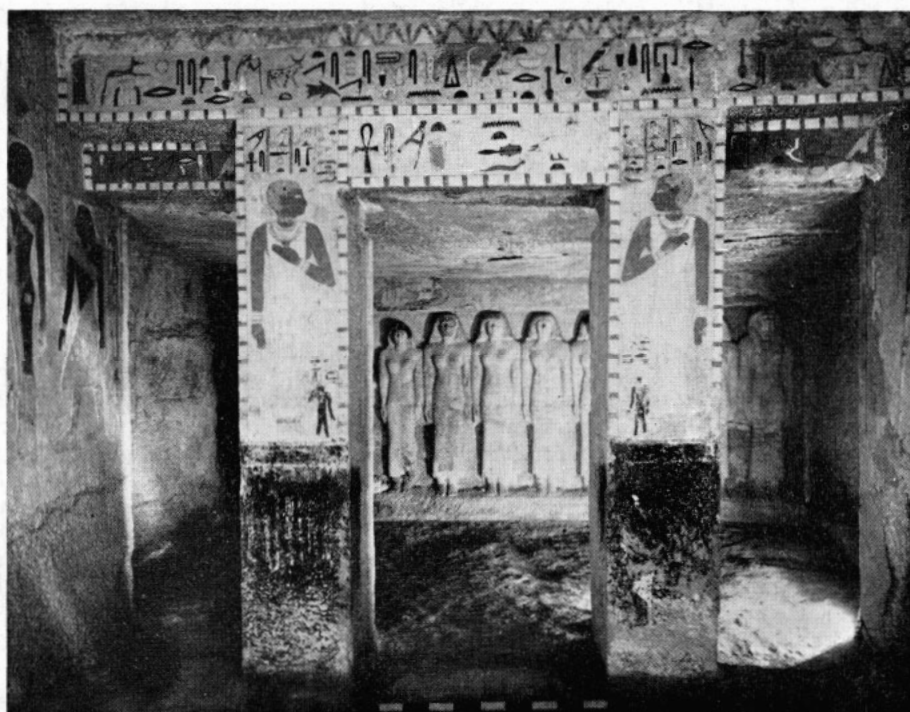


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TOMB OF QUEEN MERESANKH III

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Fig. 1. Discovery of entrance to tomb of Meresankh III; debris in doorway. April 23, 1927.

The Tomb of Meresankh, a Great-Granddaughter of Queen Hetep-Heres I and Sneferuw

DURING the past winter the Harvard-Boston Expedition has continued the excavation of the Cheops family cemetery at Giza, where they found the secret tomb of Queen Hetep-heres, the wife of Sneferuw and the mother of Cheops. Six large mastabas have been exposed, together with the intervening streets and the surrounding later mastabas of small size. The five rows of large mastabas seen in the northern part of the cemetery were followed southward, but the southern tombs were manifestly later in date of construction. On the very last day of the season the gangs were clearing the eastern face of the third mastaba in the fifth row from the west, when a doorway was unexpectedly revealed in the rock under the eastern wall of this mastaba. Later we found that two stairways led down from the floor of the street to the level of the doorway, which was about two meters below. Above the doorway were inscribed the titles of a princess and queen named Meresankh. As soon as the debris in the doorway was photographed (Fig. 1) we cleared away enough of the sand at the top to crawl in; and getting our heads, one at a time, just inside the doorway, we saw a rock-cut offering chapel consisting of three rooms. The entrance to the main room was blocked by a cone of sand and stone, on the top of which we were lying. (Fig. 2.) Our eyes were first startled by the vivid colors of the reliefs and inscriptions around the northern part of

this large chamber. None of us had ever seen anything like it. (Fig. 4 and cover.) Then gradually in the obscurity of the two adjoining rooms statues and statuettes became visible, and finally a great square pit yawning in the floor of the inner room on the west. There were sixteen figures cut in the rock and four inserted in a niche in the south wall. An electric lamp of 1000 c. p. was brought in from the plant beside the tomb of Queen Hetep-heres I, and the place was photographed from the doorway and from the inside looking towards the heap of sand around the doorway. (Figs. 2 and 3.)

All arrangements had been made to cease work that afternoon, but we kept on a small gang to remove the debris from the doorway and the chamber. This was on April 23, and it was May 4 before we were able to examine the cleared chamber at leisure. Our interest was from the beginning focused on the representations of the family of Queen Meresankh,—her father, her mother, and her children. Her father is pictured as a rather fat and coarse old man, but he bears the name Prince Ka-wa'ab and is undoubtedly the eldest son of Cheops, whose tomb was excavated in 1924 (the northernmost of the western row of mastabas in this cemetery). (Fig. 9.) The mother is described as Queen Hetep-heres, "the daughter of the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Cheops." She also was known from the

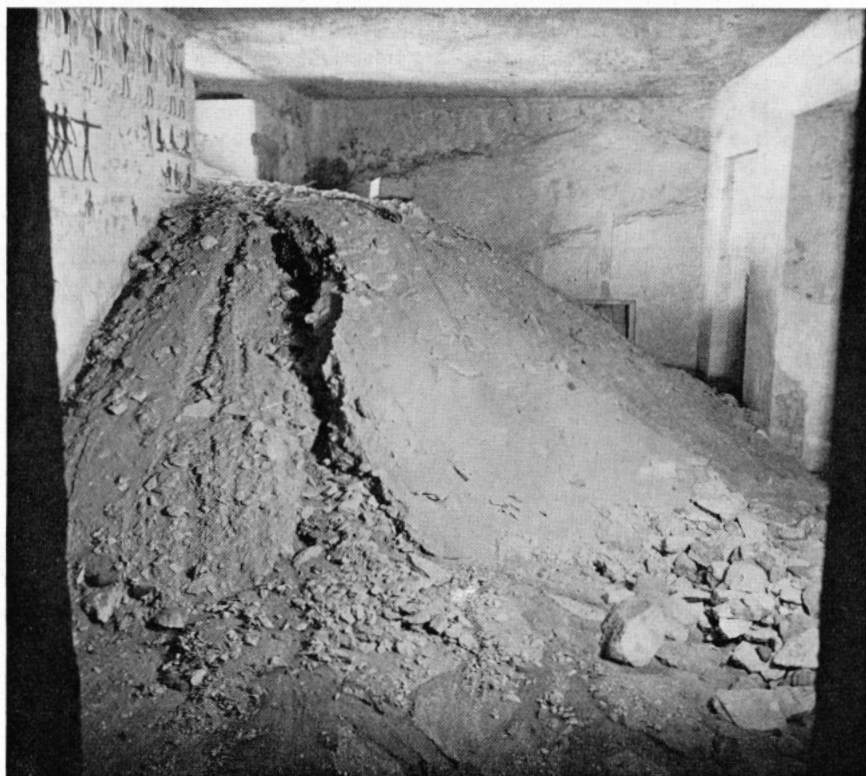


Fig. 2. View of cone of sand and debris around outer doorway, as found, looking south. April 24, 1927.

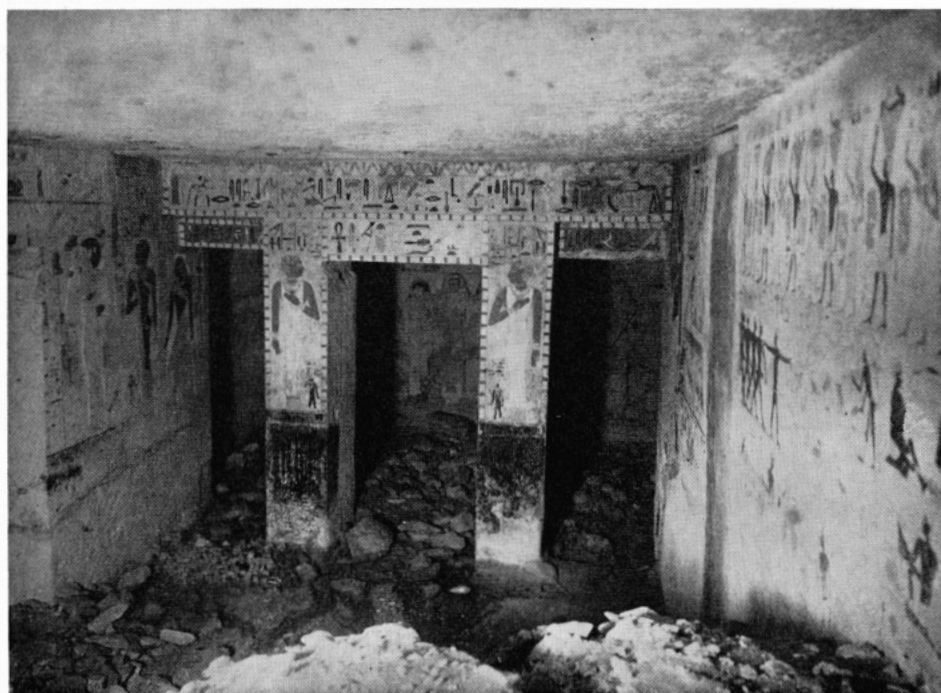


Fig. 3. First view of interior of the rock-cut chapel, as found, looking north. April 24, 1927.

tomb of Ankh-ha-ef and from an inscription in that of the steward Khemten. She is Hetep-heres II, the granddaughter of the elder Hetep-heres of the secret tomb, and is represented in two of the reliefs and in at least one of the statues. In all three cases she takes precedence of her daughter Meresankh. In the row of ten female statues cut in the northern wall of the inner

blonde or red-haired, the first of either type to be recorded among the black-haired people of the Pyramid Age. The explicit statement on the east wall that Hetep-heres II was a daughter of Cheops excludes the possibility that she was an imported foreigner; but, of course, she may have had foreign blood from her mother whom we do not know, or from some more remote ancestress. Her mother



Fig. 4. The rock-cut chapel after removing debris, looking N.N.W. from outer doorway. May 8, 1927.

chamber on the north, Hetep-heres II is on the right while the youngest daughter of Meresankh is on the left (cover). In a scene on the east wall of the main chamber Hetep-heres and Meresankh are shown standing on a reed boat pulling papyrus flowers in a swamp, and Hetep-heres, clad in a long white tunic of the usual type, stands in front with her back to Meresankh, who wears a bandalette around her black hair and a blue bead net over a white garment. (Fig. 10.) In this scene and in the statue, Hetep-heres II has the black lappet-wig, the traditional headdress of divine beings and of the great queens of Dynasty IV. On the west wall, Hetep-heres again stands in front of Meresankh, who in turn is followed by her eldest son and other children. (Figs. 5, 6 and 7.) Here Meresankh has short black hair as in the other scene but without the bandalette, and she wears a leopard skin over her white dress. Her mother, Hetep-heres II, however, has a white dress with very peculiar high pointed shoulders rising to the level of her ears, and her short hair is painted a bright yellow with fine red horizontal lines. It seems clear that this lady was

may have been a fair-haired Libyan from the western desert.

This fair-haired daughter of Cheops appears to have had three husbands at different times,—(1) Prince Ka-wa'ab, her brother, the father of Meresankh, (2) a king of Egypt from whom she derived her titles of queen, and (3) Ankh-ha-ef, one of the greatest of the nobles of Dynasty IV. The royal husband could only have been one of her two brothers, Radedef or Chephren. The estates of Meresankh mentioned on the east wall were derived from Cheops, except one which bore the name of Radedef, and consequently I consider it probable that the royal husband of Hetep-heres II was King Radedef. We know that Hetep-heres bore children to Ka-wa'ab and to Ankh-ha-ef, but we have no evidence as to Radedef. The tomb of Ka-wa'ab has a deep burial shaft for the wife; but the burial chamber was unfinished and had never been used. The tomb of Ankh-ha-ef is the largest mastaba in the whole pyramid field and contained a figure of Hetep-heres among its reliefs; but it has only one chapel and one burial shaft, both of which belonged to the husband.

Thus Hetep-heres was not buried in the tomb of either of these two men. She outlived them all and had a separate mastaba built for herself, apparently in the reign of Chephren. This is the mastaba under the northern part of which the

of this prince was found by Lepsius in 1842-1843 and published in the *Denkmaeler* under the number "Giza 86." It is a rock-cut tomb with two chambers excavated in the face of the cliff southeast of the Chephren pyramid. In that tomb our Queen

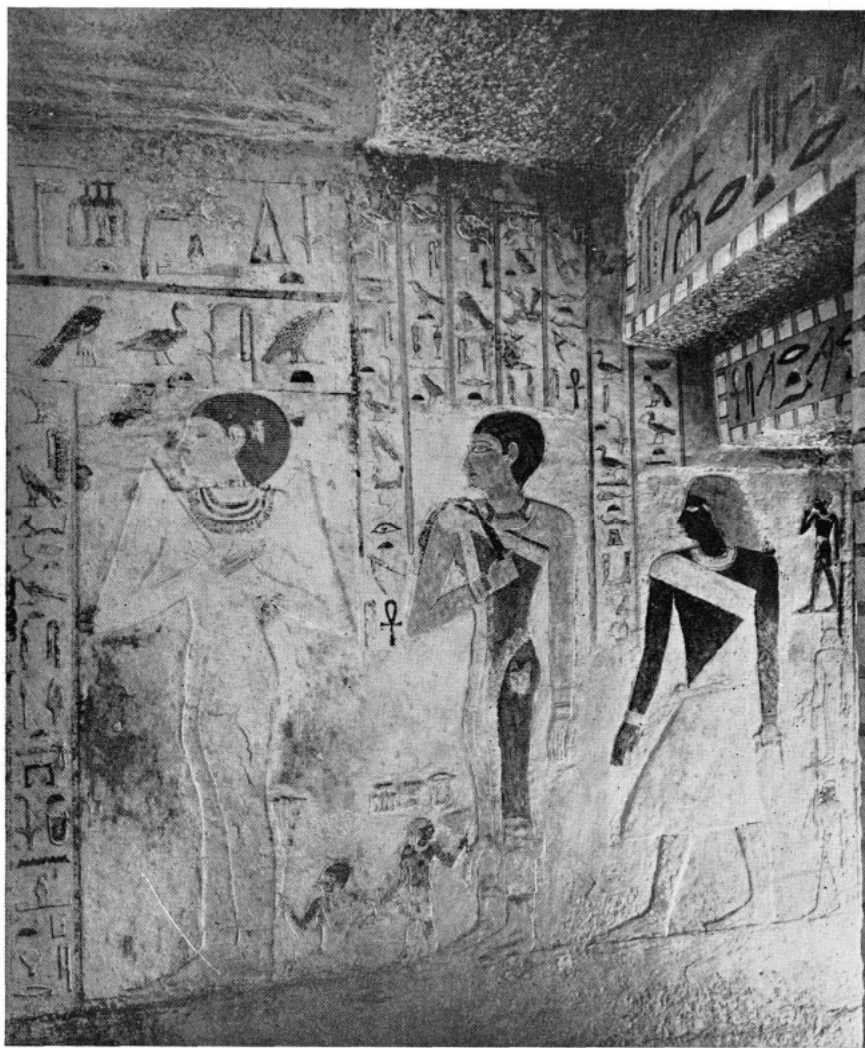


Fig. 5. Scene on western wall of main room showing the fair-haired Hetep-heres II, Queen Meresankh, Prince Nebemakhet, and other children of Meresankh III. May 27, 1927.

rock-cut tomb of Meresankh has been intruded. The offering chapel of the mastaba itself has been destroyed, but we found on the backs of three of the casing blocks dated inscriptions in red paint giving the name of "Hetep-heres." The burial shaft of Hetep-heres II has not yet been found, but we shall no doubt discover it as soon as operations are resumed.

On the west wall of the main chamber, in the scene with the yellow-haired Hetep-heres and Meresankh with the leopard skin, the eldest son of Meresankh is pictured and named "King's son of his body, Nebemakhet." (Fig. 6.) The tomb

Meresankh, the mother of Prince Nebemakhet, is represented together with his sister Shepseset-kawu, his brother Duwanera, and his wife Nubhetep. Lepsius also notes another tomb of Nebemakhet which that prince began in the cliff west of the Chephren pyramid ("Giza 12"), but abandoned for the eastern tomb ("Giza 86"). In our newly discovered tomb five children of Queen Meresankh are shown in the same scene with Nebemakhet, but only one of these is named, a small boy labeled Khenterka without any title. Among the other figures, one of the daughters is no doubt the Princess Shepseset-kawu of the Nebemakhet

tomb and one of the sons her younger brother, Duwanera.

The original decoration of the tomb was never finished, and after the work had been stopped various additions were made, probably by the

western room. (Fig. 19.) The latter are in two pairs, representing in each case Hetep-heres II and Meresankh (or alternately only Meresankh). The remaining figures are six statuettes of males, which are cut or inserted in the southern wall of the main

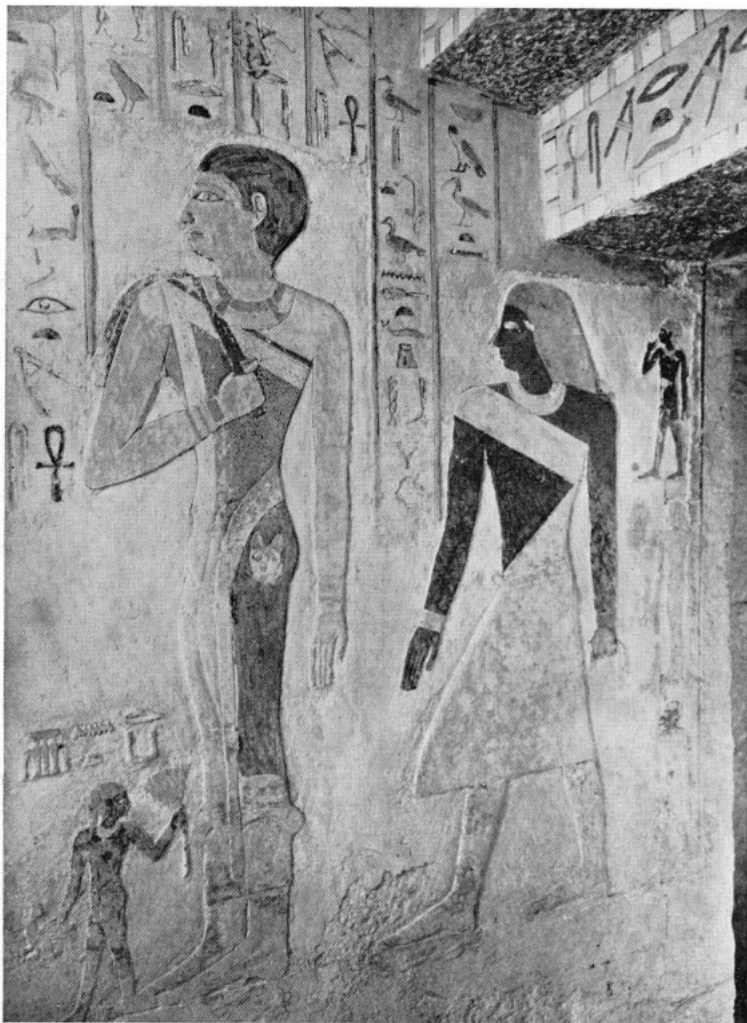


Fig. 6. West wall of main room, showing Queen Meresankh III and Prince Nebemakhet. May 18, 1927.

funerary priests. The inner room on the north has ten statues of women cut in a wide niche which takes nearly the whole length of the wall. (Cover.) The first figure on the right, and probably the first three, represent Hetep-heres II; the next four, Meresankh; and the last three, daughters of Meresankh. The only inscription is an offering formula across the top, which gives the name of Meresankh alone. The other walls of this room were never decorated and show the chisel marks of the stone-cutters. There have been no additions made in this room. The ten rock-cut statues are part of the original decoration, as are also the four similar statues of women in the western wall of the

room, below the base-line of the original reliefs, and are clearly later additions. (Fig. 13.) All six show males sitting on their feet in the attitude of scribes, and I would identify them as figures of the funerary priests. The chief funerary priest was Khemten, who is represented on the left-hand door-jamb of the outer doorway reading a papyrus before Meresankh (Fig. 17) and on the west wall of the main room just south of the only false door in this room. His tomb at the southwestern corner of the Cheops pyramid was excavated by us in 1915 and contains a well-known inscription stating that Khemten was the steward of Ka-wa'ab and Hetep-heres, whom we now know as the parents



Fig. 7. West wall of main room, showing heads of Queen Hetep-heres II (hair yellow with fine horizontal red lines) and Queen Meresankh III (black hair). June 15, 1927.



Fig. 8. East wall of main room, north of outer doorway. May 7, 1927.

of Meresankh. The family steward appears here quite naturally as the funerary priest of a member of the family. As chief funerary priest he seems to have been succeeded by his son, Khemten-the-Younger, who is shown in an added scene on the back of the pillar in the doorway from the main to

part of the eastern wall of this inner room which is north of the doorway from the main room, the rock wall has been smoothed and covered with a thin coating of pinkish plaster. On the surface of the plaster the design for the scene is drawn in fine black lines. On the south wall the process has



Fig. 9. East wall of main room; figure and inscription of Prince Ka-wa'ab, son of Cheops and father of Meresankh III. May 12, 1927.

the western room (see Fig. 14). No inscriptions are preserved on the statuettes of the scribes, but I would identify the figure on the west with Khemten, the next with Khemten-the-Younger, and the group of four, which is inserted, not cut in the rock, with the children of Khemten-the-Younger, the heirs of the chief priesthood.

The original reliefs in the main room have been worked in a coating of white plaster and vividly painted, while the greater part of the inscriptions were incised and painted in equally bright colors. In the western inner room the walls were never finished and several stages are preserved of the technical process of preparing the reliefs. On that

been carried a stage further. The background around the black design has been cut away by chiselling both the plaster and the rock and the inscriptions have been incised. The next step was the white plaster modelling of the details, as seen in the unpainted reliefs on the north wall (Fig. 15); and finally on the white plaster the design was redrawn in red lines and colored as in the main room. This technical process is well known from other tombs at Giza and is one of the cheaper methods. All the great mastabas of the children of Cheops have true reliefs cut wholly in fine white limestone; but the true relief process occurs in many qualities. On the back of the pillar which



Fig. 10. East wall of main room; swamp scene, with figures of Hetep-heres II and Meresankh III pulling papyrus flowers. May 12, 1927.

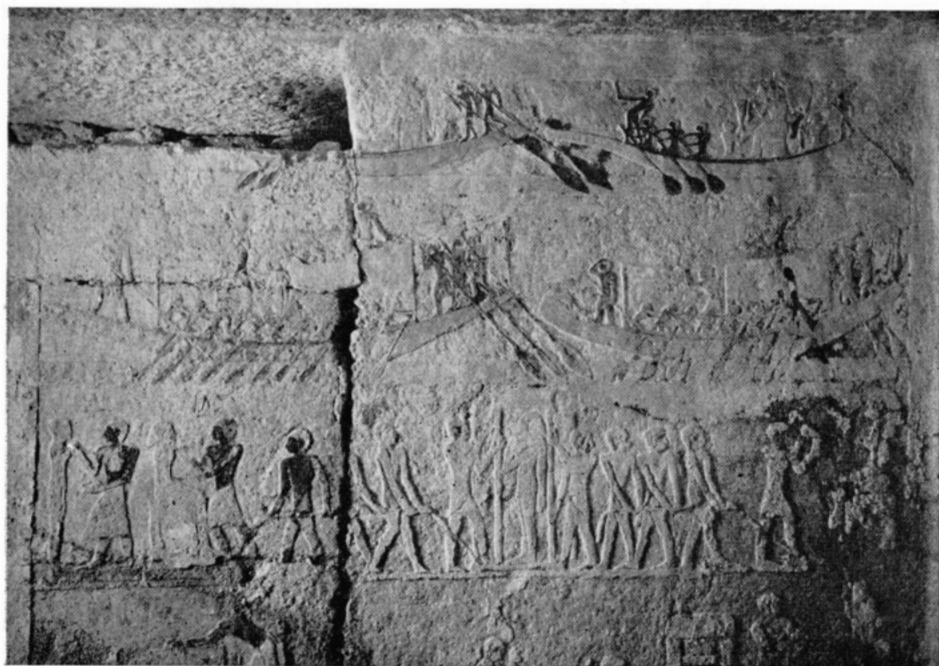


Fig. 11. East wall of main room, south of doorway; boats and statues; the sculptor, Yenkaf. May 19, 1927.



Fig. 12. East wall of main room, south of outer doorway; sculptors polishing red granite sarcophagus and other craftsmen at work. May 19, 1927.

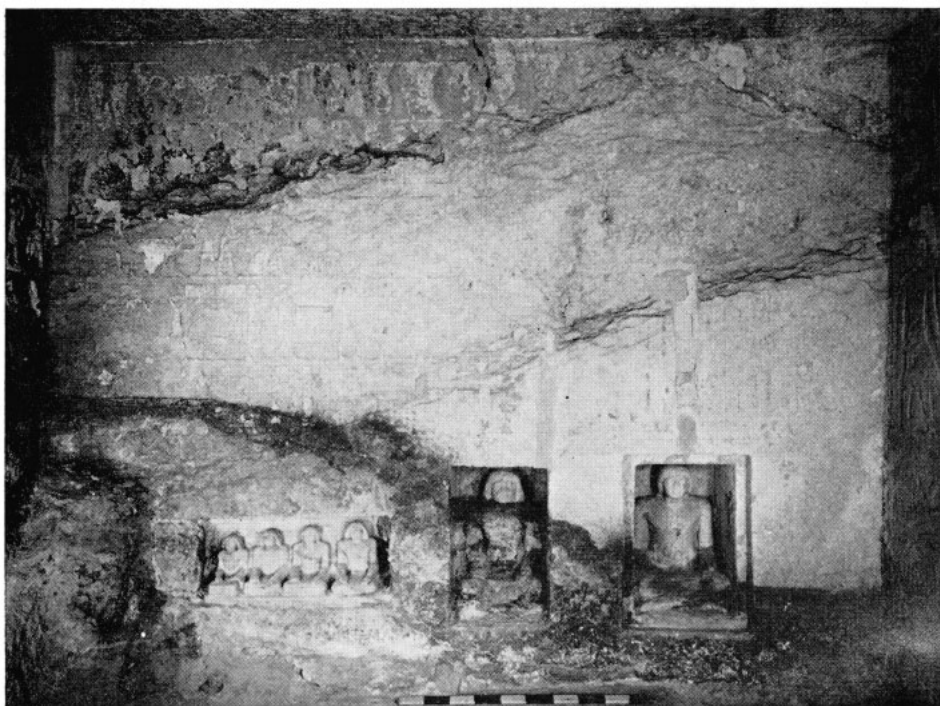


Fig. 13. South wall of main room; statues of funerary priests added below the base line of the reliefs. May 8, 1927.

stands in the doorway from the main to the western chamber (i. e., on the eastern side of the western chamber) is a scene in a poor quality of true stone-cut relief, which shows the chief funerary priest, Khemten-the-Younger, reading a papyrus before Meresankh. (Fig. 14.) The position of the scene, the technique of the relief, and the fact

Meresankh with incised inscriptions giving her titles as princess and queen, all painted in brilliant colors. On the left-hand pillar the figure of a small child has been painted as if standing behind the feet of the queen with his head turned back towards her and his finger to his lips. His name and titles are also painted on, not incised, and

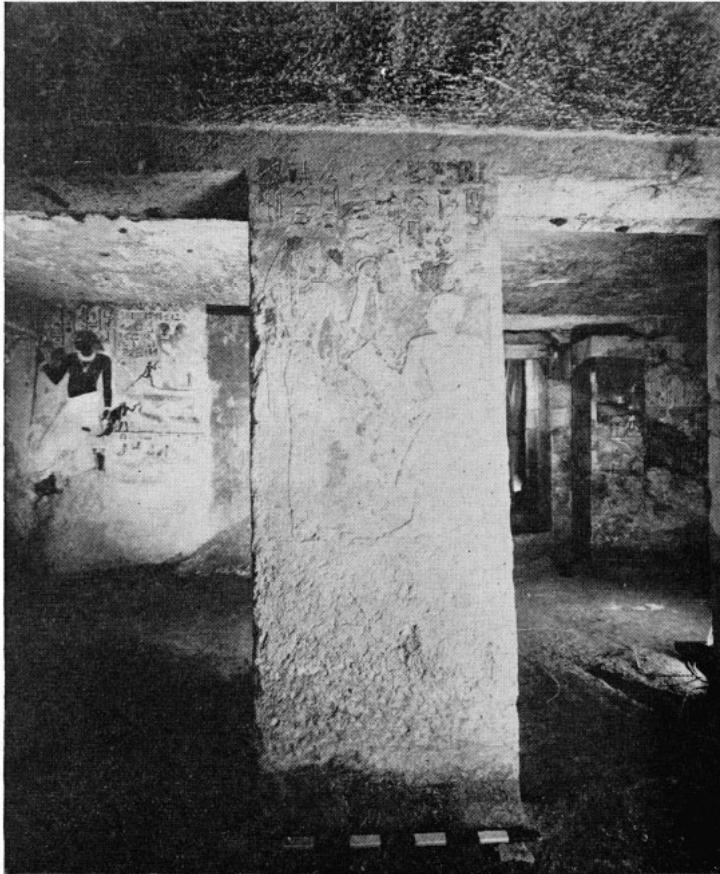


Fig. 14. Inner western room, looking east into main room; added scene and inscription of the chief funerary priest, Khemten-the-Younger, on back of pillar. May 12, 1927.

that Khemten-the-Younger could not have been "chief funerary priest" in the life-time of his father, all prove that this scene is among the later insertions, made probably after the death of the elder Khemten.

With the fact thus established that the funerary priesthood was continued through three generations in a family which owed its fortunes to Cheops and his children, and that additions were made to the decorations of the tomb after the burial of the queen, it is possible to consider two persons represented on the wall who have not yet been mentioned. These are the figures of two little royal princes painted on the front sides of the two pillars in the wide opening between the main and the northern chambers. (Cover.) On each of the spaces on the pillars stands a figure in relief of

read,—“the king’s son of his body, Neweserra-ankh.” On the right-hand pillar a similar figure, but with face forward and hands hanging, bears the inscription,—“the king’s son of his body, Duwara.” Both these figures with their inscriptions appear to have been painted in subsequent to the original decoration of the tomb. Neweserra was the sixth king of Dynasty V. A name like Neweserra-ankh, in which a king’s name is combined with other words, when it is applied to an ordinary person proves only that the person in question was born in or after the reign of the king whose name is used. But a “king’s son of his body” named Neweserra-ankh may reasonably be supposed to be a son of King Neweserra himself. Whether Neweserra-ankh was a son of Neweserra or of some later king, considering

the relationships of the people pictured in this tomb and the ordinary length of the bearing period of women, the admission of these two small princes as children of Queen Meresankh would strain the human possibilities to the breaking point. I therefore suggest that they were grandchildren (or great-grandchildren) of Meresankh painted in later to establish some claim to family estates or titles.

A very unusual, if not unique, feature of the tomb of Queen Meresankh is provided by two inscriptions, one on each side of the outer doorway, which give the date of the death of the queen and the date of her funeral. (Fig. 18.) On the front of the right door-jamb a vertical line of hieroglyphics reads,—"The king's daughter, Meresankh: year 1, month 1 of the third season, day 21: her *ka* was at rest and she proceeded to the *wa'abet* (place of embalment)." On the left a similar line reads,—"The king's wife, Meresankh: year 2, month 2 of the second season, day 18: she proceeded to her beautiful tomb." Thus 272 days (nine months and two days) elapsed between the death of the queen and her burial in the tomb. This is a much longer period than could have been required by the embalment, and it is possible that the tomb itself was prepared during the time. Unfortunately the name is not given of the king to whose reign these dates refer.

Nowhere in the tomb is any mention of the name of the king to whom Meresankh was married. She was a grandchild of Cheops and therefore of the same relative generation as her cousin Mycerinus, son of Chephren, who was a brother of her parents. She probably came to a marriageable age in the reign of Chephren. She bore at least three children to her royal husband and perhaps all six who are indicated in her tomb. The mastaba of the fair-haired Hetep-heres II, her mother, was in course of construction in the thirteenth year of Chephren, and her own tomb was intruded in the rock under that mastaba at a later date. (Fig. 16.) The inscription on the red granite sarcophagus (see below) indicates that Hetep-heres II outlived her daughter Meresankh, while the bones in the sarcophagus are those of a small adult female about fifty years old. The names of the funerary estates in the tomb of Meresankh prove that one was inherited from Radedef and the rest from Cheops, while those in the tomb of Nebemakhet were from the estates of Cheops and Chephren. This latter fact does not help, as Nebemakhet may have inherited the Chephren estates either as a son or a grandson of Chephren. Taking all these facts into consideration, Meresankh (who was the third queen of that name) could have been married to only one of two kings,—Chephren, her uncle, or Mycerinus, her cousin. I consider that the balance of probability is that Meresankh, the daughter of the greatest aristocrats of the age, would have been married to Mycerinus rather than to the older Chephren.

The tomb in which she was buried is very similar in plan and decoration to the tomb of Prince Khuwnera, son of Mycerinus and another queen (Khamerernebti II); and that tomb was made after the construction of the pyramid and the temples of Mycerinus. The date of the death of Meresankh given on the door-jamb was therefore in all probability the first year of Shepseskaf or one of his immediate successors (perhaps Weserkaf of Dynasty V). The fair-haired Hetep-heres may well have lived from the reign of Cheops to that of Shepseskaf or even Weserkaf.

The following list will give an idea of the relationships now revealed of the royal personages descended from our elder queen, Hetep-heres I:—

1. *Hetep-heres I, daughter of HUNI (last king of Dynasty III), queen of SNEFERUW (first king of Dynasty IV), mother of Cheops: buried in unidentified tomb at Dashûr and reburied in secret tomb at Giza.
2. King CHEOPS, son of Hetep-heres I and Sneferuw: First Pyramid at Giza. His queens—the ladies of the small pyramids, *G I-a, *G I-b, *Henutsen, *Nefertkauw, and Sedyt (?). His children—†*Kawa'ab, RADEDEF, CHEPHREN, *Hordedef, *Khnun-ba-ef, *Meresankh II, †*Hetep-heres II, *Khufuw-kha-ef, *Min-kha-ef, *Neferma'at (of Giza), Khamerernebti I, and others.
3. a. †*Kawa'ab, eldest son of Cheops: mastaba G 7110+7120.
b. †*Hetep-heres II, daughter of Cheops: married to Kawa'ab, RADEDEF, and Ankh-ha-ef: mastaba G 7530+7540. For their contemporaries see children of Cheops, above. Their daughter, †*Meresankh III.
4. Great-grandchildren of Hetep-heres I:—
a. *MYCERINUS, son of CHEPHREN: Third Pyramid at Giza.
b. Khamerernebti II, daughter of Chephren and Khamerernebti I.
c. †*Meresankh III, daughter of Kawa'ab and Hetep-heres II: mastaba G 7530-sub.
5. Great-great-grandchildren of Hetep-heres I:—
a. SHEPSEKAF, son of MYCERINUS: mastaba excavated by Jequier at Dashûr.
b. *Khuwnera, son of MYCERINUS and Khamerernebti II: tomb in Mycerinus quarry.
c. †Nebemakhet, son of MYCERINUS and Meresankh III: tomb in cliff southeast of Chephren pyramid.
d. †Shepseset-kauw, daughter of MYCERINUS and Meresankh III.
e. †Duwanera, brother of c. and d.
f. †Three other children of Meresankh III, including Khenterka.

NOTE.—The names marked with a * are those of sixteen persons whose tombs have been excavated by our expedition; those marked with a † occur in the tomb of Meresankh III.



Fig. 15. Inner western room, north wall; unpainted reliefs of musicians, dancers and offerers. May 13, 1927.



Fig. 16. Outer doorway under northern part of eastern wall of the mastaba of the fair-haired Hetep-heres II, looking down to west. June 2, 1927.

6. Great-great-great-grandchildren of Hetep-heres I:—
- a. Ma'at-kha, daughter of SHEPSESKAF: married Ptahshepses.
 - b. †Neweserra-ankh, son of a daughter of Meresankh III and NEWESERRA.
 - c. †Duwara, brother of Neweserra-ankh.
- descendants of the second and third generations (above) have the greatest and most expensive mastaba tombs of the whole Old Kingdom and were manifestly the great aristocrats of Dynasty IV. The branch line descended from Sneferuw by another queen, and in particular those buried at Giza, the Queen Nefertkauw, her son Prince

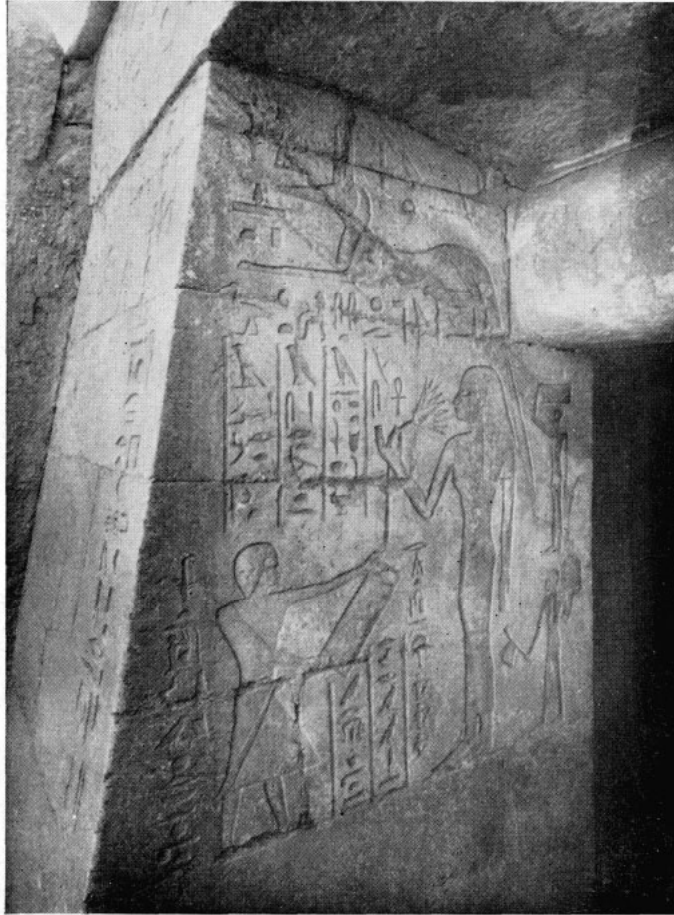


Fig. 17. Southern door-jamb, showing the first chief funerary priest, Khemten (the elder), reading a papyrus before Queen Meresankh III. May 24, 1927.

This is by no means a complete list of all the members of the royal family of Dynasty IV, but only of those of the line of Hetep-heres I who were found in the eastern cemetery at Giza, or who came to the throne. One of her sons (Cheops), two of her grandsons (Radedef and Chephren), a great-grandson (Mycerinus), and a great-great-grandson (Shepseskaf) became kings of Egypt. Of her female descendants five are known who held the title of queen—three granddaughters (the fair-haired Hetep-heres II, Meresankh II, and Khamerernebti I) and two great-granddaughters (Khamerernebti II and Meresankh III). Her line has been followed through six generations from her father, probably Huni. Her

Neferma'at, and his son Sneferuw-ha-ef, have tombs of much less distinction; and their inscriptions trace their descent from Sneferuw, not from Cheops, who was the husband of Nefertkauw, the father of Neferma'at, and the grandfather of Sneferuw-ha-ef. This manifest split in the family probably reflects some quarrel over the succession, perhaps an intrigue in the harem of Sneferuw engineered by our old queen, Hetep-heres I.

To return to the newly discovered tomb of Queen Meresankh who, as has been shown above, was Meresankh III,—the funerary equipment of the queen is depicted on the southern wall of the main chamber, and includes nearly the same pieces as those found in the tomb of her great-grandmother,

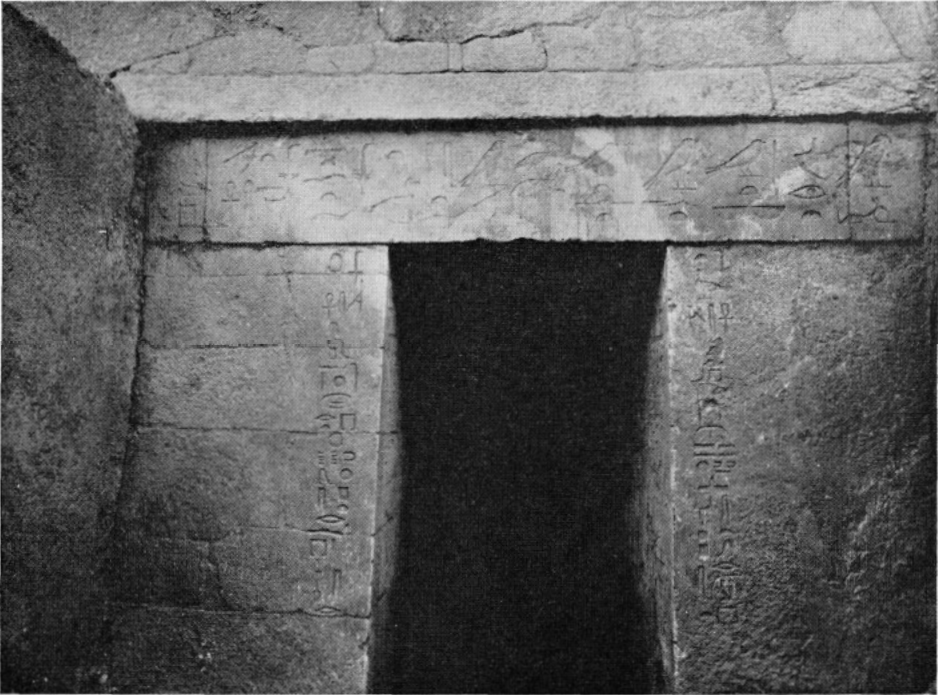


Fig. 18. Inscriptions on outer doorway, giving titles of Queen Meresankh III, and the dates of her death and funeral. June 1, 1927.

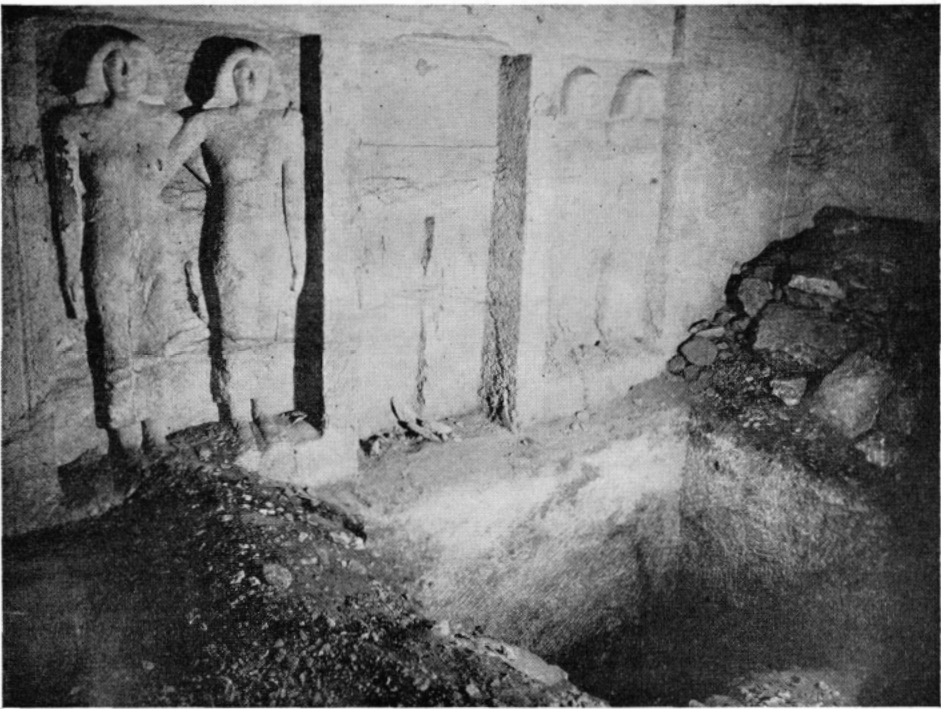


Fig. 19. The yawning burial shaft in the western inner room as left by the thieves who plundered the chamber. April 24, 1927.

Hetep-heres I. (Fig. 13.) There is a canopy supported by bulb-headed tent-poles, covering a bed with lion-legs higher at the head-end, an armchair, but with a lion under the arm instead of papyrus flowers, a carrying-chair, a head rest, and boxes for ointment jars, clothing, and other objects. Such equipments are, however, not uncommon in

a large heavy object, and on the wall south of the outer doorway workmen were depicted engaged in polishing a large red granite sarcophagus with a vaulted lid. (Fig. 12.) The material and the form of the box of the sarcophagus actually in the burial chamber are like the picture on the wall, but the lid is different. (Fig. 20.) The inscriptions

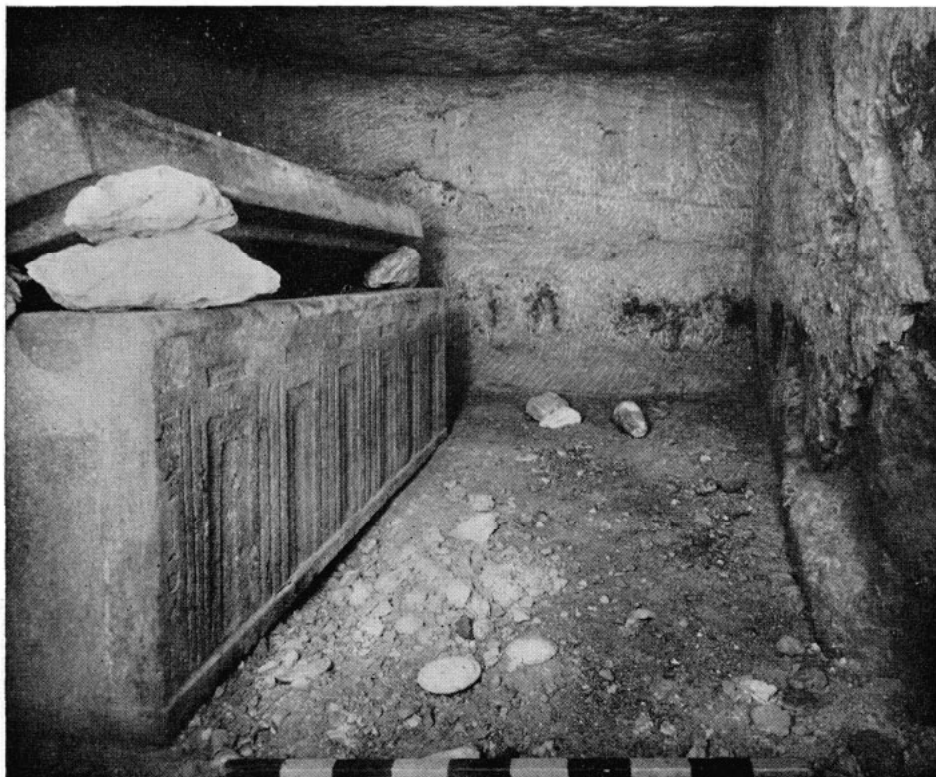


Fig. 20. The burial chamber with the granite sarcophagus as left by the thieves, looking north. June 4, 1927.

other tombs of the Old Kingdom. The burial chamber, which has now been cleared (June, 1927), was found plundered. The lid of the granite sarcophagus was lifted on the east resting on rough stones, and the disjointed skeleton of the queen lay in a disordered heap in the north end. Nothing of the equipment carved on the walls was found, only the four canopic jars of limestone with their plain lids, a few broken pottery vessels, a few fragments of copper models, some beads, and several scraps of decayed wood. The fortunes of the family were at a low ebb after the death of Mycerinus, and in all probability the thieves found no great reward for their labors.

We knew that there was a granite sarcophagus in the burial chamber before we cleared the pit. The outer doorway had been cut very wide and then reduced in width by masonry on the south side. (Fig. 18.) The edges of the inner doorway to the pit-room were bruised as if by the passage of

on each side of the box present a horizontal line giving the titles and name of Queen Hetep-heres II and two vertical lines which read,—“(That which) I have given to my daughter, the king’s wife, Meresankh.” The granite sarcophagus was given to Meresankh by her mother, the fair-haired Hetep-heres II, the daughter of Cheops. Moreover, the prominence of Hetep-heres in the tomb seems due to the fact that Hetep-heres not only gave the sarcophagus but also the whole tomb to her daughter. That means that Hetep-heres outlived her daughter, as she may easily have done if Meresankh died in the first year of King Shepseskaf or of King Weserkaf (first king of Dynasty V).

On the same wall as that on which the workmen are shown polishing the red granite sarcophagus, other craftsmen are working on four statues of Meresankh. (Fig. 11.) Over two of these men an inscription is still legible reading,—“the sculptor,

Yenkaf." On the southern wall of the same room a man is seen painting a statue and his inscription reads,—“the painter, Rahay.” The names of the craftsmen are seldom mentioned in Egyptian tombs; but the Prince Nebemakhet followed the

Some German Woodcut Illustrations

THE work of reclassifying the sixteenth century woodcuts, begun more than a year ago and finished during the past summer, has brought to



St. Sebald

Hans Springinkle

precedent set by his mother, and in his tomb inscriptions were cut recording that the overseer of works Yenkaf made the tomb and the painter Semerka painted it. The overseer of works Yenkaf is probably the same as the sculptor of the Meresankh tomb, at a later stage in his career. However that may be, I venture to believe that the sculptor Yenkaf carved the statues, the reliefs, and the inscriptions in the rock-cut chapel of Meresankh III, and that Rahay laid on the brilliant colors which have changed so little during the four and a half thousand years that have passed away since his day.

REISNER.

light a number of fine designs by German, French, and Italian artists who devoted themselves largely to the adornment of books. Many of these prints had been previously identified, but others, attributed as anonymous pieces of this or that school, had received little attention in their oblivion. A further stigma attached to the woodcuts of German origin — by far the largest group — in that a generous proportion of them were known to be of dubious vintage, being either late and worn, or modern restrikes from the original blocks. Nevertheless this German group was found to contain a sprinkling of early impressions, liberal enough to represent some of the great and small illustrators of the