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## CONTENTS

Obituary	Cathleen Keller (by Thomas Logan) . . . . .	1
PETER DER MANUELIAN	Penmeru Revisited—Giza Mastaba G 2197 (Giza Archives Gleanings V) . . . . .	3
STÉPHANE PASQUALI	Baraize Excavations 1933–1934 at Giza: What is New with the Chapel of Amenhotep II . . . . .	49
COLLEEN MANASSA	Preliminary Report for the 2008–2009 Season of the Mo‘alla Survey Project . . . . .	57
RENÉE FRIEDMAN	Hierakonpolis Locality HK29A: The Predynastic Ceremonial Center Revisited. . . . .	79
VEERLE LINSEELE WIM VAN NEER AND RENÉE FRIEDMAN	Special Animals from a Special Place? The Fauna from HK29A at Predynastic Hierakonpolis . . . . .	105
AHMED G. FAHMY AND MOHAMED FADL	Plant Macroremains from Locality HK29A at Hierakonpolis, Egypt . . . . .	137
LUCA MIATELLO	Problem 60 of the Rhind Mathematical Papyrus: Glaring Errors or Correct Method ? . . . . .	153
GARRY J. SHAW	The Death of King Seqenenre Tao . . . . .	159
DEBORAH SCHORSCH AND MARK T. WYPYSKI	Seth, “Figure of Mystery” . . . . .	177
EUGENE CRUZ-URIBE	<i>Stḥ ʿ pḥty</i> “Seth, God of Power and Might” . . . . .	201
JOSHUA ROBERSON	A Solar Litany from the Tomb of Ramesses IX. . . . .	227
ANDRÉ J. VELDMEIJER	Studies of Ancient Egyptian Footwear. Technological Aspects. Part XVI: Additional Pair of Leather Open Shoes . . . . .	233
LEO DEPUYDT	From “My Body” to “Myself” to “As For Me” to “Me Too”: Philological and Digital Analysis of a Triple Shift in Egyptian . . . . .	247
RASHA METAWI	The “General of the Estate of Amun” <i>ʿny</i> and His Notable Family Cairo Museum Stela (TN 10/6/24/11) . . . . .	291
KATHLEEN M. GARLAND AND JOHN TWILLEY	The Restoration, Treatment, Scientific Examination, and Re-treatment of an Egyptian Limestone Relief from the Tomb of Ka-aper . . . . .	303
STANLEY Z. BALANDA	The Title <i>ḥry–sštʿ</i> to the End of the New Kingdom . . . . .	319
WENDY CHESHIRE	Cleopatra “the Syrian” and a Couple of Rebels: Their Images, Iconography, and Propaganda . . . . .	349

BRIAN MUHS	Two ‘Orders for Burial’ from The Valley of the Kings . . .	393
SYLVIE CAUVILLE	La charte d’immunité d’Abydos. . . . .	397
ELIZABETH WICKETT	Archaeological Memory, the Leitmotifs of Ancient Egyptian Festival Tradition, and Cultural Legacy in the Festival Tradition of Luxor: the <i>mulid</i> of Sidi Abu’l Hajjaj al-Uqsori and the Ancient Egyptian “Feast of Opet” . . . . .	403
<b>BOOK REVIEWS</b> . . . . .		<b>427</b>
	Tristan J. Barako with contributions from D. T. Ariel, B. Brandl, J. R. Ebeling, N. Hirschfeld, R. Maddin, E. F. Maher, M. A. S. Martin, J. D. Muhly, D. S. Reese, S. A. Rosen, T. Stech, and J. Vardi, <i>Tel Mor: The Moshe Dothan Excavations, 1959–1960</i> (Nicholas Wernick). . . . .	427
	Richard Parkinson, <i>The Painted Tomb-Chapel of Nebamun. Masterpieces of ancient Egyptian art in the British Museum</i> (Deanna Kiser-Go). . . . .	428
	Gawdat Gabra and Gertrud J. M. van Loon, <i>The Churches of Egypt: From the Journey of the Holy Family to the Present Day</i> (Mariam F. Ayad). . . . .	429
	Marianne Eaton-Krauss, <i>The Thrones, Chairs, Stools, and Footstools from the Tomb of Tutankhamun (Virginia Reckard)</i> . . . . .	431
	Azza Fahmy, <i>Enchanted Jewelry of Egypt. The Traditional Art and Craft</i> (Elizabeth Warkentin). . . . .	432

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# Penmeru Revisited—Giza Mastaba G 2197 (Giza Archives Gleanings V)

PETER DER MANUELIAN

## Abstract

*The remarks below present a re-examination of G 2197 in the Western Cemetery at Giza, a mastaba belonging to the Fifth Dynasty supervisor of ka servants and director of the kitchen, Penmeru.<sup>1</sup> This individual is well known primarily for two reasons: the testament or legal decree inscribed on his chapel wall, and the three pseudo-group statues packed into his serdab. Although the tomb was published by W. K. Simpson in *Giza Mastabas 4* (1980), the epigraphy of the testament was misplaced and omitted from that publication; moreover, direct access to the statues was not possible at that time. In addition, a recently discovered, albeit fragmentary, text from the chapel niche can now be added to the documentation. The excavation history of the mastaba is summarized, and new photography from Boston and Cairo allows for previously unpublished views of the statues. An attempt is made to pinpoint the chronological development and date of Penmeru's mastaba.*

## I. Archaeological and Publication History of G 2197

Long after the original three nucleus cemeteries west of Khufu's pyramid were constructed, Penmeru erected his mid-sized mastaba in the northern strip of the Western Cemetery, in the so-called Cemetery en Echelon (fig. 1). The mastaba stands on an independent site just north of the anonymous tomb G 5190 (= G 2300). This part of the Western Cemetery fell in the original American excavation concession, and was first cleared during the eastward progression that took the Harvard-MEA Expedition from Cemetery G 2100 in the west to the Senedjemib Complex in the east (fig. 2).

Although Reisner numbered Penmeru's mastaba in the 2100s (G 2197<sup>2</sup>), the tomb bears no relation to the Dynasty 4 nucleus Cemetery G 2100, located further to the west.<sup>3</sup> In fact, several tombs postdate that cemetery but still received 2100 numbers. In addition to Penmeru (G 2197), other well-known mastaba owners include Akhmeretnisut (G 2185),<sup>4</sup> and Iasen (G 2196; fig. 3).<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For "Giza Archives Gleanings III" see "On the Early History of Giza: The "Lost" Wadi Cemetery (Giza Archives Gleanings: III)," *JEA* 95 (2009), 105–40. I am grateful to Rita E. Freed, the John F. Cogan Jr. and Mary L. Cornille Chair of the Department of Art of the Ancient World at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, for permission to republish the statues and illustrate the photographs reproduced here. I also thank Edward Brovarski for many helpful comments on an earlier draft of this paper.

<sup>2</sup> See PM III, 82–83.

<sup>3</sup> For that cemetery, see Manuelian, *Mastabas of Nucleus Cemetery G 2100*, Giza Mastabas 8, Part 1 (Boston, 2009).

<sup>4</sup> See PM III, 80–81; A. M. Roth, in S. D'Auria, P. Lacovara, and C. H. Roehrig, eds., *Mummies and Magic. The Funerary Arts of Ancient Egypt* (Boston, 1988), 83–87, cat. 14.

<sup>5</sup> See PM III, 82; W. K. Simpson, *Mastabas of the Western Cemetery*, Giza Mastabas 4 (Boston, 1980), 16–23.

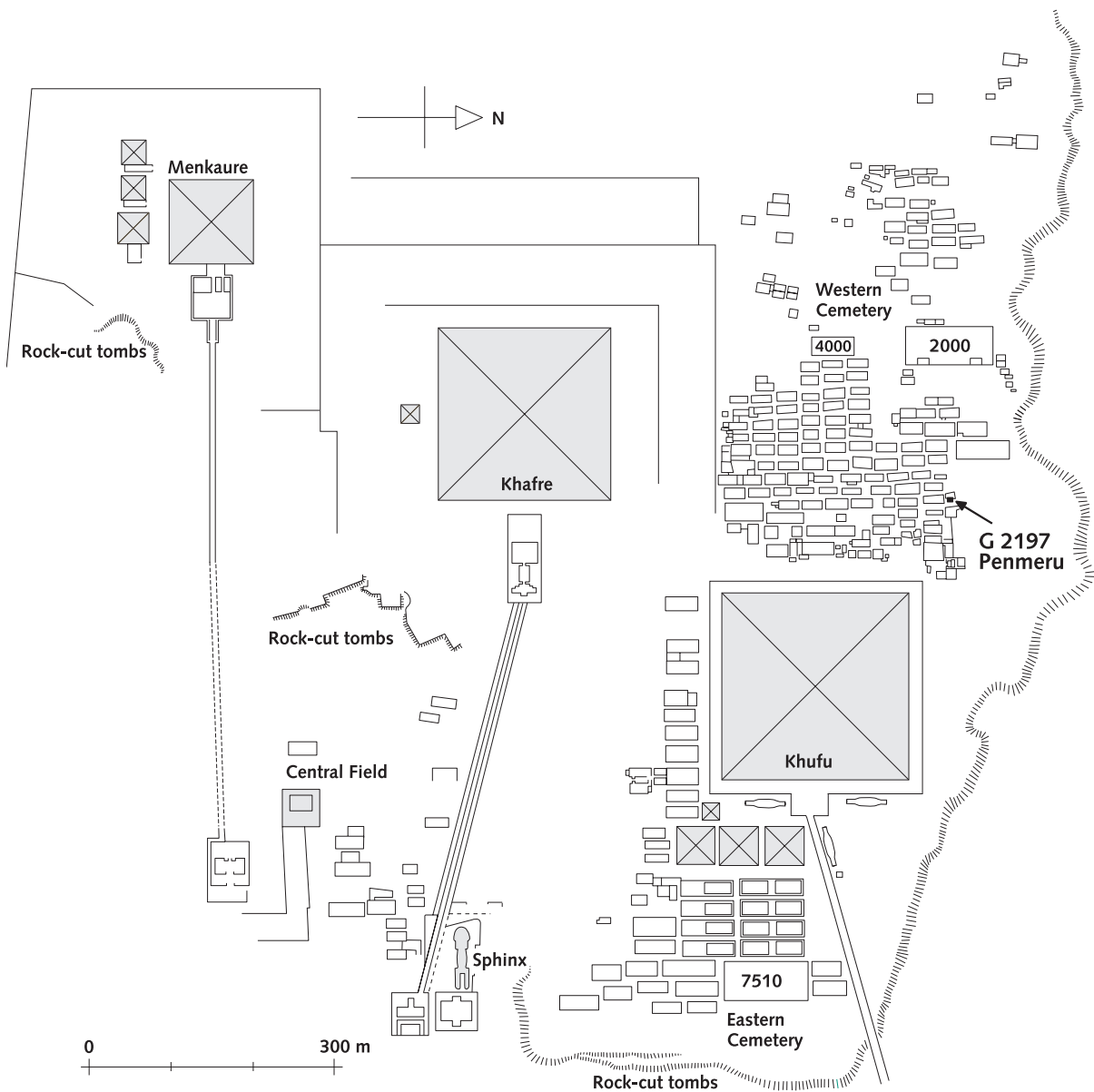


Fig. 1. Overview plan of the Giza Necropolis, with the mastaba of Penmeru (G 2197) indicated. Drawing by Liza Majerus, with additions by the author.

On April 10, 1912, Penmeru's serdab was the first major feature of mastaba G 2197 to emerge (fig. 4). Reisner described the discovery in the Expedition Diary for April 10–11, 1912, as follows:

[Wednesday, April 10, 1912] G 2196 is built against a very solid high mastaba (G 2197). Ordered this cleared. At sunset came on the roof of a chamber apparently a serdab in the eastern part of G 2197. Filled with sand from hole in east wall.



*Fig. 2. General view of the northern half of the Cemetery en Echelon, with G 2197 in the center, looking west; December 25, 1935. HU-MFA Expedition photograph, Mohammedani Ibrahim, A7362.*

[Thursday, April 11, 1912] . . . Breakfast was late and my head felt heavy when a boy came up to say that the roof found last night was clear and I was wanted at once. I said in a quarter of an hour and set to work to clear off morning mail, orders, etc. Before I had finished a second messenger arrived to say the chamber contained six large figures (statues). I hurried down and found a serdab with broken roof filled with sand. The sand had been cleared from the heads of six figures which belonged to two triads in position along the west wall. The serdab has three roofing stones in position but the southern end is open and there is a hole in the top of the east wall under stone 2 . . .<sup>6</sup>

After waiting to learn that the glass plate negatives recording the in-situ views were acceptable, Reisner ordered the three covering slabs removed and the sand fill cleared; this was all accomplished between 5:00 and 5:45 pm on April 11, 1912. The cleared serdab revealed an additional south-facing pair statuette of Penmeru (Egyptian Museum, Cairo JE 43753), invisible previously due to its much

<sup>6</sup> Harvard University-Boston Museum of Fine Arts Expedition Diary vol. 3, 89-91 (Reisner).

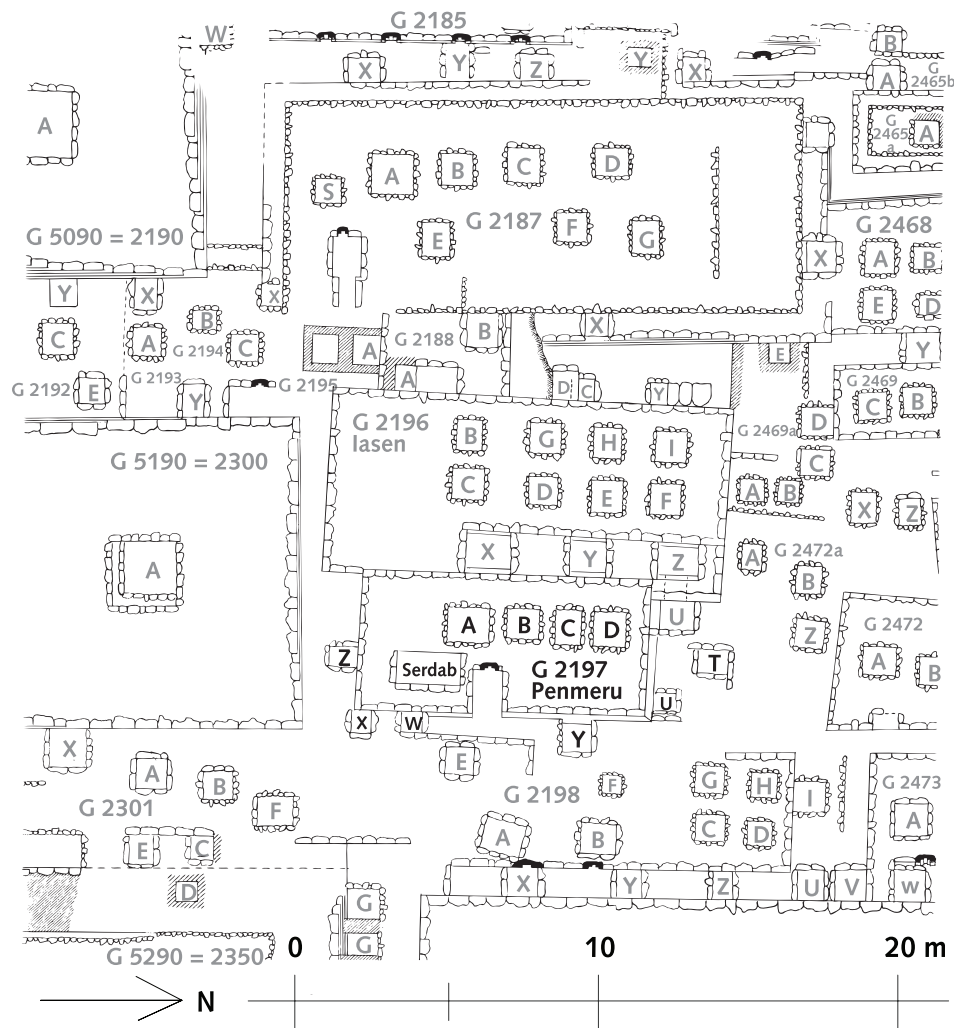


Fig. 3. Plan of G 2197 and surrounding tombs, based on HU-MFA Expedition drawing EG000498, with additions by the author.

shorter height compared to the east-facing triad and family pseudo-groups. The images in figs. 5–12 record the sequence of events described above.

The serdab connected to the much smaller chapel niche by means of serdab squint in its north wall, visible along the south wall of the chapel (figs. 9–10, and 20). The latter is little more than a deeply recessed niche surmounted by a rounded drum, located just south of the center of the east face of the mastaba. At the back (west end) of the chapel niche stands an uninscribed false door (fig. 13). The south wall contains Penmeru's well-known testament, or legal decree, carved in sunk relief hieroglyphs with no interior detail, arranged in irregular lines along the south wall, east of the serdab squint. An additional inscription adorned the eastern edge of the chapel niche's north wall, but this went completely unnoticed until 1987 (see below, figs. 25–27).

G 2197 fit into Reisner's mastaba Type X c(2) category ("mastaba with niches and open-air chapel . . ."<sup>7</sup>), and was cased with u-masonry ("grey nummulitic limestone: small blocks set in corre-

<sup>7</sup> G. A. Reisner, *A History of the Giza Necropolis I* (Cambridge, MA, 1942), 52.



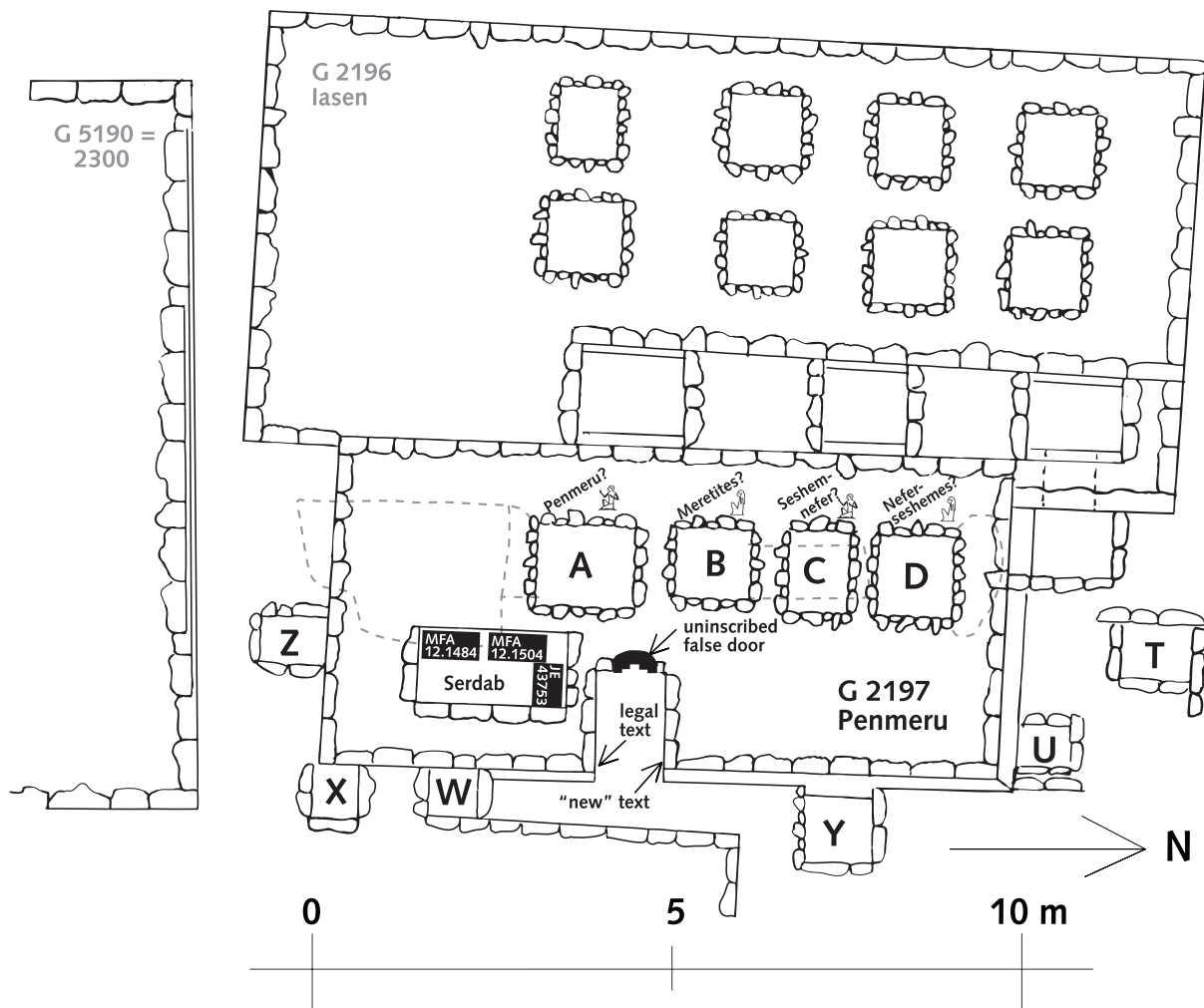


Fig. 4. Detailed plan of G 2197, with shafts and locations of statues and inscriptions indicated, based on HU-MFA Expedition drawing EG000498, with additions by the author.

spondingly low courses, to form a rough sloping surface”).<sup>8</sup> The measurements published in his *Giza Necropolis I*, 292 (48 m<sup>2</sup>; proportion 1:2.09) should, however, be corrected, based on his unpublished manuscript “Description of Addition to Cem en Echelon,” 112, to read: 9.9 × 4.7 m; area 46.53 m<sup>2</sup>; ht. 2.54 m; proportion 1:2.10.<sup>9</sup> The chapel apparently fit none of Reisner’s categories. He thus assigned it, along with G 1221, to an anomalous Type 13: “deep roofed recess in south end of facade with one niche in its west wall.”<sup>10</sup> Reisner’s published chapel measurements (1.0 × 0.8 m; area 0.8 m<sup>2</sup>) should also be corrected following the unpublished manuscript mentioned above to read: “1.0 × 1.6 m; area 1.6 m<sup>2</sup>; ht. 1.5 m.” A retaining wall east of the niche and the exterior face of the mastaba probably served to create the corridor that formed the “open-air chapel” to which Reisner was referring with his Type X c.

<sup>8</sup> For the masonry typology, see Reisner, *Giza Necropolis I*, 178, and 179, figs. 90–91.

<sup>9</sup> Reisner, unpublished manuscript “Description of Addition to Cem en Echelon,” 112 (posted online on the Giza Archives Project Web site at [www.gizapyramids.org](http://www.gizapyramids.org), file “GN2\_K10\_ApxCemEch\_p112.”

<sup>10</sup> Reisner, *Giza Necropolis I*, 292.



*Fig. 5. G 2197, Penmeru, serdab cleared of sand on roof, looking north; April 11, 1912. HU-MFA Expedition photograph, Mohammedani Ibrahim, A664.*

On Saturday, April 13, 1912, Reisner departed for Girga (returning on April 18), and Clarence S. Fisher continued the Expedition Diary. In situ photography of the serdab was completed, and a portion of the west wall was dismantled in order to extricate the statues. Fisher writes

In the afternoon the statues were removed to the house without mishap, although the two pieces were of great weight and awkward size. Heavy wooden stretchers were placed behind them and each triad in turn was inclined backward upon it, and then lifted out of the serdab upon it and carried to house.<sup>11</sup>

For “studio” photography of the heavy statues in the Harvard Camp photography studio, Reisner devised a rolling platform system on Wednesday, April 24, 1912.

<sup>11</sup> Harvard University-Boston Museum of Fine Arts Expedition Diary vol. 3, 95 (Fisher). This appears to be more or less the same method first employed in January 1910 for the removal of the famous Menkaure dyad (MFA 11.1738) from its “robber’s hole” in the Menkaure Valley Temple; see Manuelian, [http://www.gizapyramids.org/pdf%20library/manuelian\\_kmt7\\_1996.pdf](http://www.gizapyramids.org/pdf%20library/manuelian_kmt7_1996.pdf) and “March 1912: A Month in the Life of American Egyptologist George A. Reisner,” *KMT* 7, no. 2, Summer (1996), 65-75.



Fig. 6. G 2197, Penmeru, roof of cleared serdab, looking south; April 11, 1912. HU-MFA Expedition photograph, Mohamedani Ibrahim, A665.

West of the chapel niche and northwest of the serdab, Penmeru had sunk four shafts, A, B, C, D, from south to north into the mastaba core (fig. 4). Although G 2197 was first excavated in 1912, the Expedition did not return to clear the shafts until October–November 1935. The tomb may provide us with one of the relatively rare cases where the correlation between the number of shafts and the number of the tomb owner’s family members actually align: we know from Penmeru’s statuary that his was a family of four, including a wife, a son, and a daughter.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, with some uncertainty we may posit that shaft A was intended for Penmeru, shaft B for his wife Meretites, shaft C for his son Seshemnefer, and shaft D for his daughter Neferseshemes (see fig. 4). Measurements and details of the individual shafts are provided by Simpson, and are not repeated here.<sup>13</sup> However, the Expedition Diary and unpublished Reisner manuscript do add some significant details. Skeletal remains were found in shaft A (Object Register no. 35–11–91), and curiously, not one but two bodies seem to be

<sup>12</sup> Cf. P. Jánosi, “Aspects of Mastaba Development: The Position of Shafts and the Identification of Tomb Owners,” in F. Coppens, ed., *Abusir and Saqqara in the Year 2001. Proceedings of the Symposium (Prague, September 25th–27th, 2001)* (= *Archiv Orientalní* 70, No. 3 [2002]), 337–50.

<sup>13</sup> See Simpson, *Mastabas of the Western Cemetery*, 26–27, fig. 39.



Fig. 7. G 2197, Penmeru, *serdab*, roofing removed, looking northwest, with George Reisner (headless, with cane and light-colored suit) in background; April 11, 1912. HU-MFA Expedition photograph, Mohammedani Ibrahim, A668.

attested.<sup>14</sup> This shaft preserved the largest number of artifacts: eight model offering dishes (35-11-92), eight model offering jars (35-11-93), decayed fragments of a wooden coffin (35-11-94), and a sandstone rubbing stone (35-11-95).<sup>15</sup> Shaft B was found empty, as was shaft C. Shaft D was declared open and empty in Reisner's unpublished manuscript,<sup>16</sup> and quoted thus by Simpson,<sup>17</sup> but the Expedition Diary mentions "broken bones of a body" (35-11-31).<sup>18</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Harvard University-Boston Museum of Fine Arts Expedition Diary, vol. 27, 153, October 26, 1935 (Reisner): "Inside the chamber head of a body on southwest and some fragments of a head of another body appears north of the first head. The bones of the bodies are thrown into the chamber in the debris. Also some wooden fragments decayed. It may be from a coffin." Mention of the second burial is omitted from Simpson, *Mastabas of the Western Cemetery*, 26.

<sup>15</sup> Harvard University-Boston Museum of Fine Arts Expedition Diary, vol. 27, 153, October 26, 1935 (Reisner), 26. I have been unable to locate any expedition photography or drawings of these objects. Moreover, no dimensions were recorded, and their present location is uncertain.

<sup>16</sup> "Description of Addition to Cem en Echelon," 113b (posted online at the Giza Archives Project Web site, [www.gizapyramids.org](http://www.gizapyramids.org), file "GN2\_K10\_ApxCemEch\_p113b.")

<sup>17</sup> Simpson, *Mastabas of the Western Cemetery*, 27.

<sup>18</sup> Harvard University-Boston Museum of Fine Arts Expedition Diary vol. 27, 155, October 30, 1935 (Reisner).



Fig. 8. G 2197, Penmeru, serdab, tops of statues (pseudo-group statue = MFA 12.1484, triad = MFA 12.1504) exposed, looking northwest April 11, 1912. HU-MFA Expedition photograph, Mohammedani Ibrahim, A669 (rephotographed as C12756).

Later and intrusive shafts U, W, X, Y, and Z surround the exterior of the mastaba (figs. 3–4 plan and figs. 14–15). All of these contained burials, including shaft W, despite the fact that Reisner’s unpublished manuscript, followed by *Giza Mastabas 4*, states that it was found open and empty.<sup>19</sup> Shaft U produced an intrusive limestone fragment carved in sunk relief, showing the head of a hyena and a personal name Demedj (figs. 16–17).<sup>20</sup> Omitted from more formal excavation records and from

<sup>19</sup> Harvard University–Boston Museum of Fine Arts Expedition Diary, vol. 27, 155, October 30, 1935 (Reisner): “Body, head on north left for photo,” versus “Description of Addition to Cem en Echelon,” 113b. However, I have not been able to locate Expedition photography for shaft W. A summary of Expedition photographic negative numbers for all the shafts follows: shaft A (C13605); shaft U (C13588; C13604 = Simpson, *Mastabas of the Western Cemetery*, pl. 52a, bones and skull labeled 35–11–50); shaft X (C13593, pl. 52b, bones and skull labeled 35–11–46); shaft Y (C13590, and B8543, pl. 52c, bones and skull labeled 35–11–48); shaft Z (C13586A, bones and skull labeled 35–11–49). All of these images are available online at the Giza Archives Project Web site, [www.gizapyramids.org](http://www.gizapyramids.org).

<sup>20</sup> MFA 35–10–24; w. 15.5 cm; l. 21.4 cm; th. 6 cm; cf. Simpson, *Mastabas of the Western Cemetery*, 27 and pl. 52d; color image SC171427 is available on the Giza Archives Project Web site, [www.gizapyramids.org](http://www.gizapyramids.org); see also Expedition photograph B8584–NS. For a study of two possible “hyena cages” in the far Western Cemetery (south of Lepsius 19, the tomb of Ipi), originally excavated by A. M. Abu-Bakr, see S. R. Phillips, “Two enigmatic circular mud brick structures in the Western Field at Giza,” in M. Bárta, ed.,



*Fig. 9. G 2197, Penmeru, serdab partly cleared, statues in situ (pseudo-group statue = MFA 12.1484, triad = MFA 12.1504, pair statue = Cairo JE 43753), looking north; April 11, 1912. HU-MFA Expedition photograph, Mohammedani Ibrahim, C4881.*



Fig. 10. G 2197, Penmeru, *serdab* cleared to floor, with all three statues exposed (pseudo-group statue = MFA 12.1484, triad = MFA 12.1504, pair statue = Cairo JE 43753), looking northwest; April 12, 1912. HU-MFA Expedition photograph, Mohammedani Ibrahim, A671 (rephotographed as C12758).

Giza Mastabas 4, but mentioned five years later in the Expedition Diary entry for March 10, 1940, was a shaft T, located to the north of the mastaba.<sup>21</sup> This shaft appears on the original Cemetery en Echelon plan (see figs. 3–4), but I have found no further description of its excavation or contents. Perhaps shaft T was never excavated. In fact, this 1940 entry appears to be the last time G 2197 is mentioned in the Expedition Diary.

*The Old Kingdom Art and Archaeology, Proceedings of the Conference held in Prague, May 31–June 4, 2004* (Prague, 2006), 239–58. Additional images of hyenas from Giza tombs, with images on the Giza Archives Project Web site ([www.gizapyramids.org](http://www.gizapyramids.org)) supplied in parentheses, include G 7530–7540, Meresankh III (A4728–NS, A5589–NS; D. Dunham and W. K. Simpson, *The Mastaba of Queen Mersyankh III* [Boston, 1974], pl. 2d, fig. 3a); G 7948, Khafreankh (A7388–NS); G 2184, Akhmeretnisut (A639–NS, AAW1934, AAW1936; A. M. Roth, in D’Auria, Lacovara, and Roehrig, eds., *Mummies and Magic*, 85, cat. 14); Lepsius 53, Seshemnefer IV (AEOS\_II\_5263–2, o\_neg\_nr\_0115); G 2091, Kapi (A6013–NS, A. M. Roth, *A Cemetery of Palace Attendants, Giza Mastabas 6* [Boston, 1995], pls. 59, 60a, 168); G 2097 (AAW1499; Roth, *Cemetery*, pls. 95–97, 189); G 4761, Nefer I (AEOS\_I\_5305, AEOS\_I\_5588, AEOS\_I\_5650; Junker, *Giza 6* [Vienna, 1943], 59, fig. 14, fig. 16, opposite 64, pl. 2); G 5480 = 2340, Heti (A6043–NS, AEOS\_II\_2940); Lepsius 20, Persen (Phillips, “Two enigmatic circular mud brick structures,” 258, fig. 11). More recently, see J. Swinton, “De-Coding Old Kingdom Wall Scenes: Force-Feeding the Hyena,” in A. Woods, A. McFarlane, and S. Binder, eds. *Egyptian Culture and Society. Studies in Honour of Naguib Kanawati 2*, CASAE 38 (Cairo, 2010), 233–46.

<sup>21</sup> Harvard University–Boston Museum of Fine Arts Expedition Diary, vol. 34, 915, March 19, 1940 (Reis’s diary).



*Fig. 11. G 2197, Penmeru, serdab cleared to floor (pseudo-group statue = MFA 12.1484, triad = MFA 12.1504, pair statue = Cairo JE 43753), looking south; April 12, 1912. HU-MFA Expedition photograph, Mohammedani Ibrahim, A670.*





Fig. 12. G 2197, Penmeru, serdab cleared to floor (pseudo-group statue = MFA 12.1484, triad = MFA 12.1504, pair statue = Cairo JE 43753), looking west; April 12, 1912. HU-MFA Expedition photograph, Mohammedani Ibrahim, A674\_NS.

Regarding the architectural history of the mastaba, perhaps the most striking element is the serdab itself. As is evident from figs. 10–12, the two larger statues are so densely packed that it seems difficult to imagine the ancient Egyptians lowering them down into a finished serdab, with only a few centimeters to spare on each side. Were the statues deposited, and the serdab walls subsequently raised around them? Or, perhaps more likely, were the two large pseudo-groups never intended to rest in a serdab, but rather to form part of a much more grandiose chapel? The niche frame of the family group (MFA 12.1484) looks particularly well suited for embedding into a chapel’s west wall; otherwise, the frame seems too elaborate to serve merely as a platform for a *hṯp di nswt* inscription. If Penmeru originally envisioned a larger mastaba that subsequently proved impossible to complete, the next question is, what forced the reduction to a tiny offering niche, and the placement of these accomplished statue groups, among the largest from Giza, in a simple serdab? Did Penmeru fall from favor? Is there a reason that he is not mentioned in the tomb of Seshemnefer III (G 5170), whom he served? Reisner certainly interpreted the archaeological context as one of dramatic alteration; in fact “catastrophe” is the word he chose in the Expedition Diary for April 11, 1912:

The niche triad was intended for the niche of an offering chamber. The other triad seems also to have been intended to be built into a wall. In other words we seem to have here the traces of an



Fig. 13. G 2197, Penmeru, general view of chapel niche, including the undecorated false door, looking southwest. August, 1977. Photograph by Robert E. Murowchick, REM\_1977.001.12.

ancient family catastrophe. A great tomb was planned with beautifully inscribed walls and statue filled niches.<sup>22</sup>

The division of finds determined by Maspero sent the two larger statue groups to Boston (accessioned as MFA 12.1484 and 12.1504), and the smaller pseudo-group statuette to the Egyptian Museum, Cairo (accessioned as JE 43753). On July 23, 1912, Reisner wrote to Gardiner Martin Lane (1859–1914), President of the MFA, as follows:

Dear Mr. Lane,

I have been driving hard the last three weeks getting the division through and the objects packed. The big triad (or rather quintette)<sup>23</sup> has proved very difficult to handle. We have had to make an inner box of 1 1/2 inch boards and an outer one of two inch boards.

I cabled you that the division was “entirely satisfactory”. I now have Maspero’s signature to the agreement and hope to have the boxes out in a week or ten days. *We received everything of value—much to my surprise . . .*

I suppose you are wondering how it happened. I think I can make a guess. The English criticism of Maspero has stiffened his back . . . The quintette and the triad<sup>24</sup> are unique forms . . . .<sup>25</sup>

The first published accounts of mastaba G 2197 appeared in 1913. A *Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts* article by C. S. Fisher curiously contained three photographs but no discussion of Penmeru.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Harvard University–Boston Museum of Fine Arts Expedition Diary, vol. 3, 93, April 11, 1912 (Reisner).

<sup>23</sup> I.e., the family pseudo-group, MFA 12.1484.

<sup>24</sup> I.e., the triad pseudo-group, MFA 12.1504.

<sup>25</sup> Letter from G. A. Reisner to G. M. Lane, July 23, 1912, housed in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (director’s correspondence files). I am grateful to Maureen Melton, the Susan Morse Hilles Director of Libraries and Archives and Museum Historian at the MFA, for her assistance in making these archives accessible.

<sup>26</sup> C. S. Fisher, “The Harvard University–Museum of Fine Arts Egyptian Expedition. Work of 1912 at Gizeh and Mesheikh,” *BMFA* 11, no. 62 (1912), 19–22.

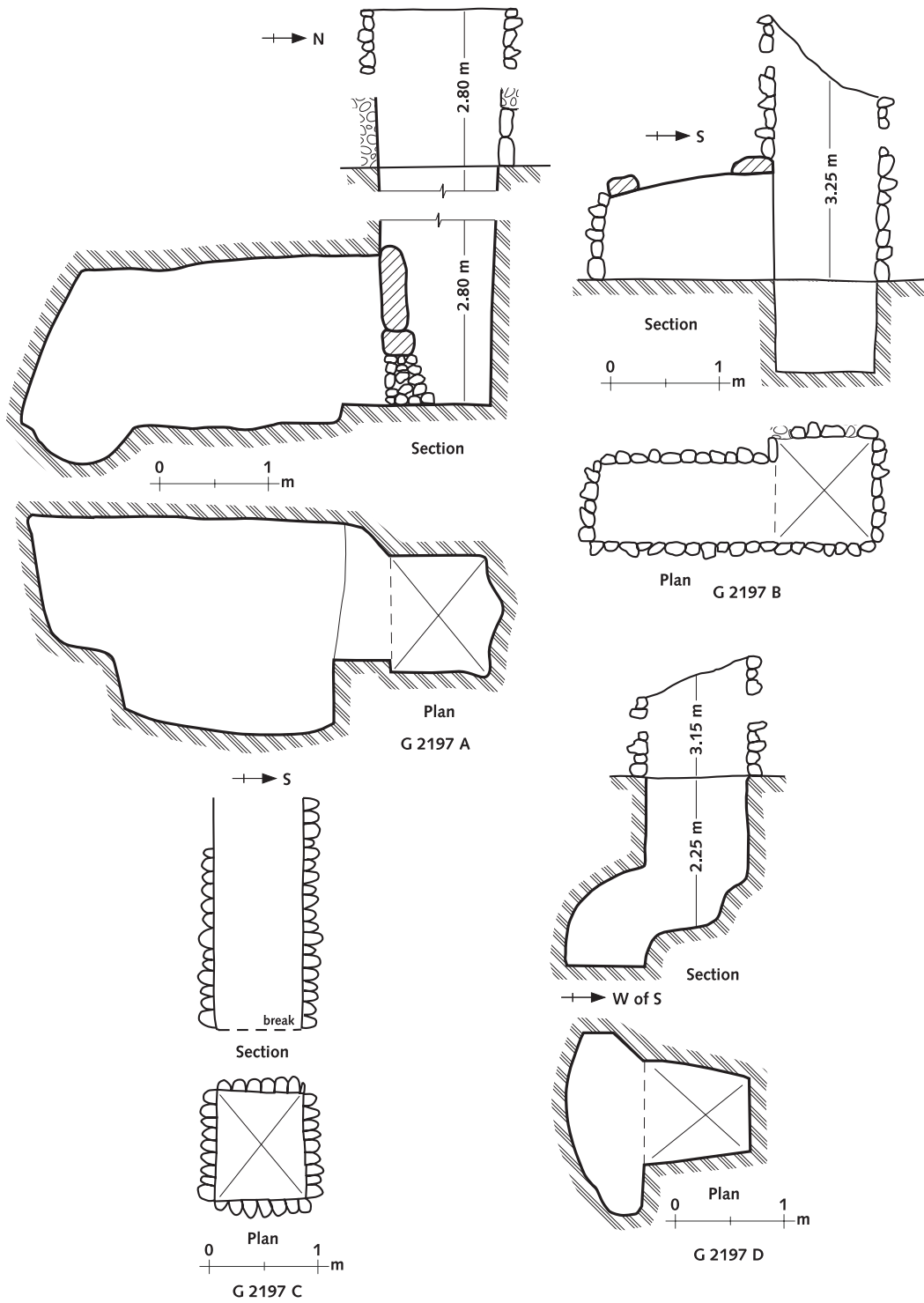


Fig. 14. G 2197, plans and sections of shafts A through D. Redrawn from HU-MFA Expedition illustrations by the author.

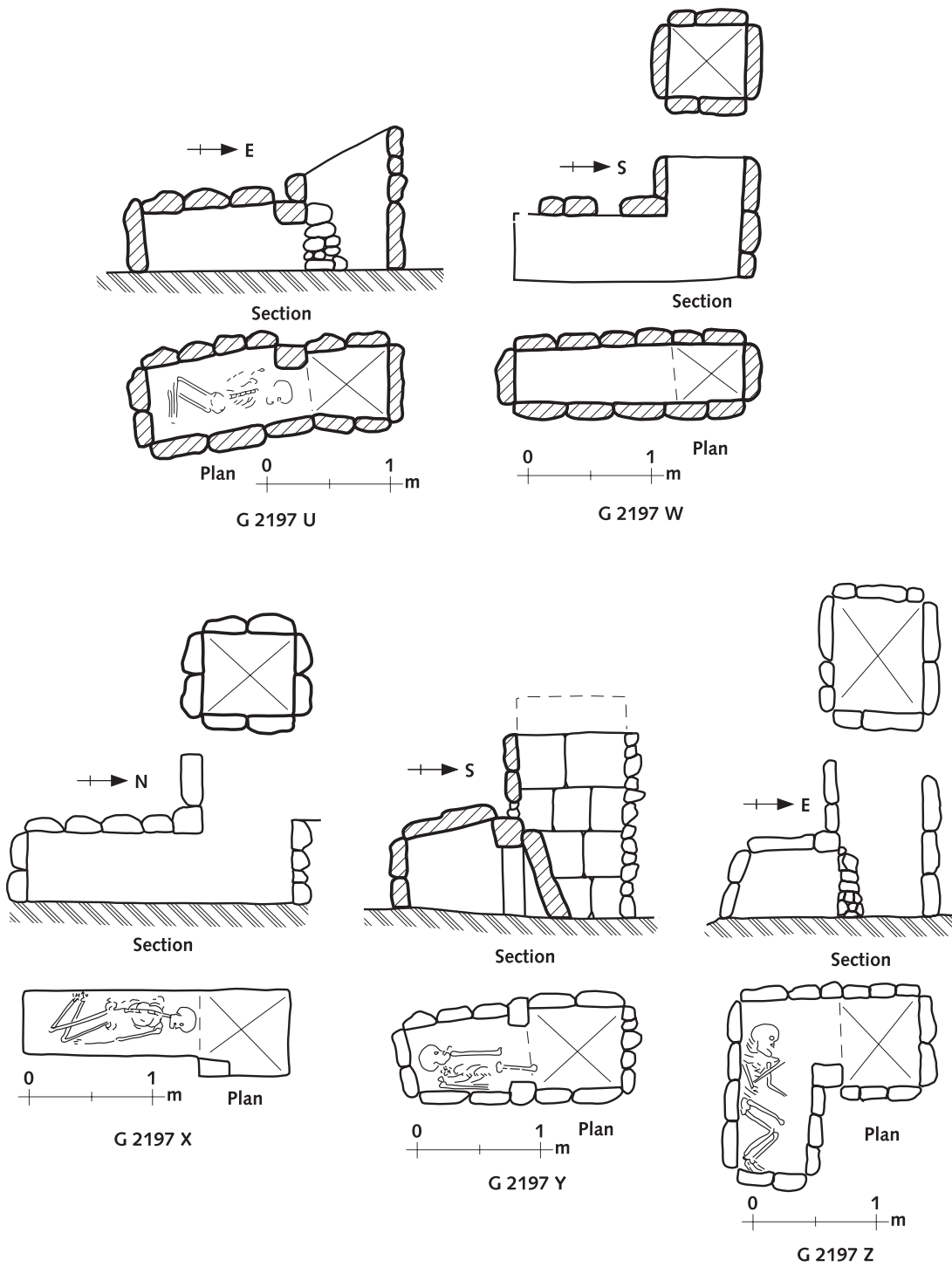


Fig. 15. G 2197, plans and sections of shafts U through Z. Redrawn from HU-MFA Expedition illustrations by the author.



Fig. 16. MFA 35-10-24, intrusive relief fragment with hyena, from G 2197, shaft U. May 18, 2006. Photograph courtesy Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, SC171427.

The first substantial Harvard-MFA Expedition excavation report, co-authored by Reisner and Fisher in 1914, went into more detail, reproducing in typeset hieroglyphs the testament from the chapel's south wall.<sup>27</sup> Since that time, succeeding publications have focused either on that legal text, or on the nature of the pseudo-group statuary (see respective bibliographical references below). It was not until 1980 that W. K. Simpson published the tomb as a whole, in *Giza Mastabas 4*.<sup>28</sup>

## II. Chapel Niche Inscriptions

Penmeru's name presents some unusual features. The key sign is the spindle hieroglyph (U34) that belongs with the first element, *pn*, not the second *mrw*. One might be tempted to see confusion between the *hsf*-spindle (Sign List U 34)<sup>29</sup> and the *mr*-chisel (U 23), hence Pen-*meru*, but every preserved example of Penmeru's name shows sufficient detail towards the top of the sign to remove all doubt that U 34 is the sign represented.<sup>30</sup> Figure 18 gathers each example of the sign and illustrates distinct orthography between Penmeru's various monuments. While *Pnw* "mouse" is a common personal

<sup>27</sup> C. S. Fisher and G. A. Reisner, "Preliminary Report on the work of the Harvard-Boston Expedition in 1911-13." *ASAE* 13 (1914), 227-52, esp. 247, 250, pl. 11a, illustration no. 17.

<sup>28</sup> Simpson, *Mastabas of the Western Cemetery*, 24-27.

<sup>29</sup> *Wb.* I, 508.5: "Name eines spindelartigen Gerätes," with *Belegstellen* entry: "Nur in Personennamen belegt," citing Penmeru, *LD* II 46 (*Pnw-ms* in the Saqqara tomb of Pehenuka), and H. Ranke *PN* I, 132.18, 20.

<sup>30</sup> The most elaborate spelling of Penmeru's name, with a very detailed seated man determinative, occurs at the bottom of the proper right frame column of text on the family pseudo-group MFA 12.1484 (see below, figs. 37, 44).

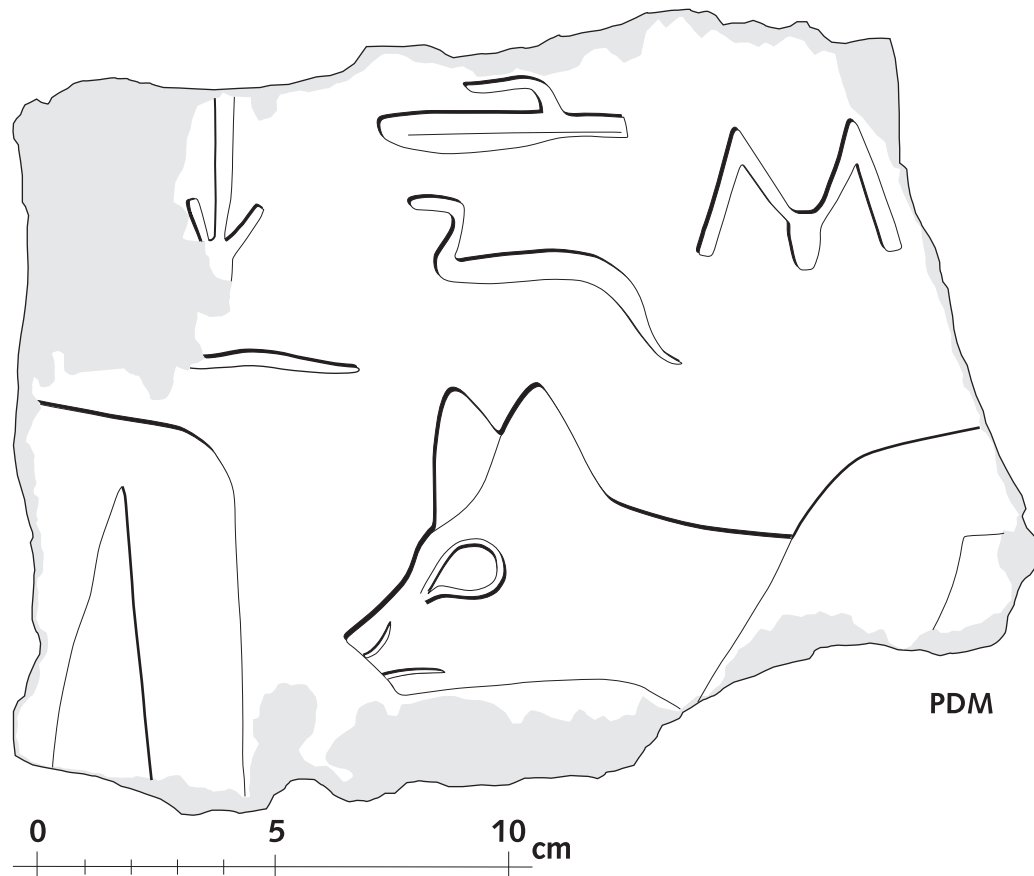


Fig. 17. MFA 35-10-24, drawing of intrusive relief fragment with hyena, from G 2197, shaft U.

name at many stages of Egyptian history,<sup>31</sup> *Pn-mrw* is apparently unique. As Ranke has argued,<sup>32</sup> and Grdseloff has noted,<sup>33</sup> neonates are often given animal names; thus “Penmeru” may mean something like “beloved little mouse.”

#### *Iia. South wall of chapel niche: Penmeru’s testament*<sup>34</sup>

Penmeru’s legal text is carved in sunk relief on the south side of his small chapel niche (figs. 1, 13, 19–24). As is now well established, the text designates Neferhotep and his descendants to serve

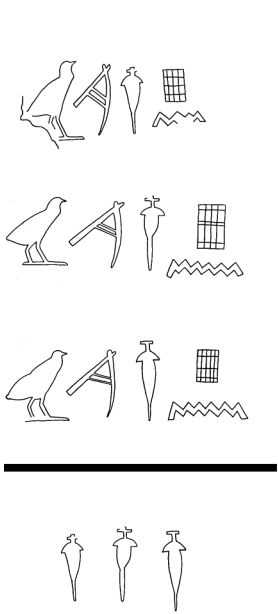
<sup>31</sup> Cf. Ranke *PN I*, 133.6; R. Hannig, *Großes Handwörterbuch Ägyptisch-Deutsch* (Mainz, 1995), 277; G. Jéquier, *Tombeaux de particuliers contemporains de Pépi II*, Fouilles à Saqqarah II (Cairo, 1929), 43. A Giza example of the name Penu occurs for a *hm-k3* in the second register from the top on the west wall of the chapel of Kaninisut I (G 2155), between the false doors; see most recently Manuelian, *Mastabas of Nucleus Cemetery G 2100*, 380, line 25, 409–11, figs. 13.53–13.55, 414, 13.59. For the name *Pni* in the tomb of Seneb, see Junker, *Giza 5* (Vienna, 1941), 93, fig. 24.

<sup>32</sup> H. Ranke, “Tiernamen als Personennamen bei den Ägyptern,” *ZÄS* 60 (1925), 79; idem, *PN II*, 182–85, 198–200.

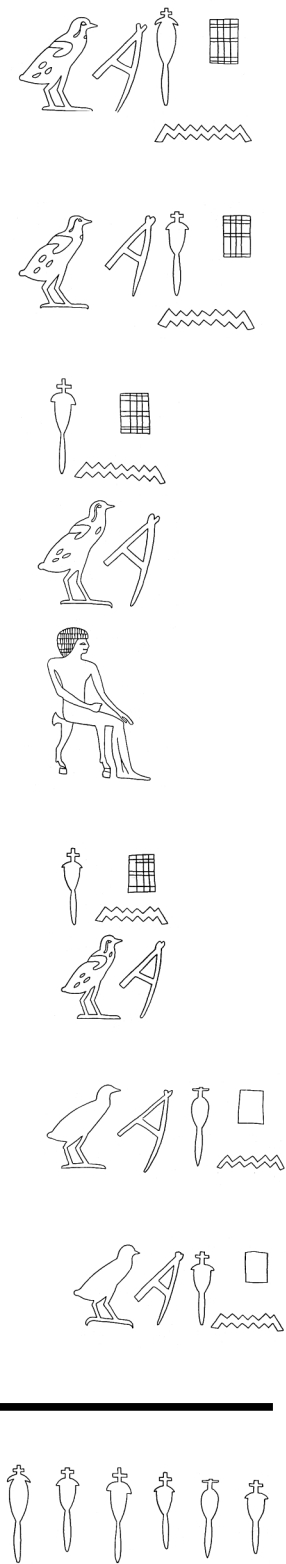
<sup>33</sup> B. Grdseloff, “Deux inscriptions juridiques de l’ancien empire,” *ASAE* 42 (1943), 44, with important references in notes 1–6.

<sup>34</sup> For bibliography on this text, see Reisner and Fisher, *ASAE* 13, 247, pl. 11 [a]; Junker, *Giza III* (Vienna, 1938), 6; Grdseloff, *ASAE* 42, 39–43, fig. 3; T. Mersich, *Untersuchungen zur Hausurkunde des Alten Reiches*, *MÄS* 13 (Berlin, 1968), §39, 40–41; H. Goedicke, *Die privaten Rechtsinschriften aus dem Alten Reich* (Vienna, 1970), 68–74, pl. 6; K. Gödecke, *Eine Betrachtung der Inschriften des Meten im Rahmen der sozialen und rechtlichen Stellung von Privatleuten im ägyptischen Alten Reich* (Wiesbaden, 1976), esp. 177–81; Simpson, *Mastabas of the Western Cemetery*, 24, pls. 46–47; R. Müller-Wollermann, translation of J. J. Poppelkin, *Privateigentum in der Vorstellung der Ägypter des Alten Reichs* (Tübingen, 1986), 36–37, 100–101; N. Strudwick, *Texts from the Pyramid Age* (Atlanta, 2005), 200–201, text 112; V. Chauvet, *The Conception of Private Tombs in the Late Old Kingdom* (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, 2004).

MFA 12.1504 Triad



MFA 12.1484 Family Group



JE 43753 Pair Statuette

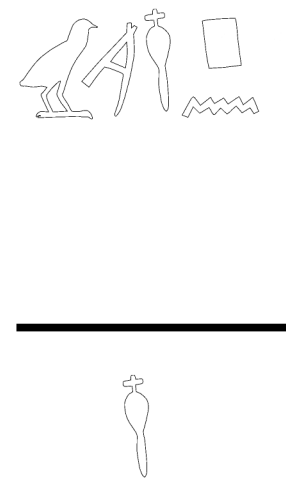


Fig. 18. Drawing of all the examples of the spindle hieroglyph (Sign List U 34) used in the writing of Penmeru's name.



Fig. 19. G 2197, Penmeru, south wall of chapel niche, testament of Penmeru, looking southwest. January 16, 2004. Photograph by the author, PDM\_01332.

Penmeru's mortuary cult in G 2197, using reversion offerings that in turn derive from the vizier Seshemnefer III (owner of G 5170, further to the south). Additional statements ("Machtreservationsklausel"<sup>35</sup>) ensure that no others possess the legal authority to interfere with Penmeru's arrangements. According to Grdseloff, the inscription dates to the final stage of Penmeru's career, and represents not a complete text, but excerpts from a longer legal testament.<sup>36</sup> Seven horizontal rules separate the inscription, but no rule separates the final two lines 8–9 (fig. 23). It is possible that this "codicil" was added at a later time, perhaps after Penmeru's wife Meretites predeceased him.<sup>37</sup> Gödecken, however, argued that Penmeru was unmarried at the time he composed the main text, hence his choice of Neferhotep to look after his cult.<sup>38</sup> Following this interpretation, Penmeru would have added the codicil lines 8 and 9 after his marriage to Meretites.

The style of the carving is somewhat crude and irregular, devoid of interior detail, and differs substantially from the more balanced hieroglyphs carved on Penmeru's serdab statues. The "tracking" or spacing of the individual lines is also noteworthy. Some lines (2, 3) appear densely packed, while others (6, 7) seem unnecessarily extended, as if intended to take up maximum space. There was

<sup>35</sup> Gödecken, *Eine Betrachtung der Inschriften des Meten*, 177, 179–81.

<sup>36</sup> Grdseloff, "Deux inscriptions juridiques," 41; Goedicke also argues for excerpts from a longer text: *Die privaten Rechtsinschriften*, 68.

<sup>37</sup> Grdseloff, "Deux inscriptions juridiques," 63, n. m, 64; Goedicke, *Die privaten Rechtsinschriften*, 72.

<sup>38</sup> Gödecken, *Eine Betrachtung der Inschriften des Meten*, 179–80.





Fig. 20. G 2197, south wall of chapel niche, testament of Penmeru, looking southwest; April 12, 1912. HU-MFA Expedition photograph, Mohammedani Ibrahim, A681 (rephotographed as B2079).

no need, for example, to carve the demonstrative adjective *pn* in line 7 as two horizontally aligned signs  $\square$   $\sim\sim\sim$ , instead of the more customary *p* above the *n*  $\square$  . And yet line 7, while extended, does not reach the left (east) edge of the inscription, so the motivation here is not for line justification. It seems rather that most lines were intended to initiate a new sentence or thought. Only two lines might be argued to continue the sentence from a previous line: line 5 (based on an unsubstantiated *ir* restored by most translators at the end of 4), and line 7, which begins with the clearly non-initial *hn*.

The text has suffered extensive damage since its discovery in 1912. Major losses have occurred at the ends of lines 2 and 3, and in the break between blocks a few signs into lines 2 through 5. The photograph in figure 19 dates to 2004; that in figure 20 dates to 1912; and the image in figure 21 is a montage of numerous images taken in 1989. To my knowledge, the latter represents the only published straight-on view of the inscription, for the cramped niche is difficult of access for photographic purposes. My digital epigraphic drawing (fig. 22) is based on numerous photographs and direct tracings from different eras, and restores only those areas that could be confirmed from the 1912 documentation. In addition to the typeset hieroglyphic rendering of the text (fig. 23), I have collected previously published editions and arranged them in line-by-line comparison (fig. 24).



Fig. 21. G 2197, south wall of chapel niche, testament of Penmeru, looking south, July 1989. Photographic montage by the author, based on multiple detail photographs by Rus Gant.

Line 1 clearly initiates the testament, but there is one additional, severely weathered limestone block immediately above this line, at the level of the rounded drum over the chapel niche. The original excavators ignored this block, and it appears devoid of inscription. However, on the opposite (north) side of the niche, the corresponding block does indeed bear an inscription, missed by all until its discovery in 1987 (see below). The hieroglyphs in line 1 are carved at a scale larger than that used for the rest of the text. Curiously, line 1 appears “centered” over the following lines, even though there is additional room to the right (west) of the initial, *sw* plant of the introductory title *w<sup>b</sup> nswt*. Perhaps the angled crack between two blocks motivated the sculptor to avoid carving the line here, but he did not shy away from this procedure in the ensuing lines.

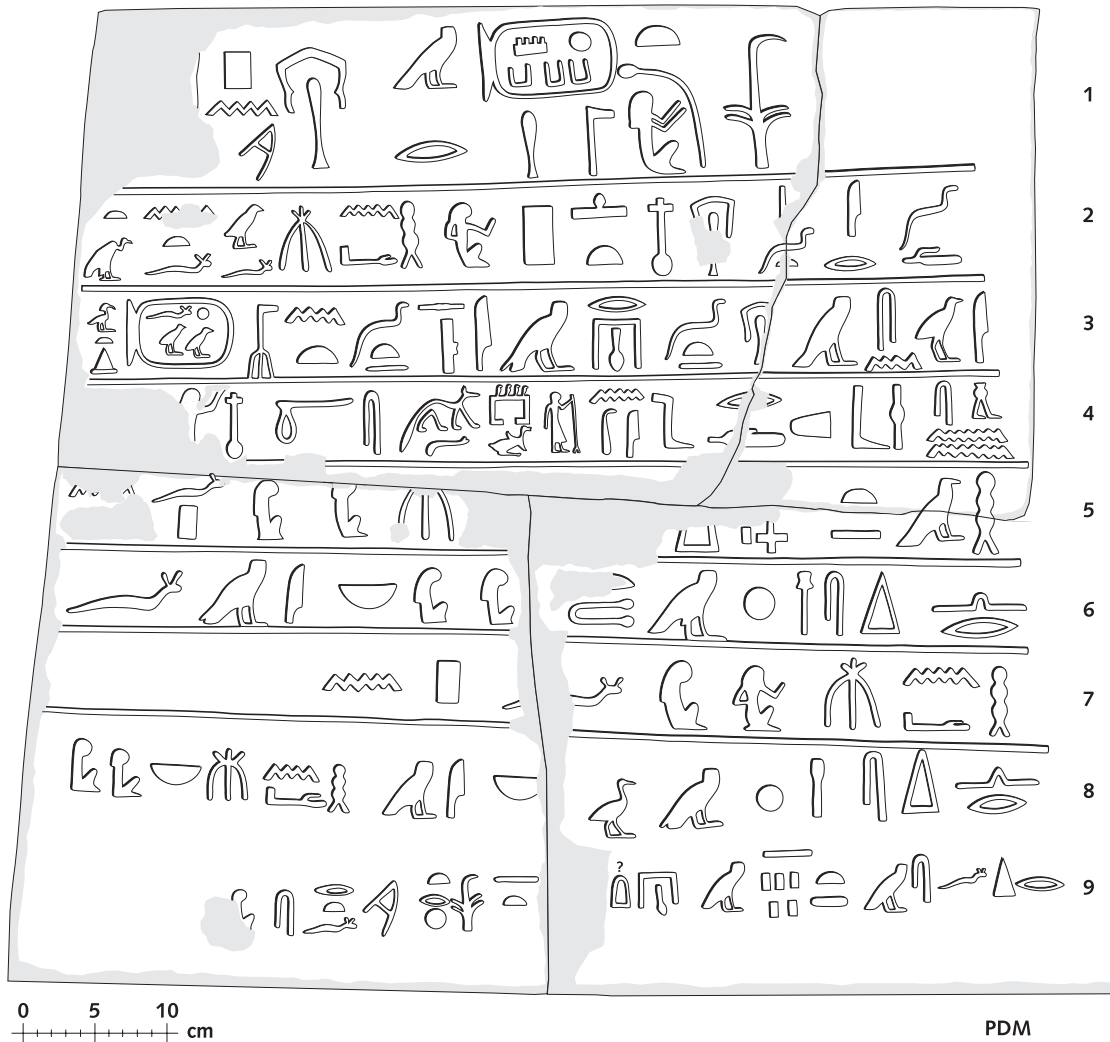


Fig. 22. Drawing of the testament of Penmeru on the south wall of the chapel niche.

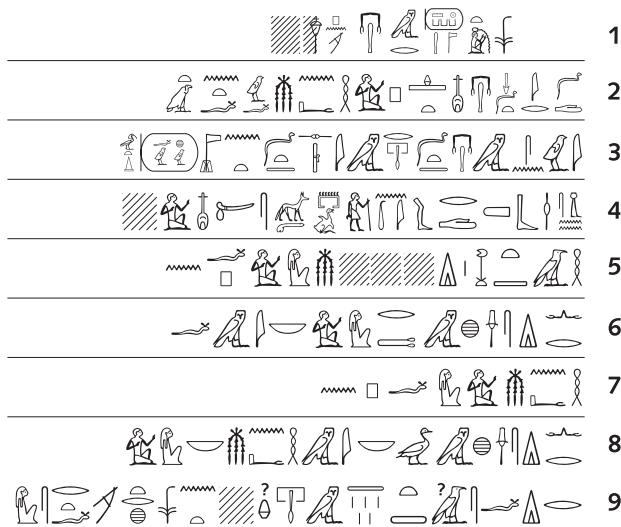


Fig. 23. Edited hieroglyphic text of the testament of Penmeru on the south wall of the chapel niche.

A = Reisner diary sketch B = Reisner/Fisher ASAE 13 C = Grdseloff ASAE 42 D = Manuelian

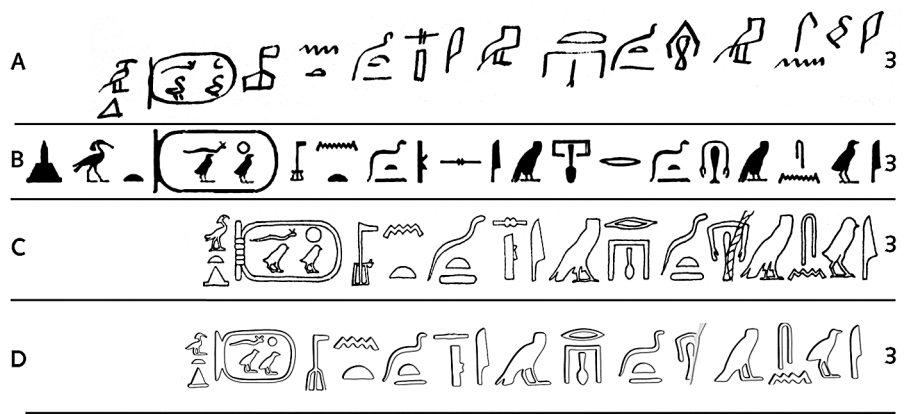
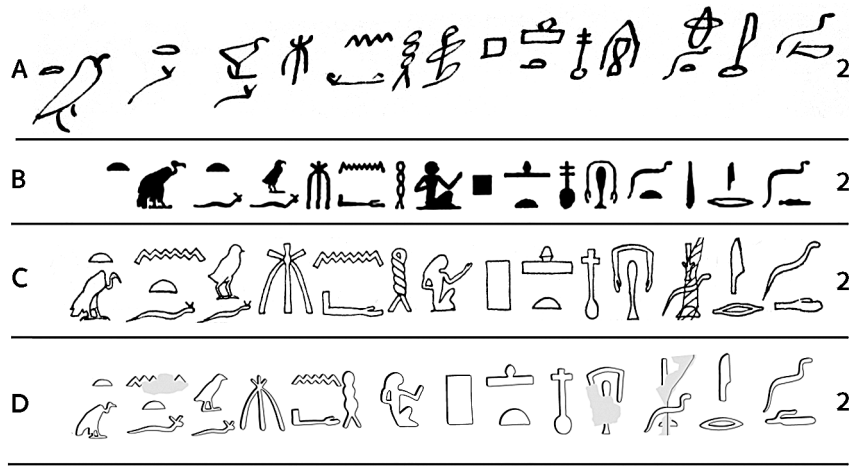
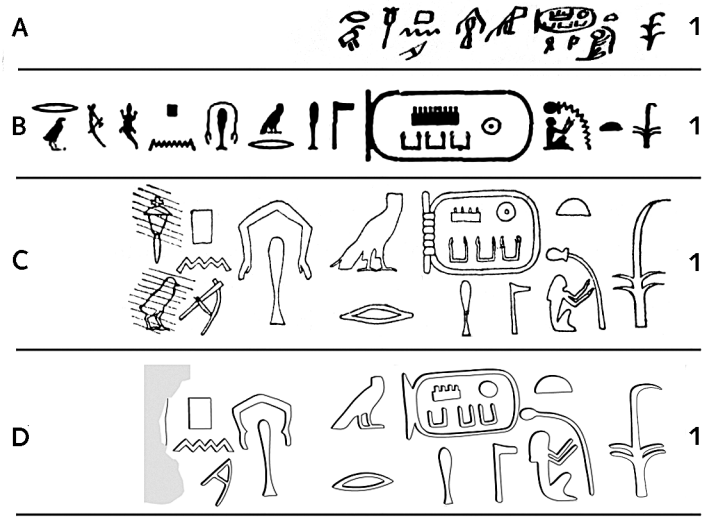


Fig. 24. Comparative layout of published editions of the testament of Penmeru (Reisner, Reisner/Fisher, Grdseloff, Manuelian).

A = Reisner diary sketch    B = Reisner/Fisher ASAE 13    C = Grdseloff ASAE 42    D = Manuelian

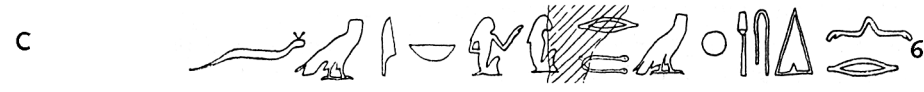
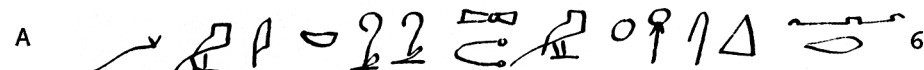
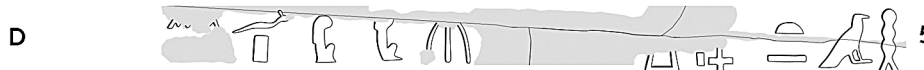
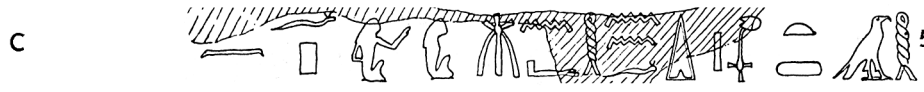
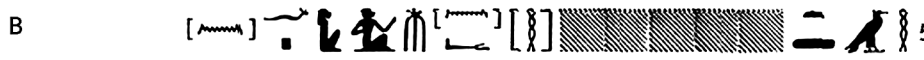
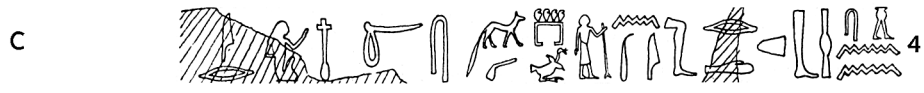
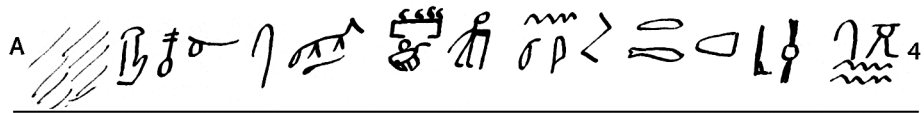


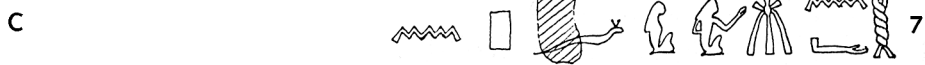
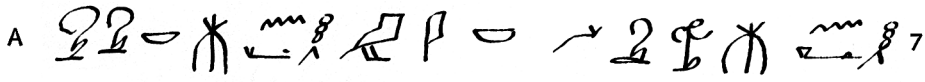
Fig. 24. Continued.

A = Reisner diary sketch

B = Reisner/Fisher ASAE 13

C = Grdseloff ASAE 42

D = Manuelian



A omitted 8

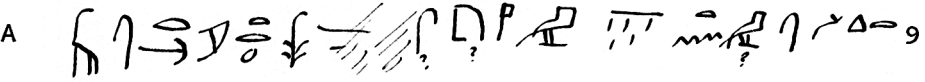


Fig. 24. Continued.

**Main Text Transliteration:**

- 1) *wʿb nswt ḥm-nṯr Mn-kʿw-rʿ ʿimy-r ḥm(w)-kʿ Pnmr[w]*
- 2) *dd ʾr sn=(i) dt=(i) ḥm-kʿ Nfr-ḥtp ḥnʿ msw=f n ʾt mwt*
- 3) *ʾw=sn m ḥm(w)-kʿ dt=(i) r pr(t)-ḥrw m ʾz=(i) dt=(i) nt ḥrt-nṯr ʿḥt-ḥwfw*
- 4) *inʾ=sn n=(i) wdb-rd n ʾty=(i) tʿty zʿb tʿty sšm-nfr [ʾr?]*
- 5) *ʿḥt ḥʿ 1 [dʾ.n=(i) n=f ḥnʿ] msw=f pn*
- 6) *n rdʾ=(i) sḥm rmt nb ʾm=f*
- 7) *ḥnʿ msw=f pn*

**Codicil**

- 8) *n rdʾ=(i) sḥm zʿ=(i) nb ʾm ḥnʿ ms(w)=(i) nb*
- 9) *rdʾ=f sʿt tʿ 5 m pr(t)-ḥrw nt rh(t) nswt Mrt-ʾt=s*

**Main Text Translation:**

- 1) (It is) the royal *wab*-priest, priest of Menkaure, overseer of *ka* servant(s),<sup>a</sup> Penmeru,
- 2) (who) says: As for (my) brother of (my) funerary estate,<sup>b</sup> the *ka* servant Neferhotep<sup>c</sup> and those born<sup>d</sup> to him by<sup>e</sup> father or mother,
- 3) they<sup>f</sup> are the *ka* servant(s) of (my) funerary estate for the invocation offerings in (my) tomb of (my) funerary estate of<sup>g</sup> the necropolis of [Akhet]-Khu[f]u.<sup>h</sup>
- 4) They shall bring to (me) the reversion offerings<sup>i</sup> of (my) sovereign,<sup>j</sup> he of the curtain, chief justice, and vizier<sup>k</sup> Seshemnefer [III]. [As for?]<sup>l</sup>
- 5) the 1 *kha*<sup>m</sup> of fields [which (I) have given to him together with]<sup>n</sup> these children of his,
- 6) I have not empowered any people to have authority over it,<sup>o</sup>
- 7) together with these children of his.

**Codicil**

- 8) I have not empowered any son (of mine) there, nor any children (of mine)<sup>p</sup> to have authority.
- 9) He should give 5 *ta* of *sat*-land<sup>q</sup> as the invocation offerings of the royal acquaintance, Meretites.<sup>r</sup>

**Notes to Main Text Translation:**

<sup>a</sup> For the somewhat more secular translation of *ḥm-kʿ* as “*ka* servant” rather than “funerary priest,” see S. Allam, “Le *ḥm-kʿ* était-il exclusivement prêtre funéraire?,” *RdE* 36 (1985), 1–15.

<sup>b</sup> For a discussion of the spelling of *dt*, citing the examples from this inscription, see Perepelkin, *Privateigentum*, 31–32, who explains *dt* as private property that, among other things, could be assigned by the king to an individual. For Perepelkin’s discussion of Penmeru’s text, see 36–37, and 100–101. Note the spelling of *dt* here in line 2, without the horizontal determinative that is included in the word below in line 3 (twice). For additional discussions, see Grdseloff, “Deux inscriptions juridiques,” 45–49, and Junker *Giza* 3, 6–7. Individuals named as *sn dt* in inscriptions at Giza are listed by Y. Harpur, “Two Old Kingdom Tombs at Giza,” *JEA* 67 (1981), 32 (1); and additionally W. Boochs, “Zur Funktion des *sn dt*,” *VA* 1 (1985), 3–9.

<sup>c</sup> Several of the seated figure determinatives in the inscription appear to have long wigs and no arms, as if they were female, not male, signs (Sign List B 1 instead of A 1). Compare the determinatives in lines 2 (Neferhotep), 5 (*msw*), 6 (*rmt*), 7 (*msw*), and 8 (*msw*). Perhaps this is simply the result of crude sunk relief carving, or poor preservation, but the only clearly differentiated pair of determinatives, male and female, appears in line 7. This raises the possibility of alternative translations such as “female children” in lines 6 and 8.

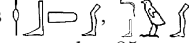
<sup>d</sup> Goedicke, *Die privaten Rechtsinschriften*, 69, observes that *msw* is most likely a passive participle, rather than a plural noun, since all other occurrences of the latter in this text show male and female determinatives, rather than the quail chick *w* (lines 5, 7, and 9).

<sup>e</sup> There is some uncertainty here as to the presence of the genitival *n* (“by/of/through”) before *ʾt* and *mwt*. Reisner’s original hand copy from his 1912 Expedition diary, his unpublished manuscript “Description of Addition to Cem en Echelon,” 112, and his published text from *ASAE* 13, 247, omit the *n*, but there is clearly space available for it above the *t* and *f* signs. Grdseloff, “Deux inscriptions juridiques,” 39, includes the *n*. Goedicke follows him in *Die privaten Rechtsinschriften*, pl. VI, and Simpson reproduces Goedicke’s transliteration in *Mastabas of the Western Cemetery*, 24. For discussion of the phrase, see Grdseloff, “Deux inscriptions juridiques,” 49–50, and Strudwick, *Texts from the Pyramid Age*, 207, n. 20.

<sup>f</sup> The *s* of the suffix pronoun *sn* is the only reversed *s* sign in the inscription. For the construction *šw m* here, see Goedicke, *Die privaten Rechtsinschriften*, 70.

<sup>g</sup> Goedicke, *Die privaten Rechtsinschriften*, 70, restores *nty <m>* here, but it is not strictly necessary if the indirect genitive refers to *dt* instead of *iz*.

<sup>h</sup> Grdseloff, “Deux inscriptions juridiques,” 51, discusses the general nature of this geographical designation.

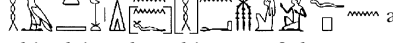
<sup>i</sup> On the reading *wdb-rd*, citing this passage, see J. J. Clère, “La lecture des termes  ‘Virement (d’Of- frandes),’ *JEA* 25 (1939), 215–16. Grdseloff, “Deux inscriptions juridiques,” 51–54, notes that 85 meters separates Pen- meru’s tomb (G 2197) from that of Seshemnefer III (G 5170); see his sketch plan, 40, fig. 4. Additional discussion, raising more questions than answers, is provided by Goedicke, *Die privaten Rechtsinschriften*, 70.

<sup>j</sup> “Lord” is perhaps a better translation than “sovereign” here, since Seshemnefer was vizier, not king. Cf. D. Jones, *An Index of Ancient Egyptian Titles, Epithets and Phrases of the Old Kingdom I* (Oxford, 2000), 344, no. 1280; Goedicke, *Die privaten Rechts- inschriften*, 71; pace Junker, *Giza* 3, 6, n. 2; and Grdseloff, “Deux inscriptions juridiques,” 54–57, for the word *ity*, and 57–61 for Seshemnefer III (but note the problems with his chronological interpretation, incorrectly taking “year 5” in line 6 of Inscription A of Senedjemib Inti (G 2370) as a regnal year date for Izezi, as noted by W. S. Smith, “Inscriptional Evidence for the History of the Fourth Dynasty,” *JNES* 11 (1952), 123, and Brovarski, *The Senedjemib Complex*, Part 1, Giza Mastabas 7 (Boston, 2001), 91, n. e (see below, under our Section V, Chronology and Date).

<sup>k</sup> References for this title sequence are gathered by Jones, *An Index of Ancient Egyptian Titles II*, 1000–1001, no. 3706. For the phallus hieroglyph determinative of *šy*, deriving from *šy* “male,” see 1001, no. 3708, and H. G. Fischer, review of S. Hassan, *Excavations at Saqqara 1937–1938*, *JEA* 65 (1979), 181, comment to 26. This passage is briefly cited by W. Helck, “Wirtschaftliche Bemerkungen zum privaten Grabbesitz im Alten Reich,” *MDAIK* 14 (1956), 71.

<sup>l</sup> Grdseloff, “Deux inscriptions juridiques,” 39, restores *ir* in the damaged space at the end of line 4, and all subsequent authors have followed his restoration (for example, Goedicke, *Die privaten Rechtsinschriften*, 71). But Grdseloff does not state explicitly whether he collated his drawing at the wall, or was merely making restoration suggestions. Reisner records only damage in both of his hieroglyphic reproductions of the text. There is certainly room for the restoration of *ir*, and it fits well with the sense of the following phrase in line 5. However, despite the irregular layout of the inscription, most of the phrases seem to be- gin on their own new line.

<sup>m</sup> Grdseloff, “Deux inscriptions juridiques,” 39, indicates a tall broken single stroke, but this sign appears shorter and complete, based on collation at the wall. In the Old Kingdom the land measure *hš* totaled one-tenth of an aroura; cf. J. P. Allen, *The Heqanakht Papyri* (New York, 2002), 152, n. 68; Helck, *LÄ III*, col. 1200; K. Baer, “A Note on Egyptian Units of Area in the Old Kingdom,” *JNES* 15 (1956), 113–17; Perepelkin, *Privateigentum*, 101 (1/3 of an aroura?). Most translators take this line to refer to 10 arouras; see for example, Grdseloff, “Deux inscriptions juridiques,” 61. For additional discus- sion, see Goedicke, *Die privaten Rechtsinschriften*, 71. The *hš* plant (M12) shows no rounded base risome at the bottom. For parallels, see S. Hassan, *Giza* 1 (Oxford, 1932), figs. 142, 144, 169, 182; idem, *Giza* 2 (Cairo, 1936), fig. 105; idem, *Giza* 6, Part III (Cairo, 1950), fig. 119.

<sup>n</sup> Grdseloff, “Deux inscriptions juridiques,” 61, restores line 5 to read:  and calls his restoration “absolument certaine.” But I am unclear as to how he made this claim when this part of the stone was already missing almost three decades before he saw it. The HU-MEA Expedition photograph A681, taken on April 12, 1912 (see fig. 20) shows a large gap after the *di* and before the two fragmentary signs preceding the *ms* hieroglyph. Even the restoration of *hn*<sup>c</sup> is difficult to confirm. In fact, preliminary drawings in the 1980s by the MFA’s Giza Expeditions suggested an *n* where one would expect the arm of *hn*<sup>c</sup>. Like its counterparts in lines 6 and 8, the tall loaf *di* does not seem to display the small in- terior triangle detail.

<sup>o</sup> *Im=f* could alternatively refer to Neferhotep, if not the 1 *kha* of fields, hence “have authority over him” instead of “over it.” The similar negational phrases with *šhm* in lines 6 and 8 are quoted by I. Harari, “La fondation culturelle de N.k. wi. Ankh à Tehneh,” *ASAE* 54 (1957), 341. For comments on the legal ramifications of Penmeru’s stipulations here, see S. Allam, “Zwei Schlussklauseln zur Übertragung eines Rechts im Alten Ägypten,” *BiOr* 1.2 (1967), 20; Grdseloff, “Deux inscriptions juridiques,” 62.

<sup>p</sup> Note the positioning of the adjectival *nb* in front of the seated figure determinatives for *msw*; cf. Grdseloff, “Deux inscrip- tions juridiques,” 62–63. Once again, if the determinative seated figures are indeed female, then perhaps a translation such as “. . . any son (of mine) there, nor any female children (of mine)” is wanted. See, in general, R. O. Faulkner, *The Plural and Dual in Old Egyptian* (Brussels, 1929), 34–36.

<sup>q</sup> Some signs are difficult to distinguish in line 9, and Grdseloff, “Deux inscriptions juridiques,” 63 argues for a lack of skill on the part of the scribe who added the codicil. The bird after the first *s*-sign may well be the vulture (G 1), but its beak seems to be missing. Grdseloff argued for *šht*, “field,” with an *s* incorrectly carved for *h* (followed by Goedicke, *Die privaten Rechtsin- schriften*, 73), but this calls for major emendation to the text. Grdseloff asserted additional scribal sloppiness in the writing of the *s*<sup>3</sup> bird without a determinative, but the stone breaks here from one block to the next, and additional signs may be missing. It is also unlikely that a garbled spelling of *stšt* “aroura” is wanted here. Further on, after the *prt-hrw* group, where the text breaks from one limestone block to the next, the determinative (bread loaf) requires additional collation. Lines 8–9 fail to display the same horizontal alignment as lines 1–7, and lack the dividing register line.

<sup>r</sup> On the family pseudo-group statue, MFA 12.1484 (see below), Meretites is identified as *hmt=f mtrt*. Goedicke, *Die privaten Rechtsinschriften*, 73, seems to connect lines 8 and 9 to turn the codicil into *prohibiting* the donation of land to Penmeru’s wife Meretites, but this appears to run counter to the logic of the text.





*Fig. 25. G 2197, Penmeru, north wall of chapel niche, with fragmentary inscription indicated, looking northwest. August 6, 2005. Photograph by the author, PDM\_02898.*

*Iib. North wall of chapel niche: additional inscription (figs. 25–27)*

Directly opposite Penmeru's famous testament on the chapel niche's south wall, the north wall shows what appear to be undecorated blocks. But at the very top, aligned with the rounded drum, one extremely weathered block does preserve a fragmentary inscription. This text was overlooked by the 1912 Harvard-MFA Expedition, and does not seem to have been mentioned in the literature since. The present writer first noticed it on August 29, 1987. Although the text is merely a fragmentary string of titles, personal names, and epithets, the most significant fact is that Neferhotep is again mentioned. This raises several questions. First, was there also an original inscription on the corresponding block at the top of the south wall, above Penmeru's testament? Second, if Neferhotep is part of the north wall's original decoration, was a similar testament or legal decree perhaps intended, or carved in plaster (since lost), further below? The inscription seems to break off in mid-sentence ("revered under . . ."), so there must have been additional hieroglyphs that are now lost. And finally, how does Neferhotep's appearance in this "new" north wall text relate to the chronology of events surrounding the tomb's construction? Was Penmeru's testament on the south wall *not* a later addition to the chapel after all, but part of the tomb's planned decoration all along?



*Fig. 26. G 2197, Penmeru, north wall of chapel niche, topmost block with fragmentary inscription, looking north. July 1989. Photograph by Rus Gant, RG\_1989.011.22.*

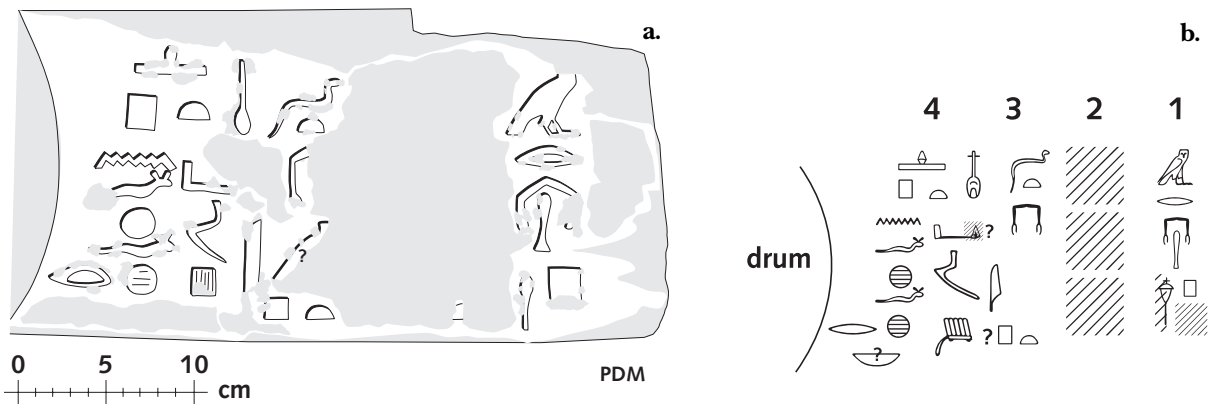


Fig. 27a. Drawing of topmost block with fragmentary inscription on the north wall of the chapel niche of Penmeru; b. Edited hieroglyphic text.

My reconstruction of the text follows below:

- 1) *imy-r hm(w)-k3 P[n-mrw]*
- 2) [. . .]
- 3) [*sn.(i)-dt=(i) [hm]-k3* [. . .] *tp?* (or *tt?*)
- 4) *Nfr-htp d3.n=f im3h=f hr [nb?. . .]*

- 1) The overseer of ka-servants, Pe[nmeru]<sup>39</sup>
- 2) [. . .]
- 3) [(my) brother] of (my) funerary estate, the ka-[servant] [tr.]<sup>40</sup>
- 4) Neferhotep. He (= Penmeru? Neferhotep?)<sup>41</sup> has caused<sup>42</sup> that he (= Neferhotep? Penmeru?) be well-endowed before [his . . . /him?] . . .<sup>43</sup>

### III. The Serdab

Most serdabs, at Giza and elsewhere, are discovered empty. Those that do contain their contents often fail to preserve the original layout and orientation. As noted above, Penmeru's serdab was so tightly packed that there can be no question that the three pseudo-groups were found exactly as deposited. Curiously, they do not face the serdab squint and offering place to the north, connecting

<sup>39</sup> Immediately to the right of the *k3* sign might be traces of the remains of a horned viper *f*, but the spacing may be too tight for an additional column in front of column 1.

<sup>40</sup> The bottom of this column seems to show two signs side by side: either two bread loaf *t* signs or a *t* and a *p*. Could a second occurrence of the name Neferhotep have fit this space?

<sup>41</sup> Since this text seems to focus on Neferhotep, perhaps Penmeru is causing Neferhotep's *im3h*-state. On the other hand, mastaba G 2197 belongs to Penmeru, not Neferhotep; would Penmeru be causing the *im3h*-state of someone else in his own tomb?

<sup>42</sup> The arm sign is clear; the object held within the hand is destroyed. *Rd3* (not *d3*) is used on the opposite wall. For *d3* written this way see E. Edel, *Altägyptische Grammatik* (Rome, 1955/1964), 251, §533.4, citing among other examples the testament of Wepemnefret (G 8882), fig. 219 opposite 190: *dd=f: d3.n=(i) n z3=(i) smsw . . .* "He says: I have given to my eldest son. . ."

<sup>43</sup> Since the sentence cannot end here with a preposition, the inscription must have continued, most likely onto the block below. Traces might possibly suggest the horizontal top of the *nb* basket ("lord") in the break at the bottom of the stone. Alternatively, the third person suffix pronoun =*f* might have fit here.

the serdab with the chapel niche.<sup>44</sup> The two larger statues face east, while the small pair statuette faces south. Differing orientations among the individual statues within a single serdab is rare.<sup>45</sup> Accidents of preservation, plunder, and deterioration of the serdab and surrounding area all render statistical analysis difficult at best. Nevertheless, Reisner made such an attempt in the manuscript for his unpublished *Giza Necropolis II*, Chapter IX, entitled “Service Equipment of the Chapel: Statues, Offering Basins and Vessels.”<sup>46</sup> Although his numbers are out of date today, his summaries are still useful. He counted 130 serdabs at Giza, and divided them by reign and dynasty. Some of his conclusions are excerpted below:

In the later serdabs of Dyns. V and VI, the statues found in intact serdabs almost universally faced the window slot and it may be safely concluded that the statues in all the early serdabs also faced the slot. In the majority of these serdabs the slot opened in a ka-door and only in a few cases in the S or N wall of the offering room. . . .

. . . Of the 130 serdabs listed above, 21 or 16.1%, were intact, 3 among the first 24 serdabs and 18 among the 106 later serdabs. The 3 early serdabs formed 16.98% of the 106 later serdabs. Five of the intact serdabs contained one or more stone statuettes (G 4000 N, G 1104, G 1039, G 2009, G 1036). Four contained both stone and wooden statuettes (G 1020, G1608, G 1040, G 1206). The remaining twelve contained only wooden statuettes sometimes completely decayed. In all these intact serdabs in which the position of the statues or statuettes was visible, the statuettes faced the window slot or the facade of the mastaba. In addition to these 21 intact serdabs there were 23 others which had been broken open but still contained statuettes or had statuettes in the debris close around them. Eighteen of these presented evidence of the original position of the statuettes in the serdab (G 5230 S2; G 5280, 1027, 2415, 1152, 1105, 2421, 3093, 2353, 3098, 2185, 1021, 1214, 1314, 4612, 1157, 1213, 2197). The total number of serdabs in which the position of the statuettes was determined was 38 or 29.23% of which 20 were intact and 18 were open serdabs. In 34 cases the statuettes faced the slot window (or the facade of the mastaba) while in 4 cases the statues or statuettes faced at right angles to the wall in which was the slot window, or the facade of the mastaba. One exception was in the great external serdab of G 5230, “Prince” Khnum-baf. In the second chamber of the southern serdab, we found six headless life-size statues of the prince and

<sup>44</sup> See E. Brovarski, “Serdab,” in *LÄ V*, esp. col. 877. For the pair statue of Mes and Semerka from G 2009, (Egyptian Museum Cairo, JE 38670) visible directly through the *ptr.ti nt hwt-k3*, “eyes of the ka mansion,” see image B1523-NS through B1525-NS on the Giza Archives Web site, [www.gizapyramids.org](http://www.gizapyramids.org). The statue is published in color in R. S. Bianchi, *Splendors of Ancient Egypt from the Egyptian Museum Cairo* (London, 1996), 58–59.

<sup>45</sup> For a list of images of serdabs to compare on the Giza Archives Web site, [www.gizapyramids.org](http://www.gizapyramids.org), see A697-NS (G 2320 = G 5280, Pehenptah); C14562-01-NS (G 2185, Nefersehefen); A6046-NS (G 2009); A7575B-NS (G 2421, Minnefer); A10844-OS (Mes-sa); AEOS\_I\_5469 (Cemetery 5000, Ptahshepses [I]); AEOS\_II\_2603 (Nikaukhnum, south of G 2000); B3904-NS (G 2415, Weri); B10744-OS (G 1040+1041, Teti); C7011-NS (G 4410); and C10605-OS (D 208, Neferihy). M. Eaton-Krauss, “Pseudo-Groups,” in R. Stadelmann and H. Sourouzian, eds., *Kunst des Alten Reiches* (Mainz, 1995), 60, notes four, or possibly five, tomb owners at Giza with more than one pseudo-group: Babaef (G 5230), Mersuankh (Central Field, now numbered G 8990), Penmeru (G 2197), and Ptahshepses I (Western Cemetery). For images of Central Field serdabs, see Hassan, *Giza 1*, pl. 77 (top; Mersuankh, G 8990), *Giza 5*, pls. 23 (Ankh-tef, G 8806), 52b (Fefi, G 8412); idem, *Giza 6 Part 3*, pls. 73b–c (Nikauhathor, G 8504); 94 (mastaba 26, G 8432), idem, *Giza 7*, pl. 42 (mastaba 16, G 8230).

<sup>46</sup> This manuscript, housed in the archives of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, is available online on the Giza Archives Project Web site, [www.gizapyramids.org](http://www.gizapyramids.org): “GizaNecr2-Chap\_09.pdf.” See in particular section g, “General relation of serdab to chapel,” 51–61, and section h, “Types of Statues in Serdabs and Burial Chambers, including servant statuettes and model of scenes from life,” 61–68, and “Summary of facts and conclusions,” 69–71. See also, in general, K. Lehmann, *Der Serdab in den Privatgräbern des Alten Reiches* 1–3, Ph.D. Dissertation (Universität Heidelberg, 2000), available on the Giza Archives Project Web site, <http://www.gizapyramids.org/code/emuseum.asp?newpage=lehmann>.

the bases found in position on the floor all faced to the north while the slot was in the E wall. The second exception was in the serdab of G 2197 Pen-meruw, a long N-S serdab with a slot opening in the north wall of the serdab. The serdab had been opened and disturbed but two of the statues appeared to be in their original places, with their backs to the W wall of the serdab. The faces were actually west of the slot. The third exception is presented by the small serdab in G 1040 which had no window slot. The statuettes faced south towards the chapel of the ancestor in G 1039 (see the preceding paragraph). The fourth exception was the serdab of G 1036 (also without slot) in which a single small statuette faced not the niche but the burial shafts (see above). These facts justify the conclusion that statues and statuettes were customarily placed in the serdabs facing the slot window or the eastern facade of the mastabas.<sup>47</sup>

More recently K. Lehmann has studied serdabs from diverse Old Kingdom sites, compiling a corpus of 264 serdabs. Published accounts allowed her to determine the original orientation of the statues in only sixty-nine of these cases. In fifty-nine of these serdabs, the statues faced the entrance wall of the mastaba that led into the niche, chapel, or court. Eight serdabs oriented their statues to a different wall, and Lehmann found only two, Penmeru (G 2197), and Ptahshepses I, that showed multiple statues oriented in different directions.<sup>48</sup> We might be able to add two more. One example comes from the serdab of Raramu (G 2099),<sup>49</sup> and a second is based on an apparently in situ photograph of two of several statues from the serdab of Heti (G 5480 = 2340).<sup>50</sup>

#### IV. The Pseudo-group Statues

The two larger statue groups were assigned to the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (MFA 12.1504, 12.1484), while the small pair statuette entered the Journal d'Entrée at the Egyptian Museum, Cairo (JE 43753). Discussion of all three statues is provided by Simpson,<sup>51</sup> Smith,<sup>52</sup> and Eaton-Krauss,<sup>53</sup> and there is no need to repeat all the details here. Smith believed that the three statues could be ranked according to quality, with the triad (12.1504) displaying the finest carving, the family group (12.1484) showing average quality, and the small pair statuette being the crudest of the three.<sup>54</sup> His arguments are valid, but the family group is not without sophistication, based on the complexity of its composition, the elaborate interior detail added to many of the hieroglyphs, and the quality of the five carved engaged statues.

<sup>47</sup> Reisner, *Giza Necropolis II* (unpublished), Chapter IX, 52, 58–59 (available online on the Giza Archives Project Web site, [www.gizapyramids.org](http://www.gizapyramids.org): "GizaNecr2-Chap\_09.pdf").

<sup>48</sup> Lehmann, *Der Serdab in den Privatgräbern des Alten Reiches I*, 95 (her "G121" = G 2197; and her "G354/1" = Ptahshepses I, Junker, *Giza 7* [Vienna, 1944], pl. 19). For additional comments on the orientation of serdab statues, referring to the mastaba of Heti (G 5480 = 2340), see Junker, *Giza 8* (Vienna, 1947), 12. See also Manuelian, "A Dig Divided: The Giza Mastaba of Heti, G 5480 (Giza Archives Gleanings IV)," in Z. Hawass, P. Der Manuelian, and R. B. Hussein, eds., *Perspectives on Ancient Egypt. Studies in Honor of Edward Brovarski*, CASAE 40 (Cairo, 2010), 235–72.

<sup>49</sup> A. M. Roth, *Cemetery*, pl. 113a, serdab statues 39-1-16 = Toledo 49.4; 39-1-17 = Toledo 49.5; 39-1-18 = Cairo JE 72138; and 39-1-19 = MFA 39.831 (deaccessioned = Richmond 49.21).

<sup>50</sup> See Junker's expedition photograph AEOS\_I\_5732 on the Giza Archives Project Web site, [www.gizapyramids.org](http://www.gizapyramids.org), and Manuelian, "A Dig Divided," 257, fig. 9 (looking east), showing both the seated and scribal statues of Heti placed perpendicular to each other. For the scribal statue, Hildesheim, 2407, see now M. von Falck and B. Schmitz, *Das Alte Reich. Ägypten von den Anfängen zur Hochkultur* (Mainz, 2009), 90–91, cat. 22, with bibliography on 130. The current location of the headless seated statue is not recorded.

<sup>51</sup> Simpson, *Mastabas of the Western Cemetery*, 24–26, pls. 48–51.

<sup>52</sup> W. S. Smith, *Ancient Egypt as represented in the Museum of Fine Arts Boston*, 6th edition (Boston, 1960), 53–54, fig. 29 (MFA 12.1484); idem, *A History of Egyptian Sculpture and Painting in the Old Kingdom*, 2nd edition (London, 1949) (hereafter *HESPOK*), 53, 85, pl. 21.

<sup>53</sup> Eaton-Krauss, "Pseudo-Groups," 60, 68, cat. 5; 72, cat. 24; 73, cat. 27.

<sup>54</sup> Smith, *HESPOK*, 53.

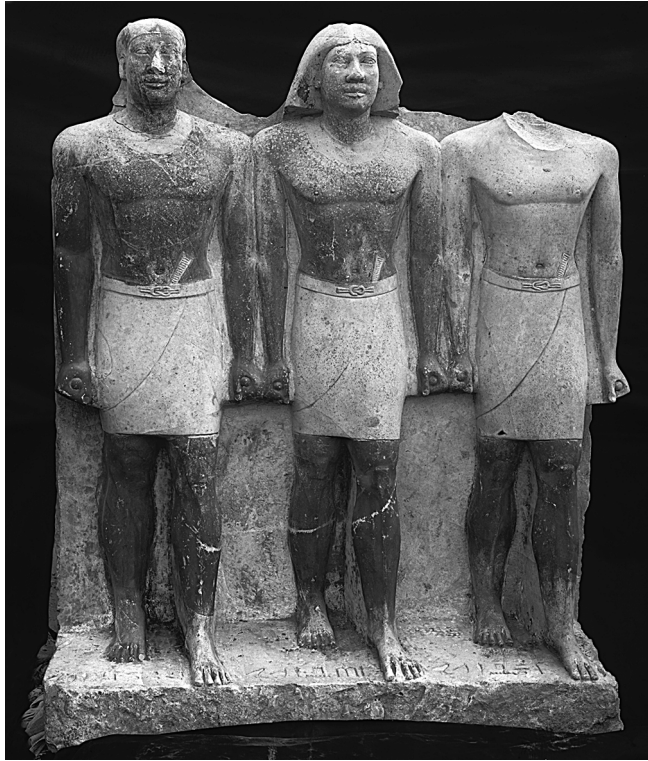


Fig. 28. MFA 12.1504, triad of Penmeru from G 2197, photographed in Harvard Camp studio, Giza; April 15, 1912. HU-MFA Expedition photograph, Badawi Ahmed, A689.

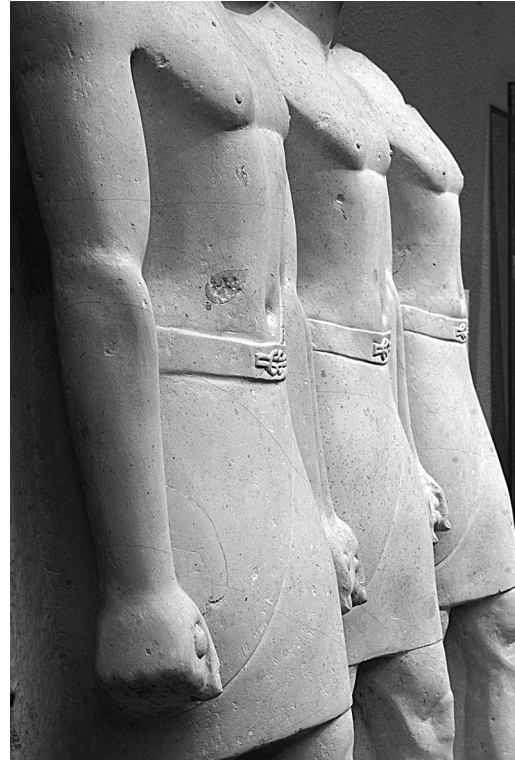


Fig. 29. MFA 12.1504, triad of Penmeru from G 2197, oblique view across three torsos; July 22, 2009. Photograph by the author, PDM\_07023.

On the nature and purpose of the pseudo-groups, Eaton-Krauss and Simpson have summarized the range of scholarly opinions.<sup>55</sup> Interpretations include: two statues of equal height emulating the dual nature of the king as ruler of Upper and Lower Egypt (Boreux); statues of unequal height representing the individual at different ages (Boreux) or representing different administrative offices;<sup>56</sup> two images indicating the individual and his ka (Junker); and finally the increasing desire through the Old Kingdom for a multiplicity of three-dimensional images in the form of pseudo-groups and rock-stuary (Vandier, Shoukry, Eaton-Krauss). In the case of Penmeru, the preservation of no less than seven images of the deceased (one headless) naturally invites comparison between the three statues.<sup>57</sup>

#### *IVa. Triad of Penmeru, MFA 12.1504 (figs. 28–36)*

The MFA triad with three standing figures of Penmeru (one headless) against a back slab displays a remarkable continuity of physique, as is shown by the oblique view in figure 29.<sup>58</sup> On the back slab,

<sup>55</sup> Eaton-Krauss, “Pseudo-Groups,” 57–58; Simpson, *Mastabas of the Western Cemetery*, 26.

<sup>56</sup> D. Dunham, *The Egyptian Department and its Excavations* (Boston, 1958), 45.

<sup>57</sup> M. Eaton-Krauss, “The Striding Statue of Pehenptah (JE 44609),” in M. Eldamaty and M. Trad, eds., *Egyptian Museum Collections around the World. Studies for the Centennial of the Egyptian Museum, Cairo* (Cairo, 2002), 311, notes that “Smith postulated a relationship between Pehenptah’s statues and the sculptures of Penmeru from the serdab of G 2197; the quality of the latter is, however, better. By contrast, the similarity which Smith thought he could detect between Pehenptah’s statuary and the Nekhebuw group (from G 2381) is illusory.”

<sup>58</sup> Eaton-Krauss, “Pseudo-Groups,” 72, argues that the headless figure on the proper right has a “somewhat more rounded abdomen than his companions.” One might compare some of the headless standing statues of Babaeef from G 5230 (MFA



Fig. 30. MFA 12.1504, triad of Penmeru from G 2197, view of the back of the statue (supported with two modern straps) with depressions and lines indicated; October 7, 2009. Photograph by the author, PDM\_IMG03708.



Fig. 31. MFA 12.1504, triad of Penmeru from G 2197, two heads of Penmeru (above) with bisected and superimposed comparisons (below); July 22, 2009. Photograph by the author, PDM\_06950.

photographs taken at the studio at Harvard Camp, Giza, in 1912 show not only Penmeru's original skin tones but several beaded collars as well (compare figs. 28–29).

Penmeru's two surviving faces do show distinctions, with the center figure much fuller and fleshier than that of its companion at proper right. Experimental overlay photography of the two faces emphasizes the misalignments (fig. 31). Noteworthy features of the three short captions by the feet of each figure include the form of the spindle hieroglyph (U 34), the two cross lines, instead of one, on the *mr* plow (U 6) and the incorrect reversal of the preposition *hr* to *rh*. (figs. 32–35). The captions read as follows below, from proper left to right (fig. 36):

two round depressions and one horizontal line bisected by two verticals were recently “discovered” when the statue was removed from its gallery location against a wall for improved display (fig. 30). The only major differences between the statues consist of distinct hieroglyphic captions on the base and distinct hairstyles (natural hair on proper right; shoulder-length wig in center). Unfortunately, the triad has long since lost all of its original color, but

21.953a-b, 21.955a-b), illustrated in color in Y. Markowitz, J. L. Haynes, R. E. Freed, *Egypt in the Age of the Pyramids* (Boston, 2002), 80–81, cat. 25; and the statues of Ranefer from Saqqara mastaba 40: M. Saleh and H. Sourouzian, *The Egyptian Museum Cairo. Official Catalogue* (Mainz, 1987), cat. 45–46. For perhaps the only standing male triad parallel to Penmeru's statue see JE 66615, from the Central Field mastaba of Rauer at Giza (G 8892): Hassan, *Giza* 1, pl. 9. This triad shows two shoulder-length wigs on the flanking statues and the echelon-curved wig in the center figure (apparently reversed in Eaton-Krauss, “Pseudo-Groups,” 72, cat. 22). Here the identifying inscriptions are located, not on the base, but vertically on the front of the back slab.



Fig. 32. MFA 12.1504, triad of Penmeru from G 2197, detail of base inscription 1 (proper left); July 22, 2009. Photograph by the author, PDM\_IMG03129.

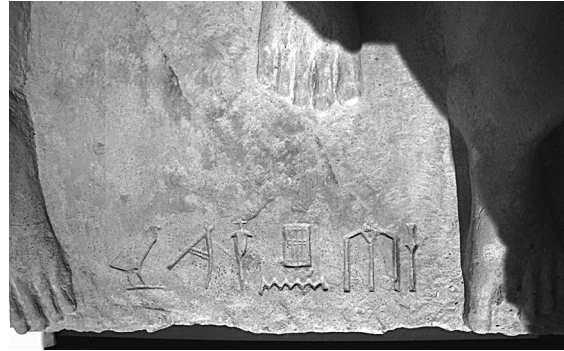


Fig. 33. MFA 12.1504, triad of Penmeru from G 2197, detail of base inscription 2 (center); July 22, 2009. Photograph by the author, PDM\_IMG03128.



Fig. 34. MFA 12.1504, triad of Penmeru from G 2197, detail of base inscription 2 (proper right); July 22, 2009. Photograph by the author, PDM\_IMG03127.



Fig. 35. MFA 12.1504, triad of Penmeru from G 2197, edited hieroglyphic text of inscriptions on base.



Fig. 36. MFA 12.1504, triad of Penmeru from G 2197, drawing of inscriptions on base, EG004613.

- 1) *rh nswt Pnmrw*
- 1) The royal acquaintance, Penmeru.
- 2) *hrp zh Pnmrw*
- 2) The director of the kitchen, Penmeru.
- 3) *im3h hr ntr Pnmrw*
- 3) The revered one before<sup>59</sup> the god,<sup>60</sup> Penmeru.

<sup>59</sup> The preposition *hr* is written *rh*.

<sup>60</sup> For parallels to the omission of 𓆎 “great” after *hr ntr* “before the god,” see Simpson, *Mastabas of the Western Cemetery*, 25, n. 6. This omission also occurs in the family triad (MFA 12.1484), column 3.

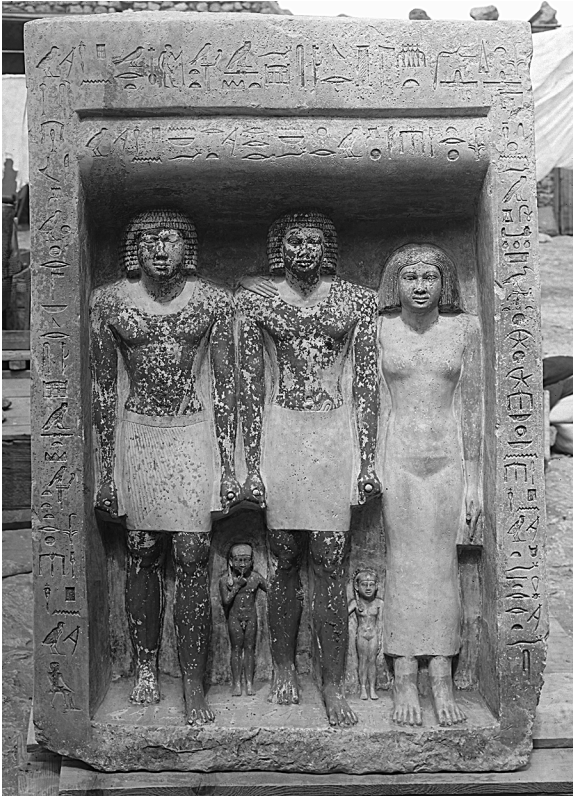


Fig. 37. MFA 12.1484, family group statue of Penmeru from G 2197, photographed in Harvard Camp courtyard; April 24, 1912. HU-MFA Expedition photograph, Badawi Ahmed, A691.



Fig. 38. MFA 12.1484, family group statue of Penmeru from G 2197, oblique view; July 22, 2009. Photograph by the author, PDM\_IMG03160.

IVb. Family pseudo-group, MFA 12.1484  
(figs. 37–48)

This statue is by far the most complex object from the entire G 2197 assemblage. We have already alluded to a possibly different original destination, as an embedded wall or niche statue, rather than a serdab deposit, due to the frame surrounding the piece and rolled mat drum or architrave above the figures (figs. 37–38).<sup>61</sup> Both frame and rolled mat are inscribed in sunk relief, surrounding the two large-scale images of Penmeru and one of his wife, Meretites, at proper left, along with the much smaller figures of his naked children, Seshemnefer (male), and Neferseshemes (female)<sup>62</sup> huddled between their parents' legs (fig. 39). While all three figures on Penmeru's triad wear

<sup>61</sup> One might perhaps compare the colossal niche statue of Mereruka at Saqqara (A. Dodson and S. Ikram, *The Tomb in Ancient Egypt* [London, 2008] 107, pl. X), or the naophorous statues of Rawer from G 8988 (Hassan, *Giza 1*, pls. 13, 19, and on the Giza Archives Project Web site: images PDM\_01297, PDM\_03135, PDM\_03136, PDM\_03147, PDM\_03148).

<sup>62</sup> See Smith, *HESPOK*, 53, and Ranke, *Personennamen I*, 200.10.





Fig. 39. MFA 12.1484, family group statue of Penmeru from G 2197, detail of Penmeru's children; July 22, 2009. Photograph by the author, PDM\_07001.



Fig. 40. MFA 12.1484, family group statue of Penmeru from G 2197, detail of the face of Meretites; July 23, 2009. Photograph by the author, PDM\_IMG03235.

a similarly styled kilt, the two figures<sup>63</sup> on this family group differ in their attire. The proper right side figure shows a wrap-around kilt with pleated flap, while the central figure's kilt lacks a belt, flap or any decoration, save for the round tie at the waist. Traces of now faded beaded collars are visible on both of the male figures. Due to the white (unpainted) full-length dress on Meretites, it is difficult to determine if she too wore a collar (fig. 40).<sup>64</sup>

Unlike the triad, this family group has preserved much of its polychromy, clearly showing the reddish tones for the male figures, and the yellow for the females.<sup>65</sup> The red selected for the adult figures differs from the more reddish-orange tone reserved for Penmeru's son. The frame around the statues exhibits a reddish background not particularly distinguishable from the color used for Penmeru's body. However, while the red background surrounds the three large figures' upper torsos and

<sup>63</sup> There are asymmetrical features to the composition of the two Penmeru figures, but it would be an overinterpretation to read significance into the directional orientation of the faces, unlike the famous Menkaure triads; cf. F. Friedman, "The Menkaure Dyad(s)," in S. E. Thompson and P. Der Manuelian, eds., *Egypt and Beyond. Essays Presented to Leonard H. Lesko* (Providence, 2008), 134, and fig. 14a-d.

<sup>64</sup> On this topic see E. Brovarski, "Old Kingdom Beaded Collars," in J. Philipps, ed., *Ancient Egypt, the Aegean and the Near East. Studies in Honour of Martha Rhoads Bell 1* (San Antonio, 1997), 137-62.

<sup>65</sup> The statue is illustrated in color in Markowitz, Haynes, and Freed, *Egypt in the Age of the Pyramids*, 45, fig. 33.



Fig. 41. MFA 12.1484, family group statue of Penmeru from G 2197, detail of Meretites's proper left hand; July 22, 2009. Photograph by the author, PDM\_IMG03212.

heads, a black background has been applied from the legs downward, also surrounding the figures of the children. Black has also been added around Meretites left hand, which is expertly carved in relief, but has not been liberated from the large block of negative space surrounding it (fig. 41).<sup>66</sup> Black, of course, also covers all wigs, including the wisps of natural hair visible at the crown of Meretites's forehead. Her right hand is visible clasped over the right shoulder of Penmeru's central figure.

The children stand naked, displaying some baby fat and the so-called side-lock of youth, painted black (figs. 32, 39, 42). The heads, particularly that of the daughter Neferseshemes, seem enlarged



Fig. 42. MFA 12.1484, family group statue of Penmeru from G 2197, view of negative space above the head of Penmeru's son; July 22, 2009. Photograph by the author, PDM\_IMG03210.

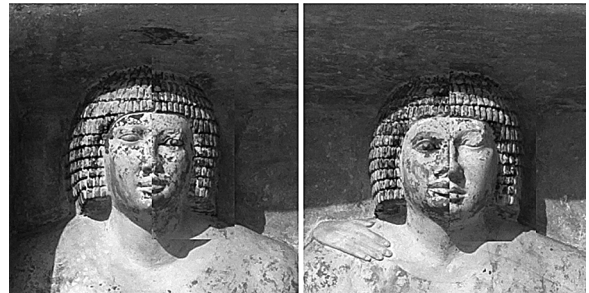


Fig. 43. MFA 12.1484, family group statue of Penmeru from G 2197; two heads of Penmeru (above) with bisected and superimposed comparisons (below); July 22, 2009. Photograph by the author, PDM\_06997.

<sup>66</sup> Compare Smith's comments, *HESPOK*, 53.



Fig. 44. MFA 12.1484, family group statue of Penmeru from G 2197, drawing of the inscriptions, EG004613.



Fig. 45. MFA 12.1484, family group statue of Penmeru from G 2197, detail of base inscription 5; July 22, 2009. Photograph by the author, PDM\_IMG03227.



Fig. 46. MFA 12.1484, family group statue of Penmeru from G 2197, detail of base inscriptions 6-7; July 22, 2009. Photograph by the author, PDM\_IMG03175.

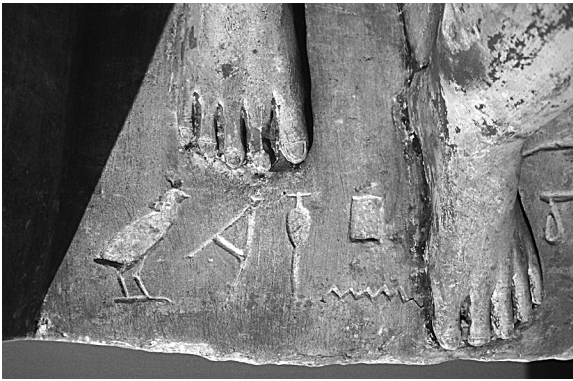


Fig. 47. MFA 12.1484, family group statue of Penmeru from G 2197, detail of base inscription 8; July 22, 2009. Photograph by the author, PDM\_IMG03174.

somewhat swollen appearance absent from the central figure of Penmeru. Once again, experimental overlay photography shows the rather dramatic discrepancy between the two faces (figs. 43). The mouths on both male figures slant asymmetrically from proper right to left. All five statues display red-painted eyes; and some seem to preserve traces of black pupils. Both figures wear the echelon-curved wig, perhaps the same type that once adorned the missing third head of Penmeru's triad (12.1504).

The sunk relief hieroglyphs (fig. 44) show the most interior detail of any of Penmeru's inscriptions, and are filled with black, now faded to gray (below) or gone altogether (above). We have already noted the discrepancy in the carving of the spindle hieroglyph (U 34) between the triad (MFA 12.1504) and this family group (see fig. 18). The *mr* plow (U 6) shows two cross lines on the triad but only its typical single line here. The *p* stool (Q 3) used in Penmeru's name displays much interior detail on this family group that is absent from the short triad caption texts. The *m* owl (G 17) presents feather lines in two different directions on the wings, and the reed leaves (M 17) contain a criss-crossing pattern on their stems. The most elaborate writing of Penmeru's name from any of his

out of proportion with the rest of the body. The son Seshemnefer holds his finger to his lips. Each child extends a hand around one of the central Penmeru figure's legs, but the sculptor indicated the hand on the other side of the leg only in the case of the son. With all the familial attention, in the form of physical contact with wife, son, and daughter, and the positioning in the center of the entire composition, it is clear that Penmeru's central figure takes precedence over his second image to the proper right. Perhaps this lends strength to the argument in favor of pseudo-groups representing, at least in this case, the deceased and his ka.

The face belonging to the proper right side of the statue is larger, with fuller cheeks giving a

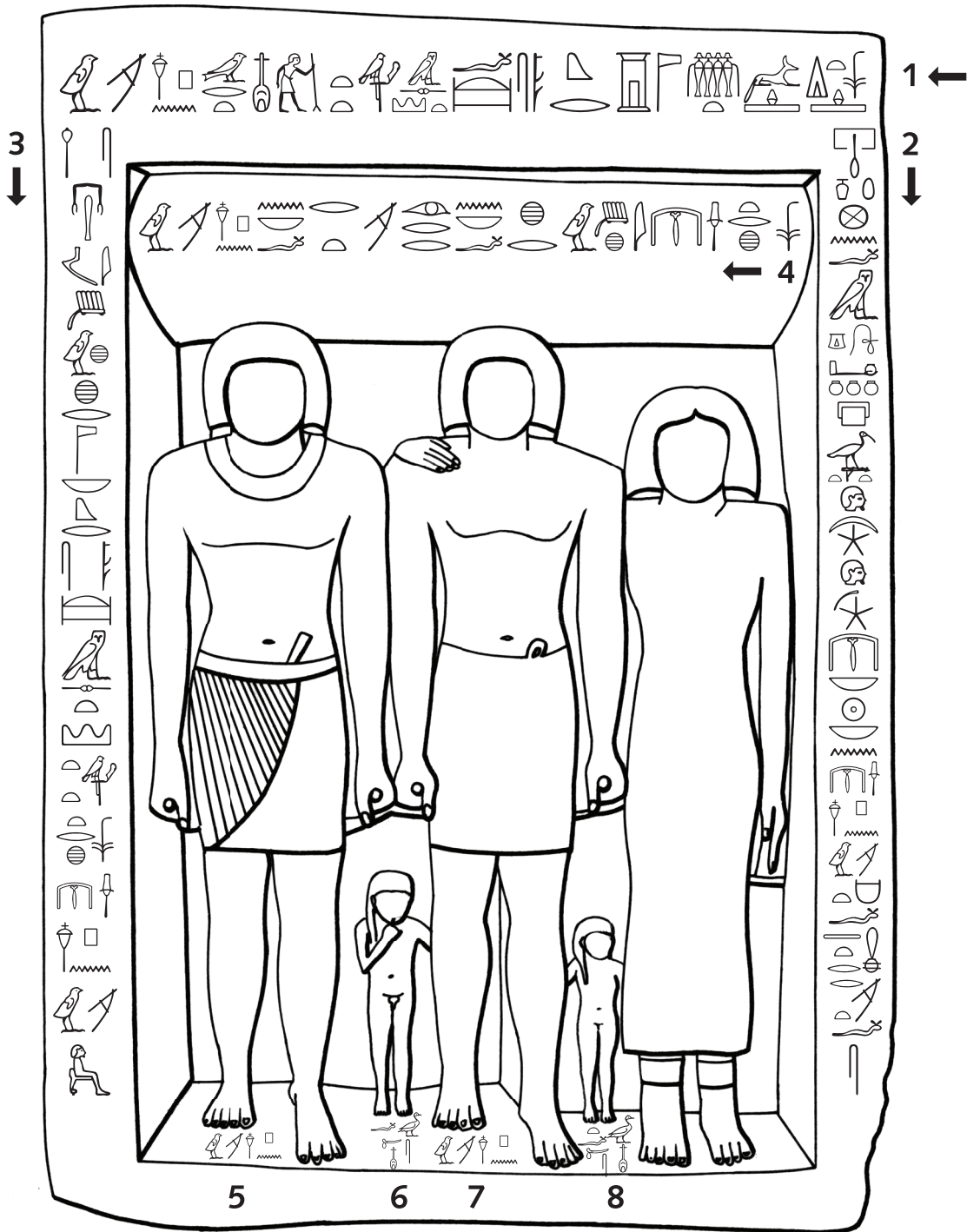


Fig. 48. MFA 12.1484, family group statue of Penmeru from G 2197, sketch statue with edited hieroglyphic text.

monuments occurs at the end of column 3 on the proper right side. The seated man determinative here wears an echelon-curl wig and sits on a bull-legged stool with cone supports and papyrus umbel. The simplest hieroglyphs, lacking any interior detail, occur on the base, where the individual figures are named (figs. 45–47). It can be concluded with certainty that the sculptor who carved these signs followed a wholly different tradition from that employed in Penmeru's testament on the south wall of his chapel niche. Figure 48 is a sketch drawing of the family group to provide context for the typeset inscriptions.

Top horizontal:

1) *hṯp dī nswt hṯp (dī) ḥnpw ḥnty zḥ nṯr krs(w)=f m zmyt ḥmntt ḳw nfr wrt Pnmrw*

1) A gift which the king and Anubis, foremost of the divine booth, give, that he might be buried in the western desert, having reached a very ripe old age, Penmeru.

Proper left vertical:

2) *pr ḥrw n=f m wʒg dhwt tpy ʒbd tpy smdt ḥb nb r' nb n ḥrp zḥ Pnmrw ḥmt=f mṯrt Mrtṯs*

2) May an invocation offering come forth for him on the *wag* festival, the Thoth festival, the festival of the first of the month and first of the half-month,<sup>67</sup> and the festival of every day for the director of the kitchen, Penmeru, and his wife, the *miteret*,<sup>68</sup> Meretites.

Proper right vertical:

3) *shd ḥm(w)-kʒ ḥmʒḥw ḥr nṯr nb krs m zmyt ḥmntt rḥ nswt ḥrp zḥ Pnmrw*

3) The inspector of ka servants, well provided before the god,<sup>69</sup> possessor of a burial in the western desert, royal acquaintance, director of the kitchen, Penmeru.

Drum horizontal:

4) *rḥ nswt ḥrp zḥ ḥmʒḥw ḥr nb=f ḥrr mrt.n nb=f Pnmrw*

4) The royal acquaintance, controller of the kitchen, one well provided before his lord,<sup>70</sup> who performs what his lord desires, Penmeru.

Texts at feet of figures, from proper left to right:

5) *zʒt=f Nfrsšms*

5) His daughter Neferseshemes.<sup>71</sup>

6) *Pnmrw*

6) Penmeru.

7) *zʒ=f sšmnfr*

7) His son, Seshemnefer.


8) *Pnmrw*

8) Penmeru.

<sup>67</sup> A better reading for this festival than *smdt* may be *mdḏnt*, consisting of the number 15 (*md* + *dī* + element *nt*, cf. Edel, *Altägyptische Grammatik*, §408); U. Luft, *Die chronologische Fixierung des ägyptischen Mittleren Reiches nach dem Tempelarchiv von Illahun* (Vienna, 1992), 163 (3.1.17).

<sup>68</sup> D. Jones, *An Index of Ancient Egyptian Titles*, 424, no. 1571.

<sup>69</sup> The omission of ʒ "great" after *ḥr nṯr* "before the god" also occurs in the triad (MFA 12.1504), in the proper rightmost text (1), above.

<sup>70</sup> The word *nb* includes the initial *n* in both occurrences in this line . Unfortunately for purposes of comparison, the word does not appear in the legal text on the chapel's south wall.

<sup>71</sup> An alternative reading of the name is Neferseshem, but Ranke, *PN I*, 200.4, and 320.17, lists only males with the names Neferseshem and Seshemnefer, in contrast to Neferseshemes, *PN*, I 200.10.



Fig. 49. Egyptian Museum, Cairo JE43753, pseudo-group pair statuette of Penmeru, photographed at Harvard Camp, Giza; April 26, 1912. HU-MFA Expedition photograph, Badawi Ahmed, B1135\_NS.



Fig. 50. Egyptian Museum, Cairo JE43753, pseudo-group pair statuette of Penmeru, frontal view, photographed in Cairo; October 1, 2009. Photograph by Ahmed Amin. Courtesy Egyptian Museum, Cairo, JE43753\_DSC8909.

*IVc. Pair statuette pseudo-group, Egyptian Museum, Cairo JE43753 (figs. 49–54)*

Smith has commented that the carving on this pseudo-group is the crudest of the three Penmeru serdab statues.<sup>72</sup> It was the only statue found facing southwards, with its back to the serdab squint in the north wall. The two figures are identical in composition, with striated shoulder-length wigs similar to the wig worn by the central figure of Penmeru's triad (MFA 12.1504). Studio photography from

<sup>72</sup> Smith, *HESPOK*, 53, pl. 21 [b] (current location erroneously listed as Boston). Simpson, *Mastabas of the Western Cemetery*, 26, lists the height of the statue at 58 cm, versus the "60–70 cm" listed in Reisner's unpublished manuscript "Description of Addition to Cem en Echelon," 113a. See also C. Boreux, "Quelques remarques sur le 'pseudo-groupes' égyptiens," in *Mélanges Maspero I: Orient Ancien*, MIFAO 66, part 2 (1935–1938), pl. ii [2], 810, 812, with n. 1, and for a sketch drawing see fig. 52 here = B. Hornemann, *Types of Ancient Egyptian Statuary IV* (Munksgaard, 1951), pl. 1095 (provenance erroneously labeled as Nag el-Mashayikh).



Fig. 51. Egyptian Museum, Cairo JE43753, pseudo-group pair statuette of Penmeru, rear view, photographed in Cairo; October 1, 2009. Photograph by Ahmed Amin. Courtesy Egyptian Museum, Cairo, JE43753\_DSC8915.

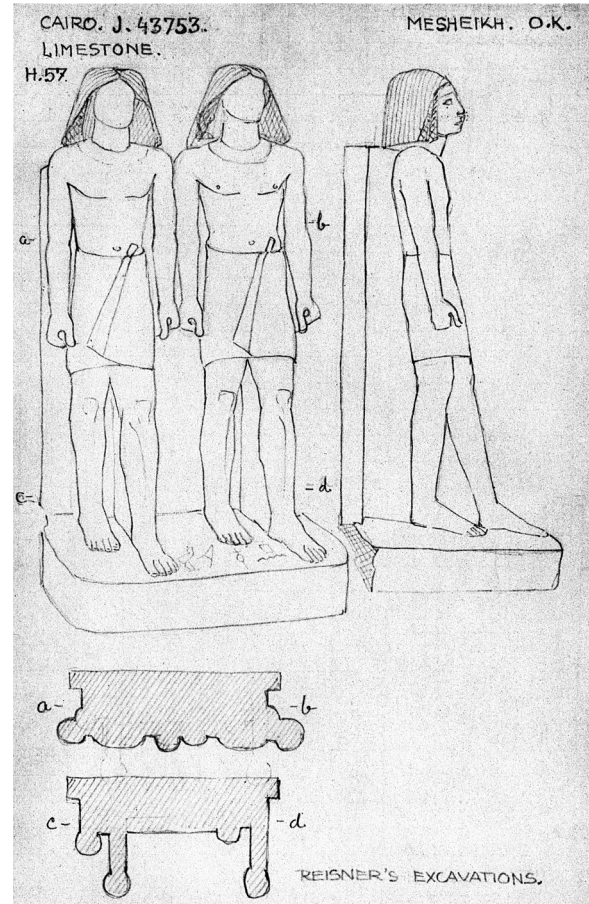



Fig. 52. Egyptian Museum, Cairo JE43753, drawing of pseudo-group pair statuette of Penmeru, after B. Hornemann, *Types of Ancient Egyptian Statuary IV*, pl. 1095 (incorrectly labeled as Mesheikh).

around the necks. Much of this color is lost today (figs. 50–51, 53), particularly around the faces, beaded collars, and torsos.<sup>73</sup> Traces of red for the eyes are still visible, however, on the proper left statue. A similar slant on both sets of lips, from proper right to left, mimics the similar feature on the family group (12.1484; fig. 43). But in contrast to the other two statues, the kilts in this case show the long sash carved in low relief down the front. Likewise unique here to Penmeru's statuary is the single inscription  *Pnmrw*, intended to serve for both figures, placed in the center of the base, in front of the proper left figure's right foot (figs. 51, 53). And the spindle hieroglyph (U 34) lacks the

1912 shows much of the original color intact (fig. 49), with the typical red skin tones, black wig, back slab and base, and traces of beaded collars

<sup>73</sup> I am grateful to the authorities at the Egyptian Museum, Cairo, for producing the images reproduced in figs. 50–51, and 53–54, and for granting me permission to publish them: Dr. Wafaa el-Saddiq, Director, Dr. Yasmin El Shazly, Head of Documentation, Dr. Hanane Gaber, Head Registrar, and Mr. Ahmed Amin, Museum Photographer.





Fig. 53. Egyptian Museum, Cairo JE43753, pseudo-group pair statuette of Penmeru, detail of faces, photographed in Cairo; October 1, 2009. Photograph by Ahmed Amin. Courtesy Egyptian Museum, Cairo, JE43753\_DSC8901.



Fig. 54. Egyptian Museum, Cairo JE43753, pseudo-group pair statuette of Penmeru, detail of inscription on base, photographed in Cairo; October 1, 2009. Photograph by Ahmed Amin. Courtesy Egyptian Museum, Cairo, JE43753\_DSC8906. For drawing, see fig. 18.

two pointed protrusions towards the top of the sign that are present on almost every occurrence of the hieroglyph on Penmeru's other statuary (see fig. 18).

An instructive parallel to this pair statuette is the Dynasty 5 pseudo-group of Nimaatsed from Saqqara D 56.<sup>74</sup> This pseudo-group shows similar shoulder-length wigs, beaded collars, standing poses, black-painted back slab and base, and single inscription placed between the feet of the two figures. The primary differences lie in Nimaatsed's detailed kilts, belts and collars, and the fact that his two statues make no contact, while Penmeru's figures stand shoulder to shoulder.

#### V. Chronology and Date

In his unpublished manuscript "Description of Addition to Cemetery en Echelon," Reisner discussed the relative chronology of the tombs surrounding G 2197:

In order of expensiveness the tombs are 2184, 2196, 2197, 2172, and 2187. I would set them in the following chronological order, 2184, 2197, 2196, 2187, and 2172. . . . G 2197 was again the nucleus of the group 2196-8 and was clearly the founder of the most important group in this area.<sup>75</sup>

Penmeru's tomb is contiguous with the later mastaba of Iasen, further to the west (G 2196). Reisner wrote that Iasen's mastaba "was built against the back of the Pen-meruw mastaba (no. G 2197) and was therefore later, but of nearly the same period." By "same period" he meant Dynasty 5, but today Iasen's mastaba is more often dated to Dynasty 6.<sup>76</sup>

<sup>74</sup> See Saleh and Sourouzian, *The Egyptian Museum Cairo. Official Catalogue*, cat. 48; Eaton-Krauss, "Pseudo-Groups," 68, cat. 4, dated to Niuserre or later; ht. 57 cm.

<sup>75</sup> Reisner, "Description of Addition to Cemetery en Echelon," 114. Penmeru's tomb is covered on 12-13, and the file is online on the Giza Archives Project Web site at [http://www.gizapyramids.org/pdf%20library/GizaNecr2-Additions\\_CemEchA.pdf](http://www.gizapyramids.org/pdf%20library/GizaNecr2-Additions_CemEchA.pdf).

<sup>76</sup> PM III, 82 (Dynasty 5 or 6); K. Baer, *Rank and Title in the Old Kingdom* (Chicago, 1960), 53-54; Y. Harpur, *Decoration in Egyptian Tombs of the Old Kingdom* (London, 1987), 265; P. Piacentini, *Les scribes dans la société égyptienne de l'Ancien Empire I* (Paris, 2002), 270-71 (Dynasty 5-6).

The key factor in dating G 2197 lies in Penmeru's relationship with the vizier Seshemnefer III, son of Seshemnefer II (G 5080 = 2200) and Henutsen, and owner of mastaba G 5170.<sup>77</sup> Since Penmeru served Seshemnefer III, as we know from his testament (see above), his tomb must be contemporary with G 5170 or slightly later. The chronology of the Seshemnefer family has been summarized by Junker, Grdseloff, Reisner in an unpublished manuscript, Strudwick, Gamer-Wallert, Baud, and others.<sup>78</sup> Grdseloff discussed the succession of viziers in Dynasty 5 from Minnefer to Seshemnefer III to Senedjemib Inti.<sup>79</sup> Minnefer served kings Niuserre, Menkauhor, and Djedkare. Grdseloff believed that Inscription A on the façade of the mastaba of Senedjemib Inti (G 2370) contained the date "regnal year 5, month 4, day 3" of Djedkare Izezi, as the date that Senedjemib became vizier.<sup>80</sup> This would indicate that Seshemnefer III, following Minnefer and preceding Senedjemib Inti, would have served as vizier no longer than the fifth year of Djedkare. However, Smith,<sup>81</sup> Strudwick,<sup>82</sup> Brovarski,<sup>83</sup> and others have concluded that the Senedjemib date is not a regnal year designation, but merely mentions a year 5. Therefore, it cannot be used to terminate Seshemnefer III's tenure in year 5 of Djedkare.

Mastabas contiguous to G 5170 play a significant role in the reconstruction of Seshemnefer III's chronology. The tomb of Djaty (G 5370 = Lepsius 31), dated to Neferirkare or later,<sup>84</sup> is located two rows east of Seshemnefer III's mastaba. Rawer I (G 5270) built his later mastaba further west, utilizing Djaty's west wall. Seshemnefer III in turn made use of Rawer I's west wall to enclose his north-south exterior entrance corridor. Perhaps most enlightening is the fact that the mastaba of Seshemnefer III's brother, Rawer II (G 5470), contained a seal with the name of Djedkare in the burial chamber.<sup>85</sup> As Strudwick has noted, this would place Seshemnefer III's G 5170 in the reign of Djedkare, or perhaps as early as Menkauhor.<sup>86</sup> Djedkare's reign fits the majority of the evidence for Seshemnefer III's burial, and this in turn places Penmeru's mastaba G 2197 towards the end of Djedkare's reign, or perhaps as late as the reign of Unis.<sup>87</sup>

Harvard University  
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

<sup>77</sup> A. Mariette, *Les mastabas de l'ancien empire* (Paris, 1889), 566-67; PM III, 153-54; Junker, *Giza III*, 192-215; E. Brunner-Traut, *Die altägyptische Grabkammer Seshemnefers III. aus Giza*, new edition (Mainz, 1995); I. Gamer-Wallert, *Von Giza bis Tübingen. Die bewegte Geschichte der Mastaba G 5170* (Tübingen, 1998).

<sup>78</sup> Junker, *Giza* 3, 8-14, with genealogy on 14; Grdseloff, "Deux inscriptions juridiques," 58-61; Reisner, "The Families of the Men called Seshemnefer I-III," unpublished manuscript in the archives of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (with some confusion in the designations of Seshemnefer I and II); N. Strudwick, *The Administration of Egypt in the Old Kingdom* (London, 1985), 139-40; Harpur, *Decoration*, 270; Gamer-Wallert, *Von Giza bis Tübingen*, 57-61; M. Baud, *Famille royale et pouvoir sous l'Ancien Empire égyptien* (Cairo, 1999), I, 59, II, 577-78. For a chronological summary of Seshemnefer II's date (G 5080 = 2200), see N. Kanawati, *Tombs at Giza II* (Warminster, 2002), 53.

<sup>79</sup> Grdseloff, "Deux inscriptions juridiques," 58-61. For Minnefer, see W. Helck, *Untersuchungen zu den Beamtentiteln des ägyptischen Alten Reiches* AF 18 (Glückstadt, 1954), 136.

<sup>80</sup> For the Senedjemib text, see Brovarski, *The Senedjemib Complex*, Inscription A (line 6), opposite 90, and pls. 58-59. The passage reads (following Brovarski): *ṛmpt 5 3bd 4 sw 3 ṛn hr ʿIzzj (7) sk w(ḥ) šps.k(ḥ) hr ʿIzzi {r} [mr(w)t.(ḥ) nb m] {ḥry-sšḥ} n ḥm.f. . .*, "(6) Five years, four months, and [three] days today under Izezi, (7) during which time I was esteemed by Izezi {more than} [any peer of mine as] {master of secrets} of His Majesty. . ."

<sup>81</sup> Smith, "Inscriptional Evidence for the History of the Fourth Dynasty," 123.

<sup>82</sup> Strudwick, *Administration*, 140.

<sup>83</sup> Brovarski, *The Senedjemib Complex*, 90, 91, n. e.

<sup>84</sup> Strudwick, *Administration*, 164 [164].

<sup>85</sup> Junker, *Giza* 3, 227, fig. 45, no. 7.

<sup>86</sup> Strudwick, *Administration*, 140. For summaries of dating conclusions by other scholars, see the tomb page for G 5170 on the Giza Archives Project Web site [www.gizapyramids.org](http://www.gizapyramids.org). An earlier date, in the reign of Neferirkare, is favored by N. Cherpion, *Mastabas et hypogées d'ancien empire. Le problème de la datation* (Brussels, 1989), 227; Baud, *Famille royale et pouvoir* I, 59.

<sup>87</sup> For summaries of dating conclusions by other scholars, see the tomb page for G 2197 on the Giza Archives Project Web site, [www.gizapyramids.org](http://www.gizapyramids.org).