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# STATIONEN

Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte Ägyptens

RAINER STADELMANN GEWIDMET

Herausgegeben von  
Heike Guksch und Daniel Polz



VERLAG PHILIPP VON ZABERN · GEGRÜNDET 1785 · MAINZ



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XVII, 497 Seiten mit 151 Abbildungen, 28 Schwarzweißtafeln und 3 Beilagen (in Tasche)

Diese Festschrift ist ein Geschenk der Franz und Eva Rutzen Stiftung und  
des Verlags Philipp von Zabern an einen alten Freund des Hauses

*Die Deutsche Bibliothek – CIP-Einheitsaufnahme*

**Stationen** : Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte Ägyptens ;  
Rainer Stadelmann gewidmet / hrsg. von Heike Guksch und  
Daniel Polz. – Mainz : von Zabern, 1998  
ISBN 3-8053-2526-6

Die Druckvorlage für diesen Band wurde von den Herausgebern auf eigenen Rechnern  
sowie auf Rechnern des Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures (UCLA) unter Verwendung  
der Software-Programme Microsoft Word für Macintosh (v. 5.1 und 6), Word for Windows 97  
und Adobe Photoshop (v. 4.0) hergestellt.

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ISBN 3-8053-2526-6

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# The Problem of the Giza Slab Stelae

PETER DER MANUELIAN

(Plates 6–7)

Few sites in Egypt provide such a wealth of archaeological material yet still leave as many questions unanswered as the Giza Necropolis. When the location of the royal cemetery shifted northward to Giza, a number of features appeared that scholars have regarded as innovations. Chief among these are the pre-planned, regular layout of streets of mastaba tombs, and a dearth of decorated wall surfaces in private tombs. The excavations by RAINER STADELMANN and his colleagues at Dahshur are filling in many of the gaps preceding the period of Giza, and leading to new perspectives on just what was innovation and what was continued tradition<sup>1</sup>. The following remarks on a topic he knows better than most are offered in gratitude, respect and friendship<sup>2</sup>.

Among the sparse corpus of inscribed material from the earliest Fourth Dynasty tombs at Giza, the so-called slab stelae (pl. 6a, fig. 1) are in some ways a truly deceptive group of objects. There are very few of them (about fifteen either complete or fragmentary examples); they appear thematically common, indeed almost boringly repetitive<sup>3</sup>. And they are chronologically isolated to a single dynasty, perhaps even to a single reign. But a closer examination of the slab stelae places them at the very center of the questions surrounding social organization, necropolis development and exactly what funerary burial equipment was deemed indispensable in the early Old Kingdom. In addition, they are artistic masterpieces in their own right, perfecting most of the canons and conventions of early Egyptian two-dimensional representation with a confidence and restrained elegance absent from many of their predecessors.

By way of definition, the slab stelae under discussion here include only those that are complete in themselves, not parts of false door panels (tablets), tomb chapels or other assemblages. Some confusion in the scholarly literature has arisen over interchangeable terminologies, such as the contradictory term "false door stela"<sup>4</sup>. With a few exceptions, the slab stelae represent the only decorated or inscribed surface of the mastaba tombs in which they were found.

While the beauty of the slab stelae, enhanced in three cases by the preservation of much of the original color scheme, has secured their place in countless surveys on Egyptian art and treatises on the Pyramid Age, more penetrating research on the Giza stelae themselves is rather limited. As the excavators of most of the examples, G. REISNER, and to a lesser extent H. JUNKER, were naturally the first

<sup>1</sup> In the early decades of this century, G. REISNER saw the potential significance of Dahshur that RAINER STADELMANN has since done so much to confirm (see, for example, the latter's numerous essays in *MDAIK*). In fact, fearing that W. M. F. PETRIE might have "damaged the site beyond repair," REISNER tried more than once to obtain a Dahshur concession to fill in the gaps in Old Kingdom mortuary development; cf. REISNER's diary entries, quoted in: *KMT* 7 no. 2, San Francisco, Calif. 1996, 71.

<sup>2</sup> For many inciteful criticisms, additional references and helpful comments on preliminary versions of this paper, I would like to thank H. G. FISCHER, E. BROVARSKI, and M. BÁRTA.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. the remarks by E. SCHOTT, in: *Fs Westendorf*, 1125 ("...daß sie fast langweilig wirken"), 1126.

<sup>4</sup> On the confusion over terminology, see G. HAENY, in: *Fs Ricke*, 160.



to concern themselves with the problem. G. REISNER provided summaries of the major mastabas of Cemeteries 1200, 2100, and 4000 as Appendices A, C, and D of his monumental *Giza Necropolis* 1<sup>5</sup>, in which the stelae he found are listed and briefly discussed. He went into slightly greater detail in his chapters for subsequent *Giza Necropolis* volumes, which remain unpublished<sup>6</sup>. H. JUNKER's more analytical comments on the stelae may be found primarily in his *Gîza* 1, 23–35, *Gîza* 2, 4–18; and *Gîza* 12, 49–53. Following upon the work of these two scholars, A. SCHARFF, W. S. SMITH, J. VANDIER, G. HAENY, S. WIEBACH, N. STRUDWICK, M. BÁRTA and R. STADELMANN have contributed important discussions<sup>7</sup>.

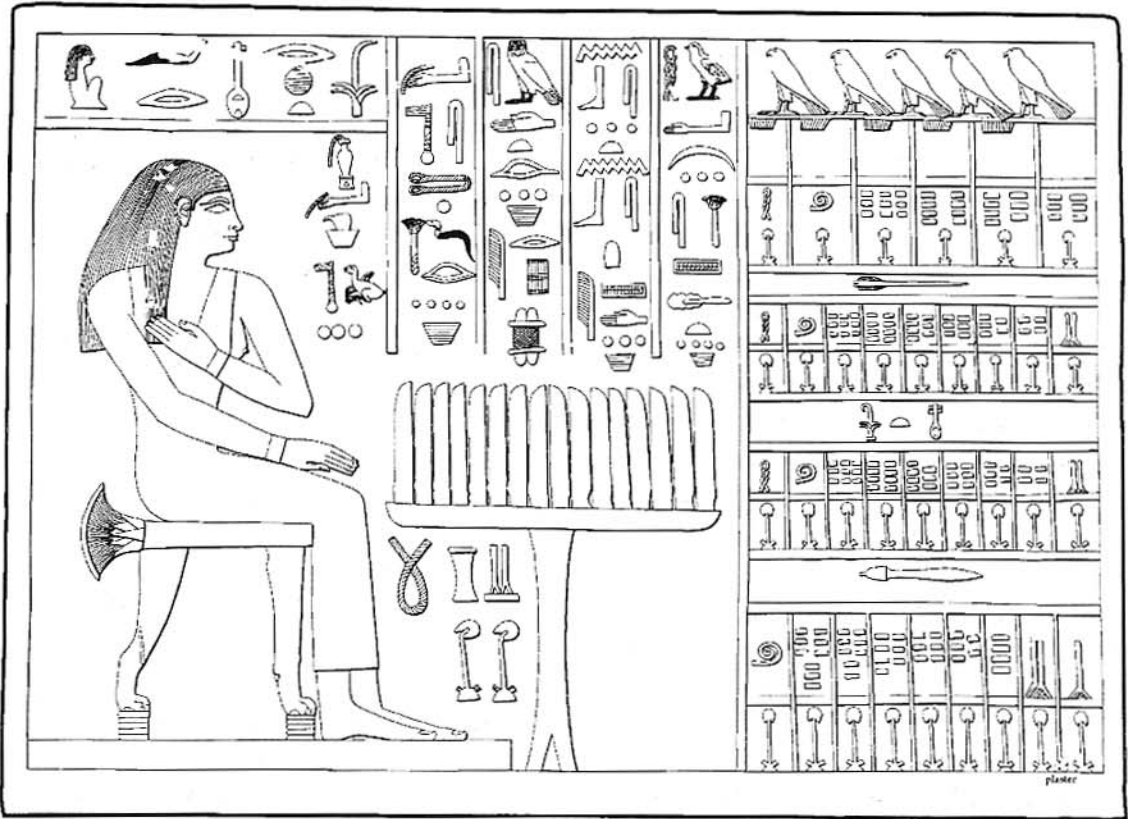


Fig. 1 Digital drawing of the slab stela of Nefer, from G 1207; Hearst Museum, Berkeley 6-19801.

<sup>5</sup> Cambridge, Mass. 1942; reprinted in 1997 by John William Pye Rare Books, Brockton, Mass.

<sup>6</sup> REISNER unpublished manuscript: G. REISNER, *Giza*, Chapter XI, the funerary equipment found in burial chambers, esp. 239–39; on reserve heads and slab stelae 237 ff. I am grateful to R. E. FREED, curator of the Department of Ancient Egyptian, Nubian, and Near Eastern Art, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, for permission to consult these unpublished manuscripts, and to reproduce images from the Museum Expedition photographic archives.

<sup>7</sup> A. SCHARFF, in: *Fs Griffith*, 346–57; W. S. SMITH, in: *Archaeology* 16, 1963, 2–13; IDEM, *Sculpture*, 159–60, 256–58; VANDIER, *Manuel* 1, 724–74; HAENY, in: *Fs Ricke*, esp. 153–59; S. WIEBACH, *Die ägyptische Scheintür*, HÄS 1, 1981, esp. 35–51. See also N. STRUDWICK, *The Administration of Egypt in the Old Kingdom*, London 1985, 37–50; M. BÁRTA, in: *SAK* 22, 1995, 21–35; R. STADELMANN, in: *Kunst des Alten Reiches*, Mainz 1995, 155–66.

In a future monograph of the *Giza Mastabas Series* of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, I hope to present a re-examination of the Giza slab stelae in some detail, along with modern facsimile drawings and collations of all the examples currently known. Pending this more thorough study, the following remarks will be limited to three broad areas of discussion: the origins, evolution and general history of the Giza stelae (Part 1), some notes on the surviving examples (Part 2), and finally, speculation on the motivation behind the slab stela form itself (Part 3).

### 1. Notes on origins, evolution and history of the Giza slab stelae

The modern archaeological history of the fifteen complete or fragmentary Giza slab stelae<sup>8</sup> began approximately a century ago, with unsystematic digging in the far Western Cemetery by M. BALLARD, M. P. His 1901–02 discovery<sup>9</sup> of the painted slab stela of Nefret-iabet (acquired by the Louvre in 1912, accession number E 15 591)<sup>10</sup>, preceded that of all the other fourteen. Working for the Hearst Expedition of the University of California from 1902–05 and, from 1905 onward, for the Harvard University–Museum of Fine Arts, Boston Expedition, G. REISNER found eight more stelae between 1904 and 1906 in the nucleus Cemeteries 1200 and 2100, and two more in 1912 and 1914 respectively in Cemetery 4000. H. JUNKER discovered six additional stelae between 1913 and 1914 within the portions of Cemeteries G 4000 and G 2100 assigned to the German/Austrian Expedition. This completes the currently known corpus. Only one of H. JUNKER's finds was complete (Iunu, G 4150); two others (G 4450 and 4560) were apparently just undecorated fragments. The schematic map of the major mastabas of the Western Cemetery in fig. 2 shows the locations of the tombs containing actual stelae versus those with empty emplacements. In addition, fig. 2 shows tombs with reserve heads as well as slab stelae<sup>11</sup>. Today, the stelae and stela fragments are housed in the museums of Berkeley (four)<sup>12</sup>, Boston (three), Cairo (three; two currently on loan to the Port Said National Museum), Hildesheim (one), Paris (one), and Vienna (three).

Much more complicated than the modern archaeological history is of course the ancient history leading up to the appearance of the slab stelae. Some have suggested that the Bankfield stela, published by A. H. GARDINER, may be the earliest representation of the funerary repast<sup>13</sup>. But the most

<sup>8</sup> The figure of two dozen stelae often cited in the literature (e.g., SMITH, in: *Archaeology* 16, 7) must refer to mastabas containing stelae and/or stela emplacements. The figure of "three dozen" (C. KELLER, in: N. THOMAS, ed., *The American Discovery of Ancient Egypt*, Los Angeles 1995, 125) must refer to reliefs with linen lists as gathered by W. S. SMITH, in: *ZÄS* 71, 1935, 134–35; in fact, several additions can now be made to SMITH's list, among them the archaic stelae discovered by Z. Y. SAAD at Helwan (Ezbet el-Walda).

<sup>9</sup> REISNER, *Giza* 1, 403. Contrary to VANDIER's statement in *Manuel* 1, 761 (h), REISNER did not discover this stela, although G 1225 did fall within the American excavation concession shortly after M. BALLARD had removed the slab. For more on BALLARD, see H. G. FISCHER, in: *MIO* 7, 1960, 311, who cites in turn the EEF's *Archaeological Report* for 1901–02, 8.

<sup>10</sup> C. ZIEGLER, *Stèles, peintures et reliefs égyptiens de l'Ancien Empire*, Paris 1990, 187–89, cat. 29.

<sup>11</sup> For a comparative map with reserve head locations marked, see R. TEFNIN, *Art et magie au temps des pyramides*, Brussels 1991, pl. 31. For more recent remarks on the reserve heads, cf. F. JUNGE, in: *Kunst des Alten Reiches*, 103–109; and A. BOLSHAKOV, in: *Seventh International Congress of Egyptologists, Abstracts of Papers*, Oxford 1995, 21–23.

<sup>12</sup> Three of the four Berkeley stelae (excluding the fragmentary stela of Kanefer, G 1203) are illustrated in LUTZ, *Steles*, pls. 1–2.

<sup>13</sup> A. H. GARDINER, in: *JEA* 4, 1917, pl. 15; VANDIER, *Manuel* 1, 739, fig. 496; FISCHER, *Dendera*, 9, and IDEM, *Varia Nova*, New York 1996, 112–13, with fig. 2a. SMITH, *Sculpture*, 143, dates the stela to Dynasty 3. Note that Netjer-aperef's round-topped stela from Dahshur casts some doubt on an Upper Egyptian provenance for the



convincing stylistic and iconographic antecedents to the Giza stelae are the Archaic cylinder seals (mostly without known provenance; cf. KAPLONY, *Inscripfen* 1–3), the archaic stelae from Saqqara (less likely the extremely simplified, round-topped stelae and private name stones from Abydos), the (misnamed "ceiling") niche-stelae from Helwan (Ezbet el-Walda)<sup>14</sup>, and the false door panels and niches from the more elaborate Third and early Fourth Dynasty tombs at Saqqara<sup>15</sup>, Medum<sup>16</sup> and Dahshur<sup>17</sup>. Stelae of uncertain provenance include those of Niankhtet (Liverpool)<sup>18</sup>, and Djefai-nisut (Hannover)<sup>19</sup>. Perhaps the best Fourth Dynasty comparisons to the Giza slab stelae are the false door panels of Rahotep (Medum, British Museum)<sup>20</sup>, Isi (Saqqara, Copenhagen)<sup>21</sup>, and Mery (Saqqara, Louvre)<sup>22</sup>. Many of these monuments present the deceased seated at a table of bread loaves, accompanied by additional hieroglyphic offering lists and a linen list at the right of the panel<sup>23</sup>. But none of them quite matches in layout or style the appearance of the stelae from the Western Cemetery at Giza.

Confusion has arisen over a number of inter-related topics: elements possibly indicating southern influence (Abydos, round-topped, vertically oriented stelae), northern influence (Memphite region, rectangular, horizontally oriented stelae), false doors directly or indirectly related to slab stelae, the originally intended appearance of the offering place in the earliest Giza mastabas, and the history of the funerary offering scene in general. Thanks to contributions by the scholars mentioned above, much light has been shed on these issues. Moreover, while the reduction of decorated wall surfaces is most striking at Giza, recent excavations by the German Archaeological Institute at Dahshur are forging a critical link to the Giza necropolis, and suggesting that Snefru, not Khufu, was the originator of the reductionist policy<sup>24</sup>.

BANKFIELD stela based on a rounded top alone. A. BOLSHAKOV eliminates this monument from his discussion due to its uncertain provenance: *Man and his Double in Egyptian Ideology of the Old Kingdom*, Wiesbaden 1997, 32.

- <sup>14</sup> Cf. Z. Y. SAAD, *Ceiling Stelae in Second Dynasty Tombs from the Excavations at Helwan*, Cairo 1957; IDEM, *Royal Excavations at Helwan (1941–1945)*, Cairo 1947, and IDEM, *Royal Excavations at Helwan (1945–1947)*, Cairo 1951. Add to these references P. KAPLONY, *Beitr. Inscripten*; IDEM, *Inscripten*. Several texts have been translated by J. KAHL, N. KLOTH, U. ZIMMERMANN, *Die Inscripten der 3. Dynastie*, *ÄA* 56, 1995, esp. 172–79. Cf. also HAENY, in: *Fs Rieke*, 148–53, and BOLSHAKOV, *Man and his Double*, 112 with n. 3. For a reinterpretation of the Helwan excavations themselves, see T. WILKINSON, in: *MDAIK* 52, 1996, 337–54.
- <sup>15</sup> QUIBELL, *Archaic Mastabas*, esp. pls. 26–28. On Hesyre, cf. W. WOOD, in: *JARCE* 15, 1978, 9–24, and H. G. FISCHER, in: *GM* 49, 1981, 28–31; for Metjen: *Ägyptisches Museum Berlin*, Mainz 1991, 24–25, cat. 14; Akhet-aa (Saqqara B 1–2): SMITH, *Sculpture*, 151, ZIEGLER, *op. cit.*, 96–103, nos. 14–15, and H. G. FISCHER, in: C. BERGER, B. MATHIEU (eds.), *Études sur l'ancien Empire et la nécropole de Saqqâra*, *Fs J.-P. Lauer*, Montpellier 1997, *Orientalia Monspeliensia* 9, 177–189.
- <sup>16</sup> For Rahotep and Nefret, cf. PETRIE, *Medum*, pl. 13; A. BOLSHAKOV, in: *GM* 123, 1991, 11–20; R. STADELMANN, in: *Kunst des Alten Reiches*, pls. 57, 58b. For Nefermaat and Atet, cf. PETRIE, *Medum*, pl. 20.
- <sup>17</sup> See, for example, N. ALEXANIAN, in: *Kunst des Alten Reiches*, 1–18 (tomb of Netjer-aperet); STADELMANN, in: *ibid.*, pl. 59c; SMITH, *Sculpture*, pl. 36b Iy-nefer (Dahshur south).
- <sup>18</sup> VANDIER, *Manuel* 1, 754, fig. 498; R. WEILL, *Des monuments et de l'histoire des IIe et IIIe dynasties égyptiennes*, Paris 1908, 225.
- <sup>19</sup> R. DRENKHAN, *Die ägyptischen Reliefs im Kestner Museum Hannover*, Hannover 1989, 22, cat. 3; and KAHL ET AL., *op. cit.*, 216–17.
- <sup>20</sup> PETRIE, *Medum*, pl. 13; British Museum 1242, *BM Stelae I*<sup>2</sup>, pl. 1 (2).
- <sup>21</sup> Copenhagen ÆIN 896a, M. JØRGENSEN, *Catalogue Egypt I*, Copenhagen 1996, 49.
- <sup>22</sup> Louvre B 49, a–c; WEILL, *Ile et IIIe dynasties*, 300; ZIEGLER, *op. cit.*, 108–111, cat. 17; STAEHELIN, *Tracht*, pl. 4, fig. 6.
- <sup>23</sup> For a useful summary of the evidence, and a rearrangement of some of N. CHERPION's dating criteria, see BARTA, in: *SAK* 22, 1995, 21–35.
- <sup>24</sup> See STADELMANN, in: *Kunst des Alten Reiches*, esp. 163–64.

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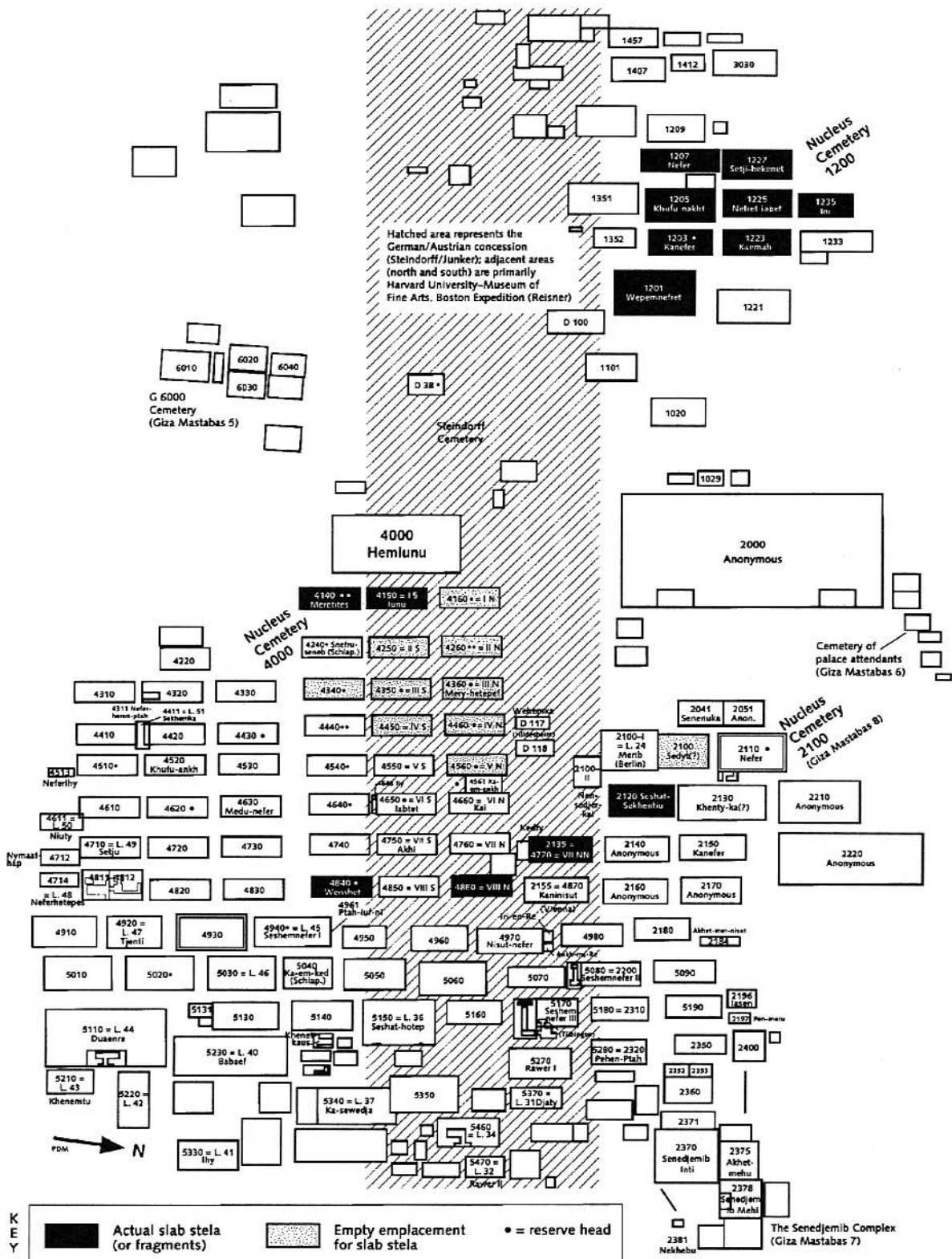


Fig. 2 Schematic map of the major mastabas of the Western Cemetery, showing the locations of slab stelae, empty slab stela emplacements, and reserve heads.



While many have seen the funerary repast of the slab stelae and the accompanying offerings as eventually evolving into the false door panel, and then beyond the false door itself onto decorated chapel walls, G. HAENY argued for the reverse development, namely that false doors were the originally intended cult focus for the earliest Giza mastabas<sup>25</sup>. In particular, he cited the mastaba of Nefer in the Western Cemetery (G 2110), a tomb with finished casing, exterior stone chapel and false door:

Es gibt jedoch, was JUNKER anscheinend übersehen hat, im Friedhofgelände von Giseh eine Mastaba, G 2110, deren Kalksteinverkleidung am ursprünglichen Kernbau fertiggestellt und auch außen geglättet worden ist, bevor die Anlage um einen geschlossenen Kultraum erweitert wurde; dessen Anschlußwände sind ohne jeden Verband gegen die Außenfläche der Mastaba gesetzt. Hier aber ist die Opferstelle nicht – wie wir nach JUNKER erwarten müßten – durch die in Giseh übliche Grabtafel gekennzeichnet, sondern in traditioneller Weise durch zwei abgetreppte Scheintürnischen, die man im voraus beim Anlegen der Verkleidung einberechnet hatte<sup>26</sup>.

It is true, as G. HAENY notes, that no joins are apparent between the exterior stone casing and the exterior stone chapel, and that the chapel did not break into the casing. However, all this signifies is that G 2110, unlike most of the tombs in the three nucleus cemeteries, actually did receive its final casing complete. Nothing about Nefer's tomb suggests that it could not once have been uncased and contained a slab stela, only to be subsequently cased and provided with an exterior chapel with a false door (and another niche at the northern end of the east wall). It therefore does not differ from other nucleus cemetery mastabas except by virtue of the completion of its casing<sup>27</sup>. Moreover, the extremely constricted passage space between the front of Nefer's chapel and the back (west) wall of mastaba G 2130 (Khenty-ka?) – about 130 cm – was certainly not intended in the original layout of mastaba cores; it is thus additional evidence for Nefer's exterior chapel being a secondary development. In fact, many of the elements of Nefer's false door panel, housed in the Museo Barracco in Rome<sup>28</sup>, might well place the chapel somewhat later than the slab stelae under discussion. These elements (form of the offering loaves, the expanded form of the offering lists, and the *hṯp di nswt* formula) have misled some scholars to date the piece as late as the Sixth Dynasty<sup>29</sup>. In short, G. HAENY's argument that the current appearance of G 2110 proves the false door – and not a slab stela – was intended as the focus of the cult from the beginning, is not supported by the evidence. Excavation photographs taken by G. REISNER show the gap between the original core stones and the casing blocks (see fig. 3)<sup>30</sup>. One wonders if a slab stela might actually still be in place between the mastaba core blocks and the

<sup>25</sup> HAENY, *Fs Ricke*, esp. 158–59. See the useful summary by WIEBACH, *op. cit.*, 29–51.

<sup>26</sup> HAENY, *Fs Ricke*, 158.

<sup>27</sup> REISNER, *Giza 1*, 417, posits the order of completion of the cores of Cemetery 2100 as follows: G 2100, G 2130, G 2120, G 2110 (Nefer), G 2210.

<sup>28</sup> See REISNER, *Giza 1*, fig. 241, pl. 31c. For more recent bibliography, see M. NOTA SANTI ET AL., *Museo Barracco Roma*, Rome 1991, 46 and 47 fig. 29; *Il "Nuovo" Museo Barracco*, Rome 1982, 88 (with important bibliography), 89, fig. 68 (color illustration).

<sup>29</sup> VANDIER, *Manuel 1*, 764; for others who date it to Dyn. 6, see N. CHERPION, *Mastabas et hypogées d'ancien empire*, Brussels 1989, 120, n. 243; she herself prefers a date for Nefer no later than Djedefre. STRUDWICK, *op. cit.*, 110 suggests the reign of Khafre or a little later, while BAER, *Rank and Title*, 89–90, prefers the end of Dynasty 4 to early Dynasty 5. This tomb, along with its companions in Cemetery 2100, is scheduled for publication in the *Giza Mastabas Series*.

<sup>30</sup> For additional views of the chapel, the casing stones, and the original core of the mastaba, see also REISNER, *Giza 1*, pl. 29a–c.

massive blocks of the exterior chapel and casing, perhaps plastered over as were the stelae of Wepemnefret (G 1201), Nefret-iabet (G 1225) and Iunu (G 4150)<sup>31</sup>.

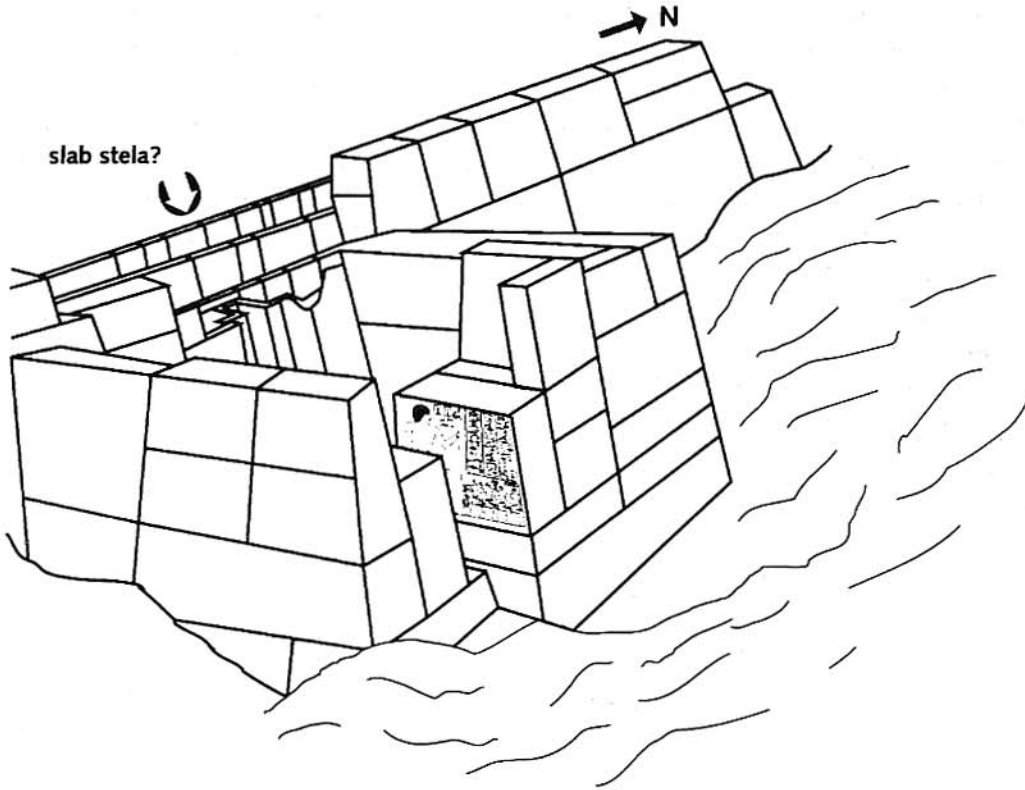


Fig. 3 Rough sketch of the chapel area of the tomb of Nefer, C 2110, showing the mastaba core and exterior casing. Cf. REISNER, *Giza 1*, pl. 29b-c.

## 2. General remarks on the corpus of Giza slab stelae

The Giza stelae provide one of the major sources for relief decoration from the reign of Khufu. Set into the south side of the east face of the major mastabas of nucleus Cemeteries 1200, 2100 and 4000, they served as the primary focal point of the funerary cult. In direct contrast to many tombs of the preceding reigns at Medum and Dahshur, no interior chambers occurred within the mastaba superstructures of these early Giza mastabas. Instead, an exterior chapel of mud brick surrounded the recess in which the slab stela was set (pl. 6b). At some point late in the reign of Khufu, this reductionist program was apparently altered. The large mastabas reserved for the royal family on the east side of the Great Pyramid were joined to form great double mastabas with interior L-shaped chapels. In the Western Cemetery, similar renovations were undertaken, as stone casings were added to some tombs, and exterior mud brick chapels were converted into stone chapels, often broken into the core of the mastaba itself. In certain cases, the slab stela was covered over (G 1201 Wepemnefret, G 1225 Nefret-iabet,

<sup>31</sup> REISNER's notes contain no mention of any attempt to examine or dismantle portions of the chapel in search of a slab stela, and excavation diaries for 1905 – the excavation date for G 2110 – were either never kept by REISNER (or A. M. LYTHGOE, his assistant at the time), or are now lost. Such a slab stela could, of course, also have been removed or destroyed during construction of the exterior chapel.



G 4150 Iunu), and a monolithic false door was erected in front of it<sup>32</sup>. Often, however, the casing and stone chapels were commenced but never completed. We will return to the possible motivations behind these events below in Part 3.

The Giza corpus (see chart, fig. 4), discovered for the most part *in situ* set into the mastaba wall, offers a unique opportunity for a comparative study of style, layout, and inscriptions. The relationship of one nucleus cemetery to another is also illuminated. The interesting lacunae in the corpus, consisting both of empty stela emplacements (see fig. 2), and of tombs whose emplacement area was destroyed by the mastaba alterations late in Khufu's reign, should also be included in the account. Such mastaba alterations might provide one explanation for the absence of slab stelae in the Eastern Cemetery (i. e., destruction of the stela area during the connection of double mastabas). Another explanation would posit that the slab stelae were a private phenomenon at Giza that was never used in the "royal" Eastern Cemetery. This explanation would demand closer scrutiny of the actual versus honorific nature of the titles *z3/z3t nswt (n ht=f)* which appear on six of our examples (G 1201 Wepemnefret; G 1223 Kaemah; G 1225 Nefret-iabet; G 4140 Meretites; G 4150 Iunu; G 4840 Wenshet; a chart of titles is provided below in fig. 6), and indeed the larger question of royalty in the east versus non-royalty in the west<sup>33</sup>.

The basic data on the Giza corpus are provided in the table in fig. 4:

NAME	TOMB NUMBER	MALE/FEMALE	CURRENT LOCATION AND ACC. NO.	CONDITION	MEASUREMENTS (IN CM)	MINIMAL BIBLIOGRAPHY
(1) <i>Wp-m-nfret</i> , Wepemnefret	G 1201	male	Hearst Museum, Berkeley, 6-19825	complete	h. 45.7; w. 66; th. 7.6	REISNER, <i>Giza</i> 1, 386, pl. 17a; SMITH, in: <i>Archaeology</i> 16, 1963, 2-13; LUTZ, <i>Steles</i> , pl. 1
(2) <i>K3-nfr</i> , Kanefer	G 1203	male	Hearst Museum, Berkeley, 6-19807	fragments		REISNER, <i>Giza</i> 1, 390, pl. 17b
(3) <i>Hwfw-nht</i> , Khufu-nakht	G 1205	male	Hearst Museum, Berkeley, 6-19786	complete	h. 38; w. 52.6; th. 8.2	REISNER, <i>Giza</i> 1, 393-94, pl. 18a; LUTZ, <i>Steles</i> , pl. 2, no. 3
(4) <i>Nfr</i> , Nefer	G 1207	female	Hearst Museum, Berkeley, 6-19801	complete	h. 38; w. 50.8; th. 8.2	REISNER, <i>Giza</i> 1, 395, pl. 18; SMITH, in: <i>Archaeology</i> 16, 6, fig. 7; LUTZ, <i>Steles</i> , pl. 2 no. 2.
(5) <i>K3-m-ḥ</i> , Kaemah	G 1223	male	Egyptian Museum, Cairo, JE 37 725 (57128), Room R42 N6	complete	w. 52.5 (this meas. from JE)	REISNER, <i>Giza</i> 1, 399-400, pl. 19a

<sup>32</sup> Note that secondarily added false doors were not necessarily placed directly in front of the slab stelae. Although difficult to see from REISNER's publication, both the tombs of Wepemnefret (G 1201; REISNER, *Giza* 1, map 4 and pl. 11) and Seshat-sekhentiu (G 2120; *ibid.*, map 5 and pl. 34g) contained false doors erected further south than the slab stelae along the east wall.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. B. SCHMITZ, *Untersuchungen zum Titel s3-njswt "Königssohn"*, Bonn 1976, esp. 17-22, and JUNKER, *Giza* 2, listing all the royal family members. For a difficult example of a queen buried in the Western Cemetery, see P. JANOSI, in: *GM* 133, 1993, 53-64.

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(6)	<i>Nfrt-ibbt</i> , Nefret-iabet	G 1225	female	Musée du Louvre Paris E 15591	complete	h. 37.7; w. 52.5; th. 8.3	REISNER, <i>Giza</i> 1, 403–405, pl. 19b; ZIEGLER, <i>Stèles</i> , 38 and cover, 187–89, cat. 29
(7)	<i>Stt-hknt</i> , Setji- hekenet	G 1227	female	Egyptian Museum, Cairo, JE 37 726 (57127), currently at Port Said National Museum	complete	w. 52.5 (this meas. from JE)	REISNER, <i>Giza</i> 1, 408, pl. 20a
(8)	<i>Ini</i> , Ini	G 1235	male	Egyptian Museum, Cairo, JE 37 727 (57127 bis); currently at Port Said National Museum	complete	w. 52.5 (this meas. from JE)	REISNER, <i>Giza</i> 1, 412, pl. 20b
(9)	<i>Sšst-shntyw</i> , Seshat- sekhentiu	G 2120	male	MFA, Boston 06.1894	fragments	h. 51.6; w. 79.8; th. 9.9	REISNER, <i>Giza</i> 1, 428; LEPROHON, <i>CAA</i> , MFA Fasc. 2, <i>Stelae</i> , Part 1
(10)	NN	G 2135 (=VII NN)	(?)	Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Inv. AS 7799	one fragm. (upper right)	h. 20; w. 23	JUNKER, <i>Giza</i> 1, 229–30, fig. 53b, pl. 37b
(11)	<i>Mrt-itꜣs</i> , Meretites	G 4140	female	MFA, Boston, 12.1510	complete	h. 50.5; w. 81.8; th. 8.0	REISNER, <i>Giza</i> 1, 460–62, fig. 280, pl. 57a; LEPROHON, <i>CAA</i> , MFA Fasc. 2, <i>Stelae</i> , Part 1
(12)	<i>Iwnw</i> , Iunu	G 4150 (= I S)	male	Pelizaeus- Museum, Hildesheim 2145	complete	h. 39; w. 54; th. 9.3	JUNKER, <i>Giza</i> 1, 173–79, fig. 31, pls. 26a–b, 27; EGGEBRECHT ET AL., <i>Pelizaeus-Museum Hildesheim</i> , 22, 36 (color)
(13)	<i>Wnšt</i> , Wenshet	G 4840 (=VIIIss)	female	MFA, Boston, 14–2–1	one fragm. (upper left)	h. 12; w. 46; th. 12	REISNER, <i>Giza</i> 1, 500, fig. 306
(14)	NN	G 4860 (=VIII N)	male(?)	Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Inv. AS 8459	complete except for upper left corner	w. 53 (restored: ca. 80)	JUNKER, <i>Giza</i> 1, 242, 245, fig. 59, pl. 8a
(15)	NN	(?)	(?)	Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Inv. AS 7447	one fragm. (lower right section)	h. 52; w. 88; th. 10	JUNKER, <i>Giza</i> 1, 258–59, 230, fig. 53c, pl. 29b

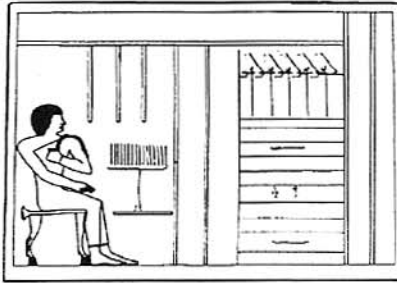
Fig. 4 Chart with basic information on the corpus of Giza slab stelae.

Two basic sizes and forms of stela may be determined at Giza, a smaller, "short form" used for the majority of the fifteen preserved examples, and a wider, "long form" with an expanded number of offerings<sup>34</sup>. In order to discuss the decoration scheme used, we might divide the decoration program used into four sections: (a) overhead identifying text; (b) funerary repast at the left side (seated figure before the table of offering loaves), (c) list of offerings located centrally and, at the right, (d) the linen list (see pl. 7a). We will return to separate discussions of these four sections shortly.

Five separate layout patterns for the sections a, b, c, and d listed above may be distinguished for the Giza stelae (fig. 5). The first pattern is unique to the stela of Wepemnefret (G 1201), for no other stela contains so many columns and lines of identifying titles (section a). In addition, these begin fur-

<sup>34</sup> Cf. SMITH, *Sculpture*, 159.

ther to the right edge of the stela than the linen list itself, another unique feature. One wonders if this stela is the earliest of the corpus; compare for example the vertical and horizontal combination of inscriptions on the archaic stela of Niankhtet in Liverpool<sup>35</sup>. Other possible clues to archaic influence include the small size of the *idmy* falcons in the linen list, the absence of vertical separators in the "compartments" of the linen list, and the offering table with loaves raised up on a separate ground line<sup>36</sup>.



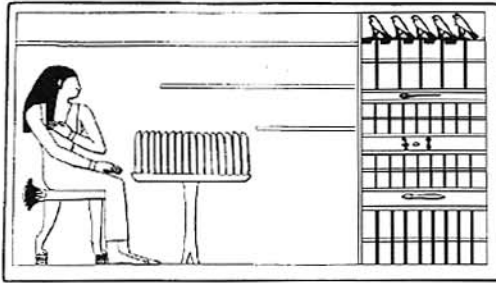
PATTERN 1 (Wepemnefret G 1201)



PATTERN 2 (Kanefer G 1203; Kaemah G 1223; Setji-hekenet G 1227; Ini G 1235)



PATTERN 3 (Khufu-nakht G 1205; Nefer 1207; Nefret-Iabet G 1225; NN G 2135)



PATTERN 4 (Seshat-sekhentiu G 2120; Meritites G 4140; unplaced fragment Vienna AS 7447?)



PATTERN 5 (Iunu G 4150; NN G 4860)

Fig. 5 Schematic rendering of the five layout patterns for Giza slab stelae.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. VANDIER, *Manuel* 1, 754, fig. 498; WEILL, *Ile et IIIe dynasties*, 226. Conversely, in its horizontal and vertical inscriptions, the layout of the Wepemnefret stela could call to mind the royal decrees of the later Old Kingdom, such as are found, for example, in GOEDICKE, *Königl. Dokumente*, esp. after 168, fig. 17 (Coptos L). For a suggested date for Wepemnefret *late* in the development of Cemetery 1200, see STRUDWICK, *op. cit.*, 37.

<sup>36</sup> Small *idmy* falcons and an absence of vertical separators are present on a host of pre-Giza niche-stelae; for raised offering tables see, for example, SAAD, *Ceiling Stelae*, pl. 27; KAPLONY, *Inschriften*, Suppl., pl. 3 (1054), and IDEM, *Beitr. Inschriften*, pls. 3 (1093).



Should one speculate, based on the layout of the Wepemnefret stela, that the largest mastabas of each nucleus cemetery (G 1201 Wepemnefret; G 4000 Hemiunu, and G 2220 anonymous<sup>37</sup>) were the very first to be constructed, and that they all originally contained slab stelae? Alterations were later made to the interiors of G 4000 and G 2220, perhaps eliminating their slab stelae<sup>38</sup>. This would leave Wepemnefret's as the only surviving slab stela among the three "principal" mastabas of the three nucleus cemeteries in question.

The other four patterns of the decorative layout of the slab stelae are much more uniform, and each pattern contains several examples. Patterns 2 and 3 are found, with the exception of the fragment from G 2135, exclusively in Cemetery 1200, while patterns 4 and 5 occur in Cemeteries 4000 and 2100. Pattern 2 shows the identifying text above (section a) stretching over sections b (funerary repast scene) and c (offerings). Examples include G 1203 (Kanefer), G 1223 (Kaemah), G 1227 (Setji-hekenet), and G 1235 (Ini). Pattern 3 reduces the identifying inscription (a) to a very short text over the funerary repast (section b), with the offerings (section c) filling in the newly won space to the upper edge of the stela. Examples of pattern 3 are G 1205 (Khufu-nakht), G 1207 (Nefer), G 1225 (Nefret-iabet), and the anonymous fragment from G 2135.

Pattern 4 shows the long form of slab stela. The identifying inscription (section a) is restored to a wide horizontal band across the top, and the list of offerings (c) is greatly expanded. The primary examples here are Meretites (G 4140) and Seshat-sekhentiu (G 2120), and the unplaced fragment (Vienna ÄS 7447) may also belong to this category<sup>39</sup>. Pattern 5 is identical to pattern 4, with the exception that the identifying text (a) begins above the linen list (d). Examples of this patterns are provided by Iunu (G 4150, short form) and the anonymous stela from G 4860 (long form).

#### Section a: The identifying inscription

The chart in fig. 6 lists all the titles preserved in the Giza stelae. An attempt is also made to group them according to their type or nature: bureaucratic (B), epithet (E), geographical (G), priestly (P), and royalty-related (R)<sup>40</sup>.

According to the scheme listed above, the slab stelae owners display eight bureaucratic titles (B), possibly one epithet (E), two geographic titles (G), eleven priestly titles (P) and three titles indicating royalty (R), whether actual or not. By far the largest number of titles belongs to Wepemnefret, and the inclusion of his twelve titles clearly indicates that there was no lack of space on the format of slab stelae for full listings of an individual's administrative duties. The much smaller numbers of titles on other slab stelae need not, therefore, reflect any kind of obligatory abbreviation of titles due to lack of space<sup>41</sup>. Judging from both the size of his mastaba and the number of his titles, there can be little doubt, then, that Wepemnefret was indeed the highest ranking and most important individual in Cemetery 1200. His twelve titles compare well with some twenty-three titles listed for Hemiunu, the

<sup>37</sup> Despite its number 2220, this tomb clearly belongs to nucleus Cemetery 2100, as does G 2210, which was similarly "misnumbered" by REISNER as he continued to clear the entire area.

<sup>38</sup> Both tombs were also originally designed as two-shaft mastabas; cf. REISNER, *Giza* 1, map 5, and JUNKER, *Giza* 1, 133, fig. 18. Wepemnefret's tomb, however, remained a single-shaft mastaba.

<sup>39</sup> A preliminary analysis of the block sizes used in the construction of the mastabas under discussion does not seem to relate to the selection of short versus long form of slab stela.

<sup>40</sup> W. HELCK preferred to relate them all to the administration of construction projects: in: ZÄS 81, 1956, 62–65.

<sup>41</sup> Throughout the scholarly literature one finds references to the format of the slab stelae as containing insufficient space for all the items supposedly "desired" by the deceased; cf. STAEHELIN, *Tracht*, 224; JUNKER, *Giza* 1, 28, 29, 30. This is a modern value judgment; see the remarks in Part 3 below.

highest ranking individual in Cemetery 4000<sup>42</sup>. As far as Cemetery 2100 is concerned, if the most important individual there was indeed the owner of G 2220, neither name nor titles are preserved<sup>43</sup>.

TITLE/EPITHET AND TYPE	TRANSLATION	BEARERS
<i>imy-r wꜣwt</i> (B)	overseer of commissions	Kanefer (G 1203)
<i>imy-r zꜣw Šmꜣw</i> <i>imy-r zꜣ[w Šmꜣw]</i> (G)	overseer of the phyles of Upper Egypt <sup>44</sup>	Iunu (G 4150); Kaemah (G 1223)
<i>iry(t)-ḥt nswt</i> (B)	keeper of the king's property <sup>45</sup>	Khufu-nakht (G 1205); Nefer (G 1207); Setji-hekenet (G 1227); Ini (G 1235)
<i>ꜣd-mr ḥꜣw</i> (B)	district administrator of the fleet <sup>46</sup>	Wepemnefret (G 1201)
<i>wꜣr mꜣw Šmꜣw</i> (G)	great one of the Tens of Upper Egypt	Wepemnefret (G 1201); Kaemah (G 1223, fragmentary); Iunu (G 4150)
<i>mdḥ zšw nswt</i> (B)	commander of the king's scribes <sup>47</sup>	Wepemnefret (G 1201)
<i>mdḥ-?</i> (archaic title with lioness) (P)	translation uncertain <sup>48</sup>	Wepemnefret (G 1201)
<i>...n ḥtꜣf mꜣry(t)ꜣf</i> (E or R)	... of his body whom he loves	Wenshet (G 4840)
<i>ḥkꜣ Mḥyt</i> (P)	<i>heka</i> -priest of Mehyt <sup>49</sup>	Wepemnefret (G 1201)
<i>ḥm bꜣw</i> P (P)	priest of the souls of Pe/Buto	Wepemnefret (G 1201)
<i>ḥm-nꜣr Ḳnpw</i> (P)	priest of Anubis <sup>50</sup>	Wepemnefret (G 1201)
<i>ḥm(t)-nꜣr Nt</i> (P)	priestess of Neith	Wenshet (G 4840)
<i>ḥm(t)-nꜣr Ḥwt-ḥꜣr nbt nḥt</i> (P)	priestess of Hathor, mistress of the sycamore	Wenshet (G 4840)
<i>ḥm-nꜣr Ḥꜣr mḥty</i> (P)	priest of the northern Horus <sup>51</sup>	Wepemnefret (G 1201)
<i>ḥm-nꜣr Ḥꜣt</i> (P)	priest of Heqet <sup>52</sup>	Wepemnefret (G 1201)
<i>ḥm-nꜣr Ššꜣt ḥntt ꜣꜣr mꜣꜣ(w)t iry ḥt nswt</i> (P)	priest of Seshat, foremost of the archive(s) of the keeper of the king's property <sup>53</sup>	Wepemnefret (G 1201)
<i>ḥꜣꜣꜣ mꜣꜣw ḥꜣw</i> (B)	controller of herds	Ini (G 1235)

<sup>42</sup> Hemiunu's titles are listed by JUNKER, *Giza* 2, 148–51.

<sup>43</sup> On this tomb, cf. REISNER, *Giza* 1, 450–53, and *Mummies and Magic*, Boston 1988, 76–77, cat. 6.

<sup>44</sup> On this title see the remarks by A. M. ROTH, *Egyptian Phyles in the Old Kingdom*, SAOC 48, 1991, 119–22, esp. 121 n. 8, and FISCHER, *Dendera*, 70, n. 283.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. HELCK, *Beamtentitel*, 26–28; H. BRUNNER, in: SAK 1, 1974, 55–60; O. BERLEV, in: JEA 60, 1974, 109, and E. BROVARSKI, in: *Fs Mokhtar* 1, 148, n. 129.

<sup>46</sup> On this title see D. JONES, *A Glossary of Ancient Egyptian Nautical Titles and Terms*, London 1988, 71–72 (no. 92; transliterated *ꜣd mr wꜣ*).

<sup>47</sup> Cf. FISCHER, *Varia Nova*, 33, note f, with important bibliography.

<sup>48</sup> On this archaic title, cf. *ibid.*, 32 note c; KAPLONY, *Inschriften* 1, 582 (2), 583 (6); STRUDWICK, *op. cit.*, 215; G. GODRON, in: RdE 8, 1951, 91–98; S. CURTO, in: ZÄS 94, 1967, 15–20; HELCK, *Beamtentitel*, 76, and J. KAHL, *Das System der ägyptischen Hieroglyphenschrift in der 0.–3. Dynastie*, GOF IV, 29, 1994, 482–83.

<sup>49</sup> KAPLONY, *Inschriften* 1, 582 (2) notes that this title is born only by Wepemnefret and Neferseshemre, for which see P. MONTET, in: *Kêmi* 1, 1928, 84; HELCK, *Beamtentitel*, 76; and L. KÁKOSY, in: LÄ 4, 5–6.

<sup>50</sup> KAPLONY, *Inschriften* 1, 584, and E. BROVARSKI, in: ASAE 71, 1987, 46 (comparing Wepemnefret and a writing board from Giza).

<sup>51</sup> For notes on this title, see B. BEGELSBACHER-FISCHER, *Untersuchungen zur Götterwelt des Alten Reiches*, OBO 37, 1981, 82–83; H. KEES, in: ZÄS 64, 1929, 102–104.

<sup>52</sup> STRUDWICK, *op. cit.*, 184–85, 207; BEGELSBACHER-FISCHER, *op. cit.*, 212, 130, and 250.

<sup>53</sup> HELCK, *Beamtentitel*, 70–71, n. 30; IDEM, in: LÄ 5, 885 with n. 19.

<i>hrp tmst(yw)</i> (B)	controller of bowcase bearers <sup>54</sup>	Kanefer (G 1203)
<i>ht H3</i> (P?)	<i>ht</i> -priest of Ha(?) <sup>55</sup>	Wepemnefret (G 1201)
<i>hry-hbt</i> (P)	lector priest	G 4860
<i>hry-[hbt] hry-tp</i> (P)	chief lector priest <sup>56</sup>	Seshat-sekhentiu (G 2120)
<i>z3 nswt</i> (R)	king's son	Wepemnefret (G 1201); Kaemah (G 1223); Iunu (G 4150)
<i>zst nswt</i> (R)	king's daughter	Nefret-iabet (G 1225)
<i>zst nswt n ht=f</i> (R)	bodily daughter of the king	Meretites (G 4140); Wenshet (G 4840)
<i>zš mdst ntr</i> (P)	scribe of the god's book	G 4860

Fig. 6 List of titles attested for the owners of the Giza slab stelae.

More research and more evidence is needed to determine any familial relationships between the various slab stelae owners, a question of great import as far as familial exclusivity within the three nucleus cemeteries is concerned. G. REISNER believed that nucleus cemeteries 1200, 2100, and 4000 represented three different branches of Khufu's family<sup>57</sup>. For the present, we can cite just a few suggestions by other scholars. For Cemetery 1200, W. HELCK (in: *Fs Leclant* 1, 221), suggests that, based on their respective "royal" titles of *z3* and *zst nswt*, Nefret-iabet (G 1225) was the wife of Wepemnefret (G 1201). He further proposes that Khufu-nakht (G 1205) might have been Wepemnefret's son, though without any particularly compelling reason. Over in Cemetery 4000, W. HELCK posits that Meretites was the wife of Hemiunu, based on the geographical proximity of their two tombs. The existence of the second (male) reserve head in Meretites' tomb (G 4140), however, might cast some doubt upon this assumption<sup>58</sup>. Finally, W. HELCK suggests that Iunu (G 4150) in Cemetery 4000 was the successor of Kaemah (G 1223) of Cemetery 1200, since both individuals bore the titles of *imy-r z3w šm'w*<sup>59</sup>. H. JUNKER (*Giza* 3, 5) wondered whether Kanefer of Cemetery 1200 (G 1203) was a predecessor of the Kanefer of Cemetery 2100 (G 2150), since they both hold the same titles, as does the latter Kanefer's son Ka-sewedja (G 5340 = Lepsius 37)<sup>60</sup>.

#### Section b: The funerary repast scene

Some of the irregularities of layout of the slab stelae become clearer when one studies the large-scale seated figures of the tomb owners. The outer frame and border areas vary widely from stela to stela; the seated figure of Ini (G 1235), for example, appears to have too much room at its disposal. His

<sup>54</sup> On this military title, cf. H. G. FISCHER, in: *JNES* 18, 1959, 267–68 (22) and JUNKER, *Giza* 4, 71–72 (9). HELCK, in: *Hommages à Jean Leclant (Fs Leclant)* 1, *BdE* 106, 1994, 221, translates it "Leiter der Bogentruppen."

<sup>55</sup> A recent discussion of this title is provided by A. MCFARLANE, in: *GM* 121, 1991, 90–91. See also HELCK, *Beamtentitel*, 47–48; STRUDWICK, *op. cit.*, 184–86, with table 9; and BEGELSBACHER-FISCHER, *op. cit.*, 211, 228–29, and 251.

<sup>56</sup> Preserved, not on his slab stela, but on a fragment from his mastaba; cf. REISNER, *Giza* 1, 427, fig. 246.

<sup>57</sup> REISNER, *Giza* 1, 27, 77. For another view, focusing instead on the "private initiative" of senior construction officials, see HELCK, in: *ZÄS* 81, 1956, 62–65.

<sup>58</sup> On the two reserve heads found in G 4140, cf. REISNER, *Giza* 1, pls. 46c, 52a (MFA 14.717), 46d, 52b (JE 46217).

<sup>59</sup> HELCK, in: *Fs Leclant* 1, 221–22. He makes no attempt to demonstrate, however, that this title was held by only one individual at a time.

<sup>60</sup> JUNKER, *Giza* 3, 5. On the tomb of Ka-sewedja, cf. JUNKER, *Giza* 7, 158–84, and H. G. FISCHER, *The Orientation of Hieroglyphs* 1, New York 1977, 80, fig. 81.



figure almost occupies the center of the stone, leaving a large blank space and disproportionately wide vertical framing border behind him. The orientation of the seated figure, however, is always the same: at the left edge of the stela facing right, along with his/her identifying inscription above (section a). Normally, the rest of the stela, offerings, linen list, etc., face left towards the deceased. The only glaring exception to the rule is the anonymous stela from G 4860 where everything, from the figure to the offerings (section c) and the linen list (section d) is oriented to the right<sup>61</sup>.

Neither gender can make sole claim to the use of the slab stela. It is probably just an accident of preservation that there are eight males versus five females (with the gender of two stela owners undeterminable). The poses chosen do vary, however: the males clench their (left) hand into a fist, usually<sup>62</sup> grasping the shoulder tie of their garment, while the women hold the same hand with palm outstretched across the breast<sup>63</sup>. It appears that all the men wear the same close-fitting garment, painted (where pigment survives) to represent a leopard skin and leaving one shoulder exposed. Some of the women wear this same garment (G 1225 Nefret-iabet; G 1227 Setji-hekenet), while others bear the traditional tight-fitting dress with shoulder straps that in two-dimensional relief appear to leave the breast exposed (G 1207 Nefer; G 4140 Meretites). The stela of Nefret-iabet (G 1225) shows the shoulder strap clearly carved, and the leopard skin garment overlaid in paint; thus, both garments appear, and it would seem that the leopard skin is intended to represent a second layer worn over the dress<sup>64</sup>. All of the women wear a long striated wig with a lappet falling in front of the shoulder. The men all sport the round valanced wig, with two exceptions (G 1201 Wepemnefret; G 2120 Seshatsekhentiu), where a longer, striated wig touches the shoulder. The valanced wig shows the high, overlapping locks topped by a row of vertical lines typical of Dynasties 3 and 4<sup>65</sup>.

It is interesting to note briefly some comparisons of other kinds, of which there is fragmentary evidence. The only example of a Giza mastaba discovered so far that includes a slab stela, a reserve head<sup>66</sup>, and an actual human skull<sup>67</sup> is the tomb of Meretites (G 4140; two reserve heads, and two

<sup>61</sup> Cf. JUNKER, *Gîza* 1, 245, fig. 59 and pl. 8a (Vienna ÄS 8549). The *idmy* falcons also face right in the niches of Kha-bau-sokar and Hathor-nefer-hotep, but following rightward dominant orientation beneath the seated figures; cf. MURRAY, *Saqqara Mastabas* 1, pls. 1–2.

<sup>62</sup> One slightly exceptional case is provided by Ini (G 1235) whose fist hand just barely touches his shoulder tie. On gestures in general, see now B. DOMINICUS, *Gesten und Gebärden in Darstellungen des Alten und Mittleren Reiches*, SAGA 10, 1993, 77–79. For this reference I am indebted to M. BARTA.

<sup>63</sup> Note however, the Fourth Dynasty false door panel still *in situ* in the East Cemetery interior stone chapel of Meretites (G 7650; a different individual from the Meretites of G 4140), containing a layout very similar to a slab stela, and showing the female in the "male pose" of grasping the shoulder tie with a fist hand (unpublished; MFA Expedition photographs A 5161 and B 6858, both June 30, 1929).

<sup>64</sup> Or is this meant to represent the broad border of the leopard skin? Cf. D. DUNHAM and W. K. SIMPSON, *The Mastaba of Queen Mersyankh III*, Boston 1974, frontispiece (top) and fig. 7. For this observation I am indebted to E. BROVARSKI.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. FISCHER, in: *JNES* 18, 1959, 238–39, fig. 4; CHERPION, *op. cit.*, 55 (criterion 28), citing occurrences attested under kings as late as Menkaure.

<sup>66</sup> For the reserve head (Cairo JE 46217), see REISNER, *Giza* 1, 462, pl. 52b, and TEFNIN, *op. cit.*, 113–14, pls. 17c, d–18a, b.

<sup>67</sup> I wish to thank here A. WILLCOX for very kindly examining the excavation photographs of this skull; her tentative conclusions based on rather inadequate photographic documentation follow: "The general consensus is that the skull represents a probable female based on the gracility of the supraorbital ridges (area above the eye), and the bossing of the parietal bones. However, the nuchal area (at the back of the skull) is extremely robust and male-looking, and the mastoid processes (behind the ears) appear intermediate. These last two are the reason for the "probable" assessment. Age is clearly adult, between about twenty-two and forty-five years, with the most likely age in the early to mid-thirties. The age is based on areas and degrees of fusion of the

skulls). Pl. 7b shows a detail from her slab stela placed beside a pencil drawing by A. Runggaldier of the reserve head in Cairo (JE 46217) and a photograph of the skull, all in profile view. While the reserve head displays a highly individualized portrait, there is little one can point to in the relief carving that is not idealized. In fact, an experimental superimposition of the drawings of the two faces produced a considerable misalignment. Thus, the two representations of Meretites do not display in two and three dimensions the same sort of similarities that have linked the reserve head of Nefer (G 2110; MFA 06.1886) with the two-dimensional relief from his chapel's north entrance thickness<sup>68</sup>. The only other mastaba to preserve a slab stela plus reserve head (no skull found) belonged to Kanefer (G 1203), even though some have suggested that the reserve head portrays a woman<sup>69</sup>.

A number of features appear on the Giza stelae that N. Cherpion incorporated into her system of criteria for dating Old Kingdom tombs, among them seats (including cushions, legs, floral umbels, floor supports<sup>70</sup>), offering tables and bread loaves<sup>71</sup>, and hairstyles<sup>72</sup>. Although she has laid too much emphasis for dating purposes on the presence of the latest royal name in the tombs in question<sup>73</sup>, her summaries of iconographic elements provide a very useful corpus. Unfortunately, many of N. Cherpion's dating criteria are ubiquitous in the early Fourth Dynasty, and only come to be differentiated at later stages of the Old Kingdom. Thus, for example, the radial "top" (actually the center) of the male valanced wigs does not diminish in size until after the reign of Menkaure, well after the early Fourth Dynasty period under discussion<sup>74</sup>. Space does not permit a more thorough analysis here, but these issues will be undertaken in the above-mentioned monograph.

#### Section c: The offerings

Some of the most elegantly detailed hieroglyphs of the Old Kingdom appear in the offering lists of the Giza slab stelae. With the possible exception of the seat legs, far more attention to detail was lavished on this part of the decoration program than on any other, including the seated figure of the deceased. Analysis of some of the finer examples, whether carved or painted, refutes H. Junker's apparent

sagittal cranial suture. Finally, she appears to have bilateral vessel impressions on the frontal bone. (They appear as thin lines moving from above the orbits toward the back of the skull.) They are relatively common, and are of interest mostly because they are sometimes mistaken for cutmarks" (personal communication, April 7, 1997). I have been unable so far to locate this skull in Boston, Cambridge, Berkeley, or Giza; it is perhaps to be found among the skeletal material discovered several years ago at Cairo University.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. Smith, *Sculpture*, 27 (22), pl. 48; Junge, in: *Kunst des Alten Reiches*, 104, pl. 36a-b; J. Assmann, in: *Studies in Honor of W. K. Simpson (Fs Simpson)*, Boston 1996, 58, 60, fig. 7. See also on this topic, Bolshakov, *Man and his Double*, 218. A more thorough study of the facial characteristics contained in the Giza slab stelae will be undertaken elsewhere.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. Stadlmann, in: *Kunst des Alten Reiches*, 163, n. 72. Reisner considered this head to represent the owner, while Smith considered it to represent his "wife(?)", *Sculpture*, 26 and pl. 9b; cf. Tefnin's remarks, *op. cit.*, 64-69, and especially 67. On this reserve head in general (Hearst Museum, Berkeley 6-19767), see Reisner, *Giza 1*, 390, pls. 21 f., 22a-e, and Tefnin, *op. cit.*, 97-98, pl. 1a-d. One might also note in this regard that some consider the owners of reserve heads to be different individuals from those eventually buried in the major nucleus cemetery mastabas at Giza; cf. Schott, in: *Fs Westendorf 2*, 1121-28, esp. 1126 for Kanefer as an "archaisieren-des Ersatzgrab," and Helck, in: *ZÄS 81*, 1956, 62-65; *idem*, in: *Fs Leclant 1*, 223.

<sup>70</sup> Cf. J. Vercoutter, in: *BIFAO 78*, 1978, 81-100.

<sup>71</sup> On the bread loaves themselves, see Barta, in: *SAK 22*, 1995, 21-35; C. E. Worsham, in: *JARCE 16*, 1979, 7-10.

<sup>72</sup> Cherpion, *op. cit.*, esp. 25-64. Additional remarks on the layout of individual stelae are provided by Vandier, *Manuel 1*, 756-63, and Junker, *Giza 1*, 29-32.

<sup>73</sup> Critical reviews of this procedure are offered by A. Roth, in: *JNES 53*, 1994, 55-58, and Bolshakov, *Man and his Double*, 54 n. 8.

<sup>74</sup> Cherpion, *op. cit.*, 55.

denigration of the Giza reliefs in favor of earlier relief from other sites<sup>75</sup>. No exhaustive analysis of the hieroglyphic items will be made here<sup>76</sup>, but the large amount of interior detail and recurrent signs across the entire corpus holds great promise for a detailed palaeographic study<sup>77</sup>. In particular, signs with interwoven interior elements (rope, flax, basketry containers, etc.) are exquisitely executed. The human hands (Sign List D 46) display an added detail of a curving line in the palm.

Nor are the stelae without certain anomalies. For example, the slab of Nefer (G 1207) fails to list any offerings (typically oxen, fowl, bread and/or beer) beneath the right-hand portion of the offering table; this is the most glaring example of asymmetry in the entire corpus. Two stelae in the long form (see above) bear relatively rare furniture lists that are very similar to each other: Seshat-sekhentiu (G 2120) and the unplaced fragment Vienna ÄS 7447<sup>78</sup>.

As far as the preserved examples allow us to determine, the stelae of Wepemnefret (1201) and Nefer (G 1207) are the only ones to clearly show a vertical arrangement of their offerings with vertical separating lines (section c). All others either contain actual horizontal separators, or are placed in such a manner that a horizontal arrangement is implied<sup>79</sup>.

#### Section d: The linen list

The most intensive attempt to interpret the linen list remains that of W. S. SMITH in 1935<sup>80</sup>. He took the four basic headings of the lists to refer to different qualities of cloth, with the subdivisions indicating the width of the linen and the amounts to be made available (fig. 7). In the top heading of two stelae, it is curious to find that the so-called *idmy*-falcons<sup>81</sup> appear to be erased. In the stela of Meretites (G 4140), the adjacent inscription has also been damaged, as is that of Seshat-sekhentiu (G 2120). In the stela of Setji-hekenet the falcons are selectively destroyed, and there is also damage to the owner's face. The stelae of Meretites and Setji-hekenet were discovered *in situ*, so a fall from the mastaba wall can be ruled out as the cause of the damage. The stela of Seshat-sekhentiu was discovered in fragments near its original emplacement, although the lower left piece (containing the owner's seat) was found far away, behind the mastaba, in the street between G 2120 and G 2100. Other anomalies concerning the falcons appear on the stela of Iunu (G 4150) and on the anonymous stela from G 4860: here the falcons are set on rectangular pedestals with the bulbous projection in front (see Sign List R 12)<sup>82</sup>.

<sup>75</sup> JUNKER, *Giza* 1, 33–34, where he seems to prefer the earlier, more vertical styles of Hesyre and other predecessors of the Giza corpus.

<sup>76</sup> On this topic see BARTA, *Opferliste*; IDEM, *Opferformel*, and KAPLONY, *Inschriften* 1, 227 ff.

<sup>77</sup> Color is another subject in which the slab stelae have much to contribute; cf. SMITH, *Sculpture*, 366–82 and esp. color pl. A; E. HORNUNG, *Idea into Image*, Princeton 1992, 26–27.

<sup>78</sup> Cf. E. BROVARSKI, in: *Fs Simpson* 1, 128, nos. (11) and (13); R. J. LEPROHON, *Stelae* 1, CAA MFA 2, 1985 (MFA 06.1894); JUNKER, *Giza* 1, 230, fig. 53c.

<sup>79</sup> Compare JUNKER's remarks on verticality, *Giza* 1, 32.

<sup>80</sup> ZÄS 71, 1935, 134–49. See also the discussions by P. POSENER-KRIÉGER, *Les archives du temple funéraire de Néferirkarê-Kakaï* 2, BdE 65, 1976, 341 ff. On the *mnht* sign, see now also KAHL, *op. cit.*, 710 ff.

<sup>81</sup> On the reading of this sign (*idmy* versus *ittwy*), cf. FISCHER, *Varia Nova*, 23 n. 63; E. EDEL, in: ZÄS 102, 1975, esp. 24–27; and KAHL, *op. cit.*, 515.

<sup>82</sup> Cf. JUNKER, *Giza* 1, 32, and one parallel (out of three falcons shown) appears on the false door panel of Rahotep: *BM Stelae* 1<sup>2</sup>, pl. 1.2 (no. 1242). Pedestals underneath the ibis on a standard are discussed by FISCHER, *Varia Nova*, 201–205, with fig. 13. For a large-scale New Kingdom Horus-of-Nekhen statue similar in profile view to the above, see the falcon of Amenhotep III, originally from Soleb, but discovered at Gebel Barkal (MFA 23.1470), D. DUNHAM, *The Barkal Temples*, Boston 1970, 25, 27, fig. 20, pl. 25b.



Useful studies of pharaonic clothing<sup>83</sup> have appeared in recent years, and instructive three-dimensional representations of the ancient spinning and weaving process are provided by, among others, the model from the tomb of Meketre<sup>84</sup>.

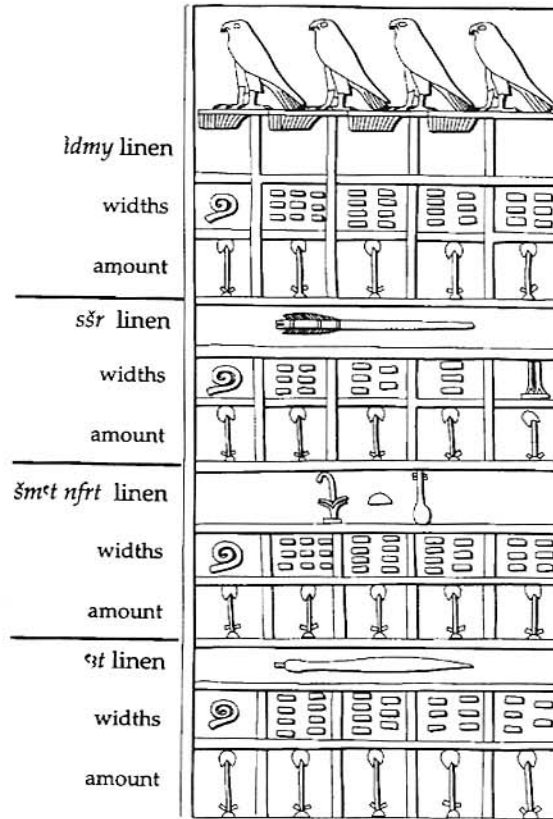


Fig. 7 The basic elements of the linen list (adapted from the slab stela of Ini, G 1235).

In some cases the vertical separators between various elements of the linen list are omitted, calling to mind the less ordered arrangements found in the earlier stelae from Saqqara and Helwan. The stela of Wepemnefret (G 1201) and the anonymous stela fragment from G 2135 bear no vertical separators; could this indicate a relatively early date for G 2135? The stela of Kanefer (G 1203) places numbers within fringed cloths that provide a sort of natural vertical divider. These fringed cloths also appear twice on the stela from G 4860 and once on that of Wepemnefret (G 1201). Note also that a correction occurred during the decoration of the stela of Nefret-iabet (G 1225), where uncarved vertical separators between the *h3* (1,000) signs were later uniformly added in paint.

<sup>83</sup> However, none seems to take up the issue of the Old Kingdom linen list; cf. G. VOGELSANG-EASTWOOD, *Pharaonic Egyptian Clothing*, Leiden 1993; E. ZOFFILI, *Costume e cultura dell'antico Egitto*, Milan 1991; STAEHELIN, *Tracht*, esp. 222–23. For a more recent study on linen and its relations to socio-economic status, see P. BOCHI, in: *CdE* 71, 1996, 221–53.

<sup>84</sup> H. WINLOCK, *Models of Daily Life in Ancient Egypt from the Tomb of Meket-Re at Thebes*, New York 1955, 29–33, pls. 26–27, 66–67.

At the bottom of the linen lists, five of the Giza stelae contain granaries<sup>85</sup>: G 1227 Setji-hekenet with five, G 2120 Seshat-sekhentiu with four or five, G 4140 Meretites with seven; G 4150 Iunu with five – painted dark gray to indicate their mud-brick construction material – and G 4860 with six. Most of the granaries are trapezoidal in shape, similar to the *šnwṯ* hieroglyph and showing the diagonal lines at each lower edge<sup>86</sup>, with the exception of Meretites' stela (G 4140), whose seven granaries show the rounded form with pointed top<sup>87</sup>. No particular title sequences for the owners appear common to all five granary-bearing stelae.

### 3. The motivation behind the slab stela form at Giza

In the hopes of stimulating further discussion, I would like to focus on three possible models for explaining the appearance of the Giza slab stelae, their role in the funerary provisions for the highest echelons of society during early Dynasty 4, and the architectural alterations made to their ancient archaeological context. The first model involves royal dicta, the second pure economics, the third what one might loosely term an example of "non-linear reductionism."

Central organization is clearly a major theme in the early development of the Giza necropolis and the monarchy is the natural place to assign responsibility for this innovation<sup>88</sup>. The predetermined layout of the mastabas evident here is absent, at least on so massive a scale, from the earlier cemeteries at Saqqara, Medum and Dahshur. In fact, the construction, decorations and alterations attested in both the Eastern and Western Cemeteries make sense only if approached from the standpoint of "prefabricated tombs," that is, mastaba cores constructed "ownerless" and only later assigned by the king to specific individuals who customized them according to time and means. If, as W. HELCK has argued<sup>89</sup>, the first pharaohs of Dynasty 4 felt compelled to "downsize" the funerary equipment of the administration in order to maintain focus on and preserve the essential uniqueness of the monarchy, this might explain the comparative simplicity of the Giza mastabas compared to their immediate predecessors. Under Khufu, decorated chambers in private mastabas disappear, false doors are scarce, and the architecture mimics aspects of the austerity of the royal mortuary complexes. R. STADELMANN has commented on this *strenger Stil* of the Fourth Dynasty (H. JUNKER's term), and

<sup>85</sup> See B. SCHMITZ, in: *LÄ* 5, 591–97, with important bibliography, including VANDIER, *Manuel* 6, 223–28 (223–25 for a list of granary models).

<sup>86</sup> Some confusion has arisen over whether this form represents an actual granary, or simply a stack of grain on a mud floor; cf. GARDINER, *EG*, 498 (sign list O 51). SCHMITZ remarks on this form being used for *Saatgetreide*, in: *LÄ* 5, 592. Other representations may be found in the tombs of Akhi, JUNKER, *Gîza* 1, pl. 39; Kha-bau-sokar and Hathor-nefer-hetep, MURRAY, *Saqqara Mastabas* 1, pls. 1–2; cf. also JUNKER, *Gîza* 4, Vienna 1940, pl. 12b, with discussion on 64, 83–84, including the diagonals at the bottom, apparently representing chaff in section view running all around the mud-brick granary (tomb of Kaemankh at Giza). Some of JUNKER's examples are shown in FISCHER, in: *MIO* 7, 1960, 308–309.

<sup>87</sup> An archaic parallel for this granary form is provided by an administrative seal from Saqqara 3505; KAPLONY, *Inschriften* 2, 1142 and 3, pl. 94, fig. 366. Wall reliefs and/or paintings of similarly shaped granaries appear in Kaemankh's burial chamber: JUNKER, *Gîza* 4, pl. 2, and 44–45; and in A. MOUSSA and H. ALTENMÜLLER, *Das Grab des Nianchnum und Chnumhotep*, *AV* 21, 1977, pl. 23, fig. 24. Three-dimensional parallels from the Old Kingdom and later may be found in BREASTED, *Egyptian Servant Statues*, 10–12, pls. 8–9a.

<sup>88</sup> Cf. D. O'CONNOR, in: *World Archaeology* 6/1, London June 1974, 20–23; B. J. KEMP, *Ancient Egypt*, London 1989, 111–17.

<sup>89</sup> W. HELCK, *Politische Gegensätze im alten Ägypten*, *HÄB* 23, 1986, esp. 19–26. For bringing this reference to my attention, I thank M. BÄRTA. For another interpretation cf. A. M. ROTH, in: *JARCE* 30, 1993, 33–55.

traced it back to Dahshur late in the reign of Snefru<sup>90</sup>. The slab stelae – and the absence of any other decoration – might represent one more attribute of the revitalized emphasis on pharaoh himself.

A second model for explaining the slab stelae, however, might serve to relieve Snefru and Khufu of much of the responsibility for the new apparent austerity at Giza. One must not forget the economics of the Giza undertaking. The simultaneous construction of the Great Pyramid itself<sup>91</sup>, the pyramid temple, causeway and valley temple, the boat pits and four satellite and queens' pyramids<sup>92</sup>, all must have taxed the state's resources and placed sculptors and craftsmen in high demand and short supply<sup>93</sup>. Perhaps, as some have suggested, we must imagine the area surrounding what was destined to become the Great Pyramid as littered with scaffolding, ramps and other equipment. It is thus small wonder that mastaba construction commenced so far west and only reached eastward – closer to Khufu's Pyramid – later in the dynasty<sup>94</sup>. Under these circumstances, and with a burgeoning bureaucracy making increased demands for funerary provisions, could the number of workshops and craftsmen have failed to meet demand? Was the slab stela, as others have argued, perforce a reduction to the barest essentials needed because of a simple dearth of sculptors and painters to design and produce chapels with decorated wall surfaces<sup>95</sup>? And analogous to slab stelae in place of decorated walls, should reserve heads be seen as an austerity measure in place of full-figured statues, and further still, should miniature ritual vessels be seen as taking the place of normal-sized ceramic vessels<sup>96</sup>? Are all these objects abbreviations or compromises that only disappeared, to be replaced by their fuller (and earlier) counterparts, once the strain of the royal construction project was relieved<sup>97</sup>?

The third and final model for explaining the form of the Giza slab stelae takes an altogether different viewpoint, and might even illuminate a modern scholarly prejudice or two. We read repeatedly in the literature of the reduced decoration scheme in the slab stelae as if it were forced upon the respective tomb owners. We are meant to think the stelae were a necessary sacrifice imposed from without (i. e., either by the king for religio-political reasons or by the economics of the time; see the remarks above), as if, given the chance, every Fourth Dynasty Egyptian would rather have provided his or her

<sup>90</sup> STADELMANN, in: *Kunst des Alten Reiches*, 155–66. See also IDEM, *Die ägyptischen Pyramiden*, 2nd ed., Mainz 1991, 125.

<sup>91</sup> See M. LEHNER, in: *MDAIK* 41, 1985, 109–43.

<sup>92</sup> On the recently discovered fourth satellite pyramid near the southeast corner of Khufu's monument, see Z. HAWASS, in: *Fs Simpson* 1, 379–98.

<sup>93</sup> As the reused reliefs of Khufu found at Lisht, along with isolated fragments from the pyramids in the East Cemetery attest, the royal mortuary complex was far from devoid of decorated surfaces; cf. H. GOEDICKE, *Re-used Blocks from the Pyramid of Amenemhet I at Lisht*, New York 1971, ix for cat. numbers, and SMITH, *Sculpture*, pl. 39.

<sup>94</sup> Cf. HELCK, *Fs Leclant* 1, 221. A different arrangement would have to have been made for the Eastern Cemetery, which attains a much closer proximity to Khufu's pyramid than the three nucleus cemeteries in the west that are under discussion here; on this point cf. REISNER, *Giza* 1, 71–72. The Cemetery en Echelon was, of course, added later. On the construction of the Khufu pyramid itself, see M. LEHNER, in: *MDAIK* 41, 1985, 109–43, and IDEM, in: *JARCE* 20, 1983, 7–25.

<sup>95</sup> See HAENY, *Fs Rieke*, esp. 158–59.

<sup>96</sup> On the miniature vessels, see M. BARTA, in: *GM* 149, 1995, 15–24. On reserve heads, cf. BOLSHAKOV, *Man and his Double*, 38.

<sup>97</sup> On the return to pre-Giza norms, the alteration and expansion of Giza tombs, cf. STADELMANN, in: *Kunst des Alten Reiches*, 166; H. JUNKER, in: *ZÄS* 63, 1928, 12. Against this interpretation one might cite STADELMANN, in: *Kunst des Alten Reiches*, 163–64, noting that the "streng Stil" of Dynasty 4 really begins with Snefru, not Khufu. Additionally, E. RUSSMANN argues that "...the evidence at this point is not sufficient to support the theory of a royal 'interdiction' of private sculpture..." (in: *Kunst des Alten Reiches*, 118, with n. 65, citing the private statuary attested for Kawab, Khafkhufu I, and Hemiunu).



mastaba with a chapel covered with relief decoration, or at the very least, include many more offerings than the "small" number that fit on a slab stela<sup>98</sup>. Two factors led to this modern conclusion: the presence of decorated chambers and longer offering lists in the period immediately anterior to the Giza slab stelae, especially at Medum, and the proliferation of chapels and decorated chambers after the reign of Khufu. The main point here is a modern Egyptological assumption on the linearity of ancient Egyptian tomb development, as well as the accompanying prejudice that over time things naturally get bigger and better; in short, the concept of "progress" leads to things that are more, rather than less, elaborate. We may have come to expect larger settlements, increased literacy, bigger tombs, a broader artistic repertoire, all moving in the same linear direction of development<sup>99</sup>. This same prejudice has resulted, at the other end of ancient Egyptian history, in modern attitudes towards the Late Period as an era of decline, the nadir of the Egyptian cultural experience.

But several factors combine to lure us away from this concept, and towards the non-linearity of progress. This is an argument the noted palaeontologist S. J. GOULD has made for years, and one might do well to apply it to the Egyptian case:

The common error lies in failing to recognize that apparent trends can be generated as by-products, or side consequences, of expansions and contractions in the amount of variation within a system, and not by anything directly moving anywhere. Average values may, in fact, stay constant within the system... while our (mis)perception of a trend may represent only our myopic focus on rare objects at one extreme in a system's variation (as this periphery expands or contracts)...

I therefore submit that the history of any entity (a group, an institution, an evolutionary lineage) must be tracked by changes in the variation of all components – the full house of their entirety – and not falsely epitomized as a single item (either an abstraction like a mean value, or a supposedly typical example) moving on a linear pathway<sup>100</sup>.

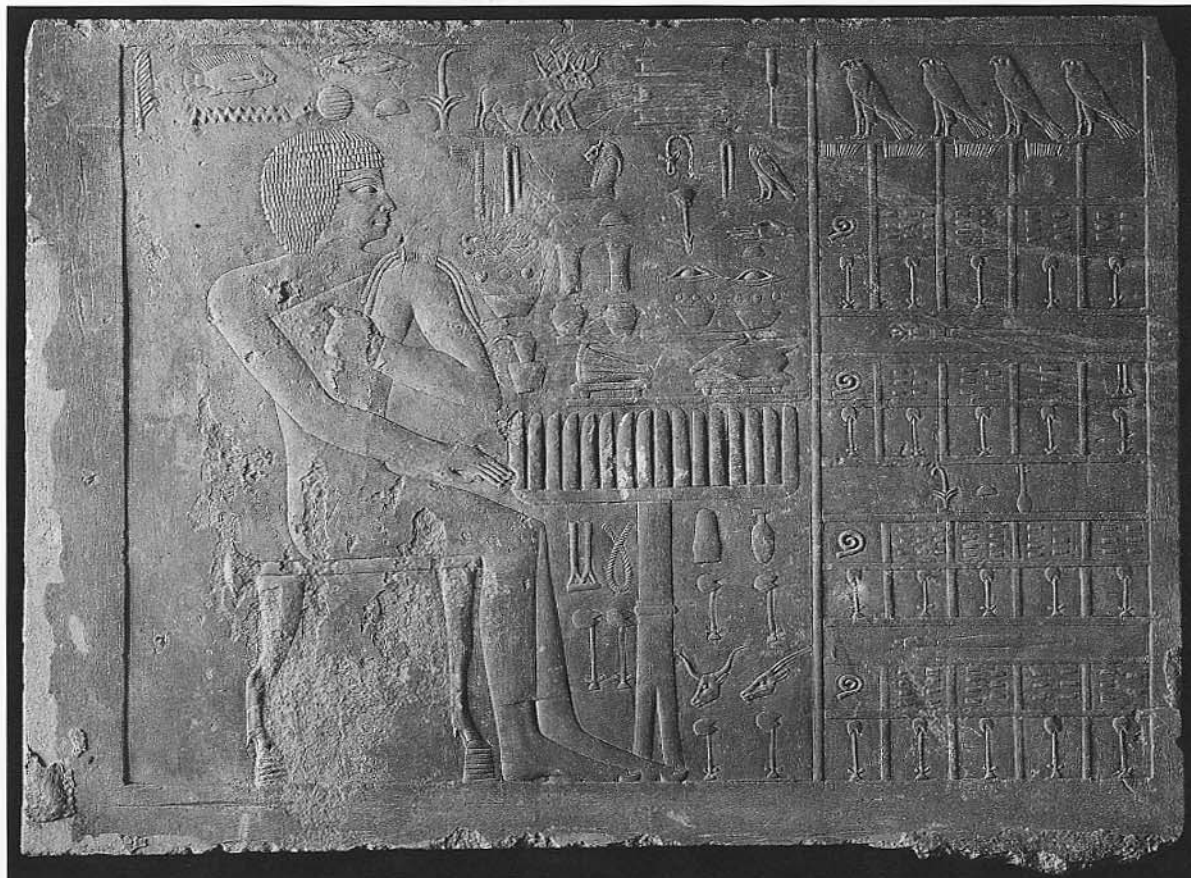
We have already seen ample evidence for concomitant developments throughout archaic and Old Kingdom Egypt, whether it be the round-topped vertical orientation of Abydene stelae versus the often rectangular Memphite versions, or the "dependent" false door panel versus the "independent" slab stela. And it is precisely the Giza slab stelae that provide an obstacle to that (unjustified?) concept of clean linear development, for here we have greater elaboration both before and after the Giza corpus. Would it be feasible to reverse our thinking for a moment and assume that these monuments – royal gifts though they were – were not forced upon an administrative class against their will, but were indeed an intentionally chosen form of tomb decoration, in keeping with the trends of the age? Complete in and of themselves, they did not represent a compromise or sacrifice, but provided every critical element needed to ensure the continued successful cult of the deceased<sup>101</sup>. Names and titles, the funerary repast, a selected offering list, and linen of all types were placed at the focal point of the mastaba, superseded in importance perhaps only by the actual subterranean burial of the body itself. There is an iconic purity and economy to the slab stelae, an almost logographic simplicity that serves its functional purpose and still provides an elite element of burial equipment. It was only in succeeding reigns that tastes changed once again, and chapels with decorated walls reasserted themselves in the Old Kingdom repertoire.

<sup>98</sup> Cf. JUNKER, *Giza* 1, 28, 29, 30.

<sup>99</sup> See HAENY's apt comments against such a misleading perspective with respect to simple and multi-niched (palace facade) tomb construction, in: *Fs Ricke*, 163. However, the thrust of much of his article is to place necropolis development within a scheme of generally linear development, against JUNKER's thesis that Giza marks a strong break with the past, in: *ZÄS* 63, 1928, summary on p. 13.

<sup>100</sup> S. J. GOULD, *Full House*, New York 1996, 33, 72–73.

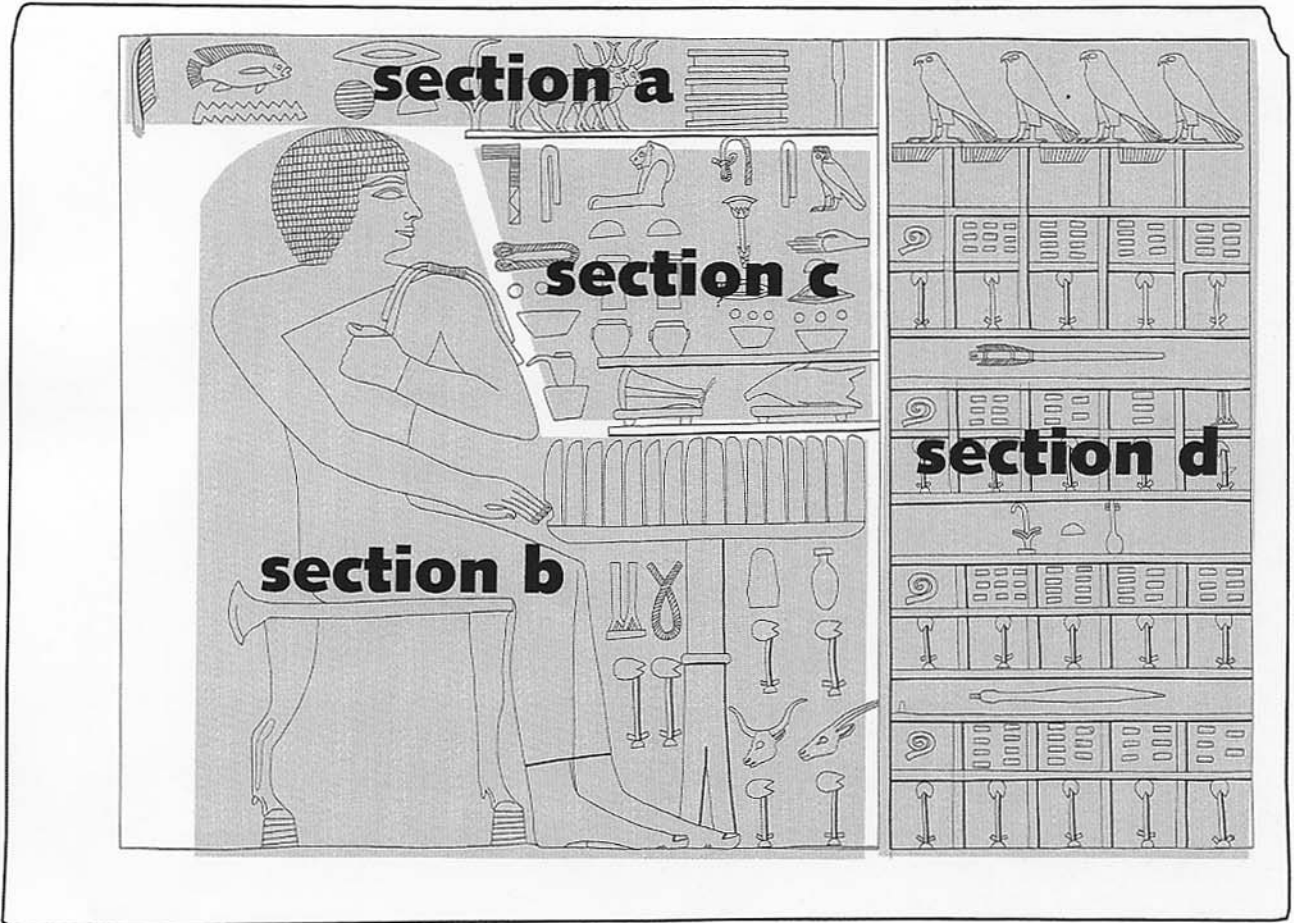
<sup>101</sup> Cf. BOLSHAKOV, *Man and his Double*, 38.



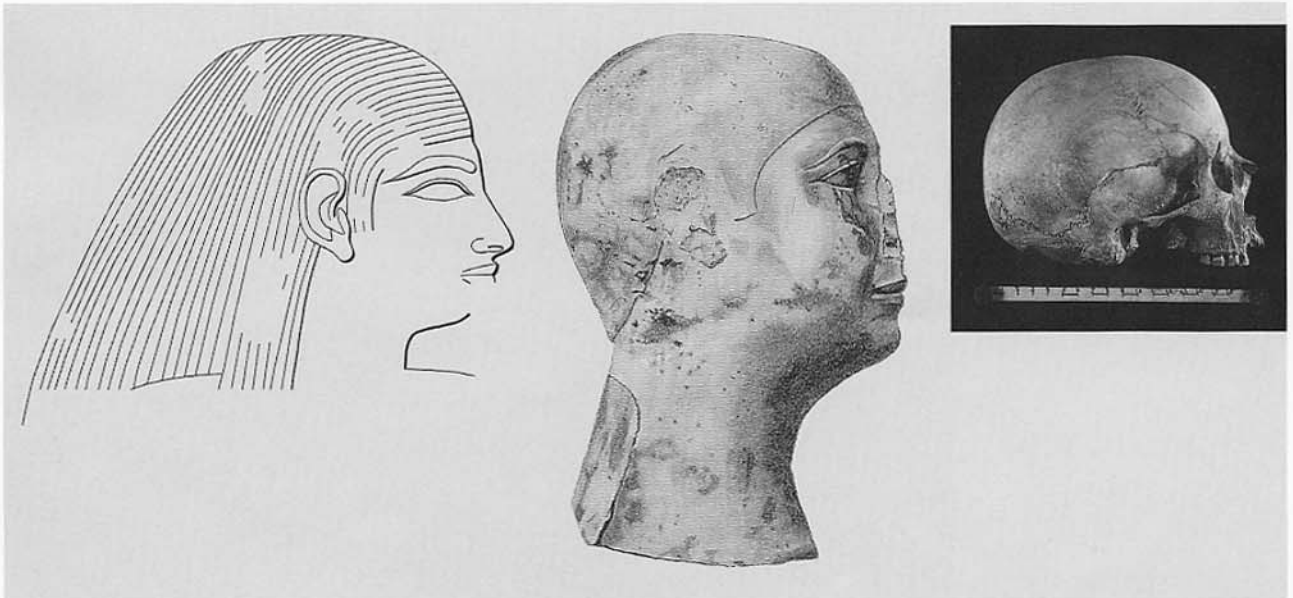
a The slab stela of Ini, from G 1235 (Cairo JE 37 727, currently on loan to the Port Said National Museum). Harvard University-Museum of Fine Arts, Boston Expedition photograph A 11588A (1904-5)



b View of the mud brick exterior chapel of Setji-hekenet, G 1227, showing the slab stela in situ as discovered (Cairo JE 37 726, currently on loan to the Port Said National Museum). Harvard University-Museum of Fine Arts, Boston Expedition photograph B 10786 (July, 1904)



a Schematic drawing showing four basic decoration sections, a, b, c, and d



b Juxtaposition of the various „heads of Meretites“ from G 4140: a) slab stela detail (MFA 12.1510); b) profile view of reserve head (Cairo JE 46 217; pencil drawing of A. Runggaldier); c) profile view of skull from shaft, Harvard University-Museum of Fine Arts, Boston Expedition photograph C 5337 (November 7, 1913)