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The certainty of change : a research into the interactions of the decoration on the western walls of the cult chapels of the mastabas at Giza during the Old Kingdom

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Chapter IX

The chronological development of the cultic character of the false door and its parts.

The interaction between the false door and the western wall.

In this chapter the chronological development of the cultic character of the door jambs and the panel of the false door is determined by the same method that has been applied to the western wall. From these two areas the chronological development of the cultic character of the false door as a whole is determined. This can be linked to the same development on the remaining surface of the western wall, not only to compare them, but also to provide information about the development of the cultic character of the whole western wall.

I. The chronological development of the cultic character: preliminary considerations.

Because only the door jambs and the panel show a chronological development, this part of the research project is limited to these two parts (see table VIII.1.Vol.2). From these parts the chronological development of the cultic character is discerned and by combining them, the chronological development of the cultic character of the false door as a whole can be determined.

Starting from the assumption that the false door is the cultic centre of the chapel, the working hypothesis is that every (sub)theme on the false door is directly and exclusively involved in the cult for the *ka* of the deceased, and, as a consequence, has a cultic character of type Ib.¹

I.1. The chronological development of the cultic character of the sections of the false door.

The chronological development (the use life) of each (sub)theme of a part of the false door is determined in the curves given in diagrams VIII.1-15.Vol.2. Only the (sub)period(s) in which the (sub)theme is frequently employed are included.² In the compilation thus made, the total type Ib cultic character of the period is determined by counting per subperiod the number of (sub)themes. The total cultic character per period is determined and compiled in a diagram.

I.1.1. The panel of the false door.

The sequence over time of the (sub)themes on the panel is determined in the curve of diagrams VIII.8-12.Vol.2 and gathered in figure IX.1. A diagram is made of their chronological development (figure IX.2).³

¹ The ideographic offering list has always been placed in the vicinity of the tomb owner at the offering table and remains so throughout the Old Kingdom. Based on the quantities given in the list, it is a section of the inventory offering list ("Inventaropferliste"), but its place next to the offering table stresses its close connection with the cultic meal the tomb owner is having (Barta, *Opferliste*, 9). Because the ideographic offering list is placed there because of its cultic role and not to fill empty space around the table, it cannot be considered as a (sub)theme with a unifying function.

² The problem of the calibration of this frequency has already been discussed (chapter VII, section V).

³ The chronological development of (sub)theme 43 has been left out due to the extremely low values per period.

(sub)theme	IV		V.E		V.M		V.L		VI	
	early	late	early	late	early	late	early	late	early	late
40/41										
42										
44										
43										
total	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3

Figure IX.1 : The chronological development of the cultic character of the panel of the false door

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presence of the
(sub)theme

For this part of the research project (sub)themes 40 (offering table scene, tomb owner alone) and 41 (offering table scene, tomb owner with other person) are taken as one (sub)theme. The curve shows that during the whole Old Kingdom the type Ib cultic character of the panel remained the same.

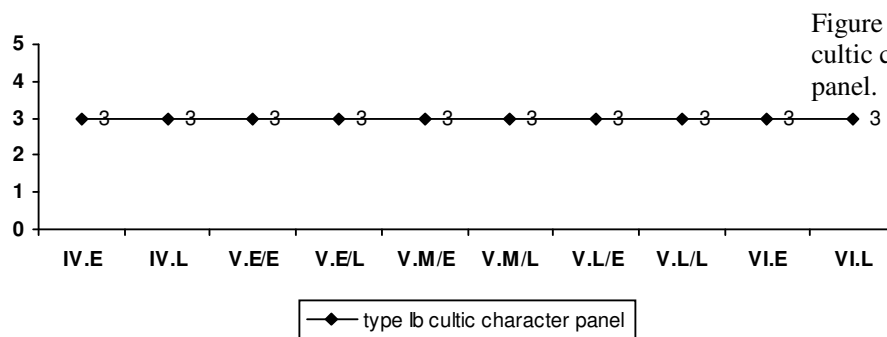


Figure IX.2: The type Ib cultic character of the panel.

I.1.2. The door jambs.

The presence of the (sub)themes on the door jambs is derived from the curves of diagrams VIII.1-7.Vol.2 and compiled in figure IX.3. The total cultic character per subperiod is determined and gathered in figure IX.4.

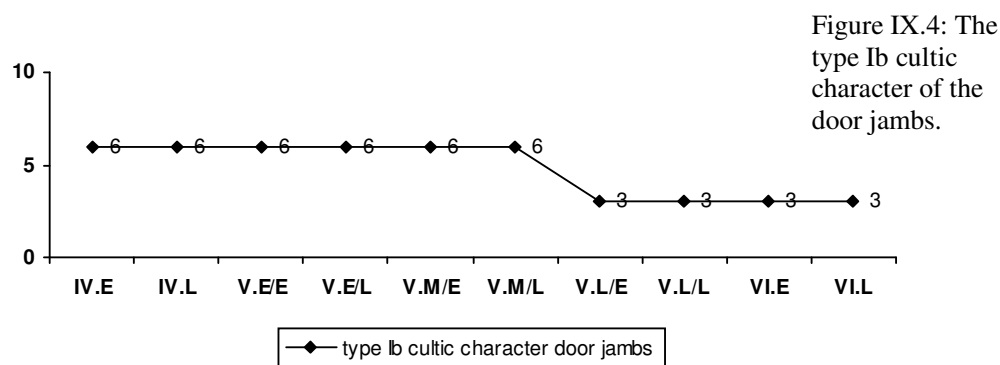
The total type Ib cultic character of the door jambs decreases in the period when (sub)theme 33 is introduced on the false door.

(sub)theme	IV		V.E		V.M		V.L		VI	
	early	late	early	late	early	late	early	late	early	late
30										
31										
32										
33										
34										
35										
36										
total	6	6	6	6	6	6	3	3	3	3

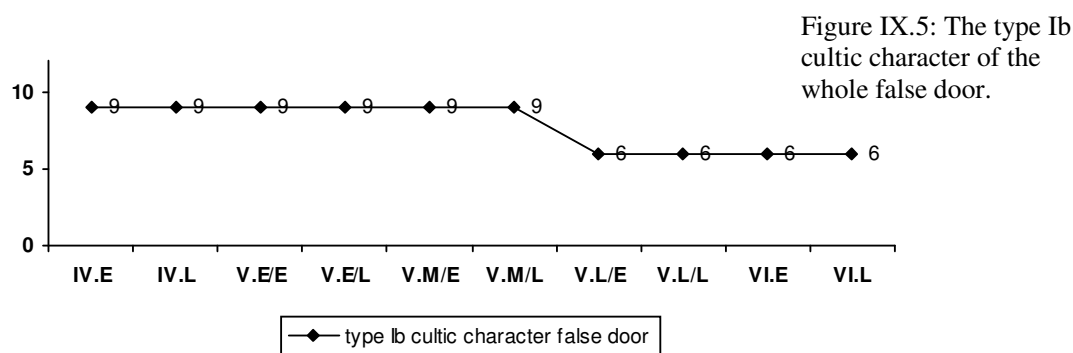
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presence of the
(sub)theme

Figure IX.3: The chronological development of the cultic character of the (sub)themes of the door jambs of the false door.



If figures IX.2 (the chronological development of the type Ib cultic character of the panel) and IX.4 (the chronological development of the type Ib cultic character of the door jambs) are combined, the chronological development of the cultic character of the whole false door becomes evident (figure IX.5). A decrease in the cultic character of the false door from the period V.M/E is visible.



However, the curves in figures IX.3, IX.4 and IX.5 not only represent the development of the type Ib cultic character on the parts of the false door and on the false door as a whole, but also represent the development of the number of (sub)themes on them.

II. The chronological development of the cultic character of the whole western wall.

Because of the exclusive type Ib cultic character of the false door, chronological developments of the type Ia and IIa/b cultic character are confined to the western wall (figures VII.19 and VII.20). In order to compare the development of the type Ib cultic character of the elements of the western wall figures VII.19 and IX.5 are combined in one diagram (figure IX.6).

Figure IX.6 shows that two major and opposed tendencies are evident on the western wall. The type Ib cultic character of the false door decreases while that of the western wall increases. However, more significant is that the increase of the type Ib cultic character of the western wall starts at the end of the 4th dynasty, thus creating a tendency that was only followed by the decrease of the type Ib cultic character of the false door at the transition from V.E to V.M.

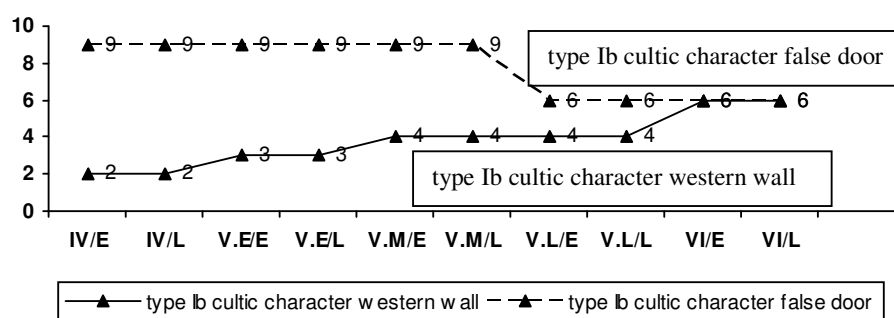


Figure IX.6: The chronological development of type Ib cultic character of western wall and false door.

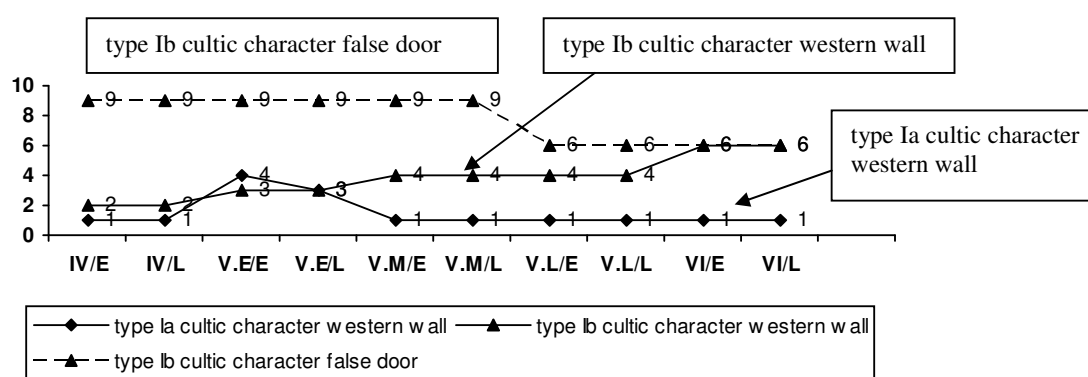


Figure IX.7: The chronological development of type Ia and Ib cultic character of the western wall and type Ib cultic character of the false door.

Because (sub)themes with a type Ia cultic character are also placed on the western wall, the development of this type is represented in figure IX.7 together with the curves of the development of the type Ib cultic character of the western wall and the false door.

In figure IX.8 the type Ib cultic character of the total western wall is given and it is evident that the overall type Ib character does not change over time.⁴

The conclusion from the curves in figures IX.6 and IX.8 is that the type Ib cultic character, which was at first practically totally confined to the false door, became increasingly shared between the two main elements of the western wall during the course of the Old Kingdom.

⁴ The linear line presented in the diagram is practically horizontal, because the “direction coefficient” is very close to zero (the equation of the curve is $y = -0.1455x + 11.8$) (see chapter III, appendix III, section II).

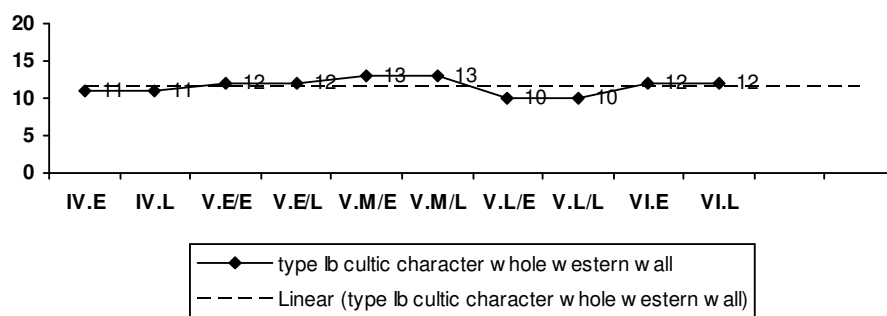


Figure IX.8: The type Ib cultic character of the total western wall.

III. Conclusions.

The major changes in cultic character that took place on the western wall are the following:

1. From the start of the Old Kingdom the false door had a type Ib cultic character, which, due to a decrease in the number of (sub)themes on the false door, began decreasing from the end of V.M/L on (figure IX.4).
2. At the start of the 5th dynasty the role of the western wall in the cult started to increase in importance (period V.E/E) (figure IX.6).
3. During the period V.E/L (figure IX.7) the type Ia cultic character of the western wall starts to decrease, and this continues throughout the period V.E/L – V.M/E, while in the same period the type Ib cultic character of the western wall continues to increase.
4. In the period V.M/E the type Ia cultic character reached its minimum value (figure IX.7).
5. In the period V.L/E the type Ib cultic character of the false door started to decrease (figure IX.7).
6. The type Ib cultic character of the false door reached its minimum value in the period V.L/E (figure IX.7).
7. The increase of the type Ib cultic character of the western wall reached its end in the period VI.E.

From the start of the Old Kingdom the western wall had a certain degree of type Ib cultic character. Yet it cannot be discerned whether its type Ib role is connected with an actual cult or a magical substitute.

Taking into account the strong type Ib cultic character of the false door, the working hypothesis is that at the start of the Old Kingdom the false door was the centre of an actual cult (type Ib), and that the western wall played only a small role in this activity. This is corroborated by the curves in figure IX.6 in which is visible that at the start of the Old Kingdom the type Ib cultic character is nearly exclusively confined to the false door and that in the course of the Old Kingdom the western wall became more important and developed a stronger type Ib cultic character.

At first the main purpose of the western wall was depicting the daily life of the tomb owner (type Ia cultic character) and supporting the cultic role of the false door by means of depictions of priests and the butchery scene.

The type Ia cultic character became more important during the first few years of the 5th dynasty, but it soon started to diminish and to fall into nearly total disuse.

In the meantime the type Ib role of the western wall continued to increase, finally resulting in a partial take-over of the type Ib role of the false door. This can be explained by a diminution of the importance of the actual cult in front of the false door, and a subsequent increase in the importance in the supply of food by way of magic.

If indeed the supply of food for the *ka* of the deceased became more dependent upon magic, then there was a growing need for decoration showing activities around the production and supply of food, and the depiction of the food itself.