



Fig. 1 Kaisebi's chapel with an offering stand *in situ* shortly after its discovery in the spring season of 2015 (photo M. Frouz)

The tombs of Kaisebi (AS 76) and Ptahwer (AS 76b) at Abusir South

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The excavations at Abusir South have already uncovered many tombs that have added valuable information to the general knowledge of the development of the Old Kingdom society, its burial and funeral habits, and last but not least social relations and their impact on the lives of ancient Egyptian officials. One of the latest discoveries is the tomb of Kaisebi (AS 76) and the adjoining structure of Ptahwer (AS 76b), which are located to the south of the anonymous mastaba (AS 54) lying on the most prominent spot of the whole Abusir South area (for more information on this tomb, see Bárta 2010 and Jirásková 2011). Kaisebi and Ptahwer built their tombs between this huge mastaba (AS 54) and a recently discovered 18.5 m long boat, both dated to the end of the Third Dynasty.¹

Research in this area was initiated in 2014, when the southern wall of AS 54 was being cleaned. By that time, the northern façades of three new mastabas had come to light, divided from AS 54 by a narrow corridor running in the east-west direction. They were labelled AS 76 (the westernmost), AS 77 (the central), and AS 78 (the easternmost). The excavation of the structures was planned for the spring season of 2015 but lasted until the

end of that year. AS 77 and AS 78 were family mud brick mastabas, whereas AS 76 was built of limestone.

Tomb AS 76 was constructed in two phases. The first one consisted of a rather small rectangular mastaba with a chapel (fig. 1), an external niche, a serdab, and two shafts. Later on, the original structure was enlarged by an annexe (AS 76b) attached to the eastern wall of AS 76, which included another offering place and two burial shafts (fig. 2).

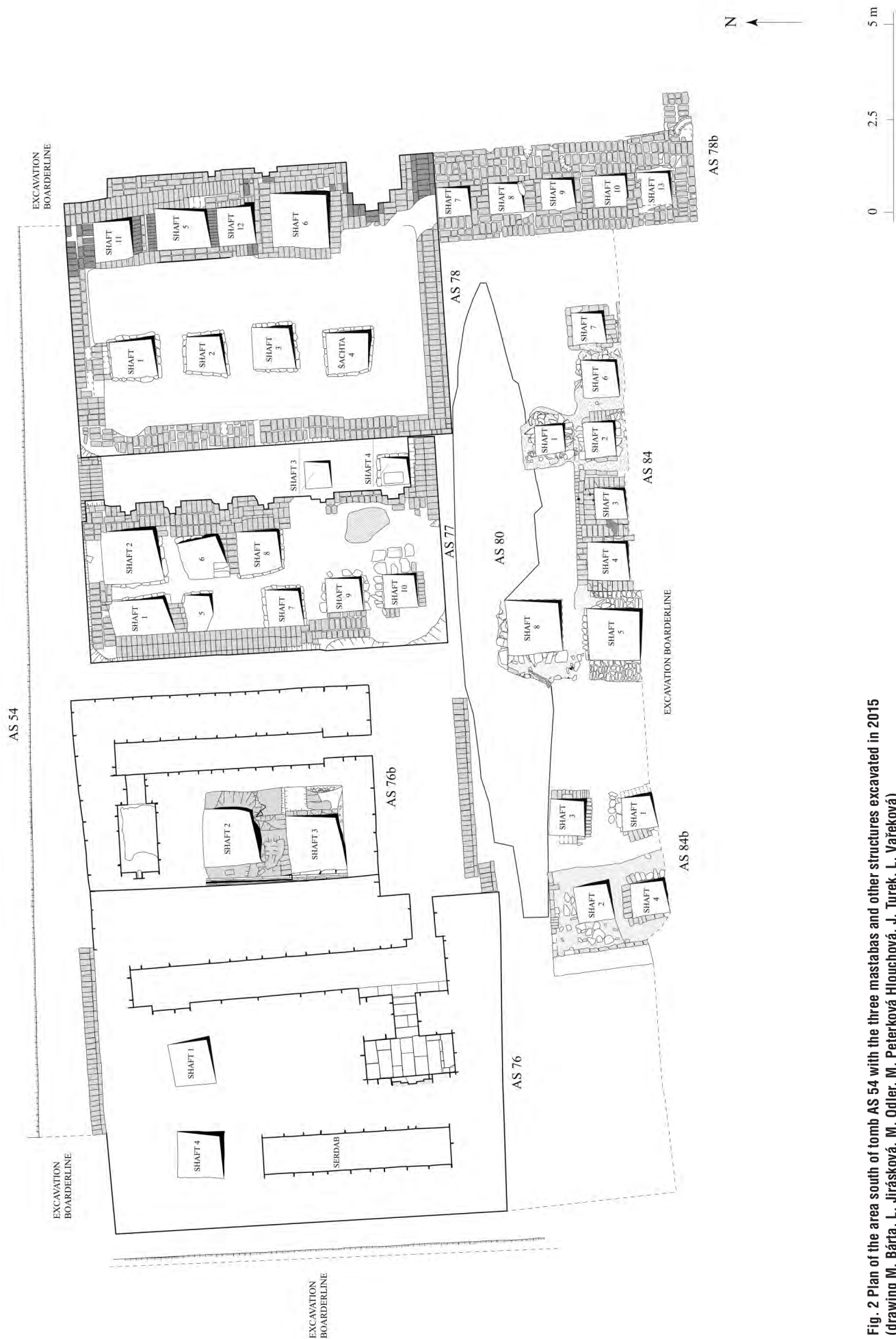


Fig. 2 Plan of the area south of tomb AS 54 with the three mastabas and other structures excavated in 2015 (drawing M. Bárta, L. Jirásková, M. Odler, M. Peterková Hloučková, J. Turek, L. Vařeková)



Fig. 3 Remains of the depiction of Kaisebi, his wife and son on the south wall of his funerary chapel (photo M. Frouz)

Original mastaba AS 76 – the tomb of Kaisebi

The original mastaba was oriented in a north-south direction, being 10.50 m long and 8.50 m wide. The height of its walls was preserved to 2.10 m. Its walls were built of limestone blocks, and the core was a compact fill of limestone chips mixed with sand. The eastern wall of the mastaba was one with Z-masonry added as its casing. Behind this wall was a north-south running corridor. The entrance to the corridor was situated approximately in front of the chapel in the southern part of the tomb. The cruciform chapel (2.38 × 1.15 m), filled with yellow sand and limestone chips, was paved with medium-size limestone slabs, and its limestone walls preserved in some parts up to 1.52 m were once decorated in colourful wall paintings. Unfortunately, only their lower parts were

preserved in their original positions, all covered with a hard mixture of salt and sand. The conservation treatment of the wall decoration is still in process. A few tiny, loose fragments of wall decoration were found in the fill of the funerary chapel. The short entrance corridor to the chapel was decorated with painted low relief. On the northern wall was a sailing scene, from which only two oars remained. Their orientation points to the movement of the boat inside the tomb. The southern part depicted men walking outside the chapel carrying birds. In the easternmost section, part of a calf's head lying on the ground is still visible. The motifs of the northern and southern walls of the chapel were represented only by paintings (red outlines on a white base) that were coloured in showing the deceased, another man, a woman and offering bearers. Unfortunately, only the lower parts of the scenes have survived (figs. 3 and 4).



Fig. 4 The figure of Kaisebi and his son depicted on the north wall of his funerary chapel (photo M. Frouz)



The depiction on the southern wall originally covered all its surface; it displays three standing figures, the tomb owner walking to the east and a female of the same scale striding opposite him (fig. 3). Thus, they are facing each other. A third figure, a male depicted at a smaller scale situated between them, reached only to the height of their knees. He is walking in the same direction as the tomb owner and is holding the staff of the deceased in the right hand. Regrettably, the scene is only partly preserved, with the legs surviving to the knees of both bigger figures and the smaller person preserved to shoulders (without the head). The poor state of preservation of the chapel is closely connected to the absence of the figures' labels. In this respect, no inscription identifying the individuals is available. In accordance with the Old Kingdom principle of tomb decoration, the scene presents the tomb owner, his wife and their eldest son. The owner of the tomb evidently wears a short kilt and his wife is clothed in a long, tight-fitting dress and embellished by anklets. Their adult son is also dressed in a short white kilt. Wives of tomb owners



Fig. 5 A male figure painted in red colour on the eastern wall of Kaisebi's funerary chapel, placed slightly above the floor level. Traces of a sign or signs are barely visible above the man's head (drawing J. Malátková)

were depicted in their dwellings of eternity, even at the same scale as their husbands, from the Fourth to the latter part of the Fifth Dynasty, precisely until the early reign of Djedkare (Roth 1999: 39).

The northern wall bears a scene representing the tomb owner and his son; only the lower part of the depiction up to Kaisebi's knees has survived (fig. 4). The tomb owner is walking to the east, while a male individual at a noticeably smaller scale reaches slightly above Kaisebi's knees and is striding in the same direction. Both are dressed in short white kilts. As stated above, it is probably a question of the eldest son of the tomb owner. He is holding the father's staff in the left hand and grasps a bird with his right hand. A naked man bringing an antelope oryx coloured white walks towards them. The scene is labelled as *int m3-hd*, "bringing the species of oryx antelope". The naked individual is depicted at a slightly smaller scale than the son of the tomb owner.

In both depictions of the family, the adult son is dressed in a short white kilt and holds his father's staff in one hand, while a bird is clutched in his other hand. Although the painting is heavily soiled, on the basis of contrasting photographs, it is evident that the bird has a topknot on his head, which means that on the north wall of the funerary chapel, the son is holding a hoopoe by the wings. This bird was closely connected with children in the decoration of the Old Kingdom tombs. Such representation was exclusively situated in funerary chapels from the Fourth to the Sixth Dynasties. Amandine Marshall (2015) has recently demonstrated that the hoopoe-and-child association had special connotation in the mental world of ancient Egyptians. This bird was mostly grasped by the eldest son in the scenes picturing a father and his child or children. Marshall's examination of these scenes has led to the conclusion that the hoopoe symbolised the future transfer of power from a father to his eldest son within the funerary iconography. Likewise, the motif of grasping the father's staff had the same symbolic meaning (Marshall 2015: 63).

The northern part of the eastern wall bears remains of two registers of butchering scenes. A solitary male figure painted in red colour is situated below the lowermost register (fig. 5). It undoubtedly does not fit with the original decoration concept of the chapel, as is indicated by the position of the figure and the style of its execution. The painting was placed slightly above the floor level, at the level of the second course of masonry. The man strides right towards the chapel entrance. He wears a short projecting kilt with a point and a shoulder length wig. His right arm is bent and rests on his chest. The state of preservation does not enable us to observe the position of his right hand and of his left arm, but what remains might evoke an adoration gesture. The paint strokes reveal that the author of this sketch was an experienced person who rendered the proportions of the human figure without an auxiliary grid. Imperceptible traces of a sign (or signs) are visible above the head of the figure, indicating possible remains of an inscription.

The western wall of the chapel contains the well-preserved false door. Remains of the butchering scenes are situated to the east of it; only two registers have survived. The state of preservation differs on the northern part of the western wall; where only the lower bordering line remains.

The false door of Kaisebi and his title

Although the false door was found *in situ* set into the western wall of the chapel, its uppermost part with the funerary repast scene on the panel and the uppermost lintel with the offering formula are missing (1.38 × 1.05 m; fig. 6 and pl. 1). Their preserved height corresponds approximately with the maximal surviving height of the walls in the funerary chapel. The false door originally consisted of at least three separate parts: a) two pairs of jambs with the central niche and the drum, b) the lintel, c) the panel, two apertures and architrave. The panel is completely missing. A similar situation is found in the tomb of the official and priest, Rahetep at Abusir (Bárta 2001: 65, 67, pls. XXIX–XXXIII). No fragments were found during the exploration of the tomb and the surrounding structures.

The regular ritual purification activity performed in the chapel included repeated whitewashing of the false door, due to which the door seemed to be made of a white piece of stone with remains of sunken relief. However, the efforts of a restorer proved it to be beautifully decorated. Thanks to the layers of ancient whitewash, all the colours were protected, and after restoration, came out as strong and bright as if newly applied (a similar circumstance can be observed, for example, in the mastaba of Inti (AS 22); see Bárta – Vachala *et al.*, *forthcoming*). The door itself was cut from white limestone of excellent quality and was partly painted red in imitation of more precious granite. The hieroglyphic signs included blue, green, black, orange and red colours.

The inscriptions on the false door are of rather unusual form, because the lintel and jambs bear only offering formulae, epithets and a personal name, while the title of the tomb owner is not included. His name – Kaisebi – is mentioned several times not only on the false door, but also in the hieratic inscriptions inscribed on the walls of the tomb. The male personal name Kaisebi, “My *ka* is coming” occurs sporadically during the Old Kingdom period (Gourdon 2007: [699] 3; Scheele-Schweitzer 2014: 709 [3510]; not listed in Ranke). Only three occurrences of this personal name are attested so far. Apart from the recently discovered bearer of this name in Abusir South, the name Kaisebi is to be found in the mid-Fifth Dynasty mastaba of the two brothers Nyankhkhnum and Khnumhetep at Saqqara. This individual was the son of the “overseer of manicurists of the Great House”, Khnumhetep. He is depicted among Khnumhetep’s children in the wall decoration of the mastaba (Moussa – Altenmüller 1977: Tafel 72, Sz. 32.3), where he is labelled a “*hem-ka*-priest” and “barber”. Having worked in the sphere of body care, this Kaisebi followed in his father’s footsteps (for the working activities of the members of this family during four generations, see Dulíková – Mařík 2017: figs. 3, 4, 13 and 14).

The second occurrence of the name, Kaisebi, is attested in the roughly incised inscription on the offering table found reused as roofing in grave G 7000 SE 198 in the Eastern Cemetery at Giza.² Kaisebi from Giza was employed as a scribe during the late Fifth or the Sixth Dynasty; the exact dating is uncertain.

In tomb AS 76, Kaisebi’s name appears written on the drum of the false door, as well as on its jambs. However, no information on his social and administrative position is

to be found there. His titles, thus, must have been present on the lost panel with the funerary repast scene. The rarity of the decoration of the false door lies also in the offering list located in the central niche, painted in blue colour (fig. 7). Although the lower part of the niche is quite damaged, it seems that the list contains by and large 72 squares in four columns and eighteen rows including at least 78 items: 1) *mw zt*, “libation of water”; 2) (*šdt*) *šntr*, “incense”; 3) *šti-ḥb*, “sacred oil”, one jar; 4) *šft*, “sacred oil”, one jar; 5) *nḥnm*, “sacred oil”, one jar; 6) *tw3wt*, “sacred oil”, one jar; 7) *ḥ3tt-š*, “sacred (best cedar) oil”, one jar; 8) *ḥ3tt-ṯḥmw*, “sacred (best Libyan) oil”, one jar; 9) *w3ḏw*, “green eye paint”, one bag; 10) *mšdmt*, “black eye paint”, one bag; 11) *wnḥw*, “cloth”, two; 12) *šdt šntr*, “incense on the fire”; 13) *ḳbḥw ʔ2*, “libation of water and two balls of natron”; 14) *ḥ3wt*, “one offering table”; 15) *ḥtp nšwt*, “an offering to the king”; 16) *ḥtp wšḥt*, “an offering in the broad hall”; 17) *ḥmš*, “sit down! (to eat)”; 18) *šnš ḏwiw iʿw-r3*, “breakfast”; 19) *t-wt*, “wt-loaf”; 20) *t-rḥ*, “baked bread”; 21) *ḏsrt*, “jar of ale”; 22) *ḥnkt ḥnmš*, “ḥnmš-beer”; 23) *f3y šnš*, “one serving of bread”; 24) *šnš ḏwiw šbw*, “food – one each of bread and beer”; 25) *šwt*, “meat”; 26) *mw ʿ*, “water”; 27) *bd*, “natron”; 28) *šnš ḏwiw ʔw-r3*, “breakfast”; 29+30) *t-wt*, “wt-loaf”, *t-rḥ*, “baked bread”; 31) *ḥṯ*, “bread”; 32) *nḥrw*, “bread”; 33) *dpti*, “bread”; 34) *pzn*, “bread”, four; 35) *šnš*, “bread”, four; 36) *t-imy-t3*, “bread which is baked in the earth”; 37) *ḥnfw*, “bread”; 38) *ḥbnwt*, “bread”; 39) *ḳmḥw ḳm3*, “bread”; 40) *id3t-ḥ3*, “bread”; 41) *p3t*, “bread”; 42) *t[-3šr]*, “bread”; 43) *ḥḏw*, “onions”; 44) *ḥpš*, “foreleg”; 45) *iwʿ*, “beef hind thigh”; 46+47) *zḥn*, “kidney”, *šwt*, “beef hind shank”; 48–51) damaged; 52) *iwf-ḥ3t*, “meat”; 53+54) *šr*, “species of duck”, *trp*, “species of duck”; 55+56) *zt*, “species of duck”, *š*, “species of duck”; 57–78) damaged. The canonical offering list in the central niche of the false door can also be found in the mastabas of three individuals buried at North Saqqara. Both an “inspector of the Great House”, Nenkhfetka (D 47, Mariette 1889: 304–309), and Werirenptah, who was employed in the legal sphere and in the department of royal documents (unnumbered tomb, James 1961: Pl. XXVIII), are dated to the mid-Fifth Dynasty, to the reign of King Nyuserre. The third man, a “singer of the Great House”, Rameryptah, lived in the late Fifth Dynasty (C 22, Mariette 1889: 152–156). Another official whose false door niche embodied the offering list, an “inspector of those who are in attendance”, Samery, most probably constructed his tomb at Saqqara as well. The stela, currently located in Bologna, is dated to the late Fifth Dynasty (Fischer 1976).

The canonical offering lists were not only incorporated in the central niches of false doors, but in the panels, architraves, apertures and door jambs (for treatises on offering lists, see *e.g.* Barta 1963; Hassan 1948). Most of the false doors which incorporate the canonical offering list range from the reign of Neferirkare to Djedkare (Strudwick 1985: 29). The recently unearthed false door in the rock-cut tomb of Nefer at Abusir South (AS 68d), which includes an offering list on its panel and in the aperture, comes from the mid-Fifth Dynasty (Bárta – Vymazalová – Dulíková *et al.* 2014: 27–29, fig. 10). The proportion of the rather wide central niche of Kaisebi’s false door and the absence of torus moulding also support the period preceding the Sixth Dynasty.



Fig. 6a, b The false door of Kaisebi after cleaning (photo M. Frouz, drawing J. Malátková)

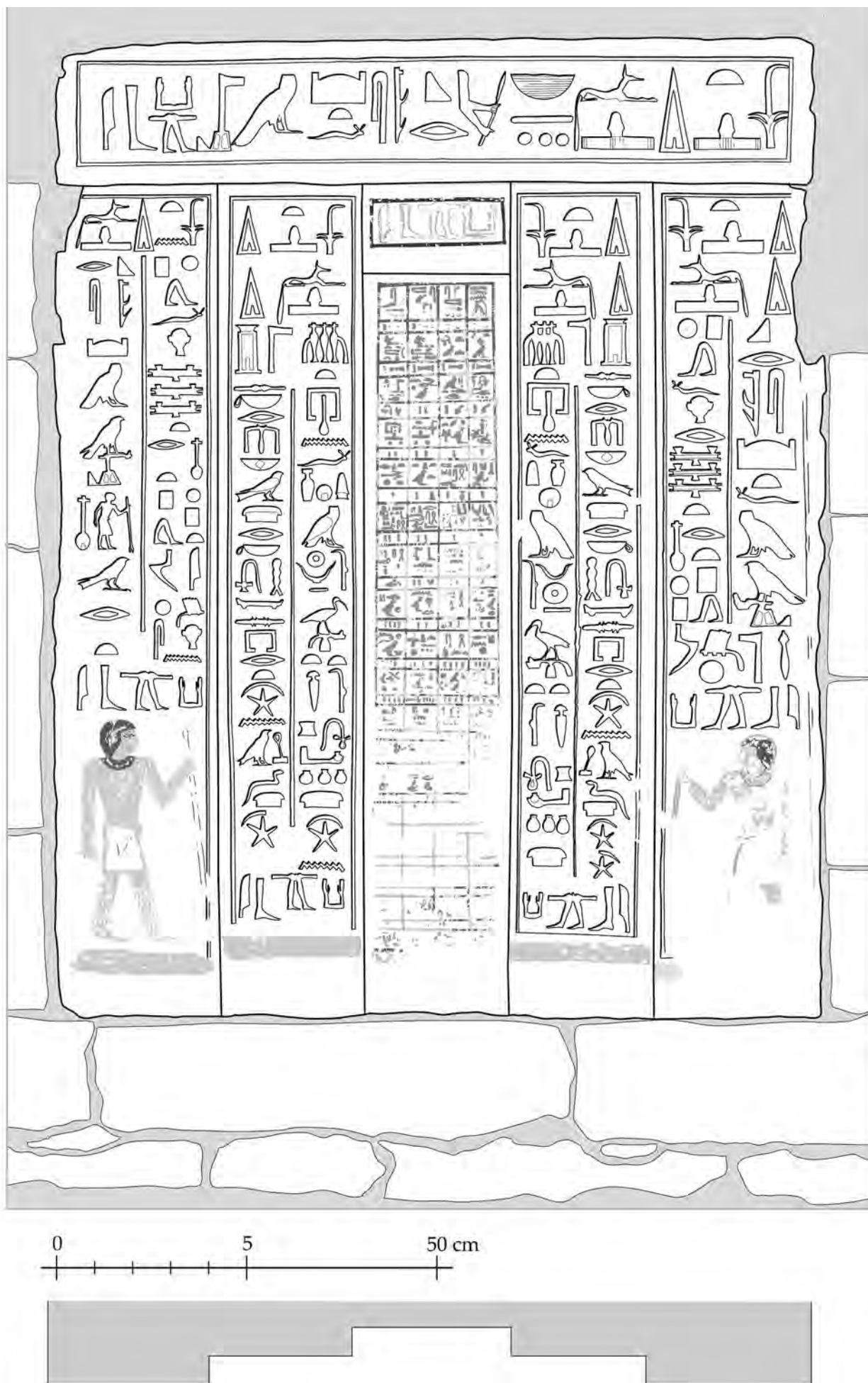




Fig. 7 Detail of the offering list placed in the central niche of Kaisebi's false door, painted in blue colour (photo M. Frouz)

The rest of the false door bears offering formulae and a list of important feast days comprising 11 festivals carved into both inner jambs:

The lintel: *ḥtp di nswt, ḥtp di Inpw, nb t3 dšr, krstf m ḥrt-ntr, K3(i)-zbi*, "An offering which the king gives and an offering which Anubis (gives), the lord of sacred land that he may be buried in the necropolis Kaisebi".

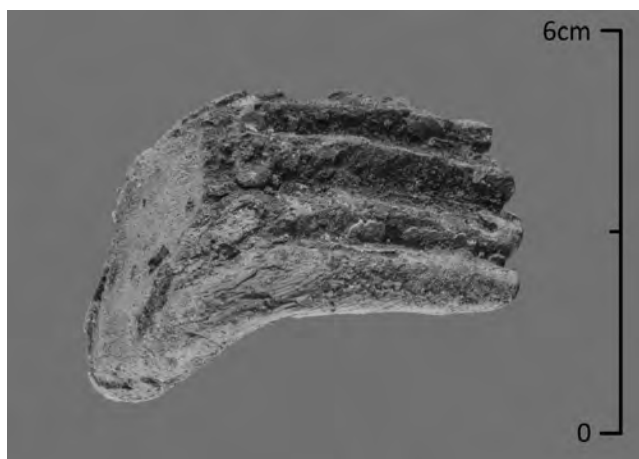


Fig. 8 A wooden hand. Remains of one of at least two wooden statues of Kaisebi found in his serdab and funerary chapel (photo M. Frouz)

The inscriptions on the inner jambs are almost mirror images (except the last signs at the end of the columns): *ḥtp di nswt, ḥtp di Inpw, ḥnty zh-ntr. Prt-ḥrw nf t ḥnkt m wp rnpt, Dḥwtyt, tpy rnpt, w3g, ḥb Zkr, ḥb wr, rkḥ, prt Mnw, 3bd n 33d, (tp) 3bd, (tp) smdt*, "An offering that the king gives and an offering that Anubis (gives), who presides over the divine booth. Invocation offerings may come forth for him (consisting of) bread and beer on the (feasts of) the First day of the year, Thoth, New Year's feast, *wagy*, Sokar-festival, the Great feast, the *rekeh* feast (the festival of burning), coming forth by Min, the *sadj* feast, (the first day of) the month and of the half-month".

A text on the outer jambs that ends with the figure of the tomb owner minutely differs not only in the size and arrangement of particular hieroglyphic signs, but also in the usage of some words.

Right outer jamb: *ḥtp di nswt, ḥtp di Inpw, ḥp(y)f ḥr w3wt nfrwt ḥppt, krstf m ḥrt-ntr, im3ḥ(w) [ḥr] ntr 3ḥ, K3(i)-zbi*, "An offering that the king gives and an offering that Anubis (gives), that he walks on the beautiful roads, that he may be buried in the necropolis revered [with] the great god, Kaisebi."



Fig. 9 A wooden *kherep*-scepter (14a/AS76/2015) was originally part of a statue which represented the dignitary, Kaisebi (photo M. Frouz)

Left outer jamb: *hṭp di nšwt, hṭp di Inpw, hp(y).f hr w3wt nfrwt hṭpt im3h(w) hr.šn, kṛš m hrt-nṯr i3w nfr(t) wrt, K3(.i)-zbi*, “An offering that the king gives, an offering that Anubis (gives), that he walks on the beautiful roads, on which honoured ones walk, that he may be buried in the necropolis at a good old age, Kaisebi.”

The length of the inscription is uneven. It extends to the bottom on the inner jambs, whereas on the outer ones, it is shorter due to the figures of Kaisebi, which represent the only surviving portrayals of the tomb owner. In contrast to the text on the jambs executed in sunken relief, Kaisebi's depiction is entirely painted. His striding figure wears a short, white kilt and a broad collar, holds a long wooden staff in one hand, while a handkerchief is grasped in the other hand.

If there had been no hieratic inscriptions written on the various walls of AS 76, there would have been no information preserved on at least one of Kaisebi's titles, *šmšw h3yt (n) z3b*, “the elder of the judicial/audience hall” (Jones 2000: 813, no. 2974). The word *h3yt* denotes “gateway” or “entrance hall” (Hannig 1995: 487), and *šmšw* signifies a person who is professionally senior (Hannig 1995: 709–710). The title was connected with the legal sphere; however, the exact competence of its holder is not fully known (cf. Philip-Stéphan 2008: 54). Michel Baud considers it to be a new rank title (Baud 2000: 259). The same title might have been borne by Kaisebi's presumed relative, Ptahtwer, for the title appears on a hieratic inscription in the chapel of the annexe (AS 76b, see below). Sixteen other individuals buried or embodied in the decoration programme of the tombs at Abusir were also associated with the title *šmšw h3yt (n) z3b* or its variant *šmšw h3yt*, ranging from the early Fifth to the end of Sixth Dynasty (see tab. 1). Three places where this title occurs can be identified: seven dignitaries with this title were depicted in the pyramid complex of Sahure (El Awady 2009: Pls. 5 and 9). The rest are to be found within two tomb clusters. Six men bearing this title are connected with the tomb complex of Vizier Qar and his family (Bárta *et al.* 2009) and two title holders were buried nearby, namely the sun priest, Neferinpu (Bárta *et al.* 2014), and Hetepinpu (recently uncovered tomb AS 85, yet unpublished). Apart from Kaisebi and Ptahtwer, the third location of holders of the title *šmšw h3yt (n) z3b* at Abusir is represented by Kaaper Junior, who built his tomb not far from theirs (AS 61, as yet unpublished). It is worthy to mention that if these officials had to choose only one title from their titulary to record their name and position on certain artefacts or monuments (statues, hieratic inscriptions on tomb walls, entry in royal monuments, reference in tombs of somebody else's, *etc.*), they preferred to select the title *šmšw h3yt (n) z3b*, even without any rank title. Such preference may be noticed, for example, in hieratic inscriptions on Neferinpu's mastaba (Vymazalová 2014), but also in the labels of seven officials portrayed in the causeway of Sahure's pyramid complex, of the sons of Vizier Qar in their father's tomb, of the sons of the judge, Inti, and of a dependant in his mastaba. Based on this observation, other individuals collected in Table 1 who are known only from hieratic inscriptions very probably bore further titles, *e.g.* Kaaper Junior, Hetepinpu, Kaisebi and Ptahtwer.³

Serdab with statues

To the west of the chapel, an elongated north-south oriented serdab was situated (5.00 × 1.00 m), built in limestone, preserved to a height of 1.70 m. It had originally contained an unknown number of wooden statues (Exc. No. 14/AS76/2015, see fig. 8), but only a few fragments were collected in its southern part in a fill of yellow sand mixed with limestone chips. One smaller left foot and one bigger left foot are the remains of at least two statues made of tamariscus (*Tamarix sp.*) and acacia (*Acacia cf. nilotica*), respectively. The smaller foot bears traces of yellow ochre, as well as another fragment that features a female breast. The bigger foot was once painted red and therefore belonged to a male. Tiny fragments with remains of black colour probably come from a pedestal of one of the wooden statues. Another piece was an excellently preserved *hṭp*-sceptre made of cedar (*Cedrus libani*; see fig. 9). A very similar sceptre, 27 cm long, was found near one of the wooden statues discovered in the serdab of Mernefu's mastaba dated to the mid-Fifth Dynasty (Verner – Callender 2002: 76). Other similar examples from Abusir are also dated to the Fifth Dynasty and come from the anonymous tomb AS 47,⁴ situated close to Kaisebi's tomb, and from the burial chamber of the priest, Neferinpu (Bárta *et al.* 2014: 102). In the case of the latter two instances, the sceptres were part of the burial equipment, and they were found by the hand of the deceased in the sarcophagus.

External niche and shafts

In the northern part of the corridor of the original mastaba, there was another offering place represented by a wide niche that resembled a false door. The niche is 2.59 m tall and 1.04 m wide, and consists of a single pair of jambs and a central niche. It is mostly made of the same blocks of stone as the surrounding wall, but in the upper recessed part, it seems to bear a centrally oriented panel with two wider side apertures.

Behind this door, two shafts were located (numbered 1 and 4; see fig. 10), which were unusually modest, both in construction and in contents. Neither of them were found undisturbed. Shaft 1 measured 1.25 × 1.15 m at its mouth, and it was 4.50 m deep. Its architecture was very simple, and there was no burial chamber at all, only a shallow niche filled with mud bricks. The body itself was found in a strange, disarticulated position, in the area of the south-western corner of the bottom of the shaft. There were no traces of burial equipment; only pottery was collected in the fill of the shaft itself. Regrettably, the gender of the deceased was not unambiguously determined on the basis of the anthropological analysis of fragments of bones. The buried individual was an adult, but the exact age is undeterminable (for the anthropological analyses, see below).

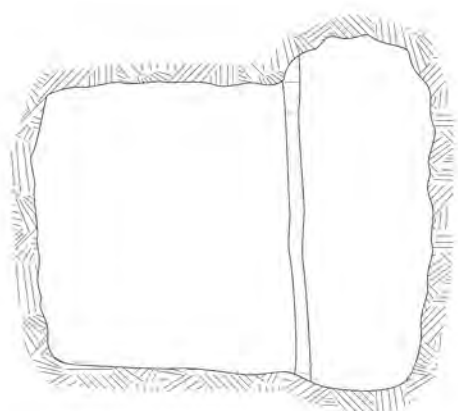
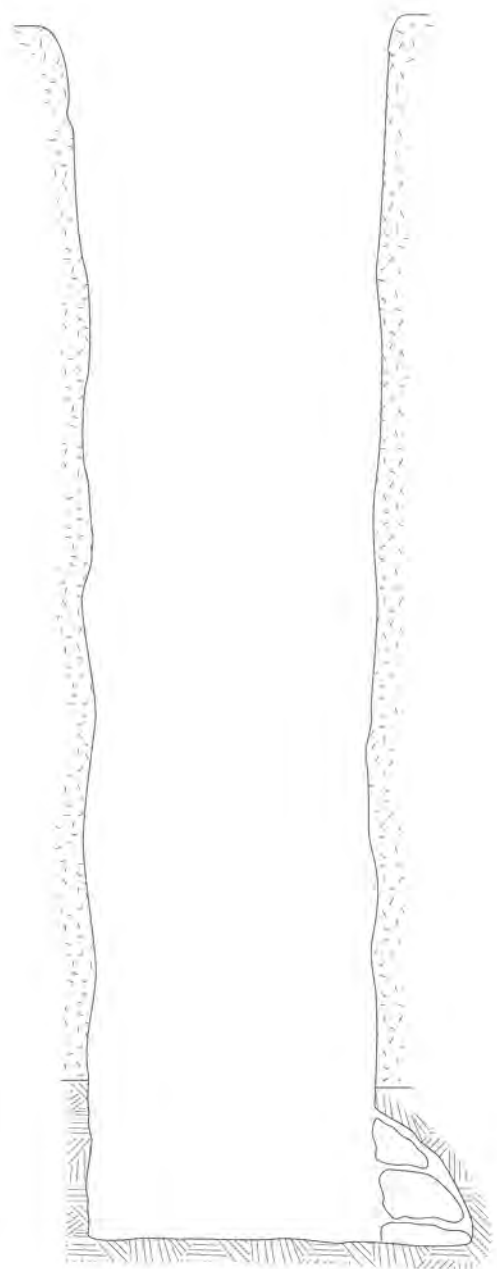
Shaft 4 was situated to the north of the serdab and to the west of Shaft 1. It measured 1.27 × 1.22 m at its opening and reached a depth of 3.35 m. It was left unfinished. The walls of the shaft were lined with mud bricks and dark plaster in its upper part and with uneven limestone fragments in its lower part (cf. fig. 10). The fill of the shaft consisted of yellow wind-blown sand. The floor was made of *tafla*. It seems that Shaft 4 was constructed

| name | tomb code | provenance | dynasty | king | title | Jones | bibliography |
|------------------------|-----------|--------------------------------------|------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|---|
| <i>Hry-ny-Rc</i> | AC 1 | causeway of Sahure's pyramid complex | early 5 | Sahure | <i>šmšw h(š)yt</i> | 902-903, no. 3313 | El Awady 2009: Pl. 5 |
| <i>Tnti</i> | AC 1 | causeway of Sahure's pyramid complex | early 5 | Sahure | <i>šmšw h(š)yt (n) zšb</i> | 813, no. 2974 | El Awady 2009: Pl. 9 |
| <i>Šnqm-ib</i> | AC 1 | causeway of Sahure's pyramid complex | early 5 | Sahure | <i>šmšw h(š)yt (n) zšb</i> | 813, no. 2974 | El Awady 2009: Pl. 9 |
| <i>Nliti</i> | AC 1 | causeway of Sahure's pyramid complex | early 5 | Sahure | <i>šmšw h(š)yt (n) zšb</i> | 813, no. 2974 | El Awady 2009: Pl. 9 |
| <i>Ty-nfr</i> | AC 1 | causeway of Sahure's pyramid complex | early 5 | Sahure | <i>šmšw h(š)yt (n) zšb</i> | 813, no. 2974 | El Awady 2009: Pl. 9 |
| <i>Kš(i)-m-št</i> | AC 1 | causeway of Sahure's pyramid complex | early 5 | Sahure | <i>šmšw h(š)yt (n) zšb</i> | 813, no. 2974 | El Awady 2009: Pl. 9 |
| <i>Mmi</i> | AC 1 | causeway of Sahure's pyramid complex | early 5 | Sahure | <i>šmšw h(š)yt (n) zšb</i> | 813, no. 2974 | El Awady 2009: Pl. 9 |
| <i>Kš(i)-pr Junior</i> | AS 61 | mastaba of Kaaper Junior | mid 5 | | <i>šmšw h(š)yt (n) zšb</i> | 813, no. 2974 | unpublished |
| <i>Nfr-Ḥnpw</i> | AS 37 | mastaba of Neferinpu | late 5 | Nyuserre – Djedkare | <i>šmšw h(š)yt (n) zšb</i> | 813, no. 2974 | Bárta <i>et al.</i> 2014: 9, 71–80 |
| <i>Kš(i)-zbi</i> | AS 76 | mastaba of Kaisebi | late 5 | | <i>šmšw h(š)yt (n) zšb</i> | 813, no. 2974 | Dulíková <i>et al.</i> 2016 |
| <i>Šnqm-ib</i> | AS 16 | mastaba of Qar | late 5 – early 6 | Unas – Teti | <i>šmšw h(š)yt</i> | 902-903, no. 3313 | Bárta <i>et al.</i> 2009: 102 |
| <i>Tnti</i> | AS 16 | mastaba of Qar | late 5 – early 6 | Unas – Teti | <i>šmšw h(š)yt</i> | 902-903, no. 3313 | Bárta <i>et al.</i> 2009: 107 |
| <i>Tnti</i> | AS 16 | mastaba of Qar | late 5 – early 6 | Unas – Teti | <i>šmšw h(š)yt (n) zšb</i> | 813, no. 2974 | Bárta <i>et al.</i> 2009: 53, 101 |
| <i>Šnqm-ib</i> | AS 18 | tomb of Senedjemib | late 6 | Pepy I – Pepy II | <i>šmšw h(š)yt</i> | 902-903, no. 3313 | Bárta <i>et al.</i> 2009: 149 |
| <i>Ḥh-m-Ḥnt</i> | AS 22 | mastaba of Inti | late 6 | Pepy I – Pepy II | <i>šmšw h(š)yt (n) zšb</i> | 813, no. 2974 | Bárta – Vachala <i>et al.</i> , forthcoming |
| <i>Šnqm-ib</i> | AS 22 | mastaba of Inti | late 6 | Pepy I – Pepy II | <i>šmšw h(š)yt</i> | 902-903, no. 3313 | Bárta – Vachala <i>et al.</i> , forthcoming |
| <i>Tri</i> | AS 22 | mastaba of Inti | late 6 | Pepy I – Pepy II | <i>šmšw h(š)yt (n) zšb</i> | 813, no. 2974 | Bárta – Vachala <i>et al.</i> , forthcoming |
| <i>Prh-wr ?</i> | AS 76b | tomb of Ptahwer | late 6 | | <i>šmšw h(š)yt (n) zšb</i> | 813, no. 2974 | Dulíková <i>et al.</i> 2016 |
| <i>Ḥp(w)-Ḥnpw</i> | AS 85 | mastaba of Hetepinpu | late 6 | | <i>šmšw h(š)yt (n) zšb</i> | 813, no. 2974 | unpublished |

Table 1 Holders of the title *šmšw h(š)yt (n) zšb*, “the elder of the judicial/audience hall” whose names occurred at the Abusir necropolis during the Old Kingdom (V. Dulíková)



Shaft 1



Shaft 4

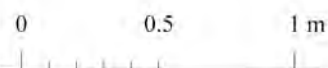
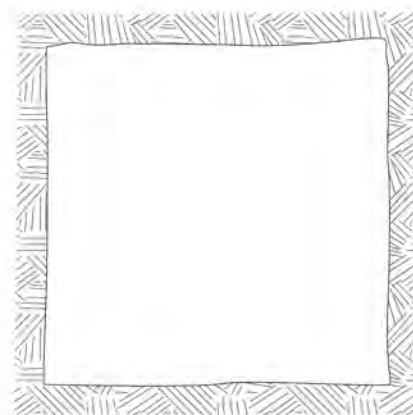
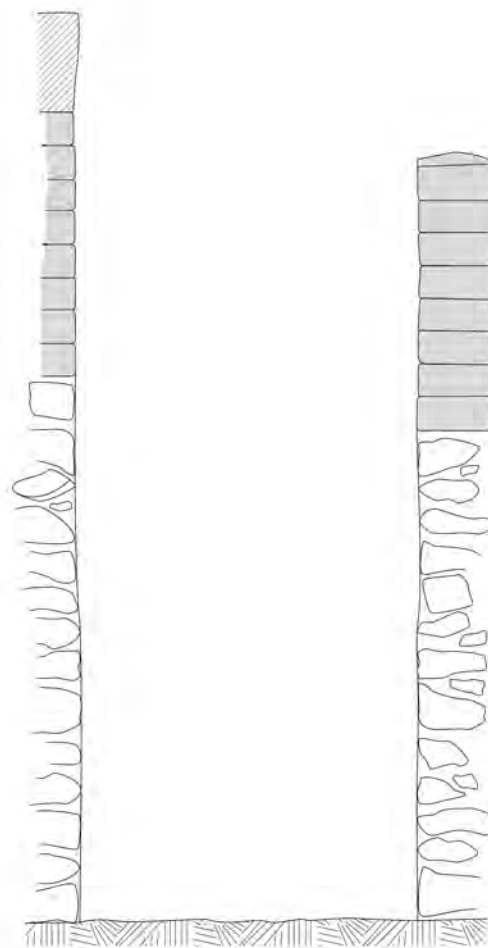


Fig. 10 Shafts in the core of the original mastaba of AS 76, numbered as Shafts 1 and 4 (drawing V. Dulíková, M. Peterková Hloučová, L. Vařeková)



simultaneously with the serdab, since the eastern wall and the western wall are shared. Two divisions made of mud bricks were built between the serdab and Shaft 4. No traces of any burial arrangement were found. This fact can lead to the conclusion that this shaft was only intended for future usage, which was never carried out. The positions of both shafts align with the external offering place.

Additional structure AS 76b – the tomb of Ptahwer

At some point in time, tomb AS 76 was “enlarged” with a simple stone structure which was attached to its eastern wall – AS 76b, oriented in a north-south direction, 8.00 m long and 5.65 m wide. The southern wall of the new tomb was connected with the southern end of the Z-masonry of the eastern wall of AS 76 (Reisner 1942: 179–180), and the northern wall of AS 76b followed the line of the northern wall of AS 76 (fig. 2). In this respect, both tombs created a coherent structure with a common entrance and a small courtyard bordered to the west by AS 76, to the north by AS 76b, to the east by AS 77, and to the south by a mud brick wall, constructed to divide the functional area of AS 76 from the boat burial (AS 80), situated to the south. AS 76b was probably not built as an independent tomb but attached to AS 76 on purpose; one may suppose that the owners of the tombs were relatives.

The access to the small courtyard that was created with the construction of AS 76b, was determined by the eastern wall of the new tomb, which was built along the western wall of AS 77 lying to the east, thus creating a narrow north-south oriented corridor. The entrance to AS 76 was in the western part of the courtyard, whereas the entrance to AS 76b was in its north-eastern corner (fig. 2). The latter leads to another corridor, in line with the above-mentioned corridor, running again in a north-south direction, 5.60 m long and 0.85 m wide. In the north, it turned to the west, and opened into a chapel, a 1.75 × 1.00 m large rectangular room with a simple, undecorated false door in the western wall. The false door was 1.35 m high and 1.00 m wide and was damaged in its upper part. The floor of the chapel was plastered and whitewashed.

The name of the owner of the tomb – Ptahwer – was inscribed on the walls in hieratic inscriptions. In comparison with Kaisebi, the male personal name Ptahwer, “Ptah is great”, rather frequently occurred during the Old Kingdom (Ranke 1935: 139, no. 6; Gourdon 2007: [180] 1; Scheele-Schweitzer 2014: 327 [908]). In the Abusir necropolis, this name appears, for instance, in connection with the title *pr(y)-ḥ* (Jones 2000: 417, no. 1537) in Neferirkare’s papyrus archive, on a fragment dated to the late Fifth or to the Sixth Dynasty (Posener-Kriéger – Cenival 1968: 96 F), or again in the relief decoration of the causeway of Sahure’s pyramid (El Awady 2009: 117 and pl. 6), together with the title *mdḥ gnwtjw/kštyw ... (?)*, “overseer of sculptors, sculptor/maker(?), of stone vessels” (Jones 2000: 469, no. 1744).

The core of AS 76b to the west of the corridor and south of the chapel consisted of two shafts divided by a mud brick wall. The main one, Shaft 2, was situated in the north, while Shaft 3 was in the south (fig. 11). The upper layers of the walls and fill of the annexe were disturbed by modern

robbers, at the least, who were searching for precious objects. They probably looted and damaged a mud plastered feature uncovered in the eastern part of the southern area of the core of the annexe. Its remains seemed to be an additionally created place for a later burial, which consisted of a mummy in a decorated coffin. The only remnant of the supposed burial was a tiny piece of stucco or mortar decorated with colourful paint.

The northern shaft lying directly to the south of the offering chapel of the annexe, AS 76b, was the most elaborate burial place of the whole complex of the two tombs. The wide shaft with straight walls was 10.85 m deep and ended in a burial chamber situated to the north, exactly under the chapel, which once should have been the main offering place for the person buried below. The roughly hewn burial chamber was closed by a stone wall built of medium-size limestone pieces without mortar. Half of the blocking wall was dismantled by robbers, who perhaps already broke inside in ancient times but definitely in modern times (a piece of contemporary bread was found hidden down in the sand in this area). The chamber had a well-shaped rectangular ground plan (3.00 × 2.50 m) with a kind of bench in the northern wall. The maximum height of the ceiling was 1.20 m. The furnishings left by the looters were very limited. The burial itself was found disturbed, scattered mostly in the western half of the room (fig. 12a, b). The human body, with traces of basic mummification including the linen body wrapping, was originally laid in a stretched position along the western wall. Judging from both the lines of greyish or brownish powder and tiny fragments of wood that formed a rectangle on the floor in the north-south axis along the western wall, there very probably was a wooden coffin made of acacia (*Acacia cf. nilotica*; Exc. No. 60/AS76b/2015_b). Owing to the humidity in the burial chamber, the wooden chest had completely decayed, as is known in several other tombs at Abusir South.

The anthropological analysis of the human remains (Exc. No. 60/AS76b/2015_a) reveals that they most probably belonged to a man 20–25 years old (for details, see hereinafter).

With respect to the depth of the shaft and the size of the burial chamber reaching almost 9 cubic meters, one would expect the burial chamber to be equipped not only with pottery, but also with copper (tools or model vessels) and stone objects (model vessels, Opening of the Mouth ritual set), and last but not least, jewellery, such as in other similar tombs from the latter part of the Old Kingdom (e.g. intact Shaft 316 of tomb G 5070, Junker 1944: 48–62). The intensive looting activity in the tomb resulted in a complete disturbance of the burial and the disappearance of most of the original burial equipment. The only remains are four pottery beer jars and a long and thin wooden staff (Exc. No. 61/AS76b/2015), which symbolized an insignia of power (Hassan 1976: 55–71). The staff, made of tamariscus (*Tamarix sp.*), was found broken both on the bench and below it. A complete beer jar and fragments of broken mud stoppers of other three were lying behind the head of the body, *i.e.* by the northern wall, leaning against the bench. Due to the presence of the stoppers, this seems to be their original position. Two other jars were found by

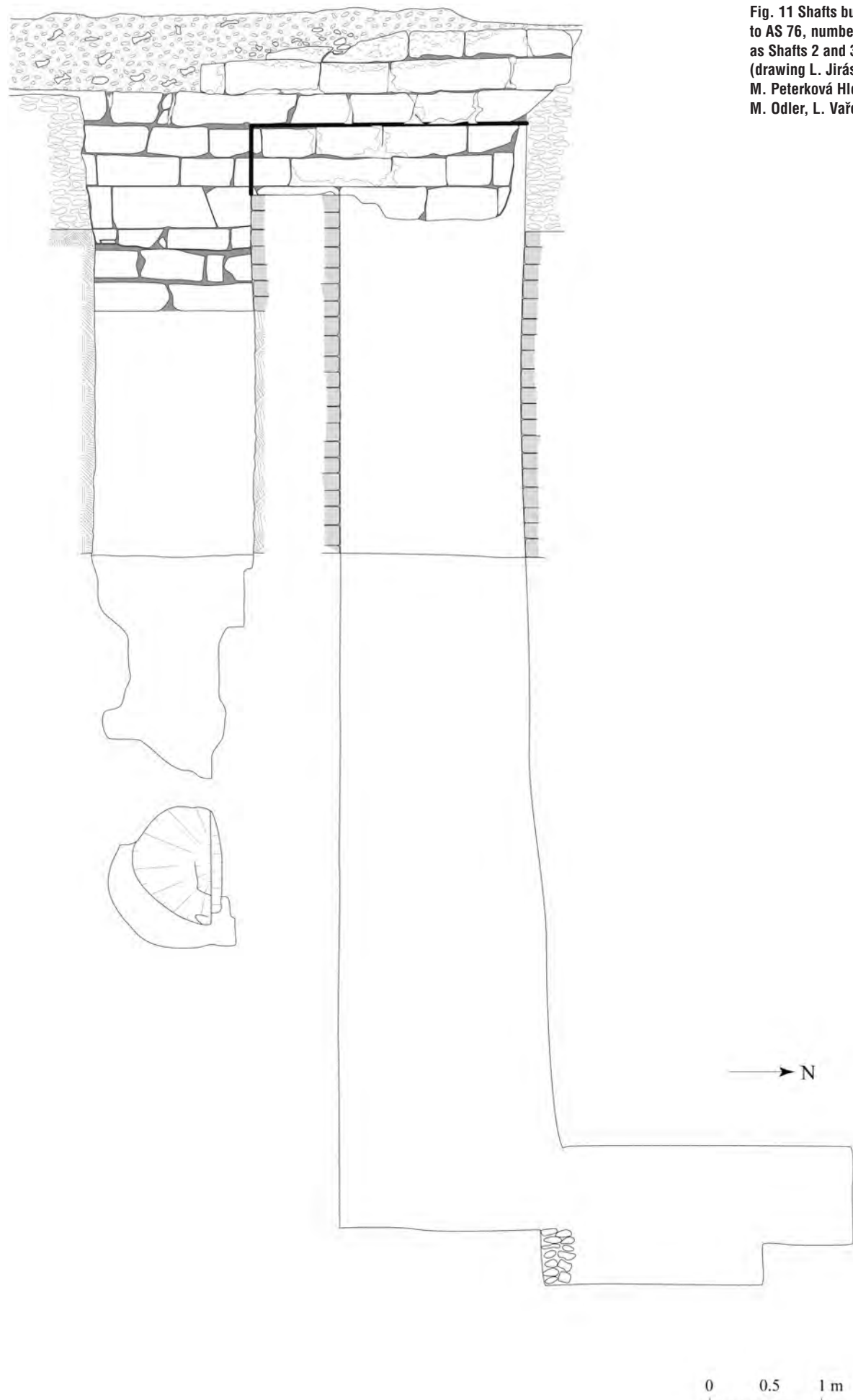
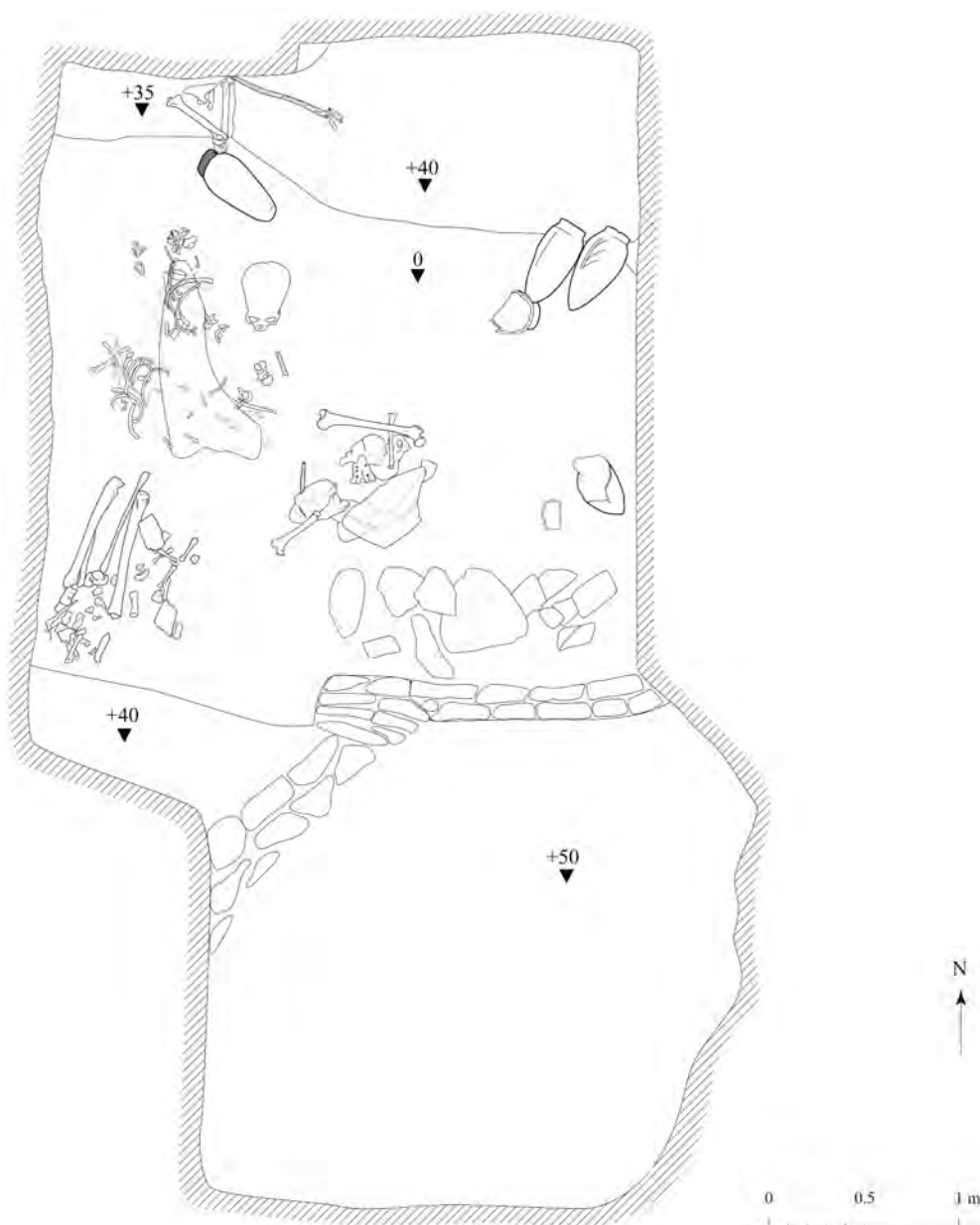


Fig. 11 Shafts built in the annexe to AS 76, numbered as Shafts 2 and 3 (drawing L. Jirásková, M. Peterková Hloučová, M. Odler, L. Vařeková)



Fig. 12a, b A disturbed human burial in the burial chamber of Shaft 2 in tomb AS 76b, presumably belonging to the owner of the annexe (photo M. Frouz, drawing M. Odler, M. Peterková Hloučová, L. Vařeková)



the eastern wall, and the fourth one was broken into pieces that were spread around these two.

The southern shaft (Shaft 3) was of minor importance. It was 6.40 m deep. Its walls, hewn in *tafla*, were straight only in the upper part, whereas the lower part, cut in stone, was narrow and irregular. The shaft ended with a shallow niche in the southern wall, just large enough to contain a body in a contracted position, but with no space for any other larger offerings (figs. 11 and 13). Unfortunately, only a few fragments of bone were collected from the fill of the shaft. Its bottom and the niche were found completely empty, and therefore there is no information on the person who was buried there.

Hieratic inscriptions from the tomb of Kaisebi (AS 76)

Hieratic inscriptions in red paint were documented in several parts of Kaisebi's tomb. The north wall is partly covered with mud brick coating and no inscriptions were noticed on the small exposed part of the casing masonry. The west wall of the tomb, which very often contains hieratic inscriptions with the name and the main title of the tomb owner (Vymazalová 2010, 2014 and *forthcoming*), has not been explored because it adjoins another mud brick structure situated further west (see fig. 2). No inscriptions were noticed on the walls of the eastern corridor or in the chapel. Numerous inscriptions, on the other hand, were found on the blocks of the south wall of the tomb as well as inside the serdab. In addition, one inscription was identified on the external southeast corner

of the tomb but is partly covered with a mud brick structure (see fig. 2), and several inscriptions were traced on the external east wall of the tomb. Several loose blocks found in the fill by the east and south walls of the tomb bore hieratic inscriptions with parts of the title and the name of the tomb owner as well.

The south wall of the tomb exhibits hieratic inscriptions on its bottom part. It is clear that these inscriptions were written on the blocks prior to their placement in the masonry, and thus represent the usual builders' inscriptions (or "*Baugraffiti*", for the interpretation of such inscriptions, see for instance Verner 1992; Vymazalová *forthcoming*, both with further bibliography). The best preserved and most complete are two inscriptions on the bottom course of the masonry (fig. 14), which mention the title and name of the tomb owner: *z3b šmšw h3yt K3(.i)-zbi*, "judicial elder of the court/audience hall, Kaisebi" (for the title, see Jones 2000: 813, no. 2974; another possible interpretation is *šmšw h3yt (n) z3b*, "judicial elder of the hall of the Jackal/king", see Bárta *et al.* 2014: 9). It is worth mentioning that while the name of the tomb owner also occurs in the chapel on the preserved part of the false door (see above), his title is attested exclusively in the hieratic inscriptions. In addition, the writing of the name differs from the writing on the false door where the sign *k3* was used, while the hieratic inscriptions contain the sign *k* instead.

Several inscriptions were also found inside the serdab, namely on its west and east walls. This is not so unusual because inscriptions from serdabs are also known from the tombs of Fetekty (AS 5, Bárta 2001: 117–118) and Kaaper

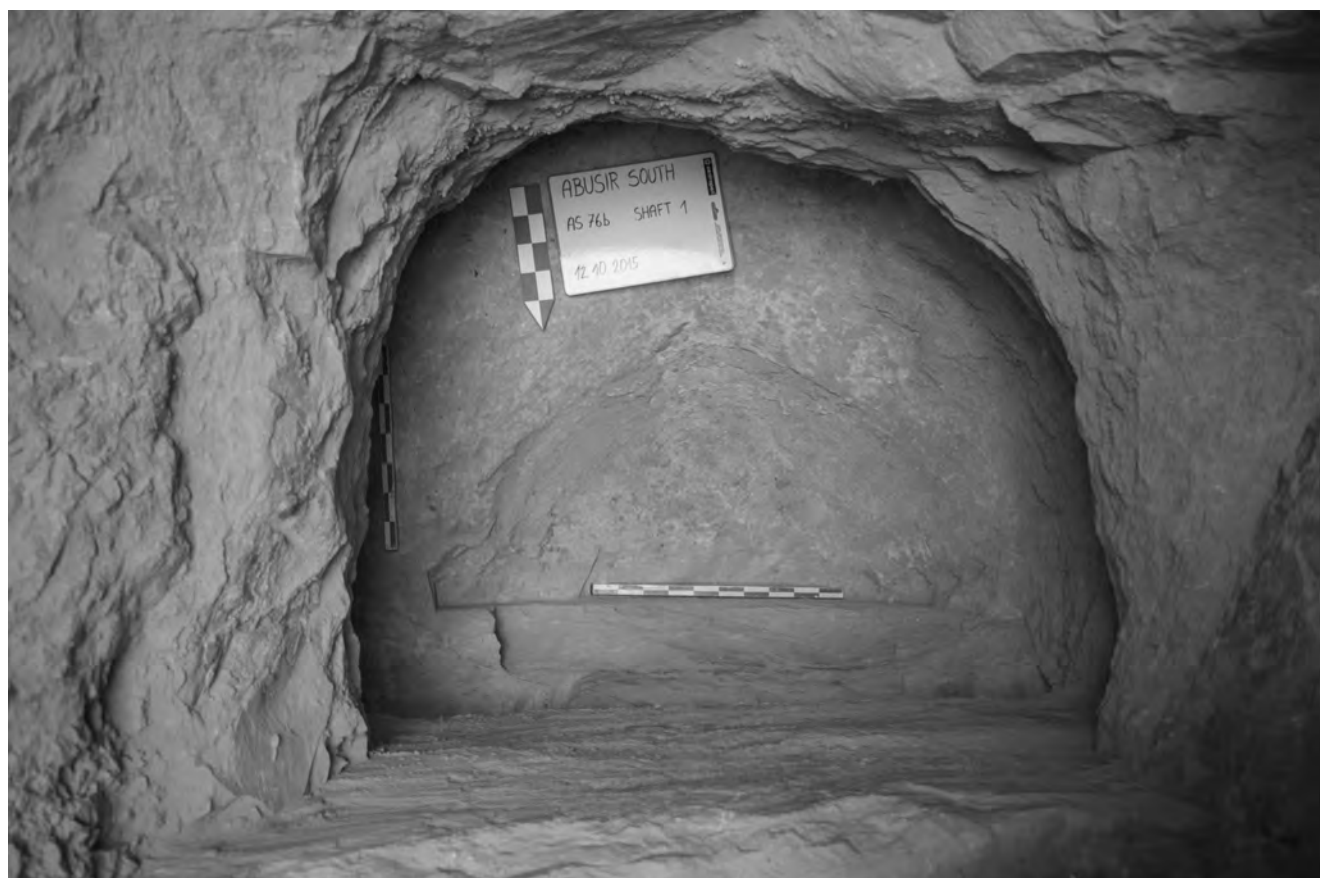


Fig. 13 Only a small burial niche was found at the bottom of Shaft 3 of the annexe to AS 76 (photo L. Jirásková)

Fig. 14 Hieratic builder's inscription on the south wall of Kaisebi's tomb, in an upside-down position (drawing H. Vymazalová)

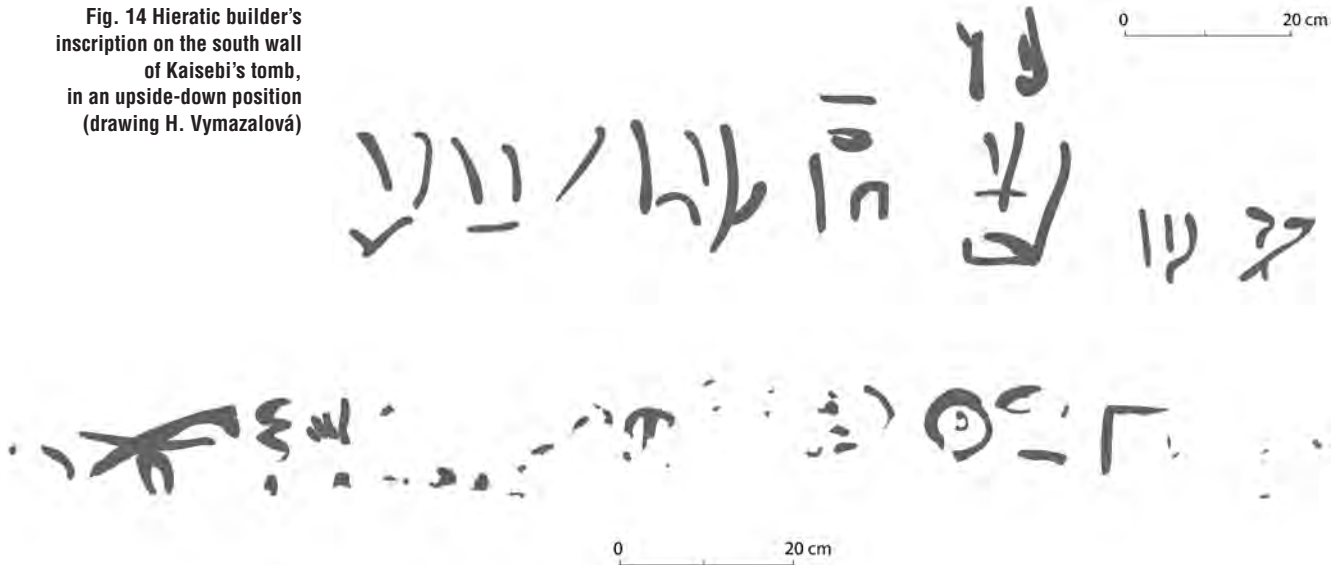


Fig. 15 Hieratic inscription on the north wall of Pthahwer's tomb, extending over three blocks of masonry (drawing H. Vymazalová)

Junior (AS 61, yet unpublished). The inscriptions in Kaisebi's serdab include his name as well as other inscriptions. His name was written on several blocks on the east wall of the serdab, which were located just behind the chapel, *i.e.* right to the west of Kaisebi's false door.

Hieratic inscriptions from the tomb of Pthahwer (AS 76b)

In the tomb of Pthahwer, which adjoins the external east wall of mastaba AS 76 (see above), hieratic inscriptions in red paint can be found on the external north wall of the tomb, as well as on the walls of its corridor and its chapel.

An inscription comprising a date and the name of the tomb owner was written in red paint on the north external wall of AS 76b, on its lower-most course of masonry. The inscription runs over three blocks of masonry and also over the mortar in the seams, and this clearly shows that it was written after the blocks were placed in the tomb. Only a part of this inscription is preserved today due to the badly eroded surface of the central block; it reads: *3bd 1 (?) prt šw 18 (?)* // *P[t]h-wr*, "the 1st (?) month of the *prt*-season day 18 (?), [...] Pthahwer". The missing part of the inscription perhaps contained Pthahwer's title (fig. 15).

The name of the tomb owner is also written on one of the blocks on the east wall of the corridor of Pthahwer's tomb leading to the chapel. Several inscriptions were documented on the corridor's west wall. The title and the name of the tomb owner seem to have been written here

three times one after the other; however, they are hardly legible due to the high salinity of the blocks.

Another inscription was added in red paint on a lower course of blocks of the west wall of the corridor and covered two blocks of limestone. It contains a date: *3bd 1 prt šw 18*, "the 1st month of the *prt*-season day 18" (fig. 16). The name of the tomb owner was written again on another block underneath. Each of these inscriptions on the west wall of the corridor extend over more than one block of limestone. Therefore, it is clear that (similar to the north wall) these inscriptions were written after the construction of the corridor.

More inscriptions were found in the chapel of Pthahwer's tomb; however, today only small traces can be found on the south wall and in the northeast corner. The former inscription seems to be written over two blocks, *i.e.* after the completion of the chapel. One of the blocks on the north wall of the chapel bears the owner's name while another block shows the remains of what possibly was a title: *[z3b] šmšw h///*, "[judicial] elder [of the court/audience hall]". Too little is preserved of this inscription to confirm its reading, or to conclude whether the title referred to Pthahwer or rather to Kaisebi, who held the title under discussion (see above).

The west wall of the tomb featured several inscriptions as well, which are badly preserved due to the eroded surface of the limestone blocks. It is clear, however, that one inscription comprises a part of the name and title of Kaisebi, while another contains only his name.

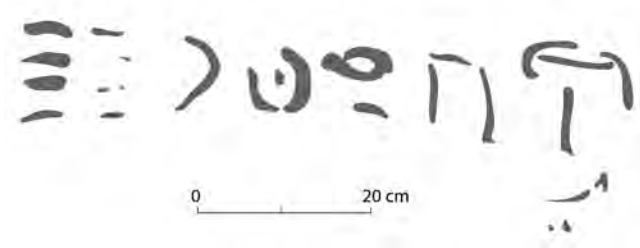


Fig. 16 Hieratic inscription referring to a date on the west wall of the corridor in Pthahwer's tomb (drawing H. Vymazalová)

Discussion on the hieratic inscriptions from the tombs of Kaisebi and Pthahwer

The hieratic inscriptions documented on the tombs of Kaisebi (AS 76) and Pthahwer (AS 76b) provide us with interesting evidence concerning the two architecturally connected tombs. The builder's inscriptions on the east wall of Kaisebi's tomb mention only his name and titles, confirming that this wall with its Z-masonry casing formed the external east wall of Kaisebi's mastaba (see above), to which Pthahwer attached his tomb's north and south walls

(see the plan in fig. 2). At the same time, Ptahwer's tomb bore only his own inscriptions, indicating that the annexe, AS 76b, was neither planned nor constructed by Kaisebi (for discussion on hieratic inscriptions in the Abusir South tombs, see Vymazalová, *forthcoming*). This evidence, however, does not indicate at which point in time Ptahwer's annexe was added to Kaisebi's tomb.

Kaisebi's tomb features typical builders' inscriptions both in the serdab and on the south and east walls, while Ptahwer's tomb contains not only several builders' inscriptions but also a different type of inscriptions, which were written after the construction of the tomb. This is not very common, but another example of such hieratic inscriptions can be found in Abusir on the south wall of Neferinpu's tomb (Vymazalová 2014: 71; for a more detailed discussion, see Vymazalová, *forthcoming*).

The two dates, attested on the north wall of the tomb and the west wall of the corridor, refer to the same season, and it is likely that also the month and day were identical (or a day or two apart). We assume that the inscriptions on the north wall of the tomb and the west wall of the corridor were written down at the same time and that they relate either to the construction of the tomb in its final stage, or to the burial time of the tomb owner (see also Vymazalová, *forthcoming*).

The distribution of the inscriptions in Ptahwer's tomb perhaps follows the access route of the tomb's visitors. The inscription on the north wall indicates that the visitors came from the north-east, passing through the corridor between tombs AS 54 and AS 77–78, and then had to turn south and pass between tomb AS 77 and Ptahwer's tomb to reach its entrance. The inscriptions then continued inside the tomb on the west wall of the corridor and perhaps also on the south wall of the chapel. The location of the entrance on the south side of Ptahwer's tomb is not practical in regard to the access route, but it was undoubtedly planned to be as near as possible to the entrance of Kaisebi's tomb, allowing perhaps the space in front of the entrances to be used as a communal courtyard (see also above) by the dependants of the tomb owners. These hieratic inscriptions on Ptahwer's tomb show that there was a need to specify this tomb's ownership, perhaps to emphasize that it was here where the cult place of Ptahwer himself was located. A need for such identification might be related to the position of his chapel deeper inside the tomb at the northern end of the corridor (see above and the plan in fig. 2). There is no evidence of reliefs and inscriptions that might have once decorated the entrance and the chapel, and the young age of the deceased from the major shaft (Shaft 2) indicates that the tomb owner might have died prior to finishing the decoration of his tomb. At the same time, however, the choice of the hieratic script instead of hieroglyphs for the above mentioned inscriptions might reflect the limited means of the tomb owner (or his dependants) but it also may reflect the direction of these inscriptions towards the visitors of the necropolis instead of the divine sphere.

Pottery analysis of the tomb of Kaisebi (AS 76)

The exploration of the main tomb (AS 76) brought to light several ceramic contexts. In the corridor leading to the

chapel of Kaisebi, pottery was collected from the surface layer and from the fill, but the amounts were generally rather small. The fragments from the surface layers (1.AS76.2015) were all highly eroded and included a variety of platters, beer jars and bread forms. The topmost layer of the fill even contained a large rim and body fragment of a Third Intermediate/Late Period storage jar made of Marl D (2-1.AS76.2015), together with typical late Old Kingdom ware, including finer jars and bowls.

The fill of the chapel (3.AS76.2015) contained a large variety of pots, including some otherwise characteristic early Old Kingdom types, such as bowls with an inner ledge (Abusir type B-10; two examples) and carinated bowls with angular shoulders, largest diameter at the shoulder and rolled rim (Abusir type B-1d; five examples). These particular types can be most likely seen as intrusive from the building activities that disturbed the area of the early Old Kingdom neighbouring structures, most prominently the anonymous mastaba (AS 54), positioned immediately north of the tomb or the large wooden boat (AS 80) found south of the tomb.

By far the most relevant was an example of cultic pottery, being an almost fully preserved stand (Exc. No. 9/AS76/2015), which was uncovered *in situ* in front of Kaisebi's false door (see fig. 1 and pl. 1; also Dulíková – Jirásková – Arias Kytmarová 2016: obr. 6). The upper part of the stand was broken and had fallen into the debris but was reconstructed to full profile during the analysis. The stand is of a later date (possibly the early Sixth Dynasty) and is a very distinct type, namely with a very tall X-shaped body (maximum height of 51.50 cm) with highly conical walls. It was not only covered with a high quality red-slip and thoroughly polished but also plastered in thick, irregular layers (see also Arias 2017: Figs. 4.57 and 5.12–5.13).

Pottery uncovered *in situ* in the cultic spaces of the tombs is rather rare, although there are enough cases to establish the main characteristics. This pottery was usually of high quality material, covered not only with well-polished red slip but also, as a rule, coated in a thick white wash or plaster. It was designated for long-term placement, unlike the votive offerings that were brought in on a regular basis (see also Rzeuska 2006: 513; Arias 2017: 199–203). The best documented is the presence of tall, massive stands that were positioned in front of the false door or in front of niches in the corridor chapels. At Abusir, we have several attestations of such a custom, ranging from the Fifth to the end of the Sixth Dynasty. The stands were often very tall, with a height of around 50 cm and sometimes were "decorated" with excised windows. The most notable examples from Abusir include a fully intact stand that was positioned on the north side of the southern niche in tomb AS 13 (Bárta 2001: 41, Pl. XXIIb), complemented by a clear imprint of a large stand in front of the northern niche (Bárta 2001: 41, Pl. XXIIb). Another documented example came from the late Fifth Dynasty tomb of Gegi (AS 7). In his chapel, two fully intact, large, hour-glass shaped stands were found *in situ* on each side of the false door of the main owner (Bárta 2001: 126, Pl. XLIVb–c).

The cemetery of Giza has also provided us with a limited amount of similar stands. In Fifth Dynasty tomb G 1457, a tall A-shaped red-slipped and polished stand was

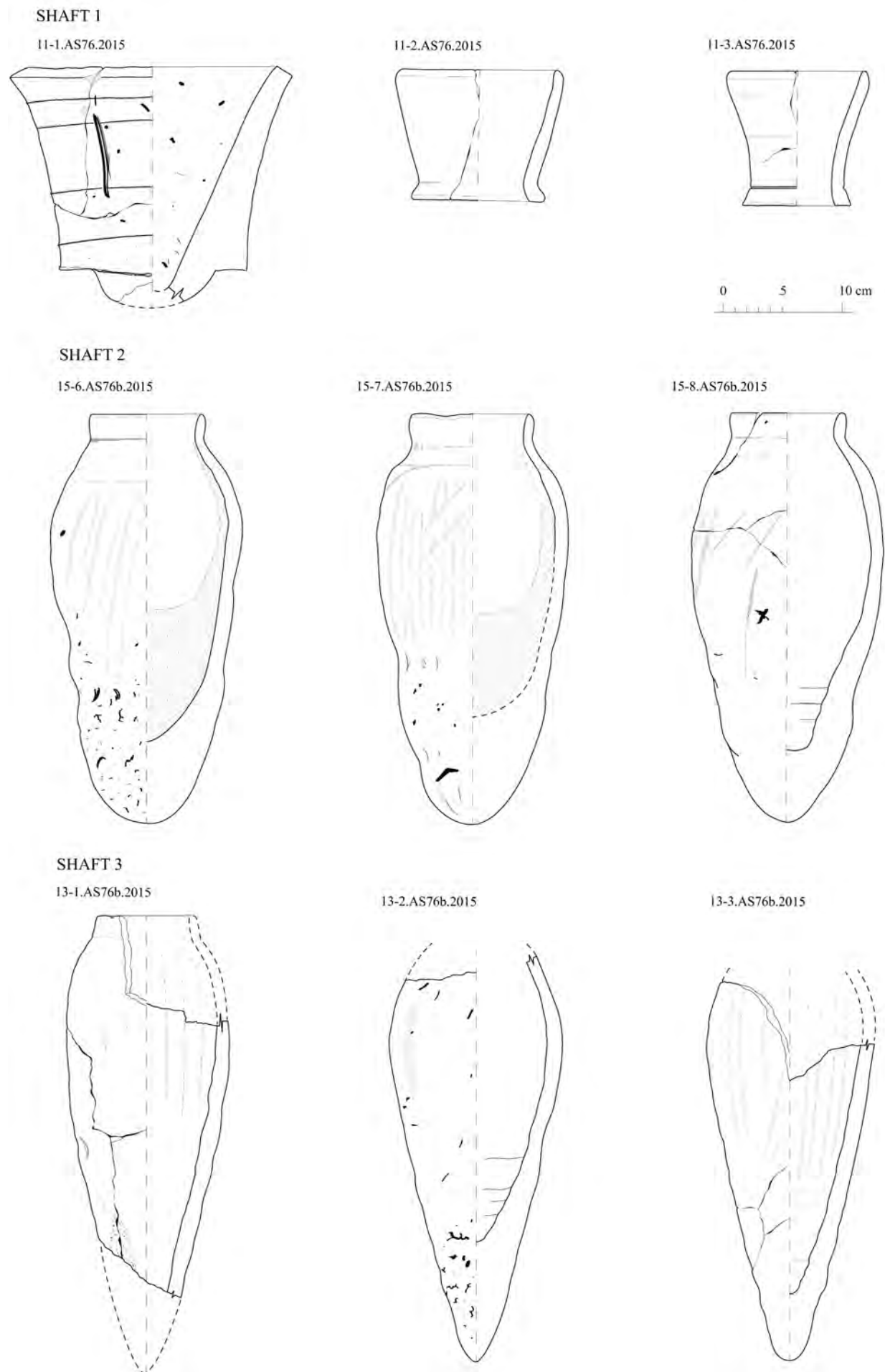


Fig. 17 Representative vessels from three main contexts (Shafts 1, 2 and 3) in tombs AS 76 and AS 76b (drawing K. Arias Kytarová, L. Vařeková)

discovered fully intact *in situ* in front of the false door of Nisutnefret (Reisner – Smith 1955: Fig. 129, 34-11-9). It additionally bore a vertical hieratic inscription in black ink.⁵ An even larger stand was preserved in tomb G 1407. It was found collapsed on its side but otherwise intact in front of the niche, together with a limestone offering table and a base that served as the support for the stand (Reisner – Smith 1955: Fig. 129, 34-12-3).

At Saqqara West, a fully intact Sixth Dynasty stand complemented by a bowl was found *in situ* in front of the southern false door in Chapel 11 in the tomb of Merefnepet (Rzeuska 2001: 165–167, Pls. 29, 34–36; Rzeuska 2006: Pl. XI, 4). The stand is much smaller than the examples from Abusir, with a height of only 26 cm and a rim diameter of 9.5 cm. It belongs to the common hour-glass shaped stands (Abusir type S-1all, Saqqara Form 216, see Rzeuska 2006: Pl. 152, no. 774). A bell-shaped bowl with a modelled rim was also found fully intact and with traces of a white substance both inside and outside (Rzeuska 2006: Pl. 98, no. 490).

In numerous cases, not only the stands but also the false doors were covered with a thick layer of plaster. In the case of stands, this was originally interpreted as imitation of limestone material. However, it is likely that while the manufacturers might have attempted to imitate a more precious material, ritual purity played an equal, if not bigger, role. Usually, false doors, offering tables and walls of chapels were repeatedly whitewashed during cultic rituals, and sometimes it was possible to identify numerous subsequent layers of plaster (*cf.* Kuraszkiwicz 2002: 59; Rzeuska 2006: 513). The stands that were placed in front of the false door were very likely part of the “permanent” equipment of the chapels and were used for repeated offerings, in combination with open shapes such as bowls (see also Bárta 2001: 127; Rzeuska 2006: 513; Arias 2017: 195–198). In this respect, it must be noted that the fill of Kaisebi’s chapel included a beer jar base (3-14.AS76.2015), used as a container for mortar or plaster, that can be directly associated with the whitewashing of the walls of the chapel and the stand.

From the serdab, only very few ceramic fragments were collected, including several beer jars of characteristic late Fifth Dynasty shape with an ovoid body, contracted mouth and partly pointed base (Abusir types J-1al and J-1all), attested *e.g.* in the complex of Princess Sheretnebt (AS 68), the tomb of Neferinpu (AS 37) and the tomb of Kaiemtjenenet (AS 38; see Vymazalová *et al.* 2011; *cf.* Arias 2017: 223–234, Fig. 5.1; Arias Kytarová 2011: Fig. 15, 9.AS37.2007 and 14.AS37.2007; *etc.*).

The three most noteworthy finds from the serdab included a fragment of a bowl with a simple contracted rim (Abusir B-4a), analogical *e.g.* to the fully preserved example uncovered *in situ* in the burial chamber of Nefermin in Shaft 2 of tomb AS 68a (see Arias 2017: 85–88, Figs. 3.117–3.118). The second was a large fine platter with flaring walls, preserved to full profile, with parallels found in larger numbers *e.g.* in diverse contexts from the tomb of Prince Werkaure at Abusir Centre (AC 26; Arias Kytarová 2014: Figs. 4.82–4.83). The last is a fragment of a very fine jar made of Marl A, having a tall collared neck. Analogical jars are very rare and attested

in only very few cases, those of which differ from each other, exhibiting an early Old Kingdom ceramic tradition that continued into the later periods (see also Arias Kytarová – Jirásková 2015: 63–64). A fully preserved jar with a collared neck was also found in the Fifth Dynasty tomb of priestess Nensedjerkai at Giza (G 4631B; Reisner – Smith 1955: Fig. 101, 14-1-47).

Shaft 1 of tomb AS 76 provided us with only a handful of relevant ceramic fragments. Some of them were of chronological value, such as two short stands respectively with a flat lower rim and a simple upper rim (type S-5, see fig. 17, nos. 11-2.AS76.2015 and 11-3.AS76.2015), otherwise attested in numerous examples in securely dated contexts from the late Fifth Dynasty, such as the shafts of Nefer and Neferhathor in AS 68d, the so-called husband in AS 68c and Duaptah and Nefermin in AS 68a (see also Arias Kytarová 2015: Fig. 3, 77-34.AS68d.2013; Arias 2017: 257; Fig. 5.14). The context in Shaft 1 also contained a fragment of a very fine carinated bowl with a tall rim and angular shoulders with equal rim and shoulder diameter, analogical *e.g.* to the fully preserved example from the burial chamber of Nefer (Shaft 1 in AS 68d, Arias 2017: Fig. 3.260). Besides several platters and more stands, the shaft also contained a bread form preserved almost to full profile, exhibiting a late Fifth Dynasty type with a rounded base and angular shoulder. This bore a potmark on its outer walls consisting of a simple vertical stroke (fig. 17, 11-1.AS76.2015). Notably, the fill of the shaft did not contain later Sixth Dynasty wares.

On the other hand, the areas around the tomb superstructure yielded a mixture of Fifth and Sixth Dynasty pottery, with a distinct presence of ceramic types that are equivalent to those that come from the core and Shaft 3 of the annexe. Among these, the most important ones were tall and slim beer jars with a sharply pointed base (Abusir type J-1c), preserved in diverse contexts around the main tomb (8.AS76.2015, 10.AS76.2015).

Pottery analysis of the tomb of Ptahwer (AS 76b)

Based on the ceramic analysis, it is of little doubt that the annexe of Ptahwer was built considerably later, during the course of the Sixth Dynasty. Unluckily, the archaeological situation was very complicated, and in some cases, layers of the core fill and its debris were difficult to differentiate from the destruction of the upper part of the shafts. The fact remains that the area above both shafts (4.AS76b.2015) contained a larger amount of ceramic vessels typical of the early reign of Pepy II, as attested by parallels from well-dated contexts in the cemetery of Saqqara West – most prominently, the already mentioned tall slender beer jars with a pointed base (Abusir type J-1c; see Rzeuska 2006: Table 1, Form 10).

The same type (J-1c) also appears in almost 20 individual examples in the fill of Shaft 3 (context 13.AS76b.2015), in some cases preserved to more than $\frac{3}{4}$ of the profile. All of them had tall bodies (with a maximum preserved height of 33 cm and an estimated full height of around 38 cm, see fig. 17, third row), and very slim maximum body diameters of only around 14 cm. Parallel vessels were uncovered *e.g.* in the tombs of Pehenptah and Seshemnefer at Saqqara

West, dated by epigraphic evidence to the first half of the reign of Pepy II (Rzeuska 2006: Pls. 29–30). At Abusir, two fully preserved examples were uncovered in the additional Sixth Dynasty Shafts 5 and 6 in the rock-cut tomb of Princess Sheretnebtj (AS 68c, see Arias 2017: Figs. 3.201 and 3.206), as well as over 50 vessels from several shafts in the anonymous tombs AS 84 and AS 84b (yet unpublished).

At the same time, it must be stressed that the fill of Shaft 3 contained small fragments of early Old Kingdom ceramics consisting of beer jars with a collar rim (J-1h, see Arias Kytarová – Jirásková 2015: 61–63, Fig. 7), which undoubtedly originated either from the anonymous mastaba (AS 54), or the large wooden boat (AS 80), where they were found in dozens of examples. It is very likely that this shaft was built during the early reign of Pepy II, due to the large presence of pottery dating to his period. The intrusive pottery can be interpreted as a result of cleaning or building activities in the neighbouring area that was later used as debris during the filling of the shaft. It should be noted that the shaft also contained a beer jar base used as a mortar container (13-19.AS76b.2015).

According to the ceramic evidence, we can assume that Shaft 2 was used even slightly later. However, the debris from the shaft (14.AS76b.2015) was again highly mixed and brought to light a variety of very different types, including some very fragmented early Old Kingdom wares (e.g. bowls with an inner ledge and carinated bowls with modelled rims and angular shoulders), Fifth Dynasty pottery (especially deep bent-sided bowls with modelled rims, tall hour-glass shaped stands and bread forms with rounded bases), as well as tall beer jars with pointed bases of the Sixth Dynasty. Also in this shaft, there was a vessel used as a container of mortar; however, in this case it was a bread form with a bevelled rim (for a discussion on repurposed pottery, see also Arias 2017: 173, 178–180).

The most chronologically relevant ceramic remains were uncovered in the burial chamber that is attributed to the

official, Ptahwer, himself (see also *supra*). The chamber was found disturbed but contained some of its original tomb equipment, most notably four large beer jars and their mud stoppers scattered around the burial (15.AS76b.2015, fig. 12; Arias 2017: 169, Figs. 4.22–4.23). These belong to type J-1d with a tall tubular tapering body and a rounded base (see fig. 17, middle row and fig. 18), which is most characteristic for the second half of the reign of Pepy II, as attested by analogies e.g. from the tombs of Nypepy and lady Kheti at Saqqara West (cf. Rzeuska 2006: Pls. 15–17, esp. nos. 27 and 28), although it might have also occurred earlier during the course of the Sixth Dynasty. The jars were rather massive, with heights of 34.5–35.5 cm and maximum diameters of 16–16.5 cm. All four were filled with Nile mud ritually representing beer for the afterlife of the deceased and were originally sealed with mud stoppers, which were able to be reconstructed to full profiles from their fragments (fig. 19, cf. Arias 2017: Figs. 4.24–4.26). The presence of beer jars instead of finer storage jars, as well as the lack of any other finer pottery (most notably bowls) can be either indicative of the lower social status of Ptahwer or the fact that his burial chamber was thoroughly robbed.

Anthropological analysis of skeletons from tombs of Kaisebi and Ptahwer

In the tomb complex of Kaisebi and Ptahwer, two human skeletons were found. A gracile skeleton was uncovered (50/AS76/2015) at the bottom of Shaft 1 of the original mastaba, AS 76 (above-mentioned). Both skull and postcranial skeleton were poorly preserved. Almost all bones including cranial and pelvic bones were fragmented, which complicated an estimation of sex and age-at-death. Thus, regrettably, it is only possible to state that this skeleton belonged to an adult individual, according to the dental attrition of the preserved teeth probably older than 40 years (Lovejoy 1985). Some markers on the cranial bones refer more probably to female than male. No



Fig. 18 Three of the tall beer jars with tubular tapering bodies and rounded bases, uncovered in the burial chamber of Shaft 2 in tomb AS 76b. From the left, jars 15-6.AS76b.2015, 15-7.AS76b.2015 and 15-8.AS76b.2015 (photos K. Arias Kytarová)



Fig. 19 Mud stoppers belonging to beer jars from the burial chamber of Shaft 2 in tomb AS 76b (photo K. Arias Kytarová)

complete long bones were preserved; therefore, even an estimation of stature was not possible to state. This skeleton does not exhibit any degenerative changes or even pathological conditions.

The second human burial (60/AS76b/2015_a) was found in Shaft 2 of the annexe of AS 76. The burial chamber was disturbed and the original position of the skeleton was indeterminate. The body was very probably originally placed in a wooden coffin. An almost complete skeleton was preserved; only the skull was partially damaged, and the right facial part and mandible were missing. According to an anthropological analysis mainly based on pelvic bones (Brůžek 2002; Murail *et al.* 2005; Lovejoy *et al.* 1985; Schmitt 2005), the skeleton belonged to a male who died between 20 and 25 years. The man was approximately 164 cm tall (Raxter *et al.* 2008). Several pathologies were discernible on the skeleton. A compression fracture of the proximal end of the radius (radial head) as well as a fracture of two ribs, which were coalesced, indicates some traumatic experience. Degenerative changes of the joints are mainly connected with advanced age. Considering the young age of Ptahwer (see Discussion), the degenerative changes observed at the left scapula (acromioclavicular joint), both navicular bones at the instep or at the fourth thoracic vertebra, are probably connected with some kind of physical stress or habitual activity. On the other hand, the first two thoracic vertebrae were coalesced mainly at the dorsal and left parts of the bodies, intervertebral space was preserved and the vertebral arches were not fused. All these conditions show that the deceased had a congenital disorder. Nevertheless, an x-ray examination is necessary in order to prove the past existence of this skeletal malformation.

Discussion

The two tombs, AS 76 and AS 76b, are architecturally closely connected. Their architecture and position raises many questions about their owners and their relationship. Kaisebi's original mastaba stretched over an area of

89.25 m². Other holders of the title *smšw h3yt (n) z3b* buried at Abusir during the Fifth Dynasty built larger tombs: Kaaper Junior (AS 61) 119.49 m² and Neferinpu (AS 37) 169.10 m² (Bárta *et al.* 2014). Observing the satellite image, we can surmise that Kaisebi, respecting older structures, was limited on space for the construction of his tomb. The mastaba of Kaisebi was rather small in size, and also the burial shafts can be considered unequal to the decorated chapel with a beautiful false door, which by itself seems to correspond with the status of the tomb owner. Similar tombs from the latter part of the Fifth Dynasty usually have the main burial shaft descending to a more or less spacious burial chamber. Contrarily, Shafts 1 and 4 were very shallow and modest, with no chambers at their ends, and there was no burial equipment at all. The burial apartments dated to the same time as Kaisebi's and belonging to owners with a similar status usually contained canopic jars, sets of model vessels, sets of model copper instruments and ceramic beer jars or wine amphorae and bowls (*e.g.* Shaft 1 in the mastaba of Neferinpu (AS 37), Bárta *et al.* 2014). Due to this discrepancy, there was another attempt to find the main burial place, the chamber of Kaisebi. The only available place was between the chapel and Shaft 1, but no traces of another shaft opening were detected. Shaft 4, which seems to be unfinished, shall be excluded. Only Shaft 1 is left to consider, but there is a probability that the bones collected there belonged to a female, perhaps to the wife of the tomb owner. The false door mentions only Kaisebi, and a male wooden statue was originally placed in the serdab. It is highly improbable that he was buried elsewhere. Moreover, the northern niche situated in the corridor of AS 76 was probably the offering place of Shaft 1, and the chapel should have had its own burial chamber situated below its floor, accessible through a shaft to the north of it.

The tomb of Ptahwer (AS 76b) was attached to that of Kaisebi, and they shared a single corridor as the only access to both structures. In this respect, there must have been a relationship between both men. Moreover, it seems that Ptahwer might have held the same title connected with

legal matters as Kaisebi. Research on working activities in the Old Kingdom shows a growing trend from the mid-Fifth Dynasty of the transfers of posts or functions within families (Dulíková 2016: 71–134). Therefore, one would expect them to be father and son. If this was so, Ptahwer could have built two shafts in the annexe for himself and his father, who might not have finished his own burial place. The decoration of his chapel points to the unexpected and early death of Kaisebi. The entrance corridor is executed in low relief, whereas the inside is only painted, as if it was necessary to finish the decoration quickly.

The owner of Shaft 3 is not known, since there were no bones found at the bottom. The other burial of AS 76b, in Shaft 2, belonged to an adult male. Concerning the hieratic inscriptions in AS 76b, the burial chamber of Shaft 2 was prepared for Ptahwer, whose well-being in the afterlife was maintained in the only chapel of AS 76b. However, there is an obstacle to the father and son interpretation, again, and that is the dating of the pottery in Shafts 2 and 3 to the reign of Pepy II. The chapel of Kaisebi was dated according to other parallels to the latter part of the Fifth Dynasty, which is too far from the reign of Pepy II, and so it is improbable that the two men were father and son. Nevertheless, although several generations are between them, the kinship between these two individuals cannot be excluded. The burial place of Kaisebi thus remains unknown and may come to light with future research in the yet unexcavated immediate neighbourhood of AS 76.

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Notes:

- ¹ The members of the team taking part in the excavation, documentation, analyses of finds and preservation of Kaisebi's and Ptahwer's tombs: chief of the mission Miroslav Bárta, Egyptologists and archaeologists Veronika Dulíková, Lucie Jirásková, Mohamed Megahed, Martin Odler, Marie Peterková Hloučová, Jan Turek and Hana Vymazalová, ceramologist Katarína Arias Kytarová, surveyor Vladimír Brůna, conservator Martin Dvořák, anthropologists Šárka Bejdová, Hana Pišová and Petr Velemínský, zoologist Zdeňka Šůvová and botanist Jan Novák. Our thanks belong to all team members and also to Egyptian colleagues, inspectors of the Ministry of State for Antiquities: Tamer Ragab Abdalla, Mahmoud Shaban, Sayed Shibl and Emad Farouk.
- ² <http://www.gizapyramids.org/view/objects/asitem/SiteFinds@1456/0?t:state:flow=d3c2533b-bdee-4074-8b25-ae411339224b>.
- ³ A database of officials predominantly buried within the Memphite cemetery during the Old Kingdom, the *Maat-base* comprising data on about 3,700 individuals, was launched in 2006 by Veronika Dulíková and has been running continuously since. The *Maat-base* spans the Third to the Eighth Dynasties.
- ⁴ Yet unpublished tomb, the archive of the Czech Institute of Egyptology, Exc. No. 14-1/ASW/2007. For the ceramic report, see Arias Kytarová (2011).

- ⁵ For detailed views of the stand and inscription, see no. 34-11-9 in www.gizapyramids.org.

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Abstract:

The excavations at Abusir South have already uncovered many tombs that have added valuable information to the general knowledge of the development of the Old Kingdom society, its burial and funeral habits, and last but not least social relations and their impact on the lives of ancient Egyptian officials. One of the latest discoveries is the tomb of "the elder of the judicial hall", Kaisebi (AS 76), and the adjoining tomb of Ptahwer (AS 76b), which are located to the south of the anonymous mastaba (AS 54), lying on the most prominent spot of the whole Abusir South area. Kaisebi and Ptahwer built their tombs between this huge mastaba (AS 54) and a recently discovered 18.5 m long ship, both dated to the end of the Third Dynasty.

Tomb AS 76 was constructed in two phases in the course of the late Fifth and Sixth Dynasties. The first one consisted of a rather small rectangular mastaba with a chapel, a northern niche, a serdab, and two shafts. The cruciform chapel of Kaisebi's mastaba with colourful wall paintings contains a well-preserved false door *in situ*. Later on, the original structure was enlarged by an annexe (AS 76b) attached to the eastern wall of AS 76, which included another offering place and two burial shafts.

Abusir South – Old Kingdom – mastaba – false door – hieratic inscription – pottery – Fifth Dynasty – Sixth Dynasty

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