Offerings to the Discerning Eye

An Egyptological Medley in Honor of Jack A. Josephson

Edited by
Sue H. D’Auria
Culture and History of the Ancient Near East

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Magda Saleh</td>
<td>Preface</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magda Saleh</td>
<td>Jack A. Josephson: A Biographical Narrative</td>
<td>ix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diane Bergman</td>
<td>Bibliography of Jack A. Josephson</td>
<td>xv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Abbreviations</td>
<td></td>
<td>xvii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Illustrations</td>
<td></td>
<td>xxi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matthew Douglas Adams and David O'Connor</td>
<td>The Shunet el-Zebib at Abydos: Architectural Conservation at One of Egypt's Oldest Preserved Royal Monuments</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dieter Arnold</td>
<td>Earthquakes in Egypt in the Pharaonic Period: The Evidence at Dahshur in the Late Middle Kingdom</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dorothea Arnold</td>
<td>Foreign and Female</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kathryn A. Bard and Rodolfo Fattovich</td>
<td>Recent Excavations at the Ancient Harbor of Saww (Mersa/Wadi Gawasis) on the Red Sea</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edward Bleiberg</td>
<td>Reused or Restored? The Wooden Shabti of Amenemhat in the Brooklyn Museum</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrey Bolshakov</td>
<td>Persians and Egyptians: Cooperation in Vandalism?</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bob Brier</td>
<td>The Great Pyramid: The Internal Ramp Theory</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Betsy M. Bryan</td>
<td>Amenhotep III's Legacy in the Temple of Mut</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Günter Dreyer</td>
<td>Eine Statue des Königs Dewen aus Abydos?</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mamdouh Eldamaty</td>
<td>Die leeren Kartuschen von Akhenaten</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard Fazzini</td>
<td>Aspects of the Mut Temple’s Contra-Temple at South Karnak, Part II</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erica Feucht</td>
<td>A God’s Head in Heidelberg</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rita E. Freed</td>
<td>Reconstructing a Statue from a Head</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G.A. Gaballa</td>
<td>The Stela of Djehutynofer, Called Seshu</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ogden Goelet, Jr.</td>
<td>Observations on Copying and the Hieroglyphic Tradition in the Production of the Book of the Dead</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom Hardwick</td>
<td>A Group of Art Works in the Amarna Style</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W. Benson Harer, Jr.</td>
<td>Sexually Transmitted Diseases in Ancient Egypt</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melinda Hartwig</td>
<td>The Tomb of a hity,-', Theban Tomb 116</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zahi Hawass</td>
<td>A Head of Rameses II from Tell Basta</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salima Ikram</td>
<td>A Pasha’s Pleasures: R.G. Gayer-Anderson and his Pharaonic Collection in Cairo</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sameh Iskander</td>
<td>Merenptah’s Confrontations in the Western Desert and the Delta</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T.G.H. James</td>
<td>A Contemplation of the Late Period</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# CONTENTS

Peter Jánosi  
“He is the son of a woman of Ta-Sety...”—The Offering Table of the King’s Mother Nefret (MMA 22.1.21) ........................................ 201

Nozomu Kawai  
Theban Tomb 46 and Its Owner, Ramose .................................. 209

Peter Lacovara  
A Unique Sphinx of Amenhotep II ............................................... 217

Sarwat Okasha  
Rameses Recrowned: The International Campaign to Preserve the Monuments of Nubia, 1959-68 ................................................. 223

Paul F. O’Rourke  
Some Thoughts on τὸ ὀδόρ of Thales and τὸ ἀπειρον of Anaximander ................................................................. 245

William H. Peck  
Mapping the Temple of the Goddess Mut, Karnak: A Basis for Further Exploration ........................................................... 253

Elena Pischikova  
The Dog of Karakhamun .............................................................. 263

Donald B. Redford  
The Second Pylon of the Temple of Ba-neb-djed at Mendes ........ 271

Gerry D. Scott, III  
Four Late Period Sculptures in the San Antonio Museum of Art 277

Hourig Sourouzian  
News from Kom el-Hettan in the Season of Spring 2007 ............... 285

Rainer Stadelmann  
The Prince Kawab, Oldest Son of Khufu ..................................... 295

Paul Edmund Stanwick  
New Perspectives on the Brooklyn Black Head ............................. 301

Emily Teeter  
A “Realistic” Head in the Oriental Institute Museum (OIM 13952) ................................................................. 313

Nancy Thomas  
Transformation of a Royal Head: Notes on a Portrait of Nectanebo I .............................................................. 317

Jacobus van Dijk  
A Cat, a Nurse, and a Standard-Bearer: Notes on Three Late Eighteenth Dynasty Statues .................................................. 321

Kent R. Weeks  
The Theban Mapping Project’s Online Image Database of the Valley of the Kings ......................................................... 333

Christiane Ziegler  
The Tomb of Iahmes, Son of Psamtkisneb, at Saqqara .................. 339

Alain Zivie  
The “Saga” of ‘Aper-El’s Funerary Treasure .................................. 349

Index ................................................................................. 357

Dynasties ...................................................................... 362

Theban Tombs .................................................................. 362

Egyptian Words and Phrases .................................................. 362
The mastaba of prince Kawab is situated in the first row of the Eastern Cemetery at Giza (fig. 1). It takes the first and best place in the four rows of double mastabas directly behind the queens' pyramids, that of the queen mother Hetepheres, and that of queen Meretoytes, most probably Kawab's mother (fig. 2). Therefore, and due to his titles st-niswt smsw and titj-rrjpt, "King's Eldest Son" and "Vizier," Kawab was regarded by scholars as crown prince and designated successor of Khufu.  

The four rows of eight large mastabas of the direct descendants of Khufu, sons and daughters, were constructed as double mastabas; only the enormous mastaba of Ankhhaf, almost certainly also a—younger—son of Khufu—not of Sneferu—who became vizier and master builder of Chephren's pyramid, was built as a single tomb, most probably during the reign of Chephren. These double mastabas conceived for the king's sons and their sister(?)—spouses are an innovation of the court of Sneferu at Meidum. There the princes of primogeniture, Nefermaat and his wife Atet, Rahotep and Nofret, were the first royals in the newly created princely mastaba cemetery to have the status and benefit of this promotion. Not, however, the crown prince. For him no tomb was foreseen. When he died in the time of his father Sneferu at Meidum, he was given a large single mastaba, M17, near the pyramid, without an annex for an unknown spouse. At Dahshur the great mastabas of the first row to the east of the Red Pyramid are too destroyed to allow us to decide whether they were conceived as double mastabas or not. The prince Netjeraperf who had his mastaba tomb in the second row at Dahshur is a king's son, but may be of a secundogeniture, a son of a son of Sneferu, like most probably Iynofer from Dahshur South.  

At Giza the double mastabas of the descendants of Khufu were each built by joining two separate mastabas into one of double size with a continuous casing on the east and west fronts (fig. 3). The cult niches were each cut near the southern corner of the twin mastabas. Thus there is a clear distinction between conventional mastabas, with two niches to the south and to the north, and these twin mastabas. This characteristic architectural feature may well serve as a decisive criterion for the establishment of the genealogy of the early 4th Dynasty. Regrettably it was abandoned in the time of Chephren.  

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2 B. Schmitz, Untersuchungen zum Titel S3-NJ SWT "Königsohn" (Bonn, 1976); Reisner, A History of the Giza Necropolis II, compl. and rev. by W. Stevenson Smith (Cambridge, MA, 1955), 1-12; also Simpson, Mastabas of Kawab, Khaefkhufu I and II; more reserved M. Römer, Zum Problem von Titulatur und Herkunft bei den ägyptischen Königsohnen des Alten Reichs (Bonn, 1977) and "Kronprinz," LA 3, 816.  
4 W.M.F. Petrie, Medum (London, 1892), 11-17.  
5 R. Stadelmann, "Khaefkhufu=Chephren. Beiträge zur Geschichte der 4. Dynastie," SAK 11 (1984), 165-172, and Stadelmann, "Userkaf in Sakkara and Abusir," Archiv Orientalni Supplement IX (2000), 532 n. 14. The objections raised by A. Bolshakov in "Princes who became kings: where are their tombs?" GM 146 (1995), 11-22, are not relevant. His main thesis that the tombs of crown princes were abolished and demolished when they had become kings lacks evidence; neither in the row of large mastabas of the descendants of Snefru at Meidum nor at Dahshur are there any empty spaces; and more evidently in the tomb rows of the family of Khufu at the Eastern Cemetery G 7000 at Giza, there is absolutely no empty space that might attest to contemporary relinquished or destroyed mastabas.  
7 N. Alexanian, Das Grab des Prinzen Netjer-aperef: die Mastaba II/1 in Dahschur, Dahschur 2, AV 56 (Mainz, 1999).  
Kawab’s mastaba has suffered badly from stone looting in later periods. Not only the exterior chapels with their elaborate decoration, but also most of the casing in the niches and on the outer face, have been cut off and torn off for reuse. The general aspect of the destruction of the mastabas of the Eastern Cemetery does not support George Reisner’s interpretation of a dynastic conflict between the sons of Khufu. This demolition is not an act of annihilation or extermination of personalities. For such a motivation, the destruction of the reliefs and the erasure of names would have been absolutely sufficient. It looks most certainly that the looting took place in order to obtain the valuable stone material in the construction of mosques, palaces, and bridges in the Arabic Middle Ages.

Kawab’s wife was princess Hetepheres II, certainly also a daughter of the great king Khufu. After the death of Kawab she was married to Djedefre,9 son and successor of Khufu, who already had a royal spouse, Khentetenka, and several sons, among them Baka, the future king and successor of Chephren. Baka was the initiator of the unfinished pyramid of Zawiyet el-Aryan. The names Meresankh/Mersiankh, Meretyotes, Hetepheres and Khentetkaus are very frequent queens’ names in the family of the 4th Dynasty. Through her marriage to king Djedefre, Hetepheres II earned the title of queen. The daughter of Kawab and Hetepheres II was Meresankh III, who married Che-

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9 Reisner and Smith, *Giza Necropolis II.*
THE PRINCE KAWAB, OLDEST SON OF KHUFU

Although most of the decoration of Kawab's chapel is shattered, Stevenson Smith and William Kelly Simpson were able to reconstruct some of the scenes and the titles by analogy with the chapel of the neighboring tomb of Khafkhufu (fig. 4). According to Smith, about 324 statue fragments were recorded, which could be attributed to about ten to twenty statues of all kinds and sizes, small and life-size, standing and sitting, and, for the first time, to scribe statues. The most important titles of Kawab are preserved on these fragments of his stationary and on fragments of his sarcophagus. He is s3 nswt smsw, "king's eldest son," also n ht.f, "of his body = the king's," t3ty and jry-p't and hbrt.14 He also bears several priestly titles, but he is not priest of his father Khufu. The titles t3ty and jry-p't together with hbrt are the titles commonly regarded as those of a crown prince.15 If we, however, regard closely all persons who bore these highest titles from the Thinite period16 up to the 5th Dynasty, we can observe, and have to admit, that Henutsen, mother of Khafkhufu, also wears this collared headdress in Khafkhufu's chapel, G 7230.


13 Smith, HESPOK, 134, 143, 262 and fig. 48; C. Ransom Williams had interpreted the collared lines as conventional drawing lines, which was rightly corrected by W.S. Smith, in Giza Necropolis II, 7, with reference to the headdress worn by Djoser's queen and the lady of the Bankfield stela. Queen

14 Reisner and Smith, Giza Necropolis II, 1-12, Reisner, Mycerinus, 244-245, and Smith, HESPOK, 30-31; Simpson, Mastabas of Kawab, Khafkhufu I and II, 8.

15 Reisner and Smith, Giza Necropolis II, 1-12; Schmitz, Untersuchungen zum Titel S3-NJSWT "Königsohn."

16 G. Dreyer, "Wer war Menes," in The Archaeology and Art of Ancient Egypt, Essays in Honor of David B. O'Connor 1, ed. Z. Hawass and J. Richards (Cairo, 2007), 221-230, has recently tried to identify princes with highest titles of the 1st Dynasty with future kings, but this remains as uncertain as the suggestions of N. Dautzenberg, "Zum König Ity I. der 1. Dynastie," in GM 69 (1983), 33-35.
none of them ever became king! This fact has been completely ignored by all scholars who examined titles and their associated royal careers. If one would have examined simultaneously the individual princes together with their titles, it would have been obvious that these princes pursued the highest functions of wasirs, overseers of all building activities, directors of expeditions etc. but none of them ever became king. They cannot all have died before their royal fathers. This would mean that the designated crown prince had no official function during the lifetime of his father. Therefore we never find any hint, name or representation, of the person to become king. Under Djoser the most eminent prince and powerful person was Imhotep, who was even snyt, “twin” of Djoser, but he was not the successor. This was Sanakht or Sekhemkhet, under whose reign Imhotep evidently supervised the construction of the pyramid complex.  

Senefru’s name never appeared during the long reign of Huni, nor was Khufu ever mentioned during Senefru’s reign, neither at Meidum nor at Dahshur, although we know that he was a son of Senefru and Hetepheres I. In Meidum the princes Nefermaat and Rahotep bear the highest titles, in Dahshur Kanofer, but a prince Khufu never came into view. Nor Djedefre at Giza before he had become king.

There is even another negative criterion regarding crown princes or future kings. When Senefru created a princely necropolis with large twin mastabas as an innovation at Meidum, he did not plan a tomb for the crown prince. When this designated prince died unexpectedly before his father, a large mastaba was hastily constructed beside the step pyramid of his father for the unknown prince. Neither at Dahshur, nor at Giza in the Eastern Cemetery for the princes and princesses of the primogenitor, was a mastaba tomb for the crown prince foreseen. Obviously, according to the royal code of belief, a crown prince should or could not die before his father. He had to become king and build his own pyramid!

Who chose the future king? The reigning king alone or the ruling clan? Certainly the successor must have been chosen in advance, in order to avoid feuds or even bloody confrontations after the death of the ruler. The successor must have been installed in order to proceed at once after the death of the old king with the rituals of the mumification and deification of his predecessor.

Among Kawab’s highest titles is hry ḫḥt hry ṭp, “Highest Exorcist.” And he bears the bizarre title of a wr-md-šmʾw, “One of the Ten Great of Upper Egypt.” These are very ancient functions in the royal cortège dating back to the Thinite Period, when a clan of Upper Egypt reigned over Egypt. It may well be that the “Ten Great of Upper

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17 Graffito with the name of Imhotep on the inner niched wall, M. Z. Goneim, Horus Sekhem-khet, The Unfinished Step Pyramid at Saqqara I, Excavations at Saqqara, Service des Antiquités de l’Égypte (Cairo, 1957), pl. 13.
18 Simpson, Mastabas of Kawab, Khafkhufu I and II, 8.
Egypt was the board that chose, together with the king, the future ruler. Kawab in his function of an s3-nswt-smsw, "Eldest King's Son," was the head of this important committee. He was, however, never the Crown Prince.¹⁹

¹⁹ After completing this article I became aware of two new publications, both related to the academic school of Vienna: Peter Jánosi, Giza in der 4. Dynastie: Die Mastabas der Kernfriedhöfe und die Felsgräber (Vienna, 2005), and somehow connected with the results of this study an article by Roman Gundacker, "Ein Beitrag zur Genealogie der 4. Dynastie," in: SOKAR 16, 1 (2008), 22-51.

Both authors insist that Reisner's attribution of Cemetery G 7000, the mastabas east of Khufu's pyramid, to the sons and daughters of Khufu only, the primogeniture, cannot be proved definitely and must therefore be rejected. Their main and only argument against Reisner's thesis is an unlikely hypothesis according to which Kawab was a younger son of Sneferu and brother of Khufu. Gundacker even invents a mysterious first consort of Kawab and a son with identical name.

Both authors fail to notice that in the time of Khufu the allocation of a mastaba tomb was a strictly royal favor and decree of the king and there is no proof at all that any other prince or relative to Khufu was permitted to have a mastaba in the Eastern Cemetery. Even the most powerful persons beside Khufu, Hemiun, and the unknown prince of mastaba 2000, the builders of his pyramid were not authorized to have a tomb among the direct descendants, although Hemiun was a nephew, the son of Khufu's elder brother Nefermaat. How should then Kawab have his mastaba tomb in the first row if he was not a senior son of Khufu.