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## THE SENEDJEMIB COMPLEX AT GIZA : AN INTERIM REPORT

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The latest dated group of mastabas at Giza is the complex of the Senedjem-ib family at the north-western corner of the Great Pyramid which contained the well-known mastabas of Snedjem-ib Inti (G 2370) and Senedjem-ib Mehi (G 2378), who served Isesi and Unas respectively as viziers and overseers of all royal works. In 1842-3 Lepsius excavated these two tombs, made plans, and copied the reliefs and inscriptions<sup>1</sup>. During the spring of 1850, the Rev. Mr. Lieder re-excavated these two tombs<sup>2</sup>, and Mariette made a plan and copied some of the inscriptions<sup>3</sup>. About 1901 the villagers of Kafr-el-Haram also made illicit excavations at the place and removed some stones<sup>4</sup>. A block in the Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago (No. 31705), which comes from G 2370 or G 2378 probably derives from these illicit excavations<sup>5</sup>.

The two tombs of Inti and Mehi, however, were only part of a great complex of tombs of one family built around a large offering court. Reisner cleared the site again in 1912 to 1913 and discovered the tomb of Khnum-enti (G 2374), a son of Senedjem-ib Inti who carried on his father's duties under Teti<sup>6</sup>. Two other large mastabas also opened on the offering court but both had been destroyed to their foundations. One of these was the tomb of Nekhebu (G 2381), the other was not identified (G 2385). There were also at least five smaller offering rooms connected with the group. One of the five (G 2383) was a very small offering room built against the southern face of the tomb of Senedjemib Mehi, with a false door inscribed for *Wr-k3w-b3' Ikw*.

Finally, opposite the tomb of Nekhebu, Reisner came on a sloping shaft (G 2381A) closed with a great rectangular block of limestone that protected the unviolated burial of *S3bw-Pth' Ibbi*, one of the sons of Nekhebu<sup>7</sup>. Both the wooden coffin found in the burial chamber reached by the sloping shaft and the copper vessels and tables found in front of

<sup>1</sup> LD I, pl. 23, II, pl. 73-8 and *Ergänzung* I, pl. 51-58.

<sup>2</sup> See Málek, *GM* 13, 1974, 21-23.

<sup>3</sup> Mariette, *Mastabas*, p. 495-515.

<sup>4</sup> Reisner, *BMFA* 11, No. 66 (Nov. 1913), 53.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Baer, *Rank and Title*, p. 127 [456A].

<sup>6</sup> A loose stone found in the offering room with the titles of Khnum-enti bore the name of Teti's pyramid, and the burial shaft G 2385A, which belonged to the mastaba, contained a small diorite bowl (MFA 13.3141) with the inscription *nsut bity s3 R' Tii 'nh dt*, see Reisner, *ASAE* 13, 1913, 248-49.

<sup>7</sup> Pace Reisner, *o.c.*, who assigns the burial to *Mryr'-mr-Pth-'nh*, Nekhebu's other son.

the coffin bear the names and titles of *both* the sons of Nekhebu<sup>8</sup>. However, the alabaster headrest found in the coffin itself, which supported the head of the mummy (MFA 13.2925), is inscribed for Ibebi.

Reisner published preliminary reports on his work at the Senedjem-ib complex in *ASAE* 13 (1913), p. 248-50 and in *BMFA* 11, No. 66 (November, 1913), p. 53-66<sup>9</sup>. However, as many of the blocks found in disordered heaps in the debris of the complex were too heavy to be handled and put together in the field, each block was separately photographed, to an approximately uniform scale, and the walls were reconstructed on paper by assembling the prints from these photographs. Great progress was made, at first by Reisner in the field, and then by his successors Dows Dunham and William Stevenson Smith (with the assistance of E. L. B. Terrace) working at home in Boston. In 1938 Dunham published the biographical inscriptions of Nekhebu in Boston and Cairo, together forming a continuous account of Nekhebu's career<sup>10</sup>.

The Boston text (MFA 13.4331) contains the account of three missions assigned Nekhebu by Pepy I which consisted of work on the *ka*-mansions of the king in Lower Egypt and on the royal pyramid at South Saqqara as well as the digging of canals in the Delta and at Qus in Middle Egypt<sup>11</sup>. The Cairo text continues with the account of works carried out by Nekhebu at Heliopolis.

Smith's untimely death prevented his following up on Dunham's brilliant beginning, although the latter's extensive notes in the files of the Department of Egyptian and Ancient Near Eastern Art are a great aid in the reconstruction of the Senedjem-ib complex. A comprehensive publication of the complex was further delayed by the death of E. L. B. Terrace who had spent great time and energy on its reconstruction. In the interim, Dr. Henry G. Fischer studied the remains from the complex<sup>12</sup>. Dr. Fischer has very kindly relinquished his prior interests in the material to the present author.

The Senedjem-ib complex offers a unique opportunity of reconstructing the careers and fortunes of four generations of royal viziers and kingly master builders in the time of kings Djedkare to Pepy II, whose reigns span a hundred and fifty years of Egyptian history at the end of the Old Kingdom. The Cairo text, for instance, tells how Nekhebu was advanced step by step to positions of increasing responsibility in the reign of Pepy I and incidentally illustrates the mechanism of promotion in Old Kingdom Egypt<sup>13</sup>.

Recent research has permitted a fuller reconstruction of the Senedjem-ib family tree (fig. 20). Unfortunately, Nekhebu's parents are not named on the blocks that survive from his chapel, although Smith speculated he was the son of Senedjem-ib Mehi<sup>14</sup>. Research has also revealed that, contrary to Smith's statement in the *Cambridge Ancient History*, Khnum-enti indeed succeeded to the vizierate under Teti and served Teti as well as overseer of all royal works<sup>15</sup>. Khnum-enti is explicitly named *iry-p't, h3ly-c, t3yly z3b*

<sup>8</sup> The coffin is now in Boston and bears the number MFA 13.3085. For the coffins, vessels, and tables *in situ*, see *ibidem*, fig. 13; for the vessels and tables, see *ibidem*, figs. 15-16.

<sup>9</sup> For an up-to-date bibliography, see PM III<sup>2</sup>, p. 85-92.

<sup>10</sup> *JEA* 24, 1938, 1-8.

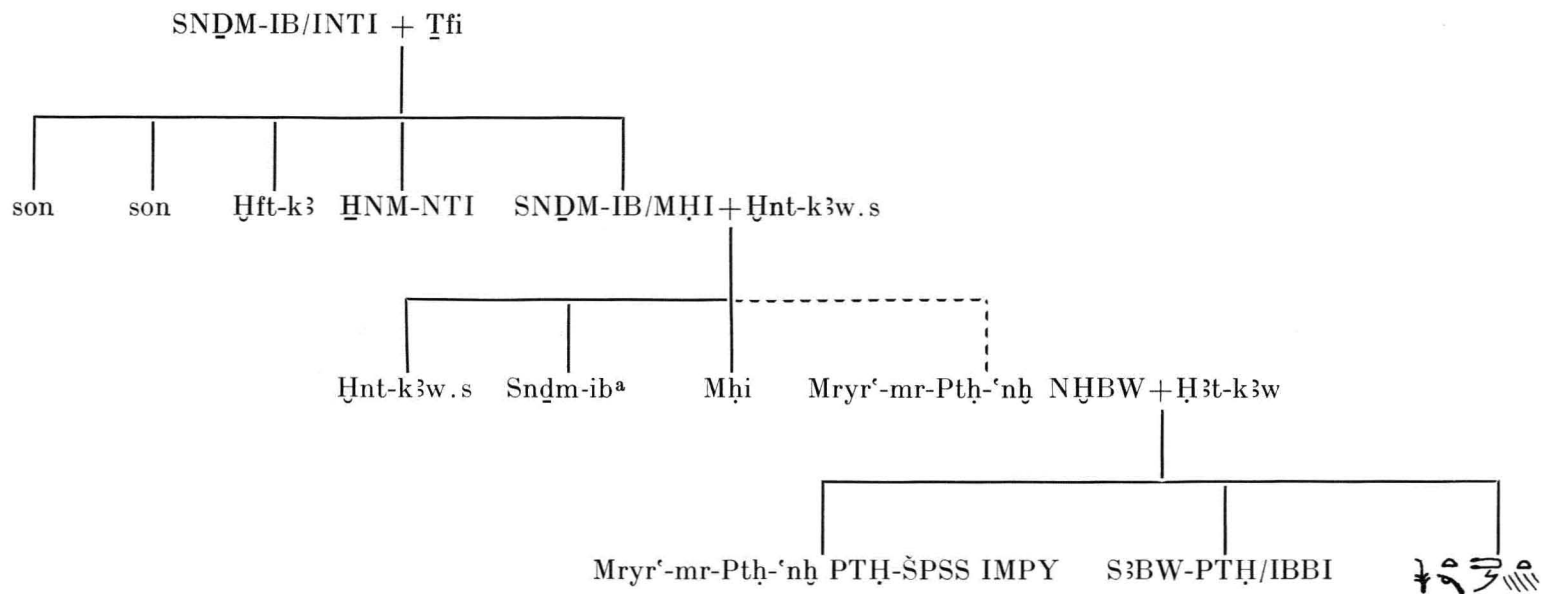
<sup>11</sup> Was it Nekhebu who built or directed the building of the *ka*-mansion of Pepy I at Bubastis (Labib Habachi, *Tell Basta (CASAE 22)*, 1957, p. 11-36, pl. 1-10)?

<sup>12</sup> One result of his study of the Nekhebu material is the interesting study in *JARCE* 2, 1963, 17-22, with Frontispiece.

<sup>13</sup> Dunham, *o.c.*, 3-8; Baer, *o.c.*, p. 37.

<sup>14</sup> *CAH*<sup>3</sup> I, pt. 2, p. 86.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibidem*, cf. Baer, *o.c.*, p. 215 [402].



a. Already in the tomb of his father *mdh kd nswt m pr.wy* (LD, *Ergänzung*, pl. 26). If Nekhebu was indeed a son of Senedjem-ib Mehi, as seems likely, this may be the brother mentioned in the Cairo text with whom Nekhebu served an apprenticeship (Dunham, *JEA* 24, 1938, 7-8).

Fig. 20. — Genealogical Tree.

*Ỉty* on the facade of G 2374<sup>16</sup>, and a loose block found in the debris of the same mastaba gives the identical titles together with the name of the pyramid of Teti<sup>17</sup>. There is no evidence that Nekhebu inherited the office of vizier, but two unpublished bits of evidence suggest that both of his sons perhaps held the high office in turn. The evidence is contained in two blocks from the destroyed serdabs of Impy and Ibebi. Several fragments of the serdab of Ibebi are preserved in Boston. Three complete and nine incomplete representations of Ibebi together with his titles are carefully incised on the surface of two adjoining blocks<sup>18</sup>. On the edge of the larger block the titles *Ỉmy-rỈ nỈwt*, *Ỉyly* [*zỈb Ỉty*] are just visible. A block from G 2382 bears seven incised figures of Impy, none of them completely preserved. Before one of the figures the titles *Ỉty-Ỉ*, *Ỉyly zỈb Ỉty* appear<sup>19</sup>. Impy's other name was *Mryr-Ỉmr-PlỈ-Ỉnh*, and it is under this name that he appears with his father Nekhebu in the Wadi Hammamat in year 36 of Pepy I<sup>20</sup>. He is evidently the overseer of all royal works, Impy, who appears in the temple reliefs of Pepy II<sup>21</sup>. If the completion of the decoration of the mortuary temple of Pepy II dates to a point about the second quarter of the ninety-four years that Pepy II reigned<sup>22</sup>, Impy was probably not appointed vizier before the middle of Pepy II's long reign and, perhaps, served somewhat later. A domed jar sealing found by Reisner still in place on a two-handled vase in G 2381 A dates the burial of his brother Ibebi to the reign of Pepy II<sup>23</sup>.

Before adding Impy and Ibebi to the list of known viziers who served Pepy II, it should be noted that the titles occur only on the serdab blocks. In tomb A, No. 2 at Meir, Pepy-ankh Heny the Black is assigned the titles *Ỉyly zỈb Ỉty* only once, in *his* serdab decorated with several registers of repeating figures representing statues, so like the files of statues from the serdabs of Nekhebu, Impy, and Ibebi<sup>24</sup>. It is legitimate to inquire if these singular occurrences of the vizierial titles are instances of posthumous promotion of the sort known from the tomb of Djau at Deir el-Gebrawi, who begged for his father Djau Shemai a posthumous promotion from King Pepy II to the rank of *Ỉty-Ỉ*<sup>25</sup>. In the Intermediate Period, such offices which the deceased did not exercise on earth but which he boasts of in his funerary inscriptions were referred to as *Ỉwt Ỉrt-Ỉnr* "offices of the necropolis"<sup>26</sup>. It should be noted, however, that in the one clear instance we possess of posthumous promotions, the beneficiary, Djau Shemai, is promoted in rank and assigned the rank-indicator *Ỉty-Ỉ*, but he receives no new offices or titles which imply practical duties with functional significance. Very little survives of the mastabas of Impy and Ibebi and the vizierial titles perhaps occurred elsewhere on their walls. My own preference is indeed to add the two brothers to the list of known viziers who served Pepy II.

At a conservative estimate, no fewer than seven<sup>27</sup>, possibly twelve<sup>28</sup>, individuals

<sup>16</sup> MFA photo A 5804 (N.S.).

<sup>17</sup> MFA photo A 5624 (N.S.).

<sup>18</sup> MFA photo B 1455 (O.S.).

<sup>19</sup> MFA photo C 5201 (O.S.). For a brief description of both blocks, see Eaton-Krauss, *JARCE* 13, 1976, 22, n. 2.

<sup>20</sup> Couyat and Montet, *Les inscriptions hiéroglyphiques et hiératiques de Ouadi Hammâmât*, nos. 61, 107; see also G. Goyon, *Nouvelles inscriptions rupestres du Wadi Hammamat*, no. 21.

<sup>21</sup> Jéquier, *Pepy II*, II, pl. 48.

<sup>22</sup> See Baer, *Rank and Title*, p. 62.

<sup>23</sup> Reisner, *Giza Necropolis II*, p. 54, fig. 54.

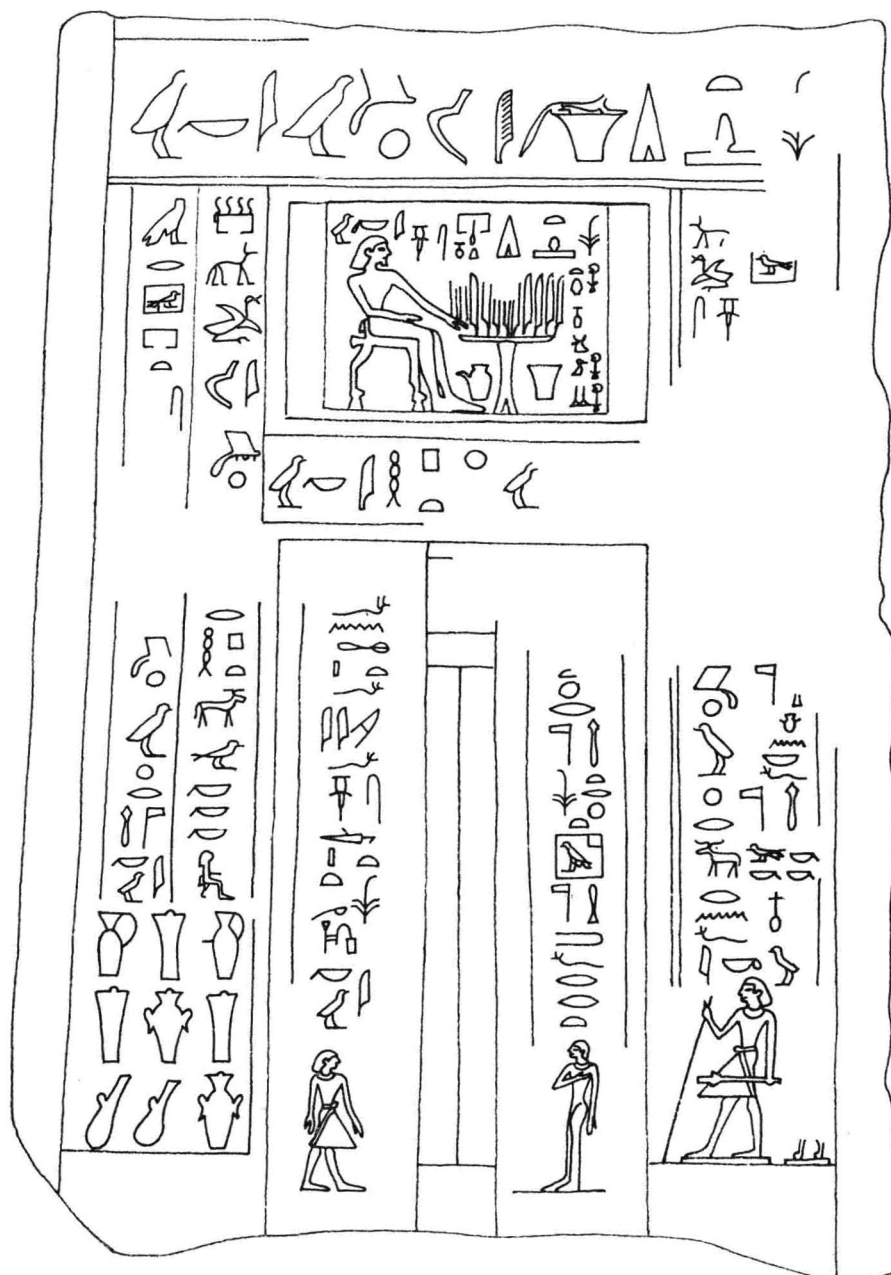
<sup>24</sup> Blackman, *Meir*, V, pl. 40.

<sup>25</sup> Davies, *Gebrawi*, II, pl. 13.

<sup>26</sup> Fischer, *Dendera*, p. 145.

<sup>27</sup> Baer, *Rank and Title*, nos. 73A, 133, 134, 202, 361, 591, and Jéquier, *o.c.*, II, pl. 57.

<sup>28</sup> Baer, *o.c.*, nos. 57, 135, 184, 229A, 560.



G 2383  
12-12-594 (?)

41  
3-12-79

Fig. 21. — False door from G 2383.

served Pepy II as viziers. Half of these were interred at Saqqara, while three were perhaps buried at Abydos and two were entombed at Meir. Pepy II's was a long reign (90 [+ x] years in the Turin Canon), and it is not impossible that he was served by seven to twelve viziers. However, if Impy and Ibebi are added, the total is nine to fourteen viziers for the reign. Given the latter number, it might well behoove us to seriously reconsider Kee's suggestion<sup>29</sup> that the vizierate was held by two persons concurrently, one for Upper Egypt and one for Lower Egypt. His suggestion is supported by the burial of half Pepy's viziers at provincial sites in Upper Egypt, and by the burial of the other half in the Memphite cemeteries. This seems preferable to the notion that the vizierate was cheapened, and that the title *ḥꜣty*, like *iry-p't* and *ḥꜣty-ꜥ*, became a mere indicator of rank<sup>30</sup>.

The small offering room of *Wr-kꜣw-bꜣ'Ikw* (G 2383) has already been mentioned. While the false door from G 2383 is battered, the titles *ḥꜣty zꜣb ḥꜣty* are visible to the left and right of the central tablet (see fig. 21)<sup>31</sup>. It seems we have here another candidate for the vizierate. There is nothing in the inscriptions to suggest that it is later than the Old Kingdom, but considering the humble nature of his offering room, Iku may have served one of the successors of Pepy II.

I. Evidence survives of no fewer than thirteen servitors or funerary priests who served the Senedjem-ib family for generation after generation and who sometimes named their children after members of the Senedjem-ib family. In the first street west of the mastaba of Senedjem-ib Inti, three tombs in a row of small mastabas (G 2361-2366) built against the large mastaba G 2360 belonged to servitors of the Senedjem-ib family. The small tomb G 2391 at the northeast corner of the Senedjem-ib complex on a much lower level likewise belonged to a family of priests who served the Senedjem-ib family. Reisner believed that the smaller mastabas in the Senedjem-ib complex together with the tombs of the funerary priests beside it may well be nearly the last in the Giza cemetery previous to the intrusive burials of the Ptolemaic and Roman periods. In other words, the official cemetery gradually fell into disuse during the time of Pepy II or his successors of the late Old Kingdom, through the dissipation of earlier endowments or their diversion to other uses<sup>32</sup>. In several instances, it is possible to reconstruct the genealogy of the funerary priests of the Senedjem-ib family. It is hoped that further study will cast light on the organization of the funerary priests, on their social and economic status, and the mechanism by which they passed on their inherited offices. Paleographic and epigraphic analyses of the inscriptional evidence will perhaps yield a sequence of local paleographic peculiarities typical of Giza in Dyns. VI-VIII which may be linked with other local sequences in the Memphite area and elsewhere to contribute to a more complete picture of the difficult period of dissolution at the end of the Old Kingdom. The lists of the funerary priests of the Senedjem-ib family is as follows<sup>33</sup> :

<sup>29</sup> *Göttingen Nachr.*, N.F. IV, Phil.-hist. Klasse, 39-54.

<sup>30</sup> See Baer, *o.c.*, p. 6ff.

<sup>31</sup> I am indebted to Mr. Lynn Holden, Research Assistant in the Department of Egyptian and Ancient Near Eastern Art, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston for the line drawing reproduced here. Mr. Holden has pointed out to me that the figure of iku on the right outer jamb is on a base and appears to be a statue. Unfortunately, this detail cannot be checked as the original is not in Boston.

<sup>32</sup> Reisner, *ASAE* 13, 1913, 250.

<sup>33</sup> Priests named or represented in scenes on the walls of the mastabas of the Senedjem-ib complex are not included in this list, for example, *Hm-ꜣht* in G 2370 (*LD, Ergänzung* I, pl. 18) and *Hwfw-ꜥnh* in G 2378 (*LD* II, 73).

*Senedjem-ib or unspecified.*

- G 2337 Dꜣti : *ny-dt.f*, imy-rꜣ pr, zš n zꜣ ḥm-kꜣ.  
 G 2357 A Ḥy : *ny-dt.f*, imy-rꜣ pr, imy-ḥt ḥm-kꜣ.  
 G 2366 Ny-Mzti : imy-rꜣ pr, imy-ḥt ḥm-kꜣ, imy-rꜣ šsr, ḥrp šms.  
 G 2391 Nfri : imy-rꜣ wpt ḥmw-kꜣ.  
 G 2396 A — : imy-rꜣ pr. ḥm-kꜣ.  
 G S 660/661 Pth-m-... : imy-[rꜣ] pr, zš n zꜣ ḥm-kꜣ (JG 8, fig. 78).

*Inti.*

- G 2338 B Ttw : *dt.f*, ḥrp zḥ.  
 G 2347 X Z-n-ḥt/Z-n-Ḥtḥr : imy-rꜣ wpt ḥm-kꜣ, imy-rꜣ šsr, ḥrp šms.  
 G 2364 Sndm-ib/Inti : imy-rꜣ zš, šḥd zš n zꜣ n ḥm-kꜣ.

*Mehi.*

- G 2362 Rwd : *dt.f*, imy-rꜣ zš, imy-ḥt ḥm-kꜣ, zš n zꜣ.  
 G 2391 Ir.n-ḥt/Iri : imy-rꜣ pr, imy-rꜣ wpt ḥm-kꜣ.  
 G S 2006 Pth-nb-nfrt : *ny-dt.f*, imy-rꜣ pr, zš šnwt, zš pr-ḥd, zš n zꜣ.

*Impy.*

- Between G 2337/2371 Tnni : *ny-dt.f*, imy-rꜣ šsr, šḥd ḥm-kꜣ, ḥm-kꜣ.

## LE COMPLEXE FUNÉRAIRE DES SENEDJEM-IB À GIZA : UN RAPPORT INTÉRIMAIRE

Le complexe funéraire familial de Senedjem-ib Inti et Senedjem-ib Mehi à Giza fut fouillé en dernier lieu par Reisner en 1912-3. Cet ensemble comprenait en outre les mastabas de Nekhebou et des fils de ce dernier, tous en mauvais état de conservation. La photographie des blocs retrouvés sur le terrain permet de reconstruire en partie cet ensemble et d'en reconstituer les textes, grâce auxquels on peut suivre les carrières de quatre générations de vizirs et architectes royaux s'étendant sur 150 ans environ, du règne d'Isési à celui de Pépi II. L'auteur dresse l'arbre généalogique de cette importante famille et aborde la question des vizirs de Pépi II.