

Unpublished False Door Preserved in Marsa Matruh's Museum

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Abstract

This article studies a discovered inscribed limestone delusive door at Dahshur, preserved and displayed in Marsa Matruh Museum. The false door is dated to the end of Old Kingdom. The false door is described, the scenes are explained, and the texts are translated. The delusive door is dated according to its owner's name and offers a formula, architectural features, and decoration.

The functions of the Old Kingdom delusive doors are essential funerary equipment for the private tombs of the Egyptian elite. There are two major religious roles of false doors that have been defined: Firstly; as connecting doors, and secondly; as the focus for the presentation of offerings for the deceased. Delusive doors performed roles that were focused on the living when they offered prayers and sacrifices to the dead and their kin. The literary evidence makes it abundantly evident that the living and the dead created a bond based on the "do ut des" principle, a bond in which the false doors were pivotal.

Keywords:

Old Kingdom, Delusive Door, Dahshur, Limestone, Marsa Matruh's Museum

مستخلص:

يتناول هذا المقال دراسة باب وهمى تم نحته من الحجر الجيري ويحمل نقوش وتم اكتشافه في منطقة دهشور، وهو محفوظ ومعرض بمتحف مرسى مطروح للأثار. ويعود تاريخ هذا الباب الوهمى إلى نهاية عصر الدولة القديمة. وتقوم الباحثة بوصف هذا الباب الوهمى، وشرح المناظر المنقوشة عليه، وتترجم النصوص به. وتم تأريخ الباب الوهمى حسب اسم صاحبه وصيغة التقديم (القرايين) ودراسة سماته المعمارية والزخرفية.

كانت وظائف الأبواب الوهمية في عصر الدولة القديمة هي كمعدات جنازية أساسية للمقابر الخاصة بالنخبة المصرية. (كبار رجال الدولة) وهناك دوران دينيان رئيسيان للأبواب الوهمية تم تحديدهما:

أولاً، كأبواب متصلة تنحت في الجدار الغربى للمقبرة

؛ وثانياً، كمركز لتقديم القرايين للميت.

وقد قامت الأبواب الكاذبة بأدوار تركزت على الأحياء عندما يقوم الأحياء بتقديم القرايين والأضاحي للأموات. إن الأدلة الأدبية توضح بجلاء أن الأحياء والأموات خلقوا رابطة مبنية على مبدأ "do ut des"، وهي رابطة كانت الأبواب الزائفة محورية فيها.

تم تطوير مكونات مهمة للثقافة الجنازية غير الملكية، مثل الإيمان بالحياة الآخرة، وتنظيم عادات الدفن، وعبادة أوزوريس، خلال عصر الدولة القديمة (حوالي ٢٥٤٣-٢١٢٠ قبل الميلاد). اعتنق المصريون القدماء المعتقد الثقافي. وأن الحياة تستمر بعد الموت وأن القبر هو المكان الذي تستمر فيه. لذلك اعتبر النبلاء المصريون المقبرة موقعاً مهماً.

من المفهوم منذ زمن طويل أن المقابر تخدم غرضين حيويين: فهي تؤوي طوائف جنازية وتحمي جسد المتوفى. ولكي يستمر المتوفى في حياته الآخرة، توقعوا أن يقوم الكهنة بتنفيذ طقوس الدفن لهم وأن يقدم الأحياء القرايين ويصلون لهم. ونتيجة لذلك، اهتم أصحاب المقابر أيضاً بإعداد الأدوات الجنازية، على سبيل المثال، التابوت، ومائدة القرايين، وحوض الماء (الذي كان مخصصاً للممارسات الجنازية)، والأواني التي سيستخدمها المتوفى في الحياة الآخرة. في جميع أنحاء الدولة القديمة تطورت الثقافة الجنازية غير الملكية وتغيرت مفهوم الحياة الآخرة، وأحدثت تغييرات في المقابر الخاصة، واهتموا بشكل خاص بنحت

باب زائف يحمل نقوشاً للميت وهو يقبل القرابين المقدمة له وهكذا ستتعرف الروح على صاحب القبر. وكانت للأبواب الكاذبة أهمية خاصة وكبيرة بالنسبة للموتى في مصر القديمة.

Introduction:

Important components of non-royal funerary culture, such as the belief in the afterlife, the organization of burial customs, and the worship of the Osiris, were developed during the Old Kingdom (c. 2543–2120 B.C.) Ancient Egyptians held the cultural belief that life persisted after death and that the tomb was a place where it continued. The Egyptian nobility therefore considered a tomb to be a significant location.

It has long been understood that tombs serve two vital purposes: They house funerary cults and safeguard the body of the departed. In order for the deceased to continue their afterlife, they anticipated that priests would execute burial rituals for them and that the living would provide offerings and pray for them. Consequently, the tomb owners also paid attention to preparing funerary goods, for instance, a sarcophagus, offering table, water basin (which were for funerary practices) and vessels the deceased would use in the afterlife. Throughout the Old Kingdom the non-royal funerary, culture developed and changes to the concept of the afterlife, brought about changes in the private tombs. They were particularly interested in carving a false door bearing inscriptions of the dead accepting the offerings presented to him and so that the spirit would recognize the owner of the tomb. False doors had special and great importance for the dead in ancient Egypt.

Methodology

This article focuses on the false door discovered at Dahshur archaeological site, as important and essential funerary equipment in ancient Egyptian tombs, this Old Kingdom false door will be discussed in terms of the textual and archaeological evidence to cover the various aspects that it contains.

Dahshur was the southern part of the cemetery of Memphis, the capital of ancient Egypt. The pyramids of the kings of the Old and Middle Kingdoms were erected on this hill. The first king of the 4th Dynasty, Snefru, chose the rocky plateau of Dahshur to establish his first pyramid but failed to complete it. This first attempt turned into a broken shape, but he built a complete pyramid at a distance from it, called the Red Pyramid. Nearby, the pyramids dating to the Middle Kingdom, starting from the pyramid of King Amenemhat II, stand, although in a bad state. The pyramid of King Senusret III is surrounded by the tombs of the princesses Sit-Hathor and Ment. (Alexanian, and others,2007, p.1-3)

As for the Black Pyramid of King Amenemhat III, it is also in a poor condition. Despite the erosion of its stones, it is still standing at a distance from the pyramid of Snefru. The stone pyramidion, the tip of the pyramid, is on display at the Egyptian Museum. Several other pyramids of the 13th Dynasty were built at Dahshur. (Alexanian, and others,2007, p.3-5) Some Elite built their tombs next to the kings, where the false door was discovered.

The false door is about 161 cm*91 cm, preserved N. Mt 34 at the first floor in Marsa Matruh Museum for archaeology. The Museum was established inside Misr Public Library in Matruh Governorate in cooperation with the governorate to shed light on the city of Marsa

Matruh and its history throughout the ages on the basis of the excavations in the region. The total area of the museum is 728 m², divided on two floors. The museum includes many artifacts that highlight the accomplishments of the kings of Egypt during the various eras, the most important of which is the Pharaonic period, such as securing borders and establishing forts and castles in the western border region of Egypt. This highlights the historical importance of the region that is considered as the western gateway to Egypt, in addition to its role in relation to hunting and trade and its relationship with its neighbors, as the exhibits shed light on the desert deities. The museum screening scenario also covers other topics such as astronomy, science and philosophy.



The false door looks like a real door, which is made of wood and reed matting, but the false door is modelled in stone in rock-cut tombs, these doors can be directly hewn from the rock's surface. These doors, however, were formed of a single stone slab or individual building blocks in free-standing chapels. Although false doors might be made of a variety of materials, such as wood, granite, and sandstone, the most common one is limestone. The fake door was constructed of limestone, the most common stone in Egypt (Wiebach 2001, 498–501).







The ancient Egyptians described false doors as the entrances to souls and gave them a name RA pr Which means the entrance to the house, and another name is Rwt which means the gate, its purpose is for the soul to pass through to identify its owner. The Egyptian artist engraved the name and titles of the owner of the tomb and also engraved scenes of the dead person accepting offerings. (Saleh, ١٩٦٠, p١٠٠-٩٥)

The false door architectural structure is divided into the following sections: A stone drum that resembles a rolled-up reed mat, a cross bar above the door, a panel resting on the cross bar with a representation of the door's owner seated before an offering table, and one, two, or three pairs of jambs typically inscribed with offering formulae and the name and titles of the deceased are some elements that have persisted across different periods. Over time, false door structures underwent significant development. (Strudwick 1985, 9–27; Brovarski 2006, 71–118)

The decorations of the false door on these sets of jambs were always concluded with a figure of the stela's owner standing, oriented inwards, and often represented with attire and regalia reflecting the dead social standing in life and the ideal into which he desires to be transfigured, starting from the mid-Fifth Dynasty, many false doors exhibited distinctive architectural features such as cavetto cornices decorated with stylized palm leaves and torus moldings. The latter appear as a rounded edge representing a bundle of reeds tied together with ropes, which were used as frames of actual contemporary wooden doors (Brovarski ,2009, 359–425).

First: At the top of the upper part of the false door, we see the offering bearers and priests who carry offerings to the dead. They are from right to left:

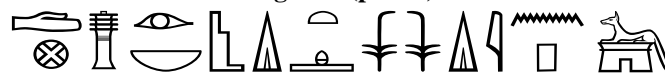
- 1-  Wdpw The bartender
- 2-  Wt The mummified priest

- 3-  Xry- hp The chanting priest
- 4-  Xry- xpS Thigh holder
- 5-  Xry- aA Follower
- 6-    Xry sttA The servant woman

Second: In the part that holds No. 2, we find the offering formula for the offerings, which was divided in the direction of the writing into two parts, one on the right for Anubis and the second on the left for Osiris. It appears as follows:



Fig. no.1(part.2)



Htp di nsw wsir nb Ddw AbDw Htp di nsw inpw

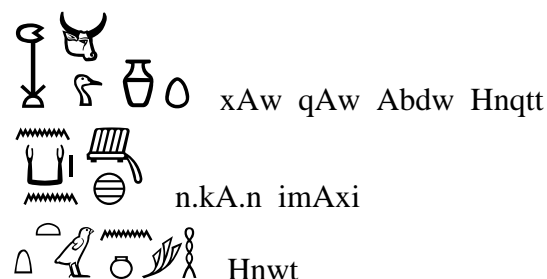
Translation

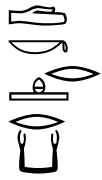
For an offering that the king gives to Osiris, lord of Ddw (Abydos),

For an offering that is given to Anubis.

Third: In the part that bears No. 3, we find lines that were engraved vertically as colored decorations, where we find remnants of the red color.

Fourth: In the part bearing No. 4, there is an inscription representing the offering table scene on the false door. Where we see a woman sitting in the position of receiving offerings, wearing a long robe and a wig, and smell the lotus flower, in front of her is a rectangular table on which different types of offerings such as bread, meat, and birds are placed, and under the table there are three vessels.





d.k r. htp r.kA

Translation

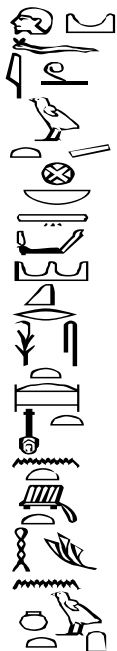
A thousand beer, bread, bulls' heads, and birds' heads for the ka of infertile Hnut peace for her ka.



At the bottom of the scene of accepting dead offerings, the artist engraved the eyes of the widgets.

The two vertical lines: We find hieroglyphic text on both sides of the false door, as follows:

On the right one :



tpy
Dw.f
nb
tA
Dsr
qrst.f

Hnwt

Translation

	prt xrw t Hnqt qAw Abdw nt AmAxt sAt sbk rn.s nfr HnwT
.	. Translation
The in-	
oxen, and bird	
name is Hnut.	
At the end of	
and left, are r	

The invocation of the voice of the offering, consisting of bread, beer, oxen, and birds, to the Venerable Sat Sobk (sobk's daughter), whose beautiful name is Hnut.

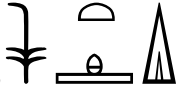
At the end of the vertical line of the hieroglyphic text, at the two parts right and left, are representations of the false-door owner. Hnut, holding with one hand the lotus flower, smelled to give her life again. The inscription follows

Conclusion


A false door has a top lintel, an outer pair of jambs, and interior jambs that are all on the same plane. A prayer may be found in the texts that have been preserved on the upper lintel and extend all the way down the left outer jamb. False doors from the latter part of the Old Kingdom typically have arrangements like this. (Brovarski 2009, 359–425).


The false-door drum in the central niche is on the same level as the inner jambs and lacks any inscription, an arrangement that is also typical of late Old Kingdom false doors.

Hnut's name was used at the end of the old kingdom and at the Middle King Dom, as this name was common in the Middle Kingdom, according to (Ranke 1935, p. 242).

This format is  Htp-di - nsw / a gift given by the master.

One of the most popular formulae used throughout the Old and Middle Kingdoms was "which means an offering," but starting with the Eighteenth Dynasty, the prior phrase was

utilized instead, became unfamiliar, instead, the form  Htp-di-nsw is used, which is translated with the same meaning. (Smither, C.P., 1939)

 **Wedjat-eyes** appeared on the decorated false doors. (Brovanski 2009: 361)

Stated that the use of **Wedjat-eyes** on the niche of false doors became a typical feature in the Sixth Dynasty and the First Intermediate Period. 'Protection, strength, and perfection' Wedjat-eyes are associated with offering rituals, so the motif might have been used on behalf of the offering ritual scene. Without going into the details of the Wedjat-eyes on Old Kingdom false doors. (Wiebach 1981: 160-163)

To further understand the use of the false doors, let's look at how tomb owners in the old Kingdom used them as memorials and offering stela for the deceased rather than as a passage way between this world and the underworld. Likewise, the false doors changed, and this alteration was reflected in the significance of false doors in Egyptian funerary culture. This stylistic change is visible in reliefs dating back to Pepi I's rule, and it was more common at the end of the Sixth Dynasty and the end of the Old Kingdom. (Brovanski 2008, 49–89).


The false door can also be dated in several ways, such as the appearance of the dead smelling perfume, and this is a feature that appeared at the end of the Fifth Dynasty onwards, and the false doors with large scenes of the deceased on the sides of the door, which spread in the Fourth Dynasty until the middle kingdom. (Mahmoud ٢٠٢٢, p 323)


The Fifth Dynasty, and the False door with small scenes of the deceased on the sides, which is the prevailing style after the middle of the Fifth Dynasty, and holding a papyrus or lotus scepter, which is a feature that appeared since the reign of Pepi II, as well as shortening the view of the offering plate and only depicting the dead sitting in front of the offering table without depicting foods or utensils, it is an appearance that refers to the second half of the reign of King Pepi II. (Mahmoud ,2022 p 323)

Observations:

On the False Door which we are studying we find:

1- The use of sunk-relief on false doors with cornices and Khayrazna began from the late Fifth Dynasty onwards.

2-  Writing the formula for the offering by prt Xrw consisting of bread, beer only is a feature of the Old Kingdom and precedes the First Intermediate Period. (Hassan ,٢٠٢٠,p -١٩٦ ٢٠٢)

3-  The writing of Anubis in the form of an animal crouching over a cabin It dates from the reign of Pipi I onwards, writing the name Anubis in monograms only, without the form of a crouching jackal, indicates the end of the Old Kingdom, which is the period extending from the end of the Sixth Dynasty until the Eighth Dynasty. (Hassan ,2020, p 207) (Fischer, 1968, p. 84)

2

	3	
	4	
	5	

Fig. no.3
(Illustrate by Walaa Omer)



Fig. no.4

The false door preserved N. Mt 34 in MarsaMatruh Museum (photo by Wael Ayoub)



Left part Fig. no.5



Right part Fig. no.1

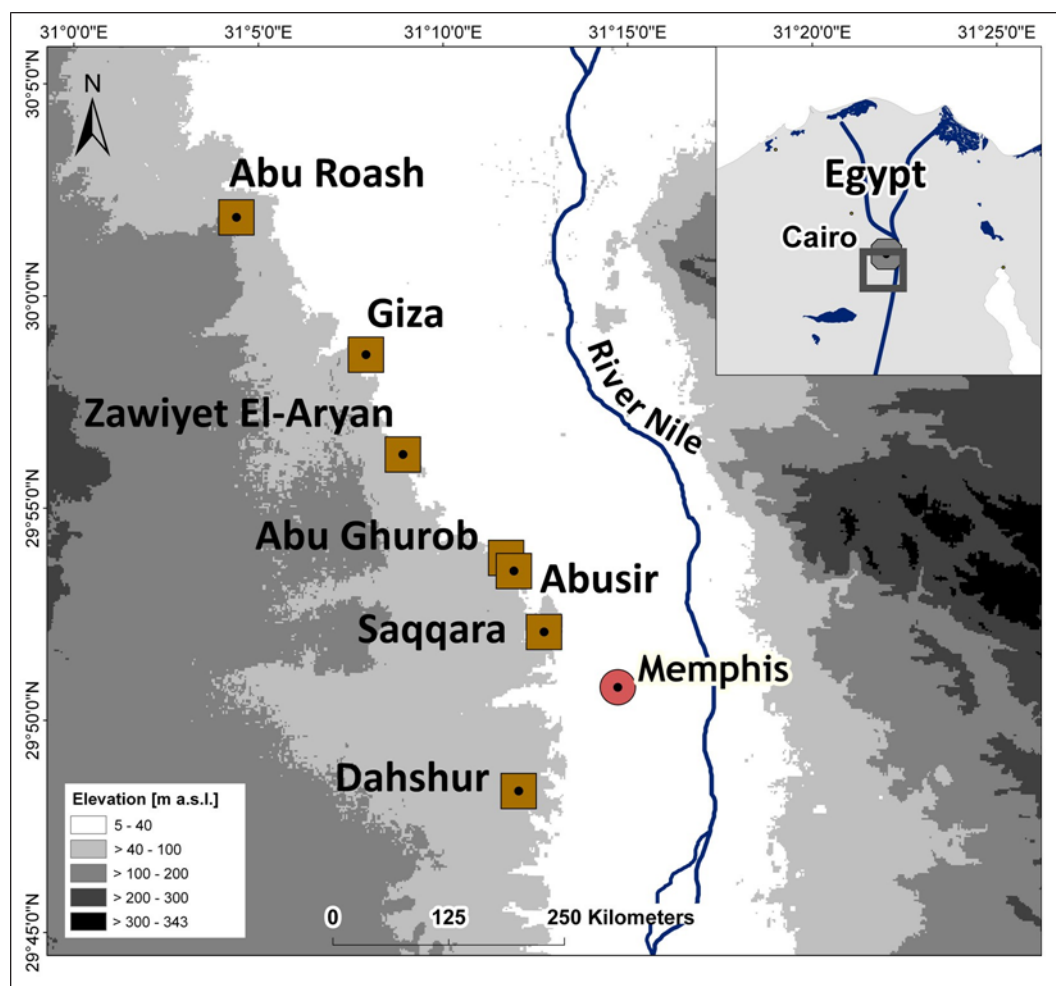
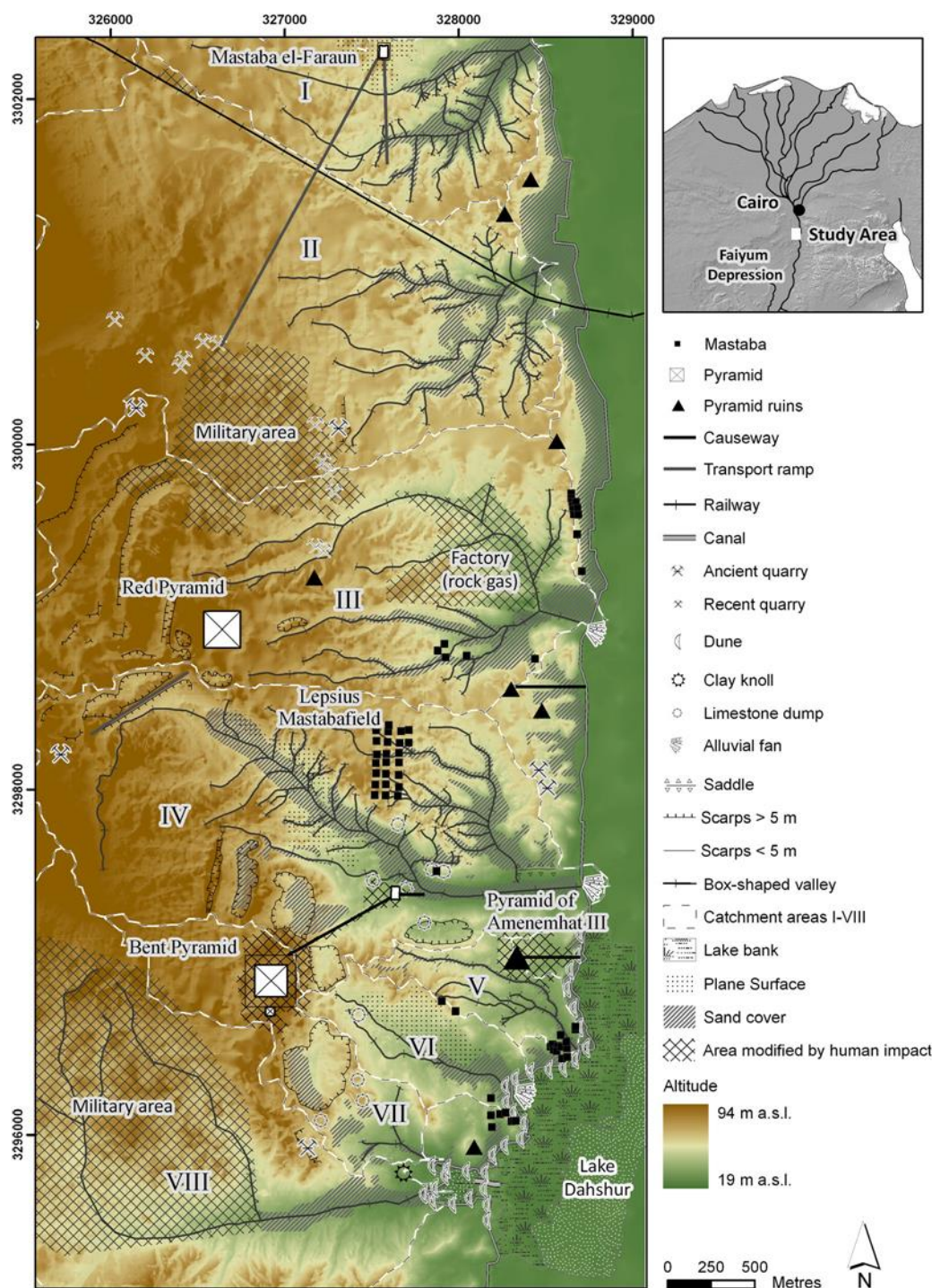


Fig. no.6

Overview of the Memphite necropolises south of Cairo. Coordinate system: WGS 1984 (map source: Shuttle Radar Topography Mission, <http://edc.usgs.gov/srtm/>) (Bebermeier and Others ,2011, p.326)



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