

FOR HIS KA

ESSAYS OFFERED IN MEMORY OF KLAUS BAER

Edited by David P. Silverman



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Series Editors' Note

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Cover Illustration

The illustration by Jennifer Houser is based on the depiction of a table of offerings that appears in several Theban tombs of the New Kingdom: Tjanefer (TT 158); the two sculptors, Nebamun and Ipuky (TT 181); the vizier Ramose (TT 55); Kheruef (TT 192); Inherkha (TT 359); and the false door stela from the tomb of Puyemre (TT39).

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CHAPTER 4

THE GIZA MASTABA NICHE AND FULL FRONTAL FIGURE OF REDI-NES IN THE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON

PETER DER MANUELIAN

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Klaus Baer always had time for an intellectual puzzle. While his broad overview of many facets of Egyptian language and culture was phenomenal, perhaps even more impressive was his ability to hunt down and solve scholarly puzzles that previously seemed unsolvable. More than once this writer had the privilege of entering his office with a difficult text passage or historical problem, and then leaving with a feeling that the word “enlightenment” might accurately describe. Although in my case he was unable to see his role as *Doktorvater* through to completion, he nevertheless righted many a wrong turn on my dissertation and proved a constant source of encouragement. May this short note below on an Old Kingdom puzzle from a site he knew better than most be offered in his memory.¹

INTRODUCTION

The little limestone false door niche of the scribe and royal *w*^c-priest, Redi-nes,² has been known to the scholarly world since the early 1920s.³ The primary reason for its notoriety derives from the exceedingly rare representation of the tomb-owner in a full frontal pose, with feet splayed outward, that appears in the central niche of the door. Photographs of portions of the piece have appeared in the scholarly literature, but in an incorrect reconstruction. Parts of the dedicatory inscriptions have never been published or translated, and the door shows some interesting names and examples of hieroglyphic reversals. In addition, the archaeological context has not received sufficient attention in print. The following remarks consider the excavation history of the piece, provide a new translation of the texts, a discussion of certain aspects of Redi-nes' frontal representation, and finally, a note on the date of the piece.

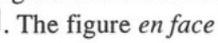
1. For many helpful comments on earlier versions of this paper, I am indebted to Dr. Henry G. Fischer and to Dr. Ann Macy Roth.
2. For the name, see Ranke 1935, p. 178.1. Another (?) Redi-nes is known from a false door in the Flint Institute of Arts, Flint, Michigan. For this reference, I am indebted to Dr. David P. Silverman.
3. The piece was officially accessioned to the museum in 1921 and bears the number 21.961. Its measurements are: height of door and jambs: 79.0 cm; total width of frontal surface: 58.0 cm; width of door: 41.0 cm; width of jambs: 7.3–8.5 cm; depth of jambs: 26.0–26.5 cm; height of central figure: 32.2 cm; width of central niche: 14.0 cm. I am grateful to Dr. Rita Freed, Curator of the Department of Ancient Egyptian, Nubian, and Near Eastern Art, for permission to publish the piece and to quote from the unpublished Museum Expedition diaries. For general references, see Porter and Moss 1974, p. 145.



Figure 4.1. View of Cemetery en Echelon in the Western Cemetery, Looking to the East (Museum Expedition Photograph B 8492; August 26, 1935); Arrow Points to Stone Marked G 5032 Indicating Position of Mastaba of Redi-nes. Courtesy of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

EXCAVATION HISTORY

Redi-nes constructed his limestone mastaba on the western side of the Great Pyramid, in the so-called cemetery en echelon. It is located in the street between the larger tombs G 5030 and 5040 to the west and G 5130 to the east (see figs. 4.1–2). The tomb contained four shafts (A–D), a small chapel, and a serdab (figs. 4.3–4). The Museum Expedition diary for October 29, 1915 briefly discusses the excavation of tomb G 5032 under item three of the day's work:

(3) G. 5032 ... This is contemporaneous with G. 5031. The S[outh] niche is a very curious little stela with a figure in sunk relief *en face* in the middle panel. The feet are turned out ... The scribe: . The figure *en face* has on the round beam above it: . In the S[outh] end of Ch[amber], a serdab has been walled off (with a hole from Ch[amber] to S[outh]). The roof was found intact (3 stones) but the statuettes were of wood and entirely decayed.⁴

4. Museum Expedition diary, unpublished, October 29, 1915, pp. 37–38 (handwritten version, notebook covering January 5–December 13, 1915), pp. 21–22 (typescript). Additional objects discovered in the tomb bear the field numbers 35-8-38 (large blue faience barrel bead); 35-8-39 through 35-8-51 (thirteen pottery fragments); 35-8-52, 65, 71, and 35-9-13 (human bones).

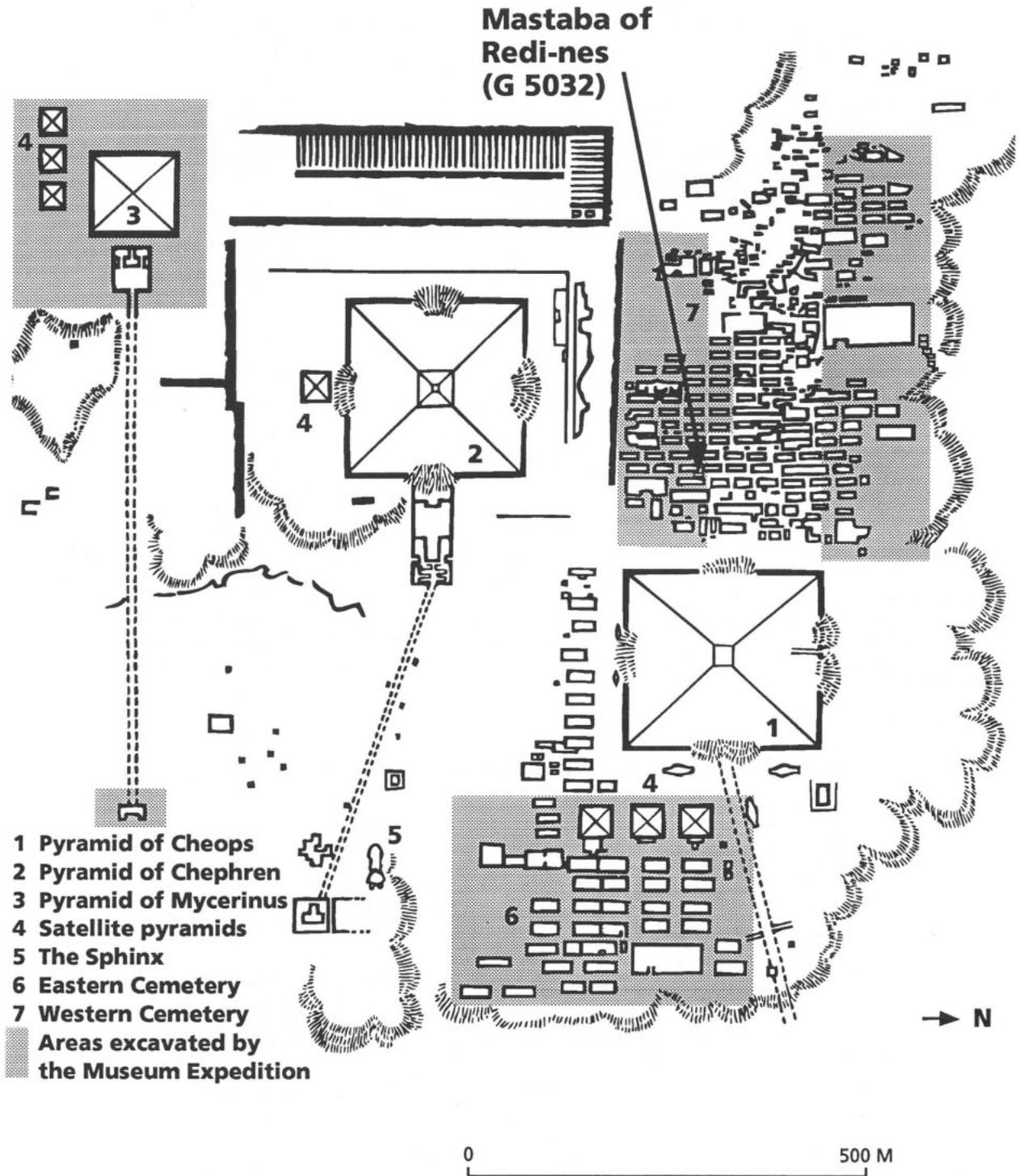


Figure 4.2. General Plan of the Giza Necropolis, Showing the Location of the Mastaba of Redi-nes (G 5032) in the Western Cemetery

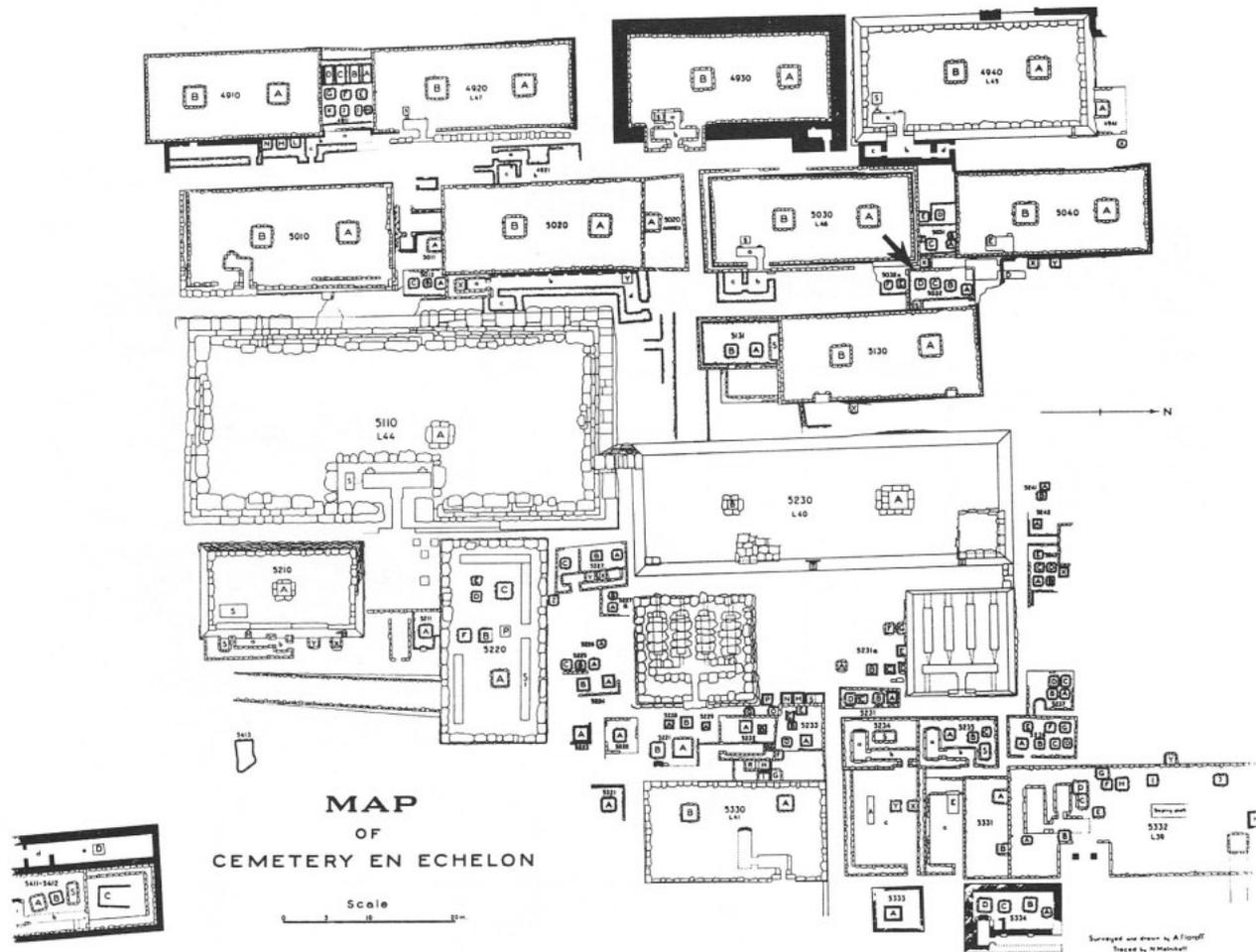


Figure 4.3. General Plan of Cemetery en Echelon by A. Floroff and N. Melnikoff

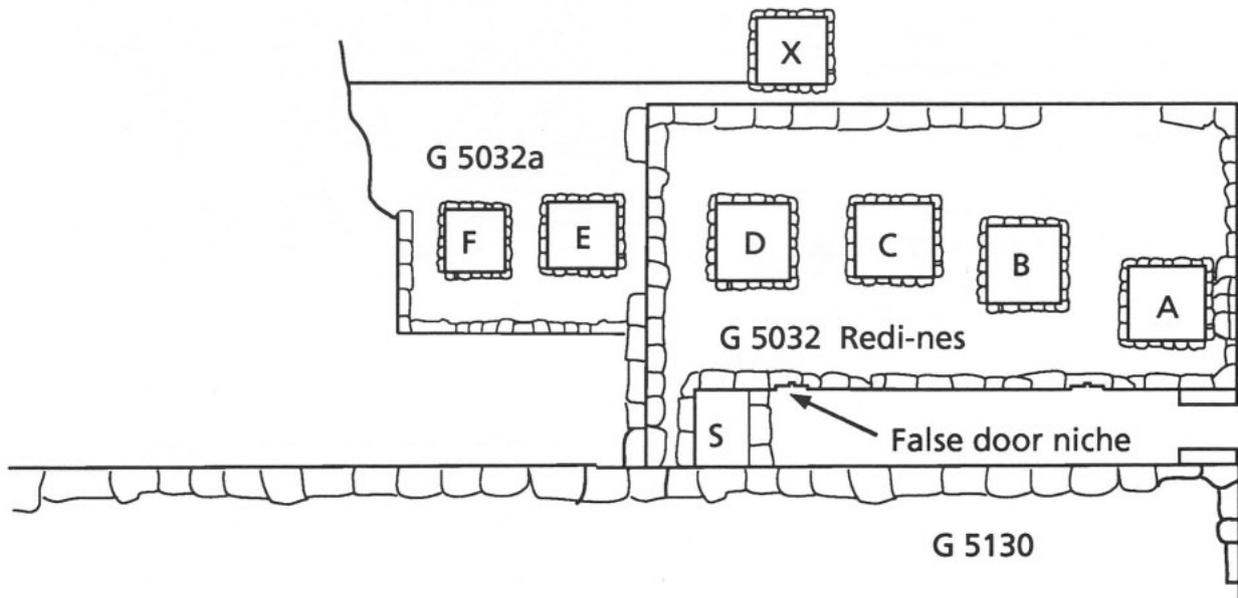


Figure 4.4. Detail Sketch Plan of the Mastaba of Redi-nes (G 5032)

The southern niche was the only inscribed area or object in the entire tomb. It consists of a false door that is flanked on either side by inscribed, protruding jambs. Each jamb contains two vertical columns of inscription, one band on one face and the other located ninety degrees around the corner. It is interesting to note that symmetry is not in evidence here, possibly because additional inscriptions were never carved. The right-hand, or northern, jamb bears texts both facing the viewer and facing inward toward the false door. The left-hand, or southern jamb texts, however, face both out toward the viewer and southward *away* from the false door.

The photograph in figure 4.5 shows the niche still in situ with broken pottery fragments (offering table elements?) on the ledge in front of it. Recent reexamination of this photograph and the excavation diary notes has indicated, however, that around 1921, after its arrival in Boston, the niche was for a time incorrectly reassembled for exhibition.



Figure 4.5. View of the Chapel of Redi-nes' Tomb, Looking to the Southwest, Showing the False Door in Situ at the Far End of the Western Wall (Museum Expedition Photograph C 6925; October 31, 1915).

Courtesy of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Furthermore, the photograph of the piece, recording the mistake, is the photograph used in all the published illustrations of the niche. In an (apparently modern) effort to restore symmetry to the layout of the inscriptions, the left-hand, or southern, jamb of the niche was incorrectly rotated ninety degrees. The photograph in figure 4.6, the same one used in the 1922 *Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts* (Sanborn 1922, p. 27), Wreszinski's (1936, pl. 21) *Atlas*, and Brunner's (1965, pl. 3) *Chrestomathie*, shows the incorrect arrangement.⁵ The left (southern) jamb in the photograph should be rotated ninety degrees outward, or to the left from the viewer's point of view. The jamb inscriptions are reproduced in figures 4.9–10. An

5. For a detail of the central figure, see here figure 4.12. The object is difficult of access for new photography in its current location on exhibit. But the photograph in figure 4.6 plus the original expedition photographs (figs. 4.9–10) serve to show all the inscribed faces of the niche. The piece is displayed correctly in the Museum of Fine Arts' gallery today.

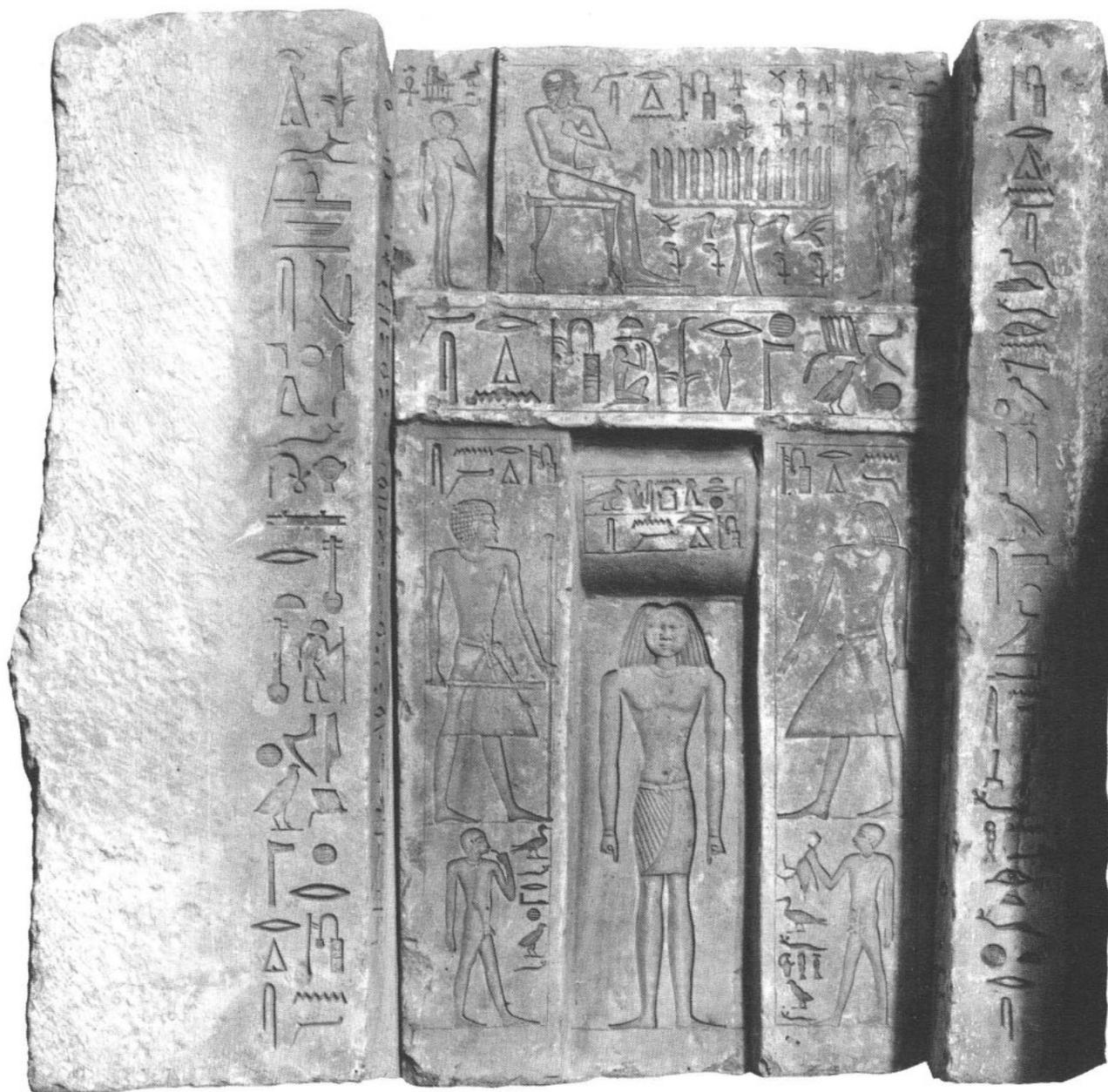


Figure 4.6. Studio Photograph of the False Door Niche, MFA 21.961, Showing the Incorrect Reconstruction of the Left Outer Jamb (Containing the  sign). Courtesy of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

enlargement of the photograph in figure 4.5 (see fig. 4.8) makes the texts partially visible and proves the case. Perhaps more interesting archaeologically is the fact that this exterior jamb text (beginning with the *hetep di nisut* formula) was walled up in the tomb by what must have been the subsequent construction of the serdab wall with the window (fig. 4.8).⁶

6. An alternative suggestion, kindly suggested to me by Dr. Ann Macy Roth, would place the original entrance to the tomb to the south; thus the viewer would see the two side texts with the *hetep di nisut* formulae (texts 2 and 4) first, oriented as they both are to the south.

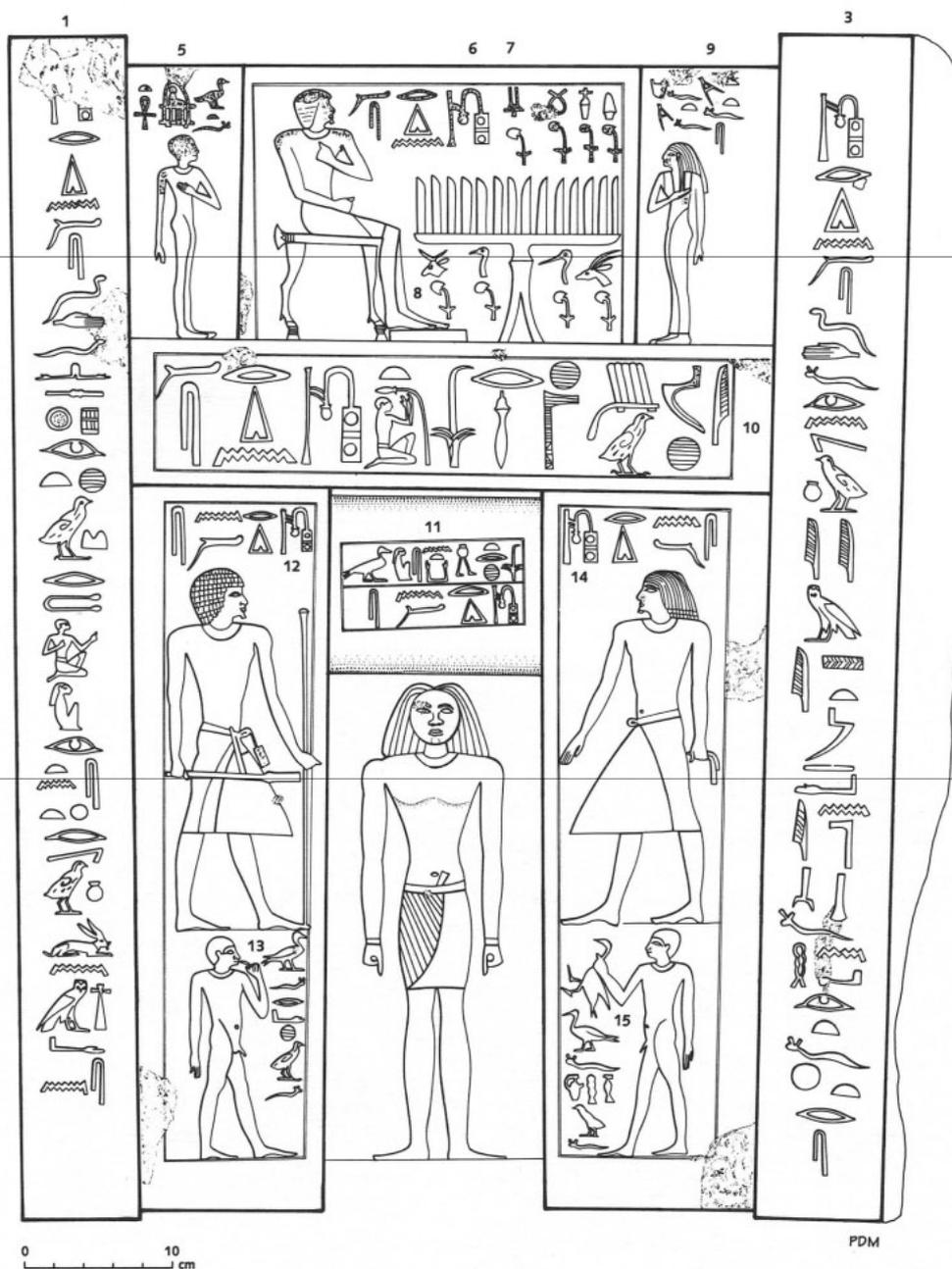


Figure 4.7. Facsimile Drawing of the False Door Niche of Redi-nes, MFA 21.961

THE TEXTS AND SCENES

The basic orientation of the inscriptions on the niche is to the right, that is, to be read from right to left. Some interesting reversals occur throughout the text. Every scribal sign hieroglyph and every occurrence of Redi-nes' name, except for that on the right inner jamb, faces to the right. Reversals include *sš* and *ns* signs on the right jamb; and the *s* sign in the right aperture in the name of Meret-it-es.⁷ The hieroglyphs are carved in sunk relief with a fair amount of interior detail (see fig. 4.7).

7. Most likely "retention of dominant orientation"; cf. Fischer 1977, p. 112, § 38.



Figure 4.8. Enlargement of the Museum Expedition Photograph C 6925, Showing the Inscriptions on the False Door as Well as the Later Wall with Window Covering up the Text on the Southern (Left) Exterior Jamb. Courtesy of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston



Figure 4.9. Left (South) and Right (North) Frontal Jamb Inscriptions (Museum Expedition Photograph B 3768; 1919). Courtesy of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

[1] LEFT JAMB



sš Rdi-ns ḏḏ.f n zp ṛr. (i) ḥt ḏw [r] rm.t.t The scribe Redi-nes says: Never did (I) do any
ṛr.ty.sn ḥt r nw wn.<f> nḏ(.w) m-^c.sn evil thing against people. (As for) those who will
do something against this, it shall be protected
from them.⁸

8. For the expression *nḏ m-^c*, “protect from,” see references in CT Spell 303 (de Buck 1951, 57b); CT Spell 334 (de Buck 1951, 180g); CT Spell 455 (de Buck 1954, 328c); CT Spell 456 (de Buck 1954, 329f); CT Spell 600 (de Buck 1956, 216b–d); CT Spell 790 (de Buck 1961, 2r–s); and *Wb.* II, 374.4.



Figure 4.10. Exterior (Left or South) and Interior (Right or North) Jamb Inscriptions (Museum Expedition Photograph B 3769; 1919). Courtesy of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

[2] LEFT THICKNESS (EXTERIOR OF NICHE)



ḥtp dī nswt ḥnpw nb t3 ḏsr i.ḥp.f⁹ ḥr w3(t) nfrt i3w nfr ḥm3ḥw ḥr ntr sš Rdi-ns

A gift which the king and Anubis, lord of the sacred land, give, that he might travel upon the beautiful way, having attained a ripe old age, (as) one revered¹⁰ before the god; the scribe Redi-nes.

9. Note the *i*-augment on the verb; cf. Edel 1955, § 481 g.

10. On the translation for *ḥm3ḥw*, instead of “well-provided,” see recently Fischer 1991, p. 22, section 2.

[4] RIGHT THICKNESS (INTERIOR OF NICHE)



*ḥtp dī nswt ḥnpw qrs m ḥrt-nṯr nb ḥmꜣḥ
ḥr nṯr ꜣ nb st ḥmntt sš Rdi-ns*

A gift which the king and Anubis give, (namely) a burial in the necropolis, (as) a possessor of veneration before the great god, lord of the western desert. The scribe Redi-nes.

[5] LEFT APERTURE

Above the standing figure of a woman with a close-cropped wig:



sꜣt.f ꜣnh-rpwt¹³

His daughter, Ankh-reput.

[6]–[8] TABLET

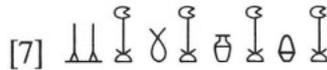
Redi-nes sits upon a stool with carved bull-like legs, before a table of fourteen offering loaves. He wears a short valanced wig, clenches his right hand on his lap, and draws his left over his chest. As he faces to the right (north), so does his identifying caption text above the offering table:



sš Rdi-ns

The scribe Redi-nes.

Offerings above the table face the tomb owner:



mnḥt ḥꜣ šs ḥꜣ ḥnqt ḥꜣ tꜣ ḥꜣ

Clothing, one thousand; alabaster, one thousand; beer, one thousand; bread, one thousand.

Below the offering table are listed:



kꜣ(w) ḥꜣ ꜣpd(w) ḥꜣ r(?) ḥꜣ mꜣḥd ḥꜣ

Bulls, one thousand; fowl, one thousand; *r* (?) - geese, one thousand; oryxes, one thousand.

[9] RIGHT APERTURE

Above the standing figure of a woman with long wig:



ḥm[t]fm [r]t.f Mrt-ḥt.s¹⁴

His beloved wife, Meret-it-es.

13. See Ranke 1935, p. 417.2; Faulkner 1962, p. 148.

14. Note the reversal of the Π .

[10] LINTEL



im3hw hr ntr 3 w b nswt sš Rdî-ns

The revered one before the great god, the royal
w^b-priest, Redi-nes.

[11] DRUM



[A] *s3 rh(t)-nswt int-k3.s* [B] *sš Rdî-ns* The royal acquaintance Inet-kas' son, the scribe
Redi-nes.¹⁵

[12]–[13] LEFT INNER JAMB

The large figure of Redi-nes faces inward toward the central niche. He wears a valanced wig, wide kilt with loop and ties, and holds a tall staff in his left hand and a *sh̄m*-scepter in his right.



sš Rdî-ns

The scribe Redi-nes.

A smaller, standing naked figure of a boy with left hand raised to the mouth, is carved beneath the larger figure of Redi-nes.

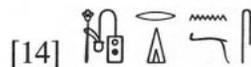


s3 f R ʿ-hwi f

His son, Re-khuief.¹⁶

[14]–[15] RIGHT INNER JAMB

Redi-nes stands facing left (south), with a long, tressed wig, and simpler kilt, omitting the loops and ties on the kilt in the left inner jamb. His right hand is empty, but in his left he holds a handkerchief.



sš¹⁷ Rdî-ns

The scribe Redi-nes.

15. For general remarks on the occurrence of the mother's name alone, see Fischer 1989, p. 4 with n. 30, and additionally du Bourget 1961, p. 14, pls. 1, 3.

16. On this name, cf. Ranke 1935, p. 220.2 (*R ʿ-hwi f*).

17. Note the reversal of the *sš* hieroglyph .

A second naked son appears beneath this figure, clutching a duck by the neck in his right hand. He is identified as:

[15] 

s3.f Hnm-hsw.f

His son Khnum-hesu-ef.¹⁸

THE CENTRAL NICHE FIGURE

The most interesting feature of the false door of Redi-nes is the unique full frontal figure of the tomb owner in the central niche (see figs. 4.7, 12).¹⁹ While Egyptian two-dimensional representations almost always contain a combination of perspectives, this figure mixes

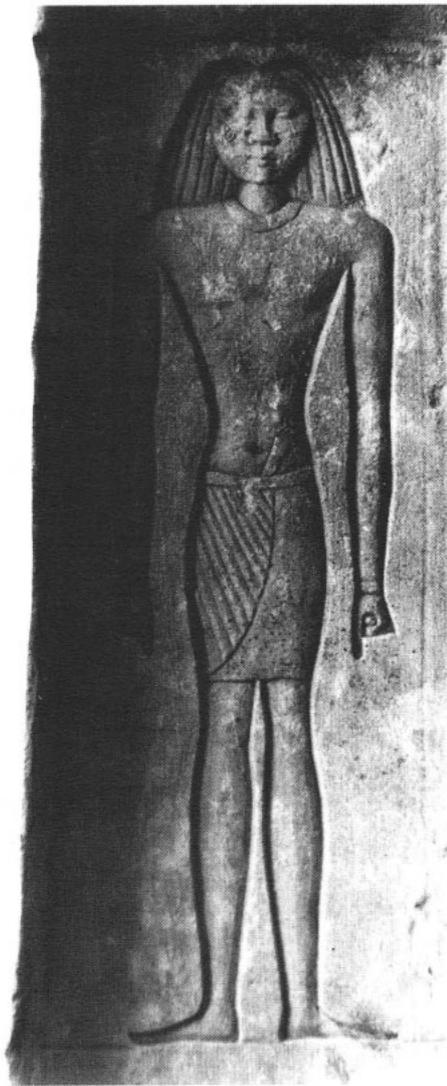


Figure 4.12. Enlargement of Museum Expedition Photograph B 3770, Showing the Central Figure of Redi-nes (1919). Courtesy of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

18. On this name, cf. Ranke 1935, p. 276.5.

19. Smith (1946, pp. 323–26) discusses examples of frontal figures; see also Schäfer 1974, § 4.4.3, pp. 205–18. The Redi-nes figure appears in Säve-Söderbergh 1968, pl. 13.

frontal and side views in a fashion—so far as this author is aware—never quite duplicated in Egyptian art.²⁰ The carving is in sunk relief with raised interior elements. A modern, three-dimensional view of the figure might look something like that in figure 4.13.²¹

The head is shown straight-on, determined by an oval shape carved in raised relief. Above and behind the head “sprout” two symmetrical portions of a typical striated wig seen on many “normal” faces shown in profile. In fact, the wig resembles that on the figure in Redi-nes’ right inner jamb. No ear details are shown; presumably they are hidden behind or underneath the wig, although the frontal view suggests that they should be visible, as they are in figure 4.13.

Like the wig, the facial features are carved symmetrically. The two eyes present rather narrow openings adorned with plastic eyebrows in low relief modeling. The figure’s right eye

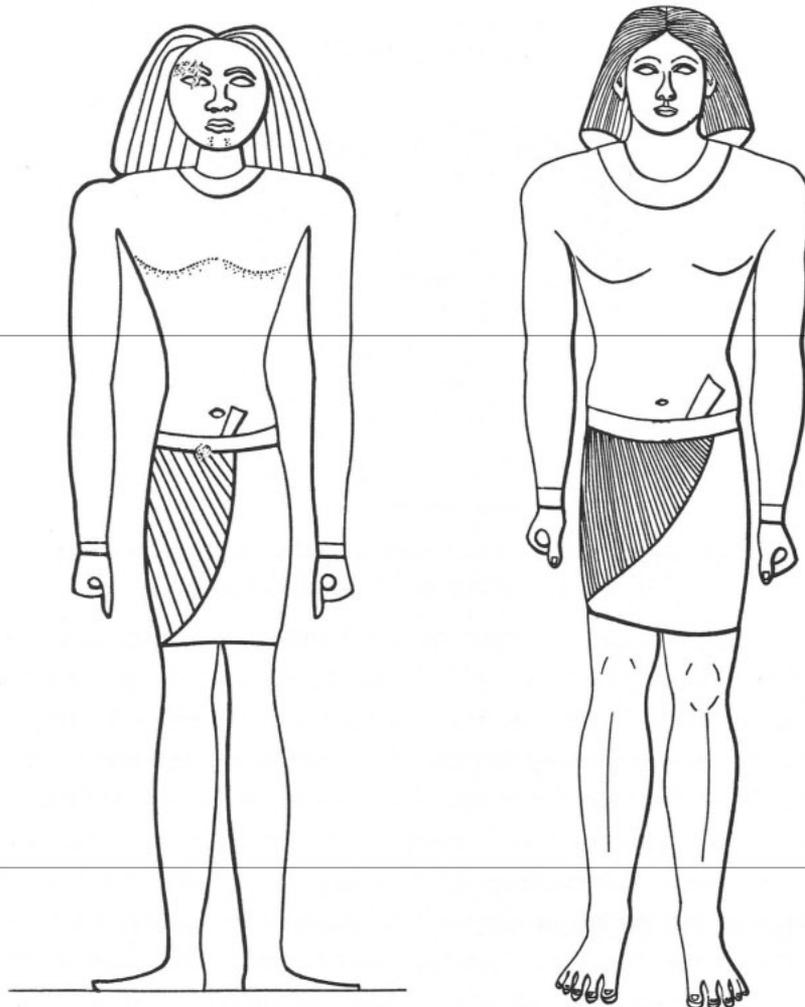


Figure 4.13. Modern Three-dimensional “Conversion” of the Central Figure of Redi-nes
(Based on the Serdab Statue of Ranefer in the Cairo Museum)

20. Some interesting parallels include two women shown frontally except for their heads: one takes the form of a scale, see Smith 1958, pl. 51A, while the second woman cracks grain in a mortar (CG 1534), Fischer 1976, p. 19, fig. 11 (= Schäfer 1974, fig. 207).
21. Based (but for the feet) on the statue of Ranefer (CG 19 = JE 10063) from Saqqara, now in Cairo; see Saleh and Sourouzian 1987, cat. 45; Smith 1946, p. 18 d.

is damaged. The full frontal nose has a wide, flat bridge and flaring nostrils. A philtrum is visible below it, and the two lips are softly carved and equal in size. No beard adorns the figure.

One is immediately tempted to compare the head to the full frontal *hr* hieroglyph. The oval shape of the head and the flat nose are perhaps most reminiscent of this sign.²² And yet Redi-nes' head seems far more clumsy than its hieroglyphic counterpart. Redi-nes' lack of ears is disturbing, the thin slits for the eyes and the absence of the typical goatee beard, all present subtle but important differences from the well-known hieroglyphic sign. In fact, one almost wonders at the inability of the artist to transfer centuries of competence with the *hr* sign to this rendering of the face (cf. fig. 4.14). There is even an example of *hr* on the monument, in the text on the left exterior thickness of the niche (see text [2] above).



Figure 4.14. Example of the *hr* Hieroglyph from the False Door in the Saqqara Chapel of Kaemnofret, MFA 04.1761 (Published by W. K. Simpson)

Continuing our description of the figure, the oval head is perched upon a vertical column for a neck carved in raised relief. A small broad collar adorns the neck, and the broad shoulders splay out on either side, this time in sunk relief. There is slight frontal breast modeling on the figure. An interesting feature is the exterior torso line beginning at each of the armpits and reaching down to the waist. The profile of these lines takes such a drastic inward curve, pinching the waistline and hips to an extreme degree, that one might suggest we have here *two* symmetrical torso lines of the kind we normally see on figures in profile. Except for any bulge at the breast or nipple indication in the exterior line of the torso, the form of the curve seems directly taken from the more familiar side view of the chest.

The delineation of the two arms, however, takes an almost “neutral” shape, bulging just slightly at the forearms. A bracelet is indicated at each wrist, and the clenched fists hold rounded elements or emblematic cloth pieces (see further, below; Fischer 1975, pp. 10–21).

A simple kilt with pleated foldover and belt tie provides the only carved detail on the figure. The legs present once again an unusual combination of profile and frontal views. The

22. Cf. Wreszinski's (1936, p. 40 IIa [pl. 21]) remarks. Smith's (1946, pp. 324–35, pl. 57c) comments, including a list of parallels of frontal representations, are also pertinent.

knee areas seem almost too thin to be in profile, and no outward bulge or kneecap modeling is present. On the other hand, the shins bulge disproportionately to either side, suggesting a profile view. This fact is further enhanced by the profile rendering of the splayed feet, such that except for the knees, Redi-nes resembles a typical profile view from the kilt downward. No toes are indicated.

We come now to the interpretation of this frontal figure of Redi-nes. Two interrelated questions worth asking here are: 1) What is the function of the figure? and 2) Is motion indicated, and if so, to what purpose and in what direction? As far as the first question is concerned, Smith (1946, p. 190, pl. 57) noted that the figure most likely represents an imitation of a statue standing in the back of the niche.²³ Smith (1960, p. 63) also stated that it “is really a cheap imitation of those false doors which have a statue of the owner standing in the inner niche as though issuing from the tomb.” While Redi-nes’ figure does not stand on a base (a common feature used to indicate statuary), it most likely does represent a statue. One clue that points to this conclusion is the appearance in his hands of the rounded elements that are usually seen on three-dimensional statues. However, there seems to be some discrepancy between false door statues and niche statues, as well as between figures that stand with both feet together and those that stride with left foot advanced.²⁴ To which camps does our figure of Redi-nes, with its unusual splayed feet, belong?

While there are several examples of statues issuing forth from statue niches, there seem to be very few that appear in the central niche of actual false doors. Usually, this area is left blank, or occasionally filled with a rightward-facing inscription or (less frequently) figure carved in relief (see below for more on rightward dominance).²⁵ Statue niches that are not themselves false doors may show the figure either standing or striding. Examples of such statue niches in which the figure strides with left foot advanced may be found in the court of the Giza mastaba of Nefer-bau-Ptah (G 6010; see fig. 4.15),²⁶ and in the Saqqara mastaba of Mereruka (see Simpson 1978, p. 156; Eggebrecht 1984, p. 309; Málek 1986, p. 108). Statue niches that show the deceased standing with both feet together include those in the Giza

23. The figure is not included in Eaton-Krauss 1984.

24. One should bear in mind that the following discussion refers only to engaged statues, not “free-standing” serdab statues. For a discussion of the representation of feet in Egyptian art, see Russmann 1980.

25. For examples of rightward-facing inscriptions carved in the central panel of false doors, see Junker 1943, p. 239, fig. 101 (Ny-ankh-nemty); idem 1950, p. 172, fig. 78 (In-kaef). Rightward-facing figures may be found in Junker 1934, p. 182, fig. 28 (Seshat-hotep); idem 1938, p. 133, fig. 16 (Kai); and Cherpion 1989, pls. 4, 24, 29. Rightward-facing figures and inscriptions are present on the false doors of Nikaure (CG 1414) and Ika (JE 72201); cf. Saleh and Sourouzian 1987, cats. 57–58. A full range of false doors may be found in Moussa and Altenmüller 1971, pls. 29 (tomb owner and son face each other), 32 (rightward facing text, and rightward-facing female figure of Meret-it-es), 36 (rightward-facing figure of Wer-bau), and 39 (mother Sen-itef with son Ny-kau-Ptah, both facing rightward). For an unusual carving of a rightward-facing *ka*-priest in the central niche of the false door with both arms raised to support a basket of offerings, see Hassan 1936, p. 91, fig. 94, pl. 27; idem 1944, p. 152.

26. This tomb is scheduled for publication, along with three other major tombs of the G 6000 cemetery, by Kent Weeks in the Giza Mastabas Series.

mastabas of Yasen, Qar, Idu, Meresankh III, and Kaherptah.²⁷ Although there are doubtless others, only four false doors have turned up in a preliminary search by this writer showing a statue in the central panel. One is BM 1165, a standing figure belonging to one Ba-teti.²⁸ Another standing figure appears in the Saqqara tomb of Iteti (see Murray, 1905, pl. 19; Westendorf 1968, p. 65 [color photograph]). Two other statues are mentioned by Selim Hassan (1941, pp. 110, 152 [Sed-hotep and Khor-tjemat]) but are not illustrated. Unusual cases of false door statuary include the well-known bust of Idu with outstretched



Figure 4.15. Striding Statue in the Western Wall of the Outer Court of the Mastaba of Nefer-bau-Ptah (G 6010; Museum Expedition Photograph A 7963; March 28, 1938). Courtesy of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

27. For Yasen (G 2196), see Simpson 1980, p. 19, pls. 41b, 42a–c, fig. 28; for Qar and Idu (G 7101–7102), see idem 1976, pls. 6b, 9b, 11a, 21–23, figs. 2, 4, 10; for Meresankh III (G 7530–7540), see Dunham and Simpson 1974, pls. 6, 11; for Kaherptah, see Kendall 1981, pp. 104–14.

28. James 1961, p. 4, pl. 4 (the drawing appears to indicate that the figure strides with left leg advanced, but it actually stands with both feet together; this drawing is also illustrated in Wiebach 1981, fig. 4b).

arms,²⁹ and the two standing statues and bust (in place of a tablet scene) of Neferseshemtah from Saqqara (see Schäfer 1974, pl. 31; Fischer 1986, pl. 26).

Up to this point we have determined that representations of figures carved in the central panel of the false door are extremely rare, and those of three-dimensional statues are rarer still.³⁰ The only useful examples of statues that our cursory survey provided were the standing figures of Ba-teti and Iteti. Should Redi-nes be understood then as striding, as issuing forth from the tomb as does Mereruka? Or has he already “arrived,” and does he merely stand in the land of the living? This question might be rephrased: Do Redi-nes’ splayed feet bear (cultic) significance for the pose of the figure, or do they simply represent a somewhat awkward solution to an Egyptian experiment in representational perspective? The standing parallels in the tomb of Iteti and the false door of Ba-teti mentioned above might support the latter interpretation for a standing figure, with the splayed feet forced by conventions of symmetry. It would seem, then, that Redi-nes is not temporarily leaving the land of the dead to partake of the offerings left before the niche in the land of the living, but has in fact “already arrived,” and stands before the offerings.

Schäfer noted that the figure of Redi-nes “is evidently meant to serve as a substitute for semi-sculpture. It is by no means a great work of art, and the full views of feet spread sideways have a particularly unfortunate effect” (Schäfer 1974, p. 205, with sketch of Redi-nes in fig. 206). Schäfer goes on to use this figure as the exception proving the rule that most sideways-facing figures in the central niche, and indeed all representations that “interact” with a viewer, are to be understood as directly facing the viewer in reality. Thus such profile views as the wooden reliefs of Hesy-re (CG 1427 [= JE 28504] Schäfer 1974, pls. 1, 14–15; Saleh and Sourouzian 1987, cat. 21; Wood 1978, pp. 9–24; Harris 1966, pl. 1), or the central figure on the false doors of Nikaure or Ika in Cairo (Saleh and Sourouzian 1987, cats. 57–58 [CG 1414 and JE 72201, respectively]), are to be taken as frontal figures.

Fischer has discussed the Egyptian preference for the dominance of rightward orientation. This preference comes from early writing systems (not limited merely to Egypt) where the majority of right-handed people began writing on the side where their writing hand was located (Fischer 1977, pp. 6–8; see also now van Sommers 1989). The penchant for rightward orientation soon carried over from the writing system to all artistic representations, unless the factors, to use Fischer’s terminology, of confrontation, symmetry, or concordance were present to warrant a reversal (Fischer 1977, pp. 9–47). In the case of Redi-nes’ false door, symmetry accounts for the (typical) reversal of the two leftward-looking figures on the right inner jamb, as well as the reversed inscriptions on that whole side of the niche. In most false doors that bear a figure in the central niche, the rightward dominance is in evidence

29. Simpson 1976, pl. 29 (showing the offering slab still in place), figs. 12, 40; for a color illustration see also Málek 1986, p. 109 (minus the offering slab before the figure). This may well be the pose once held by the bust of prince Ankh-haf, which is now in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (MFA 27.442); cf. Bolshakov 1991, pp. 4–14.

30. Hassan (1941, p. 131) notes that in the Fourth Dynasty only two of his own excavated false doors and seven out of fifty-two excavated by others bear central niche decoration; in the Fifth Dynasty three out of one hundred forty-six of his own excavated doors, and twenty-one out of eighty-eight excavated by others bear central niche decoration (p. 152).

(Saleh and Sourouzian 1987, cats. 57–58 [CG 1414 and JE 72201, respectively]). This writer was able to find only one exception, the false door of Nisukedu discovered by Junker at Giza (see fig. 4.16; Junker 1943, p. 245, fig. 104, pl. 23d).



Figure 4.16. False Door of Nisukedu with Central Figure and Inscriptions
Oriented to the Left (from Junker 1943, fig. 104)

In conclusion then, Redi-nes' central figure is a frontal representation of a statue that most likely stands rather than strides in the false door niche. We seem to have an ancient experiment toward a more literal interpretation of the full frontal representation, a representation normally indicated in Egyptian art by a rightward-facing figure. In terms of the technical execution of the figure, we may have a case of circular influence: when Redi-nes made the unique decision to show a (typically frontally intended) figure frontally for a change, the primary influence on the rendering was the *rightward* striding relief figure. This accounts for the unusual combination of views of carved body parts that seem to jump back and forth between rightward and frontal views (e.g., knees versus shins, exterior torso outline versus chest). The representation of the feet posed the only serious problem, because the artist apparently hesitated to let one overlap the other, and yet would have had to splay the

legs in an altogether too awkward and asymmetrical fashion to achieve the striding effect found in most typical relief figure carvings (and the walking legs hieroglyph Δ).

Whatever the correct interpretation of the figure might be, Redi-nes' experiment in frontality was destined to be short-lived. It must be relegated to the category of discontinued representational techniques, along with examples such as the Third Dynasty figures of Sepa with staff carved vertically along the arm (Smith 1981, p. 68, fig. 57; idem 1946, pl. 4c; Ziegler 1990, p. 24), the inlaid paste decoration of the Fourth Dynasty tomb of Nefermaat and Atet at Medum (Porter and Moss 1934, tomb 16, pp. 92–94 [references]), and the semi-squatting Sixth Dynasty statue pose of Niankhre (Aldred 1968, pl. 49; idem 1980, p. 103, fig. 62; Vandier 1958, pl. 21.1; Russmann and Finn 1989, no. 12, pp. 34–35). As for the reasons for his experiment, we can only speculate whether the impetus came from him directly, from his craftsmen, or from his pocketbook. Perhaps his finances played the deciding role, and the figure should, as Smith once suggested, be taken as a cheap substitute for a three-dimensional sculpture. The archaeological context might well bear this point out. The tomb is a minor, intrusive burial in a street of the Western Cemetery, its false door niche is quite modest in size, and very few objects survived to be discovered with the burial.

THE DATE OF THE TOMB

It remains only to mention a possible redating of the tomb of Redi-nes. While Brunner (1965, pl. 3) and Wreszinski (1936, p. 39) originally assigned the tomb to the Fifth Dynasty, most writers since have dated the false door to the Sixth Dynasty.³¹ Unfortunately, detailed examination of the cemetery en echelon remains to be undertaken, so the surrounding mastabas, which range from the Fourth to Sixth Dynasties, are of little concrete assistance here. Nor is the form of the false door by itself (e.g., number of lintels, jambs, etc.) particularly useful, as Wiebach (1981, pp. 20–21) has noted, contrary to the comments of Rusch (1923, pp. 101–24; cf. Cherpion 1989, pp. 70–72; Haeny, "Scheintür," *LÄ V*, cols. 563–74). Cherpion, however, has assembled several criteria for the dating of Old Kingdom mastabas, several of which are present on Redi-nes' false door. Most of these criteria date to the first half of the Fifth Dynasty, focusing on the reign of Neuserre. For our purposes, her criteria (several of which relate to the tablet scene of Redi-nes seated at table) include: a stool without back or cushion (*critère 1*) and showing bull, rather than lion, legs (*critère 10*); the form of the loaves upon the offering table (*critère 16*); the form of the table set on the jar stand (*critère 24*); the *sekhem*-scepter without a papyrus umbel (standing figure on the left inner jamb, difficult to determine due to damage to the stone; *critère 41*); and the presence of a figure in the central niche of the door (*critère 50*).³² All of these factors may eventually vindicate the dates assigned by Brunner and Wreszinski and warrant a redating of the tomb from the Sixth Dynasty back to the middle of the Fifth Dynasty.

31. For a Sixth Dynasty dating, see Smith 1946, p. 190; Porter and Moss 1974, p. 145. Schäfer (1974, p. 205) merely refers to the piece as Old Kingdom.

32. Cherpion 1989, pp. 25–84. On the form of the bread loaves, see also Worsham 1979, pp. 7–10.

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