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ANDREY O. BOLSHAKOV

Some Notes  
on the Reliefs of Jj-nfr.t  
(Karlsruhe)

Mournful is the destiny of many Egyptian monuments - they were either crashed and sold in parts by native robbers or excavated and dismantled by the scholars of the last century who were interested first of all in spectacular finds and neglected the exact fixation of an archaeological complex. As a result the museums throughout the world possess a lot of still undated fragments of unknown provenance. It is just the case with the reliefs from the Old Kingdom mastaba of Jj-nfr.t kept in Badisches Landesmuseum Karlsruhe. The only information on this tomb is that it was built of crude brick and was situated near the pyramid of Mn-k<sup>3</sup>.w-r<sup>c</sup>(w) /Wiedemann, Pörtner, 1906, S.1; Schürmann, 1983, S.7/. The reliefs were published at the very beginning of the century /Wiedemann, Pörtner,

1906, Taf.I-VI/, but the quality of the plates leaves much to be desired whereas the commentary is rather brief and insignificant. That is why the reliefs didn't rank in egyptology as high as they deserved. Recently the reliefs were re-edited in photographs and linedrawings by Schürmann /1983/, who also made the reconstruction of their arrangement in the tomb and gave the new dating of the monument. Unfortunately, for many reasons his commentary is inadequate <sup>1</sup> and some of his conclusions are to be reconsidered or made more precise.

The main problem is the reconstruction of the decoration system of the tomb. The Karlsruhe Museum possesses a number of blocks with entrance reliefs and the reliefs of three walls of some inner chamber. The representations on them are as follows:

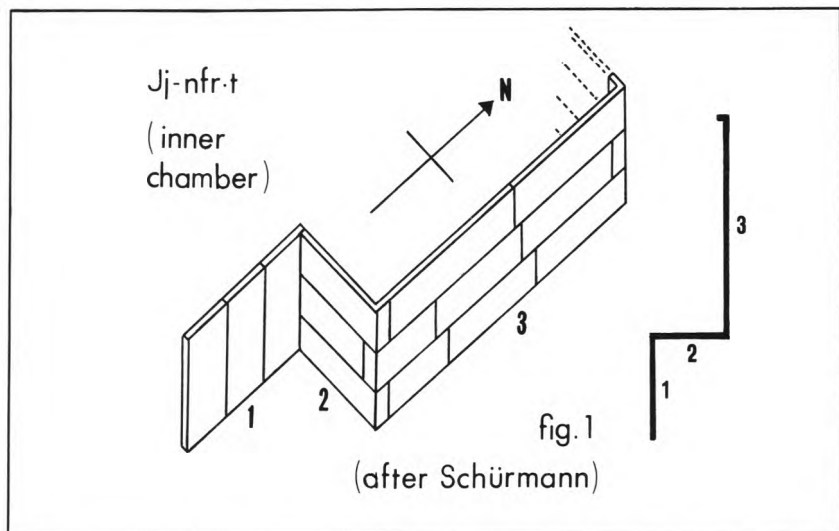
Wall 1. False-door and attendant pictures of Jj-nfr.t and his wife standing and of their children and Ka-priests bringing offerings.

Wall 2. Jj-nfr.t at a table, list of offerings, priestly service and bringing cattle.

Wall 3. Jj-nfr.t observing marsh-scenes, baking, brewing and cooking meat.

Entrance jambs 4ab. Jj-nfr.t standing and his Ka-priests with offerings.

<sup>1</sup> For example, the author gives a lame account of the genesis of the false-door, as if it were derived from "Opferplatte" of Dyn.IV /S.18/; he supposes the ritual of "taking away the footprints" to have been performed not after the offering rites, but before them, that has no confirmation /S.23/; he names the word "serdab" Arab while it is Persian in origin /S.8/ etc.



Entrance lintel 5. The offering-formula and the representation of Jj-nfr.t and his wife sitting.

Most important for the reconstruction of the reliefs' arrangement is the fact that the end blocks of wall 3 and the far right blocks of wall 2 are L-shaped in cross-section (see fig.1). Thus walls 2 and 3 were doubtless joined and had to form a projecting corner. On these grounds Schürmann proposed the reconstruction presented in fig.1 - walls 2 and 3 are joined constructively while walls 1 and 2 have not such a junction, but the presence of the offering-list on wall 2 makes it reasonable to suppose the false-door to be nearly. Unfortunately, it is impossible to determine the plan of the chamber in that way, but according to Schürmann's reconstruction (if the orientation of the false-door is standard) wall 3 is doubtless to be the west one and the chamber is to be regarded as a

chapel.

In this case, however, it is striking that the marsh-scenes are represented on the west wall of the chapel while their normal location is the east wall /Bolshakov, 1986, p. 113-115/. The rules of the arrangement of the representations are very strict since they reflect the certain ideas of the Ka-Double /Bolshakov, 1986, p.98-108/; thus every departure from the norm is to be investigated particularly. So either we are dealing with the unique, next to impossible, exception to the rules of the pictorial decoration of the tomb, or Schürmann's reconstruction is wrong. And though we can not completely deny the former, most probable is the latter. This statement can be confirmed by the possibility of two other variants of reconstruction.

#### Variant A.

The contiguity of walls 1 and 2 postulated by Schürmann is based solely on the necessity of the false-door and the offering-list being close to each other, that can be attained only in the way proposed. But well-known are some Giza chapels with the offering-lists being far from the false-door - on the east wall <sup>2</sup> or on the entrance thickness <sup>3</sup> /see Bolshakov, 1986, Tbl.I/. It gives us the right to separate walls 2 and 3 from wall 1 and to dispose them in

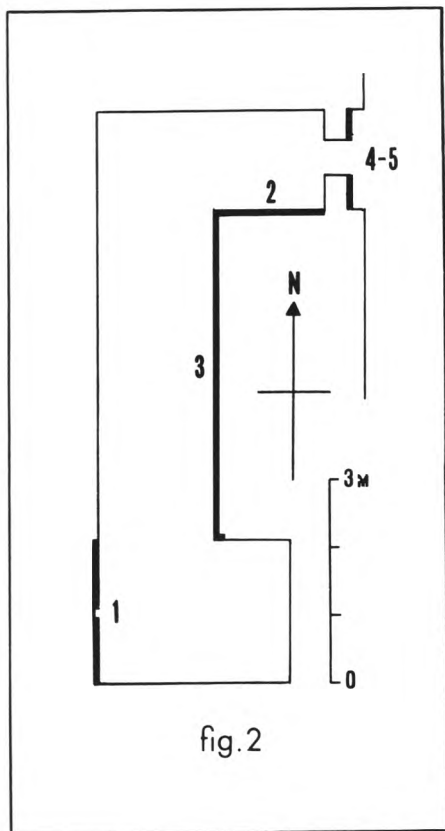
<sup>2</sup> K<sup>2</sup>(.j)-nfr(.w) G 2150 /Reisner, 1942, fig.260/;

Sšm(.j)-nfr(.w) G 4940 = LG 45 /LD II, Bl.28/.

<sup>3</sup> H<sup>c</sup>(j).f-hw(j).f-w(j) I G 7140 /Simpson, 1978, fig. 28-29/; Mr(j)-jb(.j) G 2100-I-annexe /LD II, Bl.22ab/;

K<sup>2</sup>(.j)-nfr(.w) G 2150 /Reisner, 1942, fig.261/;

K<sup>2</sup>(.j)-n(j)-n(j)-sw.t I G 2155 /Giza II, Abb.15-16/.



space in the way of transforming wall 3 into the east one. Respectively wall 2 turns to form some kind of a niche, most probably the entrance thickness. Another niche of uncertain dimensions is to be located to the south of wall 3.

Corridor north-south chapels with a niche in the south end of the east wall are known at Giza,<sup>4</sup> that allows us to give a reconstruction presented in fig.2 (one more or

several false-doors could be incorporated into the west wall besides the false-door 1).

#### Variant B.

The mastaba of Jj-nfr.t can be a multiple-roomed one, and thus walls 2 and 3 joined as they are can derive from

<sup>4</sup> In brick mastabas: cnh /Giza V, Abb.43/; S 4445 /Giza V, Abb.52/; cnh.w /Giza V, Abb.53/, S 8/82 /Giza VI, Abb.59-60/; Mnj /Giza IX, Abb.65/. In stone mastabas: Dmg /Giza V, Abb.56/; Hw(j).f-w(j)-snb(.w) I /Giza VII, Abb.43/.



some other chamber, not from the chapel with false-door 1. True, it is impossible to make any reconstruction of the plan in this case, and the offering-list outside the chapel is rather unusual, but it seems, however, that we have some argument for multiple-roomed character of the tomb of Jj-nfr.t.

The length of lintel 5 is approximately 120 cm, while each of jambs 4ab is 40 cm wide, that means the breadth of entrance is about 40 cm /see Schürmann, 1983, fig.18/. It is obviously too narrow, and we can suppose the lintel to be derived from some other entrance than the jambs.

Indeed, the offering-formula on the lintel is addressed to the owner's wife Mr(j).t-(j)t(w).s, not to himself, his name being inscribed at the side of the main inscription.

There is a false-door of certain Mr(j).t-(j)t(w).s from Giza /see BM Guide 1909, p.4, No 7/ in the British Museum (BM 1228) /BM Hiero.Texts I<sup>2</sup>, pl.XIII-2/. The names of two her daughters are Zšzš.t and Htp-hr.s, while the names of Jj-nfr.t's daughters inscribed on the Karlsruhe false-door are Zšzš.t and Nb.t /Schürmann, 1983, fig.4, 19/. Such a coincidence of the names of the mother and of one of the daughters is enough to identify this Mr(j).t-(j)t(w).s with the wife of Jj-nfr.t. James didn't make this identification, however, and even cast some doubts on the provenance of the London false-door from Giza /BM Hiero.Texts I<sup>2</sup>, p.13/ but Málek was quite sure including it in one group with the reliefs of Jj-nfr.t /PM III<sup>2</sup>, p.299/. I think the last point of view is correct.

Of course, the London false-door could be a part of the west wall of the chapel of Jj-nfr.t according to variant A. But it is smaller than the false-door of Jj-nfr.t while the representations and inscriptions covering its surface are of much poorer quality. These facts allow us to suppose that it was situated in the other chapel intended for the cult of Mr(j).t-(j)t(w).s.

### Dating and choosing the reconstruction variant

Both variants of the reconstruction being hypothetical can be confirmed only by an archaeological discovery of the tomb. Nevertheless, the possibility of their existence proves by itself that the Karlsruhe reliefs are to be interpreted with much care; at any rate it is useless to treat them as a whole. Yet let us try to make clear the most acceptable variant.

Variant A permits us to reconstruct the arrangement of marsh-scenes that is not contradictory to the norm. At the same time the type of the chapel reconstructed has some similarities with brick Giza mastabas. On the other hand, this variant has some weak points. First, only ideographic and early short offering-lists are observed on the entrance thickness, whereas Jj-nfr.t has a developed late compartment list. Secondly, the representation of the tomb owner at the table placed on the thickness is to be turned with his face to the entrance, while in our reconstruction the orientation is reversal. Finally, the entrance turns out to be too narrow.

Variant B settles all these contradictions, but only

owing to the assumption of a multiple-roomed character of the mastaba, that is very probable, but is not directly proved.

Thus we can not show preference to any variant of the reconstruction. Some complementary and even decisive arguments can be given by an exact dating of the mastaba, but it is embarrassing by itself. Therefore we are to turn our attention to the problems of dating.

Four different datings have been published by now:

- Reign of Mn-k<sup>3</sup>.w-r<sup>c</sup>(w) /Wiedemann, Pörtner, 1906, S.9/;
- Middle of Dyn.V /Schürmann, 1983, S.14/;
- Reign of Mr(j)-n(j)-r<sup>c</sup>(w) - early reign of Pjpp II /Harpur, 1987, p.265/;
- Dyn.V-VI /PM III<sup>2</sup>, p.298/.

The first dating can be rejected doubtlessly since it is based only on the bygone belief that any mention of the royal name in the titles of the private person is sufficient for ascribing the tomb to the reign of the king in question. The fourth opinion expressed by Málek is so indistinct that it has no positive significance. But then the positions of Schürmann and Harpur give the limits within which the dating can vary.

If the dating by Harpur is reliable, it correlates well with our reconstruction variant A - the chapels with a niche in the southern part of the east wall are characteristic just for the late Old Kingdom; at least their age should not be earlier than middle Dyn.VI. But what are her arguments for the late dating ?

An important stylistic feature supporting Harpur's dating is the representation of the wife of Jj-nfr.t squatting with one knee raised /Schürmann, 1983, Abb.6ab/ - the posture that appears, in her opinion, only in early reign of Pjppj II /Harpur, 1987, p.139/. Her summary table /Harpur, 1987, p.335, Tbl.6.17 / seems to confirm this conclusion - all the tombs showing such a posture are not earlier than the date supposed. But only in two Giza tombs (excluding Jj-nfr.t's) the posture is presented, that is quite insufficient for a definite inference, while the rest of the monuments are located in the provinces, where the new trends were late in comparison with the Memphite region. Thus this feature is not a sufficient proof for the dating supposed by Harpur. We can easily find a number of indications that are characteristic for Dyn.V, not for Dyn.VI.

Most of them belong to the false-door typology:

- The false-door of Jj-nfr.t has no cavetto cornice and torus moulding that come into being in the early - middle Dyn.V and are the norm under Dyn.VI /Wiebach, 1981, S.133-5; Strudwick, 1985, p.15/;

- The false-door of Jj-nfr.t has only one pair of jambs with large representations of the tomb owner on them. It is typical for Dyn.IV - the first half of Dyn.V, while three pairs of jambs with small representations are the standard for Dyn.VI (under Ttj - Pjppj II) /Strudwick, 1985, p.17, 35/;

- All the inscriptions and representations on the false-door of Jj-nfr.t are carved in raised relief that disappears at the end of Dyn.V. All well-dated false-doors of Dyn.VI are decorated with sunk relief that was in use from

N(j)-wsr-r<sup>c</sup>(w) /Strudwick, 1985, p.24/.

These are serious arguments against Harpur's dating. A number of arguments of the same trend, however, are gathered even in the book written by her, though she doesn't regard them as such. The reliefs of Jj-nfr.t show clapnet-scene, dragnet-scene and fording of cattle. All these topics are really seen in the tombs of Dyn.VI, but much more common they are for Dyn.V /Harpur, 1987, p.339, Tbl.6.19; p.241-2, Tbl.6.20; p.248-9, Tbl.6.25/. Thus the presence of these scenes is not to be considered as a characteristic of Dyn.VI.

A very serious dating criterion is the absence of the name of Osiris in the offering-formula on lintel 5, that is rather strange for Dyn.VI, but is quite natural under Dyn.V.

Each of these features is not a determinant by itself, but as a whole they are an incontrovertible evidence against the dating of the mastaba of Jj-nfr.t the time of Dyn.VI and, respectively, against our reconstruction variant A. By the way, the tomb owner is not represented on the thickness of the entrance to the chapel after early Dyn.V /Bolshakov, 1986, p.102, Tbl.I; p.121/<sup>5</sup> and thus variant A combining the early location of this scene with the late type of the chapel is to be rejected as contradictory.

So we are to choose the arrangement variant B and to approximate to Schürmann's dating. But his opinion needs

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<sup>5</sup> It is true for one-roomed tombs and for the interior entrance to the chapel in multiple-roomed mastabas. On the thickness of the entrance from the open to the multiple-roomed tombs the representations of the owner at the table are to be found even at the end of Dyn.V /Harpur, 1987, p.53/.

some specification:

- The scene of the priestly service is shown in the late iconography that appears in Giza for the first time in the tomb of N(j)-m<sup>c</sup>.t-[r<sup>c</sup>(w)], Hermitage 18123 /Bolshakov, 1985, p.4, fig.1; p.9/ or of R<sup>c</sup>(w)-wr(.w) II, G 5470 =LG 32 /LD II, Bl.84; Giza III, Abb.46, S.108/ in the period from the middle of Dyn.V to the reign of N(j)-wsr-r<sup>c</sup>(w) /Bolshakov, 1985, p.9-10/ or Jzzj /Reisner, 1942, p.370/.

- The name of Osiris appears in the private Giza tombs only at the turn of Dyn.V /Giza IV, S.18/; in Saqqara mastabas it occurs a little earlier, may be under Jzzj /Barta, 1968, S.15/, but at any rate after N(j)-wsr-r<sup>c</sup>(w) (it is still absent in such an important tomb as N(j)-<sup>c</sup>nh-hnm(w) and Hnm(w)-htp(.w) /Moussa, Altenmüller, 1977/).<sup>6</sup>

- The festivals are listed in the offering-formula in a chronological order (the New Year, Thoth, the First Day of the Year), as it was common under Dyn.IV /Barta, 1968, S.10/. Though it can appear even under Dyn.VI, along with other features it can be regarded as an argument for the early dating.

Thus the tomb of Jj-nfr.t (reconstruction B) is to be dated the second part of Dyn.V, most probably the reigns of N(j)-wsr-r<sup>c</sup>(w) - Jzzj.

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<sup>6</sup> Harpur /1987, p.35/, as well as Hassan /1950, p.64-5/ dates the first mention of Osiris the reigns of Špss-k<sup>2</sup>.f - Wsr-k<sup>2</sup>.f. I hope to discuss the problem elsewhere.

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