

Preface

ON MY first visit to Egypt in 1951 I had the opportunity to stay with the late William Stevenson Smith and to accompany him on several occasions to the mastaba of Queen Mersyankh III, where he was engaged in revising and correcting the drawings of the chapel discovered by Reisner's expedition in 1927. It seemed likely that Smith would have the publication well in hand by the following year. Unfortunately, his ever increasing duties as curator at the Museum of Fine Arts, his other publications, and the realization of the vast amount of publication which remained to be done on the Giza site prevented him from accomplishing this project.

My appointment as curator in Boston coincided with the completion of the series of volumes on Reisner's work in the Sudan by Dows Dunham. By rare good fortune I was able to persuade Mr. Dunham to take up the Giza publications at this point. To edit Reisner's bulky manuscript which was originally intended as the second volume of his *History of the Giza Necropolis* seemed to us too ambitious an undertaking. Instead, we opted for a series of short volumes on the mastabas and their chapels, a series envisioned by Reisner himself in the introduction to his *Development of the Egyptian Tomb down to the Accession of Cheops*. We hope to deal with individual mastabas or groups in separate volumes in this new series. With several exceptions, the mastabas will be presented in photography and line drawing with a descriptive text and a limited commentary. Smith would probably have wished to treat them more fully, but practical considerations favor the current plan of making available the material without extended discussion. Many of the titles and scenes in the other Giza mastabas have already benefited from an extensive study by Junker.

The staff of the expedition has been acknowledged in previous publications. The drawings, corrected in several respects by Smith, have been further revised by Miss Suzanne E. Chapman on the basis of a week's study of the chapel in 1972 by the undersigned. Dr. Henry G. Fischer has kindly read the manuscript and made several suggestions and corrections on the basis of his unparalleled knowledge of the period. Mr. Dunham and I wish to acknowledge his help and encouragement.

The name of the queen is rendered throughout as Mersyankh, "the Living One loves her," on the basis of the parallel name, Mersuankh. Nevertheless, one wonders if the earlier reading of the name as Meresankh, "she loves life," may not be the correct interpretation.

The extraordinary preservation of the colors in the reliefs is one of the most attractive features of the chapel. These were recorded in part in a series of watercolors by Smith and in a series of paintings by the late Joseph Lindon Smith, now in the Museum of Fine Arts. A publication of the chapel in color photography would be extremely welcome. In the meantime, the reader is referred to the selection of hieroglyphs in water-color copies by W. S. Smith in *A History of Egyptian Sculpture and Painting in the Old Kingdom*, pl. B.

The abbreviations used are those followed by the editors of the *Annual Egyptological Bibliography*. Attention is called, however, to *HESPOK* for the volume by Smith just cited, and *LD* for Lepsius, *Denkmäler*.

The first part of the following text, consisting of general comments, has been prepared by the undersigned, and the second part, the description, by Mr. Dunham, with various additions by the undersigned and observations by Dr. Henry G. Fischer. Miss Mary B. Cairns has been responsible for the preparation of the typescript, and Miss Paula Williams of Yale University for the layout of the plates and figures.

WILLIAM KELLY SIMPSON
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