INSTITUT DES CULTURES MÉDITERRANÉENNES ET ORIENTALES DE L'ACADÉMIE POLONAISE DES SCIENCES

ÉTUDES et TRAVAUX XXVI 2013

MIRAL LASHIEN

The Ultimate Destination
Decoration of Kaiemankh's Burial Chamber
Reconsidered

The tomb of Kaiemankh at Giza¹ has recently generated a number of studies dealing with its date and the significance of its wall decoration, particularly that of its burial chamber. It was originally assigned by H. Junker to the Sixth Dynasty,² a date which has been maintained by many scholars,³ while K. Dawood proposed a date in the early part of the Sixth Dynasty, probably not earlier than the reign of Teti.⁴ This date has been recently challenged by C. Sourdive⁵ and N. Kanawati,⁶ both of whom placed the tomb's construction in the Fifth Dynasty, possibly under Djedkare/Isesi and lately A. Woods, in an article devoted to the dating of this tomb, concluded that the evidence supports a Fifth Dynasty date for the tomb, probably in the reign of Djedkare or early in that of Wenis.⁵ Whether dating to the end of the Fifth Dynasty or to the beginning of the Sixth, it now appears almost certain that Kaiemankh was one of the earliest individuals to decorate his burial chamber.

A vertical shaft, 5.10m deep, leads to Kaiemankh's burial chamber which is irregular in shape, measuring 3.35m on the east wall, 3.90m on the west wall, 3.50m on the north wall and 2.60m on the south wall, with an average height of 1.50m. Occupying the centre of the room is a limestone sarcophagus 2.10m long, 0.90m wide and 0.75m high, with a curved lid 0.25m high at the centre. The sarcophagus is positioned almost exactly beneath Kaiemankh's false door in the alcove of the chapel. All four walls of the burial chamber around the sarcophagus are smoothed, plastered and decorated in painting.⁸

The decoration of burial chambers usually consists of lists of offerings and scenes of food items cut/prepared and stacked or stored in chests and granaries. A few exceptions

^{*} I was fortunate to work with Professor Karol Myśliwiec during his expedition at Saqqara. His leadership, generosity with his knowledge, and kindness to everyone on the dig were exemplary. It is a great pleasure then to offer him this paper with friendship and respect.

¹ H. Junker, Gîza IV. Die Mastaba des *K3jm^cnḫ* (Kai-em-anch), Wien-Leipzig 1940 [= Gîza IV]; N. Kanawatı, Tombs at Giza I. Kaiemankh (G4561) and Seshemnefer I (G4940), *ACE Reports* 16, Warminster 2001 [= Tombs at Giza I], pp. 13–50, Pls 1–17.

² Junker, Gîza IV, pp. 1–4.

³ See for instance K. Baer, Rank and Title in the Old Kingdom: The Structure of the Egyptian Administration in the Fifth and Sixth Dynasties, Chicago 1960, p. 141 [520]; N. Strudwick, The Administration of Egypt in the Old Kingdom, London 1985, p. 154; Y. Harpur, Decoration in Egyptian Tombs of the Old Kingdom: Studies in orientation and scene content, London 1987, pp. 7 n. 7, 270 [255]; A.O. Bolshakov, Man and his Double in Egyptian Ideology of the Old Kingdom, ÄAT 37, Wiesbaden 1997 [= Man and his Double], pp. 119–120.

⁴ K. Dawood, Animate decoration and burial chambers of private tombs during the Old Kingdom: New evidence from the tomb of Kairer at Saqqara, [*in:*] L. Pantalacci, C. Berger-El-Naggar (Eds), Des Néferkarê aux Montouhotep. Travaux archéologiques en cours sur la fin de la VI^e dynastie et la Première Période Intermédiaire. Actes du Colloque CNRS – Université Lumière-Lyon 2, tenu le 5–7 juillet 2001, *TMO* 40, Lyon 2005 [= Animate decoration], pp. 114–115.

⁵ C. Sourdive, La main dans l'Egypte Pharaonique: Recherches de morphologie structurale sur les objets égyptiens comportant une main, Berne 1984, p. 139 [28].

⁶ Kanawati, Tombs at Giza I, pp. 15–18; Id., Decoration of the burial chambers, sarcophagi and coffins in the Old Kingdom, [*in*:] K. Daoud, S. Bedier, S. Abd el-Fatah (Eds), Studies in Honor of Ali Radwan II, *ASAE-Suppl.* 34, Cairo 2005, pp. 57–58.

⁷ A. Woods, Contribution to a controversy: A date for the tomb of K_3 (=*i*)-*m*-^cnh at Giza, *JEA 95*, 2009, pp. 161–174.

⁸ Kanawati, Tombs at Giza I, pp. 22–23, Pls 25–26.

depict animate figures, humans and animals, both of which are present in the burial chamber of Kaiemankh, which provides a striking example of this phenomenon. Here, the scenes include themes typically represented in the chapel, so the reason for their inclusion in a burial chamber has been fervently disputed. K. Dawood sees a link between the inscription of the Pyramid Texts in the royal burial chambers, starting with that of Wenis, and the introduction of iconic (figurative) decoration in the burial chambers of some individuals, both of which may have been the result of the same ideological rationale. On the other hand, A.O. Bolshakov views these scenes as an attempt to create an analogous world to that which is shown in the chapel, while N. Kanawati suggests that scenes in the burial chamber were occasionally used as an extension of or even a substitute for those in the chapel. K. Dawood further thinks that the animate decorations correspond to the art repertoire employed in the superstructure, but were carefully selected and modified to suit the realm of the sarcophagus. That such figures did not become predominant in burial chambers was, according to K. Dawood, due to the shift in emphasis to coffins and wooden models of daily life.

To understand the purpose of depicting such scenes in Kaiemankh's burial chamber, we must examine the type of themes he represented. The east wall (**Fig. 1**) is mostly occupied by an offering list, in addition to some offering bearers bringing gifts, such as live animals, jars, bread loaves and rolled cloth. Priests are also shown beneath and to the right of the offering list conducting the usual 'purification' and 'glorification' ceremonies associated with funerary meals. While the inclusion of live humans and animals is uncharacteristic in a burial chamber and therefore needs to be explained, the inscription of an offering list, typically on the east wall, is rather common even when there are no animate figures. These lists are positioned immediately opposite the east side of the sarcophagi/coffins, allowing the deceased to view them through the frequently represented w@3t-eyes.

⁹ See examples in Dawood, Animate decoration, pp. 107ff.; N. Kanawati, Decorated Burial Chambers of the Old Kingdom, Cairo 2010 [= Burial Chambers], *passim*.

¹⁰ Dawood, Animate decoration, p. 109.

¹¹ Bolshakov, Man and his Double, pp. 119–120.

¹² N. Kanawati, The Tomb and its Significance in Ancient Egypt, Cairo 1987 [= Tomb and its Significance], p. 138.

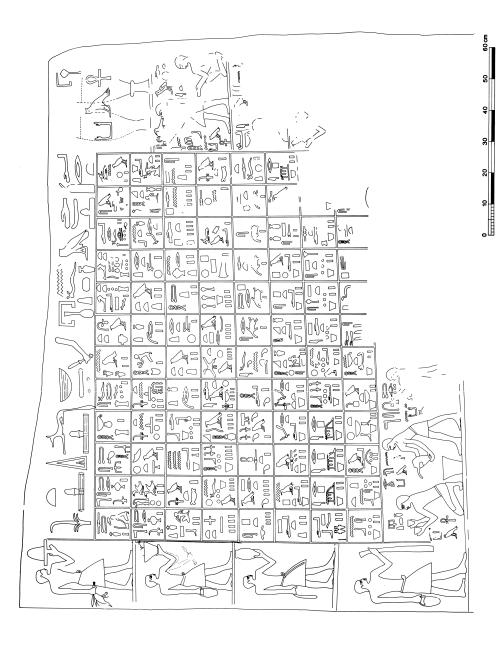
¹³ Dawood, Animate decoration, p. 112.

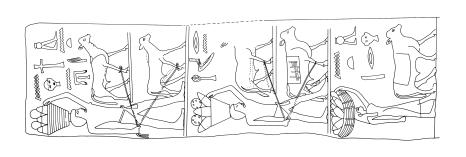
¹⁴ This was suggested to him by J. Malek. Dawood, Animate decoration, p. 112.

¹⁵ Junker, Gîza IV, Pls 12, 16; Kanawati, Tombs at Giza I, Pl. 34.

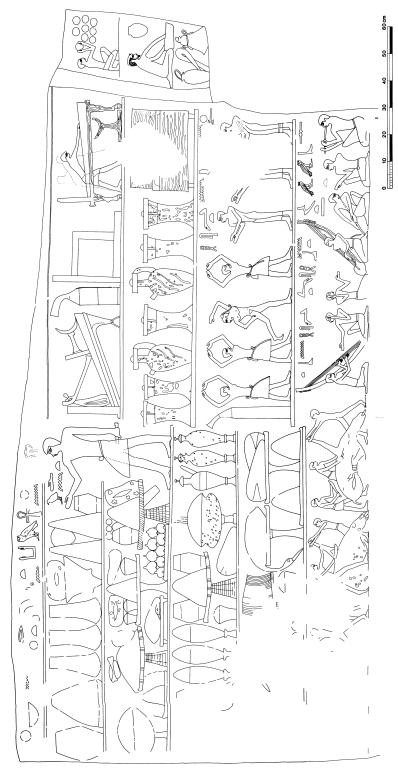
¹⁶ See for example E. BROVARSKI, The Senedjemib Complex, Part I: The Mastabas of Senedjemib Inti (G2370), Khnumenti (G2374) and Senedjemib Mehi (G2378), Giza Mastabas VII, Boston 2001, Fig. 71; R. MACRAMALLAH, Le mastaba d'Idout, Cairo 1953, Pl. 22B; N. KANAWATI, M. ABDER-RAZIQ, The Unis Cemetery at Saqqara II. The Tomb of Iynefert and Ihy (reused by Idut), ACE Reports 19, Oxford 2003, Pl. 72a; N. KANAWATI, A. HASSAN, The Tomb of Ankhmahor, The Teti Cemetery at Saqqara II, Warminster 1997 [= Ankhmahor], Pl. 63; T.G.H. JAMES, The Mastaba of Khentika Called Ikhekhi, London 1953, Pls 35–36; H. ALTENMÜLLER, Die Wanddarstellungen im Grab des Mehu in Saqqara, AV 42, Mainz 1998, Pl. 98.5.

¹⁷ See for example the *wd3t*-eyes inside the sarcophagus of Inumin and his offering list on the opposite east wall, e.g. N. Kanawati, The Teti Cemetery at Saqqara VIII, The Tomb of Inumin, *ACE Report* 24, Oxford 2006, Pl. 34.

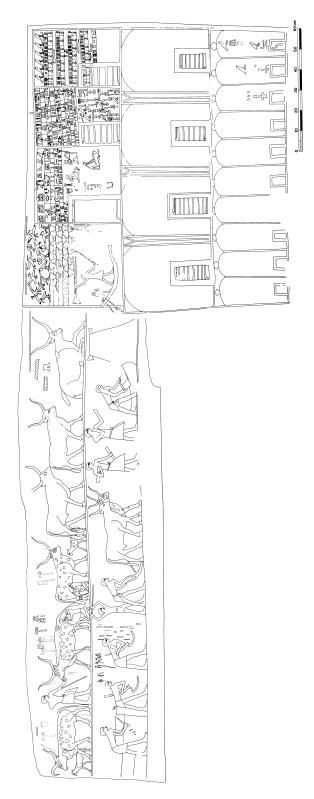




1. Tomb of Kaiemankh, Burial chamber, east wall (Drawing: courtesy of The Australian Centre for Egyptology).



2. Tomb of Kaiemankh, Burial chamber, south wall (Drawing: courtesy of The Australian Centre for Egyptology).



3. Tomb of Kaiemankh, Burial chamber, west wall (Drawing: courtesy of The Australian Centre for Egyptology).

As for the scenes with animate figures, the south wall of Kaiemankh's burial chamber (Fig. 2) will be examined first. The eastern half of this wall shows a servant raising an empty hand in what is captioned as wdn ht 'gesturing of offerings'. He is accompanied by four registers of different items of food and drink and a fifth register occupied by butchers engaged in slaughtering three bound animals.¹⁸ This scene joins and presumably complements that on the east wall. The western half of the wall is divided into four registers, the top of which illustrates some furniture, including a bed, a chair, a linen bag, a sofa, headrests and a fly whisk. The second register contains seven jars for the traditional oils and two wooden chests probably for storage. Four female dancers and three rhythmic clappers are shown in the third register, 19 while the bottom register is occupied by singers and four musicians, two playing wind instruments and two playing the harp. It is interesting that the same number of musicians, instruments, dancers and clappers appear on the west wall of the chapel performing in front of the tomb owner and his wife. 20 Perhaps they represent the same troupe. However, while the dancers in both instances are performing the same movements, the so-called 'Diamond Pose', one of them, only in the burial chamber, is nude and performing the 'Solo Swastika Pose'. 21 To the extreme right of the wall is bread making scene, placed in two registers.²²

The south section of the west wall is divided into two registers, the top of which depicts aspects of animal husbandry, such as milking a cow in the presence of its calf and assisting a cow giving birth. The lower register shows agricultural activities, including harvesting grain and flax, ploughing the land and measuring grain.²³ The north section of the wall represents granaries and storerooms.²⁴ However, the top left part, immediately opposite the entrance to the burial chamber, portrays the figure of Kaiemankh on a boat in a papyrus thicket performing the *zšš w³d* 'Pulling the Papyrus',²⁵ a ceremony probably dedicated to the goddess Hathor (**Fig. 3**).²⁶

The north wall (**Figs 4–6**) has deteriorated the most, but fortunately excellent photographs were published by Junker when the scenes were in near perfect condition.²⁷ The upper part of the wall is occupied by a scene of three boats, their sails raised, with the tomb owner shown in each of them, and two other boats with sails down travelling in the opposite direction.²⁸

¹⁸ Junker, Gîza IV, Pl. 17; Kanawati, Tombs at Giza I, Pl. 35.

¹⁹ Junker, Gîza IV, Pls 14–15; Kanawati, Tombs at Giza I, Pls 1, 35.

²⁰ Junker, Gîza IV, Fig. 9; Kanawati, Tombs at Giza I, Pl. 32.

²¹ For a study of these poses see L. KINNEY, Dance, Dancers and the Performance Cohort in the Old Kingdom, Oxford 2008, pp. 9–12, 88–90. Also in the funerary procession scene in the tomb of Tjeti/Kaihep of El-Hawawish, clappers and dancers were depicted including a nude female. N. KANAWATI, The Rock Tombs of El-Hawawish III. The Cemetery of Akhmim, Sydney 1982, Fig. 12.

²² Junker, Gîza IV, Pl. 13; Kanawati, Tombs at Giza I, Pl. 35.

²³ Junker, Gîza IV, Pl. 12; Kanawati, Tombs at Giza I, Pl. 36.

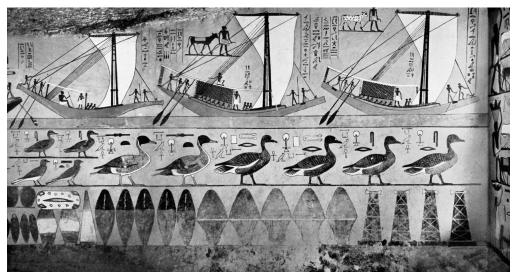
²⁴ Junker, Gîza IV, Pls 9–10; Kanawati, Tombs at Giza I, Pl. 36.

²⁵ Junker, Gîza IV, Pls 2, 11; Kanawati, Tombs at Giza I, Pl. 36.

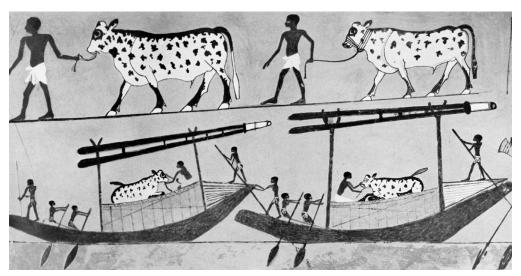
²⁶ Y. Harpur, *zšš w3d* scenes of the Old Kingdom, *GM 38*, 1980, pp. 53–61.

²⁷ JUNKER, Gîza IV, Pls 3–8. For its present condition see KANAWATI, Tombs at Giza I, Pls 2c, 15b, 37.

²⁸ The boats with raised sails are traditionally taken to represent the journey towards Abydos. However in an earlier study I have argued that although these boats are sailing in a southerly direction, they are more likely



4. Tomb of Kaiemankh, Burial chamber, north wall, eastern half (after Junker, Gîza IV, Pl. 7).

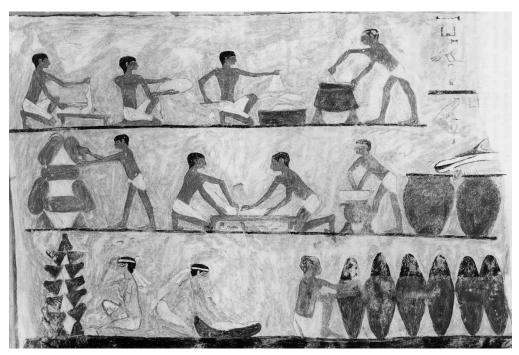


5. Tomb of Kaiemankh, Burial chamber, north wall, upper western corner (after Junker, Gîza IV, Pl. 6).

Each of the latter carries an ox, with two more oxen led by herdsmen travelling on land in the register above (**Figs 4–5**). The lower right section of the wall depicts a row of different species of birds, containers on sledges, loaves of bread and jars of drinks (**Fig. 4**). To the left is a scene of making bread and roasting geese (**Fig. 6**).

All of the themes pictured on the walls of Kaiemankh's burial chamber are attested in many Old Kingdom chapels, but why did Kaiemankh include them in his burial chamber?

to be travelling towards Memphis from a location in the Delta. M. Lashien, The so-called Pilgrimage in the Old Kingdom: Its Destination and Significance, *BACE* 20, 2009, pp. 87–106.



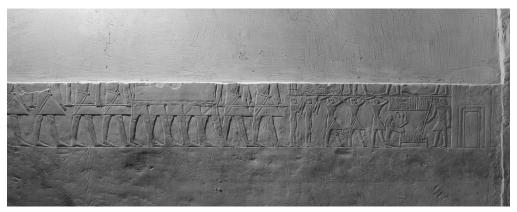
6. Tomb of Kaiemankh, Burial chamber, north wall, lower western corner (after Junker, Gîza IV, Pl. 8).

The suggestion that the walls of the burial chamber were considered as an extension or a substitute for those of the chapel,²⁹ or that the animate decorations in the burial chamber correspond to the art repertoire employed in the superstructure, but were carefully selected and modified to suit the realm of the sarcophagus,³⁰ needs further examination.

Apart from the offerings inscribed or represented on the east wall and the adjacent eastern section of the south wall, the activities shown on the remaining walls of Kaiemankh's burial chamber seem to be closely connected, documenting one single event. In previous studies, I have concluded that the so-called pilgrimage voyages portrayed on the walls of many Old Kingdom chapels represent visits to religious sites in the Delta, rather than to Abydos as in later periods. In such visits, which took place during the official's lifetime, tomb owners viewed certain activities performed in their funerary estates in the north, including agricultural pursuit and animal husbandry, as well as some other occupations. Similar activities are portrayed in Kaiemankh's burial chamber. Also during such visits tomb owners were also able to perform the zšš w³d 'Pulling the Papyrus' ceremony, associated with the Goddess Hathor, and this is equally represented in Kaiemankh's burial chamber. Following these 'pilgrimage' trips tomb owners returned to the cemetery where they inspected the arrival of their funerary furniture and placed them in the burial chamber

²⁹ Kanawati, Tomb and its Significance, p. 138.

³⁰ Dawood, Animate decoration, p. 112.



7. Tomb of Mereruka (Saqqara), room A13, south wall (Phot. courtesy of The Australian Centre for Egyptology).

or the serdab, accompanied by the required ceremonies.³¹ The reason for representing such a visit in Kaiemankh's burial chamber rather than in his chapel needs further investigation.

Special attention is given to the abovementioned journey in the tomb of Mereruka at Saqqara. A study of the decoration of Mereruka's tomb demonstrates that each section of his chapel was devoted to a particular topic/theme,³² thus while outdoor activities are shown in the outer section of the chapel, the other rooms were set aside for scenes of eating, preparation of food, storage, intimate familial relationships, and finally the so-called pilgrimage voyage.³³ The latter occupies the innermost room A13, a six-pillared hall which is, in fact, the largest in the multi-roomed chapel. The themes represented in room A13 are clearly similar to those shown in Kaiemankh's burial chamber. They include the voyage of the tomb owner to and from sacred sites, his inspection of the agricultural and animal produce of his estates, the building/repairing of wooden ships³⁴ and most importantly, the performance of the *zšš w3d* 'Pulling the Papyrus' ceremony.³⁵

An important theme represented on the south wall of Mereruka's room A13, but missing in Kaiemankh's burial chamber, shows the transportation of the coffin to the cemetery and the various stages it passes through before it is finally placed in the burial chamber (**Fig. 7**).³⁶

³¹ LASHIEN, *BACE* 20, 2009, pp. 87–106; EAD., The transportation of funerary furniture in Old Kingdom tomb scenes, [*in*:] A. Woods, A. McFarlane, S. Binder (Eds), Egyptian Culture and Society: Studies in Honour of Naguib Kanawati 2, *ASAE-Suppl.* 38, Cairo 2010 [= Transportation of funerary furniture], pp. 1–12.

³² The same phenomenon may apply to many other tombs.

³³ N. Kanawati, Mereruka and King Teti: The Power behind the Throne, Cairo 2007, pp. 65ff.

³⁴ It should be noted that the upper registers of the north wall above the shipbuilding scene are missing and may have included representation of carpenters manufacturing some funerary furniture. P. Duell, The Mastaba of Mereruka II, Chicago 1938 [= Mereruka II], Pls 149–150, 152; N. Kanawati, A. Woods, S. Shafik, E. Alexakis, Mereruka and his Family III: 2. The Tomb of Mereruka, *ACE Reports* 30, Oxford 2011 [= Mereruka and his Family III: 2], Pl. 74.

³⁵ DUELL, Mereruka II, Pls 127–131, 139–146, 149–172; KANAWATI *et al.*, Mereruka and his Family III: 2, Pls 63–86.

³⁶ Duell, Mereruka II, Pls 130–133; Kanawati et al., Mereruka and his Family III: 2, Pls 63–64.

The location of Mereruka's burial shaft in room A11 immediately behind the abovementioned scene in room A13 seems deliberate.³⁷ On the other hand the absence of this theme in Kaiemankh's case may well be due to the fact that the entire voyage is represented in the burial chamber itself where the coffin has already been placed in its ultimate destination and the other funerary furniture and the ceremonial music and dancing associated with the occasion are represented immediately to the south of the sarcophagus.³⁸

The scenes painted on the north part of the west wall of Kaiemankh's chapel are of particular relevance to the issue under investigation.³⁹ They show the tomb owner seated next to his wife and participating in a game of *senet* with another man. Before them are musicians and dancers, as well as funerary furniture identical to those represented in the burial chamber, with a scribe recording them under the supervision of the magistrates of the funerary estate. It seems likely that both scenes in the chapel and the burial chamber represent different stages in the same event.

From almost the same period, Tjy of Saqqara depicted himself in corridor II of his chapel travelling to the Delta, performing the zšš w³d 'Pulling the Papyrus' ceremony, then returning to the cemetery where he is celebrating the arrival of his statues at his tomb, as indicated by the accompanying inscriptions.⁴⁰ The emphasis on the transportation of the statues in this case is understandable as the procession is heading south where the serdab is located.⁴¹ Akhethotep/Hemi, a vizier under Wenis,⁴² represented a similar scenario in his tomb, where he appears on a chair watching musicians and dancers of the 'funerary estate' as well as men playing a *senet* game and the transportation of his funerary furniture which, unlike those of Kaiemankh, includes the coffin.⁴³ Other instances of the transportation of the coffin in association with this voyage may be found in the tombs of Mereruka⁴⁴ and Ankhmahor⁴⁵ at Saqqara and Hemre I at Deir el-Gebrawi⁴⁶ and others.⁴⁷

CONCLUSION

An analysis of the scenes depicted in Kaiemankh's burial chamber shows that the selection of themes was not random, but was deliberate and, apart from the scenes and inscriptions

³⁷ DUELL, Mereruka II, plan facing Pl. 105; KANAWATI et al., Mereruka and his Family III: 2, Pl. 61.

³⁸ Kanawati, Tombs at Giza I, Pl. 1.

³⁹ Junker, Gîza IV, Figs 9, 10 (A); Kanawati, Tombs at Giza I, Pl. 32.

⁴⁰ L. ÉPRON, F. DAUMAS, Le tombeau de Ti, fasc. I, Cairo 1939 [= Ti I], Pls 46–50, 52–56; LASHIEN, *BACE* 20, 2009, pp. 87–92.

⁴¹ ÉPRON, DAUMAS, Ti I, Pl. 1.

⁴² The tomb was reused by Prince Nebkauhor early in the Sixth Dynasty (S. HASSAN, The Mastaba of Nebkaw-Her, *Excavations at Saggara 1937–1938* I, Cairo 1975, *passim*).

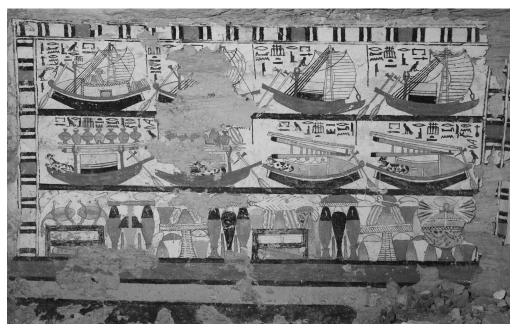
⁴³ *Ibid.*, Figs 2–11.

⁴⁴ Duell, Mereruka II, Pls 130–133; Kanawati et al., Mereruka and his Family III: 2, Pls 63–64.

⁴⁵ The event is recorded on the south wall of room 6, on both sides of its entrance (Kanawati, Hassan, Ankhmahor, Pls 56–58).

⁴⁶ N. DE G. DAVIES, The Rock Tombs of Deir el-Gebrâwi II. Tomb of Zau and Tombs of the Northern Group, *AsEg* 12, London 1902, Pls 17, 19–20.

⁴⁷ Lashien, Transportation of funerary furniture, pp. 1ff.; Ead., BACE 20, 2009, pp. 96ff.



8. Tomb of Remni (Saqqara), Burial chamber, east wall (Phot. courtesy of The Australian Centre for Egyptology).

Similar voyages are found in earlier and later tombs⁴⁸ than that of Kaiemankh; yet in all examples they are depicted in the chapel rather than the burial chamber. As Kaiemankh's is one of the earliest burial chambers to be decorated, the absence of such scenes in burial chambers of earlier dates is understandable. In later chapels, as in the case of Mereruka, the event is recorded in pillared hall A13, immediately adjacent to his burial shaft located

⁴⁸ For example: D. Dunham, W.K. Simpson, The Mastaba of Queen Mersyankh III G 7530–7540, *Giza Mastabas* 1, Boston 1974, Figs 4–5; S. Hassan, Excavations at Gîza V, Cairo 1944, Figs 104, 123; W.K. Simpson, The Mastaba of Kawab, Khafkhufu I and II G 7110–20, 7130–40, and 7150 and subsidiary mastabas of Street G 7100, *Giza Mastabas* 3, Boston 1978, Fig. 47; H. Junker, Gîza V. Die Maṣṭaba des Śnb (Seneb) und die umliegenden Gräber, Wien-Leipzig 1941, Pls 4, 6a, Figs 14–16.

in room A11. Similarly, Tjy represented this event and the transportation of his statues very close to his serdab.

The tradition of representing animate figures, humans and/or animals, in burial chambers lasted for a relatively short period between the end of the Fifth Dynasty and the beginning of the Sixth and gradually but quickly disappeared.⁴⁹ Until the reign of Teti officials seldom depicted animate human figures in their burial chambers.⁵⁰ Yet, from the same reign we notice that Mereruka eliminated all animate figures from his burial chamber. He even truncated a human figure determinative in the offering list and erased the figure of Anubis in the funerary formula, replacing it with the deity's name in hieroglyphs. But, he did not truncate the hieroglyphic signs for snakes and vipers.⁵¹ His near contemporary, Remni, included his voyage by ships in his burial chamber, yet the ships are unmanned although the sails are up and the only passengers portrayed are young calves. Vipers are also not truncated (**Fig. 8**).⁵²

Kaiemankh's representation of animate figures in his burial chamber thereby fits well with its suggested date near the end of the Fifth Dynasty, but the inclusion of his return voyage to the north and the celebration of the placement of the funerary furniture, which may appear as pertaining to daily life activities, remains unique but still understandable in its context and connection to the burial chamber.

Miral Lashien Macquarie University Sydney mirallashien@yahoo.com

⁴⁹ Kanawati, Burial Chambers, *passim*.

⁵⁰ See the case of Qar, who may be dated to the beginning of the Sixth Dynasty (M. BARTA *et al.*, Tomb Complex of the Vizier Qar, his Sons Qar Junior and Senedjemib, and Iykai, *Abusir* XIII, Prague 2009, Pl. 20.2).

⁵¹ Kanawati, Burial Chambers, pp. 52–54, photographs 51, 74–75, 82–83.

⁵² N. Kanawati, The Tomb of Remni, The Teti Cemetery at Saggara IX, Oxford 2009, Pl. 38a.