

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:
THE GIZA TABLET OF TJENTI (JE 72135)**

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One of the most productive long-term excavations in Egyptian archaeology was the Harvard University–Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Expedition at Giza (1905 to 1942) directed by George A. Reisner. In addition to digging at nearly two-dozen other sites, Reisner conducted almost four decades of activity on the Giza plateau. In the course of these excavations he developed a model approach to site analysis that was far ahead of its time, in addition to unearthing countless finds that enriched the collections of both the Egyptian Museum, Cairo, and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Reisner’s diaries are full of accounts of his frequent trips from the “Harvard Camp” headquarters west of the Khafre pyramid to the Cairo Museum, in order to meet with Antiquities Service directors such as Gaston Maspero and Pierre Lacau.¹ And he was no doubt very proud of the contributions the Expedition made to the Old Kingdom collections of that venerable institution. One of the Giza objects that entered the Museum is the subject of the pages that follow.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT

The challenges inherent in reconstructing the developmental history of the Giza Necropolis have received much attention in recent years.² To use a vastly oversimplified distinction, two categories of private funerary monuments at the site might be separated as

¹ I would like to thank Rita Freed, Norma Jean Calderwood curator of Ancient Egyptian, Nubian, and Near Eastern Art, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, for permission to consult and utilize the archives. I am also grateful to Henry G. Fischer for several helpful suggestions on the remarks presented below. Reisner’s diaries and other excavation materials are slated for on-line access as part of the Museum’s Giza Archives Project funded by a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. For an account of one particular Reisner–Maspero meeting, see “A month in the life of a great Egyptologist: George Reisner in March, 1912,” *KMT* 7, No. 2 (Summer 1996), pp. 67–70.

² See R. Stadelmann and H. Sourouzian, eds., *Kunst des Alten Reiches*, SDAIK 28 (Mainz, 1995); N. Grimal, ed., *Les Critères de datation stylistiques à l’Ancien Empire*, BdE 120 (Cairo, 1998); C.M. Ziegler, ed., *L’Art des l’Ancien Empire égyptien* (Paris, 1999); *Egyptian Art in the Age of the Pyramids* (New York, 1999), M. Bárta and J. Krejčí, eds., *Abusir and Saqqara in the Year 2000* (Prague, 2000).

belonging to a) the original layout of core cemeteries as envisioned by Khufu, and b) the later addition of subsidiary and intrusive burials that choked the original design of those core cemeteries. The false door tablet of Tjenti was discovered amidst the latter category and, to further complicate the issue, was reused as a roofing stone in a burial shaft. A closer look at this monument, the only inscribed object found in mastaba G 2113, reveals some interesting features about tomb decoration, use and reuse, and dating methods as applied to anomalous finds at Giza.

Cemetery 2100 is one of Reisner's four core, or nucleus, cemeteries west of the Khufu pyramid.³ Originally consisting of eleven major mastabas that were probably constructed in an earlier phase (the western tombs) and a later phase (the eastern tombs), the cemetery was subsequently filled with minor mastabas and intrusive burial shafts. Most of these are uninscribed, and they must have been constructed well after Khufu's reign, many of them even as late as Dynasty 6. These minor mastabas are difficult to pinpoint precisely in time, and in the absence of artifacts or inscriptions, one must rely on archaeological and architectural context for dating purposes.

Nestled into the east–west passage between two of the earliest mastabas of cemetery 2100, tombs G 2110 (Nefer)⁴ to the north, and G 2100 (one of Merib's parents)⁵ to the south, is a small complex of minor mastabas that Reisner numbered G 2111, 2112, and 2113 (fig. 1).⁶ Cemetery 2100 was first excavated in 1905–06 during the transition season when Reisner's sponsorship switched from the University of California, Berkeley (supported by Phoebe Apperson Hearst), to Harvard University and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. That year the work proceeded under the direction of Albert M. Lythgoe in what was to be his last field season before relinquishing his Boston curatorship and moving

³ The other core cemeteries are G 1200, G 4000, and the so-called Cemetery en Echelon; cf. Reisner, *A History of the Giza Necropolis I* (Cambridge, MA, 1942), p. 13ff., and Appendix A, C, and D.

⁴ References to G 2110 may be found in PM III, pp. 72–74, and Reisner, *Giza Necropolis I*, Appendix C, pp. 422–425. The author hopes to publish this tomb in a future volume of the Giza Mastabas Series.

⁵ The decorated chapel from this tomb was removed to Berlin by Lepsius in the 1840s; cf. PM III, pp. 71–72; Reisner, *Giza Necropolis I*, Appendix C, pp. 419–421; K.-H. Priese, *Die Opferkammer des Merib* (Berlin, 1984).

⁶ Reisner, *Giza Necropolis I*, Appendix C, p. 425.

to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. Unfortunately, detailed daily excavation diaries were either not kept or did not survive from those early years.⁷ An expedition photograph⁸ shows the progress in the area between the major mastabas G 2100 and G 2110. While the shafts are clearly exposed at this time, the false door tablet under discussion must still be lying undiscovered, perhaps as much as one meter below surface level.⁹ Our best information on the area was recorded thirty-two years later, in 1937, when the expedition returned or, more accurately, returned yet again, since supplemental work is also recorded in Cemetery 2100 for the years 1912 and 1931–32, among others. The purpose of these return efforts was additional clearance work in preparation for the publication of Reisner's monumental *History of the Giza Necropolis I*.¹⁰

G 2113 is an indistinctly delineated tomb to the west of G 2112 (see plan, fig. 1). To use Reisner's terminology, the mastaba was of type X c(1), with u-masonry.¹¹ The tomb measures about 4.5 x 4.0 m, with a height of 1.20 m. The chapel was no more than an open-air limestone passage just under 1 m wide between the back (west) wall of G 2111, and the façade (east wall) of G 2113. The undecorated lower part of a monolithic limestone false door was still in place at the north end of the east face. The corresponding area at the south end of the east face had been ripped away, obscuring the likely placement of a second, and probably more important, false door.

⁷ Field season reports back to the trustees of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, are preserved for several of the earliest Giza seasons; these are stored in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston and have been converted to electronic form.

⁸ Negative C 1352, taken during the 1905–06 season, unpublished.

⁹ A comparison of Expedition photographs C 1352 (= C 12533; 1905–06) and A 7883 (December 3, 1937, fig. 2 here) reveals the deeper levels of the later image, clearly indicated by the exposed courses of the southwest corner of G 2110 to the left.

¹⁰ Made possible by a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the "Giza Archives Project" has created a database of the more than 21,000 glass plate photographic negatives taken by the expedition at Giza. This database currently reveals only four images specifically of G 2113: A 7883 (12/3/1937), A 7884 (12/10/1937), C 14093 (12/16/1937); and B 8900 (12/3/1937). Two of these are illustrated here.

¹¹ "Small nummulitic blocks set in low courses to form a rough sloping surface;" cf. Reisner, *Giza Necropolis I*, pp. 178–179, figs. 90–91.

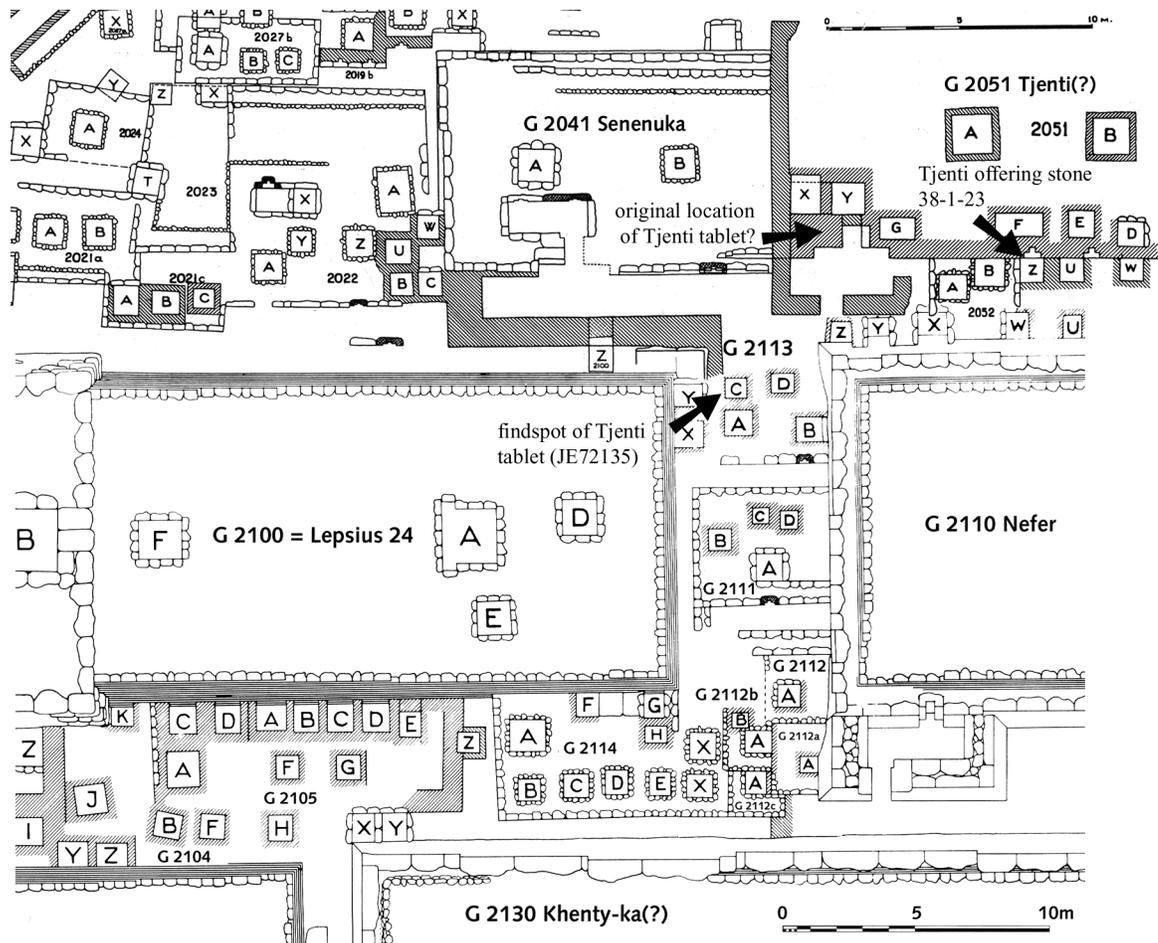


Figure 1. Plan of portion of nucleus cemetery G 2100, including G 2113.

Mastaba G 2113 contained four shafts, A, B, C, and D, all of which were lined above ground with mud brick. Shaft B was lined with mud brick on three sides; the masonry from the south face of Nefer's mastaba (G 2110) formed the superstructure's north side, providing a clue to the chronological development of the tombs in question (see below). Only shaft A was found to contain an actual burial, although the gender was not determined.¹² Shaft C, however, contained the reused tablet of Tjenti (Plate II). An excerpt from the Expedition Diary for Friday, December 3, 1937 reads:

... (2) G 2113. On the top of the mastaba. In exposing the lining and shafts of the mastaba. It is north of G 2100, south of G 2110 and west of G 2111. Masonry mastaba, because we found

¹² The author hopes to provide a more detailed treatment of this tomb in a forthcoming publication on Cemetery 2100.

the remains of the lining on east. On west side of the mastaba appears an uninscribed stela. Exposed four shafts, A, B, C, D and not started in them. We found on the roof of the chamber of shaft C two fragments of half of a limestone stela, in relief with the name of Thenty. One of the fragments is big and the other small. Two fragments from the outer part of the stela but uninscribed. Drawing of the mastaba in which the work resumed today.

The image in Plate I, photographed the same day the diary entry quoted above was made, shows the state of the excavation, with the tablet in the center foreground by the meter stick, looking southeast toward the Khufu pyramid. The tablet was removed to Harvard Camp and photographed in the camp studio on December 10, 1937 (Plate IIA). It was entered into the Expedition's Object Register with the field number 37-12-1 and following description:

Upper part of white limestone stela of [Tjenti] in fine relief but partially unfinished; re-used as a roofing slab, upper left hand corner broken off and also sides broken off into several fragments. Height 85 cm; width 110 cm; thickness 19 cm.

The tablet was subsequently acquired by the Egyptian Museum, Cairo under the number JE 72135. It is clear that it is not indigenous to G 2113 because the tomb's one surviving false door measures about 50–60 cm wide, while Tjenti's tablet measures 110 cm wide. One might wonder why shaft C, an apparently unused shaft,¹³ would have received such an elaborate covering stone. Should it not have been the occupied shaft A that needed the best roofing slab? Or did all four shafts originally bear such covering stones and contain burials, and shaft C, with Tjenti's tablet, was merely the only one still in place in 1905?

DESCRIPTION AND TRANSLATIONS

The tablet's most striking features are the high quality of the raised relief carving and the unfinished state of the decoration (Plates IIA–B). The artist(s) apparently preferred to work from the bottom to the top. The lintel area below is complete, with a considerable amount of interior detail added to the large-scale hieroglyphs in bold raised relief. Particularly noteworthy are the *nb*-basket, *ntr*-sign, and the twisted flax *T* of Tjenti's name.

¹³ The word "apparently" is used here because on occasion the Expedition excavated a shaft in 1905 that contained a burial, only to return twenty-five or thirty years later for additional clearance work, and declare the shaft empty! The later excavators were clearly not aware that burials had been found and removed back in 1905.

Above the lintel, the carving of the panel, or tablet area, is three-quarters complete. The artist laid down his tools for good while halfway through carving the names of the seated couple. He has left the upper right portion of the tablet untouched altogether. Whatever sculptor's guidelines may have guided his chisel are invisible today, and the Expedition records make no mention of any painted lines at the time of excavation in 1937. The uncarved portions were probably meant to list Tjenti's titles, as well as standard offerings that typically follow natron, green and black eyepaint. One might expect the words for figs (*dbꜣ*), wine (*irp*), carob bean (*wꜥh*), or similar items. Depending on the date of the stela (see below), there might also have been a linen list in the upper right, but the available space seems too restricted, and linen lists usually extend to the bottom of the panel area, which in this case is already occupied.¹⁴ At any rate, the "frozen stage" of the relief carving affords an instructive glimpse into the working methods of the Egyptian sculptor, notably the carving stages of individual hieroglyphic signs. Examples include two of the three *kꜣ* arms in the woman's name, the roughed-out owl *m* and subsequent signs of *msdmt* ("black eye-paint"), and the jagged lines of the *n* of "Tjenti."

Apart from these unfinished signs, the rest of the decoration has received the sculptor(s)' careful attention. Forms are rounded and smooth, interior detail is present (though not as pronounced as on the larger hieroglyphs of the lintel beneath) and the seated couple especially are a minor masterpiece of intricate carving. Tjenti and his wife(?), share a theriomorphic stool with bulls' legs, papyrus umbel rail(s) and small cushion. The woman's name might be taken as [...] *kꜣw*, in which case the two vertical rectangles above the *kꜣ* arms would represent the initial carving of two more identical signs. Another possibility, kindly pointed out to me by Henry G. Fischer, might involve reading these two vertical signs as *mnw*, hence *mnw=(i)-kꜣ=(i)*, "my monuments/fortresses are my ka."¹⁵ The

¹⁴ See, for example, W.S. Smith, "The Old Kingdom Linen List," *ZÄS* 71 (1935), pp. 134–149, and Manuelian, "The Problem of the Giza Slab Stelae," in H. Guksch and D. Polz, eds., *Stationen. Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte Ägyptens Rainer Stadelmann gewidmet* (Mainz, 1998), pp. 115–134.

¹⁵ This sign is discussed by Fischer, "Two New Titles of the Old Kingdom," in L. Limme and J. Strybol, eds., *Aegyptus Museis Rediviva. Miscellanea in Honorem Hermann De Meulenaere* (Brussels, 1993), pp. 93–95, fig. 3. See also D. Jones, *An Index of Ancient Egyptian Titles, Epithets and Phrases of the Old Kingdom I*

couple is dressed in finery, including a tight-fitting, full-length garment with shoulder straps for her, and a kilt with elaborate belt tie for him. Both wear beaded broad collars with bichrome teardrop pendants,¹⁶ and the woman additionally sports a choker. Tjenti's garment shows the elaborate shoulder tie, and a small beard complements his valanced wig to complete his coiffure. The woman's wig is a standard tripartite one, with each of the long individual tresses clearly indicated. In addition, she wears a bracelet and faint traces of anklet lines are just visible beneath her dress line. The faces are both rendered in great detail, including eyes and eyelids, long plastic eyebrows, nostril and philtrum indication, and in the woman's case, a well-delineated ear. Sophisticated musculature modeling is apparent on Tjenti's knees and shins, as well as on the bull leg stool, the seated couple's faces and selected hieroglyphs.

The most important feature here is the pose of the seated couple. The woman embraces her spouse(?) with both hands wrapped around him just above his waist. This is an exceedingly rare pose; while parallels may be available, this writer has so far been unable to locate them. The woman's rear arm, stretching across Tjenti's "back," is quite common,¹⁷ but it is her forward arm, reaching around his body to show her hand clasping the "front" of his stomach and obscuring his navel, that seems unique.¹⁸ A cursory survey of the published Giza parallels has not yet turned up a similar example on a seated couple. In the early Fifth Dynasty at Abusir, however, two standing embraces between Kaaper and

(Oxford, 2000), pp. 138–1139, titles 537–540. Fischer notes (personal communication) that a similar sign in *Urk.* I, 152 (15) is not to be read *hn* (*Wb.* III, p. 100, followed by Junker, *Giza* 9 [Vienna, 1950], p. 52), but as *mnw*, and a similar example occurs as the determinative of *mnw* in Pyr. 662a(T). Another option involves taking the two unfinished signs as two mansions *hwty*, hence *Hwty* (*PN* I, p. 235 (2, 5), "one who belongs to the estate." In our case, then, *Hwty(t)-k3=(i)* might be a preferable reading.

¹⁶ Cf. E. Brovarski, "Old Kingdom Beaded Collars," in J. Philipps, ed., *Ancient Egypt, the Aegean and the Near East. Studies in Honour of Martha Rhoads Bell* (San Antonio, 1997), pp. 137–161; Y. Markowitz and S. Shear, "New Thoughts on an Old Egyptian Necklace," *Adornment. The Newsletter of Jewelry & Related Arts* 3, 2 (Spring 2001), pp. 1–2, 19–21.

¹⁷ For the related(?) pose where the woman touches the man's elbow, as an erotic gesture, see Edna R. Russmann, in *Eternal Egypt. Masterworks of Ancient Art from the British Museum* (London, 2001), cat. 56, pp. 138–139 (Dynasty 18 pair statue of Khaemwaset and Nebettawy), to which might be added Hildesheim, *Das alte Reich*, cat. 38, p. 96, and Nisut-nefer (G 4970), Cherpion, in *Kunst des Alten Reiches*, pl. 2d.

¹⁸ The feature was noticed already by N. Cherpion, *Mastabas et hypogées d'Ancien Empire* (Brussels, 1989), p. 121.

his wife are attested.¹⁹ In one case, the couple face each other; in the second example, the wife stands “behind” her spouse. Most other parallels show the woman’s hand resting on the man’s front shoulder.²⁰ One could argue that the man’s shoulder tie in this case prevents the woman’s arm from occupying that area, but there are several examples where the woman’s hand rests on or adjacent to such a shoulder tie.²¹ Perhaps one of the best parallels comes from the realm of three-dimensional sculpture, most notably the famous standing pair statue of Menkaure and the queen who embraces him (MFA 11.1738).²²

A translation of the tablet follows:

- | | |
|--|---|
| (1) <i>rh̄ nswt zš ʿ nswt nb im̄sh̄ rh̄^(sic) ntr ʿ</i>
<i>Tnti</i> | (1) Royal acquaintance, royal document scribe, possessor of veneration before ²³ the great god, Tjenti |
| (2) (uncarved) <i>[T]nti</i> | (2) (uncarved) [Tj]enti |
| (3) (uncarved) ... <i>k̄w(?)</i> | (3) (uncarved) ...-kau(?) |
| (4) <i>bd w̄sd msdmt</i> (uncarved) | (4) Natron, green eyepaint, black eyepaint, (uncarved) |
| (5) <i>h̄tp nswt h̄tp nswt im̄yt wsh̄t</i> | (5) Royal offering, royal offering of the broad hall |
| (6) <i>t-s(i)f t-nbs t-[n]sb^(sic) ʿ dsrt</i> | (6) <i>t-s(i)f</i> bread, ²⁴ zizyphus, dried cake from |

¹⁹ See H.G. Fischer, “A Scribe of the Army in a Saqqara Mastaba of the early Fifth Dynasty,” *JNES* 18 (1959), p. 243, fig. 8 and pl. 6, and p. 253, fig. 21 and pl. 8; recently republished by M. Bárta, *The Cemeteries at Abusir South I, Abusir V* (Prague, 2001), p. 156, fig. 4.11, p. 161, fig. 4.13, p. 175, fig. 4.23, pls. 55, 71.

²⁰ See, for example, the tombs of Nefer, Junker, *Giza* 6 (Vienna and Leipzig, 1943), p. 49 fig. 11; Kahif., *ibid.*, p. 122 fig. 38a; Woser, *ibid.*, p. 191 fig. 69.

²¹ Examples include Wehemka (D117), with the spouse’s hand next to the shoulder tie: A. Eggebrecht, ed., *Das Alte Reich* (Wiesbaden, 1986), cat. 8, pp. 46–47; Sekhemka (G 1029), with the wife’s hand on his shoulder under the tie: W.K. Simpson, *Mastabas of the Western Cemetery*, Part 1 (Boston, 1980) fig. 3; Seshem-nefer III, with the wife’s hand on his shoulder and covering up part of the shoulder tie: E. Brunner-Traut, *Die Grabkammer Seschemnofers III.*, new edition (Mainz, 1995), pl. 17 and Beilage 3; Kai, a rare case with no hand showing, while her other hand slips unusually around his back arm: Junker, *Giza* 3 (Vienna and Leipzig, 1938), p. 131, fig. 15 = pl. 8b. On embraces in general, see N. Cherpion, “Sentiment Conjugal et Figuration à l’Ancien Empire,” in *Kunst des Alten Reiches*, pp. 33–47.

²² G.A. Reisner, *Mycerinus. The Temples of the Third Pyramid at Giza* (Cambridge, MA, 1931), p. 110 (no. 17), pls. 54–60; *Egyptian Art in the Age of the Pyramids* (New York, 1999), cat. 67, pp. 268–271. On the identity of the woman beside Menkaure, see B. Fay, “Royal Women as Represented in Sculpture during the Old Kingdom,” in *Les Critères de datation stylistiques à l’Ancien Empire*, pp. 164–166, fig. 11–12. For an example of a seated pair statue with a similar embracing pose, see the possibly Fifth Dynasty granite pair statue of Irankhptah and Niankh-hathor, MFA 12.1488, in Y.J. Markowitz, J.L. Haynes, and R.E. Freed, *Egypt in the Age of the Pyramids* (Boston, 2002), cat. 27, p. 83.

²³ Note the reversed spelling of *h̄r*.

	zizyphus, a portion of ale
(7) cuts of meat	(7) cuts of meat
(8) <i>d3t h3 iw3 h3</i>	(8) crane, 1,000, oxen, 1,000
(9) <i>t h3 hmqd h3</i>	(9) beer, 1,000, bread, 1,000
(10) <i>k3 h3</i>	(10) bulls, 1,000

DATING AND INTERPRETATION

Stylistically, a number of elements on Tjenti's tablet may date it to the late Fourth Dynasty. Cherpion has dated the tablet to not later than the reign of Menkaure, although she assumed that it actually belonged to G 2113, and was unaware of its reused archaeological context.²⁵ Among the criteria favoring such a date are the visibility of just the end of the couple's seat cushion (critère 1), the larger, more detailed papyrus umbel (critère 9), the short bread loaves on the offering table reaching between the deceased's knee and elbow (critère 16), the footed offering table (critère 24), the wife's choker (critère 46), and Tjenti's wig with tall vertical valances at the top of the head (critère 24), a feature described by Fischer in 1959.²⁶ The earlier spelling of "black eye-paint," *smdt* for *msdmt*, might also speak for a Fourth Dynasty date, although the spelling admittedly occurs in the Fifth Dynasty as well.²⁷ Additionally, one might note that the carving shows affinities with the Giza tomb of Khaf-khufu (G 7130–7140), usually dated to early Dynasty 4 (Khufu), and identified by Stadelmann as the early sepulcher of Khafre.²⁸ In particular one might cite the

²⁴ Some confusion has crept into this line. The *t* at the end of the word is either a mistake for a rounded cake or meat sign determinative, cf. S. Hassan, *Excavations at Giza 6*, pt. 2, *The Offering List in the Old Kingdom* (Cairo, 1948), pp. 376–378 (no. 153), pl. 94 (Sankh-ptah), or intended as the *t* of *t-nbs*, the following item. The third item in the list is even more garbled, for it omits the *n* of *nbs*, and also reverses the *b* and *s*. In fact, all three tall *s* signs on the tablet are reversed. The *n* must be read twice, and a superfluous *t* deleted. The word is likewise miswritten *nsb* in the tomb of Kaemankh, *ibid.*, pl. 96 (no. 178).

²⁵ Cherpion, *Mastabas et hypogées*, p. 121.

²⁶ Fischer, *JNES* 18, pp. 238–239.

²⁷ Cf. Hassan, *Giza 6*, pp. 264–265; many of the Giza slab stelae from the reign of Khufu use *smdt* for *msdmt* as well: Manuelian, *Stationen*, p. 116, fig. 1, pl. 6a; Reisner, *Giza Necropolis I*, pls. 17–20.

²⁸ Cf. R. Stadelmann, "Khaefkhufu = Chephren: Beiträge zur Geschichte der 4. Dynastie," *SAK* 11 (1984), pp. 165–172. This intriguing suggestion is not without its share of problems, such as the discrepancy in the respective names of spouses.

his wife are attested.¹⁹ In one case, the couple face each other; in the second example, the wife stands “behind” her spouse. Most other parallels show the woman’s hand resting on the man’s front shoulder.²⁰ One could argue that the man’s shoulder tie in this case prevents the woman’s arm from occupying that area, but there are several examples where the woman’s hand rests on or adjacent to such a shoulder tie.²¹ Perhaps one of the best parallels comes from the realm of three-dimensional sculpture, most notably the famous standing pair statue of Menkaure and the queen who embraces him (MFA 11.1738).²²

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(5) <i>h̄tp nswt h̄tp nswt imyt wsh̄t</i>	(5) Royal offering, royal offering of the broad hall
(6) <i>t-s(i)f t-nbs t-[n]sb^(sic) ʿ d̄srt</i>	(6) <i>t-s(i)f</i> bread, ²⁴ zizyphus, dried cake from

¹⁹ See H.G. Fischer, “A Scribe of the Army in a Saqqara Mastaba of the early Fifth Dynasty,” *JNES* 18 (1959), p. 243, fig. 8 and pl. 6, and p. 253, fig. 21 and pl. 8; recently republished by M. Bárta, *The Cemeteries at Abusir South I, Abusir V* (Prague, 2001), p. 156, fig. 4.11, p. 161, fig. 4.13, p. 175, fig. 4.23, pls. 55, 71.

²⁰ See, for example, the tombs of Nefer, Junker, *Giza* 6 (Vienna and Leipzig, 1943), p. 49 fig. 11; Kahif., *ibid.*, p. 122 fig. 38a; Woser, *ibid.*, p. 191 fig. 69.

²¹ Examples include Wehemka (D117), with the spouse’s hand next to the shoulder tie: A. Eggebrecht, ed., *Das Alte Reich* (Wiesbaden, 1986), cat. 8, pp. 46–47; Sekhemka (G 1029), with the wife’s hand on his shoulder under the tie: W.K. Simpson, *Mastabas of the Western Cemetery*, Part 1 (Boston, 1980) fig. 3; Seshem-nefer III, with the wife’s hand on his shoulder and covering up part of the shoulder tie: E. Brunner-Traut, *Die Grabkammer Seschemnofers III.*, new edition (Mainz, 1995), pl. 17 and Beilage 3; Kai, a rare case with no hand showing, while her other hand slips unusually around his back arm: Junker, *Giza* 3 (Vienna and Leipzig, 1938), p. 131, fig. 15 = pl. 8b. On embraces in general, see N. Cherpion, “Sentiment Conjugal et Figuration à l’Ancien Empire,” in *Kunst des Alten Reiches*, pp. 33–47.

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²³ Note the reversed spelling of *h̄r*.

eliminated is the Tjenti of the minor mastaba just east of G 5150 (Seshat-hetep), identified only by several cylinder seals.³²

Perhaps a more likely candidate for matching our Tjenti is to be found just a few meters to the west of G 2113. Mastaba G 2051 has been assigned to a Tjenti based on an inscribed offering basin stone found in situ in front of one of the two mud brick false door emplacements on the tomb's exterior east wall.³³ The stone is oblong with a raised circular platform in the center and a rectangular basin to one side (both inscribed). The two false door emplacements measure 65 cm across, and are thus too small to hold a false door tablet the size of the one reused in G 2113. But the tomb also contains an interior chapel which once held yet another false door. According to unpublished excavation records in Boston, this "room a" measured 3.8 x 1.2 m, "probably with niche or inserted stela at south end of west wall (destroyed by the intrusion of shaft X)."³⁴ Exact measurements of this chapel false door do not survive to allow a precise comparison with the tablet found in G 2113, but it was almost certainly larger and more elaborate than the simpler mud brick niches on the exterior of G 2051. Tjenti's name is spelled the same way on both the Cairo tablet, and the offering stone from G 2051, and while the titles do not particularly tally well, it is quite likely that we are missing many of our Tjenti's titles due to the unfinished state of the tablet's decoration. Our Tjenti bore the titles translated above (*rh nswt* and *zš ʿ nswt*), while

³² PM III, p. 150; Junker, *Giza 7* (Vienna and Leipzig, 1944), pp. 90–92. For the seals, see idem, "Zwei Schein-Rollsiegel aus dem Alten Reich," *Mélanges Maspero I* (Cairo, 1935–38), pp. 267–271. Yet another Tjenti was apparently the owner of G 2007, but his wife is named Bebi, as preserved on a tablet scene showing the couple seated on either side of an offering table, Harvard–MFA Expedition photographs B 731 (= B 7466) and A 525 (=A 5969), unpublished.

³³ This offering stone was numbered 38-1-23 by the Harvard–MFA Expedition, and measures 50–60 cm in length and 38 cm in width. It is presumably in Cairo. An unpublished Expedition photo bears the negative number C 14112, taken on January 27, 1938. On the development of Old Kingdom offering basins, see now R. Hözl, *Ägyptische Opfertafeln und Kultbecken*, HÄB 45 (Hildesheim, 2002), pp. 13–26, and idem, "Zur Typologie der Opfertafeln und Kultbecken," *GM* 183 (2001), pp. 53–69 (although the form of Tjenti's offering stone is not represented specifically). See also M. Mostafa, *Untersuchungen zu Opfertafeln im Alten Reich*, HÄB 17 (Hildesheim, 1982), and D. Abou-Ghazi, *Denkmäler des Alten Reiches III*, CCG 57001–57100 (Cairo, 1978, 1980).

³⁴ Unpublished records on G 2051, housed in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and scheduled for publication along with nucleus cemetery 2100.

the Tjenti of G 2051 was a king's acquaintance (*rh nswt*), juridicial scribe (*zš zsb*), and an overseer of document scribes of Akhet-Khufu (*imy-r zš mdst šht-Hwfw*).

What is the sequence of use and reuse for the Cairo tablet of Tjenti, and how do the various mastabas involved help in reconstructing that sequence? The following scenario is offered for discussion. The original core mastabas G 2100 and G 2110 of nucleus cemetery 2100 clearly date to reign of Khufu. The chapel of G 2110 (Nefer) may have been decorated somewhat later, in the reign of either Djedefre or Khafre.³⁵ To the west of Nefer's mastaba were built G 2041 (Senenuka) and G 2051 (Tjenti); these are taken to be contemporaries of Nefer, for a representation of Senenuka actually appears on the north entrance thickness of Nefer's chapel wall.³⁶ At this time in Dynasty 4, no subsidiary tombs would yet have existed between G 2100 and G 2110, in order to keep the access clear. Since G 2110 and G 2041 (further west, see plan, fig. 1) are contemporary, it is highly unlikely that access between the tombs would have been cut off in Khufu's or Khafre's reign. Later, perhaps in Dynasty 5 or even 6, the addition of subsidiary burials of G 2111, 2112, and 2113 choked the east–west passage between G 2100 and G 2110. We know that G 2113 must be later than G 2110, not only for the above-stated reasons of access, but because shaft B of G 2113 uses the south wall of G 2110 as its north wall, hence it must post-date G 2110. By the time (post-Dynasty 4) of construction of G 2113, the cult of G 2051, including the unfinished tablet of Tjenti from its interior chapel false door, had ceased to function. Tjenti's tablet was thus removed and “repurposed” by those entrusted with the mortuary cult of G 2113. This might explain the relocation of Tjenti's unfinished tablet into the roof of the late Old Kingdom G 2113's shaft C. We thus have a Dynasty 4 tablet fragment (Tjenti) removed from a Dynasty 4 mastaba (G 2051) and reused in a Dynasty 5 or 6 subsidiary tomb (G 2113). One wonders if the rest of the false door was ever finished and whether its lower half may have landed elsewhere in the Western Cemetery at Giza.

³⁵ Cherpion prefers Djedefre, *Mastabas et hypogées*, pp. 119–120.

³⁶ MFA 07.1002; cf. Reisner, *Giza Necropolis I*, pl. 30b; *Egyptian Art in the Age of the Pyramids*, cat. 79, pp. 285–286 (last figure on the right).



Plate I. The tablet of Tjenti re-used as roofing slab over shaft G 2113 C, looking southeast, December 3, 1937; photograph by Expedition Photographer Mohammedani Ibrahim (A 7883). Courtesy Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.



Plate IIA. “Studio” photograph of the tablet of Tjenti (Cairo JE 72135) taken by Expedition Photographer Mohammedani Ibrahim at Harvard Camp, Giza, on December 10, 1937 (A 7884). Courtesy Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

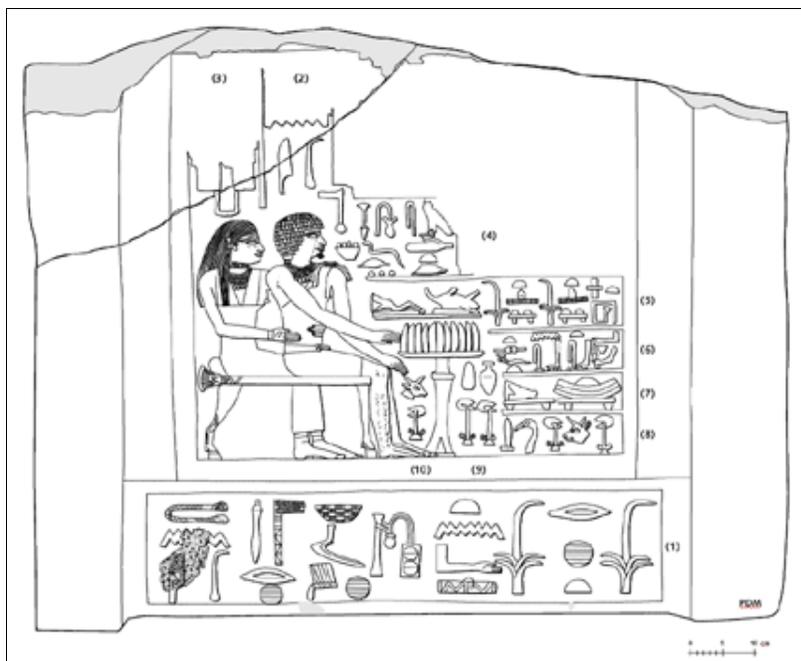


Plate IIB. Digital epigraphy drawing of the tablet of Tjenti (Cairo JE 72135).