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Serdab of Pen-Meru Mastaba. Two triads in situ before clearing

The Harvard University-Museum of Fine Arts Egyptian Expedition

Work of 1912 at Gizeh and Mesheikh

DURING the first five months of 1912 the work of the Expedition was divided between the concessions of Gizeh and Mesheikh.

The Gizeh cemetery covers a large area extending to the north and northwest of the two larger pyramids. The site being one of the most important in Egypt, there were several applications for concessions to excavate it and it was ultimately divided into three parallel strips running west from the Great Pyramid. These were assigned by lot, the Italian Expedition securing the southern strip, the German Expedition the middle, and the American (Hearst) Expedition, through Dr. Reisner, the northern one. Excavations were carried on in this strip up to the end of 1907. The following years the efforts of the Harvard University-Museum of Fine Arts Expedition, which had succeeded to

the rights of the Hearst Expedition, were concentrated on the temples connected with the Third Pyramid, and later a season was devoted to the exploration of Zawiet-el-Aryan. On January 2, 1912, work upon the Gizeh concession was resumed. Towards the close of the season the Italian concession was transferred to Dr. Reisner, so that now the Expedition controls two-thirds of the entire area of the Gizeh cemetery.

The cemetery originally consisted of a number of large mastabas of officials of the IV. Dynasty, laid out in regular rows with wide streets between them. Many of these were subsequently enlarged and refaced, and other mastabas of smaller size built in the open passages between them. Still later the remaining spaces were filled up by numbers of simple shaft tombs. The large mastabas have always been partly visible above the surface of the debris and their tops have to a large extent been denuded. In most of them, too, the offering-chambers and serdabs were wrecked and their

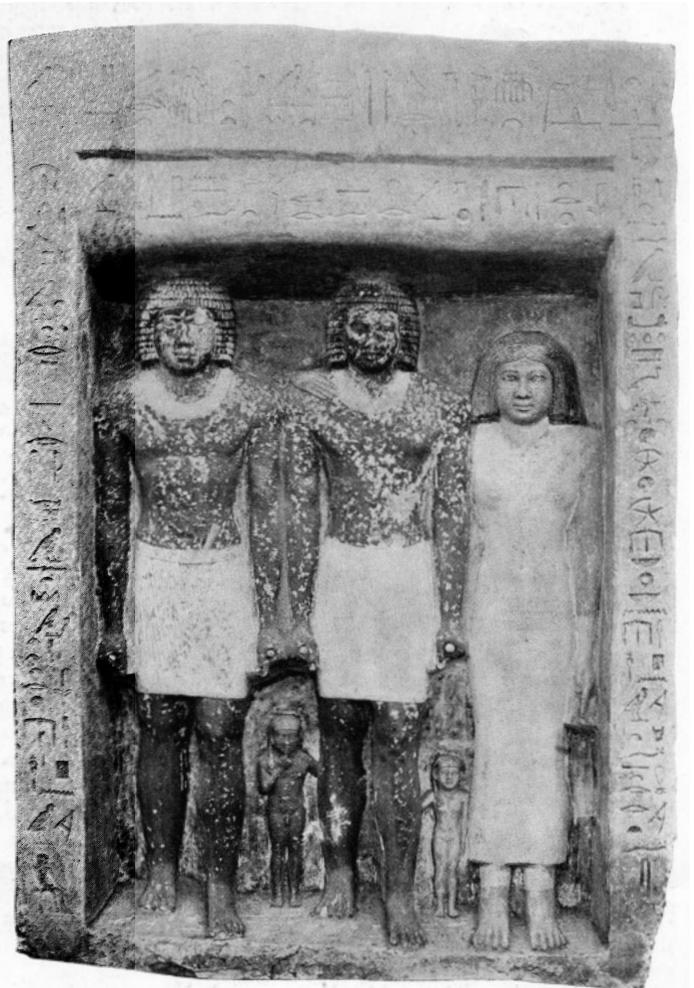


Head of Seshem-Nofer lying in shaft

its original freshness. The serdab had been completely wrecked by thieves, and the statues it contained had been destroyed. However, in the débris filling the outer chapels there were found a number of fragments of a life-size statue of red granite. Later the perfect head of this statue was found in débris which had been thrown into a nearby shaft tomb by the plunderers when they broke up the figure and scattered the fragments.

contents either carried off or wantonly destroyed and scattered around by plunderers. During the present season a number of very important tombs were cleared. The most impressive was No. 2200, belonging to Seshem-Nofer. This was one of the regular series of mastabas, originally built of small stones laid in stepped courses and finally finished with smooth sloping sides of large limestone slabs. Along the eastern side were two chapels, together equalling in length the east face of the mastaba and filling the space between it and the adjoining mastaba. The entrance was at the northern end and was divided into three equal spaces by two square limestone piers between *antae*. These were all inscribed with the name and titles of Seshem-Nofer. Outside were found traces of a small vestibule of mud-brick which had been built against the tomb after the original structure had been completed. The first chapel occupied about two-thirds of the whole length. Its west wall, formed by the sloping face of the mastaba itself, was decorated with a series of shallow niches and near its southern end was a large offering basin sunk in the floor. Just beyond this was the entrance to the inner chapel, marked only by two red granite bases for the piers, and by traces of *antae* on the adjoining walls. As usual in this period, the main offering-chamber was built into the body of the mastaba itself, near the southern end of its east face, and was entered directly from the second chapel. The walls were preserved nearly to the roof level and were covered with fine low reliefs showing processions of slaves bringing offerings of fruit, animals, geese, etc. Most of the coloring still retained

Not far from this tomb was a smaller one in almost complete preservation, belonging to Ka-Nofer. This tomb was in many respects the finest small mastaba ever found by the Expedition, and, thanks to the generosity of Mr. Frick, the Museum was able to purchase it from the *Service des Antiquités* for our collection. The tomb consisted of an outer chapel and an offering-chamber with its serdab.

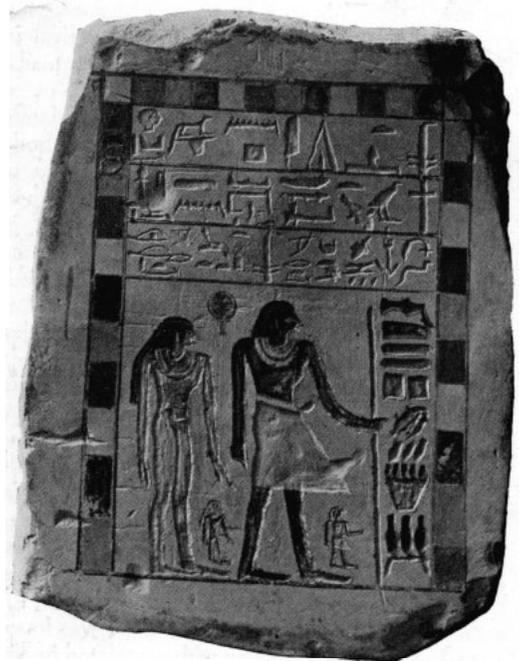


Portrait of Pen-Meru and Family



Serdab of Pen-Meru cleared

The offering-chamber was intact with the exception of one roofing slab. The room was lighted by a small slanting window, and the walls were covered with paintings of boats, fishing and hunting scenes, a row of dancing girls, and various domestic scenes. The door-jamb was decorated with two exquisite low reliefs, colored, of Ka-Nofer and his mother on one side and Ka-Nofer and his wife on the other. Opening from this there was a small inner offering-chamber, also elaborately decorated. The door had afterwards been blocked up, when the tomb was used by Meryt-aket-Nesut, the superintendent of the royal gardens. His seated portrait statue, with a large offering slab of alabaster inlaid in a limestone frame beside it, was placed before the door, which then became the niche of the offering-room. The outer chamber had originally been of mud-brick plastered over with stucco and then decorated in color. Later the west wall had been cased with slabs of stone on which life-size figures of Ka-Nofer were cut. An inscription below one of the figures stated that "his lord (*i. e.*, the King) made these for him." The figure nearest the chamber represents Ka-Nofer leaning on his staff, while his brothers and several slaves



Painted burial stele from Mesheikh, VI. to X. Dynasties

are seated before him. The figure is particularly interesting because of its restful attitude, having none of the stiff conventionality of the usual standing figure. The weight is carried on one foot only, the other being drawn up and resting on the toes. At the north end of the wall is the second figure, also full of action and accurate rendering of muscles. Here Ka-Nofer is represented in the act of throwing a lasso with a slip-knot identical with those used to-day. This figure demands another in front of it, either an ox or some wild animal, yet the wall ends just beyond in a perfectly straight face in line with the exterior of the older mud-brick wall. It certainly was intended to complete the scene, but this for some reason was never done.

One wall of an adjoining tomb with a procession of dancing girls was also purchased for the Museum.

In the same vicinity was found a tomb with a nearly life-size figure of the owner in the niche at the west end, the entire chamber and figure being cut in the solid rock. The walls were partly covered with paintings in perfect preservation and coloring. The details of hunting scenes in the marshes, various building and cooking operations and piles of offerings were depicted with a great deal of fine detail, even the characteristic markings of the various fruits and offerings being carefully drawn. The ceiling was painted a dull red and the lower part of the walls a dark gray. The body had been deposited in a pit opening from one corner of the chamber, but this had been rifled. The tomb was approached through a long corridor running north with a doorway opening to the east at its northern end. This had later been blocked up and the passage used for several shaft-tombs. When these walls are removed and the rock chamber made accessible to visitors it will be one of the most interesting sights at Gizeh, and will rival in interest, though not in size, the well-known tombs at Sakkarah.

Shortly after the arrival of Mr. Rowe in March, several gangs were detached from the main body of workmen at Gizeh and sent under his charge to excavate a cemetery at Mesheikh. This was part of the Naga-el-Dêr concession, another part of which had been excavated by Dr. Reisner for the Hearst Expedition and still another, Mesaeed, cleared three years ago for our Museum. After the close of work at Gizeh the entire expedition was transferred to this site.

Mesheikh is a small village built partly over and around a mud-brick temple of Merenptah lying at the mouth of a deep ravine in the cliff bordering the Nile. The rock here consisted of alternate layers of hard yellow limestone and shale. Erosion had altered the face of the cliff into a series of terraces in the limestone upon which the loose shale had accumulated in long sloping beds. These beds had been utilized for burial purposes from the earliest periods. On the western slope was found a small predynastic cemetery with contracted bodies in oval pits, some wrapped in mats or laid on thin

folded leather garments. With them were necklaces of shell and stone, rude figurines of animals and women and ivory ornaments. Near this group and also covering the greater part of the opposite side of the ravine was a group of tombs of the VI. to X. Dynasties. These were cut into the stratum of shale, and the rough sides of the rock cased with mud-brick. They consisted usually of an outer offering-room with a small painted limestone stele giving a rude portrait of the owner and his family with offering, together with dedicatory inscriptions. From this room extended two or more low, tunnel-like cavities in which the body was placed in a plain wooden coffin. The openings were sealed with mud-brick. The stelae were crudely drawn and colored, several of them being cut out slightly around the outlines.

A considerable amount of pottery, beads and amulets were found with the bodies, and a fine offering box of polished wood containing a basket, an ostrich egg, and several alabaster vases. Two of the coffins were secured for the Museum.

Some work was done on the old Naga-el-Dêr site, clearing a small cemetery back of our camp. Some interesting Middle and New Empire burials were found, with the objects belonging to them *in situ*.
C. S. F.

Gifts of American Silver

A PUNCH BOWL by William Homes and a paten made by Jacob Hurd have been given to the Museum by Mrs. Ambrose Dawes in memory of her husband. Two silver forks by John Noyes have been received from Mr. Winthrop Sargent; and from the Benevolent Fraternity of Churches fourteen pieces of the silver used by the Church in Brattle Square, Boston. Mr. Francis H. Bigelow was instrumental in obtaining all three gifts for the Museum.

The bowl is of massive silver (d. 9% in.; h. 4¾ in.), finely hammered in the colonial shape used later by Paul Revere when making his somewhat larger bowl for the "Sons of Liberty." The maker, William Homes (b. 1717, d. 1783), called the "Honest Silversmith," was a nephew of Benjamin Franklin, and married Rebecca Dawes, aunt of William Dawes, who rode to Lexington on the memorable 19th of April, 1775. She was a cousin of Col. Thomas Dawes, for whom the bowl was made. Thomas Dawes (b. 1731, d. 1809) was adjutant and later colonel of the Boston regiment from 1763 to his retirement from public life; and he also commanded the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company. The bowl was presented to him by the former organization and is inscribed: "The Gift of the Field Officers and Captains of the Regiment of the Town of Boston to Thomas Dawes, Esqr. for his past services as adjutant to said Regiment, Sept. 13, 1763." On the opposite side is engraved the Dawes arms. Ambrose Dawes, the last possessor of the bowl, was a great-grandson of the Colonel, and had