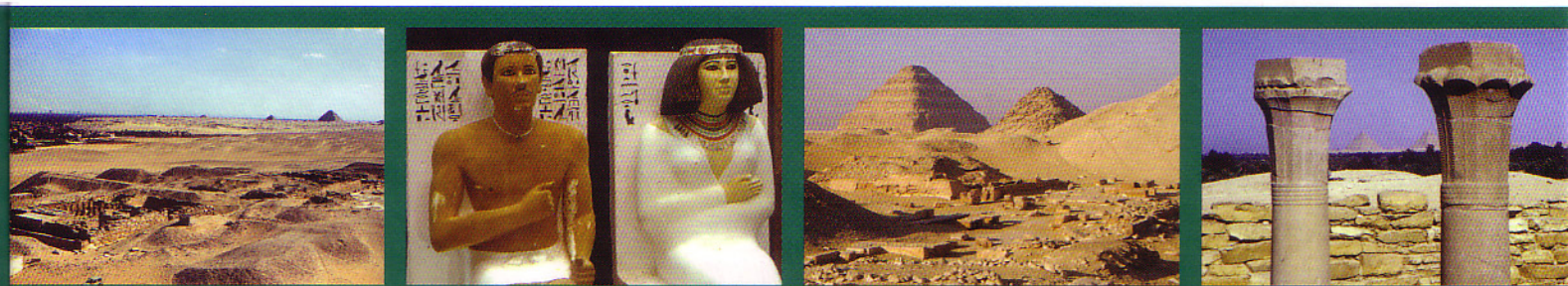# THE OLD KINGDOM ART AND ARCHAEOLOGY

Proceedings of the Conference

Prague, May 31 – June 4, 2004

Miroslav Bárta
editor

THE OLD KINGDOM ART AND ARCHAEOLOGY

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CONFERENCE HELD IN PRAGUE,
MAY 31 – JUNE 4, 2004

Miroslav Bárta
editor

Contributors

Nicole Alexanian, James P. Allen, Susan Allen, Hartwig Altenmüller, Tarek El Awady, Miroslav Bárta, Edith Bernhauer, Edward Brovarski, Vivienne G. Callender, Vassil Dobrev, Laurel Flentye, Rita Freed, Julia Harvey, Salima Ikram, Peter Jánosi, Nozomu Kawai, Jaromír Krejčí, Kamil O. Kuraszkiewicz, Renata Landgráfová, Serena Love, Dušan Magdolen, Peter Der Manuelian, Ian Mathieson, Karol Myśliwiec, Stephen R. Phillips, Gabriele Pieke, Ann Macy Roth, Joanne M. Rowland, Regine Schulz, Yayoi Shirai, Nigel Strudwick, Miroslav Verner, Hana Vymazalová, Sakuji Yoshimura, Christiane Ziegler

Contents

Foreword

It is with pleasure that after more than two years the publication of the lectures held during the conference on the Old Kingdom Art and Archaeology in Prague in the year 2004 (May 3 – June 4) has been made possible.

The conference held in Prague continued the tradition of previous meetings by being dedicated to the same subject: art and its dating in the Old Kingdom of Egypt: the period that forms the first apogee of the developing Egyptian state. The tradition of these irregular meetings was established in 1991 by Hourig Sourouzian and Rainer Stadelmann, at that time the Director of the German Archaeological Institute in Cairo, who organised the first conference.[1] The second meeting also took place in Cairo, at this time the place of the venue was the French Institute of Oriental Archaeology and the conference, held on November 10–13, 1994, was organised by its director Nicolas Grimal.[2] The penultimate meeting took place in Paris, France, on April 3–4, 1998, and was organised by Christiane Ziegler, Chief Conservator of Egyptian Antiquities in the Louvre.[3]

The present volume continues a well-established and successful tradition of post-conference publications. As such, it makes available most of the contributions that were presented during the conference in Prague. It was mainly the scientific profile of the Czech Institute of Egyptology that led us to substantially widen the scope of the conference in 2004. The total of thirty-three contributions presented in this volume cover various aspects connected to Old Kingdom culture, not only its art, but also its archaeology and architecture, selected administrative problems, iconography, texts and the latest, often first time published results of ongoing excavations. From the list of contributions it becomes evident that natural sciences and their application in the widest sense receive general acceptance and support from among Egyptologists. It is one of the few aspects that can in the future significantly enhance our understanding of specific issues connected to the Old Kingdom art and archaeology.

Eng. Marta Štrachová carefully edited the manuscript and was essential in producing this volume. The advice and guidance of Eng. Jolana Malátková also proved indispensable. The Czech Academy of Sciences is to be thanked for the production of the book. Last but not least, it was Prof. Dr. Jean Leclant, Secrétaire perpétuel de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, Paris, and the chair of the European branch of the Fondation Michela Schiff Giorgini, and Prof. Dr. David Silverman, University of Pennsylvania, chair of the North American branch of the the Fondation Michela Schiff Giorgini and the respective committees that approved this publication and agreed to support it financially.

Miroslav Bárta

---

[1] The conference was held in the German Archaeological Institute, Cairo, on October 29–30, and the proceedings published in 1995 in the volume *Kunst des Alten Reiches. Symposium des Deutschen Archäologischen Institut Kairo am 29. und 30. Oktober 1991, Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Abteilung Kairo, Sonderschrift* 28, Mainz am Rhein.

[2] N. Grimal, ed., *Lex critères de datation stylistiques à l´Ancien Empire, Bibliothèque d´Étude* 120 (Cairo, 1998).

[3] Ch. Ziegler, N. Palayret, eds., *L'Art de l'Ancien Empire égyptien. Actes du colloque organisé au Musée du Louvre par le Service culturel les 3 et 4 avril 1998* (Paris, 1999).

Bibliography

Abbreviations for journals, series and monographs used throughout the volume follow the system of *Lexikon der Ägyptologie* (cf. *Lexikon der Ägyptologie, Band* VII. *Nachträge, Korrekturen und Indices*, founded by W. Helck and E. Otto, edited by W. Helck and W. Westendorf, Wiesbaden 1992, XIV–XXXVIII).

The following additional abbreviations are also used:

ACER – The Australian Centre for Egyptology: Reports, Sydney;

AOS – American Oriental Society, Michigan;

BSAK – Studien zur altägyptischen Kultur, Beihefte, Hamburg;

CA – Current Anthropology, Chicago, Illinois;

Hannig, *Handwörterbuch* – R. Hannig, *Die Sprache der Pharaonen. Großes Handwörter-buch Ägyptisch-Deutsch (2800–950 v. Chr.)*, Mainz 1995;

Harpur, *DETOK* – Y. Harpur, *Decoration in Egyptian Tombs of the Old Kingdom. Studies in Orientation and Scene Content*, London and New York 1988;

Harvey, *WSOK* – J. Harvey, *Wooden Statues of the Old Kingdom. A Typological Study, Egyptological Memoirs 2*, Leiden 2001;

KAW – Kulturgeschichte der Antiken Welt, Mainz am Rhein;

LingAeg – Lingea Aegyptia, Journal of Egyptian language Studies, Göttingen;

OrMonsp – Orientalia Monspeliensia, Montpellier;

PAM – Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean, Warsaw;

SAGA – Studien zur Archäologie und Geschichte Altägyptens, Heidelberg;

WES – Warsaw Egyptological Studies, Warsaw.

The iconography of the princess in the Old Kingdom

Vivienne G. Callender

In his contribution made at this conference, Stephan Seidlmayer, reporting about research that he did, said that, at the outset, he expected to be disappointed in his results. To the contrary, however, he was agreeably surprised that his analysis turned out to be both valid and convincing. My own experience has been exactly the opposite: I set out with high expectations of finding convincing iconographic evidence to enable us to distinguish the presence of a princess in wall reliefs, but my results were very disappointing. However, this disappointment forced me to have another look at the inscriptional material and this, at least, has led to more interesting observations regarding the status of the Old Kingdom princess.

Because the records for Old Kingdom princesses are confined solely to a slender collection of titles and standard tomb decorations, it is extremely difficult to reconstruct the elements of their lives and their significance for the era in which they lived. Nevertheless, we may readily see that there were three main groups of princesses:

1) The first group consists of those who, by their titles, claim to have been physical daughters of the king.[1]

2) The second group is made up of princesses who married kings and became queens;[2] their group is smaller than the first one.

3) But there is also a third group, which consists of apparently non-royal women who were married to prestigious officials and were labeled as princesses in their husbands' tombs. These women have been called *titular princesses* because they appear to have this status from their title alone. Moreover, it can be demonstrated that some of them were descended from non-royal parents. These princesses seldom call themselves *bodily daughters of the king*.[3]

One could further subdivide the first group into three subgroups,

    a) those princesses who appear to have no recorded marriage,[4]

    b) those who married princes, and

    c) those princesses who married high-ranking officials.[5]

In spite of the extensive damage and deterioration that plague our sources, we probably know most about those princesses who married high-ranking officials.

---

[1] Of these, some were married, whilst others appear to have had no husband or children – such as Hedjetnub and Khekeretnebty of Abusir, and Hemetra II of Saqqara (all from the Fifth Dynasty).

[2] Eg. Queen Hetepheres II, daughter of Khufu, wife of Kawab, later married an as yet unknown king (possibly Djedefra); Khamerernebty II, daughter of an unknown king (possibly Khafra), married Menkaura; Rekhetra, daughter of Khafra, married an unknown king (perhaps Menkaura, but possibly a later ruler).

[3] But there are exceptions, such as Princess Iufy, Princess Khamerernebty I, etc.

[4] Eg. Hetepheres II, Khekeretnebty, Hedjetnub, Idwt. The difficulty with every princess is that, unless she appears in her husband's tomb, we are not likely to know if she was married. In their own tombs, princesses – and many non-royal women, too – do not include the name of a man. This is probably because of the 'second rule of compositional hierarchy', as G. Robins ('Some Principles of Compositional Dominance and Gender Hierarchy in Egyptian Art', *JARCE* 31 [1994]: 33, 36) calls it: that the husband takes precedence over the wife. While Robins was discussing funerary stelae, the rule applies even more so to a tomb. If her husband were depicted, the female tomb-owner would need to take a subordinate position within her own tomb and this would be undesirable.

[5] Eg. *zꜣt nswt nt ẖt.f* Khentkawes, wife of Khafkhufu II (who held the titles of *zꜣ nswt, imy-r mšꜥ, imy-r smswt imntyt, imy-r kꜣt n nswt, wr mḏ Šmꜥw, ẖry sštꜣ n nb.f* amongst others). See W. K. Simpson, *The Mastabas of Kawab, Khafkhufu I and II, Giza Mastabas* 2 (Boston, 1978), 23; Khamaat, who married the High Priest of Heliopolis.

These princesses were used to cement loyalties with men from the higher levels of the bureaucracy and they are recorded in substantial and often well-preserved tombs.

The earliest surviving record of this marriage practice is from the time of King Shepseskaf of the Fourth Dynasty. His daughter, Khamaat, was married to the High Priest of Heliopolis, Ptahshepses (buried at Saqqara). Ironically, in spite of her name being mentioned in flowery terms on Ptahshepses' magnificent false door, there is no other record, either verbal or pictorial to tell us anything else about Princess Khamaat.[6] Princess Khamerernebty, said to be the daughter of the Fifth Dynasty ruler, Nyuserra,[7] is the next princess we know who took part in a political marriage. She was married to Nyuserra's vizier, Ptahshepses, whose once-splendid tomb is at Abusir. She is featured a number of times on the reliefs there, her title being that of King's bodily daughter.[8] While only two examples of political marriages of this sort are known prior to King Djedkara, from the time of this king onwards, there was a proliferation of such political marriages, notably with the daughters of King Teti.

At least two of Teti's daughters were married to high officials: Watetkhethor, who was married to the vizier Mereruka, and Nubkhethor, who was the wife of vizier Kagemni. There were numerous other marriages of princesses in the era mentioned, but we cannot be sure about the family connections of many of those women claiming the title of King's Daughter, although Yoyotte[9] suggests that two more of Teti's daughters, both named Seshseshet, were married to Neferseshemptah and Shepsespuptah.[10]

The iconography of princesses in the Old Kingdom

During the Old Kingdom, princesses were indistinguishable in the iconographic record from other women of the richer classes. All were depicted dressed in tight, white shifts with broad shoulder straps that covered the breasts.[11] Usually, the broad collar (*wsḫ*) decorated the princess's neck, and she often wore bracelets and/or anklets, but her feet were invariably bare. This simple picture accords well with the few statues of princesses that we have from this period (*pl. II, 3*). Some princesses wore fillets or floral crowns on their wigs when they appeared in particular scenes (*fig. 1*). Occasionally, one is depicted in the panther skin or the bead-net dress,[12] but other females who belonged to the upper

---

[6] Mariette, *Mastabas,* C1, 112.

[7] The case is problematic: this woman had an original tomb directly in front of Nyuserra's pyramid temple; her daughter Meretites is *zȝt nswt*, often a strong indication that the mother was a real princess – but see further in this article.

[8] It is significant that both of the marriages mentioned here took place in times which had some element of political tension: Nyuserra's accession to the throne having followed the brief reigns of Neferefra and Shepseskara (for a discussion on this king, see M. Verner, 'Who was Shepseskaf and when did he reign?', in M. Bárta, J. Krejčí, eds., *Abusir and Saqqara in the Year 2000* [Prague, 2001], 581–602), whilst the accession of Teti evidently marked the arrival of a new branch or new family to the Egyptian throne (on this topic see H. Altenmüller, 'Bemerkungen zur Grundung der 6. Dynastie', in A. Eggebrecht, ed., *Festschrift Jurgen von Beckerath Zum 70. Geburtstag am 19. Februar 1990*, *HÄB* 30 (1990), 1–20. Manetho (Waddell, *Manetho*, 53) asserts that this king was murdered by his bodyguard.

[9] J. Yoyotte, 'Les Filles de Téti et la reine Sheshé du Papyrus Ebers', *RdE* 7 (1950): 184f.

[10] The former was Overseer of the Great Court, Superintendent of the priests of Teti's pyramid, *smr wʿty* and royal chamberlain, significant offices, but not the highest ones. The latter man, however, was even less distinguished, being a count and Keeper of the Royal Headdress – so neither man was of the first rank, and their children had lowly official status. N. Kanawati, 'Nepotism in the Old Kingdom', *BACE* 14 (2003): 65 suggests that as many as 8 daughters of Teti might be involved!

[11] The fact that breasts in profile protruded from beneath these straps is due to religious considerations as followed by Egyptian art conventions.

[12] The statue fragments of Neferhetepes I, for example, retain traces of this bead net garment (Smith, *Sculpture*, 33).
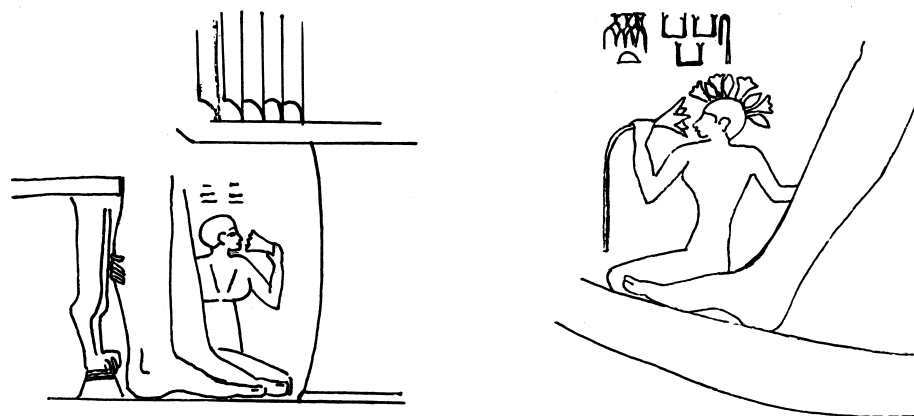
official class also wore these things from time to time. It was only the titulary of a princess that marked her out as being different from other upper class women.

There is little variety within the way in which the princesses are depicted in tombs. Like their male counterparts, princesses who were tomb-owners were depicted very simply, whether they were standing or sitting. Frequently, such tombs had only limited wall decorations – as in the case of the tomb of Khekeretnebty of Abusir. In the case of her sister, Hedjetnub, the chapel does not appear to have been decorated at all.[13]

Whenever the princess does appear in the tomb decoration, the emphatic impression is one of dignity, and most of the variations appearing among different scenes consist of changes in arm positions, as Harpur has already remarked.[14] When the princess appears in her husband's tomb, her images are not so frequent, and on occasions one might overlook her presence because she is depicted in miniature, often dwarfed by an offering table and the huge legs of her husband (*fig. 2*). While earlier representations of the princess as a wife have her as standing either behind or, more rarely, in front of her husband, from the time of Nyuserra onwards, the married princess can be found kneeling at the foot of her husband in some scenes. Biri Fay[15] recorded some time ago in relation to 3-dimensional art, that this image has been transferred from royal statuary, and first appears amongst our records during Djoser's time (*fig. 3*). The smaller size for these female relatives of the king is due to the belief that the king's social and religious status caused him to be shown as being so much larger than his female dependants.[16] As Schäfer has

[13] M. Verner, V. G. Callender, *Abusir VI. Djedkare's Family Cemetery* (Prague, 2002), 86f.
[14] Harpur, *DETOK*, 172.
[15] B. Fay, 'Royal Women as Represented in Sculpture During the Old Kingdom', in N. Grimal, ed., *Critères de datation stylistiques à l'Ancien Empire, BdE* 120 (1998), 161.
[16] While my own work has encompassed the statuary of princesses, I will not touch on this here because B. Fay has more than adequately introduced this topic.

pointed out, the smaller size of dependant figures 'only expresses decreasing rank' as well as 'power and authority',[17] and in this case, the tomb-owner is always the male, not the princess.

While the Heliopolis sculpture should probably be considered to be an example more of two-dimensional art than sculpture, the earliest appearance of the kneeling image of a woman in tomb relief decoration after this isolated example is attested from the chapel of Nefermaat at Meidum, where the kneeling figure is not a royal daughter (*fig. 4*).[18] The significance of the pose, which is similar to the hieroglyph of the woman in the 'giving birth' attitude, surely indicates that the pose is related to the theme of regeneration in the Afterlife. In connection with this, we note the frequent use of this icon in the tomb-owner's different activities in the marshes, together with the papyrus wreath so often used by these upper-class women. These are particularly frequent scenes in the Fifth Dynasty, when the Solar Cult placed its emphasis on growth and regeneration. The kneeling position, however, is met just as frequently in scenes where the tomb-owner is seated at the offering table.
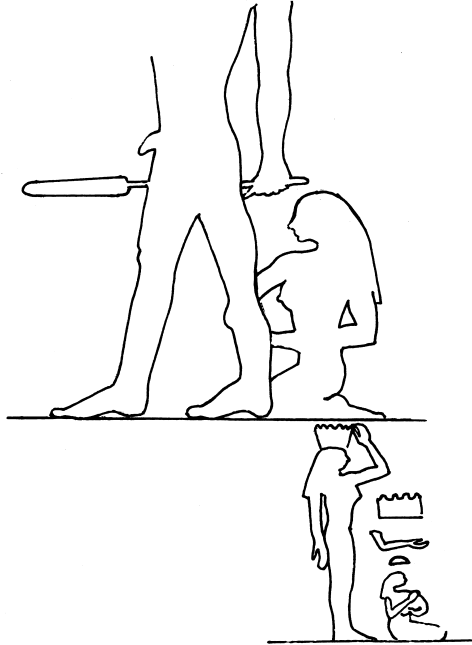
Fig. 4 Section from Nefermaat's niche chapel, showing the earliest non-royal image of a kneeling woman in miniature scale – note the tiny icon of the kneeling nurse in the register below (from Petrie, *Medum*, pl. XIX)

The earliest surviving princess depicted in 2-dimensional form, kneeling in this way, is Khamerernebty I (*fig. 5*).[19] Her pose is exceptional, for unlike other kneeling women, she is depicted facing her husband while, in another very damaged scene, she is of almost the same proportions as her husband.[20] (Usually, such figures are in miniature.) Harpur[21] has remarked about standing wives, that it is rare to have the tomb owner facing his spouse; so this pose, where the kneeling princess faces her husband, must be a particular mark of esteem for the wife, and we wonder at her implied status here.

As early as the Fourth Dynasty, the princess could be depicted in what Nadine Cherpion so aptly labelled 'une sorte d'hieroglyph plastique'.[22] Probably Princess (?) Nefretkau II,[23] wife of Khafkhufu I was the earliest of these depictions to survive (*fig. 6*). Titular princesses, such as Nensedjerka, and commoner noblewomen were also depicted like this during the Fifth Dynasty.

Our impoverished records regarding the princess are much worse for the second group, those princesses who became queens. Only Meresankh III's tomb is more or less complete. This makes it impossible to view the development of iconography in

---

[17] H. Schäfer, *Principles of Egyptian Art* [ed. E. Brunner-Traut and translated and edited by J. Baines] (Oxford, 1986), 231.

[18] Harpur, *DETOK*, 77; Petrie, *Medum*, pl. XIX.

[19] M. Verner, *Abusir I. The Mastaba of Ptahshepses. Reliefs* (Prague, 1977), pls. 16, 49.

[20] *Ibid.*, pl. 49.

[21] Harpur, *DETOK*, 78.

[22] N. Cherpion, 'Sentiment conjugal et Figuration à l'Ancien Émpire', *SDAIK* 28 (1995), 34. See also Schäfer, *Principles of Egyptian Art*, 230ff., where he refers to the prominence of the more important individuals in the tomb, and the reliance of these smaller dependents upon the tomb owner.

[23] Unfortunately, the wife of Khafkhufu I has through accidental damage been deprived of all titles except that of *ḥmt.f* in her husband's tomb. However, the fact that she is the earliest female to have new iconographic elements (the lotus, her stance, etc.), suggests that she may have been a princess (see further in this essay).

regard to these women. However, by the Sixth Dynasty, the iconography of the queen begins to differ from that of the princess. Unfortunately, our records of reliefs are very few in number, and only small samples of Sixth Dynasty scenes from the newer French excavations have been published, so that not a lot can be analysed as yet. Queen Iput I, a woman who was apparently a king's daughter, is depicted in a scene involving a goddess.[24] Her granddaughter, Neit, has a scene from royal iconography showing lions wearing a harness, and this image is also present in the precincts of Queen Inenek-Inty's tomb – although this woman was

Fig. 5 The kneeling figure of Princess Khamerernebty, wife of Vizier Ptahshepses, faces her husband (from Verner, *Abusir* I, pl. 22)

not a royal daughter, apparently. Thus, it seems to me that the iconography of the queen (whether she was a king's child or not) departed from the iconography of the princess during the Sixth Dynasty, and, more particularly, in the time of Pepy I.
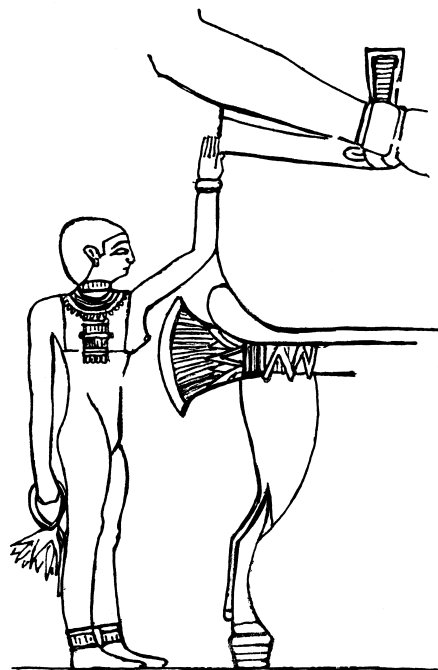
Despite their limited iconography, though, it is possible that both princes and princesses played another role in the iconography of the Old Kingdom wall scenes. Staehelin[25] has already traced the rise and decline of certain icons within the predominantly male iconography of the Old Kingdom, and in her conclusions she has suggested that new themes among wall decorations depicted in the tombs of non-royal persons, had been copied from royal scenes (in the same way as Djoser's images of miniscule women had been transferred). From these examples, other officials further down the social ladder had also copied the icons of their superiors. This was, Staehelin[26] asserts, an early example of the so-called *democratisation of the Afterlife*. While the use of the word *imitation* would more exactly describe this practice, the suggestion is perceptive and significant.

Whether the mechanism permitting the transfer of icons from the royal to the non-royal sphere was the decision of the king, or that of the tomb-owner,[27] is more difficult to decide. Perhaps the presence of the king's children in tombs outside of the specifically royal cemeteries (namely, princes and princesses buried in their own monuments) may have been the initial vehicle for this transmission of royal iconography. It has long been noted by Harpur[28] and others, that the tombs of Rahotep, Meresankh III and Nebemakhet have frequently been the sources of tomb scenes that seem to have been derived from

Fig. 6 Nefretkau, the wife of Khafkhufu I, depicted in miniature standing behind her husband (redrawn from Simpson, *Giza Mastabas* 2, fig. 30)

---

[24] Firth – Gunn, *Teti Pyramid Cemeteries* II, pl. 56. It is most clearly Iput I with a *wȝś* sceptre in this scene, as the two females wear different wigs.

[25] Staehelin, *Tracht*, 267f.

[26] *Ibid.*, 267

[27] *Ibid.*, as Staehelin ponders: p. 268. (She talks about the king bestowing and the commoner usurping the use of icons).

[28] Harpur, *DETOK*, 181, where she stresses the importance of the iconography from the tomb of this woman and her son, Nebemakhet.

royal iconography. In Meresankh's tomb, such scenes as the *zšš wȝḏ* or the carving of the tomb-owner's statue clearly have their origins in the royal domain. All of these tomb owners claim to be royal children, and it would be a logical development if these new topoi had come into the artistic repertoire via concessions granted to the royal offspring.

The titulary of princesses in the Old Kingdom

From the physical relationship of the princess to her father came the chief title by which a princess is known, *zȝt nswt*.[29] This was the oldest title of a princess but, sometime during the Third Dynasty, the title of *zȝt nswt nt ẖt.f* ('King's Daughter of his body', or 'Bodily King's Daughter', as some prefer) was used for Princess Redjef.[30] (There are other title extensions we could mention, but they are not so relevant to this discussion.) The more recent title implies that there may have been some distinction between the princesses who carried it and others who only used the title of *zȝt nswt*. However, it needs to be said that many princesses who used the longer title, also entitled themselves as simply *zȝt nswt* on occasions, too.

At some time in the Fourth Dynasty, the title of *zȝt nswt* ('King's Daughter') was given to women who were not the daughters of kings.[31] One thing that is not always clear, however, is what the relationship was between those princesses and the Egyptian king. Queen Meresankh III was one woman who held both *zȝt nswt* and *zȝt nswt nt ẖt.f* titles, yet she was clearly a granddaughter, and not the daughter of a king. Theoretically, she is classed as a titular princess under Schmitz's criteria.

I do not feel satisfied with this designation when I compare this queen to the titular princess Nebti from Koptos. There are two decrees[32] from Koptos which indicate that Nebti acquired her titles as a result of a petition to the king. Her husband had asked the king to determine the status of his wife and Koptos J constitutes the reply from the king.[33] His answer sets out a titulary for Nebti and, in my opinion, it is significant that her royal daughter title is *zȝt nswt wrt* – a title which is not the normal indication of a princess and, moreover, is only carried by one other princess during the pharaonic period. Clearly, Nebti's relationship to the king differs substantially from that of Meresankh III and the grandfather from whom she was descended, yet both women are grouped as titular princesses.

There are several cases where these so-called titular princesses were the granddaughters of kings[34] – as Meresankh was – and on one occasion that we know about, a *titular princess* could be more than three generations removed from the king. Princess Nensedjerkai, who was the great-granddaughter of King Khufu is a striking example of this. Other women whose parentage is unknown might have been commoners, but the only way we can pick them out is because they do not label themselves as *bodily daughters of the king*, and because of the inclusion of other titles that were given to courtiers, rather than royal relations. Chief amongst the courtier titles that were used by titular princesses are those of *rḫt nswt*, *ḥkrt nswt*

---

[29] See B. Schmitz, *Untersuchungen zum Titel sȝ-njśwt 'Königssohn'*, (Bonn, 1976), *passim*.

[30] Statue of Redjef from probably early in the Third Dynasty figure and now in Turin Museum; Smith (*Sculpture*, 38) considers that the princess must have been able to command a fine sculptor for her statue – implying that princesses had considerable wealth (the king, however, may have donated the statue to his daughter).

[31] Apart from the example of Queen Meresankh III, there is the clearly defined example of Princess Iufy of Hemamieh, who was probably the eldest daughter of a woman named Khentkawes and her husband, Khakhent (see *Bahrein and Hemamieh*, 31–33; pl. X), neither of whom was of royal origin. Petrie dates her to the Fourth Dynasty, but others place her at the beginning of the Fifth Dynasty.

[32] Goedicke, *Königl. Dokumente*, Koptos J, 197–202; Koptos K, 206–213. In the same way, the king set out Shemay's place in Upper Egypt (Koptos I, 172f.).

[33] See Schmitz, *Königssohn*, 177f. Schmitz adds (178) that the decrees are important for displaying from what type of group the titular princesses were chosen.

[34] Nefretka, the daughter of Neferetkau II; the two daughters of Weneshet; Meretites, the daughter of Khamerernebty I, etc.

and *ḫkrt nswt wᶜtt*. Sometimes these titles create an occasional problem: Princess Khamerernebty I, alleged daughter of Nyuserra and wife of Ptahshepses, includes the title of *ḫkrt nswt wᶜtt* among her oft-cited titularies within her husband's tomb. She also appears within another tomb that earlier had been designed for her, known as *Grab der Prinzessinnen*. This tomb is directly in front of Nyuserra's pyramid temple, suggesting a very close relationship to that king. Schmitz[35] has already indicated that mixed titles invariably distinguish a non-royal princess. Should we class Khamerernebty as a titular princess?

In the arguments of Junker, Schmitz and others, Queen Meresankh III's case has always been the one which clinched the argument that a *zȝt nswt/ zȝt nswt nt ḫt.f* was sometimes not a genuine royal daughter. Meresankh's known parents were Prince Kawab and Princess (later Queen) Hetepheres II. Drawing a parallel with Prince Nefermaat, the eldest son of Sneferu, Junker[36] has suggested that Meresankh III gained this title on the grounds that her father, Kawab, was also the eldest son of a king – presumably, Khufu. The situation seems clear enough: Meresankh had evidently been born to two descendants of Khufu, and was therefore only the granddaughter of a king. But in this world, things are often not what they seem, and this is so in the case of Meresankh. Her mother, Queen Hetepheres II, became at some stage a royal wife. Because Meresankh III assumed the titles of a princess – and indeed plastered them all over the walls of her tomb – it has sometimes been assumed that Meresankh became the adopted daughter of her stepfather – and that is indeed a possible situation. However, if an adoption *had* taken place, the status of Meresankh becomes ambivalent. Were adopted children treated in the same way as natural children in the Old Kingdom? If they were, it is very possible that this alleged adoption would make Meresankh a legitimate King's Daughter of his body. In such a case, was she then actually *entitled* to use that label, which, up until that time, is thought to have been the mark of a true princess?

In my opinion, it is rather questionable to use this princess as an example of a woman bearing royal titles which inaccurately denote her position, for the simple reason that we do not know how the Egyptians of her time viewed Meresankh's situation. She may have carried those titles because of adoption, or because her father was an eldest son, or there may be another reason of which we are ignorant at present.[37] Meresankh is, however, one of the few princesses for whom both parents are attested. Both of them bear the highest credentials for being physical children of the king. If the royal blood is pure in a king's child, and two of those children beget a child of their own, how pure then is the royal blood in that child? Meresankh III may well deserve her *zȝt nswt nt ḫt.f* title, not because of a theoretical adoption by a king, or because of her father's title, but because the Egyptians of her day may have considered her to have the undiluted blood of a king in her veins. Unfortunately, this proposition is only another hypothesis – but it does suggest that Meresankh's position is not as cut and dried as we have at times assumed.

There are several more problematic princesses that bother me – but I will confine my observations to one alone: Princess Meretites of G 4140, in Khufu's Western Field, who has been the subject of some recent remarks.[38] This princess, who is

---

[35] Schmitz, *Königssohn*, 29f, classes her as a titular princess, but curiously finishes her discussion by leaving the question of her relationship open: 'Ob es sich bei ihr tatsächlich um eine Tochter des Nj-wsr-Rᶜ handelt, is später noch zu untersuchen'. Schmitz's conclusions (p. 123) about some being the true offspring of kings is really rather muddled, which is not surprising when we have women like Khamerernebty I to consider.

[36] Junker, *Gîza* I, 152f.

[37] In a lengthy and stimulating discussion with Professor Fayza Haikal, it was pointed out that modern Egyptians have a very elastic definition for son and daughter labels, a teacher's female students even being considered as daughters – with the consequent obligation to treat them in the same manner.

[38] P. Jánosi, *Giza in der 4. Dynastie, Die Baugeschichte und Belegung einer Nekropole des Alten Reiches. Band I: Die Mastabas der Kernfriedhöfe und die Felsgräber*, DÖAW 30 (2005), 2.3.3 says her origins are in doubt and she is not a born princess; P. Der Manuelian, *Slab Stelae of the Giza Necropolis*, PPYE 7 (2003), 96 says she was probably a titular princess.

represented by one of the finest of all slab stelae, recently redrawn by Peter Der Manuelian, is designated on the slab as *z3t nswt nt ḫt.f*, seriously damaged though the title is. Her date is the Fourth Dynasty, thought to be the reign of Khufu (and one would therefore consider it very likely at this historically early stage, that she was a born princess). But, because she is buried in the Western Cemetery of Giza, Schmitz[39] and others prefer to classify her as a titular princess on the premise that if she were royal, she would have been buried in the Eastern Field, along with other well-known royal offspring.

The grounds for this caution are dubious, in my opinion. In all probability, Meretites was married and had a tomb not far from the burial of her unknown husband, somewhere in the Western Field. In this case, it would surely be her proper place to be positioned somewhere near his tomb. As it was, hers was the largest of all the burial chambers in the G 4000 cemetery, and the only tomb with a slab stele that was lined and paved. In addition to the stela, she had a reserve head – two in fact were found in her tomb – which was also a prestigious item of burial at the time. Clearly, her burial arrangements were among the best in quality and it seems to me that the credentials in favour of her high estate are greater than the one detraction that has been suggested. We just do not know what the background of this woman was and it seems arbitrary to decide on an ancient relationship merely on the grounds that the woman was not buried in Khufu's Eastern Field.

As a side note of interest, it should not be forgotten that two princesses buried on the outskirts of the royal cemetery in Abusir, were even further removed from the pyramid of their putative father than Meretites was. Nevertheless, Eugen Strouhal's analysis of the remains of these women and those of King Djedkara-Izezi established beyond doubt the fact that their claims to be princesses were legitimate.[40] It is therefore probably better to be cautious in the case of Meretites.

In this paper on the iconography of the Old Kingdom princess, much of my time has been spent on the titles of the princesses, but it is essentially through the titulary that we identify and discriminate among our various groups of these women; in the iconography alone we cannot detect them. The real and titular princesses are portrayed in a similar way to each other, and that iconography is virtually identical to the iconography of non-royal noble women of the Old Kingdom. We need the titularies to help us find the princess in the scene. However, some of our earlier guidelines regarding the titulary of princesses may in fact need to be looked at again; the last word has not been said on it, in my opinion.

---

[39] Schmitz, *Königssohn*, 127.

[40] E. Strouhal, 'Anthropological and archaeological identification of an ancient Egyptian royal family (5th Dynasty)', *International Journal of Anthropology* 7 (1992): 43–63; E. Strouhal, M. F. Gaballa, 'King Djedkare Isesi and his daughters', in W. V. Davies, R. Walker, eds., *Biological Anthropology of the Nile Valley,* British Museum (London, 1993), 104–118; and E. Strouhal, in Verner, Callender, *Abusir* VI, 119–132, esp. 127–130.

THE OLD KINGDOM ART AND ARCHAEOLOGY
PROCEEDINGS OF THE CONFERENCE HELD IN PRAGUE,
MAY 31 – JUNE 4, 2004

Miroslav Bárta
editor

Autoři příspěvků:
Nicole Alexanian, James P. Allen, Susan Allen, Hartwig Altenmüller, Tarek El Awady, Miroslav Bárta, Edith Bernhauer, Edward Brovarski, Vivienne G. Callender, Vassil Dobrev, Laurel Flentye, Rita Freed, Julia Harvey, Salima Ikram, Peter Jánosi, Nozomu Kawai, Jaromír Krejčí, Kamil O. Kuraszkiewicz, Renata Landgráfová, Serena Love, Dušan Magdolen, Peter Der Manuelian, Ian Mathieson, Karol Myśliwiec, Stephen R. Phillips, Gabriele Pieke, Ann Macy Roth, Joanne M. Rowland, Yayoi Shirai, Regine Schulz, Nigel Strudwick, Miroslav Verner, Hana Vymazalová, Sakuji Yoshimura, Christiane Ziegler