unspecified
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	van Dijk No. 11
Publication/image	Martin 1987: Pl. 22 (No. 62)

CATALOGUE

B4.9	
Object category	Tomb decoration (depiction)
Object	Cairo TN 8.11.26.4 (Neferhotep)
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	–
Provenance/location	Saqqara
Dating	Late 18th Dynasty
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Stands with food and drink
Text/action	No vessels
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Unspecified
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	van Dijk No. 12
Publication	Gessler-Löhr 1991: Fig. 8

B4.10	
Object category	Tomb decoration (depiction)
Object	'block in a magazine in Saqqara (van Dijk)'
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	–
Provenance/location	Saqqara
Dating	Late 18th – early 19th Dynasty
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Stands with food and drink
Text/action	No vessels
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Unspecified
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	van Dijk No. 13
Publication/image	Martin 1987: Pl. XXIII (63)

B4.11	
Object category	Tomb decoration (depiction)
Object	Cairo TN 12.6.24.20 (Khaemwaset)
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	–
Provenance/location	Saqqara
Dating	Late 18th – early 19th Dynasty
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Stands with food and drink
Text/action	Breaking
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Unspecified
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	van Dijk No. 4
Publication/image	Werbrouck 1938: Pl. XXXIV

B4.12	
Object category	Tomb decoration (depiction)
Object	Cairo JE 8374 (Hormin)
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	–
Provenance/location	Saqqara
Dating	Seti I
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Stands with food and drink
Text/action	Unspecified
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Unspecified
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	van Dijk No. 5
Publication/image	Werbrouck 1938: Pl. XXXV

BREAKING THE *DŠR.T*-VESSELS

B4.13	
Object category	Tomb decoration (depiction)
Object	Ägyptisches Museum, Berlin ÄM 2088 (lower part); lost (upper part) (Maya)
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	–
Provenance/location	Saqqara
Dating	Seti I
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Stands with food and drink
Text/action	Pouring liquid
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Unspecified
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	van Dijk No. 7
Publication/image	Lepsius 1972: Pl. CCXLII

B4.14	
Object category	Tomb decoration (depiction)
Object	Cairo TN 25.6.24.8
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	–
Provenance/location	Saqqara
Dating	Early 19th Dynasty (van Dijk)
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Stands with food and drink
Text/action	Pouring liquid
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Unspecified
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	van Dijk No. 14; unpublished
Publication/image	-

B4.15	
Object category	Tomb decoration (depiction)
Object	Brussels E 3053–3054 (Neferrenpet)
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	–
Provenance/location	Saqqara
Dating	19th Dynasty (van Dijk)
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Stands with food and drink
Text/action	Pouring liquid
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Unspecified
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	van Dijk No. 15
Publication/image	Werbrouck 1938: Pl. XXXII

B4.16	
Object category	Tomb decoration (depiction)
Object	Cairo JE 43275 (Kyiry)
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	–
Provenance/location	Saqqara
Dating	Ramesside (van Dijk)
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Stands with food and drink
Text/action	Breaking
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Unspecified
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	van Dijk No. 6
Publication/image	Borchardt 1929: Fig. 2

CATALOGUE

B4.17	
Object category	Tomb decoration (depiction)
Object	Cairo TN 17.5.25.1 (Mose)
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	-
Provenance/location	Saqqara
Dating	Ramesses II
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Stands with food and drink
Text/action	No vessels
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Unspecified
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	van Dijk No. 16
Publication/image	Gaballa 1977: Pl. XXXIV

B4.18	
Object category	Tomb decoration (depiction)
Object	Tomb of Nebnefer and Mahu (Saqqara)
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Second Court, north wall
Provenance/location	In situ
Dating	Ramesses II
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Stands with food and drink
Text/action	No vessels
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Unspecified
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	-
Publication/image	Gohary and Hawass 2009: Fig. 22a

B4.19	
Object category	Tomb decoration (depiction)
Object	TT 49 (Neferhotep)
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Transverse hall, east wall, south side
Provenance/location	In situ
Dating	Amenhotep IV
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Stands with food and drink
Text/action	Pouring liquid
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Unspecified
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	-
Publication/image	De Garis Davies 1933: Pl. XXI

B4.20	
Object category	Tomb decoration (depiction)
Object	TT 178 (Neferenpet)
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Room I, west wall
Provenance/location	In situ
Dating	Ramesses II
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Stands with food and drink
Text/action	No vessels
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Unspecified
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	-
Publication/image	Hofmann and Seyfried 1995: Pl. XXVII

BREAKING THE *dšr.t*-VESSELS

B4.21	
Object category	Tomb decoration (depiction)
Object	TT 138 (Nedjemger and Hori)
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	West wall, southern part
Provenance/location	In situ
Dating	Ramesses II
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Stands with food and drink
Text/action	Unclear
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Unspecified
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	-
Publication/image	Feucht 2006: Col. Pl. VI

B4.22	
Object category	Tomb decoration (depiction)
Object	TT 13 (Shuroy)
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	First room, south wall
Provenance/location	In situ
Dating	Ramesside
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Stands with food and drink
Text/action	Breaking
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Unspecified
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	-
Publication/image	Werbrouck 1938: Pl. XXXIX

B4.23	
Object category	Tomb decoration (depiction)
Object	TT 44 (Amenemhab)
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	long hall, west wall, lower register
Provenance/location	In situ
Dating	Ramesside
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Stands with food and drink
Text/action	Breaking
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Unspecified
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	-
Publication/image	el-Saady 1996: Pl. XLVII

B4.24	
Object category	Tomb decoration (depiction)
Object	TT 341 (Nakhtamun)
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Outer hall, east wall, south side
Provenance/location	In situ
Dating	19th Dynasty
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Stands with food and drink
Text/action	Pouring liquid
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Unspecified
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	-
Publication/image	De Garis Davies 1948: Pl. XXV

CATALOGUE

B4.25	
Object category	Tomb decoration (depiction)
Object	Tomb of Sennedjem and Senqed (Akhmim)
Occurrence of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Main hall, north wall
Provenance/location	In situ
Dating	Tutankhamun
Context of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Stands with food and drink
Text/action	Unclear
Quantity of <i>dšr.wt</i>	Unspecified
In combination with <i>nms.wt</i>	No
Comments	Also depicts breaking of the stands; more stand scenes on the west wall, but in a very poor state of preservation
Publication/image	Ockinga 1997: Pl. LV

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