

Scribe of Justice

Egyptological Studies in honour of Shafik Allam



Edited by
Zahi A. Hawass,
Khaled A. Daoud
& Ramadan B. Hussein

CAHIER N° 42



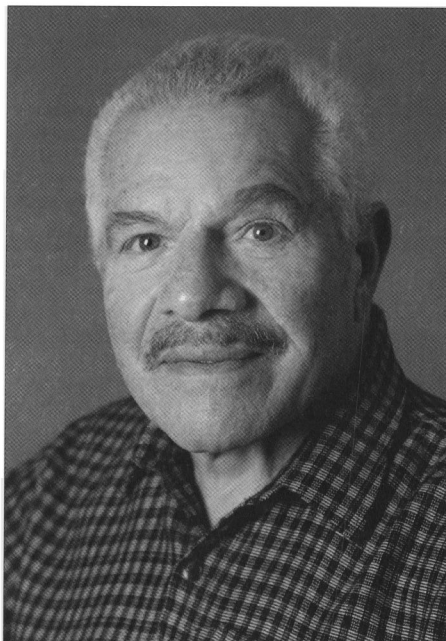
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Cover Illustration:

The Biographical Text of Ka-pu-nesut Kai
in the Western Field at Giza.
(by Ahmed Ehab 'Photographer')



Prof. SHAFIK ALLAM

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SUPPLÉMENT AUX ANNALES DU SERVICE DES
ANTIQUITÉS DE L'ÉGYPTE

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Ministry of State for Antiquities

LE CAIRE 2011

Graphic Designer
Magdy Ezz Eldin

Director of Printing
Mostafa Aly

(CASA E 42) 2011

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DAR EL KUTUB NO. 13490/2011
ISBN. 978-977-704-693-0
ISSN. 1687-4951

Printed in Egypt by MSA Press 2011

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Tabula Gratuluria</i>	9
HAWASS Zahi	
<i>PREFACE</i>	11
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	13
HAIKAL Fayza	
<i>SHAFIK ALLAM</i>	
<i>A TRIBUTE TO SHAFIK ALLAM</i>	15
ABDELRAHIEM Mohamed	
<i>DIE WÜRFELFIGUR DES SCHEUNENVORSTEHERS</i>	
<i>AMENEMHAT, GENANNT JBJ (KAIRO, JE 37355)</i>	41
AFIFI Mahmoud	
<i>KING USERKARE</i>	55
ALTENMÜLLER Hartwig	
<i>DIE FIKTION VON SETHNACHT ALS DEM SOHN SETHOS' II.</i>	59
BARDOT Jacques and DARMON Francine	
<i>THE CAMOUFLAGED WALLS IN THE HORIZONTAL GALLERY AND</i>	
<i>GRAND GALLERY OF THE GREAT PYRAMID OF KHUFU</i>	71
BAREŠ Ladislav	
<i>ROYAL NAMES IN THE LATE PERIOD SHAFT TOMBS AT ABUSIR</i>	95
BRESCIANI Edda	
<i>A RE-READING OF PAPYRUS BERLIN 3024, 68-85</i>	99
BREYER Francis	
<i>ḏd rn m rꜥ n(.i) rmꜥ(.w) 'DER NAME BLEIBT IM MUNDE DER MENSCHEN'</i>	103
BROVARSKI Edward	
<i>Ỉpt, 'INDIRECT ACCESS APPROACH (TO AN EDIFICE)'</i>	111

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECKER Wolfgang <i>ZUSCHAUER BEIM ALTÄGYPTISCHEN SPORT</i>	119
EBEID Mahmoud <i>N-tr.t (m-dr.t) IN THE DEMOTIC INSCRIPTIONS ON THE IBIS COFFINS AND SARCOPHAGI FROM THE GALLERIES OF THE TUNA EL-GEBEL NECROPOLIS</i>	127
ELNASSARI Ahmad <i>THREE COPTIC STELAE FROM MIDDLE EGYPT</i>	145
EL SAYED Ramadan <i>TROIS MONUMENTS DORÉS AU MUSÉE DU CAIRE</i>	157
GAMER-WALLERT Ingrid <i>DAS VERHÄLTNIS VON TT 36 ZU TT 34 IM ASASIF</i>	167
HAIKAL Fayza <i>ECHOES FROM ANCIENT EGYPT</i>	179
HAWASS Zahi <i>THE BIOGRAPHICAL TEXT OF KA-PU-NESUT KAI IN THE WESTERN FIELD AT GIZA</i>	191
HOFFMEIER James K. <i>DEITIES OF THE EASTERN FRONTIER</i>	197
HUSSEIN Ramadan B. <i>NOTES ON THE SAITE COPIES OF PYRAMID TEXTS SPELLS IN THE MEMPHITE AND HELIOPOLITAN SHAFT-TOMBS</i>	217
KANAWATI Naguib <i>REMNI OF SAQQARA: HIS DECORATED BURIAL CHAMBER AND UNUSUAL BACKGROUND</i>	235

TABLE OF CONTENTS

KESSLER Dieter

*BEMERKUNGEN ZUR TEMPEL-
UND GOTTESGERICHTSBARKEIT IM NEUEN REICH* 249

KURTH Dieter

VERSCHLÜSSELTE KENNZEICHNUNGEN DES GERECHTFERTIGTEN TOTEN . 265

MARTIN Cary J., SMITH H. S. and DAVIES Sue

*TWO DEMOTIC LETTERS FROM
THE SACRED ANIMAL NECROPOLIS, NORTH SAQQARA* 273

MORENZ Ludwig D.

*HIMMEL – STERNE – KUHKOPF
DIE VOR-ÄGYPTISCHE GESCHICHTE EINER GÖTTIN* 293

MYŚLIWIEC Karol

SILLY JOKES OF A MASTER'S DEPUTY (SIXTH DYNASTY, SAQQARA) 313

NASR EL-DINE Hassan

UN SCARABÉE INÉDIT DU ROI AMENHOTEP III À TOUNA EL-GEBEL 327

RADWAN Ali

AHMOSE-NEFERTARI ALS SISTRUMSPIELERIN 337

محمود الحمراوى

تاريخ أتريبو (يثرب) القديم من خلال المصادر الأثرية والكلاسيكية والقرآن الكريم ١٤-١

Tabula Gratoluria

Abdelrahman Ali
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THE BIOGRAPHICAL TEXT OF KA-PU-NESUT KAI IN THE WESTERN FIELD AT GIZA

Zahi HAWASS

I would like to dedicate this article to Shafik Allam who devoted his career to Egyptology. He lived in Germany for most of his life, but always remembered his homeland. I thought it is important that the SCA honor him and, therefore, I am pleased to present both this festschrift and my article to him.

The Mastaba of Ka-pu-nesut Kai was found during the excavation of the SCA in the Western Field at Giza on January 25, 1992 (Fig. 1).¹ The mastaba is rectangular in shape. Lengthwise, there are six courses of limestone blocks remaining. The tomb is divided into two sections. The northern section is the largest. It includes four burial shafts. Facing the northernmost burial shaft is a false door (Fig. 2). The southern section contains the offering chapel decorated with beautiful scenes.²

Inscribed on the northern side of the tomb's facade is a very interesting biographical text (Fig. 3).³

Transliteration of the biographical text

1 - [...] Kꜣi

2 - [hm]-nꜥr ḥꜥ f.rꜥ, Kꜣi

3 - hm-nꜥr ỉry-ḥt nswt (?), Kꜣi⁴

4 - ỉr(w) wꜥ.t(i) n.f. ..., Kꜣi

5 - ỉmy-rꜥ hm(w)-kꜣ Kꜣi, ḏd.f: ỉr rmꜥ nb ỉwꜥ.t[ꜣy].sn r mꜣꜣ nn ỉrꜥ.(i) m smt ỉmntt r krs(w).(i) ỉm mrr nswt pw ḏwꜥ.ty.f n.(i) nꜥr ỉm ỉry(i) nw m-ḥnw-ꜥwy⁵ ỉmꜣḥ ḥr nꜥr ḥr nb.ỉ grgw ... ỉr.f

6 - (Across the top of the niched panel) ỉr(w)⁶ ꜥmrrt nb.f m wꜥt.f nbt⁷

7 - hm-nꜥr ḥwfw, ỉry-ḥt nswt (?), Kꜣi

8 - hm-nꜥr ḏd.f rꜥ, ỉry-ḥt nswt (?), Kꜣi

9 - hm-nꜥr snfrw, Kꜣi

10 - n rmꜥ drr m st.f tp-rꜥ(i) n rmꜥ ỉry.n.(i) (?) ḥt r.f ỉrꜥ.ỉ ỉs pw ỉr(w).n.(i), ỉry-ḥt nswt (?)

11 - m ỉšt(i) mꜣꜣ ỉr.n(i) ḥr T ḥnꜣt psn ỉnk ỉr(w) nw m rd.wy(i) m ꜥwy(i) ḏs(i) sk wꜥ ꜥnh.kl, Kꜣi

- 12 - *Kꜣi nbt nfr*,⁸ *Kꜣi in ir(w)-is*⁹ *hrty-ntr*¹⁰ *hmty sš-kdwt ksty*¹¹ *irw nw r-šw ddw(.i) n.sn*
*dd.n.sn wnt-sn htp-w hr.s di.sn 'nh ntr*¹² *hr ntt sn htpw*
- 13 - *Kꜣi, Kꜣi*
- 14 - *Kꜣi, Kꜣi*
- 15 - *Kꜣi, Kꜣi*

Translation of the biographical text

- 1 - [...] Kai
- 2 - The [priest] of Khafre, Kai
- 3 - The priest and custodian of the king's property, Kai
- 4 - who does what is commanded to him, Kai
- 5 - The Overseer of Ka-priests, Kai, he says: as for any person who shall come to see this which I made in the western desert (i.e. necropolis) in order that I might be buried therein. The king shall love him who shall praise god for me therein. I made this by virtue of my honor with god and with my lord so that I might find...
- 6 - who does what his lord loves being everything which he commands
- 7 - The priest of Khufu and custodian of the king's property, Kai
- 8 - The priest of Djedefre and custodian of the king's property, Kai
- 9 - The priest of Sneferu, Kai.
- 10 - There is no man who my utterance drove from his place. There is no man against whom I did a (bad) thing. I made this tomb chamber which I made with
- 11 - my property, truly, which I made for bread, beer, and cakes. I made this (while I was) on my two feet (that is to say alive) with my own two arms, while I was alive, Kai.
- 12 - The cadet Kai (says): It was the tomb-makers, the stone mason, the craftsman, the outline draftsmen and the sculptor who made this in exchange for what was given to them. They said that they were satisfied with it and they gave (the oath) – 'May the god live' - because they were satisfied.
- 13 - Kai, Kai
- 14 - Kai, Kai
- 15 - [K]ai, Kai

Transliteration of the column text

*skd wiꜥ sš 'prw nfr try-ht (?) nswt kꜣ-pw-nswt rn.f nistify*¹³ *m Kꜣi*

Translation of the column text

The oarsman of the boat, the scribe of the crews of cadet(s), and custodian of the king's property, Ka-pu-nesut is his name, who is called Kai.

Transliteration of the text across the top

imy-rꜥ sš(w) prw msw-nswt nswt

Translation of the text across the top

Overseer of the scribes of the house of the king's children, and the king.

Endnotes

- ¹ The story of the excavation began when I planned to publish the tomb of Nisutnefer. The tomb is located to the north of mastaba no. 1828 and to the west of mastabas no. 1830 & 1829 from our excavation. We began to remove the sand around the tomb and found over 60 tombs located under the excavation debris of both George Reisner and Hermann Junker.
The first tomb that we found was the tomb of the dwarf *pr-ny-‘nhw*; see Z. Hawass, 'The statue of the Dwarf *pr-n(i)-‘nh(w)* recently discovered at Giza', in *Festschrift für Werner Kaiser*, MDAIK 47 (1991), 57-62.
- ² Hawass, 'Unique statue from Giza V: The exceptional statue of the priest Kai and his family', in *Studies in Honor of Ali Radwan*, CASAE 34/II (2005), 25-38.
I would like to thank the members of my Egyptian team: Mahmoud Afifi, who assisted me during this excavation, Jihan Abdou el-Rahiem, Eman Rashid, and Amani Omar, our drafts-ladies.
- ³ Many words in this text were difficult to understand. In 1993, after temporarily leaving my job at Giza, I spent six months at UCLA. During this time I discussed with colleagues the translation of two Old Kingdom texts. The first was from the tomb of Mehu and the second was this unique text from the tomb of Kai. By mail and by phone, I was in contact with the great man, Henry Fischer, and with my friend, Ed. Brovarski. They helped me a lot on the translation and the comments of this text. I offer them all my sincere thanks.
- ⁴ There is much debate as to whether this title should be read *iry-ht nswt*, custodian of the king's property, or *rh nswt*, king's acquaintance; see C. M. Firth and B. Gunn, *Teti Pyramid Cemetery*, I (Cairo, 1926), 157, no. 5. On this title, see W. Helck, 'Untersuchungen zu den Beamtentiteln des ägyptischen Alten Reiches', in *ÄgFo* 18 (1954), 26-28; H. Brunner, 'Der Bekannte des Königs', SAK 1 (1974), 55ff; O. D. Berlev, 'A Contemporary of King Sewah-en-re', *JEA* 60 (1974), 109; G. T. Martin, 'Private-Name Seals in the Alnwick Castle Collection', MDAIK 35 (1979), 217, no. 20; M. Bárta, 'The Title 'Property Custodian of the King during the Old Kingdom'', ZÄS 126 (1999), 79-89; H. G. Fischer, *Egyptian Women of the Old Kingdom and of the Heracleopolitan Period* (New York, 2000), 71, no. 176; E. Brovarski, 'Akhmim in the Old Kingdom and First Intermediate Period', in *Mélanges Gamal Eddin Mokhtar*, BdÉ 97/1, 148, no. 129, where the suggestion is made that the reinterpretation of the title might somehow be connected with its all but complete disappearance as a title for provincial officials after Dynasty 5. Also see Fischer, *Dendera in the Third Millennium B.C. down to the Theban Domination of Upper Egypt* (New York, 1968), 11; 69-70.
- ⁵ See E. Edel, *Altägyptische Grammatik*, *Analecta Orientalia* 39 (1964), §800. Fischer reads the sign (Gardiner sign list D 41) 'wy; see *Egyptian Studies III: Varia Nova* (New York, 1996), 180.
- ⁶ The word *irw* does double duty and is read twice in two different directions.
- ⁷ The *nbt* is actually written at the top of line 14, where it intrudes between the name *Kꜥi* at the top of the column and the title *nfr*.
- ⁸ For *nfr* 'recruit, cadet, conscript, young (soldier)', see the references gathered in D. Jones, *An Index of Ancient Egyptian Titles, Epithets and Phrases of the Old Kingdom* (Oxford, 2000), 1807.
- ⁹ For the *ir-Is*, 'tomb maker', see Fischer, 'An Old Kingdom Monogram', ZÄS 93 (1966), 56-69.
- ¹⁰ R. O. Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian* (Oxford, 1962), 204.
- ¹¹ These workmen may be listed in the order of which they worked on the tomb. Certainly, the 'outline draftsman' necessarily drew the designs on the smoothed limestone walls before they were carved by the 'sculptor'. The position of *hmty* in the list of workmen is interesting, since Rosemarie Drenkhahn argues that the craftsmen were unskilled assistants responsible for the preparation of the raw material (either wood or stone), while the final polishing of the statue was done by the *ksty* R. Drenkhahn, *Die Handwerker und ihre Tätigkeit im alten Ägypten* (Wiesbaden, 1976), 60-69; see also M. Eaton-Krauss, *The Representations of Statuary in private Tombs of the Old Kingdom* (Wiesbaden, 1984), 44.
- ¹² For the oath '*nḥ ntr*'; see J. A. Wilson, 'The oath in ancient Egypt', *JNES* 7 (1948), 129-132.
- ¹³ For *nistify(m)*, see A. Erman and H. Grapow, *Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache* II (Leipzig and Berlin, 1926-1963), 204; Edel, *Altägyptische Grammatik*, § 681.

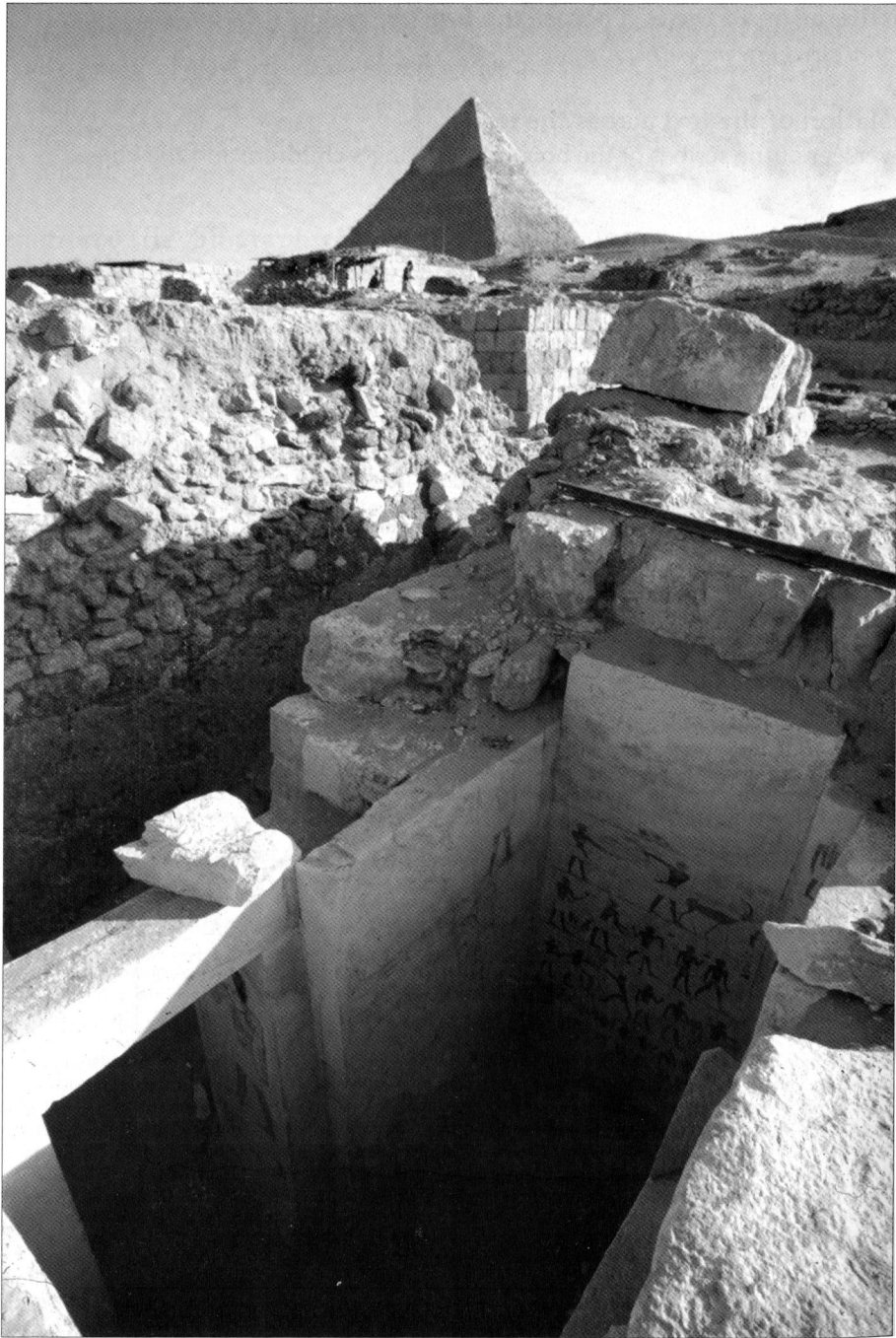


Fig. 1. The Mastaba of Ka-pu-nesut Kai in the Western Field at Giza.



Fig. 2. False door facing the northernmost burial shaft.

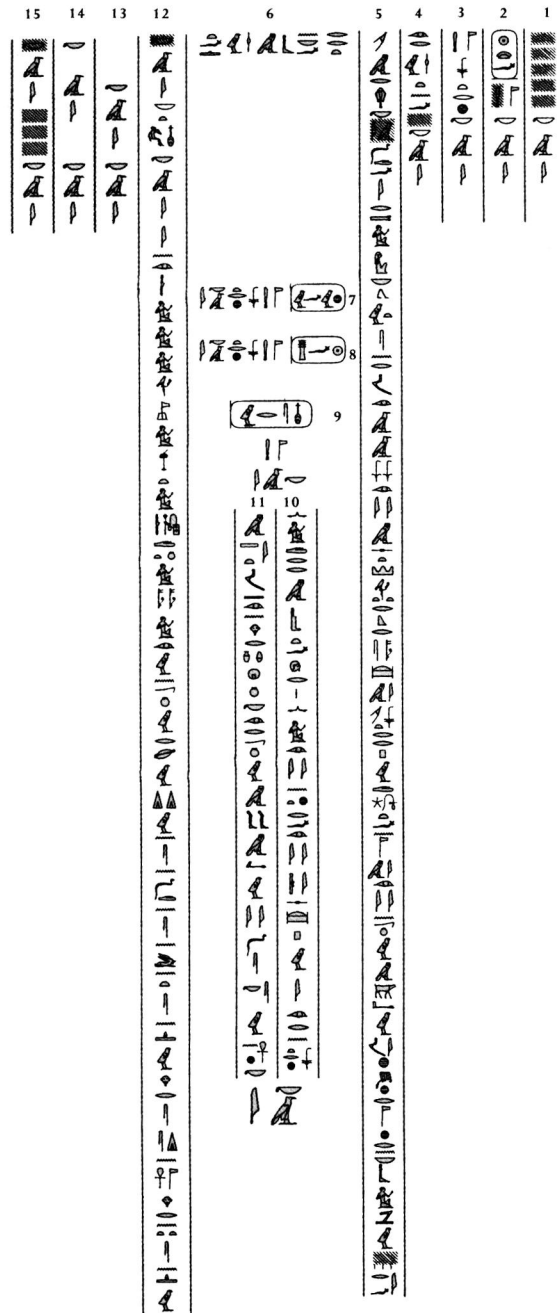


Fig. 3. Biographical text inscribed on the northern side of the tomb's facade.