

STUDIES IN ANCIENT EGYPT,
THE AEGEAN, AND THE SUDAN





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**Essays in honor of Dows Dunham
on the occasion of his 90th birthday,
June 1, 1980**

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An Unusual Rock-Cut Tomb at Giza

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Fig. 1. View of the entrance of G 7721 looking SW. June, 1975.

1. The number of high relief statues carved against the walls of individual rock-cut tombs seems to have been as variable as the number of free-standing statues placed in mastaba chapels above ground. Many rock-cut tombs, even many important ones like that of Khuenre (MQ 1) at Giza, possess no engaged statues at all, indicating that originally they were furnished only with statues in the round. Other very large rock-cut tombs, like that of Yaseu (G 2196), sometimes possess only one such statue, while other quite modest tombs may possess as many as five or six. Occasionally, as in the tomb of Ankhmare (G 7837-7843), one will find a standing rock-cut statue beside a niche of equal width, which obviously had been intended as a placement for a similar free-standing statue.

The most common rock-cut statue types are single standing figures, usually carved within individual niches, but there are also innumerable variations and combinations of these: duplicate pairs, husband-wife pairs, triple and quadruple images, groups of adults with children, all of which are fairly common. Much rarer forms, however, are seated figures and cross-legged scribes.

Tombs bearing more than six rock-cut statues are uncommon. The tomb of Khenuka (no. 14) at Tehneh contains seven standing statues in as many niches (G. Fraser, *ASAE* 3 (1902), p. 74); seven statues of variable type also occur in both the tombs of Qar and Idu at Giza (G 7101 and 7102) (W. K. Simpson, *Giza Mastabas II, The Mastabas of Qar and Idu* (Boston, 1976), pls. 9, 11, 21, and 29). An underground gallery at North Saqqara contains a row of nine standing statues in individual niches (W. B. Emery, *JEA* 51 (1965), pl. 2(2); *JEA* 52 (1966), pl. 1(4)). At Sheikh Said, the tomb of Meru has ten statues of mixed type cut in seven niches (N. de G. Davies, *The Rock Tombs of Sheikh Said* (London, 1901), pp. 25f., pl. 18), and again at Giza, the tomb of Djedi bears eleven standing statues in four niches, of which seven have been left unfinished (S. Hassan, *Excavations at Giza I* (Oxford, 1932), pp. 86f., pls. 53-54). Thirteen statues are carved against the

Considering the many years that Dows Dunham has spent at Giza, both above and below ground, it seemed to me that as an appropriate *hṯp-di-nswt* on the occasion of his ninetieth birthday, I might offer to his *k3* some notes on a little known architectural oddity at that site, which I had the opportunity to visit for several days during June of 1975. This is the rock-cut tomb G 7721 of Kaherptah, a tomb which has the curious distinction of possessing a greater number of engaged statues than any other Old Kingdom tomb in Egypt—29 in all. Here, for whatever reason, we find that this form of plastic decoration has been used out of all proportion to the norm, so that of the seven walls in the two conjoined rooms of the subterranean chapel, only one is decorated exclusively in the usual low relief. All the others bear niches along their entire extent containing groups of nearly identical lifesize or half-lifesize frontal male figures, seemingly carved in the round but which actually emerge from the native rock only about 20 cm.¹ Particularly unusual is the fact that statue niches have also been cut in each of the three square columns separating the two rooms of the chapel, a feature that appears in only three other known tombs.² Presenting a definitely experimental aspect, this ambitiously conceived structure, with its unparalleled use of high-relief sculpture, gives the impression, despite its present wretched condition, of having once been one of the most grandiose and ostentatious private burial monuments at the site.

Located in the Eastern Cemetery, toward the northern end of the ridge overlooking the village Nazlet el-Simmân, the tomb of Kaherptah lies about fifty meters due east of the great mastaba of Ankh-haf (G 7510), almost precisely on its east-west axis. Its entrance appears as a wide cavelike aperture in a small hollow (fig. 1), and a good view of the interior of the chapel may be had even while walking past. Its isolated position in a vacant area between two groups of rock tombs makes it particularly conspicuous.³ It might even be suggested that this place was shunned as a locus for other contemporary tomb construction because of the poor quality of the limestone on this part of the ledge.⁴ Kaherptah's tomb is now in a most deplorable state. The stone crumbles at the touch, and the walls, pillars, and statues, banded by strata of different hardnesses, have weathered severely and unevenly. Furthermore, having lain open and exposed since antiquity, the tomb has also suffered some damage at the hand of man, its walls pierced with *loculi* for later burials and its statuary scarred with the abuse of the irreverent.

The tomb of Kaherptah has probably been visited or at least seen by every wanderer, tourist, and archaeologist that has ever strolled the length of the eastern ridge at Giza. Petrie stopped there between 1880 and 1882 and took notes on its plan and inscriptions.⁵ Jean Capart evidently photographed the tomb in the 1920s, for he used a view of the six statues in the south wall of the antechamber in his popular book, *Memphis à l'ombre des pyramides* (p. 337, fig. 320), published in 1930. At that time, as in Petrie's, however, the main chambers were filled with sand and debris to a depth of a meter or more, which completely concealed the smaller statues cut in the pillar fronts and in the west and north walls of the antechamber.

Curiously, George Reisner's field diaries make no mention of G 7721 or give any indication of when it was cleared. Nevertheless, his expedition photographer did take a complete set of photographs of the tomb's interior during February and March of 1936, which reveal that Reisner's workmen were indeed clearing its chapel at that time.⁶ But as no reference to the tomb appears in the expedition's object registers, it is evident that nothing of even the slightest consequence was recovered from it. The rear burial chambers, still filled with debris nearly to the ceiling, have obviously never been cleared. The earliest survey and plan of the tomb seem not to have been made until March of 1939,⁷ which perhaps explains why Reisner made no reference to it in his study of the rock-cut tombs at Giza in *History of the Giza Necropolis*, vol. I.⁸ Reisner himself was then almost totally blind, and his great work,

already written, was then awaiting press. Nevertheless, the excellent photographs of the tomb, if not the tomb itself, were certainly known to Reisner's assistant, William Stevenson Smith, who in 1946 made brief reference to its columnar statue niches and extensive statuary in his *History of Sculpture and Painting in the Old Kingdom*.⁹

I first became aware of G 7721 when I happened upon the original photographs of it in the Reisner files at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. Although I had seen much high-relief statuary in rock-cut tombs before, I had never seen a tomb whose decoration was so utterly dominated by it. I also thought it most surprising that, but for Smith's short notice, it still remained unpublished and unknown. In June of 1975, therefore, when I and several other members of the Boston Museum's Egyptian Department were engaged as draftsmen for the second season of the Pennsylvania-Yale Giza Project,¹⁰ I determined to visit the tomb, to re-photograph it, to record completely its relief and inscriptions, and to prepare a detailed ground plan. With the aid of several of my colleagues on the expedition—David and Daniel Ball of Yale University, and Nicholas Thayer of the Museum of Fine Arts staff—I was able to complete this task, working intermittently during several afternoons and an occasional free day over a period of about two weeks. It is from the notes and drawings made at that time that the elevations of the tomb's interior walls, published here, have been prepared (figs. 9-12).

Entrance

The tomb of Kaherptah is approached from the north through an open rectangular entryway approximately 1.5 x 2.7 m. in area, which is cut into the natural rock bed to a depth of about a meter (figs. 1 and 8). Through a doorway at its northeast corner, the visitor steps down into this passage, turns right to confront its west wall, and faces what would seem to be the much damaged and enlarged squint hole of an original serdab. This rectangular cavity, cut from the north wall of the antechamber and probably re-used and slightly modified for a late burial, is 1.6 x 1.1 m. in area and would doubtless have contained several small statues, all in addition to the great number of them carved against the walls of the chapel proper.

Just to the left of this supposed squint hole lay the tomb's original doorway. Since the floor level of the chapel is about .5 m. lower than that of the entryway, it is likely that several cut stone steps would once have been placed against the inner side of the threshold to permit the visitor to step down easily into the chapel. It is curious that this still bears two shallow vertical grooves on the inside, about a meter apart (fig. 2). Of the original doorway, however, only parts of the jambs are now preserved. At some point, perhaps even before the tomb had been completed, the upper part of this entrance, together with a substantial section of the roof of the chapel just beyond, fractured and collapsed, leaving in its place a wide, ragged hole



Fig. 2. Interior composite photograph of G 7721 from the antechamber looking NW to N. June, 1975.

walls of the tomb of Ith at Hemameh (E. MacKay and W. M. F. Petrie, *Babrein and Hemameh* (London, 1929), p. 31); fourteen appear in the tomb of Nekankh (no. 13) at Tehneh (Fraser, pp. 122f.) and sixteen are found in the tomb of Kep at the same site (*ibid.*, pp. 71f.). A particularly interesting rock-cut tomb is that of Irukaptah at Saqqara, which contains thirteen finely carved and painted engaged standing statues in separate niches and a fourteenth in an unfinished, roughly cut sculptural state. Drawn in red paint on another section of wall are the frontal outlines of two more statues, planned but never carved (B. de Rachewitz, *The Rock Tomb of Irukaptah* (Leiden, 1960), pls. 4, 5, 7). Apart from that in the tomb under discussion in this paper, the most remarkable use of high relief decoration occurs in the tombs of Debehen, Ankhmare, and Meresankh, all at Giza. Debehen's tomb bore on one wall a niche containing thirteen standing statues, each dressed differently from the one beside it. Single standing figures were also cut in the faces of each of the three pillars in the tomb (Hassan, *Excavations at Giza IV* (Cairo, 1943), pp. 159ff.; see also M. A. Shoukry, *ASAE Suppl. 15* (Cairo, 1951), p. 244). The tomb of Ankhmare (G 7837-7843), just to the south of G 7721, contains long deep niches at the bases of its west, north, and east walls, in which were carved no less than fifteen lifesize squatting scribe statues (personal observation; see also W. S. Smith, *History of Egyptian Sculpture and Painting in the Old Kingdom*, 2nd ed. (Boston, 1949), p. 189, pl. 57). Surely the most renowned of these monuments is that of Queen Meresankh III (G 7530-7540), which possesses a total of twenty rock-cut statues: ten standing women in one niche, two pairs of women on opposite sides of a false door, and a row of six miniature seated scribe statues of diminishing size, the largest of which was intended to be concealed behind a panel (D. Dunham and W. K. Simpson, *Giza Mastabas I, The Mastaba of Mersyankh III* (Boston, 1974), pls. 4, 8, 9, 11).

2. Statues cut in pillar faces are very rare. They exist in finished form only in the tombs of Kaherptah and Debehen (see note 1). A single unfinished figure of a woman is found in the tomb of Khamereneby II and would seem to be the earliest attempt to carve a statue within a column niche (G. Daressy, *ASAE* 10 (1910), p. 43). A pair of unfinished figures (male and female?) is also cut on a column face in an unidentified tomb at Giza shown in Reisner photo B 8593. The name of the owner is given as Irenakhet.

3. See G. A. Reisner, *History of the Giza Necropolis I* (Cambridge, 1942), map of Cemetery G 7000.

4. Reisner notes the differing qualities of the limestone beds at Giza in *ibid.*, pp. 10-11. I might also note that a short distance to the south of G 7721, there is a ruinous rock-cut tomb that had been abandoned in mid-construction due to the sudden collapse of its roof. Unnumbered and uninscribed, this structure is of interest not only in illustrating the potential instability of the stone in this area, but also in revealing a series of rock-cut statues in various stages of completion.



Fig. 3. View of G 7721 from the antechamber looking SW. March 19, 1936. Reisner Giza photo A 7535. Photographer: Mohammedani.



Fig. 4. Composite photograph of face of north column, G 7721. Feb. 26, 1936. Reisner Giza photos A 7488 & A 7489. Photographer: Mohammedani.

at the northeast corner of the antechamber. From this point a short rock-cut trench extends eastward two meters, bearing in its south face a deep rock-cut horizontal shaft that may have served for a secondary burial (fig. 1). Now filled with debris, it extends into the ledge at least three meters.

The Antechamber

The antechamber itself is a spacious room approximately 6.8 x 3.2 m. in area. At its south end there is an elongated hole in the roof about 1.5 m. in length, through which the sunlight shines and partly illuminates the interior (figs. 3 and 8). This, like the hole over the doorway, was the result of a natural fault. The thickness of the stone ceiling over the antechamber is hardly more than half a meter at any point, although it increases markedly to westward over the inner chamber. There could never have been a masonry superstructure here, for the roof could not have supported the weight. On each wall of the antechamber except the east there are niches containing rock-cut images of standing male figures.

On the north wall a recess surmounted by a torus and cavetto bears four half-lifesize statues (figs. 2, 8, and 9). All are dressed and posed similarly. Each wears a short skirt, half-pleated on the right side, with loose belt tabs visible. Each figure stands erect, as if at attention, arms hanging at the sides and hands closed in fists. The statues are distinguished only by wig style, the first and third wearing wigs flaring to the shoulders and the second and fourth wearing close-fitting wigs. Even though the faces have all been mutilated and the bodies are badly worn, it is clear that the quality of carving could never have been more than mediocre at best. The proportions are poorly conceived, and the figures themselves are not quite of equal size as they were doubtless intended to be. The second from the left is slightly taller than the first and third, which are of equal height, and the fourth is slightly shorter. If they were once identified, all traces of inscription have vanished.

Immediately above this niche there are two horizontal shafts, square in section, separated by a rock-cut wall barely 12 cm. thick. The hole on the right, which, as suggested above, seems once to have formed a serdab, cuts into the cavetto cornice of the statue niche, suggesting that it may have been slightly enlarged at a later date to provide for a secondary burial. The hole on the left served as an entry to the north burial chamber. Both would originally have been bricked up and plastered over.

The east wall of the antechamber was apparently the only wall carved exclusively in bas-relief, but it was a substantial surface, measuring approximately 5.6 x 2.3 m. Today, however, the stone has disintegrated to such an extent that only the merest traces of the original design are visible: at mid-wall, the legs of several small human figures walking right; and at the south end, the outline head and shoulders of large figure facing left, probably seated in an armchair. The composition seems to have represented the deceased gazing upon processions of offering bearers approaching him from the direction of the entrance.

A niche extending the whole length of the south wall contains six lifesize, frontal images of standing men, which, like all the other statues in the tomb, are in quite poor condition (figs. 3, 8, and 10). Nevertheless it is again possible to distinguish each one from its neighbor by wig style. The first, third, and fifth, wear short, close-fitting wigs, while the second, fourth, and sixth, wear long, flaring wigs. All seem to be wearing the short pleated kilt except the third figure from the left, who appears to be wearing a longer kilt with flaring triangular *tablier*. The first three figures, however, are shown holding hands,¹¹ suggesting a group representing the deceased between two of his sons, while the latter three, like those on the north wall, merely stand shoulder to shoulder with their arms at their sides. Probably these statues represented Kaherpah himself personifying his various titles (see below). Labels identifying each effigy would very likely have been cut beside the feet of each, and a longer inscription honoring the tomb owner should have appeared on the lintel over their heads. All traces of such texts, however, have completely disappeared.

To the west of this row of statues is a short corner wall, about 1.5 m. in length, that bears in its lower half a recess with three more half-lifesize figures identical to those in the north wall (figs. 3, 8, and 11). Despite the battered condition of the heads, enough remains of each to indicate that the end figures wore close-fitting wigs and the middle figure, a long flaring wig. Over this niche is a much abraded, barely perceptible relief scene of traditional type representing the deceased, wigless and wearing a sash over his left shoulder, standing in a boat, hunting birds in the marshes. He raises his right arm as if throwing a boomerang. The boatman has poled the craft toward a papyrus clump full of nesting birds. Another boat, carrying three men, follows close behind. Traces of birds may barely be discerned taking wing from the tops of the blossoming papyrus, and a small ichneumon is just visible climbing up one of the stalks, which bends under the weight.

Architrave and Pillars

Separating the antechamber from the offering room are three square rock-cut pillars that rise from a low sill. These support an inscribed architrave that extends from the north to the south wall and thus create four separate doorways joining the two rooms (figs. 2, 3, 8, and 11). The architrave itself is so badly weathered that only occasional traces of signs survive, but the text was doubtless a standard *hṯp-di-nswt* formula, invoking the usual blessings upon the deceased, part of whose titulary is intelligible over the south door: ... *imi hṯ n sʿ(w)* [*pr(w)*]... (“... Assistant Supervisor of the ‘Sons of the House’...”)¹² The lower half of each column front contains a statue niche, while its upper half and corresponding sections of its north and south faces are carved in low relief. None of the pillars are decorated on their west or inner face. These columns have all been severely damaged by natural weathering, particularly in their mid-sections. This marked decay of the stone at the level of the debris that filled the tomb prior to 1936 suggests that the tomb had probably been filled in this way for a very long time indeed, at least since late antiquity and probably much before that. Although the original forms of the statues within the column niches are clear and the reliefs above them fairly well discernible, the reliefs on the sides are poorly preserved at best and the carving lines now very indistinct. For this reason I have thought it best to include only descriptions of these rather than full illustrations.

North Doorway

On the north jamb there were perhaps originally four registers of relief, of which traces of only three are visible; the third itself is quite unintelligible, and the fourth, if it existed at all, is obliterated. The top register, which is the same width as the drum over the doorway, bears the faint outline of a kneeling man, facing right, leaning forward, his arms slightly extended, as if tending a small animal. In the second register, the legs and horns of a standing cow are visible. The animal faces left, toward the offering chamber, and may have been shown in the act of giving birth. Behind her one can discern the torso of a kneeling drover who would seem to be assisting with the delivery of the calf. The only sign distinguishable on the abraded surface above seems to be *idt(?)* (“cow”) (Gardiner Sign List F45).

The south jamb (i.e. the north face of the north pillar) probably also bore four registers of relief, but the top and bottom registers have been obliterated. The two visible registers each contain groups of animals walking right, toward the offering chamber. In the upper, there seem to be three overlapping bullocks, and below them, somewhat more distinct, are three overlapping donkeys. The head of a fourth donkey, facing left, appears over the shoulder of the third. The traces of signs in either register do not permit restoration of the texts.

The drum over this door is inscribed: *rh nswt sʿb hry-wdb imʿhw hr ntr ʿs K3-br-ptḥ* (“King’s acquaintance, Judge, He who is in charge of the reversion offerings, revered one under the Great God, Kaheptah”).

Face of North Pillar

The niche in the lower half contains the half-lifesize figure of a man similar to those on the north and west walls. It is perhaps the best preserved statue in the

5. This and the following reference to the tomb are found in Porter and Moss, *Top. Bib.* III, 1, p. 203. I wish to thank Dr Jaromír Málek and the Griffith Institute for providing me with a photocopy of Petrie’s notes on G 7721 in Sayce MSS. 17b, where it is identified as “Tomb on brow of hill NE of No. 60 Lepsius.” Although Petrie drew a tiny sketch plan of the tomb, he made no reference to its statues, recording hastily, at times even incorrectly, only the existing inscriptions, which were certainly in no better condition even then.

6. The photos, now in the files of the Egyptian Department at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, are numbered A 7485- A 7520 and A 7530- A 7538.

7. This is the date of a survey map by A. Floroff in the files of the Egyptian Department, which includes G 7721 together with its immediate neighbors to the north, G 7712-7716. This seems to have been the only map produced by the Reisner expedition that included a detailed plan of the tomb; the rear burial chambers, however, are not indicated.

8. Reisner, pp. 219-47, 346-60.

9. Smith, p. 190. In noting the rare occurrence of pillar-cut statues, Smith observed that “this same procedure is found at the base of two (sic!) pillars in the chapel of Ka-kher-ptah (G 7721) where the walls of the inner and outer rooms have also long rows of standing figures in niches.”

10. For an account of the work carried out by the Pennsylvania-Yale Giza Project, see W. K. Simpson, *Expedition* 21, no. 2 (winter, 1979), pp. 60-63.

11. Affectionate gestures are common in rock-cut sculptural compositions, just as they are in statuary in the round. A pair of men holding hands, for example, is cut in the wall of G7948 (LG 75) (Reisner photo A 5520). In the tomb of Meresankh, pairs of women are depicted both in this way and with their arms about each other, and in the same tomb, the figure of a young girl is portrayed with her arm about a taller girl’s waist (Dunham and Simpson, *Giza Mastabas I*, pls. 6, 11, and cf. pl. 17). Married couples, too, are portrayed in similar attitudes. The man and woman either hold hands, as in the Giza tomb of Sedhetep (Hassan, *Excavations at Giza III*, pl. 31) or else the woman places a hand over the shoulder or about the waist of her spouse. Such groups may be seen not only in the tomb of Kaheptah (face of central column) but also in the tombs of Perseneb (LG 75) (Reisner photo A 7482), Iteti (LG 68) (Reisner photo A 7358), and Kaemnofret (LG 63) (Reisner photo A 7370). In Mastaba “E” at Giza, a statue group consists of a man flanked by another man, presumably his son, and a woman, his wife. The two men are holding hands, and the woman holds the central figure about the waist (Hassan, *Excavations at Giza III*, pl. 20). In the tomb of Niudjptah at the same site, a woman stands between two men. She holds the hand of one, and with her other arm, holds the other about the waist (A.-M. Abu Bakr, *Excavations at Giza 1959-60* (Cairo, 1953), pl. 61b).

12. For discussions of Kaherpтах's title sequence, see J. Yoyotte, *RdE* 9 (1952), pp. 139-151, and H. G. Fischer, *MIO* 7 (1960), pp. 299-310. Note also Simpson, *The Connoisseur* 179, no. 720 (Feb. 1972), pp. 114, 116, 121, n. 9.

13. This is the only place in the tomb where this individual is mentioned. Called *sn dt* (lit. "brother..." or "partner of eternity" or "...of the (funerary) estate"), he was apparently a family member or personal friend of the tomb-owner whose image, and possibly burial, were placed in the tomb so that his *k3* could partake of the offerings. See M. Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature* (Berkeley, 1973), p. 88; H. Junker, *Giza II* (Vienna and Leipzig, 1934), p. 194f.; *Giza III* (1938), p. 6f.



Fig. 6. Offering chamber, G 772I, looking SW. March 21, 1936. Reisner Giza photo A 7534a. Photographer: Mohammedani.

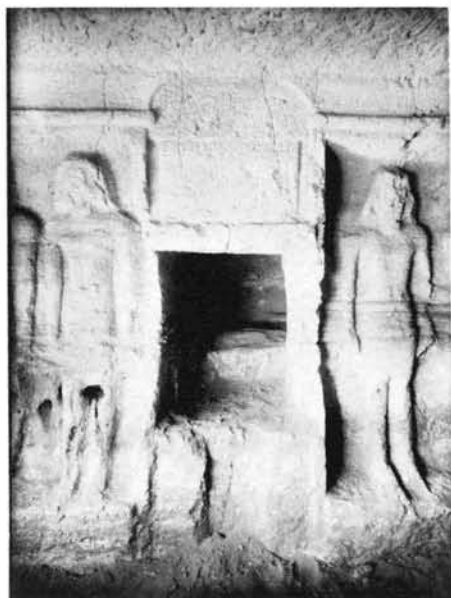


Fig. 7. Central "false" door of G 772I looking W. March 12, 1936. Reisner Giza photo A 7516. Photographer: Mohammedani.



Fig. 5. Composite photograph of the offering chamber, G 772I, looking N. June, 1975.

tomb (fig. 4). He wears a flaring wig and short kilt, pleated on the right side. In the upper half of the column face there is a figure of a standing man in low relief, facing left, wearing a short pleated kilt, a necklace, and natural, close-cropped hair. A small boy, facing right, stands beside the man's extended leg and places a hand on the adult's knee cap. A vertical inscription identifies the two individuals as *rh nswt K3-hr-ptḥ* ("King's Acquaintance, Kaherpтах") and *s3.f[mr].f[m]rw.k(3)* ("His son, whom he loves, Meruka").

Second Doorway

The north jamb (i.e. the south face of the north pillar) partly preserves three registers of relief, although, like the other, it may have had four. On the top register, again the same width as the drum, the figure of an animal, standing, may be discerned facing left. The traces suggest either a heifer or a goat. In the second register there seem to be two bullocks side by side, also facing left, their bodies overlapping. The accompanying text reads: *[im]t [i]w3t* ("Bringing long-horned cattle"). The third register portrayed a man escorting an oryx toward the offering chamber, but only the outline of his head and the text above are preserved: *int [rn] m3hd* ("Bringing a young oryx").

The south jamb of this entrance (i.e. the north face of the middle pillar) is carved with the figure of a standing man, facing left, wearing a short kilt, necklace, and close-fitting wig. He is identified as...*smsw K3-hr-ptḥ* ("...the elder, Kaherpтах"), although more signs seem to have existed above the sign *smsw*. Below his name the name and figure of another son may also have been carved.

The drum inscription reads: *rh nswt imi ht s3(w) pr (w) K3-hr-ptḥ* ("King's Acquaintance, Assistant Supervisor of the 'Sons of the House,' Kaherpтах").

Face of Middle Pillar

The much worn, half-lifesize figures of a husband and wife are carved in the niche in its lower half (figs. 2, 3, and 11). The woman stands to the man's left, her right arm over his right shoulder. The relief on the upper face of the column portrays a standing man, facing right, again wearing the short pleated kilt and now a flaring wig. A small boy, facing right, stands before the man's extended leg. A vertical inscription identifies the elder individual as: *sn dt s[] hrp 'pr nfrw K3-hr-st.f* ("Partner in the funerary estate..., the Controller of the Equipment of the Recruits, Kahersetef").¹³ The name of the boy, who is identified as *s3.f* ("his son"), is not preserved.

Third Doorway

The north jamb (i.e. the south face of the middle pillar), seems again to have been divided into at least three registers of relief. Here, however, the surface of the stone is so badly damaged that no sense can be made of the few surviving traces of carving. On the other hand, the south jamb, (i.e. the north face of the south pillar), bears the figure of a woman standing, facing left, her right hand placed over her chest. The figure of a small girl, facing right, stands before her at knee level. The text reads: *[hmt].fmr.t.fHnwt.sn s3t.[f]...b...* ("His wife, whom he loves, Henutsen. His daughter...-b-...").

The drum inscription over the doorway is completely destroyed.

Face of South Pillar

The half-lifesize statue in the niche, although slightly taller, is virtually identical to the figure cut in the north pillar face, but it is badly damaged. The relief above it represents a standing man, facing left, wearing a close-fitting wig, a necklace, and a leopard skin garment. The head and face of the figure have been deliberately hacked out with a sharp metal or stone implement. The accompanying text reads: *rh nswt K3-hr-ptḥ* (“King’s Acquaintance, Kaherptah”).

South Doorway

The north jamb (i.e. the south face of the south pillar) preserves three registers of relief. On the upper register, there are three overlapping figures of walking bulls, facing left, with tethering ropes hanging from their heads; on the second there is a man, his back to the offering chamber, pulling a hyena to the left, which is accompanied by the inscription *int ḥtt* (“Bringing a hyena”); and on the third, now almost totally obliterated, a man was shown escorting an ibex in the same direction. Here, for lack of space, no text was ever carved.

The south jamb also bore three parallel registers: on the top, another group of three tethered bulls, now facing right; in the second, two butchers cutting up a slaughtered ox; and in the third, three men walking right.

The drum overhead was inscribed: [*rh nswt i*] *m3ḥw hr ntr 3 K3-hr-ptḥ*. (“King’s Acquaintance, the revered one under the Great God, Kaherptah”).

Offering Chamber

Each of the three walls of the offering chamber is carved with a niche, surmounted by a torus and cavetto, containing a triad of lifesize male statues. All the figures are of similar size, dress, and posture, and duplicate the type used so abundantly in the antechamber. Each stands erect, arms at the side, hands closed in fists, and, again each wears a wig of a type differing from those worn by the figures beside it. All are very badly abraded due to natural weathering, the most serious losses having occurred in the mid-sections of the figures, which were banded by a stratum of less stable stone. (figs. 5-10, and 12).

The niches in the north and south walls nearly fill the entire wall space, and, but for their differences in wig styles, the statues seem to mirror each other. On the north wall a man wearing a long, flaring wig stands between two men wearing close-fitting wigs, while on the south, a man in a short wig is flanked by two others in long wigs. Two more statue niches, bearing figures bewigged as the last, are also cut in the west wall, bringing the total number of statues in the room to twelve.

There are two false doors in the west wall, one between the two statue niches, and a second, between the south niche and the south corner. The first, curiously, has been cut through in its upper half so as to provide access to the burial chamber beyond (figs. 7 and 12). The aperture has been neatly cut so that its upper edge precisely corresponds to the bottom of the lintel. This, and the fact that originally there would have been no other way to reach the burial chamber, would seem to suggest that this “false” door was actually made as a true doorway to the burial chamber, and that following the burial it would have been plugged with a masonry wall or with a large stone specially cut and fitted to it. Such an arrangement would seem to be without parallel.

The primary titles of the deceased are inscribed on the lintel: *rh [nswt] imi [ḥt n s]3(w) [pr(w)] im3ḥw K3-hr-ptḥ* (“King’s Acquaintance, Assistant Supervisor of the ‘Sons of the House,’ the revered one, Kaherptah”). Over this, on the tablet, the deceased was shown seated in a chair, facing right, before a table of bread. Although the traces of carving are now very faint, it is clear that to the right of the table there was a short *ḥtp-di-nswt* ending in the words... *ḥt nbt nfr(t)* (“...and every good thing”) and that over the table the man’s name appeared as the last word in a line beginning at the right edge. Over this the cavetto cornices of the adjacent statue niches curve upward to the roof, giving the illusion of an archway in relief (fig. 12). Carved in this space was another short *ḥtp-di-nswt* in a single line, now illegible.

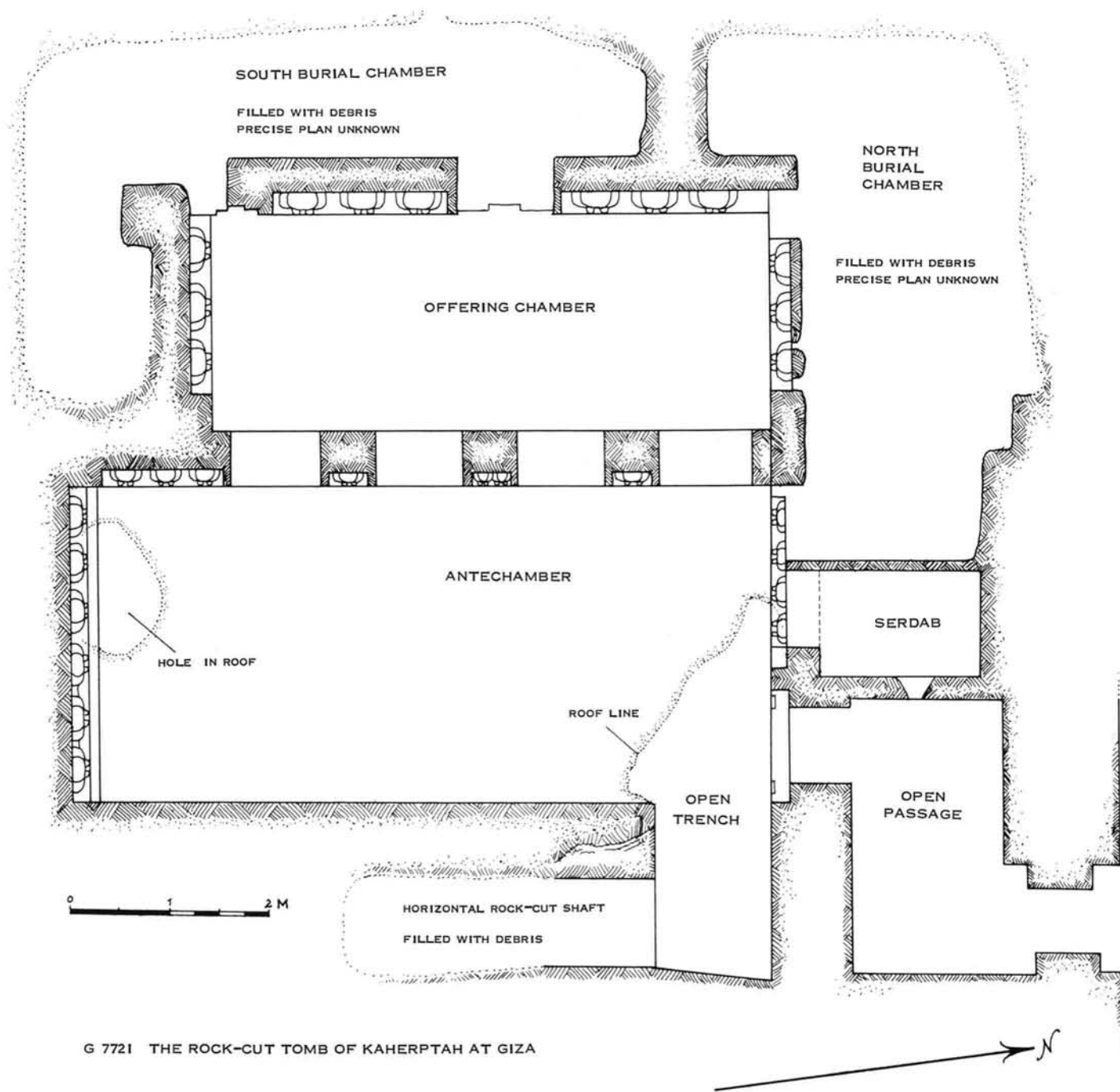


Figure 8.

Very similar in its simplicity to the first false door lintel is that carved at the south end of the wall. The lintel is inscribed *hṯp-di-nswt [In]pw pr n.[f] hrw m.. [K3-hr-ptḥ]* ("An offering which the King and Anubis gives: namely, that the voice go forth for him in... Kahephtah"). Over this, the tablet, carved as the last, bears the tomb owner's full titulary: *rh nswt s3b hry-wdb smsw h3yt imi ht n s3(w) K3-hr-ptḥ* ("King's Acquaintance, Judge, he who is in charge of the reversion offerings, the Elder of the Portal, the Assistant Supervisor of the 'Sons of the House,' Kahephtah"); and still another short, single line *hṯp-di-nswt*, now obliterated, appeared above this text. The vertical panels and drum of the false door are uninscribed.

Burial Chambers

It will be seen in the plan (fig. 8) that the walls of the offering chamber are not facings of solid bedrock, but are instead merely rock-cut panels separating the room from two large, roughly cut L-shaped chambers which completely surround it. Since there are no pits in the floors of the outer rooms that could have been used for burials, it seems likely that these two irregular cavities served this purpose, or themselves contained pits. As noted, the southern chamber could only have been entered through the square hole in the "false" door in the center of the west wall, while the northern was entered through the square hole beside the serdab in the north wall of the antechamber. The "false" door entrance would seem to have been plugged with a fitted stone block or with masonry. The other, as well as the serdab entry, would have been suitably blocked up and plastered over. At some later time, these burial chambers were broken into either by tomb robbers or by those seeking sites for other burials. Not only were their original entrances penetrated but two holes were pierced in the walls of the offering chamber: one in the northwest corner between the statue niches and another in the southwest corner, which damaged the left side of the false door tablet (figs. 5, 6, and 12). Two more holes, too small to permit entrance into the burial chamber, appear in the north statue niche, but these were probably caused during construction of the tomb when the masons hewing out the wall from the rear, cut across several weak sections of stone, which gave way. This particular wall is only about 12 cm. wide. Anciently these holes would have been bricked up and plastered over.

While the floor level of these two inner chambers seems to be about a meter higher than that of the outer chambers, the ceiling too, is cut higher and increases steadily to westward, conforming to the natural slope of the hill. However, since these chambers remain filled with sand, leaving only a crawl space between the ceiling and the top of the debris, it cannot be known at present whether there were actually pits sunk in the floors or even if there were chambers beyond them. In the short time available to us we were not able to measure precisely the configuration of these rooms or their exact dimensions, but the plan (fig. 8) may be thought to convey a fairly accurate impression of their discernible extent and shape.

Comments

The tomb of Kaherptah must belong to the middle or late Sixth Dynasty. The type and quality of the rock-cut figures compares rather well with those in other rock-cut tombs of the period. The statues cut in the wall of the tomb of Qar (G 7101) at Giza, for example, which are datable to the reign of Pepi I, are very similar to those under consideration here, and must indicate how Kaherptah's figures looked originally, at their best.¹⁴ This type of statue stands unnaturally rigid, as if at attention, with little resemblance to life, having a waist too narrow and shoulders rather too broad. The modeling, devoid of sensitivity, is mechanical and cursory, and even when completely carved and well-finished, the body still appears very flat. Only with the application of a coat of plaster and paint could such figures assume even an illusory natural appearance. In Kaherptah's tomb the constant repetition of the standing male figure conveys the clear impression of mass production.

One is left to wonder whether all the single statues represented only the deceased or if some may also have represented the other male members of his immediate family. Certainly there are many more statues here than Kaherptah had titles. But if these statues were intended primarily to serve as reserve habitations of the *k3* of this gentleman there was also a curious concern here with their decorative function. Unlike many other heavily sculptured tombs, where the statue niches are placed more randomly, here there is a clear symmetry in their placement. In the offering chamber, the three statues of the north wall face three similar statues on the south wall, and on the west wall, identical triads stand on opposite sides of the central false door. These have been slightly offset to the north only to create space for the second false door at the south corner. Nearly identical images of single standing men appear in the north and south columns, while the middle bears the

14. See note 1.

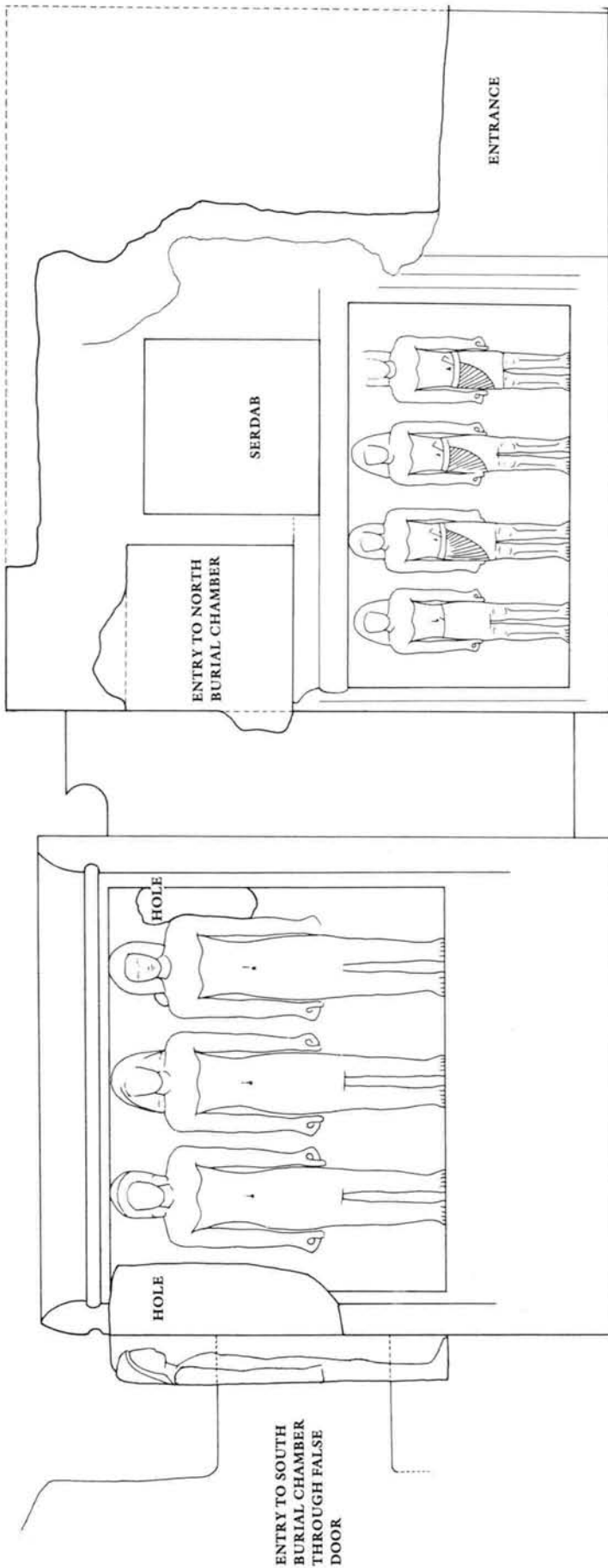


Fig. 9. G 7721 north wall

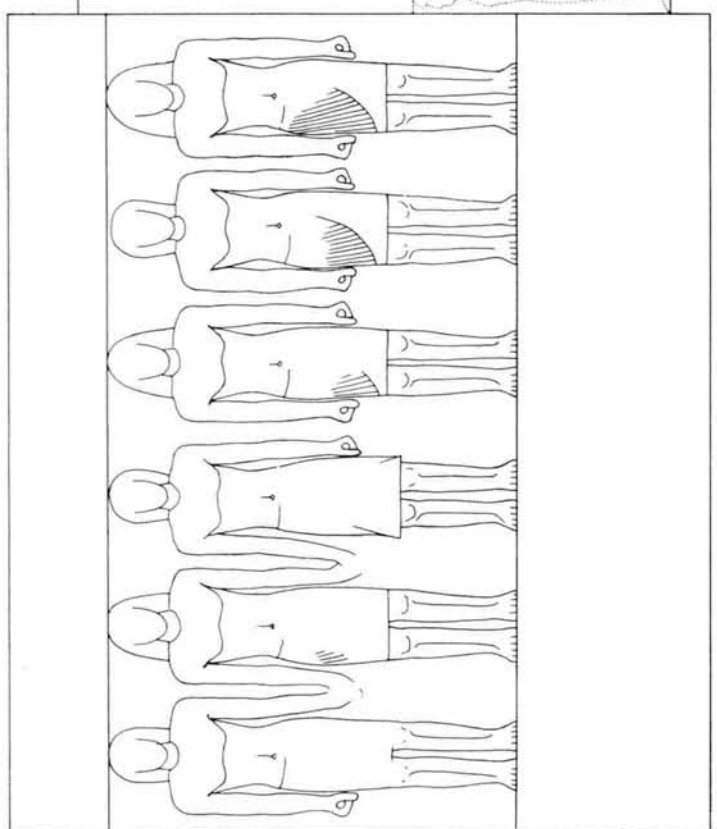


Fig. 10. G 7721 south wall

OFFERING CHAMBER

ANTECHAMBER

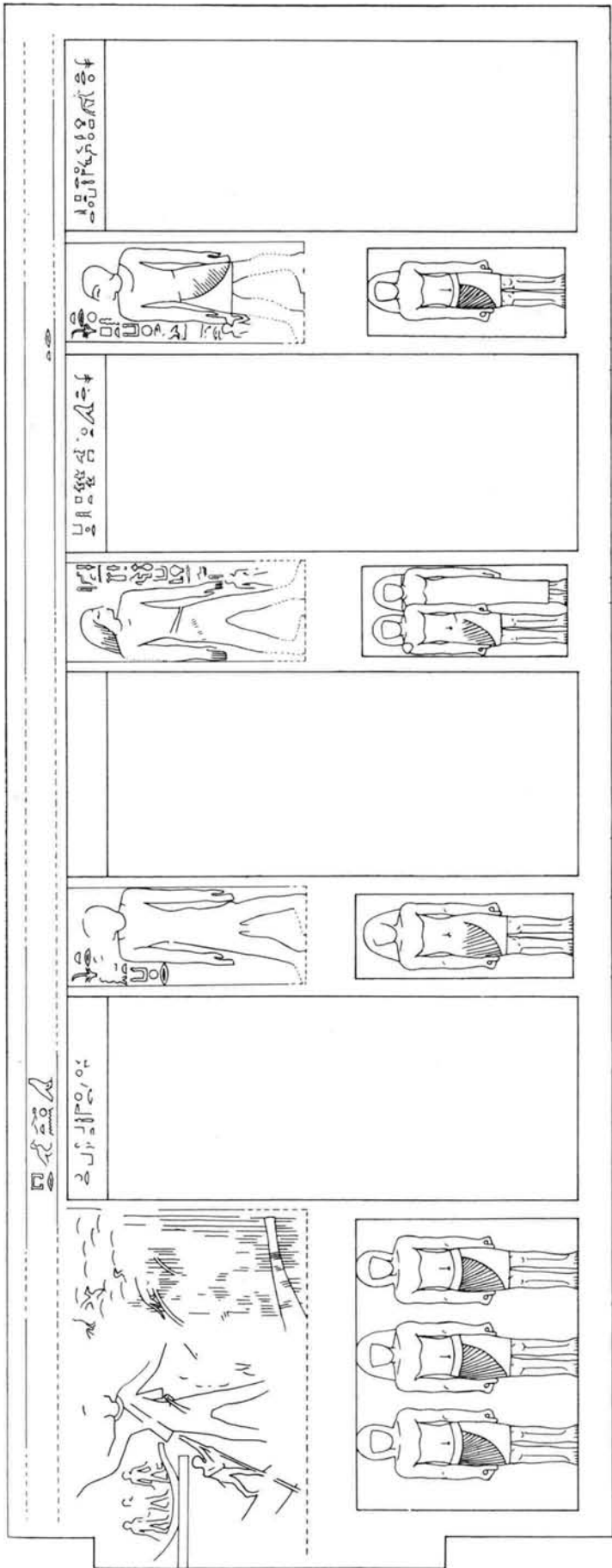


Fig. 11. G 7721 west wall of antechamber and columns

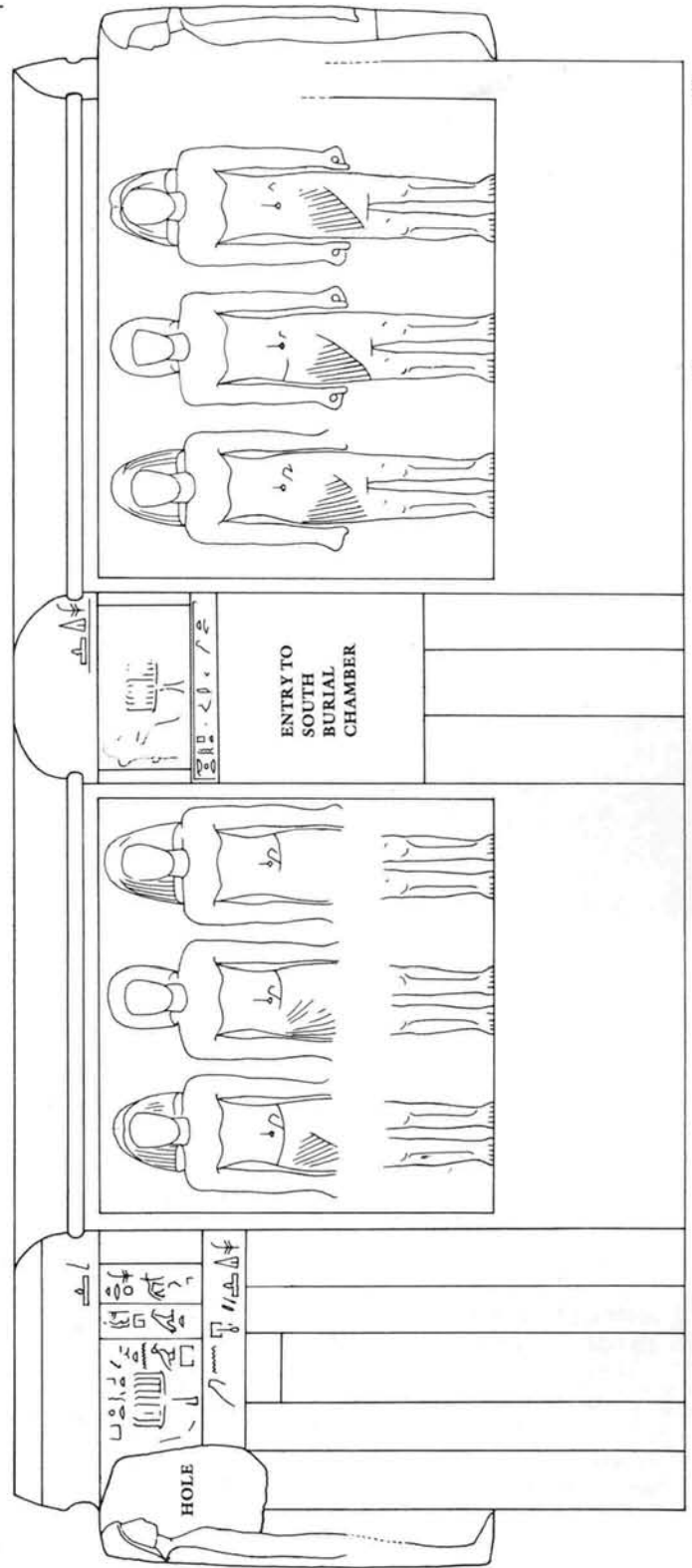


Fig. 12. G 7721 west wall of antechamber

pair statue. Further symmetry is noticeable in the reliefs on the upper faces of the columns; for the figures of the north and middle columns face each other, and that on the south column faces the figure in the fishing scene. Variation in the otherwise monotonous replication of standing statues was achieved only by regularly alternating the wig styles of each.

A striking feature of this tomb is the boldness with which it was cut. Not only is it uncommonly spacious, but its ceiling and certain of its walls are astonishingly thin. Over the antechamber the roof varies in thickness between 30 and 50 cm. and the wall between the serdab and the north burial chamber as well as that behind the statues at the north end of the offering chamber are hardly more than 12 cm. thick at any point.

The designer of this extraordinary monument would seem to have drawn his inspiration from the well-known Fourth Dynasty tomb of Debehen, cut in the cliff southeast of the Khafre pyramid temple, which even in antiquity must have been one of the most famous tombs at the site.¹⁵ Not only is it one of the largest of the rock tombs at Giza, but, together with its contemporary, the tomb of Meresankh III, it demonstrated a utilization of rock-cut statuary which to the observer of the late Old Kingdom, would probably have suggested the full potential of this art form. One wall of Debehen's tomb contained a niche with no less than thirteen engaged statues of the deceased in a striding attitude, dressed in various types of garments, while the two columns and pilaster opposite them each have niches in their faces containing single standing men. This same rare feature was also adapted to Kaherpтах's tomb, but with originality. A standing couple was squeezed into the niche in the central pillar, and, unlike Debehen's columns, the upper faces and sides of each were also adorned with reliefs. Furthermore, whereas the sculptured columns and pilaster in Debehen's tomb were designed to serve only as corner supports for the walls of two brick-built serdabs, within which would have been set large free-standing statues, Kaherpтах's columns served to create separate doorways leading into the offering chamber, itself a kind of open serdab, where the twelve rock-cut statues lining the walls served the same purpose as Debehen's statues in the round.

To modern Egyptologists the tomb of Debehen is most famous for its unusual anecdotal inscription, which recounts that Mycerinus himself designated the site where the tomb was to be built while he was out one day inspecting the work on his pyramid and that he assigned daily a gang of fifty of the royal workmen to the task of cutting it. This bit of information may be assumed to convey some idea of the approximate number of masons, laborers, and sculptors who might have been employed to create any rock-cut tomb of comparable size: cutting the stone, hauling away the chips, preparing and sharpening the chisels, carving and painting the statues and reliefs, etc. This note can only serve to emphasize the fact that to have afforded such a burial monument, Kaherpтах must have been a man of considerable affluence.

To go further than this, however, it may be suggested that Kaherpтах's deliberate imitation of Debehen's unique tomb, which in his day was probably at least two centuries old, would indicate not only that he was a man with some antiquarian interests but, even more, that he possessed highly individual tastes and the strength of character to display them. His own tomb is quite unlike anything created by his contemporaries. It stands out all the more because of its curious physical isolation from them in an otherwise crowded cemetery. Is it possible, therefore, that in this monument we have evidence of one individual's conscious effort to create something different from his peers? And can it be that Kaherpтах's own preference for so many images of himself, to the almost total exclusion of other forms of decoration, is itself evidence of the sort of exalted ego and flamboyant personality that would be willing to depart from the common standard?

15. See notes 1 and 2.