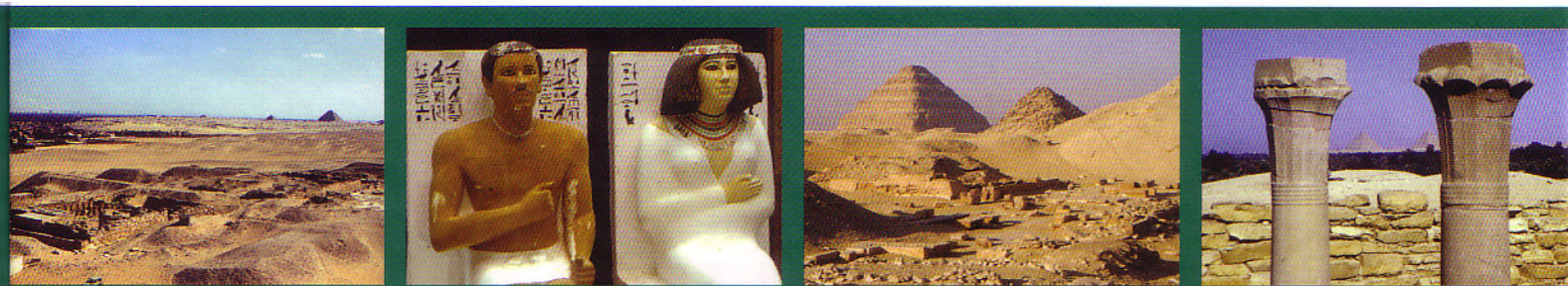


# THE OLD KINGDOM ART AND ARCHAEOLOGY

## 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

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## 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.<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup>

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

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> N. Grimal, ed., *Lex critères de datation stylistiques à l'Ancien Empire*, Bibliothèque d'Étude 120 (Cairo, 1998).

<sup>3</sup> 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 Handwörterbuch 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.



# Little women: gender and hierarchic proportion in Old Kingdom mastaba chapels

Ann Macy Roth

One of the basic principles of Egyptian art is the concept of hierarchic proportion, the depiction of more important people at a larger scale than less important people, so that comparative proportion represents rank in the hierarchy. H. Schäfer traces this tendency back to the respect early peoples felt for the strength of large, healthy people, 'but when an Egyptian emphasizes someone by exaggerating his size, this is meant less to indicate physical strength than power and authority'.<sup>1</sup> He cites an example where the scale of representation decreases from left to right, which, he argues, 'expresses decreasing rank'.<sup>2</sup> E. Brunner-Traut gives 'the emphasizing of figures through size (equivalence of size and importance [*Bedeutungsmaßstab*])' as the first of the 'single rules' encompassed by her general term, 'aspective'.<sup>3</sup>

Despite the frequent citation of this principle in works on Egyptian art, it has been little studied, particularly in comparison with questions of the representation of proportions within a single human figure, and the quality of the 'importance' or 'power' that it represents is left vague. While comparative size clearly implies political or bureaucratic status in some instances (one would not expect, for example, an official to be represented at a smaller scale than one of his subordinates), the nature of that status is not well defined. Schäfer notes that gods and the king are normally shown at the same scale, although the king is normally shown at a larger scale than his officials, and the officials at a larger scale than their subordinates and servants.

When examined more closely, moreover, these differences in scale are themselves variable, and form no consistent pattern reflecting a rigid hierarchy of status. These variations in scale raise a number of questions. Was the comparative size of the figures left to the discretion of the individual artist? Was it dependent upon the precise social or political rank of the individuals depicted, or upon general societal conceptions of status, such as the comparative status of men and women? Were the actual comparative heights of the individuals a factor? Did the proportions of the actors depend upon the nature of the scene? Did relative proportions vary over time? To what extent were they based on practical considerations of composition? The present study will attempt to answer some of these questions.

## Methods and limitations

In an initial attempt to investigate what variations in comparative scale meant to the ancient Egyptians who created and viewed Egyptian art, I have considered the limited case of the wife represented with her husband in reliefs and paintings in his tomb chapel. I have excluded royal representations, where the kingship of the husband must have affected the comparative scale, and I have limited the survey to the Old Kingdom; however, both royal representations and examples from other periods will be cited for purposes of comparison. I have also excluded pair statues, which generally represent the couple at the same scale. Statues in which the wife is shown at a smaller scale are most likely influenced by the two-dimensional representations.

While the wife is normally represented at a smaller scale, the difference varies significantly. L. Meskell, in a discussion of the New Kingdom evidence, argues that

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<sup>1</sup> H. Schäfer, *Principles of Egyptian Art* (E. Brunner Traut, ed., transl. J. Baines, Oxford, 1974; original edition 1919), 231.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> E. Brunner-Traut, 'Epilogue: Aspective', in Schäfer, *Principles*, 431.

since 'size provides a reliable yardstick for judging the relative importance of the subjects portrayed', and since both the tomb owner and other males are 'larger than the females portrayed, ...normative status includes gender relativity'.<sup>4</sup> However, Old Kingdom tomb chapel scenes showing both men and women at work show them at exactly the same scale. There is no evidence of a scale differential that is inherent in gender. Within a single scene, normally only the tomb owner, his wife, and his children can be shown at a larger scale than the other people in the scene, suggesting that it is ownership of the chapel and relationship to its owner that lead to this enlarged scale. The question addressed here, then, is why the wife is sometimes shown at the same scale as her husband, and sometimes at a reduced scale.

In his discussion of the question, Schäfer initially cited an Old Kingdom depiction of a man and wife that are shown at a natural scale, with the wife only slightly shorter than her husband. Yet only a page later, he cited an example of a wife shown at a much smaller scale, embracing the calf of her husband's leg, so that her 'trust in his protection is charmingly expressed'.<sup>5</sup> In fact, patterns can be found in these variations that suggest that such individual, impressionistic interpretations are inadequate. J. Swinton has recently identified some of these patterns.<sup>6</sup> However, she has divided all representations of the wife into two categories, 'full sized' and 'small sized', which obscures some of the distinctions. It will be shown below that there are finer gradations in scales, and that several variables appear to be significant for determining them, including date, proximity to the offering place, origin of the scene, function of the scene in the tomb chapel, location within the chapel, and even the location of the tomb.

To understand the variations in scale, it is essential to determine exactly what they are. A simple measurement of height cannot be used to determine the comparative scale of a man and his wife, since it is difficult to determine the comparative height of seated and kneeling figures. Even when both are standing, the conventional poses of a striding male and standing female distort their comparative heights slightly. For the purpose of this study, measurements were made from the top of the head to the base of the torso, that is, the seat in the case of seated or kneeling postures and an estimate of that same point in the case of standing postures (fig. 1).<sup>7</sup> This is the largest rigid length in a body, as the head is never tilted in traditional Egyptian art. The comparative scale can then be expressed as a percentage, the torso-plus-head length of the wife relative to that of her husband. As fig. 1 illustrates, women's torsos are proportionately somewhat shorter and their upper legs somewhat longer than those of men in depictions of this period, so that the

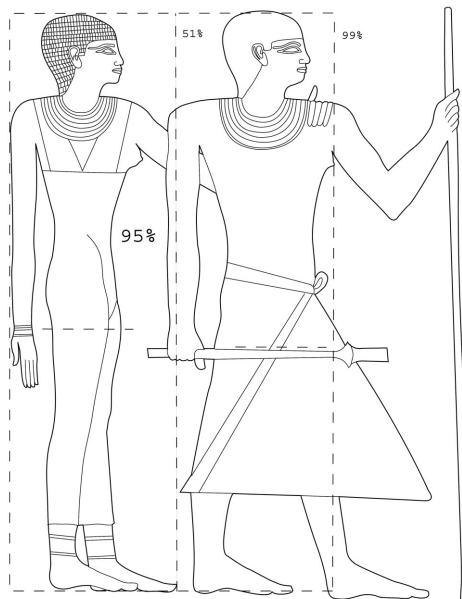


Fig. 1 Tjetu and Hetep from Giza 2001. The horizontal dashed line represents the estimated base of the torso used for measurement in this study, which here gives the wife's scale as 95% that of her husband's. The larger dashed box represents the area occupied by the wife, which is 99% of the area occupied by her husband. The smaller box, labeled 51%, represents the area she would occupy if her arm were not extended to embrace him (drawing is by the author)

<sup>4</sup> L. Meskell, 'Size matters: Sex, gender and status in Egyptian iconography', in J. Hope et al., eds., *Redefining Archaeology: Feminist Perspectives* (Canberra, 1998), 176. However, with a few significant exceptions, which will be discussed below, most New Kingdom representations seem to portray wives at relative scales that might correspond to their natural difference in stature.

<sup>5</sup> Schäfer, *Principles*, 233–234.

<sup>6</sup> J. Swinton, 'The Depiction of Wives of Tomb Owners in the Later Old Kingdom', *BACE* 14 (2003): 95–101. I am indebted to V. Callender for giving me a photocopy of this article at the Prague conference at which I presented this paper. Swinton's brief discussion (less than three pages without illustrations) forms the first half of an article devoted primarily to arguing the intriguing proposition that the frequent omission of the wife in Sixth Dynasty tombs results

comparative scales as determined by measuring the head and torso are somewhat less than would be produced by measuring the height of standing figures. However, this distortion in scale should be the same for all examples, so it does not affect the comparison of the percentages. In examples where the depiction is insufficiently preserved to allow these measurements to be taken, other measurements on the body are taken and compared to complete examples from the same tomb; the percentages are then worked out proportionately.<sup>8</sup>

All measurements cited here have been taken from publications, when possible from photographs or from facsimile drawings. While there are obviously significantly subjective elements in calculating these measurements, several checks done upon the calculations (for example, by using photographs taken at different angles, or comparing facsimile drawings with photographs, or measuring again after an interval of several days to control for subjectivity) resulted in variations of no more than two or three percentage points.

P. Munro has made the interesting point that it is not only the height of the figure that indicates status, but the total area occupied, as defined by a rectangle tangent to the furthest extended extremity in each direction.<sup>9</sup> Thus, a man, standing in the conventional position with a staff before him might be the same height as a woman with her hands at her sides or sniffing a lotus, but would take up almost twice the horizontal space.<sup>10</sup> Munro argues that it is this horizontal dimension, and hence the total area occupied, that distinguishes depictions of gods from kings. But although this horizontal dimension is significant for individuals standing in isolation, it cannot be a measure of status when a man and wife are shown together. The wife's embrace of her husband, which is a way of emphasizing her subordinate status,<sup>11</sup> radically increases that dimension, in comparison to a woman who is not embracing her husband, and would thus distort the comparison of their scale of representation. For example, the woman shown embracing her husband in *fig. 1* is 95% the scale of her husband when the torso-and-head ratios are compared. In terms of area, she occupies a rectangle with an area 99% as large as the area her husband occupies. If the same woman were not embracing her husband, however, she would occupy an area only 51% of the size of her husband's, despite the fact that the representations are at the same scale, and despite the fact that the ancient viewer would probably have perceived the embracing wife as more subordinate to her husband than the same woman simply standing behind him. This difference between embracing and non-embracing wives would dwarf differences in the real scale of representation, and hence comparisons of areas are not useful in this particular study.

Because the date of the tomb was found to be a significant factor in determining the comparative scales at which couples were represented, the patterns are discussed here in three chronological groups. This survey is by no means complete, but includes most major published monuments as well as some more minor ones.

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from a tendency in that period to begin decorating one's chapel later in life. Although I cannot agree with her assumption that 'tomb owners' reluctance to portray the dead' is responsible for the absence of wives, the increased percentage of adult children that she notes is interesting.

<sup>7</sup> This point is normally quite easy to visualize by following the curve of the buttocks, which is almost always indicated.

<sup>8</sup> One exception was in the tomb chapel of Mereruka. Mereruka's upper body is rarely preserved in the chapel, so the floor-to-waist measurement was used in most cases where both figures were standing. Percentages based on such measurements were determined to be about 3% higher than those based on the head-plus-torso measurements, so the percentages attributed to standing pairs were reduced accordingly in *table 5*.

<sup>9</sup> P. Munro, 'Auszeichnung durch graphische Mittel', *LÄ I* (1977), cols. 582–586.

<sup>10</sup> The fact that women normally occupy less horizontal space than men was raised in my article 'The Usurpation of Hem-Re': An Old Kingdom 'Sex-Change Operation', in M. el-Damaty, M. Trad, eds., *Egyptian Museum Collections around the World: Studies for the Centennial of the Egyptian Museum, Cairo* (Cairo, 2002), 1022.

<sup>11</sup> W. K. Simpson, 'Amor dei: *Nṯr mrr rmt m t3 w3* (Sh. Sai. 147–148) and the Embrace', in J. Assmann, E. Feucht, R. Grieshammer, eds., *Fragen an die altägyptische Literatur: Studien zum Gedenken an Eberhard Otto*, (Wiesbaden, 1977), 493–498.

### Meidum through the Early Fifth Dynasty (*table 1*)

Prior to the Fourth Dynasty tombs at Meidum, and indeed in the apparently later tombs at Dahshur and the earliest parts of the Giza cemeteries, husbands and wives were not depicted together, but each was accorded a separate cult space. At the two preserved decorated Meidum mastabas, wives were depicted in the principal cult places of their husbands; and, quite anomalously, husbands were depicted in the cult places of their wives.<sup>12</sup>

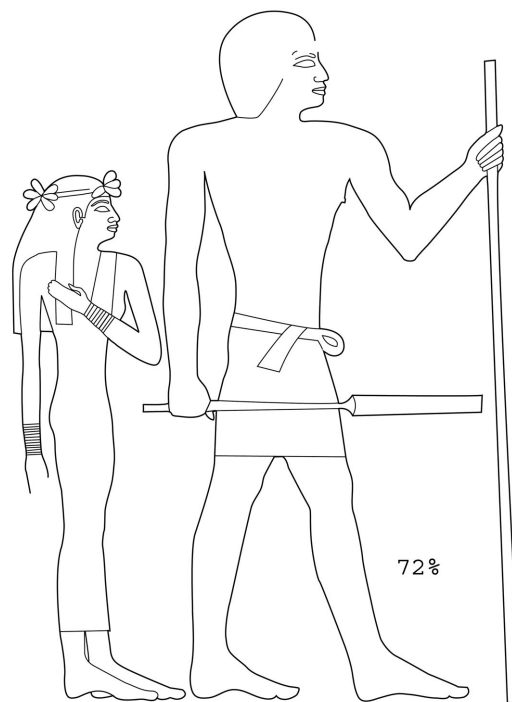
**Table 1** Tombs of the Fourth and Early Fifth Dynasty. Ratios represent the wife's scale as a percentage of her husband's. Boldfaced scales are located on the false door. Scales given in parentheses compare figures in different registers.

<i>Husband</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Site</i>	<i>Scale (%)</i>	<i>Source</i>
Rahotep	4E	Meidum	72, 72	Harpur, <i>The Tombs of Nefermaat and Rahotep</i>
Nofret	4E	Meidum	<b>100</b>	
Nefermaat	4E	Meidum	(72), 81, 100	
Itet	4E	Meidum	(60), <b>100, 100?</b>	
Khufukhaf I	4E	Giza 7140	76, 91	Simpson, <i>Giza Mastabas 3</i>
Shery	4	Saqqara	89, <b>98</b>	Borchardt, <i>CG 1394</i>
Nihetepkhnun	4	Giza	85, <b>96</b>	Abu Bakr, <i>Excavations at Giza 1949–1950</i>
Teti	4	Giza	<b>89</b>	Cherpion, <i>Mastabas et Hypogées</i>
Senenuka	4	Giza 2041	<b>93, 100</b>	Reisner photographs, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
Kaninesut	5E	Giza 2155	85, <b>98</b>	Junker, <i>Giza II</i>
Nesutnefer	5E	Giza 4970	85, 90, 92, <b>96, 97, 100</b>	Junker, <i>Giza III</i>

Despite the small sample, comparing the representation of the two couples makes it clear that the context of the representation has affected the scale, even at this early period. In the tomb of Rahotep and Nofret, Nofret is represented twice at 72% in the recess dedicated to her husband (*fig. 2*), and at 100% of his size in her own recess.

In the tomb of Nefermaat, his wife Itet is represented at 72%, 81% and 100% in his chapel; and at 60% and twice at 100% in her own chapel. Although most of these scales could represent a natural difference in height, if this were the case, one would expect the proportions to be consistent. The smallest scales in each chapel are cases in which Itet is represented in the register below Nefermaat, which apparently affects the scale. Those two examples aside, the wives are clearly shown at a larger scale in their own chapels than they are in the chapels of their husbands, and this seems also to hold true

for other women: Nub, perhaps a secondary wife or an adult daughter, is shown at 64% in Nefermaat's chapel and 75% in Itet's. Moreover, all of the examples



**Fig. 2** Rahotep and Nofret from the chapel of Rahotep at Meidum. Nofret is represented at 72% the size of her husband (drawing is by the author)

<sup>12</sup> A. M. Roth, 'The Absent Spouse: Patterns and Taboos in Egyptian Tomb Decoration', *JARCE* 36 (1999): 37–53.

in which these women are shown at 100% are located on the false door. While in some cases, this equality can be attributed to the symmetrical arrangement of figures on the tablet of the false door, the figures of husband and wife are not always in a symmetrical position.<sup>13</sup> The relative scale of the wife at Meidum thus seems to depend upon who is the principal object of cult in the chapel, whether the couple is represented in the same register, and whether the representations are located on the false door.

In the later Fourth Dynasty, at Giza and in one case at Saqqara, most women are represented at approximately the same scale as their husbands. Scales of less than 85% seem to be rare; the only clear case in *table 1* is the chapel of Khufukhaf I, one of the earliest Giza examples, where his wife is represented at 80% (though in another representation she is shown at 91%). Neither of these examples is from the false door; and as at Meidum, it is the representations on the false door that tend to represent the wife at the largest comparative scale. An interesting Fourth Dynasty example is that from the false door of Senenuka (G 2041). On the tablet of his false door his wife is represented at natural scale; on the jambs, however, she is represented at exactly the same scale as her husband, but her legs are somewhat exaggerated in length, so that her total height is 105% of her husband's. This can probably be explained by the fact that she has many fewer titles than he does, and the line of hieroglyphs on the upper part of the jamb is consequently shorter. The upper part of her body is thus carved at a higher level to fill the space.

Early Fifth Dynasty tombs, those of Kaninesut and Nesutnefer, seem to follow the same pattern as the Fourth Dynasty examples. The range is between 85 and 100%, with the higher end of that range belonging to representations of the couple on the false door. Note that in the case of Kaninesut, the relationship of the figures is in the upper range even though he is represented on the tablet and his wife is on the jambs of the false door.

### Middle and Later Fifth Dynasty (*tables 2, 3*)

After the first few reigns of the Fifth Dynasty, the pattern continues, but with some variations. In some cases, the wife continues to be shown at natural or close

to natural scale with respect to her husband, but in two specific contexts, she is consistently shown at a radically reduced scale, comparable to the smaller scale that had previously been used for the servants and children of the tomb owner.

The first type of scene in which the wife is radically reduced is that in which the husband is seated in a chair while his wife kneels at his feet, a posture that becomes common in the middle Fifth Dynasty. In such cases, the wife tends to be represented at a scale between 60% and 70% that of her husband, although she is sometimes represented at an even smaller scale, and more rarely at a slightly larger one (*fig. 3*).



**Fig. 3** Ti and Neferhetepes from his tomb at Saqqara (south wall of the main chamber). She is represented at 60% the scale of her husband (drawing is by the author)

<sup>13</sup> One example is on the architrave over the false door of Itet, in which Nefermaat is shown trapping birds for her. The representations are at equal scale in Mariette's drawing, and about 93% in Petrie's (Y. Harpur, *The Tombs of Nefermaat and Rahotep at Maidum. Discovery, Destruction and Reconstruction* [Oxford, 2001], 81, fig. 82). Although neither drawing is a true facsimile, Mariette saw the entire scene intact, and his drawing indicates that he received the impression that the figures were the same size.

Interestingly, a similar pose, and a scale in the same range, is attested at the tomb of Nefermaat at Meidum, where he is standing, and Nub, a daughter or secondary wife, is shown kneeling at his feet at a comparative scale of 64%. There are no examples in the later Fourth Dynasty, however, to my knowledge.

In the second scene type, the wife appears at an even smaller scale, between 35% and 55%. These are the scenes in which the husband is shown spearing fish and throwing a throw-stick at fowl in the marshes. His wife either kneels at his feet or stands before him, sometimes pointing out a desirable bird. These scenes seem to have entered the repertoire somewhat later than the scenes with the kneeling wife, probably in the later part of the reign of Nyusera.<sup>14</sup>

There were earlier parallels to these scenes, complete with a tiny wife, in the mortuary temple of Sahura at Abusir.<sup>15</sup> Although these scenes survive only in fragments, Sahura's queen seems to have been depicted at a scale about 43% that of her husband. This smaller size presumably represents the status distinction between a king and a non-king, rather than a gender distinction. The scenes in private tombs in the later Fifth Dynasty were clearly derived from such royal models. It seems likely that the scale at which the wife is represented in private tombs was thus borrowed along with the scene in which she is represented.

The scale of the kneeling wife may also have royal antecedents. The earliest known depiction of a royal family, the representation of the wife, daughter, and another female relative at the feet of the king in the little shrine of Netjerikhet at Heliopolis<sup>16</sup> shows at least one of the women, and possibly all three, in a kneeling position. The scale of these women is difficult to determine, since the king is not preserved above the knee, but they are clearly smaller than any of the non-royal representations known, reaching barely to his ankle. It seems likely that, borrowed into the non-royal repertoire initially at Meidum, where wives were normally shown at natural or nearly natural size, this pose was associated with a slightly diminished stature as opposed to the direct copying of scale we find in the fishing and fowling scenes. (It is perhaps significant that the some of the earliest three-dimensional representations of wives at a diminished scale also show the wife as kneeling at her husband's feet.<sup>17</sup>)

The adoption of these two scene types from the royal repertoire continued to influence the scale at which the wife was depicted in much later versions of the scenes. For example, in the Eighteenth Dynasty, when wives were almost universally represented at the same scale as their husbands, they could still be shown at a significantly smaller scale in scenes of fishing and fowling (for example in the tomb chapel of Nakht<sup>18</sup>) and scenes in which they were shown kneeling at his feet (for example in the burial chamber of Sennefer<sup>19</sup>).

The pattern can be seen in tombs of the middle and later Fifth Dynasty at Giza (table 2). Most wives are shown at scale in the 80–95% range, compared with their husbands, and the two examples of the table scene fall at the high end of that range, as in the Fourth Dynasty. Of the seven Giza scenes that show the wife at a scale of 70% or less, six are either from fishing and fowling scenes or show her in a kneeling position while he is seated. The seventh and largest example, in which the wife of Iasen is shown at a scale 70% of his, occurs on a doorjamb. On the facing doorjamb, another woman is represented with him at exactly the same scale and

<sup>14</sup> Harpur, *DETOK*, 192–194.

<sup>15</sup> Borchardt, *Sahure II*, pl. 16. The mortuary temple of Userkaf apparently also had such a scene, but the figure of the queen is not preserved.

<sup>16</sup> Smith, *Sculpture*, 113, fig. 48. A later royal version of this scene at a scale more like those in the non-royal tombs occurs on the Unas causeway, although the woman is not identified. See A. Labrousse, A. Moussa, *La chaussée du complexe funéraire du roi Ounas*, *BdE* 134 (2002), 169, fig. 106.

<sup>17</sup> Metropolitan Museum of Art, *Egyptian Art in the Age of the Pyramids* (New York, 1999), 368–369, 374–375.

<sup>18</sup> A. G. Shedid, M. Seidel, *The Tomb of Nakht* (Mainz, 1996), 60–61.

<sup>19</sup> A. Eggebrecht et al., eds., *Ägyptens Aufstieg zur Weltmacht* (Hildesheim, 1987), 79.

height (although since Iasen is shown at a larger scale, her scale is only 61% of his). The relationship of this woman to Iasen is not clear; perhaps she was not entitled to be shown at a more equal scale, and his wife was reduced in scale for reasons of symmetry. This suggests that the artist could in some cases reduce the scale of the wife for aesthetic reasons.

**Table 2** Tombs of the Middle and Late Fifth Dynasty at Giza. (Abbreviations: st = standing, se = seated, kn = kneeling; the husband's posture is given first; shaded areas mark percentages of 75% or less and characteristics that explain them. Boldfaced examples show the deceased at a table of offerings.)

Owner	Tomb	Scale (%)	Posture	Context	Source	
Iasen	Giza 2196	89	st/st	receiving animals	Simpson, <i>Giza Mastabas 4</i>	
		70	st/st	couple standing (doorjambs)		
		92	se/se	seated on architrave		
Sekhemka	Giza 1029	92	se/se	<b>table scene</b>		
Khufukhaf II	Giza 7150	89	st/st	couple standing (doorjambs)	Simpson, <i>Giza Mastabas 3</i>	
		93	se/se	<b>table scene</b>		
Iimery	Giza 6020	67	st/kn	shaking papyrus	Weeks, <i>Giza Mastabas 5</i>	
		87	st/st	receiving animals		
Ity	Giza 6030	88	st/st	couple standing		
		92	st/st	couple standing		
Shepseskafankh	Giza 6040	90	se/se	<b>table scene</b>		
Neferbaupthah	Giza 6010	91	st/st	receiving animals		
		88	se/se	incense, birds		
Akhetmehu	Giza 2375	55	st/st	spearing fish		Brovarski, <i>ASAE 76 (2001): 70, fig. 2</i>
Senedjemib Inti	Giza 2370	47	st/kn	spearing fish		Brovarski, <i>Giza Mastabas 7</i>
		92	st/st	couple standing		
		89	st/st	couple standing		
Senedjemib Mehi	Giza 2378	41	se/kn	watching taxes, music, cattle		
		39	st/kn	spearing fish		
		88	st/st	watching fishing, etc		
Kapi	Giza 2091	85	st/st	facing each other (2 faces of column)	Roth, <i>Giza Mastabas 6</i>	
Neferkhuwi	Giza 2098	65	se/kn	watching butchers, offering bearers		

The examples from Saqqara and Abusir (shown in *table 3*) show even more exceptions. Again, most of the largest scales appear in scenes where the tomb owner is seated at an offering table. In the one exception to this pattern, from the tomb of Neferseshemptah, where the wife is shown at 59% of her husband's scale, she is not seated with her husband, but stands behind him. In this proportion, their heads are at the same level, whereas if they had been shown at the same scale, she would tower over him, presumably violating some basic rule of decorum. Of the remaining eleven examples in which the wife is represented at less than 70%, nine can be explained by the kneeling posture of the wife or the fishing and fowling context. The two exceptions occur in symmetrical scenes in the tomb of Niankhkhnum and Khnumhotep, where all of the representations of the wives are at scales less than 45%. It might be argued that the stress laid on the relationship between the two men in this tomb was responsible for the reduced scale at which their wives are depicted; however, it seems more likely that this scale was used throughout to imitate the royal prototypes more closely, since this was perhaps the first tomb to depict the tomb

owners fishing and fowling.<sup>20</sup> In the tomb of Nefer and Kahai, a kneeling woman is shown at an unusually small scale, 36%; however, the woman is unlabeled, and may be a daughter rather than a wife, in spite of her elaborate jewelry. In two other representations, one in the same tomb and the other in the tomb of Ptahshepses, the kneeling wife is shown at about 75% her husband's scale, which is slightly above the usual size. I can suggest no explanation for these slightly larger examples.

**Table 3** Tombs of the Middle and Later Fifth Dynasty at Saqqara and Abu Sir. Boldface ratios and contexts are those associated with the false door; shaded cells represent those of the two new scene types. (Abbreviations: st = standing, se = seated, kn = kneeling; the husband's posture is given first; shaded areas mark scales of 76% or less and characteristics that explain them.)

<i>Owner</i>	<i>Site</i>	<i>Scale (%)</i>	<i>Posture</i>	<i>Context</i>	<i>Source</i>
Neferseshemtah	Saqqara	59	se/st	<b>table scene</b>	Moussa, Junge, <i>Two Tombs of Craftsmen</i>
		89	st/st	couple standing	
Nefer & Kahai	Saqqara	79	st/st	watching taxes, marsh scenes	Moussa, Altenmüller, <i>The Tomb of Nefer and Ka-hay</i>
		75	se/kn	receiving food offerings	
		36	st/kn	before offerings (may be daughter)	
		100	se/se	<b>table scene</b>	
		94	se/se	<b>table scene</b>	
		100	st/st	couple standing	
		94	st/st	couple standing	
		98	se/se	<b>table scene</b>	
		100	se/se	<b>table scene</b>	
		100	st/st	<b>jamb of false door</b>	
		89	se/se	<b>table scene</b>	
95	st/st	<b>jamb of false door</b>			
Ptahshepses	Abu Sir	65	se/kn	facing each other	Verner, <i>Abusir I: The Mastaba of Ptahshepses: Reliefs</i>
		62	se/kn	facing each other	
		76	se/kn	facing each other, with family	
Kairenptah	Saqqara	50	st/st	spearing fish	Moussa, Junge, <i>Two Tombs of Craftsmen</i>
		53	st/st	fowling	
Niankhkhnum & Khnumhotep	Saqqara	35	st/st	spearing fish	Moussa, Altenmüller, <i>Nianchchnum und Chnumhotep</i>
		40	st/st	fowling	
		38	st/st	receiving animals	
		43	st/st	receiving animals	
		40	st/kn	fowling	
		44	st/kn	spearing fish	

Also dating to this period is the well known tomb of Ti, where his wife Neferhetepes is depicted thirteen times, in all but one of them at scales between 49% and 75% that of Ti (*table 4*). Eight of these are explained by the kneeling posture of the wife, although the remaining four representations show her standing. Perhaps, as with the case of Niankhkhnum and Khnumhotep mentioned above, the artist this tomb adopted the scale used in the most frequent depictions for other scenes as well. *Table 4* shows these scales and their contexts arranged sequentially from the entrance of the tomb to the false door. The exceptional example in which Neferhetepes is shown at

<sup>20</sup> Harpur, *DETOK*, 193–194.



the same scale as Ti occurs on the north wall of the main offering chamber, adjacent to the wall containing the false doors; otherwise, all the other examples in the inner rooms show her at the smaller scale and kneeling. The scenes where she is standing all occur in the outer courtyard to the north and on the north corridor wall closest to it. It is not clear what this progression means, if it is meaningful at all; neither scene position nor Neferhetepes's posture seems to correlate with scale at all. The smallest scales occur in the side chamber, where the couple is receiving food offerings, a characteristic that points towards the pattern found in the Sixth Dynasty; similarly, the occurrence of the full scale depiction of Neferhetepes in a scene showing marsh pursuits may also be a foreshadowing of the later pattern, unless this scale is due to the proximity of the false door.

**Table 4** Tomb of Ti & Neferhetepes at Saqqara, from Epron and Wild, *Le Tombeau de Ti* (Cairo, 1939–1953). The table is arranged from the outside of the tomb chapel to the false door. Shaded ratios and postures mark scenes where the Neferhetepes is kneeling. (Abbreviations: st = standing, se = seated, kn = kneeling; the husband's posture is given first; shading marks scenes of where Neferhetepes is kneeling.)

<i>Context</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Ratio</i>	<i>Posture</i>
watching butchers, receiving offerings	N wall courtyard	58	st/st
watching scribes	W wall courtyard	51	st/kn
couple w son	W wall courtyard	66	st/st
watching birds	W wall courtyard	61	st/st
Shaking papyrus	N wall corridor	52	st/st
facing; music and dance	S wall corridor	57	se/kn
receiving offering bearers w food	S wall side chamber	50	se/kn
receiving offering bearers w food	N wall side chamber	49	se/kn
watching wheat fields from tent	E wall main	63	se/kn
watching bringing animals	S wall main	75	st/kn
watching birds and wine making	S wall main	67	se/kn
watching furniture making & sculpture	S wall main	58	se/kn
watching marsh activities	N wall main (W end)	100	st/st

The middle and later Fifth Dynasty examples thus seem to show a good deal more variation than the other periods examined. It may be that if these chapels could be more accurately dated within that period, the differences would prove to be finer chronological distinctions.

Swinton has also remarked upon the importance of kneeling wives and fishing and fowling scenes and concluded, as I do, that these two scene types introduced the depiction of the wife at a much smaller scale into officials' tombs.<sup>21</sup> However, she sees the scale as a purely practical matter of artistic convention, arguing that 'the skiff on which [the tomb owner] stands is too small to support a husband and wife at equal scale'.<sup>22</sup> This contention is arguable, given that two full scale adults are shown on just such a skiff in the tomb of Meresankh III.<sup>23</sup> She concludes that the smaller scale was merely 'an artistic device that derived from these new scenes...[which] allowed the wife to be included in many scenes where wall space was limited or the composition of the scene did not allow for two full-sized figures.<sup>24</sup> However, since it is the largest Sixth Dynasty tomb chapels, where space is plentiful, in which

<sup>21</sup> Swinton, *BACE* 14 (2003): 101. She considers all earlier depictions to be 'full sized'.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> D. Dunham, W. K. Simpson, *The Mastaba of Queen Mersyankh III: G 7530/7540, Giza Mastabas 1* (Boston, 1974), pl. IV and fig. 4.

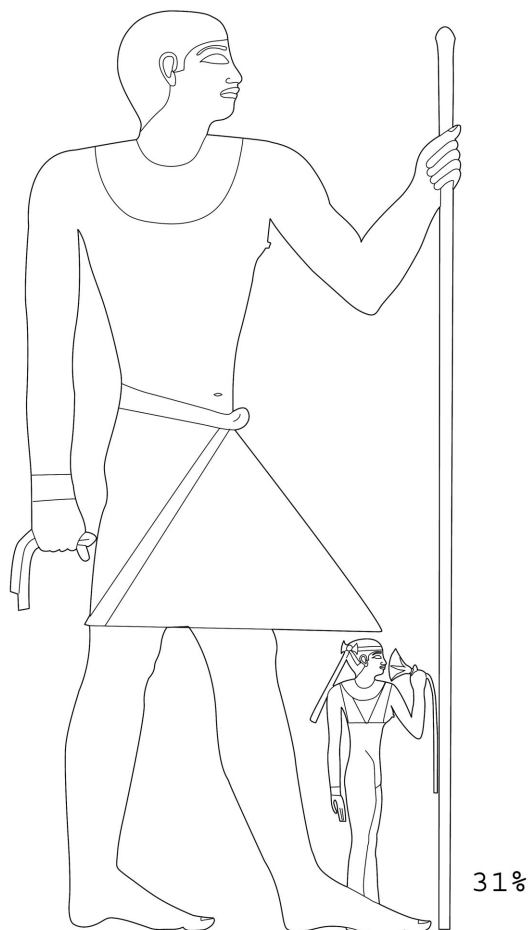
<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

the wife seems to be most often represented at the smallest scales, this explanation seems less likely than a reference to the royal prototypes of these scenes.

At the very end of the Fifth Dynasty wives disappear entirely from their husbands' tomb chapels.<sup>25</sup> It seems unlikely that this disappearance is to be connected with the reduction in size of the wife (in some contexts) that precedes it, given the fact that most examples of wives shown at reduced scale are explained by the royal origin of their context. The circumstance that women of the middle Fifth Dynasty and somewhat later seem to show fewer affectionate gestures towards their husbands is most probably also unrelated to the disappearance.<sup>26</sup> (The decline in affectionate gestures may have been caused by the increased difference in scale, however. The popular later gesture, in which the standing wife embraces her husband's lower leg, cannot have actually happened between normal people, and it may have taken some time for such an imaginary pose to develop.)

### The Sixth Dynasty

When wives begin to reappear in some tombs in the early Sixth Dynasty, the reduced scale has become the predominant mode of representation, and depictions at a natural scale become the examples that must be explained. This is clear from the 39 depictions of Mereruka and his wife Watetkhethor in his tomb chapel, shown in *table 5*, arranged in increasing order of scale. In 28 of these depictions of the couple, Watetkhethor is shown at a scale less than 50% of her husband's, with the average scale being 33% (*fig. 4*). Only 11 of these scenes depict her kneeling, and only 2 are in the context of a fishing and fowling scene. In all but five cases (two of which are not sufficiently preserved to determine), these smaller representations of Watetkhethor show her sniffing a lotus. In more than half of the examples she is also embracing her husband's lower leg. Of the standing representations, the embrace occurs predominantly at the very smallest scales (28% or less), although there is also one 32% example, so this pattern is not entirely determined by practicality. When she is shown kneeling and he is seated, she invariably embraces his leg. Her scale in the kneeling examples is generally somewhat greater, ranging from 33% to 43% of his.



**Fig. 4 Mereruka and Watetkhethor, as shown on the north wall of his large columned room. Watetkhethor is represented at a scale of 31% (drawing is by the author)**

<sup>25</sup> Roth, *JARCE* 36 (1999): 39–41. This disappearance of the wife from relief decoration is paralleled in wooden statues from the same period (J. Harvey, personal communication). I have suggested that this disappearance may relate to the probable independent reign of Djedkara's queen between his reign and that of Unas. In later periods, officials who serve women seem to omit their wives from their tomb chapel decoration, notably the officials of Hatshepsut.

<sup>26</sup> N. Cherpion, 'Sentiment Conjugal et Figuration à l' Ancien Empire', in *Kunst des Alten Reiches*, *SDAIK* 28 (1995), 33–47.

**Table 5** Representations of the wife in the mastaba of Mereruka. in order of size, from Duell, Mereruka (Chicago, 1938). (Abbreviations: st = standing, se = seated, kn = kneeling; the husband's posture is given first; shaded areas mark sexual content.)

<i>Context</i>	<i>Ratio</i>	<i>Posture</i>	<i>Holding husband's</i>	<i>Lotus?</i>	<i>PM III<sup>2</sup></i>
watching animals led, scribes	26	st/st	Leg	Yes	31
receiving first fruits, estates	26	st/st	Leg	Yes	32
watching dancers	26	st/st	Leg	Yes	53
couple standing	27	st/st	--	Yes	65
receiving cloth, oil	28	st/st	Leg	Yes	45
receiving cloth, oil	28	st/st	Leg	Yes	46
receiving calf, heron w son, brother	29	st/st	--	Yes	17
watching animal feeding, boatmaking	31	st/st	--	Yes	76
watching children's games	31	st/st	--	Yes	78
spearing fish	32	st/st	--	Yes	15
watching crafts, jewelry making	32	st/st	--	Yes	20
couple standing	32	st/st	Leg	Yes	37
watching work in wheat fields	32	st/st	--	Yes	80
receiving food offerings, flowers & birds	33	se/kn	Leg	No	67
by false door, couple	33	st/st	--	?	60
watching offerings to statues	34	st/st	--	Yes	24
table scene	35	se/kn	Leg	Yes	40
fowling in marshes	35	st/st	--	No	12
table scene	36	se/kn	Leg	Yes	41
receiving food offerings, mrt chests	36	se/kn	Leg	Yes	66
walking with family, attendants	36	st/st	--	No	11
receiving food offerings	37	se/kn	Leg	Yes	48
receiving food offerings	37	se/kn	Leg	Yes	52
receiving cloth, oil	38	se/kn	Leg	Yes	49
watching boats	40	se/kn	Leg	?	73
watching boats	43	se/kn	Leg	Yes	72
couple standing	45	st/st	--	No	25
with son, servants, pets	45	st/st	--	Yes	27
--- G A P ---					
facing on bed, W plays harp	80	kn/kn	--	No	50
walking behind carrying chair	80	st/st	Hand	No	14
shaking papyrus	84	st/st	--	No	81
watching fishing	85	st/st	?	?	36
watching wild animal hunt	88	st/st	?	No	18
walking toward bed	88	st/st	Hand	No	51
with female servants carrying furniture	90	st/st	?	?	19
couple standing	94	st/st	Shoulder?	No	22
watching fishing	97	st/st	Arm & Shoulder	No	26
couple standing	97	st/st	?	?	28
playing board game	99	se/se	Shoulder?	Yes	79

There is a large gap between these small representations, and the 11 representations at a larger scale. Interestingly, the range of proportions that is completely missing from Mereruka's tomb chapel, between 45% and 75%, is exactly the range that is shown in all but one of the representations in the tomb chapel of Ti. In the scenes where Watetkhethor is represented at the larger scale, it is often difficult to

determine whether she is embracing her husband. In several cases she is, although obviously she cannot reach his leg at this scale. More interestingly, there is only one example in which she holds a lotus, and even in that case she is not sniffing it, but holding it in her lap. This may be partly due to logistical considerations, since Mereruka is normally directly in front of her, leaving only minimal space for a lotus. When Watetkhethor is shown at the larger scale, she is always shown in the same posture as Mereruka, usually standing.

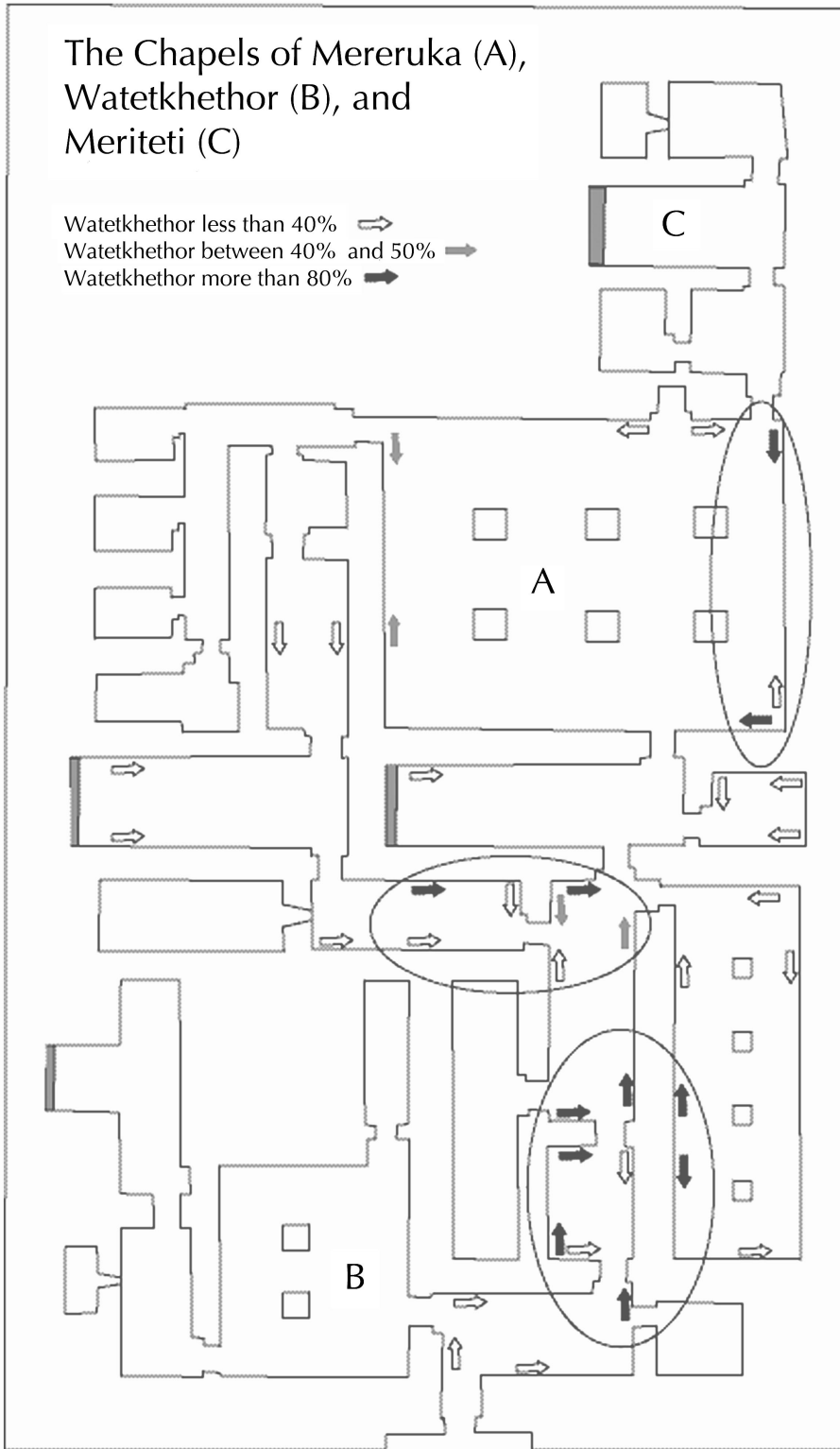


Fig. 5 Scenes of Mereruka and Watetkhethor together in his tomb chapel. The direction of the arrows represents the direction she is facing. The larger scale representations are marked by black arrows, and the smaller scale representations are marked by white arrows, although the four largest examples of the latter group are marked by light gray arrows (drawing is by the author)

The scenes with Watetkhethor at a larger, natural scale may be partially explained by the position of the scene in the tomb. Fig. 5 illustrates the distribution of natural-sized depictions (black arrows) around the tomb. They form three clusters. The

largest group is in the second and third rooms of the chapel and on the other face of their east wall, in the smaller pillared hall. This cluster is directly to the east of Watetkhethor's own chapel (in which Mereruka is not represented at all). A second group, of only two representations, can be identified along the east wall of the large pillared hall, and may be related to the adjoining chapel of the couple's son, Meriteti. On the west wall of the same room, not circled, are two of the four largest small representations (gray arrows). The third group also contains only two natural-scale representations, and runs east of the serdab; perhaps these full scale representations related to a statue of Watetkhethor in the serdab. This same group also includes the two largest of the small representations, at 45% (gray arrows). These slightly larger figures face each other and differ noticeably from the smaller representations near them, which are generally closer to a third than a half of Mereruka's scale. The smaller depictions (white arrows) occur in these areas as well, and are used exclusively in the western half of the tomb and in the three rooms on the east-west axis that runs through the false doors and burial shaft. They are also used on either side of the statue offering place in the large columned hall.

Another characteristic of the larger scale scenes may be that they refer to the sexual metaphor that is so essential to re-conception and re-birth in the afterlife, particularly in connection with the Osiris myth, which begins to be important at just this period.<sup>27</sup> The role of the wife as both the consort and mother of the deceased might lead to her representation at a larger scale in scenes alluding to that role. The two scenes in room A 10 (the smaller columned hall) show Watetkhethor and Mereruka first walking hand in hand towards a bed and then kneeling on the bed, as she plays the harp for him. This is perhaps the most explicit sexual scene known from a formal monument dating to the Old Kingdom period. The papyrus shaking scene has also been seen as having sexual associations by P. Munro, who has collected scenes that seem to complement and alternate with papyrus shaking scenes.<sup>28</sup> Two of these associated scene types are scenes of the trapping birds and fish in nets, activities that are also frequently alluded to in New Kingdom love poetry;<sup>29</sup> the only two such fishing scenes in the chapel of Mereruka show Watetkhethor at full scale. Munro also includes scenes of boats, which he connects with a kind of honeymoon; two scenes of boats in the large pillared hall are among the largest of the smaller representations of Watetkhethor (gray arrows in *fig. 5*). The raising of cattle and the dragging of the *st3t*-chests are not attested with larger scale representations of Watetkhethor in this chapel (although one would have expected them in connection with the wine making scenes in room A 12). The representations of Watetkhethor at a natural scale in the other instances must be explained either by the scenes' positions in the chapel or by some hitherto unnoticed sexual content in the scene adjacent to the representation.

Other Sixth Dynasty scenes from Saqqara and Deshasha show the same pattern that is found in Watetkhethor (*table 6*). Most examples show the wife at a scale between 25% and 50% the scale of her husband. The exceptions, a scene with a bed, a scene of bird trapping, and a scene with boats, all fall within the categories which have been interpreted as alluding to sexual activities. However, one would expect the scene in which fishing is observed by Kagemni and his wife to show his wife at a more equal scale, but it does not.

<sup>27</sup> A. M. Roth, 'Father Earth, Mother Sky: Ancient Egyptian Beliefs about Conception and Fertility', in A. Rautmann, ed., *Reading the Body: Representations and Remains in the Archaeological Record*, (Philadelphia, 2000), 187–201.

<sup>28</sup> P. Munro, *Das Doppelgrab der Königinnen Nebet und Khenut* (Mainz, 1993), 95–100.

<sup>29</sup> M. V. Fox, *The Song of Songs and the Ancient Egyptian Love Songs* (Madison, 1985), 32–36, 43 fish; 9–10, 18–19 birds. These scenes of the trapping of birds and fish in nets are to be contrasted with the active spearing and throw-stick hunting of birds and fish by the tomb owner himself, in which the wife is normally depicted at a smaller scale. The former seems to be a metaphor for the female sexual role (the word for 'trap', *mh*, is a homonym for 'fill') while the latter is a strongly male metaphor, as exemplified by the sexual pun contained in the verbs used spearing and throwing.

The examples in *table 6* from Giza are different. The chapels of Qar (G 7101), Idu (G 7102), Kahif (G 2136) and Tjetu (G 2001) seem to follow the later Fifth Dynasty pattern, with the wife represented at almost equal size in the table scene and near the false door, at a somewhat smaller scale in other scenes, and at a scale of about 45% when she is kneeling by her seated husband. Although this latter scale is smaller than the kneeling scenes in the earlier period, the mode of representing the wife was apparently generally more conservative at Giza. Unfortunately, there are few well dated Sixth Dynasty tombs from this site that also preserve representations of the wife, but the false door tablets of a number of smaller tombs suggest that, at least to some extent, the pattern of the later Fifth Dynasty was continued in other tombs as well.<sup>30</sup>

**Table 6** Sixth Dynasty tombs. (Abbreviations: st = standing, se = seated, kn = kneeling; the husband's posture is given first; shaded areas mark scenes with larger percentages and explanations for that scale: sexual content or location at Giza.)

<i>Tomb owner</i>	<i>Site</i>	<i>Ratio</i>	<i>Posture</i>	<i>Context</i>	<i>Reference</i>
Kagemni	Saqqara TPC	29	st/st	watching fishing	von Bissing, <i>Die Mastaba des Gem-ni-ka</i>
Mehu	Saqqara	47	st/kn	fowling	Altenmüller, <i>Die Wanddarstellungen im Grab des Mehu</i>
		44	st/kn	spearing fish	
		92	st/st	with family, servants, and bed	
Nefersheshemre	Saqqara TPC	28	st/kn	couple	Kanawati, Abder-Raziq, <i>The Teti Cemetery at Saqqara III</i>
		26	st/kn	couple	
		26	st/kn	couple	
S'ankhipuptah	Saqqara TPC	34	st/kn	spearing fish	
		33	st/kn	fowling	
Neferseshemtah	Saqqara TPC	84	st/st	watching bird trapping	
		94	st/st	watching boats	
		40	se/kn	table scene	
		39	se/kn	table scene, eating	
Shedu	Deshasha	33	st/kn	spearing fish	
		44	st/kn	fowling	
		24	st/kn	watching furniture making	
		26	st/kn	receiving offerings	
Niankhpepi	Saqqara	20	st/kn	couple	Hassan, <i>Ny-ankh-Pepy and Others</i>
		25	st/kn	couple	
Qar	Giza 7101	72	st/st	receiving offerings	Simpson, <i>Giza Mastabas 2</i>
		96	se/se	table scene	
Idu	Giza 7102	42	se/kn	table scene	
		45	se/kn	table scene	
Kahif	Giza 2136	81	st/st	couple	Junker, <i>Giza VI</i>
		82	st/st	couple	
		85	se/se	table scene	
		48	st/kn	watching agriculture	
Tjetu	Giza 2001	95	st/st	couple, by false door	Simpson, <i>Giza Mastabas 4</i>

### Conclusions and areas for further research

The examples collected here make it clear that the scale at which the wife was depicted was not at all consistent. To describe the wife as simply 'small' is deceptive, because the scale at which she was represented could vary quite significantly, even in tombs of the same period and even in representations of the same couple. The reduced scale was clearly not in any sense a measure of the absolute comparative 'importance' of a particular husband and wife in society, or of the status of men and women generally, as has often been assumed. That men and women other than the tomb owner and his wife are generally shown at exactly equal size in tomb chapel decoration demonstrates that the difference in size is not a function of gender but of ownership of the chapel. Women are shown at a similarly larger scale in their own chapels, where normally their husbands are not depicted at all.<sup>31</sup>

The degree of variation in scale suggests that there was some freedom left to the artists who planned the tombs' decoration. They might adopt a given scale for reasons of composition or simple decorum, although their choices are likely to have been limited by general social beliefs and their understandings of the function of the representation of the wife. Apart from these variations and exceptions, some general patterns can be identified, even from the selective overview of tombs from the Old Kingdom presented here. These patterns suggest that the relative scale of the wife in Old Kingdom tombs changed with time, with site, with the origin of the scene, and with context.

The chronological changes are obviously potentially useful in dating. Many scholars have probably noticed, for example, that very small wives are associated with a Sixth Dynasty date. The patterns that have been deduced here may offer a more precise description of the chronological changes that took place, which can be used to argue dating when sufficient examples are present and when they are used in conjunction with other criteria. Three periods were distinguished here; however, the middle and later Fifth Dynasty period seems to show great variety, and could probably be further refined with a larger sample of well-dated tombs. In addition, the persistence of the Fifth Dynasty pattern at Giza through the Sixth Dynasty and the fact that, with some exceptions, many scenes of the middle and later Fifth Dynasty are indistinguishable from those of the earlier period limit the usefulness of these criteria when used alone. The increasing frequency of wives shown at radically smaller scales over the course of the late Fifth Dynasty may also be useful in explaining the temporary decrease in gestures of affection noted by Cherpion, as artists adjusted to the new differences in scale.

The dating rules deduced may be summarized as follows. In the Fourth and early Fifth Dynasty, wives are shown at their natural size on false doors, and somewhat smaller (no smaller than 70% of their husbands' scale) in other contexts. In the middle and later Fifth Dynasty, kneeling women are usually shown at a scale of 60% to 80%, while those shown in fishing and fowling scenes are shown slightly smaller, between 40% and 60%. Women in other scenes are sometimes also shown at these reduced scales, particularly in larger tombs with many such representations. The same pattern seems to continue through the Sixth Dynasty at Giza, although the scales of kneeling women tend to be smaller (40% to 50%). After the brief disappearance of wives altogether at the end of the Fifth Dynasty, women begin to be shown at a very small scale at Saqqara and elsewhere, frequently at scales of 20% to 40%, although they still can be represented at the same scale as their husbands in certain contexts.

The persistence of early patterns at Sixth Dynasty Giza tomb chapels also suggests that these comparative scales may vary by the location of the tomb. Wives depicted at very small scales (less than 30%) might thus suggest a place of origin for unprovenienced fragments of tomb decoration, since these tiny wives do not

<sup>30</sup> See Junker, *Giza IX*, pls. 10d and pl. 15, for example

<sup>31</sup> Roth, *JARCE* 36 (1999): 45–48.

seem to occur at Giza, but are common at Saqqara and as far south as Deshasha. (I have not examined other decorated provincial tombs.) A similar difference in local traditions may explain the slightly smaller scales used for wives at Meidum.

The two scene types in which the wife kneels at the feet of her seated husband and in which she accompanies him in a papyrus skiff as he spears fish and hunts birds with a throwing stick are both of royal origin, and hence in both the wife is represented at a far smaller than natural scale, in imitation of the royal prototypes. This smaller scale continued to be associated with these types of scenes when they were adopted again in the Eighteenth Dynasty. The persistence of this connection may offer clues to the mechanisms by which these scenes are transmitted and perhaps to the later understanding of their origins. Moreover, the 'royal' difference in scale (or some less extreme variant of it) that was adopted in scenes of non-royal origin in some Fifth Dynasty tombs and then more generally in the Sixth Dynasty may have represented yet another example of the assumption of royal prerogatives in a mortuary context that is known from other evidence.

Probably the most interesting aspect of the variations in the scale at which the wife is depicted is that her scale is dependent upon the context of the scene and also the position of the scene in the tomb. Since the larger size of the husband is clearly due to his ownership of the tomb chapel, these contextual variations seem likely to correspond to functional roles that the wife plays in her husband's transition to the afterlife. The comparative scale of the wife thus offers useful clues to her role in that mechanism, and perhaps suggests changes over time.

In the Fourth and Fifth Dynasty, and even later at Giza, the wife is most often shown at natural size (greater than 90% of her husband's scale) on the false door. I can suggest no reason for this, beyond the possibility that it was the most important part of the tomb chapel, and she was intended to be a full participant in the offerings. Perhaps here, as in the later examples, a better question is why she is shown at a slightly reduced scale elsewhere. Such a reduction might be simply a matter of decorum, giving the male head of the household precedence in his own tomb chapel; however, it is difficult to explain the Meidum examples, in which the husband is shown at a larger scale in the part of the tomb that is predominantly dedicated to the wife. The incongruity of this may explain why the husband is omitted altogether in later chapels of women.

In the Sixth Dynasty, the appearance of the larger-scale wife in scenes with sexual connotations reinforces the supposition that a wife's role in her husband's tomb is to serve as the wife and mother for his re-conception and re-birth.

In sum, this initial survey of the differences in scale possible in portraying a single relationship, that of husband and wife, clearly demonstrates that the scale of representation is more complex than a simple impressionistic measure of rank, power, or authority. Close examination of the variations in comparative scale can suggest developments in artistic traditions, relationships between the royal and non-royal sphere, and funerary beliefs.



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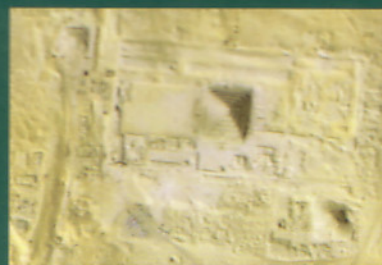
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