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THE MASTABA OF MERESANKH III (G7530/7540)

IN THE EASTERN CEMETERY AT GIZA: AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND ART HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

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The mastaba of Meresankh III (G7530/7540) in the Eastern Cemetery at Giza presents an interesting chronological problem based on its architecture, inscriptional evidence, and relief decoration.¹ The mastaba was excavated by George Andrew Reisner of the Harvard University-Museum of Fine Arts, Boston Expedition in 1927² and was subsequently published by Dows Dunham and William Kelly Simpson in 1974.³ The mastaba consists of two sections: an upper mastaba (G7530/7540) and a lower rock-cut tomb (G7530sub). The mastaba and rock-cut tomb are generally dated to the Fourth Dynasty of the Old Kingdom.⁴ However, the construction and decoration of mastaba G7530/7540 and the decoration of the rock-cut tomb of Meresankh III (G7530sub) are problematic based on their architectural relationship as well as the attribution of mastaba G7530/7540 to Hetepheres II, mother of Meresankh III. An analysis of these various factors in coordination with the graffiti and inscriptional evidence is essential to the overall dating of the architecture. In addition, a study of the iconography and style of the relief decoration may provide further evidence for assigning mastaba G7530/7540 and the rock-cut tomb (G7530sub) to the late Fourth Dynasty, or possibly even the early Fifth. Through an analysis of the architecture, inscriptional evidence, and relief decoration, it is possible to re-evaluate the dating established by Reisner and Dunham and Simpson as well as the relationship between the mastaba and the rock-cut tomb.

ARCHITECTURAL EVIDENCE

The mastaba of Meresankh III (G7530/7540) is located in the 'en échelon' section of the Eastern Cemetery (G7000) (Fig. 1).⁵ This section consists of mastabas placed in a staggered arrangement. Reisner dated the initial part of the 'en échelon' section to the reign of Khafra,⁶ ca. 2520-2494 BC,⁷ following the conversion of the twelve original cores into eight twin-mastabas in the Eastern Cemetery (G7000). The construction of mastaba G7530/7540 includes an earlier structure, G7520/7530, whose core construction and dimensions of 36.5 x 16.0 m. are similar to the twelve original cores in the Eastern Cemetery (G7000).⁸ The alignment of the southern edge of the original core, G7520/7530, with the southern row of the eight twin-mastabas suggests that G7520/7530 was probably constructed during Khufu's reign.⁹ G7520/7530 was then partially dismantled to construct mastaba G7530/7540.¹⁰ Interestingly, G7520 has a burial shaft, while mastaba G7530/7540 does not include one.¹¹

The reconstruction of mastaba G7530/7540 from the original core, G7520/7530, included an extension to the south of type IViv masonry with an interior offering chapel (Fig. 2).¹² Graffiti on the casing blocks of mastaba G7530/7540 provide evidence for its date. Two of these graffiti may date the mastaba to ca. year 13 of Khafra's reign:¹³ [rmt] zp 7 4 prt sw 20; wrt hts Htp-hrs and rnpt zp 7 4 prt sw 10; wrt hts (?).¹⁴ On the east face of the mastaba is another date: 3 šmw sw 21;



wrt hts Htp-[hrs].¹⁵ An additional date is given on another casing block: *3 šmw sw 2 (?)*.¹⁶ It is believed that this mastaba was originally intended for Hetepheres II, Meresankh III's mother, based on the graffiti.¹⁷ However, it is suggested that the blocks with the graffiti may have been reused from mastaba G7520/7530 and may actually refer to Khufu's reign.¹⁸ If the blocks were reused, the dates then must refer to a time when Hetepheres II had already become queen indicated by the title of *wrt hts* 'the one great of favor.'

Dates on the north subsidiary niche of mastaba G7530/7540 must also be factored into the overall constructional sequence.¹⁹ These dates are located on either side of the niche: *...rnpt [zp] 2 (?) 4 šmw sw 22 rnpt* 'year 3/4' ... on the north and *... [p]rt sw 6 rnpt...* on the south.²⁰ Reisner believed that these dates refer to the beginning and completion of the mastaba's construction during Khafra's reign;²¹ however, they may also refer to Hetepheres II's death.²² The difference in dates between the niche (year 3/4) and casing (year 13) may be due to the reconstruction of mastaba G7530/7540 from mastaba G7520/7530 during Khafra's reign²³ with the dates on the niche recording this event. However, Jánosi believes that the niche inscriptions may date to Menkaura's reign, ca. 2490 to 2472 BC, based on their relationship to the façade inscriptions on Meresankh III's rock-cut tomb (G7530sub) below.²⁴ His supposition might then date the chapel of mastaba G7530/7540 as late as Menkaura's reign.

The rock-cut tomb of Meresankh III (G7530sub) is located approximately 2 meters below the level of the street above.²⁵ It is believed that Hetepheres II gave the rock-cut tomb to her daughter, Meresankh III, who predeceased her.²⁶ This theory is based on the addition of an inscription to the already existing decoration and inscriptions on Meresankh III's sarcophagus, which states that the sarcophagus was given to her by her mother, Hetepheres II.²⁷ Reisner believed that Hetepheres II was eventually buried in mastaba G7350 following the death of her daughter, Meresankh III.²⁸

Inscriptions on the façade of the rock-cut tomb of Meresankh III (G7530sub) give evidence for the date of the tomb. The inscriptions on either side of the entrance read: *z3t nswt Mr.s-^cnh rnpt zp tpj 3bd 1 šmw sw 21 htp k3.s hpt.s r w^cbt* 'King's daughter Meresankh, Year 1, 1st of Shemu, day 21, going to rest of her ka, her going to the wabet (embalming)' on the north side and *hmt nswt Mr.s-^cnh rnpt (m)-ht zp tpj 3bd 2 prt sw 18 hpt.s r jz.s nfr* 'King's wife Meresankh, Year after 1 [Year 2], 2nd of Peret, day 18, her going to her beautiful tomb' on the south.²⁹ The events recorded on the entrance refer to the death and burial of Meresankh III, a period of 273 to 274 days.³⁰ The Year 1 and Year 2 have been attributed to Shepseskaf's reign, ca. 2472 to 2467 BC, by Reisner³¹ and Jánosi.³² Reisner based his theory on the rock-cut tomb (G7530sub), which is

similar in plan and decoration to the rock-cut tomb of Khuenra (MQ 1), a son of Menkaura.³³ Jánosi believes that these dates could be, at their earliest, a reference to Shepseskaf following the erection of mastaba G7530/7540 during Khafra's reign and after the addition of the north subsidiary niche's inscriptions, possibly dating to Menkaura.³⁴ However, both Reisner³⁵ and Jánosi³⁶ also suggest that the entrance dates to the rock-cut tomb of Meresankh III (G7530sub) could be as late as the reign of Userkaf of the Fifth Dynasty, ca. 2465 to 2458 BC. Yet, Dunham and Simpson believe that the dates on the façade refer to Menkaura based on Meresankh III's skeleton,³⁷ which is considered to be ca. fifty years of age or older.³⁸ If the entrance inscriptions refer to Menkaura's reign, Meresankh III could have been born earlier in Khufu's reign, ca. Year 7, or was younger at her death, ca. 40 to 45 years old, which the skeleton does not corroborate. Thus, the dates on the façade are probably a reference to the death and burial of Meresankh III during Shepseskaf's reign, which is important to establishing an overall date for the rock-cut tomb's decoration.

Relief Decoration: Iconography

A comparative study of the relief decoration in mastaba G7530/7540 assigned to Hetepheres II and the rock-cut tomb of Meresankh III (G7530sub) suggests a correlation in their decorative programs. Although the dating of the façade inscriptions on the rock-cut tomb of Meresankh III (G7530sub) to Userkaf might cause a chronological disparity between the two structures, an analysis of the iconography and style of the relief decoration suggests that the chapel of mastaba G7530/7540 and the rock-cut tomb of Meresankh III (G7530sub) are related.

The relief decoration in mastaba G7530/7540 assigned to Hetepheres II is partially preserved and carved from fine quality limestone. According to Reisner, the exterior chapel originally consisted of at least three rooms.³⁹ In contrast to the typical L-shaped chapels in the Eastern Cemetery (G7000), the offering chapel of mastaba G7530/7540 is of cruciform design with a central entrance on its east wall (Fig. 3).⁴⁰ This design is unusual in the Eastern Cemetery (G7000); other chapels with a cruciform design at Giza include: queen's pyramid GI-b in the Eastern Cemetery, the mastaba of Duaena (G5110) in the Western Cemetery, the rock-cut tomb of Nebemakhet (LG 86) in the Central Field, and queen's pyramid G III-a adjacent to Menkaura's pyramid.⁴¹ Of these, queen's pyramid GIII-a is similar in plan to mastaba G7530/7540 in that it has a cruciform design with a single niche opposite the entrance.⁴² On the west wall of mastaba G7530/7540, Reisner documented traces of 'palace façade' niching on either side of the compound niche,⁴³ which had a circular offering stone in front.⁴⁴ Chapels with 'palace façade' decoration in the Eastern Cemetery (G7000) are generally dated to the late Fourth Dynasty



or even early Fifth.⁴⁵ Reisner also assigned MFA 27-5-1 with an offering formula for a woman to the architrave on the west wall.⁴⁶

The north wall in the chapel is the best preserved. It depicts four female offering bearers facing left/west on the bottom register (Fig. 4).⁴⁷ The female offering bearers are shown wearing a single-strap garment in contrast to the typical two-strap garment. This single-strap garment also occurs in the decoration of Meresankh III's rock-cut tomb (G7530sub) below.⁴⁸ The female offering bearers on the north wall also hold various objects, including bolts of cloth, a scepter with a human hand at its end, and a box. Bolts of cloth are traditionally carried by male offering bearers in the Eastern Cemetery (G7000), such as in the chapels of Khufu-khaf I (G7140),⁴⁹ Hordjedef (G7220), Djaty (G7810), and Anonymous (G7560), which belong to male tomb owners. The human-hand scepter is unusual and does not occur in the preserved mastabas in the Eastern Cemetery (G7000). A dwarf is also depicted on the north wall in mastaba G7530/7540 holding a partially preserved object, which Dunham and Simpson reconstruct as a 'clothes bag'.⁵⁰ Calf-headed bags, possibly used for clothes and usually associated with dwarves, are represented in the rock-cut tombs of Meresankh III (G7530sub)⁵¹ and Debehen (LG 90).⁵²

In addition to the in situ traces of relief, there are several fragments assigned to mastaba G7530/7540. A fragment with a border at the top shows two registers, each with males facing left.⁵³ They are shown wearing short, pointed kilts that are unusual in the Eastern Cemetery (G7000). On the top register, three males carry a scepter (?), vessels, and bolts of cloth. The scepter (?) and the bolts of cloth are also objects that decorate the bottom register of the north wall in the chapel of G7530/7540. On the bottom register of the fragment, two males wear kilts with a double sash.⁵⁴ Inscriptions identify the figures as: *jmj-r pr hm-k k...* 'Steward, ka-priest, Ka...' and *shd hm(w)-k Pth-šps* 'Inspector of the ka-priests, Ptahshepses.' Interestingly, the name Ptahshepses is more equated with the Fifth Dynasty than the Fourth Dynasty.⁵⁵ Another fragment depicts two registers with a scribal instrument above and a figure below.⁵⁶ Scribal instruments decorate other mastabas in the Eastern Cemetery (G7000), such as the chapel of Khufu-khaf I (G7140),⁵⁷ which is usually dated to Khufu's reign but may be as late as Khafra.⁵⁸ If the two relief fragments with male figures are assigned to the north wall in mastaba G7530/7540, the combination of both male and female offering bearers would resemble the design of Meresankh III's south wall in entrance chamber (a) in the rock-cut tomb (G7530sub) below. Another fragment, MFA 28-5-36, shows a 'hobbled' cow and a calf facing left in a 'milking scene.' Dunham and Simpson remarked that its quality is different,⁵⁹ and it may be later based on its scene type.⁶⁰

The rock-cut tomb of Meresankh III (G7530sub), located on a subterranean level adjacent to mastaba G7530/7540, has both similarities and differences in its iconography with the mastaba above. The chapel of Meresankh III (G7530sub) is divided into three chambers: entrance chamber (a), offering chamber (b), and north chamber (c) (Fig. 5). The relief decoration in the chapel is carved in both raised and sunk relief from fine quality limestone and the natural rock. On the entrance thicknesses of the rock-cut chapel, female attendants carved in sunk relief wear a single-strap garment that extends to the ankles similar to that worn by females in the chapel of mastaba G7530/7540 (Fig. 6). Several of the female attendants in the chapel of Meresankh III (G7530sub) also wear a single-strap garment that extends to mid-calf.⁶¹ These two distinct styles of the single-strap garment, extending to the ankles and mid-calf, are specific to this area of the Eastern Cemetery (G7000), suggesting that their representations are a factor of date, location, or artistic influence.⁶² As the chapels with this garment, G7530/7540 and Meresankh III (G7530sub), are located next to one another, their proximity to one another may have influenced the decorative programs. On the south entrance thickness of Meresankh III's rock-cut chapel (G7530sub), the pointed kilt worn by Khemetnu the Elder, 'Overseer of the ka-priests', is also distinctive⁶³ and contrasts with the type of kilt worn by the male figures on the top register of one of the relief fragments from mastaba G7530/7540 (Fig. 7). The difference in the type of kilt may be related to the status of the individual; Khemetnu the Elder is an 'Overseer of ka-priests,' while the figures on the fragment from mastaba G7530/7540 are male offering bearers, a 'steward/ka-priest,' and an 'inspector of ka-priests.'

In the rock-cut tomb of Meresankh III (G7530sub), female offering bearers on the two bottom registers of the south wall in entrance chamber (a) carry household articles and are oriented to the west similar to the female offering bearers located on the bottom register of mastaba G7530/7540's north wall. Interestingly, bolts of cloth are not carried by the female figures on the south wall in entrance chamber (a) as they are on mastaba G7530/7540's north wall. However, the depiction of a dwarf in relation to the female offering bearers appears in both chapels.⁶⁴ Several of the household articles in the rock-cut tomb of Meresankh III (G7530sub) resemble those discovered in the tomb of Hetepheres I (G7000X), including the carrying chair and long chest.⁶⁵ In this respect, there is a definite connection between the objects and the status of the individual; Hetepheres I is a 'King's mother', while Meresankh III is a queen.⁶⁶ In the Eastern Cemetery (G7000), the depiction of female offering bearers carrying household articles occurs in two chapels related to females, mastaba G7530/7540 and the rock-cut tomb of Meresankh III (G7530sub),⁶⁷ and in one belonging



to a male tomb owner, Khaemsekhem (G7660). The representation of female offering bearers is appropriate to a chapel belonging to a female. However, their depiction in the mastaba of Khaemsekhem (G7660) suggests that female offering bearers are related to certain types of articles, such as household furniture. Scenes of female offering bearers occur in the same three chapels as the single-strap, mid-calf, and ankle-length garments, G7530/7540, Khaemsekhem (G7660), and Meresankh III (G7530sub), suggesting that date, location, and/or artistic influence were factors in their decorative programs.

Another important feature of Meresankh III's decorative program (G7530sub) is the use of 'palace façade' decoration (Fig. 8). This decoration occurs on either end of the west wall in offering chamber (b) with a normal false door in the middle.⁶⁸ In the Eastern Cemetery (G7000), 'palace façade' decoration also appears on the west walls in the mastabas of G7530/7540, Mindjedef (G7760), Djaty (G7810), G7050 assigned to Nefret-kau, Nefermaat (G7060), and Snefru-khaf (G7070).⁶⁹ These mastabas are generally dated to the late Fourth to early Fifth Dynasty,⁷⁰ the period that encompasses the rock-cut tomb of Meresankh III (G7530sub). 'Palace façade' decoration is characteristic of the rock-cut tombs of the sons of Khafra in the Central Field,⁷¹ which may have influenced the decorative programs in the Eastern Cemetery (G7000).

Relief Decoration: Style

A discussion of the style of the relief decoration in mastaba G7530/7540 and the rock-cut tomb of Meresankh III (G7530sub) is related to the type of limestone. In mastaba G7530/7540, the decoration is carved in raised relief in medium height from fine quality limestone.⁷² This medium height is comparable to the relief height in the surrounding nummulitic mastabas, including those belonging to Duaenhor (G7550), Khaemsekhem (G7660), Anonymous (G7750), and Mindjedef (G7760).⁷³ The relief decoration on the north wall in mastaba G7530/7540 in addition to fragments from the chapel⁷⁴ have rounded surfaces but these are not boldly modeled. The female offering bearers on the north wall also have rounded shoulders, a treatment that differs from major figures in adjacent nummulitic mastabas that show a more rectangular approach,⁷⁵ but is more similar to minor figures, such as Duaenhor's daughter (G7550) and the male figures decorating the south entrance thickness in Anonymous mastaba (G7750).

On the relief fragments from mastaba G7530/7540, certain stylistic features can be used to show the similarities and differences between mastaba G7530/7540 and the rock-cut tomb of Meresankh III (G7530sub). On one of the relief fragments, the features of the male figures are executed in an angular style, and their eyes are carved in a simplistic manner.⁷⁶ The use

of a horizontal line at the inner canthus also occurs on several of the male figures on this relief fragment.⁷⁷ Overall, there is not a consistent style among the male figures as some are shown rather heavy and others more slender. In this respect, the carving of the relief decoration in mastaba G7530/7540 is not of the highest quality as compared with other mastabas in the Eastern Cemetery (G7000), such as those belonging to Ankh-haf (G7510) and Akhethetep and Meretites (G7650), which are in close proximity.

The rock-cut tomb of Meresankh III (G7530sub) consists of both sunk and raised relief decoration in fine quality limestone as well as the natural rock. Sunk relief is used at the entrance to the chapel, including the façade and entrance thicknesses, which is constructed from fine quality limestone blocks. Sunk relief is also used in carving the inscriptions throughout the chapel. Raised relief occurs in entrance chamber (a) and offering chamber (b), and is carved from the natural rock with a layer of plaster.⁷⁸ The raised relief is low to medium in height⁷⁹ with the main figures generally carved in a higher relief.

The relief decoration in the rock-cut tomb of Meresankh III (G7530sub) is carved with different stylistic features. On the entrance thicknesses, Meresankh III is carved in sunk relief with a wide, open eye with a distinct incision line at the inner canthus similar to a fragment from mastaba G7530/7540 showing male figures (Fig. 9).⁸⁰ Meresankh III is also shown with rounded shoulders paralleling the treatment of the female offering bearers carved in raised relief in mastaba G7530/7540. Another distinctive stylistic feature of the rock-cut tomb (G7530sub) is the representation of the tomb owner, offering bearers, and attendants with slender bodies and/or elongated arms.⁸¹ These figures are usually female, and their slender arms may be caused by their activities.⁸² This slenderness is in coordination with an overall proportional reduction in scale.⁸³ This slender appearance is not as apparent on the female offering bearers decorating the north wall in mastaba G7530/7540.

The variety of styles in the rock-cut tomb of Meresankh III (G7530sub) is partially due to the surface of the natural rock, but the particular location of the relief decoration is also a significant factor. The east wall in Meresankh III's entrance chamber (a) (G7530sub) shows a division in skill or, at least, completion, as crudely carved, almost abstract, figures are located at the top of the wall with the more detailed figures towards the bottom.⁸⁴ The carving of figures with a more angular approach is also found on the east wall in entrance chamber (a). Minor figures with angular facial features decorate the east wall to the north and south of the entrance into the rock-cut chamber (north section: reg. 2, top subsidiary reg., Fig. 1; reg. 3, Fig. 5; south section: reg. 3, Fig. 3) (Fig. 10). This angular style may be due to a particular artisan as those figures with this treatment are located on a certain section of



the wall. It may also be related to the quality of the natural rock. This angularity is also apparent in the carving of the faces of the male figures on the relief fragments from mastaba G7530/7540, but it is not as pronounced.

CONCLUSION

A comparative study of mastaba G7530/7540 assigned to Hetepheres II and the rock-cut tomb of Meresankh III (G7530sub) indicates that there are both similarities and differences in their decorative programs. Although the chapel of G7530/7540 is only partially preserved, its architectural design in addition to the iconography and style of the relief decoration is important to a discussion of the development of architecture and art during the Fourth Dynasty. The absence of a burial shaft in mastaba G7530/7540 makes the function of its chapel unique within the Eastern Cemetery (G7000). Why would a decorated chapel be added to a mastaba without a burial place? Furthermore, what is the connection of the mastaba to the rock-cut tomb of Meresankh III (G7530sub) below? A comparison of the iconographic and stylistic features of mastaba G7530/7540 with the rock-cut tomb of Meresankh III (G7530sub) suggests that there are similarities specific to both chapels. Whether these similarities are caused by location, i.e. one chapel influenced the other, date, or the same group of artisans were involved in their decoration, there is an obvious connection between the two chapels that is mostly absent from the surrounding nummulitic mastabas that are dated to the late Fourth Dynasty. Distinct differences are also apparent in the decorative programs of mastaba G7530/7540 and the rock-cut tomb of Meresankh III (G7530sub). The various

types of kilts worn by the male figures indicate either a difference in date or, possibly, there is a distinction in status. Stylistic similarities between the chapel of mastaba G7530/7540 and the rock-cut tomb of Meresankh III (G7530sub), such as rounded shoulders and an incision line at the inner canthus, are features that occur throughout the decorative programs of the Eastern Cemetery (G7000) from the reigns of Khufu through Menkaura. The stylistic differences between mastaba G7530/7540 and the rock-cut tomb of Meresankh III (G7530sub) may be related to the type of limestone: fine quality versus the natural rock. However, as both types of stone are present in the rock-cut tomb of Meresankh III (G7530sub), these differences cannot be solely attributed to the type of stone. The emphasis upon slender figures in the rock-cut tomb of Meresankh III (G7530sub) is pronounced as compared with mastaba G7530/7540. This slenderness is also a feature of the late Fourth and early Fifth Dynasties in the Eastern Cemetery (G7000).⁸⁵ An emphasis upon angularity in the carving of several minor figures in the rock-cut tomb of Meresankh III (G7530sub) is distinctive and may be attributed to a particular artisan working on a certain section of the wall. However, in coordination with several of the fragments from the chapel of mastaba G7530/7540, this angularity may also be a stylistic feature of the late Fourth Dynasty. An overall assessment of the archaeological and art historical evidence presented by mastaba G7530/7540 and the rock-cut tomb of Meresankh III (G7530sub) suggests that the two chapels are connected through their decorative programs, including the iconography and stylistic features, and may date to the same period, namely the end of the Fourth Dynasty. ■

Endnotes

- 1 I am grateful to Peter Jánosi for proof-reading this article and for his insightful comments.
- 2 George A. Reisner, 'The Tomb of Meresankh, a Great-Granddaughter of Queen Hetep-Heres I and Sneferuw', *BMFA* 25 (1927), 64-78.
- 3 Dows Dunham and William Kelly Simpson, *The Mastaba of Queen Mersyankh III: G7530-7540, Giza Mastabas 1* (Boston, 1974).
- 4 For the dating of mastaba G7530/7540 and the rock-cut tomb (G7530 sub), see George Andrew Reisner, *A History of the Giza Necropolis*, I (Cambridge, 1942), 73, 84 (f), 207 (18); Dunham and Simpson, *Mersyankh III*, 7-8.
- 5 Reisner, *Giza I*, 82 (b); Dunham and Simpson, *Mersyankh III*, 1.
- 6 Reisner, *Giza I*, 73, 84 (f).
- 7 The chronology used in this article is based on the one used by the Metropolitan Museum of Art. See James P. Allen, 'Dynastic and Regnal Dates' in Dorothea Arnold et al., *Egyptian Art in the Age of the Pyramids* (New York, 1999), XX.
- 8 See Reisner, *Giza I*, 59, 73; Peter 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 (Vienna, 2005), 89, 100, 354, figs 5b, 7 for the original core of mastaba G7520/7530.
- 9 Jánosi, *Giza in der 4. Dynastie*, 100, 355, fig. 7.
- 10 Reisner, *Giza I*, 41 (4iv), 73; Dunham and Simpson, *Mersyankh III*, 1, 2-3, 7; Wilfried Seipel, 'Untersuchungen zu den Ägyptischen Königinnen der Frühzeit und des Alten Reiches: Quellen und historischen Einordnung', *Dissertation zur Erlangung der Würde des Doktors der Philosophie der Universität Hamburg* (Hamburg, 1980), 160; Peter Jánosi, 'Die Grabanlagen der Königin Hetepheres II', *ZÄS*

- 123 (1996), 52-54, 55, figs 3, 4; Jánosi, *Giza in der 4. Dynastie*, 100, 354-356, fig. 7.
- 11 Dunham and Simpson, *Mersyankh III*, 1, 7; Jánosi, *Giza in der 4. Dynastie*, 89, 100, 355, figs 5b, 7.
- 12 Reisner, *Giza I*, 59, 73, 207 (18); Jánosi, *Giza in der 4. Dynastie*, 85, 349, 355, figs 3, 85.
- 13 The two blocks with dates are located on the west side of the mastaba. For dating to Khafra, see Reisner, *Giza I*, 73; William S. Smith, 'Inscriptional Evidence for the History of the Fourth Dynasty', *JNES* 11 (1952), 119, 127 (9), fig. 7; Dunham and Simpson, *Mersyankh III*, 3, 7, figs 1b,c; .
- 14 For graffiti, see Smith, *JNES* 11, 119, 127 (9), fig. 7; Dunham and Simpson, *Mersyankh III*, 3, 7, figs 1b, c; Seipel, 'Königinnen', 112-113 (g1, 2); Anthony Spalinger, 'Dated Texts of the Old Kingdom', *SAK* 21 (1994), 289 (4); John S. Nolan, 'The Original Lunar Calendar and Cattle Counts in Old Kingdom Egypt', in Susanne Bickel and Antonio Loprieno (eds), *Basel Egyptology Prize I: Junior Research in Egyptian History, Archaeology, and Philology*, *AH* 17 (Basel, 2003), 96, tab. 1 (60); Jánosi, *Giza in der 4. Dynastie*, 96-97, 356 (a), 442, tabs 1 (2a, b), C4.
- 15 Smith, *JNES* 11, 119, 127 (9), fig. 7; Dunham and Simpson, *Mersyankh III*, 3, 7, fig. 1d; Seipel, 'Königinnen', 113 (g3); Jánosi, *Giza in der 4. Dynastie*, 356 (a), 442, tab. C4.
- 16 Smith, *JNES* 11, 119, 127 (9), fig. 7; Dunham and Simpson, *Mersyankh III*, 7, fig. 1a; Jánosi, *Giza in der 4. Dynastie*, 356(a), 442, tab. C4.
- 17 Reisner, *Giza I*, 73; Smith, *JNES* 11, 127 (9); Simpson, *Mersyankh III*, 3, 7.
- 18 Jánosi, *Giza in der 4. Dynastie*, 356.
- 19 Dunham and Simpson, *Mersyankh III*, 3, 4, 7, pl. 1b, fig. 1e.



- 20 For the inscriptions on the north subsidiary niche, see Reisner, *Giza I*, 36; Smith, *JNES* 11, 116, 126 (A2), fig. 4; Seipel, 'Königinnen', 117; Spalinger, *SAK* 21 (1994), 286 (1); Jánosi, *Giza in der 4. Dynastie*, 356-357 (b). See Nolan, *Basel Egyptology Prize* 1, 95, tab. 1 (53) for the 'Year of the 2nd Occasion'.
- 21 Dunham and Simpson, *Mersyankh III*, 7; Seipel, 'Königinnen', 117.
- 22 Seipel, 'Königinnen', 160.
- 23 For the dating of mastaba G7530/7540 to Khafra, see Reisner, *Giza I*, 73, 82 (b); Jánosi, *Giza in der 4. Dynastie*, 357.
- 24 Jánosi, *Giza in der 4. Dynastie*, 357-358.
- 25 Dunham and Simpson, *Mersyankh III*, 8, pl. 1a.
- 26 Dunham and Simpson, *Mersyankh III*, 7; Jánosi, *Giza in der 4. Dynastie*, 349.
- 27 Dunham and Simpson, *Mersyankh III*, 7, pl. XV, fig. 14; Jánosi, *ZÄS* 123 (1996), 50-51, fig. 2.
- 28 Reisner, *Giza I*, 207 (20); Smith, *JNES* 11, 127 (10).
- 29 For the dates on the façade, see Reisner, *Giza I*, 36; Smith, *JNES* 11, 116, 126 (A1), fig. 4; Dunham and Simpson, *Mersyankh III*, 4, 8, pl. II a, fig. 2; Seipel, 'Königinnen', 143 (2, 3), 160; Spalinger, *SAK* 21 (1994), 288-289 (1, 2), 292; Nolan, *Basel Egyptology Prize* 1, 81, 95-96, tab. 1 (57, 58); Jánosi, *Giza in der 4. Dynastie*, 357-358 (c).
- 30 For the number of days, see Dunham and Simpson, *Mersyankh III*, 8.
- 31 Reisner, *BMFA* 25 (1927), 74; Spalinger, *SAK* 21, 288-289 (1).
- 32 Jánosi, *Giza in der 4. Dynastie*, 357-358 (c).
- 33 Reisner, *BMFA* 25 (1927), 74.
- 34 Jánosi, *Giza in der 4. Dynastie*, 358.
- 35 Reisner, *BMFA* 25, 74.
- 36 Jánosi, *Giza in der 4. Dynastie*, 358.
- 37 See Dunham and Simpson, *Mersyankh III*, 7-8, 21-22, pls XIVc, XVI for the skeleton found in the tomb.
- 38 Dunham and Simpson, *Mersyankh III*, 7.
- 39 Dunham and Simpson, *Mersyankh III*, 4.
- 40 For a plan of the chapel, see Dunham and Simpson, *Mersyankh III*, plan B; Jánosi, *Giza in der 4. Dynastie*, 349, fig. 85.
- 41 Reisner, *Giza I*, 247.
- 42 Reisner, *Mycerinus: The Temples of the Third Pyramid at Giza* (Cambridge, Mass., 1931), 61 (h), plan IV; Reisner, *Giza I*, 247, 248 (3).
- 43 Reisner, *Giza I*, 211, 381 (e1); Dunham and Simpson, *Mersyankh III*, 3, 4; Hartwig Altenmüller, 'Der Grabherr des Alten Reiches in seinem Palast des Jenseits. Bemerkungen zur sog. Prunkscheintür des Alten Reiches', in Catherine Berger and Bernard Mathieu (eds) *Études sur l'Ancien Empire et la nécropole de Saqqâra dédiées à Jean-Philippe Lauer*, vol. 1, *OrMonsp* 9 (Montpellier, 1997), 13 (1.4.6). MFA 28-5-35b has traces of this niching. See Dunham and Simpson, *Mersyankh III*, 4.
- 44 Dunham and Simpson, *Mersyankh III*, 3, plan B.
- 45 These chapels include: Mindjedef (G7760), G7050 assigned to Nefret-kau, Nefermaat (G7060), Snefru-khaf (G7070), and Djaty (G7810).
- 46 Reisner, *Giza I*, 331 (b9), 332; Dunham and Simpson, *Mersyankh III*, 3, pl. XIIIb.
- 47 For the north wall, see Dunham and Simpson, *Mersyankh III*, 3, pl. XIIIa; William Kelly Simpson, *The Mastabas of Kawab, Khafkhufu I and II, Giza Mastabas 3* (Boston, 1978), fig. 72.
- 48 For the single-strap garment in the rock-cut tomb of Meresankh III (G7530sub), see Dunham and Simpson, *Mersyankh III*, pl. 2c, d, figs 3a, b.
- 49 Simpson, *Kawab*, 14, 16, 17, pls XVIII, XXIb, XXIIb, figs 30, 32, 33.
- 50 Dunham and Simpson, *Mersyankh III*, 3.
- 51 Dunham and Simpson, *Mersyankh III*, 5, 16, pl. IXb, fig. 8.
- 52 Selim Hassan, *Excavations at Giza, vol. IV. 1932-1933* (Cairo, 1943), 170, 172, fig. 119, pl. XLIX. The rock-cut tomb of Debehen (LG 90) is located in the Central Field.
- 53 See Dunham and Simpson, *Mersyankh III*, 3, pl. XIIId for this fragment.
- 54 For the kilt with the double sash, see Elisabeth Staehelin, *Untersuchungen zur ägyptischen Tracht im Alten Reich*, *MÄS* 8 (Berlin, 1966), 9 (ß), pls II (2), XLVII, fig. 76.
- 55 For tomb owners with the name of Ptahshepses, see *PM III*², 151-152, 340-342.
- 56 Dunham and Simpson, *Mersyankh III*, p. 3, pl. XIIIc.
- 57 See Simpson, *Kawab*, 12, 17, pls XVIb, XXII, XXIV, figs 27, 33 for the scribal instrument.
- 58 For the dating of the mastaba of Khufu-khaf I (G7130/7140) to Khufu, see Smith, *JNES* 11, 127 (8). For a date in the reign of Khafra, see Jánosi, *Giza in der 4. Dynastie*, 104.
- 59 Dunham and Simpson, *Mersyankh III*, 3, pl. XIIIc.
- 60 This scene also occurs in the Western Cemetery in the mastaba of Tjety I (G2001) on the west wall of the portico and Iasen's north wall (G2196). See William Kelly Simpson, *Mastabas of the Western Cemetery*, part I, *Giza Mastabas 4* (Boston, 1980), 11-12, 20, pls XXVc, XLIIIb, XLIVb, figs 22, 30. For the dating of these two mastabas to the Fifth or Sixth Dynasties, see *PM III*², 66, 82.
- 61 A mid-calf garment with two straps is also worn by female offering bearers on the north wall in the mastaba of Khaemsekhem (G7660), located to the southeast of mastaba G7530/7540, which is dated from late Khafra through mid-Menkaura. For the date of the mastaba of Khaemsekhem (G7660), see Reisner, *Giza I*, 309; Smith, *A History of Egyptian Sculpture and Painting in the Old Kingdom* (Boston and London, 1946; reprint, New York, 1978), 164.
- 62 The depiction of these garments in this specific area may also be a factor of preservation.
- 63 Dunham and Simpson, *Mersyankh III*, pl. IIc, fig. 3b.
- 64 For the dwarf on the south wall in entrance chamber (a) in the rock-cut tomb of Meresankh III (G7530sub), see Dunham and Simpson, *Mersyankh III*, 17, pl. IXa, fig. 8.
- 65 Reisner and Smith, *A History of the Giza Necropolis. II. The Tomb of Hetep-Heres, the Mother of Cheops* (Cambridge, Mass., 1955), figs 20, 34, pls 27, 28, 29.
- 66 For the titles of Hetepheres I, see Michel Baud, *Famille royale et pouvoir sous l'Ancien Empire égyptien*, vol. 2, *BdÉ* 126/2 (Cairo, 1999), 525-527 [162]. Meresankh III's royal status is further confirmed iconographically by a throne depicted on the south wall and the southern section of the west wall in entrance chamber (a) whose design with a lion is comparable to a fragment from a statue of Khafra. This is particularly significant as Meresankh III is considered to be a queen of Khafra. See Smith, *HESPOK*, 37, 291; Michel Baud, *Famille royale et pouvoir sous l'Ancien Empire égyptien*, vol. 1, *BdÉ* 126/1 (Cairo, 1999), 202, 203, fig. 21 (2) for the throne on the south wall. For Khafra's statue, see Uvo Hölscher, *Das Grabdenkmal des Königs Chephren, Sieglin Exp.*, vol. 1 (Leipzig, 1912), 100 (42), fig. 124; Smith, *HESPOK*, 37, 38, fig. 13; Baud, *Famille royale* 1, 202, 203, fig. 21 (1). For the throne on the west wall, see Smith, *HESPOK*, 37, 38, 291, fig. 13; Baud, *Famille royale* 1, 202, 203 (3).
- 67 A fragment (MFA 24-12-1100) from the chapel of Hetepheres II (G7110) depicting females wearing ankle-length garments may possibly depict offering bearers. For this fragment, see Simpson, *Kawab*, 5, fig. 16 (bottom).
- 68 Reisner, *Giza I*, 225 (8), 382 (g1); Dunham and Simpson, *Mersyankh III*, 18-19, pl. XI, fig. 10; Altenmüller, in *Études Lauer* 1, 12 (1.4.1); Jánosi, *Giza in der 4. Dynastie*, 350-351.
- 69 Reisner, *Giza I*, 381-382 (e1-4, f1-2); Altenmüller, in *Études Lauer* 1, 12-13 (1.4.5, 1.4.6).
- 70 Smith, *HESPOK*, 164.
- 71 I am grateful to Peter Jánosi for his comments concerning the development of 'palace façade' decoration in the Eastern Cemetery (G7000).
- 72 For the fragments from mastaba G7530/7540, see Dunham and Simpson, *Mersyankh III*, 3-4, pl. XIII. For the medium height of these relief fragments, see Smith, *HESPOK*, 163-164.
- 73 Smith, *HESPOK*, 162, 164.
- 74 Dunham and Simpson, *Mersyankh III*, pl. XIIIa, c, d.
- 75 These rectangular-shaped shoulders are primarily found on the tomb owners in the mastabas of Khaemsekhem (G7660) and Anonymous (G7750), which are in close proximity to mastaba G7530/7540.
- 76 For these figures, see Dunham and Simpson, *Mersyankh III*, 3, pl. XIIIc, d.
- 77 For the male figures on a fragment from mastaba G7530/7540, see Dunham and Simpson, *Mersyankh III*, pl. XIIId.
- 78 For a discussion of the use of plaster, see Smith, *HESPOK*, 166.
- 79 For relief decoration at the end of the Fourth Dynasty into early Fifth, see Smith, *HESPOK*, 162-163.
- 80 See Dunham and Simpson, *Mersyankh III*, pl. XIIId for the male figures with incision lines at the inner canthus.
- 81 These elongated figures appear on the entrance thicknesses; two bottom registers on the south wall in entrance chamber (a); and on the north wall in the west chamber (b).
- 82 Females with elongated arms occur in the 'bed-making' scene on the south wall, the south pillar on the west wall and the north section of the west wall in entrance chamber (a); and on the north wall in west chamber (b).
- 83 For example, Nefret-kau in the chapel of Khufu-khaf I (G7140) measures 1.51m on the northern section of the west wall and 1.39m on the north wall; whereas, Meresankh III is 1.05m on the west pillar of the north wall in entrance chamber (a).
- 84 The eyes of figures in the boats in the top two registers are crudely cut and are actually oval in shape. The two female figures in the top boats, considered to be Meresankh III, do not even have carved eyes.
- 85 Laurel Flentye, *The Decorated Elite Mastaba and Rock-Cut Tomb in the Eastern and GIS Cemeteries at Giza and their Relationship to the Development of Art during the Fourth Dynasty* (Ph.D. diss., New York University; UMI, 2006), 207-208.

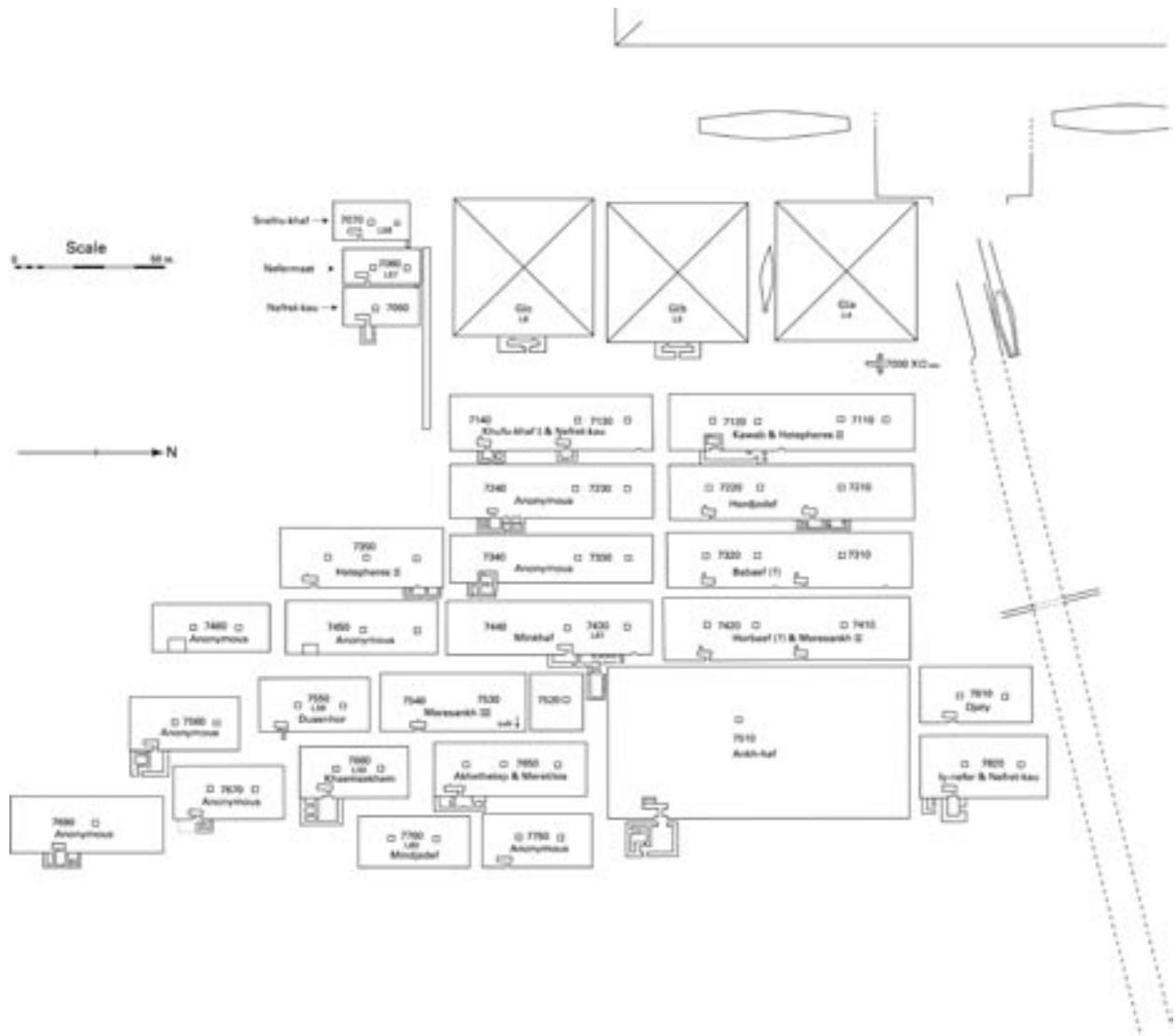


Fig. 1. Plan of the Eastern Cemetery (G7000) (after Reisner, Giza I, general plan). Drawing by Barbara Harper.

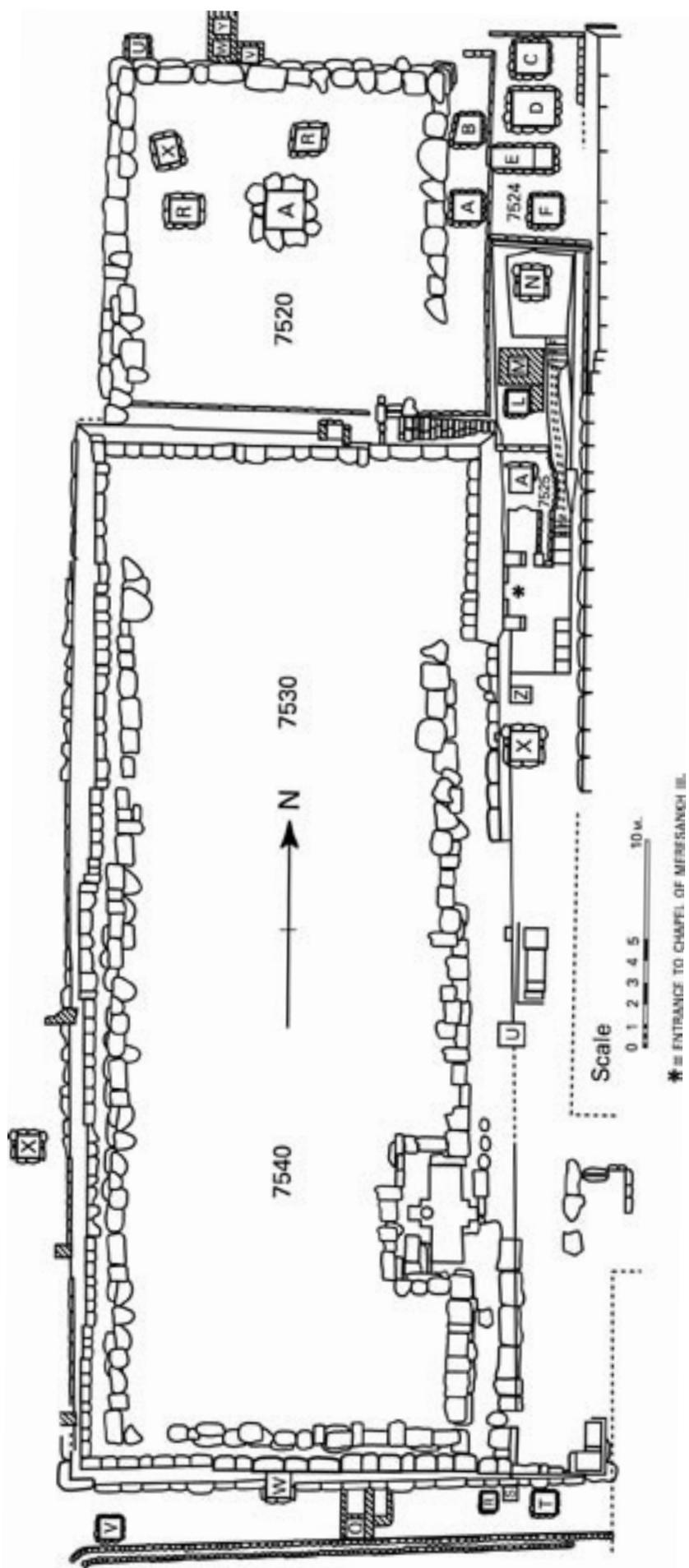


Fig. 2. Plan of mastaba G7530/7540 (after Dunham and Simpson, *Mersyankh III, Plan B*). Drawing by Barbara Harper.



CHAPEL OF MASTABA G7530/G7540

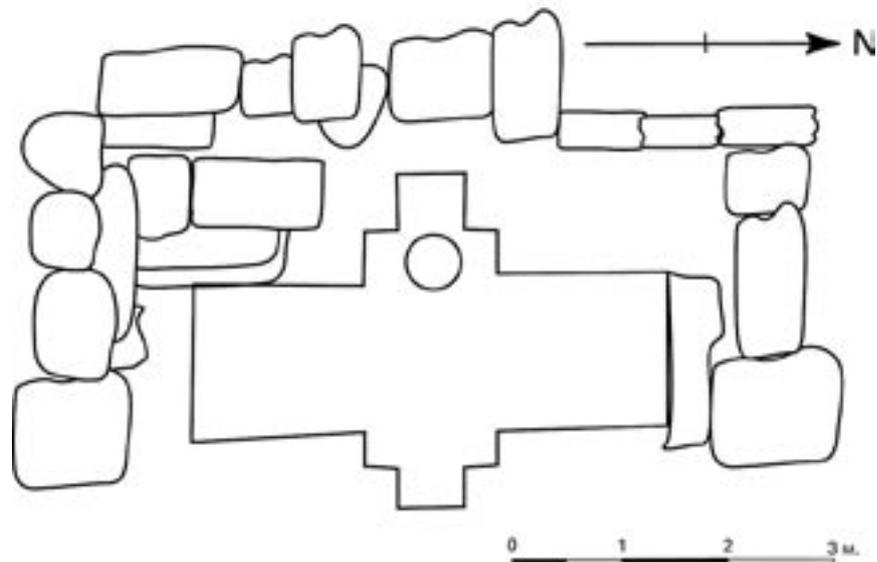


Fig. 3. Plan of the chapel in mastaba G7530/7540 (after Dunham and Simpson, *Merysankh III, Plan B*). Drawing by Barbara Harper.



Fig. 4. G7530-7540: G7540, chapel, restored N wall, looking N
 Photographer: Mohammedani Ibrahim, July 10, 1929, Harvard University-
 Boston Museum of Fine Arts Expedition, B6869 New Series
 Photograph©[2007]Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

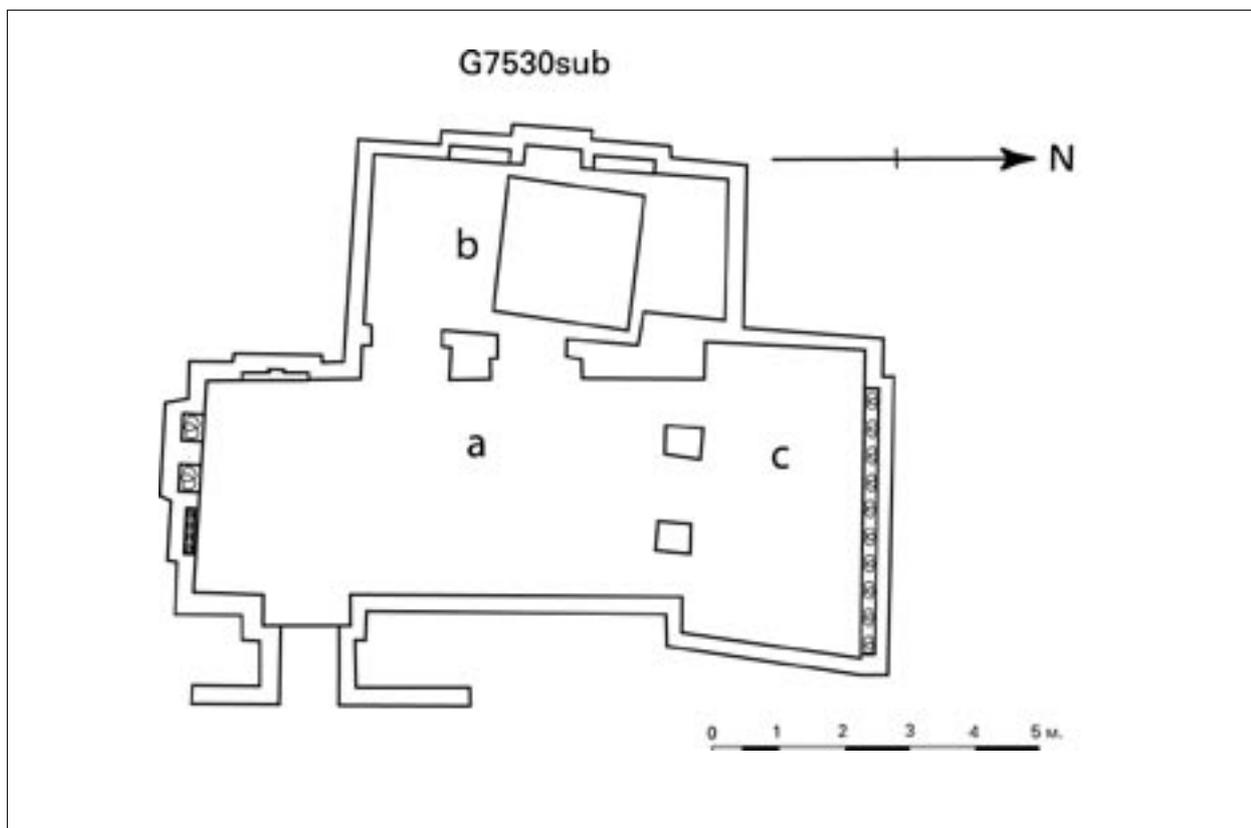


Fig. 5. Plan of the rock-cut tomb of Meresankh III (G7530sub) (after Reisner, *Giza I*, 226, fig. 131). Drawing by Barbara Harper.



Fig. 6. Detail of female attendant on the south entrance thickness (G7530sub)



Fig. 7. Khemetnu the Elder on the south entrance thickness (G7530sub).

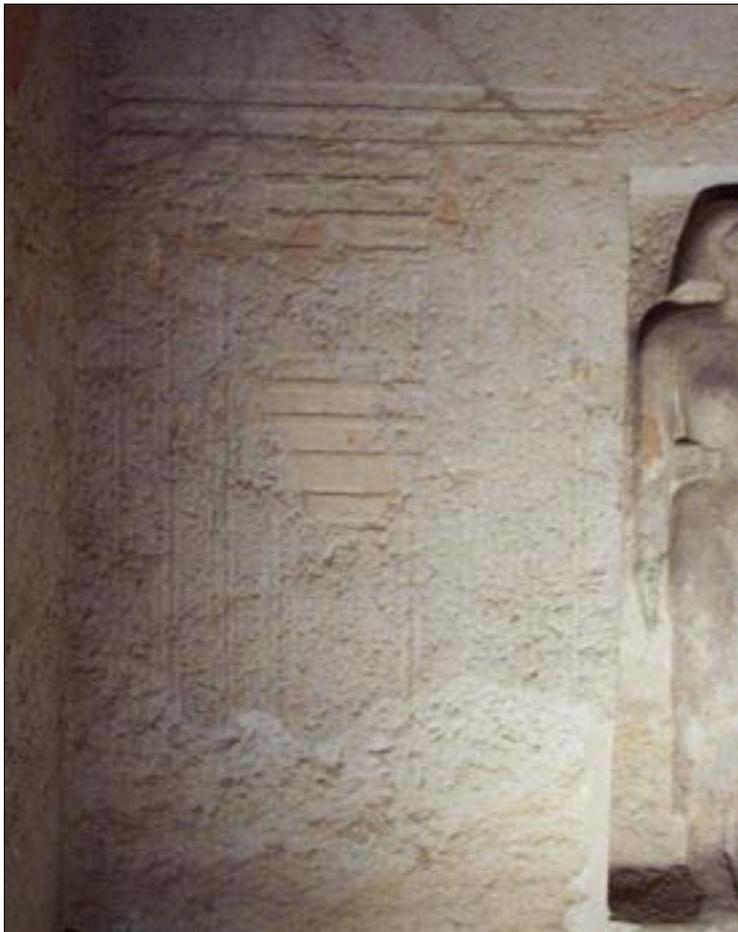


Fig. 8. 'Palace façade' decoration on the west wall in offering chamber (b) (G7530sub).



Fig. 9. Detail of Meresankh III on the south entrance thickness (G7530sub).



Fig. 10. Detail of the subsidiary registers on register 2 of the east wall in entrance chamber (a) (G7530sub).