

PUBLICATIONS DU CONSEIL SUPRÊME DES ANTIQUITÉS DE L'ÉGYPTE

**ANNALES
DU SERVICE DES ANTIQUITÉS
DE L'ÉGYPTE**

TOME LXXVI

2000-2001



**LE CAIRE
IMPRIMERIE DU C.S.A.
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DÉPARTEMENT DES PUBLICATIONS SCIENTIFIQUES DU C.S.A.

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Directeur : Amal S. El-Alfy

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Preface

With the present volume, *the Annales du Service* steps into a new era, i.e. the twenty-first century. My colleagues will undoubtedly notice that it enters the new century with great vigour and remarkable vitality; a mark of its revival. This is clearly demonstrated in the improved quality of its presentation, printing, and even its papers.

The vitality can also be seen in its contents, whether they are excavations reports or pure academic researches, written by Egyptian or non Egyptian colleagues.

Our hope is that the regularity of issuing the volumes will encourage more and more of our fellow Egyptologists to come forward with their papers or reports, in any language of their choice, to be printed in *the Annales*. This way its prosperity will be ensured, its progress will be enhanced, and its future will be secured.

G.A. Gaballa
Secretary General of
S.C.A.

THE SENEDJEMIB COMPLEX AT GIZA: REPORT ON THE FEBRUARY-MARCH 1999 FIELD SEASON OF THE GIZA MASTABAS PROJECT

Edward BROVARSKI

Between February 17 and March 14, 1999, the Giza Mastabas Project of Yale drawings in the Senedjemib Complex at Giza. Gratitude is due the Supreme Council of Antiquities for permission to work at Giza, and in particular to Dr. Gaballa Ali Gaballa, Secretary General of the Supreme Council of Antiquities, and his colleagues on the Permanent Committee of Archaeology. At Abassiya, we would also like to thank Mr. Mohamed El-Suggayir and Mr. Magdi Sayed Abu El-Ella for their efforts on our behalf.

At Giza we are indebted to Dr. Zahi Hawass, Undersecretary of State for the Giza Pyramids, for his many kindnesses and encouragement in our work. Mr. Ahmed El-Haggar, Director of the Giza Pyramids, Mr. Mahmoud Afifi and Miss Amal Samuel, Chief Inspectors of the Giza Pyramids, facilitated matters in every way.

The staff for the February-March 1999 field season of the Giza Mastabas Project consisted of the following: Edward Brovarski, Co-Director, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Bradford Endicott, Dedham, Massachusetts, photographer; Stephen R. Phillips, University of Pennsylvania, epigrapher. The Supreme Council of Antiquities was very ably represented by Mr. Mohamed Sheha, Inspector of Antiquities. Although unable to participate in the February-March 1999 season, Professor William Kelly Simpson, Yale University, serves as Co-Director of the Giza Mastabas Project.

The Senedjemib Complex is located at the northwest corner of the Great Pyramid, on the eastern edge of the great Western Field of tombs at Giza. The complex includes the well-known tombs of Senedjemib Inti (G 2370) and his son Senedjemib Mehi (G 2378), who served kings Isesi and Unis respectively as viziers and overseers of royal works (Pl. I). In 1842-43 Lepsius excavated these two tombs, made plans, and copied the reliefs and inscriptions¹. During the spring of 1850, the Reverend Johann Rudolph Theophilus Lieder re-excavated

¹ *LD* I, pl. 23 [upper and middle]; *LD* II, pls. 73-8; *LD*, *Erganz.*, pls. 51-58. Cf. George A. Reisner, A Family of Builders of the Sixth Dynasty, about 2600 B.C., *BMFA* 11, n° 66 (1913), p. 56. Lepsius numbered the tombs 26 and 27 respectively. For an account of his stay at Giza

the two tombs and, together with his wife Alice, made a number of squeezes of the reliefs which are now the property of the Griffith Institute, Oxford². Six months later, Mariette made plans of the tombs and copied some of the inscriptions³.

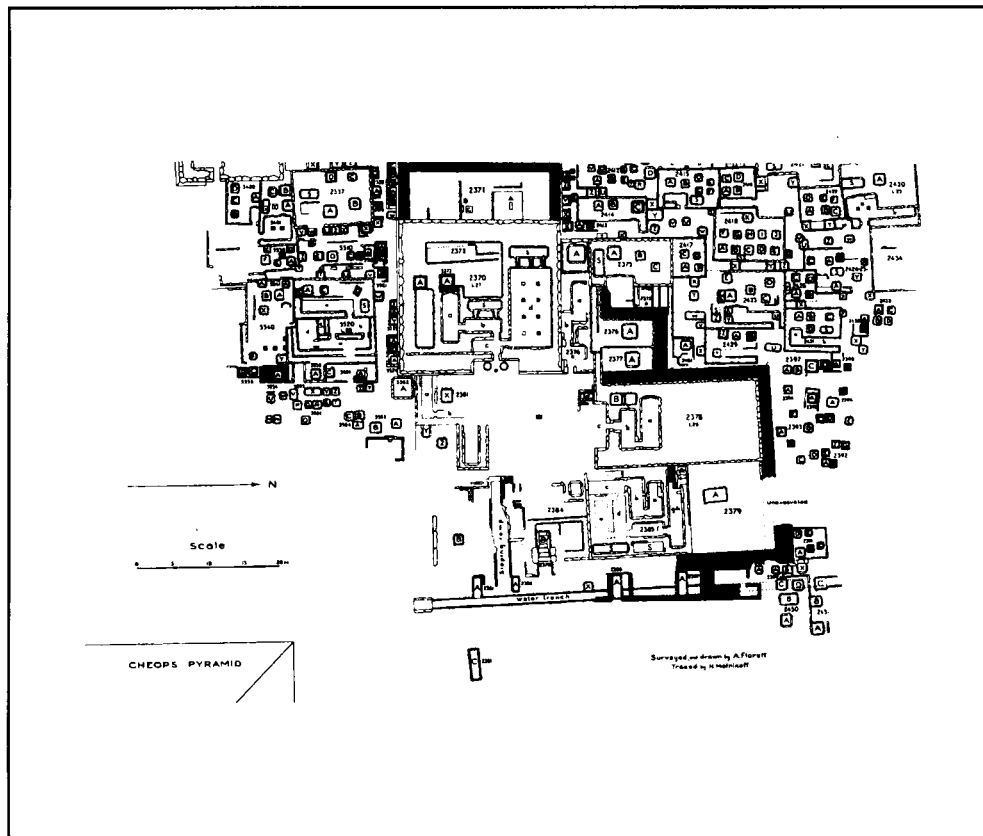


Fig. 1- Map of the Cemetery en Echelon.

(November 10, 1842-February 10, 1843), see Richard Lepsius, *Letters from Egypt*, London, 1853, p. 47-79.

² See Jaromir Malek, "Names of the estates of Senedjemib Inti", *Göttinger Miszellen* 13 (1974), p. 21-31. Malek, *ibid.*, p. 24, n. 3, notes that one of the squeezes is dated "April 8, 1850." For a biographical sketch of the Rev. Lieder, see W. R. Dawson and E. P. Uphill, *Who was Who in Egyptology*, 3d rev. ed. by M. L. Bierbrier, London, 1995, p. 255.

³ *Les mastabas de l'Ancien Empire*, Paris, 1882-1889, p. 496-515; Reisner, *o. c.*, p. 56.

The joint Egyptian Expedition of Harvard University and the Boston Museum of Fine Arts under the direction of George A. Reisner cleared the site between October 25, 1912 and January 27, 1913 and discovered that the two tombs of Inti and Mehi were part of a great complex of family tombs erected around a stone paved court approached by a sloping ramp leading up from the pyramid plateau (Fig. 1). In between Inti's and Mehi's tombs, Reisner uncovered a third tomb, that of Khnumenti (G 2374), a younger son of Senedjemib Inti, who appears to have carried on his father's duties under Teti⁴. Two other large mastabas opened on the paved court of the complex, but both had been destroyed to their foundations. One of these was the tomb of Mer-ptah-ankh-Meryre Nekhebu (G 2381), who lived in the time of King Pepy I⁵. Decorated blocks from the latter tomb were found by Reisner in a disordered heap of debris left behind by stone-robbers in antiquity. The owner of the second large mastaba (G 2385) was never identified. There were also at least five smaller offering rooms connected with the group (G 2383, 2384, 2386-a and b, 2390). In addition, opposite the tomb of Nekhebu, Reisner came upon a sloping shaft (G 2381 A) closed with a great rectangular block of limestone that protected the unviolated burial of one of two sons of Nekhebu, Mer-ptah-ankh-Meryre Ptahshepses Impy. The other son, Sabu-ptah Ibebi was apparently responsible for his brother's burial, for his name appears on Impy's coffin⁶. The identical nature of the two chapels G 2386-a and b and the unusual intercommunication between them suggests that they belonged to the two brothers⁷. Ptahshepses Impy is depicted among the courtiers in the reliefs of the pyramid temple of King Pepy II⁸.

The four generations of the Senedjemib family thus served as viziers of Egypt (except Nekhebu) and royal architects during a hundred year period in the later Old Kingdom. The tombs of the members of the family document changes in tomb architecture and decoration from the end of the Fifth Dynasty to the end of the Sixth. Additionally, two of the lengthiest autobiographical inscriptions to survive from the Old Kingdom--those of Senedjemib Inti and Nekhebu--derive from the tombs of the complex. The inscriptions of Inti

⁴ See e.g. W. S. Smith, in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, vol. 1, pt. 2, 3d ed., 1970, p. 186.

⁵ D. Dunham, "The Biographical Inscriptions of Nekhebu in Boston and Cairo", *JEA* 24 (1938), p. 1-8.

⁶ The coffin is in Boston and bears the accession number MFA 13.3085.

⁷ Reisner, o. c., p. 58-9, Fig. 11-16.

include verbatim three letters from Djedkare Izezi, one of which the king wrote with his own hand⁹. The autobiographical texts of Nekhebu (in Boston and Cairo) relate how that official was advanced to increased responsibility and power in the reign of Pepy I and contain an account of three missions he undertook on behalf of his lord¹⁰. The missions Nekhebu was assigned included the digging of two canals in Upper Egypt and the Delta and the construction of Pepy I's pyramid temple. The texts provide important insights into the functioning of the central government and the relations between kings and officials at a high level of the royal administration.

Reisner also discovered an older mastaba belonging to a man named Akhetmehu (G 2375), who had no apparent connection with the Senedjemib family, and which stood on an independent site in the northwest corner of the complex. The mastaba of Khnumenti (G 2374) was actually erected between the north side of G 2370 and the southern side of the mastabas of Akhetmehu and Senedjemib Mehi. Furthermore, in the first street west of the mastaba of Senedjemib Inti and in a second street on a lower level in front of the Senedjemib Complex Reisner uncovered a number of small tombs (G 2362-2366, 2391) belonging to funerary priests who served the Senedjemib family through several generations. Reisner believed that the smaller mastabas in the Senedjemib Complex together with the tombs of the funerary priests beside it may well be nearly the last in the Giza cemetery previous to the intrusive burials of the Ptolemaic and Roman periods¹¹.

The reliefs and inscriptions of Senedjemib Inti, Senedjemib Mehi, and Khnumenti were largely copied by the Giza Mastabas Project in 1981 and 1982, as were those of Akhetmehu and the funerary priests. Subsequently, in the course of two shorter seasons in 1989 and 1992 the present writer continued the task of recording and collating the reliefs of the complex. *The Senedjemib Complex, Part 1*, represents the results of these labors and of several years of research and study, and should appear in short order as volume 7 in the Giza Mastabas series of the Department of Art of the Ancient World of the Museum

⁸ Gustave Jéquier, *Le monument funéraire de Pepy II 2*, Cairo, 1938, pl. 48; see Smith, o. c., p. 187.

⁹ *Urk.* I, p. 60, 14-63, 11; Edward Brovarski, *The Senedjemib Complex, Part 1*, Giza Mastabas, vol. 7, Boston (in press), p. 92-101, text figures 1-2, Fig. 28-33, pls. 18, 60-66.

¹⁰ Dunham, o.c., p. 1

¹¹ G. A. Reisner and C. S. Fisher, "Preliminary Report on the Work of the Harvard-Boston Expedition in 1911-13", *ASAE* 13 (1913), p. 250.

of Fine Arts under the authorship of the present writer. Included in the volume are the three tombs of Inti, Mehi, and Khnumenti.

The February-March, 1999 field season of the Giza Mastabas Project initially addressed itself to tidying up some loose ends left over from previous seasons, and especially with checking specific details of the reliefs in the mastaba of Senedjemib Inti (G 2370) and in photographing reliefs in the offering room of the tomb of Senedjemib Mehi (G 2378), which represented a gap in Reisner's photographic documentation of the Senedjemib Complex. Time was likewise devoted to photographing the remains of the five smaller offering rooms (G 2383, 2384, 2386-a and b, 2390) on the platform of the Senedjemib Complex. Drawings made in earlier seasons in the tomb of Akhetmehu and in G 2391, the small tomb of the funerary priests at a lower level in the northeast of the complex, were collated and a few additional drawings made. All of these tombs are scheduled to be included in *The Senedjemib Complex, Part 2*, along with the dismantled chapel of Nekhebu and the intact burial of Ptahshepses Impy, the blocks and finds from which, respectively, are mostly in Boston.

G 2375, the mastaba of Akhetmehu (Mehu-akhty?), had a retaining wall or casing built of slabs of grey nummulitic limestone. Its portico chapel consisted of a wide, rather shallow, recess in the east face of the mastaba with the roof supported by two pillars (Pl. II). The inscribed architrave which rested on the pillars was inscribed with 15cm high hieroglyphs proclaiming the owner's identity as: *Z3b r3 Nhn 3ht smsw h3t hry-tp mdw n wdꜣ- mdw št3 n hwt- wrt hm-ntr M3t hry- šst3 n wdꜣ- mdw r3 Nhn 3ht-mhw*, "Dignitary, mouth of Nekhen, elder of the porch, overlord of the secret affairs of judgement of a great (law) court, priest of Maat, master of secrets of judgements, mouth of Nekhen, Akhetmehu." Above a chamfered cornice provided some protection from the elements.

Considering that they were executed in nummulitic limestone, the walls of the portico were decorated with reliefs of good quality (Pl. II). On this account, however, they were finished in places with a thick coating of plaster sizing which has since fallen away. On the rear wall of the chapel to either side of the false door are reliefs of Akhetmehu at table with food and drink offerings arrayed in low registers above and with offering bearers beneath his feet. On the south wall, Akhetmehu, his wife Hunetka (Îwnt kA), and their eldest son, Ankh-ir-ptah view the presentation of animals in four registers before them, while Akhetmehuis steward presents his master with a document concerning some

aspect of his estate¹². On the north wall opposite is a scene of Akhetmehu spearing fish in the Delta marshes as his family looks on (Fig. 2). This time a younger son named Seshemnefer is also represented. The texts of Akhetmehu's false door are of sufficient interest as to have published by Elmar Edel¹³.

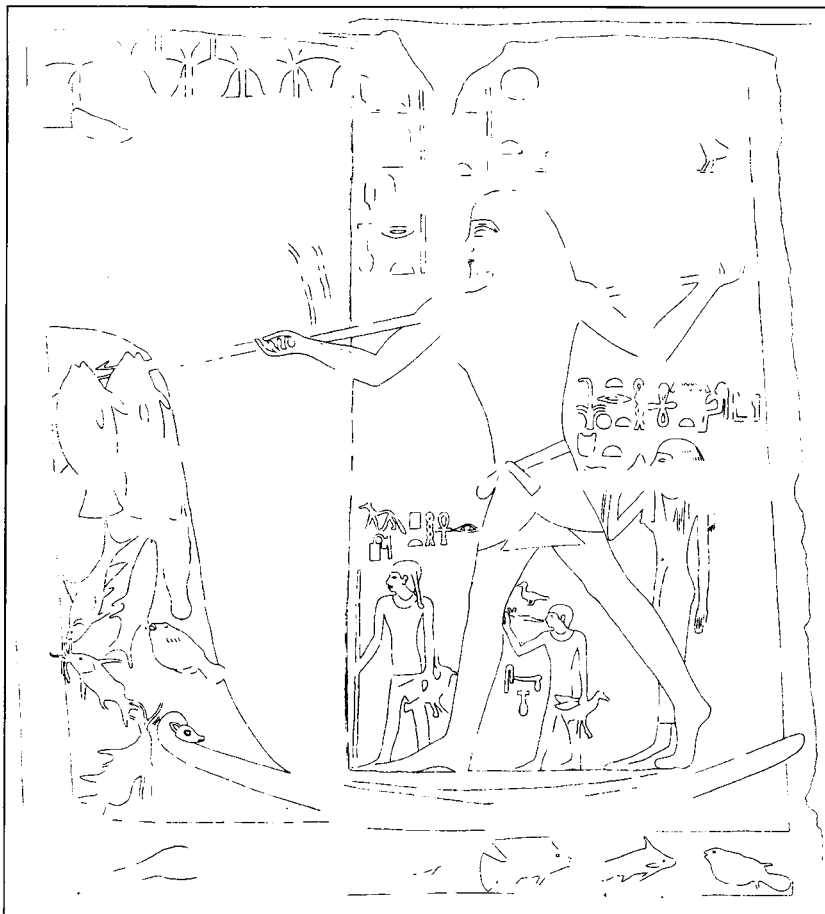


Fig. 2- North wall of portico chapel G 2375; Akhetmehu and family on an outing in the marshes.

¹²On scenes of document presentation, see Peter Der Manuelian, in *Studies in Honor of William Kelly Simpson 2*, Boston, 1996, p. 562-588

¹³"Inschriften des Alten Reiches. III. Die Stele des *Mhw- 3hty* (Reisner G 2375), "MIO 1 (1953), p. 327-333; X. Nachtrag zur Inschriften des *Mhw- 3hty*", ZÄS 83 (1958), p. 3-18.

The portico chapel was preceded by a mud brick court in which Akhetmehuis son Ankh-ir-ptah, a “Dignitary and Mouth of Nekhen” like his father, later built his own small, one-room chapel (G 2375 a)¹⁴. Here too was erected the false door of Akhetmehuis wife. The eastern side of the court and the doorway to it were left open and accessible until Senedjemib Mehi built two small additions (G 2376 and 2377) to his mastaba containing one burial shaft each, presumably for members of his family.

G 2391 is a small mastaba (4.8 x 4.35m) with a retaining wall or casing of different types of masonry. The east face of the mastaba (Pl. III) consisted of four monolithic false doors, two side by side at the south separated by a plain monolith and further north two other false doors separated by a second monolith inscribed with an “address to the living” and a large figure of the mortuary priest Irenakhet Iri with arms raised in supplication. Reisner was uncertain whether the east face of the mastaba was protected by an exterior chapel¹⁵.

The owners of the two northern false doors were Irenakhet Iri and his wife Kasyotes (*k3.s- it.s*, “Her father is her ka”). Irenakhet was *imy-r3 wpt hmw- k3 Mhi*, “overseer of commissions of the ka-priests of Mehi,” and *imy-r3 st hntyw-s pr-s*, “overseer of a department of tenant land-holders of the palace. “Me hi” is without doubt Senedjemib Mehi, whose mortuary cult Irenakhet would have served. Nefri, the owner of the southernmost false door was likewise *imy-r3 wpt hmw-k3*, “overseer of commissions of the ka-priests”, although his lord is not specified. He was also *[imy]-ht -hntyw-s pr-s* “supervisor of the tenant land-holders of the palace”. The name of the owner of the fourth false door, an *imy-r3 kdw*, “overseer of builders”, is lost.

The false doors were originally surmounted by three long architraves which Reisner found tumbled to the ground at their feet¹⁶. The architraves were inscribed with funerary prayers and showed (from left to right) figures of Nefri, Irenakhet, and Kasyotes approached by their children, the latter identified by title where appropriate. Irenakhet Iri and Kasyotes had no less than five

¹⁴ See George A. Reisner, *A History of the Giza Necropolis* 1, Cambridge, MA, 1942, p. 285.

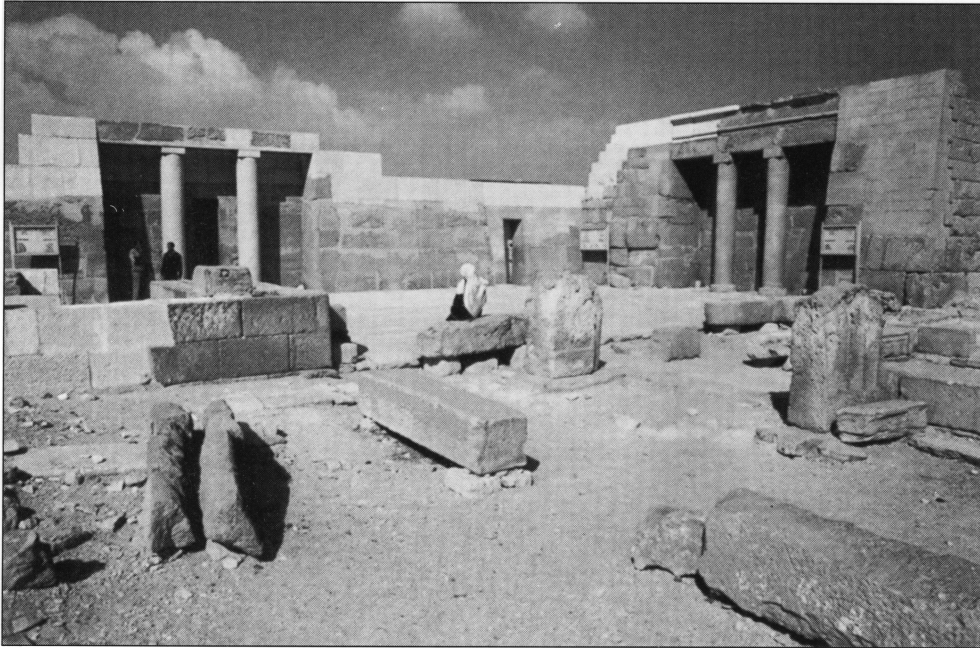
¹⁵ “Description of Additions to Cemetery en Echelon,” Department of Art of the Ancient World, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, n.d., p. 177.

¹⁶ The architraves are in Boston, *MFA* 13.4333, 13.4337, 13.4338. See Reisner, *BMFA* 11, n°. 66 (November, 1913), p. 65, Fig. 22.

children, while two grand-daughters are also represented, and Nefri and his unnamed wife had three sons and three daughters. Interestingly, Irenakhet, who served Senedjemib Mehi's funerary cult, named his three sons Senedjemib, Mehi, and Khnumenti, after the senior members of the Senedjemib family. In his turn, Nefri named one son Inti and also named a daughter Hatkau, possibly in honor of Nekhebu's wife. If he really did so, this would furnish a terminus ante quem non for the mastaba in the reign of Pepy I.

It is tempting to see in this small mastaba a family tomb, even though it is difficult to establish a direct connection between Irenakhet and Nefri. Possibly Nefri's unnamed wife was a daughter of Irenakhet and Kasyotes but, in that case, one would expect the link to be stressed and the wife to be represented. Another possibility presents itself. On his architrave Nefri seems to bear the double name Nefri-Mehi. If this is indeed the case, Nefri may be identical with Irenakhet's son Mehi. Some support for this hypothesis is perhaps to be found in the similarity in Irenakhet and Nefri's titles, both individuals being "overseer of commissions of the ka-priests" and Nefri having only a slightly lower grade in the administration of the tenant-landholders of the palace.

In 1913 Reisner found the mummy of Senedjemib Inti himself resting in his sarcophagus of fine white Tura limestone. In 1997, Dr. Zahi Hawass, Undersecretary of State for the Pyramids, re-excavated Inti's sloping passage tomb. A highlight of the 1999 season was a descent into the burial chamber, where Inti's sarcophagus, beautifully inscribed in black painted hieroglyphs, still resides. The present whereabouts of Inti's mummy is unknown, however.



a. General View of the Senedjemib Complex with the tombs of Senedjemib Inti at the left and Senedjemib Mehi at the right. Courtesy of the Giza Mastabas Project. Photograph by Bradford Endicott.



b. Tomb of Akhetmehu, G. 2375, looking northwest across court. Courtesy of the Giza Mastabas Project. Photograph by David P. Silverman.



Portico chapel G. 2375. Harvard University-Museum of Fine Arts Egyptian Expedition photograph B 8394.



Giza tomb G. 2391. Harvard University-Museum of Fine Arts Egyptian Expedition photograph B 8532.