

The  
**Archaeology** and  
**Art** of  
**Ancient Egypt**

Essays in Honor of David B. O'Connor



Volume II

Edited by  
Zahi A. Hawass  
and Janet Richards



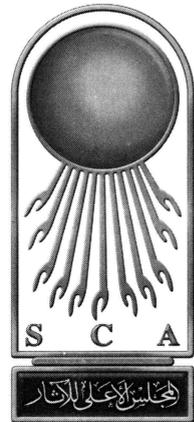
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ANNALES DU SERVICE DES ANTIQUITÉS DE L'ÉGYPTE  
CAHIER N° 36

Volume II

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PUBLICATIONS DU CONSEIL SUPRÊME DES ANTIQUITÉS DE L'ÉGYPTE

**Graphic Designer**  
Lourie, Margaret A.

**Director of Printing**  
Safwat, Amal

(CASAE 36) 2007

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Dar el Kutub No. 5576/2007  
ISBN-10 977-437-241-7  
ISBN-13 987-977-437-241-4  
ISSN 5576/2007

IMPRIMERIE DU CONSEIL SUPRÊME DES ANTIQUITÉS

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# The Scheme 2 × 4 in the Decoration of Old Kingdom Tombs

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Multiple representations of a tomb owner occur frequently on false doors and lintels or Architraves dating from the 5th and 6th Dynasties (HARPUR 1987: 44 [table 4.2], 303, 453 [fig. 9], 454 [fig. 10]; FISCHER 1968: 215–220 [Appendix C]; KANAWATI AND ABDER-RAZIQ 2003b: 16, n.31, pls. 5a, 37a). The multi-figured lintels are found above entrances or false doors, and they represent either a continuous sequence of figures walking in the same direction or a symmetrical composition comprised of two similar groups facing each other. The number of figures usually varies between two and ten.<sup>1</sup> Iconographically, the figures grouped on a lintel or false door are either identical<sup>2</sup> or differentiated. In the second case, there are often two alternating types varying with regard to such features as body build, hairdo and (or) garment.<sup>3</sup> Each of the figures is accompanied by a vertical text recording the name and titles of the person in question.

One of the multiple variations, found both on architraves (for instance in the tomb of Inyefert in Saqqara (KANAWATI and ABDER-RAZIQ 2003b: 16, pls. 5, 37a), and on false doors<sup>4</sup> of 6th Dynasty noblemen, shows four figures on each side of a symmetrical composition. At the beginning of the 6<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, this very scheme visibly “descends” from the architraves on the walls of cult chapels, as may be observed on the decoration of two tombs recently discovered by the Polish-Egyptian archaeological mission in Saqqara, west of the pyramid of Netjerykhet: that of Merefnebef, discovered in 1997 (MYŚLIWIEC ET AL. 2004: *passim*), and that of Ny-anekh-Nefertem, unearthed in 2003 (MYŚLIWIEC 2004b: 111–120; KURASZKIEWICZ 2004b: 123–125; GODZIEJEWSKI 2004: 127–129; RZEUSKA 2003: 133–136; MYŚLIWIEC 2004c: 6–23; KURASZKIEWICZ 2004a: 79–80; MYŚLIWIEC 2004a: 38–40, 42–47; MYŚLIWIEC 2005a: 90–101; MYŚLIWIEC 2004d: 66–69). Both are hewn in a cliff ledge extending N-S, west of the enclosure wall of Netjerykhet’s pyramid (MYŚLIWIEC ET AL. 2004: 40–45, pl. 2; MYŚLIWIEC 2004b: 112–120) at a distance of ca. 3.3 m from each other. The tomb of Ny-anekh-Nefertem (“good name” Temi) neighbours that of Merefnebef (good name Fefi, and a third name Wenis-anekh) on the latter’s northern side. Each of them had a rock-hewn cult chapel in the west, accessible from the west, and a mudbrick-built mastaba in the east, founded on a layer of



**Fig. 1:** The unfinished façade of the chapel in the tomb of Ny-ankh-Nefertem, with the top of Netjerykhet's pyramid in the background. View from the west. Photo by Maciej Jawornicki.



**Fig. 2:** The courtyard of chapels 15 (Ny-ankh-Nefertem) and 16 (anonymous) with rock-hewn steps leading to the chapel of Merefnebef. View from the west. Photo by Maciej Jawornicki.

the social status of Fefi and Temi, and, on the other, from a chronological gap between them. The vizier Merefnebef seems to have lived between the second half of Teti's reign and early years of Pepy I, being probably promoted to the function of vizier by Weserkare (IBID.: 246–250), while his posthumous neighbour, priest at the pyramids of Wenis and Teti, and multiple “secretary” at the royal court, was considerably younger. The pottery found in his burial, shaft and chamber,

debris set on the surface of the rock.

Each of the mastabas contained two shafts, a deeper burial shaft in the north, and a smaller (in the case of Fefi, a miniature) ritual shaft without burial chamber, in the south.<sup>5</sup> Fefi's burial chamber had an unfinished, anepigraphic limestone sarcophagus violated by ancient robbers, probably in later Old Kingdom times. The tomb owner's body (skeleton) was found lying on its lid (MYŚLIWIEC ET AL. 2004: 56, 185–189, pls. 10c, 80d–e). Temi was buried in a rectangular burial pit hewn in the rock and covered with a heavy lid made of local limestone, thus imitating a sarcophagus. The body (skeleton), badly damaged by ancient robbers, was still lying inside the coffin. Its identity with the tomb owner seems beyond doubt, thanks to a large size graffito written with black ink on the lid's long frontal side. It seems to contain the three hieroglyphs constituting the name Temi.

In spite of many similarities, there are at least as many differences between these two tombs. They result, on one hand, from

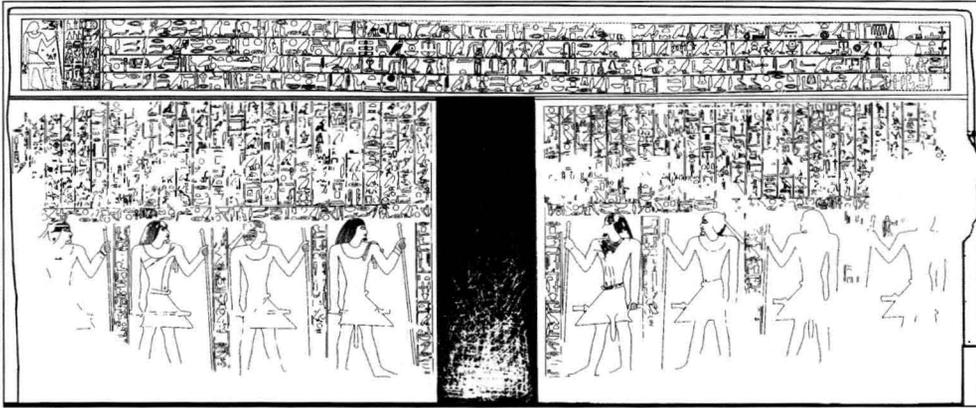


Fig. 3: Façade of the main (western) chapel in the tomb of Merefnebef (Fefi). Drawing by Kamil Kuraszkiwicz.

has been dated to the late 6th Dynasty,<sup>6</sup> so that he may have been born in the second half of Pepy I's reign at the earliest. Both tombs remained unfinished, although in the case of Fefi this is only true of the architecture of the chapel's external part (MYŚLIWIEC ET AL. 2004: 61–63, 250), while the tomb of Temi has unfinished reliefs on the chapel's inner walls, and the decoration of its façade had merely been initiated (Figs. 1, 2). Only the decoration of his chapel's northern part was finished, i.e., sculpted and painted, while reliefs in the room's southern part are roughly sculpted (with remains of original skeleton tracery on the southern and western walls) or finished as such, but still without polychromy (south part of the east wall). In the façade, only one element of the decoration has been sculpted: the "ideal biography" on the "lintel" above the entrance.

### Two Scenes in the Tomb of Merefnebef (Figs. 3–4)

One of the most important factors responsible for the unfinished state of the façade in Temi's cult chapel may have been a particular importance attributed in those times to the compositional scheme 2 x 4 in multifigural representations of the tomb owner. In the tomb of Merefnebef, this scheme occurs twice: a) in the lower register of the sophisticated decoration on the long eastern wall in the façade of the main, western chapel (Fig. 3; *IBID.*: 56–59, 83–86), and, b) on the architrave that originally surmounted the false door standing in the mastaba's eastern chapel (Fig. 4) which was added to the mastaba's eastern wall some time after the huge retaining wall crowning the façade of the western chapel collapsed, and thus blocked thoroughly the façade and entrance to the chapel, probably not earlier than toward the end of Pepy I's reign (*IBID.*: 41–42, 248–249). The scene in the façade, found below two registers containing long texts (*IBID.*: 69–83), belongs to this part of the decoration which may tentatively be dated to the reign of Weserkare (*IBID.*: 248–249). It is during the short reign of the usurper that Merefnebef seems to have been promoted to the function of vizier, and his new title, found only once in the inscriptions sculpted on the walls inside the chapel, appears constantly repeated in the reliefs decorating its exterior, i.e., the façade which certainly was decorated later than the interior. The eight large-size figures of the tomb owner, arranged symmetrically on both sides of the entrance (Fig. 3), thus contributed to the vainglorious propaganda of the parvenu.

Each side of the symmetrical composition is a mirror image of the other one (Fig. 3), except for one detail: the *hrp* scepter held, as usual, in the pendant hand, is shown differently in each

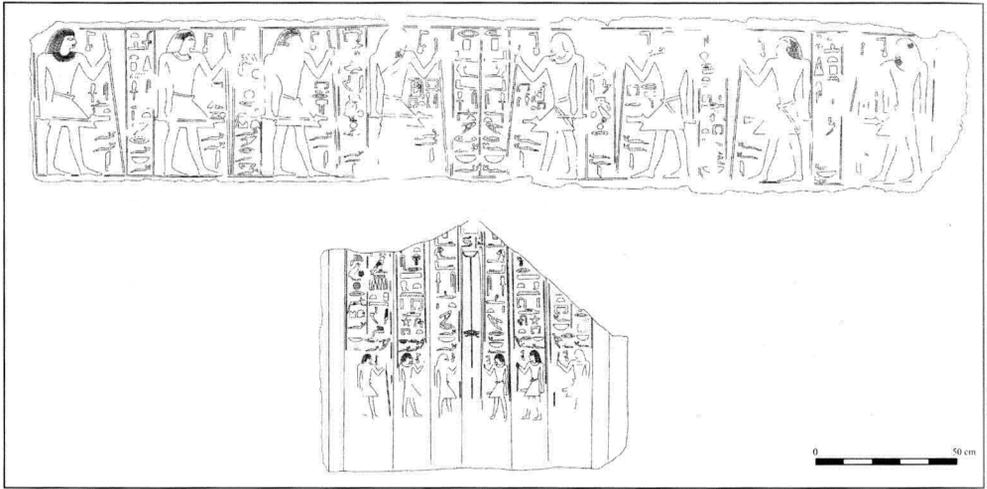


Fig. 4a–b: Architrave and false door fragment from the secondary (eastern) chapel of Meretnebef. Drawing by Kamil Kuraskiewicz.

group of figures. In the northern one, it appears on the visible side of the kilt, and in the parallel group it passes behind it. The other hand of each figure holds a long staff topped with a globular knob. All the other elements, including the inscriptions labeling each figure, are depicted symmetrically. There is one column of inscription in front of each figure, and one line above its head. The first one enumerates various titles and epithets of the vizier, while the other one contains the formula *im3ḥw ḥr...*, with names of the same gods on each side: Osiris, Ptah, Anubis *tp(j) ḏw:f* and Anubis *imj-wt*. Remarkably, the only name of the tomb owner used in these inscriptions is his “great name,” Meretnebef, which emphasizes the official character of the scene.

Each figure wears a short kilt having a tapering protrusion and a belt with a loop below the navel, as well as a broad necklace and bracelets (not all of these are executed or preserved). Alternating are two other elements that characterize two types of figures. Every second effigy, beginning with the frontal one in each group, wears a panther skin suspended on the forward shoulder, and a shoulder-length wig (IBID.: 83–86). The other figures have a bare torso, and they wear a short wig with horizontal rows of curls, adorned with a fillet having a bond with streamers falling on the shoulders. No significant relation between the iconography of each particular figure and the titles labeling this representation could be observed. The version with panther skin doubtless emphasizes the priestly function of the vizier (*ḥry ḥbt*)<sup>7</sup>, although no priestly title is found in pertinent inscriptions. The titles and epithets found in the legends of these figures are primarily honorific. Both figures and inscriptions serve, therefore, to create a homogeneous impression of magnificence.

Inspired doubtless by this grand scene, the symmetrical composition on the architrave (Fig. 4a) which surmounted a large-size false door (Fig. 4b) that stood in the mastaba’s eastern chapel, built and sculpted some time later, probably a decade, is slightly different (MYŚLIWIEC ET AL. 2004: 59). The four figures represented on each side of the central axis do not look like a mirror image of their counterpart. There is less consistency in details, although general features have been copied from the archetype. This scene looks like a simplified version of the original, which doubtless partly results from the smaller size of the figures, and a particularly bad quality of local

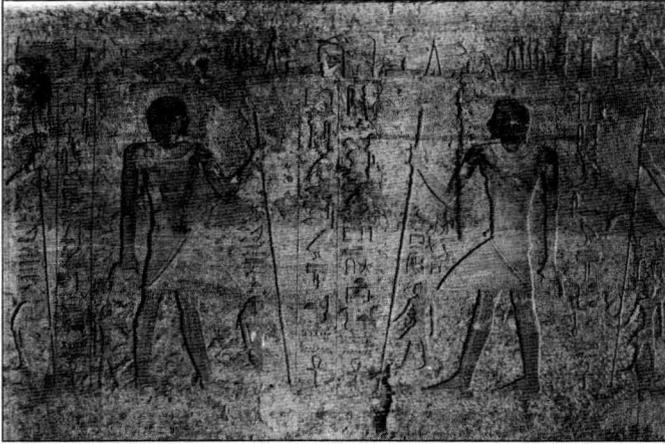
limestone used in this case. Iconographically, each of the eight figures is identical, wearing a shoulder-length wig, a broad necklace and the same type of short kilt with a tapering protrusion. The two insignia held by each figure are represented the same way as in the scene decorating the façade, although the scepter of the first figure on (our) right side is exceptionally shown on the visible side of the kilt. The first figure on the left side wears a sash crossing diagonally the chest, a characteristic feature of lector priests (IBID.: 119, n. 211). There may have been more exceptions and differences rendered in the painting that presumably covered the surface of the relief, and has later completely vanished.

Different from the prototype are also the inscriptions. The legend of each figure is composed in two columns: the front one, framed with two vertical lines, and the hind one, scattered into three parts: the hieroglyphic sign R9 (Gardiner's list) in front of the head (IBID.: 58, no. 17), an epithet placed between the staff and scepter, and the name Fefi in front of the legs. This "good name" alternates with the "great name" Merefnebef found at the end of each front column. Only some of the legends are analogous on both sides of the scene. This is, for instance, the case of the two columns meeting in the middle of the scene or those in front of the lateral figures. As far as the present state of preservation allows us to conclude, there are differences in some other parallel inscriptions, with respect to both their content (e.g., the epithet *jrj sšr Pr-ʿ3* (Keeper of the linen of the Great House) in front of the second figures from the axis; IBID.: 59, figures b and g). To some extent, these particularities may also reflect the spirit of the time when the architrave was sculpted, probably more than one generation after the death of Merefnebef, when the main (west) cult chapel had disappeared behind the fallen retaining wall of the mastaba (IBID.: 249–250). His progeny seems to have had a more distanced and relaxed attitude towards his magnificence than he himself had at the zenith of his career. This may be felt in the alternation of the two more or less official names, which contrasts with the rigid repetition of the "great name" in the original scene, sculpted on the façade. However consistency, surprising after so many years, may be observed in the fact that, like in the inscriptions of the earlier main chapel (IBID.: 87 [1a, 4] and 88 [53a, 4, n. 129]), the word that could doubtless be nothing other than "nšw" (king) in the epithet "*imšhw hr...*," has been chiseled out in each of the two parallel inscriptions (the front columns) accompanying the second figures from the axis (IBID.: 59, figs. c and f; cf. 58, n. 16, and 250). The infamy of the most "shameful" moment in his career, that of being (probably) promoted to the function of vizier by the usurper Weserkare, was visibly remembered for generations.

### A Scene in the Tomb of Ny-ankh-nefertem (Figs. 5–8)

The form and the location of the scene on the architrave seems to have influenced those of its slightly later version, found in the tomb of Fefi's posthumous neighbour Temi. Most surprisingly, this scene, even larger than that on the façade of Fefi's main (west) chapel, is found inside Temi's one-room chapel (MYŚLIWIEC 2004b: 120; MYŚLIWIEC 2005b: in print; MYŚLIWIEC 2004a: 41–42, 45–46; MYŚLIWIEC 2005a: 96). It fills entirely the chapel's east wall. This unique solution may be considered a development of the version found on the architrave of Merefnebef, where the scene in question was inserted into the east wall of the mastaba. Other analogies confirm this association. Like on the architrave, there is no rigid symmetry in the distribution of either inscriptions or iconographic details. Even if the unfinished state of the scene's southern half (Fig. 7, no polychromy) may partly be blamed for dissimilarity, one observes essential differences in both concept and workmanship between the two halves, as if each of them were executed by another artist or team.

These differences concern particularly the inscriptions accompanying the figures. In front of



**Fig. 5:** Central part of east wall in the chapel of Ny-ankh-Nefertem. Photo by Maciej Jawornicki.

legends (the figures 1, 2 and 4 on the northern side, and figures 2 and 3 on the opposite one). The evidence of a close relationship to the royal palace seems to have been particularly appreciated by Ny-ankh-Nefertem. This appears as his label, being in some cases the only title preceding the formula *im3hw hr...* in a column: the figure 4 on the left hand side (Fig. 6) and the figure 3 on the other one (Fig. 7). Another declaration of his good relations with the king is the epithet *im3hw hr nswt* (Honoured one by the king) found in the legend of the last (4th) figure on the left side (Fig. 6). It should be remembered that this very epithet was posthumously chiseled out wherever it occurred in the tomb of vizier Fefi (MYŚLIWIEC ET AL. 2004: 58 [n. 16], 59 [figs. c and f], 87 [1a, 4] and 88 [53a, 4, n. 129]), while it remains intact in the tomb of Temi. Like in the façade scene of the vizier, only the priest's official name, Ny-ankh-Nefertem, is used in these inscriptions, never his "good name" Temi.

Surprisingly different is the form of the vertical inscriptions on both sides of the scene. The columns on the northern side (Figs. 5–6) are bordered with vertical lines, and the arrangement of the hieroglyphs follows classical rules. Relevant inscriptions on the other side give the impression of being sculpted very hastily and crudely. The mutual proportions of the hieroglyphs are disturbed, and their arrangement fails to follow a vertical line, which is particularly striking in the inscription of the figure 4 (Fig. 7). It is no wonder that these columns are not bordered with incised lines, although remains of their original draught, traced with black ink, are sometimes visible (e.g., in front of the third figure, Fig. 7, middle).

The most striking innovation is that the tomb owner, priest at the pyramids of Wenis and Teti, is not represented alone, but in the company of his nearest family members, wife and sons. Remarkably, his two daughters, mentioned elsewhere in the inscriptions decorating the tomb (KURASZKIEWICZ 2004b: 125), do not occur in this scene. His only wife, Seshseshet, is represented twice, but not symmetrically beside the two central figures approaching the axis. She is respectively shown squatting in front of each of the two first figures depicted on the north (our left) side of the scene (Figs. 5–6). Her counterpart on the south side of the wall is in both cases Temi's eldest son Meruka (Figs. 5 and 7). Surprisingly, the latter also appears to be the counterpart of all other family members represented in this double scene. Depicted beside the last figure on the north side (Fig. 6), he counterbalances

each of them, there is a vertical column containing various titles of the tomb owner, but no parallelism may be observed in either the contents or the form. The choice of the titles is individual in each case, although some of them occur more frequently than the others, and preferably at the beginning of a column. This is especially the case of the titles *shd pr nswt* (Inspector of the royal estate) and *shd pr 3* (Inspector of the Great House), which open five

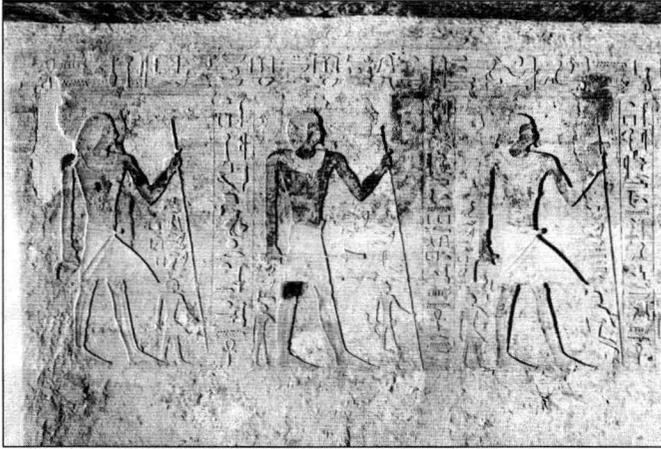


Fig. 6: North part of east wall in the chapel of Ny-ankh-Nefertem. Photo by Maciej Jawornicki.

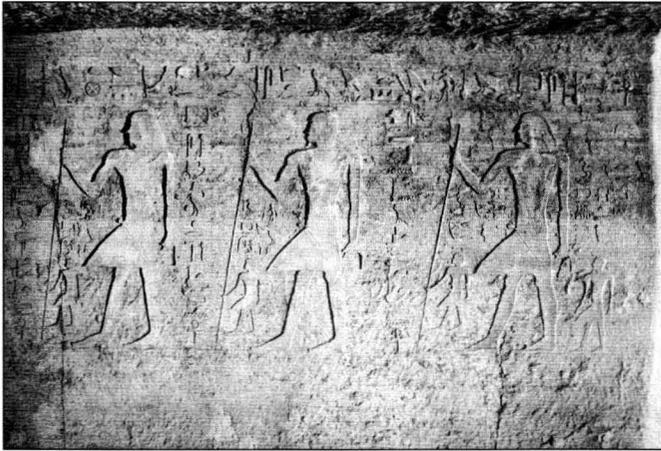


Fig. 7: South part of east wall in the chapel of Ny-ankh-Nefertem. Photo by Maciej Jawornicki.

two other, younger sons, Mereri and Tjetji, accompanying the relevant effigy on the south side (Fig. 7). Being Temi's companion in the third segment on the south side (Fig. 7), he balances the two, probably youngest sons represented at the homologous place on the other side (Fig. 6). In sum, he appears as much as four times at his father's side, and whenever he does, he turns out to be his sole companion, unlike the other family members who always appear in groups of two. He also seems to be the only son represented more than one time in this grandiose family picture. This demonstrates a predominant role played by the eldest son in the family of Ny-ankh-Nefertem.

An interesting iconographic, but also prosopographic problem is presented by the figures depicted in the third square (segment) on the left (=north) side (Fig. 6). Unlike in all other incarnations, here Temi wears a tight kilt, contrasting with the protruding kilt of the other figures, and

holds a *hrp* scepter replacing the piece of cloth held in the pendant hand by all other ones. Equally, the representations of the two sons accompanying this figure differ iconographically from those of their brothers. Smaller than these latter, they appear either wearing the same kind of tight kilt as that of their father, or nude with a symbolically rendered phallus (this detail is not explicitly indicated), and they have shaven or short-cropped hair. The figure of the son following the father is smaller than that represented before him. The latter has short-cropped hair with a wisp falling on his shoulder, while the head of the smaller one seems to be shaven. Their iconography visibly indicates that they were still children, doubtless the youngest sons of Ny-ankh-Nefertem. The elder of them holds a bird (*upupa epops*) in his pending hand. This detail seems to be of importance, for

the bird is unnaturally large in proportion to the youth; a particularity that may indicate that the boy excelled in fowling while accompanying his father on marsh expeditions, the favorite hobby of Egyptian noblemen, illustrated so superbly in the neighbouring tomb of the vizier on the same eastern wall of his cult chapel (MYŚLIWIEC ET AL. 2004: 122–134).

But even more surprising than the iconographic affinity of the two boys is the similarity of their names. Both are named Mereri. Their juxtaposition in one single segment of the sequence was probably the only means to avoid misunderstandings concerning the number and the identity of his sons bearing the name Mereri.

The problem is in fact much more complicated than this, for a third Mereri is depicted in the last segment of the southern sequence (Figs. 7 and 8d), where he is paralleled by a son called Tjetji. This Mereri is depicted as an adult, with long hair and wearing a protruding kilt, like Meruka, the eldest son. Remarkably, he is the only younger brother to resemble so strictly the eldest one on an iconographic level. All other sons depicted in this panoramic scene have short-shaven hair. It seems hardly conceivable that this figure would represent one of the two adolescent Mereris described above, in a later phase of his life. This sort of prosopographic anachronism, bordering on a “historicity” in the private sphere, is not common in ancient Egyptian pictorial art. Moreover, it would unduly favour one of the younger sons without any specific reason, the eldest one being represented four times, but always in the same iconographic version. Therefore, it seems more plausible to assume that Temi had three sons named Mereri, and that two of them were much younger than their namesake. Their names in this scene are never accompanied by any title, neither is there any title in other representations of any Mereri found in this tomb (KURASZKIEWICZ 2004b: 125).

There is yet another Mereri in the panoramic double scene. He accompanies the first figure of Ny-ankh-Nefertem in the north (left) sequence (Figs. 5 and 8c). But in this case the inscription is evidently not the original one. The lower part of the column above the son's head, where an epithet should be expected, as well as his name sculpted in front of his face, had deliberately been destroyed, and the rough surface overlaid with white mortar, on which the name Mereri is crudely written with red colour. A similar witness to an iconoclast's activity is found in the legend of an offering bearer represented in the lower register of the chapel's north wall (GODZIEJEWSKI 2004: 128, fig. 2; cf. KURASZKIEWICZ 2004b: 124–125), where the name Mereri is likewise written with the same colour on a secondary (mortar) surface. Both cases allow us to conclude that one of Temi's sons, occupying an important place in the family (depicted with father and mother in the scene's central part, Fig. 5), fell victim to a *damnatio memoriae*, probably some time after the father had passed away. The name of this son has been replaced with that of Mereri. But which of the three bearers of this name depicted in the double scene would be responsible for this sacrilege? It seems unthinkable that the usurper was one of the two sons portrayed as youths (Fig. 6), and that he committed the iconoclastic act when he became adult, for he wanted to be identified as such. One could speculate that the son whose name was destroyed had passed away prematurely, and his death had encouraged one of the younger brothers to take his place, with all consequences of this fact. In any case, we remain ignorant of the name of a son whose effigy appears at a very honourable place in his father's tomb. To sum up, Ny-ankh-Nefertem seems to have had seven sons, three of which were named Mereri. Two of these were probably the youngest ones. One of his most important sons remains anonymous, deprived of his name by one of his younger brothers.

There is a remarkable iconographic differentiation of Temi's figures in his double scene. As in the archetype scene decorating the façade of Fefi's main chapel, the hairdo of all eight of the figures represents the two types, short and long wig, alternating regularly (Figs. 5–7). However, unlike in that case, each of the two series begins with a figure wearing a short wig. Every figure



a



b



c



d

**Fig. 8:** Representations of Temi's sons named Mereri (photos by Jaroslaw Dabrowski):

**a)** The child beside the third figure in northern sequence.

**b)** The youth in front of the third figure in northern sequence.

**c)** The representation usurped by a Mereri, beside the first figure in northern sequence.

**d)** The son in front of the fourth figure in southern sequence.

wears a necklace and holds a long staff in the outstretched hand. Seven figures are also identical with respect to other details: the type of protruding kilt known from both scenes in the tomb of Fefi, and a piece of linen held in the other hand. The latter feature is new in comparison with the scenes in Fefi's tomb. However, one of the figures, the third one in the northern sequence (Figs. 6 and 8a–b), exceptionally wears a tight kilt, which was not found in the iconography of the vizier, and holds the *hry* scepter which was a constant attribute of the latter. It is noticeable that this exception is made for the representation of the priest with his two youngest sons, as if a

demonstration of his power and dignity in this case were more important than when he appears with his wife and older sons.

Worth special attention is the asymmetry of the two groups standing directly beside the axial inscription (Fig. 5). A similar motif, the tomb owner with a female member of his family, is found at the same place, i.e., opposite the entrance, in the center of the east wall in the chapel of Merefnebef, but there the tomb owner appears twice in the company of his squatting mother, Tjezet. The mother of Temi is not depicted or mentioned in his tomb. Her place has been taken by Temi's wife Seshseshet depicted at the left hand side (north) figure, and by his eldest son Meruka accompanying his father on the other side of the axis. This clearly emphasizes the difference between the vizier and the priest in their attitude toward their families. The representations of the four wives of Merefnebef, constituting a quartette of harpists, witness of their secondary role in his life, are in any case less prominent than that of his mother. In the case of Ny-ankh-Nefertem, it is just the contrary: his only wife and his children, particularly his eldest son, play primary roles for him. This is doubtless the reason why he broke with the time-honoured tradition of representing the tomb owner alone in similar multi-figured scenes, and invented a version showing him in the company of his progeny. The only reminiscence of the central scene from the east wall of Fefi's main chapel is the fact that Temi's "first lady" is also doubled, though not symmetrically on both sides of the axis, but shifted to the north side of the scene (Figs. 5–6).

An artistic invention signifying an effort to render the scene more spatial or three-dimensional should be observed. Small-sized figures represented in front of the large-size effigies depicting Temi are usually shown standing or squatting at a higher level than the figures found behind him. These latter appear to be sharing the ground with the tomb owner; the former, on the contrary, appear as if they were placed in the air. The artist doubtless wants to indicate that the "suspended" ones are found on the other side of the main figure. This effort to express a spatial perspective goes, however, only as far as allowed by the much stronger rules of Egyptian perspective. In one case, in the representation of the eldest son accompanying the fourth figure in the northern sequence (Fig. 6) the artist did obey a traditional rule: the father and the son depicted in front of him stand on the same ground. The father's forward leg overlaps a leg of the son, which may be a discrete indication of this offspring's particular status, that of successor.

This unique scene appears to some extent as a synthesis of the two eight-figured, older compositions found in the neighbouring tomb of vizier Merefnebef, but, at the same time, is marked by many individual features, regarding both its content and form. The question that still remains open is why this meaningful scene has been sculpted inside the cult chapel, on its eastern wall, and not on its façade like the archetype in the tomb of Merefnebef. The façade in the tomb of Ny-ankh-Nefertem remained unfinished (Figs. 1–2), but its surface has visibly been prepared for a tripartite composition (which is particularly visible in our photo, Fig. 1). There is a clear division into three horizontal zones which in their proportions correspond to the three registers in the façade of the neighbour's chapel (Fig. 3). Still, the inscription on the lintel above the entrance remains the only element of this sophisticated decoration that has been sculpted in the chapel of Temi. Like in the tomb of Fefi, it contains an "ideal biography" (for that of Fefi, cf. MYŚLIWIEC ET AL. 2004: 70–74). The unfinished state of the two other registers cannot be explained just by the bad quality of the rock in this place. The same problem has been mastered perfectly by the artists who decorated the tomb of Merefnebef,<sup>8</sup> and efforts to strengthen crumbling parts of the rock in the façade of Ny-ankh-Nefertem by using similar methods (e.g., leveling the surface with mortar) are clearly visible on some parts (particularly at the northern end) of the façade.<sup>9</sup> These efforts have ended with full success in the case of the lintel, while no single hieroglyph has been

sculpted in the two other registers. It seems obvious that the original project, intended to repeat the tripartite composition from the neighbour's tomb, was given up at the moment when the upper register was already perfectly completed. At that moment, it was decided to execute the sophisticated lower register scene inside the chapel, on its eastern wall. The scene, crowned with a large-sized strip containing a symmetrically composed offering formula to Osiris (Figs. 5–7), fills almost entirely the surface of this wall. It enlarges the central, symmetrical motif found on the relative wall in Fefi's chapel, while all the other scenes decorating that wall have been omitted in the tomb of Temi. It must have seemed extremely important to replace them with multiple representations of the tomb owner and his family.

In the author's opinion, only one answer would logically fit the ambience of these turbulent times, the last decades of the Old Kingdom: the priest Ny-ankh-Nefertem, who must have witnessed or heard of the dramas and scandals that ravaged the family of his posthumous neighbour, including purposeful destruction of some representations and inscriptions in his cult chapel, decided to spare his own tomb a similar fate. In order to avoid the representations of his beloved wife and progeny being violated by any iconoclasts, he decided to place them inside the chapel. The choice of the eastern wall may have been inspired by two elements found in the decoration of the vizier's tomb: the symmetrical double scene located in the center of his main (west) chapel's east wall, and the eight-figured scene on the architrave surmounting his secondary (east) chapel, built some time after his death, at his mastaba's east wall. The scene in question thus bears witness to the feelings of threat and uncertainty palpable in many tombs of noblemen who lived in those times (KANAWATI 2003a: *passim*).

## Conclusions

In spite of increasing popularity of eight-figured symmetrical scenes on false doors and architrave/lintels dating from the 6th Dynasty (cf. n. 5 and 6), similar scenes sculpted on the walls of contemporaneous cult chapels are extremely rare. Besides the two scenes found in Saqqara, discussed above, only one other case is known so far. This is a fragmentarily preserved scene on the façade of Khnumenti's tomb in Giza (G 2374; BROVARSKI 2001: 115, pl. 84c, fig. 80). Preserved are only the four figures north of the entrance, facing left. Their iconography and arrangement is very reminiscent of the relevant scene on the façade of Fefi's cult chapel. Each of the figures is preceded by a column of inscription. The best preserved figure has a shoulder-length wig, chin beard, a necklance and a short kilt with flaring front panel. Khnumenti holds a long stick at a diagonal with his right hand in front, and a scepter in his hanging left hand behind. Like in the case of left-facing figures in the southern half of Fefi's scene, the scepter passes behind the figure and is partly hidden by the kilt. There are remains of a panther skin vestment on the first figure, which additionally emphasizes the analogy between both tombs. The mastaba of Knumententi has tentatively been dated to the reign of Teti (IBID.: 30–31, n. 121 and 123). If this date proves true, the scene in the façade of his tomb may slightly precede that in Fefi's main chapel that we suspect to have been executed during the short rule of Weserkare.

The three examples known so far let one suppose that the fashion to decorate the walls of funerary chapels with a motif borrowed from false doors and architraves appeared at the turn of Dynasties 5/6, together with other innovations characterizing this period.<sup>10</sup> One may ask why four, and not, for instance, three representations of the tomb owner have been chosen for reduplication in these cases. Besides a universal meaning of the number four (KESSLER 1977: 1213–1215; GOEDICKE 1986: 128, n. 4, 7; HORNUNG 1986: 129–132), it may have been inspired by a similar number of figures and inscriptions traditionally multiplied in the decoration of various architectural elements, particularly rectangular pillars,<sup>11</sup> as well as by the number of these elements themselves.<sup>12</sup>

Another question is the dualism and symmetry of these scenes. Both features characterize Egyptian art in general, but in the case of serial representations of the tomb owner, their meaning, as it seems, must be associated with that of his three dimensional effigies, particularly the so-called "pseudo-groups." We are inclined to follow the interpretation proposed by Ch. Boreux concerning the statues in which the size is the same: they would embody the person's emulation of the ruler's dual nature as King of Upper and Lower Egypt (EATON-KRAUSS 1995: 57–58). Many factors suggest that the reliefs in question, found in Old Kingdom tombs, are just a projection of the same idea into two-dimensional art. The large-sized double-scenes discussed in this article always occur on walls oriented North-South, in which they naturally emphasize the omnipresent symbolism of the country's geo-political division into Lower and Upper Egypt. On the other hand, the wish of 6th Dynasty noblemen to imitate the king in every possible respect is striking in both the architecture and decoration of their tombs (MYŚLIWIEC 2003: 318–325). In the case of Fefi and Temi, it is observable, for instance, in the form of some inscriptions visibly imitating that of the Pyramid Texts,<sup>13</sup> or in the red (sometimes with black dots) colour of the ceiling and false doors, evidently imitating that of red granite, the stone which was "royal" for excellence (MYŚLIWIEC ET AL. 2004: 93–96, 160–162). The symmetrical double-scenes on the walls of their tombs indirectly allude to the principal feature of Egyptian royalty: its duality, combining the natures of two healdic gods, Horus and Seth (MYŚLIWIEC 2005c: in print), that noblemen wished to share with the king, particularly in times when his power started diminishing.

The multiplication of two-dimensional representations would go well paired with a similar tendency concerning statues and statuettes found in the tombs of 6th Dynasty noblemen (RUSSMAN 1995: 275, n. 57, 61, 68). An extreme and unparalleled case is constituted by the fourteen statues hewn in the walls of a room in the tomb of Irukaptah at Saqqara, dated to the late 5th or 6th Dynasty.<sup>14</sup> A general feeling of uncertainty characterizing the political, social and religious life of the period may be observed, for instance, in the increasing number of figures and figurines placed in particular tombs. Instead of being exposed in the chapel itself, they were often hidden in the tomb's less accessible part, i.e., the burial chamber which also changed its original character, toward the end of the 6th Dynasty (JANOSI 1999: 36–37; ALBERS 2005: 21–22; MYŚLIWIEC 2003: 325). A similar anxiety may be deduced from the hesitation of Ny-ankh-Nefertem concerning the location of his own multi-figured scene, with the decision in favour of a less exposed place.

Unlike the three-dimensional effigies of tomb owners that tended to become multiple, but smaller than in earlier times, the multi-figured representations of 6th Dynasty noblemen in reliefs decorating the walls of their tombs were usually larger than their prototypes on false doors and architraves.

#### Notes:

- 1 Cf. The entrance lintel of Ny-sankh-akhtj in Giza with ten figures arranged symmetrically: HARPUR 1987: 454, fig. 10.
- 2 E.g., on the lintel of Ny-Pepy recently discovered in Saqqara: KURASZKIEWICZ 2001: 127–133. Cf. also KANAWATI 1987: fig. 35a, pl. 8a.
- 3 Cf. The lintel of Nisuiru-Pepisenebu: BOLSHAKOV 2003: 21–25. For a different interpretation of this contrast, cf. MYŚLIWIEC 2005c: 232–233.
- 4 E.g., in Saqqara, in the tomb of Hesi (KANAWATI and ABDER-RAZIQ 1999: pls. 40, 42, 63; suggested date –Teti/Pepy I, *Ibid.*: 16), Geref (KANAWATI and HASSAN 1996: pl. 35; suggested date–end of Teti's reign/early

- under Pepy I, *IBID.*: 71), Mehi (EL-KHOULI and KANAWATI 1988: 15, pls. 7–8), and Neferseshemre (KANAWATI and ABDER-RAZIQ 1998: pls. 18, 58).
- 5 The shafts in the mastaba of Temi have been excavated in September/October 2005, and are still unpublished, cf. a forthcoming preliminary report in *PAM* 17, Warsaw 2006. For the function of ritual shafts in this necropolis, cf. RZEUSKA 2002.
  - 6 Oral communication of Dr. T. RZEUSKA who is preparing a publication of this material (cf. her forthcoming preliminary report in *PAM* 17).
  - 7 The element being more frequently a *differentia specifica* of the priest *sem*: STAEHELIN 1975: 231; STÖRK 1980: 1006; WESTENDORF 1982: 665; SCHMITZ 1984: 835.
  - 8 Concerning their methods used in repairing missing parts of the surface to be decorated, cf. MYŚLIWIEC ET AL. 2004: 66 (n.2), 67 (F 3), 75, 140–146 (scene 29), and 237–238.
  - 9 Cf. particularly the colour photos in: MYŚLIWIEC 2004a: 36–37; MYŚLIWIEC 2005a: 90–91.
  - 10 Cf., e.g., RUSSMAN 1995: 279, n. 98.
  - 11 Cf. pillars with four decorated faces (which is not the case of all pillars in the tombs of the period in question), in Saqqara: Mehu (ALTENMÜLLER 1998: 202–204, pls. 76–77, scene 52.1), Neferseshemre (KANAWATI and ABDER-RAZIQ 1998: 26, pls. 7–17, 39, 46–57), Ankhmahor (KANAWATI and HASSAN 1997: pls. 31, 59, 61); and in Deshasha: Inti (KANAWATI and MCFARLANE 1993: pls. 23, 34–36). Cf. the much earlier tomb of Rawer in the Central Field at Giza, where eight columns of large incised hieroglyphs were on each side of the main entrance, without any representation of the tomb owner (BROVARSKI 2001: 14), which many also have contributed to the formation of the later iconographic canon.
  - 12 Cf. the façade of the tomb of Hesi in Saqqara (KANAWATI and ABDER-RAZIQ 1999: pls. 2–6), where there are four pillars, and the front face of each is decorated with inscriptions containing titulature of the tomb owner. A room in the tomb of Ptahhotep I has two rows of four pillars (HASSAN 1975a: 31, fig. 12), which is also the case of a mastaba in Giza (“Mastaba of Shaft No. 14”: HASSAN 1975b: 21, fig. 12), as well as the mastaba of Ny-ankh-ba, where this number is doubled in a room having sixteen pillars arranged in four parallel rows (4x4) (*IBID.*: 42, fig. 25).
  - 13 Cf. the inscription on the “inner lintel” in the tomb of Fefi: MYŚLIWIEC ET AL. 2004: 70–74 (F 6), and the style of the offering list on the northern wall in Temi’s chapel: MYŚLIWIEC 2004b: 120; GODZIEJEWSKI 2004: 127–129, fig. 1–2.
  - 14 MCFARLANE 2000: pl. 4, for the dating, cf. *ibid.*: 16–19; MYŚLIWIEC 2003: 310–311. C.f. the groups of four or eight identical figures sculpted in a tomb of earlier date, that of queen Mersyankh III, G 7530–7540 (4th Dynasty): DUNHAM and SIMPSON 1974: 17–18, pls. 6 (eight identical figures in a niche), 8a–d (group of four figures of a scribe), 11b–d (two figures in each of two parallel niches, diversified in their gesture), and in a tomb dated to the reign of Pepy I, that of Qar (SIMPSON 1976: pl. 11a), where a group of five identical figures is also sculpted (*IBID.*: pls. 21–23, statues 2–6).

According to S. RZEPKA, statues served as substitute bodies for the *ka* of (the) tomb owner, and even if he ordered a group-statue representing him with his children or parents, or only these persons, he in fact intended to multiply substitute bodies for his own *ka* (RZEPKA 1995: 229, n. 9). In this respect, their function was doubtless similar to that of the serial representations of the tomb owner on the walls of his tomb.

Looking for origins of this multiplicity in the final phase of the Old Kingdom, one should also note an early (end of 4th Dynasty) occurrence of several, at least four, almost identical figurines in the serdab of a tomb, that of Intishedu in Giza (RÉUNION DES MUSÉES NATIONAUX 1999: 250). Three of the four well preserved limestone figurines (remains of a fifth, wooden one, were found in the same serdab) show him seated and wearing a long wig, while the fourth one represents a standing man with a short wig.

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