

Old Kingdom, New Perspectives

Egyptian Art and Archaeology

2750–2150 BC

edited by

Nigel Strudwick and Helen Strudwick

OLD KINGDOM, NEW PERSPECTIVES

Egyptian Art and Archaeology 2750–2150 BC

edited by

Nigel Strudwick and Helen Strudwick

OXBOW BOOKS
Oxford and Oakville

Published by
Oxbow Books, Oxford, UK

© Nigel and Helen Strudwick 2011
Cleo font by Cleo Huggins
Typeset by Nigel Strudwick

ISBN 978-1-84217-430-2

This book is available direct from

Oxbow Books, Oxford, UK
(Phone: 01865-241249; Fax: 01865-794449)

and

The David Brown Book Company
PO Box 511, Oakville, CT 06779, USA
(Phone: 860-945-9329; Fax: 860-945-9468)

or from our website

www.oxbowbooks.com

A CIP record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Old Kingdom Art and Archaeology Conference (2009 : Cambridge, England)

Old Kingdom, new perspectives : Egyptian art and archaeology 2750-2150 BC / edited
by Nigel Strudwick and Helen Strudwick.

p. cm.

Proceedings of the Old Kingdom Art and Archaeology Conference, held May 20-23,
2009 at the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge.

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 978-1-84217-430-2

1. Egypt--Antiquities--Congresses. 2. Excavations (Archaeology)--Egypt--Congresses.
3. Egypt--Civilization--To 332 B.C.--Congresses. I. Strudwick, Nigel. II. Strudwick,
Helen. III. Title.

DT60.O65 2009

932.012--dc23

2011034091

Cover: © Milan Zemina. Used by permission of Miroslav Verner

Printed in Great Britain by
Short Run Press, Exeter

Contents

Foreword		
<i>Timothy Potts</i>		v
Introduction		
<i>Nigel Strudwick and Helen Strudwick</i>		vii
1 Recent work in the tomb of Nebkauhor at Saqqara		
<i>Abdou el-Kerety</i>		1
2 A new Old Kingdom rock-cut tomb from Abusir and its Abusir-Saqqara context		
<i>Miroslav Bárta</i>		9
3 Mastaba core structure: new data from fourth dynasty elite tombs at Abu Rawash		
<i>Michel Baud and Eric Guerrier</i>		22
4 The art of Egyptian hieroglyphs as seen by the Akhmim painters		
<i>V. G. Callender</i>		33
5 Two cemeteries for one provincial capital? Deir el-Bersha and el-Sheikh Said in the fifteenth Upper Egyptian nome during the Old Kingdom		
<i>Marleen De Meyer</i>		42
6 Blocks from the Unas causeway recorded in Černý's notebooks at the Griffith Institute, Oxford		
<i>Andrés Diego Espinel</i>		50
7 A spatial metaphor for chronology in the secondary cemeteries at Giza		
<i>May Farouk</i>		71
8 The decorative programmes of the pyramid complexes of Khufu and Khafre at Giza		
<i>Laurel Flentye</i>		77
9 Reading the Menkaure Triads: Part II (Multi-directionality)		
<i>Florence Dunn Friedman</i>		93
10 The death of the Democratisation of the Afterlife		
<i>Harold M. Hays</i>		115
11 A new specific tomb type in Abusir?		
<i>Jaromír Krejčí</i>		131
12 An afterworld for Netjerykhet		
<i>Kamil O. Kuraszkiewicz</i>		139

13	Re-examining the Khentkaues Town <i>Mark Lehner, Daniel Jones, Lisa Yeomans, Hanan Mahmoud and Kasia Olchowska</i>	143
14	Searching for an undistorted template (digital epigraphy in action) <i>Jolana Malatkova</i>	192
15	The 'Reserve Heads': some remarks on their function and meaning <i>Massimiliano Nuzzolo</i>	200
16	The evidence of images: art and working techniques in the mastaba of Mereruka <i>Gabriele Pieke</i>	216
17	The concept of <i>hpr</i> in Old Kingdom religious texts <i>Joanna Popielska-Grzybowska</i>	229
18	Twisted Kilts: variations in aspective representation in Old Kingdom mastaba chapels <i>Ann Macy Roth</i>	234
19	And where are the viscera...? Reassessing the function of Old Kingdom canopic recesses and pits <i>Teodozja I. Rzeuska</i>	244
20	Fixed rules or personal choice? On the composition and arrangement of daily life scenes in Old Kingdom elite tombs <i>Nico Staring</i>	256
21	Village, town and barracks: a fourth dynasty settlement at Heit el-Ghurab, Giza <i>Ana Tavares</i>	270
22	An Old Kingdom bakery at Sheikh Said South: preliminary report on the pottery corpus <i>Stefanie Vereecken</i>	278
23	Why was the Fifth Dynasty cemetery founded at Abusir? <i>Miroslav Verner and Vladimír Brůna</i>	286
24	The economic connection between the royal cult in the pyramid temples and the sun temples in Abusir <i>Hana Vymazalová</i>	295
25	The Ancient Egypt Research Associates settlement site at Giza: the Old Kingdom ceramic distribution <i>Anna Wodzińska</i>	304
26	<i>zš</i> <i>wšd</i> scenes of the Old Kingdom revisited <i>Alexandra Woods</i>	314

Foreword

There can be no academic subject for which the general public has such an inexhaustible appetite as Egyptology, and no period more so than the age of the pyramids. But the popular writings in this area are notoriously variable. While there is no shortage of reliable and accessible surveys by leading scholars in the field, neither does one have to look far on book lists to find an abundance of 'pyramidology' and other nonsense which also finds a wide audience. It was therefore a very welcome opportunity that arose when Helen Strudwick proposed that the 2009 Old Kingdom Art and Archaeology conference be held at the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge so as to coincide with our annual Glanville Lecture on Egyptology, thus bringing the fruits of recent excavation and research by leading scholars to a wide general audience. The resulting event, held on 20–23 May 2009, consisted of a three-day meeting of specialist researchers, followed by a day of talks by some of the foremost experts in the Old Kingdom, to which the public was also invited, all culminating that evening in the Glanville Lecture delivered by Dr Jaromir Malek on 'A city on the move: Egypt's capital in the Old Kingdom'. This volume publishes all but three of the twenty-seven papers presented at the conference, plus one additional offering.

The Fitzwilliam Museum is fortunate to have one of the most important collections of Egyptian antiquities in the UK and thus provides a very appropriate setting for the OKAA conference. The earliest Egyptian object to arrive—a very fine Third Intermediate Period coffin

set—was given in 1822, only six years after the bequest of Viscount Fitzwilliam created the museum, and a quarter century before the building erected to house its collections first opened its doors. Since then the Museum's Egyptian collection has grown to nearly 17,000 objects, of which some one thousand are on display. The Egyptian galleries were refurbished in 2006 and remain the most popular in the museum.

Stephen Glanville, after whom the lecture is named, was Professor of Egyptology at Cambridge (1946–1956), as well as being Chairman of the Fitzwilliam's Syndicate and Honorary Keeper of Antiquities. Glanville saw it as essential that the Museum's Egyptian collections were actively used in teaching—as is still the case today—and that they continue to grow through acquisition. His commitment to engaging the public in the fascinating discoveries of professional Egyptologists has been continued by the Museum by the holding of a lecture bearing his name since 1977. We were delighted that Jaromir Malek accepted the invitation to give the 2009 lecture; and that so many distinguished scholars of Old Kingdom Egypt were able to attend the conference with which it was paired.

Special thanks are due to Helen Strudwick, at the time Senior Assistant Keeper, Antiquities, and Nigel Strudwick, the organisers of the conference, who have also edited the papers published here.

Timothy Potts
Director
The Fitzwilliam Museum
Cambridge

Introduction

This volume presents twenty-five of the twenty-seven papers presented at the 2009 Conference Old Kingdom Art and Archaeology, generously hosted by the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge. The history of these Old Kingdom meetings was admirably summarised by Miroslav Bárta in his Foreword to the proceedings of the 2004 conference, held in Prague, and it would be superfluous to repeat it here. The contents of the present volume show the wide range of subjects which this research group now embraces, from the Pyramid Texts through site reports, from the analysis of statue orientation to attempts to study the spatial arrangement of Old Kingdom cemeteries. Some of the papers are substantially the same as those presented at the meeting, but the editors have encouraged authors, where they feel it is necessary, to expand upon their ideas and to take them beyond the limited range of material which can be presented in a twenty-minute talk. One further paper which could not be presented at the conference is also included.

We were delighted to welcome to Cambridge colleagues from all over the Egyptological world, and they fairly represent where the Old Kingdom is studied most. We are delighted to be able to include the paper from Abdou el-Kerety (better known to his friends and colleagues as Hatem); visa problems meant that he was regrettably unable to be present at the conference, despite our best efforts with the UK authorities, but his contribution was read and appreciated in his absence. The paper of Gabriele Pieke could not be presented at the conference but we are happy to be able to include it. The longest paper presented here is by Mark Lehner and his co-authors and is a report on progress of his excavations at Giza; this has turned into a

substantial publication and analysis and it is a great pleasure to be able to include it in this volume.

The final day of the conference was open to the public, focusing more particularly on papers relating to the archaeology and monuments of the Memphite region. This, and indeed the conference as a whole, formed a precursor to the thirty-third Stephen Glanville Memorial Lecture. This annual event, hosted by the Fitzwilliam Museum, has been an important fixture in the Cambridge and UK Egyptological calendar since 1977. In 2009, the Lecture was given by Dr Jaromir Malek on the subject 'A city on the move: Egypt's capital in the Old Kingdom'.

The editors would like to thank many persons without whose help and assistance the 2009 Old Kingdom Art and Archaeology meeting could not have taken place. First and foremost, we are deeply indebted to Dr Timothy Potts and all the staff of the Fitzwilliam Museum for enabling the events to take place so successfully, and for ensuring the efficient operation of everything from computer projectors through to the teas and coffees which sustained us. We also thank our colleagues whose enlightening papers and discussion made the meeting the success it was, and we acknowledge their efforts in enabling the completion of the manuscript just over two years since the meeting.

We are delighted to acknowledge the help and assistance offered by Oxbow Books in taking this publication into their archaeological series. To our editor, Clare Litt, and the head of production, Val Lamb, go our profound thanks for their advice and support.

Nigel Strudwick
Helen Strudwick

The 'Reserve Heads': some remarks on their function and meaning

Massimiliano Nuzzolo

*Introduction*¹

A full century has elapsed since Jacques de Morgan's excavations at Dahshur unearthed the first reserve head (Cairo CG 591).² Since then, many theories have been put forward to explain their anomalous shape and strange mutilations, but none has found a general consensus among scholars.³

¹ My gratitude goes to those friends and colleagues who kindly assisted this study: Rosanna Pirelli (University of Naples 'L'Orientale'; Director of the Italian Archaeological Centre in Cairo) for comments and suggestions during each stage of the study; Peter D. Manuelian (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston: Giza Archives Project: www.mfa.org/giza) for several references on the topic and for making information so easily accessible through the Giza Archives; Harold M. Hays (Leiden University) who revised the English version of this paper. Any mistake remains, of course, my own responsibility. Special thanks also go to Nigel and Helen Strudwick for inviting me to join this wonderful and interesting meeting in Cambridge.

² J. de Morgan, *Fouilles à Dahchour*, mars-juin 1894 (Vienne 1895), 9, fig. 7.

³ The most comprehensive study of the subject is that by R. Tefnin, *Art et magie au temps des pyramides: L'énigme des têtes dites 'de remplacement'* (MonAeg 5; Bruxelles 1991). Further to its bibliography and according to their chronological order, it is worth mentioning here other, more recent papers specifically devoted to the topic: A. L. Kelley, 'Reserve Heads: A Review of the Evidence for their Placement and Function in the Old Kingdom Tombs', *JSSEA* 5 (1974), 6–12; C. Vandersleyen, 'Ersatzkopf', *LÄ* II (1977), 11–14; N. B. Millet, 'The Reserve Heads of the Old Kingdom', in W. K. Simpson and W. M. Davis (eds), *Studies in Ancient Egypt, the Aegean, and the Sudan. Essays in honor of Dows Dunham* (Boston 1981), 129–131; R. Tefnin, 'Les têtes magiques de Gizeh', *BSFE* 120 (1991), 25–37; H. Schmidt, 'Zur Determination und Ikonographie der sogenannten Ersatzköpfe', *SAK* 18 (1991), 331–348; E. Dubis, 'Some Remarks on Egyptian Reserve Heads', *Studies in Ancient Art and Civilization* 4 (1992), 19–25; D. Wildung, 'Zerstörungsfreie

This situation of uncertainty is even more complicated by the lack of any textual evidence contemporary with the heads which could help us to uncover the secrets of the religious beliefs and funerary practices of the Egyptians of that period more than just the indirect archaeological evidence does. At the same time, however, we must beware of using later textual sources too freely to support our interpretations of much older archaeological data, unless these

Untersuchungen an ägyptischen Objekten', *Jahrbuch Preussischer Kulturbesitz* 29 (1992), 133–156; F. Junge, 'Hum-iunu, Ankh-ha-ef und die sog. "Ersatzköpfe"', in R. Stadelmann and H. Sourouzian (eds), *Kunst des Alten Reiches* (SDAIK 28; Mainz am Rhein 1995), 103–109; A. O. Bolshakov, 'New Observations on the Functions of the So-called Reserve Heads', in C. J. Eyre (ed.), *Seventh International Congress of Egyptologists. Cambridge, 3–9 September 1995. Abstracts of Papers* (Oxford 1995), 21–23; P. Lacovara, 'The Riddle of the Reserve Heads', *KMT* 8/4 (Winter 1997–98), 30–36; D. Wildung, 'Technologische Bemerkungen zur Kunst des Alten Reiches: Neue Fakten zu den Ersatzköpfen', in N. Grimal (ed.), *Les critères de datation stylistiques à l'Ancien Empire* (BdE 120; Le Caire 1998), 399–406; C. H. Roehrig, 'Reserve Heads: An Enigma of Old Kingdom Sculpture', in Do. Arnold (ed.), *Egyptian Art in the Age of the Pyramids* (New York 1999), 73–81; N. Millet, 'The Reserve Heads of the Old Kingdom: A Theory', in Arnold (ed.), *Egyptian Art*, 233–234; R. Tefnin, 'Reserve Heads', in D. B. Redford (ed.), *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt* III (Cairo 2001), 145–147; N. S. Picardo, "'Semantic Homicide" and the So-called Reserve Heads: The Theme of Decapitation in Egyptian Funerary Religion and Some Implications for the Old Kingdom', *JARCE* 43 (2007), 221–252. A detailed analysis of the topic was also made by W. Stevenson Smith within the wider chapter about the sculpture of the fourth dynasty: W. S. Smith, *A History of Egyptian Sculpture and Painting in the Old Kingdom* (London 1946), 23–30, pl. 6–9 (from now on abbreviated as Smith, *HESPOK*).

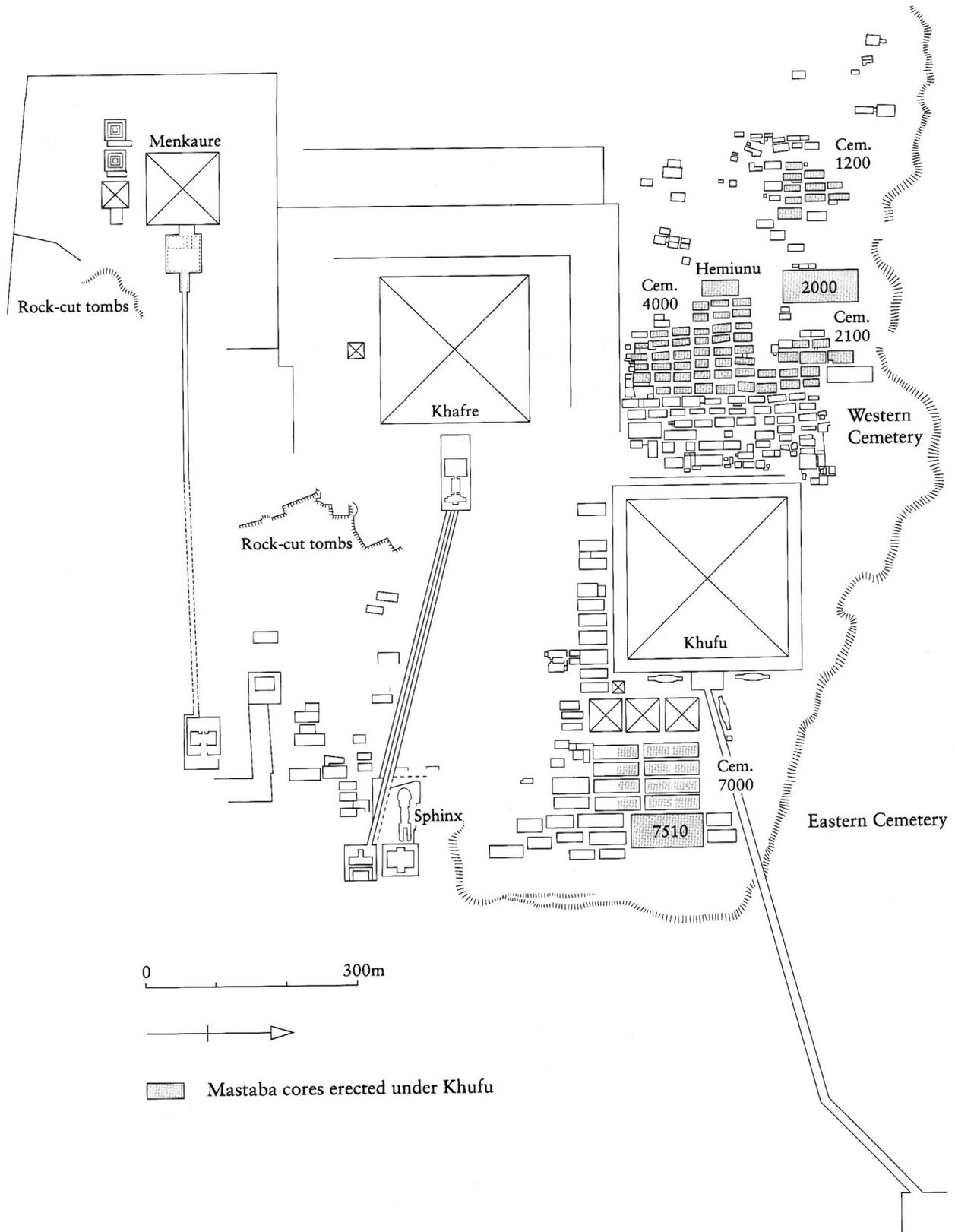


Fig. 1: Map of the Giza Necropolis (after Jánosi, in Arnold (ed.), Egyptian Art, 28). In grey the mastabas built during Khufu's reign

sources directly refer to the period in question.⁴ Indeed, despite the traditional, conservative character of Egyptian thought and myth, each period has its own peculiarities as to both religious and historical backgrounds.

Therefore, starting from a reconsideration of the whole corpus of artefacts and a comparison with other important archaeological, ideological and religious elements of the same period, I will try to show how these sculptures were closely related to the political theology of the beginning of the fourth dynasty and particularly to the figure of Khufu.

In doing so, however, I do not claim to offer any conclusive solutions. With this discussion, I simply wish to draw attention to some reservations and possible lines of research, hoping that these 'magical heads' may continue to receive such attention.⁵

The corpus of the heads: artistic features and archaeological context

Carved in fine white limestone, although sometimes finished with substantial amount of plaster,⁶ the heads show unmistakable physiognomic features with clear portrait hints.⁷

⁴ It appears to be a trend in recent theories to attempt to approach the subject via later textual and/or archaeological sources. This is the case, for instance, for Roehrig, in Arnold (ed.), *Egyptian Art*, 77–78 and Picardo, *JARCE* 43 (2007), 238 ff which will be discussed in detail later. Also in the present paper later texts will be occasionally used (Westcar Papyrus) but only because of their direct connection to the period/king we are dealing with, namely the fourth dynasty and Khufu in particular. As to the use of later sources, see also Tefnin, in Redford (ed.), *Oxford Encyclopedia* III, 146, although he does not always appear to adhere to these strictures.

⁵ P. D. Manuélian, *Mastabas of Nucleus Cemetery G 2100* (Giza Mastabas 8; Boston 2009) appeared after this article has been submitted and it has not been possible to consult it. I am aware that it contains further references to the 'Reserve Heads'.

⁶ Concerning the use of plaster, see for example the head coming from Abusir in the Berlin Museum (ÄM 16455): PM III², 342–343; L. Borchardt, *Das Grabdenkmal des Königs Ne-user-re* (WVDOG 7, Leipzig, 1907), 133, fig. 114; Tefnin, *Art et Magie*, 98–99, pl. II a–d (cat. 2); Wildung, in Grimal (ed.), *Critères de datation*, 399–403; the head from Giza, mastaba G 4940 (Boston Museum of Fine Arts, MFA 21.329): G. A. Reisner, *A History of the Giza Necropolis I* (Cambridge Mass. 1942), pl. 56; Tefnin, *Art et Magie*, 104–105 (pl. IXc–d–XIIa). Roehrig also maintains that several corrections in plaster were made on head 6-19767 in the Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology at Berkeley: see Roehrig, in Arnold (ed.), *Egyptian Art*, 235 (cat. 46).

⁷ According to most scholars, we can certainly speak of real portraiture in the case of the reserve heads: see for example D. Dunham, 'Portraiture in Ancient Egypt', *BMFA* 41 (1943), 68–72; Smith, *HESPOK*, 28–29; Junge, in Stadelmann and Sourouzian (eds), *Kunst*, 103–109; A. O. Bolshakov, *Man and his double in Egyptian Ideology of the Old Kingdom* (ÄAT 37; Wiesbaden 1997), 234–260, especially 257–258; E. R. Russmann, 'Portraiture', in E. R. Russmann (ed.), *Eternal Egypt: Masterworks of Ancient Art from the British Museum* (Berkeley-Los Angeles 2001), 32–39, particularly 33–35. Assmann

However, they appear to be quite standardised in dimensions (about 25–30 cm high), and aesthetic characteristics: all are unpainted⁸ and display either a low surface or an incised line encircling the forehead; deep-set eyes; eyebrows drawn in relief; fine carved noses with the wings of the nostril joining the cheeks; philtrum rendered as a shallow trench with vertical walls.⁹ The strange gaze of the person represented, which is unusually raised from horizontal,¹⁰

goes a step further by saying that: "The portrait has no apparent communicative and commemorative meaning. It is not meant as a "sign" but as a "body" to make a somewhat illegitimate use of the Platonic pun on *soma* (body) and *sema* (sign). "Body" and "sign", *soma* and *sema*, can also be regarded as the two foci on which the tomb as a "bifocal" structure is centered. ... The question arises as to which focus statuary belongs, and the answer can – with regard to the private sculpture of the Old Kingdom – obviously point only to the "body" focus. It is the body, and not the sign, which is extended by this type of tomb sculpture'. However, as we will see later, he seems wrong in comparing functionally the reserve heads and the mummy plaster masks of the same period. See J. Assmann, 'Preservation and Presentation of Self in Ancient Egyptian Portraiture', in P. D. Manuélian (ed.), *Studies in Honor of William Kelly Simpson I* (Boston 1996), 55–81 and particularly 58–62; the quote above is on p. 61. On other hand, Tefnin raises some doubt about the use of the term portraiture for the reserve heads because of their standardised nature as well as magical power and significance. See Tefnin, *Art et Magie*, 64–73. Based on the 'individuality' of these heads and their life-size scale, Reisner and Junker also stressed the possible familial relationships among the subjects and/or their ethnic background. See G. A. Reisner, 'Accessions to the Egyptian Department during 1914', *BMFA* 13 (1915), 29–36, and H. Junker, *Giza. Grabungen auf dem Friedhof des Alten Reiches bei den Pyramiden von Giza I* (DAWW 69; Wien-Leipzig 1929), 63–65. This idea, however, must be discarded as clearly demonstrated by Tefnin, *Art et Magie*, 62–69 and Roehrig, in Arnold (ed.), *Egyptian Art*, 73–74, 238–241 (cat. 48–49).

⁸ The problem of colour on the heads' surface is indeed still much debated: very tiny traces of paint are visible on at least five heads, namely Berkeley 6-19767, Cairo JE 46216 and JE 44974, Boston MFA 14.718 and MFA 21.328 (for the complete depiction of the heads see Tefnin, *Art et Magie*, 12, 97, 101–102, 103–104, 109–110, 112–113 [cat. 1, 5, 7, 14, 17]). However, Roehrig casts many doubts upon a real, extensive treatment of the reserve heads using paint since traces of colour are never visible in those points where one would expect to find them, vis. in the deep lines around the eyes and the nostrils and at the corners of the mouth. See Roehrig, in Arnold (ed.), *Egyptian Art*, 237, n. 2. Tefnin does also agree with this statement: Tefnin, in Redford (ed.), *Oxford Encyclopedia* III, 145.

⁹ For more details see also Smith, *HESPOK*, 25–28, Tefnin, *Art et Magie*, 19–39; Junge, in Stadelmann and Sourouzian (eds), *Kunst*, 103–109; Millet, in Arnold (ed.), *Egyptian Art*, 233–234.

¹⁰ Vandersleyen, in *LÄ* II (1977), 11; Millet, in Simpson and Davis (eds), *Studies in Ancient Egypt*, 130; Tefnin, *Art et Magie*, 14–15; Millet, in Arnold (ed.), *Egyptian Art*, 233; Tefnin, in Redford (ed.), *Oxford Encyclopedia* III, 145. On the contrary, Roehrig argues that this is only a photographic effect: 'The chin of the present example [Boston MFA 21.328] and a number of others is slightly raised, a feature that has led some scholars to assert that all reserve heads gaze

and the lack of any explicit indicator of gender¹¹ – usually a very important concern in Egyptian statuary¹² – seem to be further indications that these sculptures were produced in series in the same, probably royal, workshop.¹³

However, of the thirty-six heads known,¹⁴ I will take only thirty-one into consideration, those from Giza. Almost

upward. However, profile views of this piece and nearly every other reserve head reveal that they look straight ahead even if the chin is raised.' and 'Many photographs of Egyptian Museum, Cairo, JE 46217, the head of Meret-ites, are taken from below eye level and this creates the impression that she looks up. However, when the piece is seen in profile, she appears to look straight ahead' (Roehrig, in Arnold (ed.), *Egyptian Art*, 236, 237 (n. 7)).

¹¹ Contrary to Reisner's and Smith's opinion (Reisner, *BMFA* 13 (1915), 32–35; Reisner, *Giza Necropolis* I, 64–65 and pls 52–55; Smith, *HESPOK*, 28–29; in this sense see also Assmann, in Manuelian (ed.), *Studies Simpson* I, 58–60, figs 3–7; Picardo, *JARCE* 43 (2007), 228) no head shows clear indication of whether male or female is represented. Indeed neither the head from the Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum in Hildesheim (Inv. 2384) nor that from the Cairo Egyptian Museum (JE 46217) could have been certainly attributed to a female without the other explicit, archaeological references found in the respective tombs, i.e. the slab stelae with the name of the tomb's owner (Roehrig, in Arnold (ed.), *Egyptian Art*, 237, n. 1). Based on Reisner's suggestions, Junker proposed identifying two broad groups, one of more noble and one of more peasant origin (Junker, *Giza* I, 63–65). This idea is also very problematic and was criticised by Tefnin, *Art et Magie*, 62–69. For more details on the two above-mentioned heads see also Tefnin, *Art et Magie*, 113–134, 123–124 (cat. 18, 32).

¹² The bibliography on this topic is extensive. Two of the most complete studies on portraiture in ancient Egypt are K. Lange, *Ägyptische Bildnis* (Munich 1957); E. Buschor, *Das Porträt. Bildniswege und Bildnisstufen in fünf Jahrtausenden* (Munich 1960). However, in this context, it is worth mentioning at least other three studies particularly devoted to the portrait in the Old Kingdom, vis. Dunham, *BMFA* 41 (1943), 68–72; A. O. Bolshakov, 'The Ideology of the Old Kingdom Portrait', *GM* 117/118 (1990), 89–142, particularly 126–134; M. Eaton-Krauss, *The representation of statuary in private tombs of the Old Kingdom* (ÄA 39; Wiesbaden 1984).

¹³ In this sense, see also Schmidt, *SAK* 18 (1991), 337–340; Dubis, *Studies in Ancient Art and Civilization* 4 (1992), 22–23. On the contrary, Smith suggested distinct sculptural schools as reason of their slightly different treatment (Smith, *HESPOK*, 28–29), an argument followed with some distinctions also by Roehrig and Millet, in Arnold (ed.), *Egyptian Art*, 73–74, 234.

¹⁴ For a complete list of the heads see Tefnin, *Art et Magie*, 149–150. This list omits the head 'Cairo JE 89611' (which is, however, mentioned in the catalogue with no. 22) since it comes from somewhere in the Giza necropolis (see PM III², 305). This head will not be taken into account in this paper because of the lack of any information about its unearthing in the Giza necropolis, although it shows clear similarities (and thus probably also the same chronology) with the other heads which we consider. To these we must add one found in 1989 at Lisht by Dieter and Dorothea Arnold and dated to the early twelfth dynasty. This head, however, is completely different from the others as to both shape and size: it is only 10.25 cm high and seems to have been part of the debris from a sculptor's workshop that was

all were found in the western cemetery in well-known archaeological contexts dated approximately to the reign of Khufu.¹⁵

The rest, which will not be taken into account in this context, are somewhat problematic: two, in a private collection in Belgium and at University College London respectively, are of unknown provenance and show artistic features that make them very different from the other heads, leading some scholars to raise doubts about their authenticity.¹⁶ The other three, from outside Giza, were found in isolated, doubtful archaeological contexts and for this reason are generally considered separately.

Two, from Abusir¹⁷ and Saqqara,¹⁸ were discovered in close proximity to tombs dated to the fifth and sixth dynasties which had been largely ransacked by robbers. This has led some scholars to argue that these two heads may have been reused.¹⁹ The last one was found at Dahshur in a well preserved tomb dated from the very last part of Sneferu's reign to the beginning of that of Khufu.²⁰ It shows close affinities with those from Giza and might thus be the first of a long series having Giza as its artistic and cult centre.²¹

used as fill for a burial shaft. See Roehrig, in Arnold (ed.), *Egyptian Art*, 79, n. 2.

¹⁵ Tefnin, *Art et Magie*, 97–129 with further bibliography.

¹⁶ Tefnin, *Art et Magie*, 121–122, 125–126 (cat. 30, 34).

¹⁷ See n. 4 for the bibliography.

¹⁸ A. Fakhry, *The Monuments of Snefru at Dahshur*, I. *The Bent Pyramid* (Le Caire 1959), 30; Tefnin, *Art et Magie*, 120 (cat. 27).

¹⁹ Bolshakov, in Eyre (ed.), *Seventh International Congress*, 21. As a matter of fact, no head was found *in situ* and this leads us to reject Bolshakov's idea of a reuse of the head. Nevertheless, the head from Saqqara raises many doubts because of its different size (only 19.5 cm high) and confused archaeological context. Although the head should be in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, no photo and/or catalogue number exists for this artefact. Roehrig suggests that it could have been a sculptor's trial piece that was discarded and became mingled with debris used to fill the shaft as in the case of the Lisht head (Roehrig, in Arnold (ed.), *Egyptian Art*, 80, n. 22). As for the head from Abusir, it seems to be an isolated revival of the old fourth dynasty tradition. The reasons for such a 'ideological reuse' may lay in the strong solar aspect of the reign of Niuserre to which the head dates, an imprint which is directly linked in many ways to Khufu and his solar ideology; see H. Goedicke, 'Abusir – Saqqara – Giza', in M. Barta, J. Krejčí (eds), *Abusir and Saqqara in the Year 2000* (ArOr Suppl. IX, Prague 2000), 405–408; M. Nuzzolo, 'The Sun Temples of the V Dynasty: a reassessment', *SAK* 36 (2007), 228–289, 238–240.

²⁰ See n. 1 for the bibliography and Tefnin, *Art et Magie*, 108 (cat. 12).

²¹ Roehrig, in Arnold (ed.), *Egyptian Art*, 74 and n. 16. She also stresses the close similarities between the head from Dahshur and Giza heads Berkeley 6-19767 and Cairo JE 46217 (Tefnin, *Art et Magie*, cat. 1, 18). According to her, these three heads may have been likely the first ones of the series, thus confirming the short chronological separation between the Dahshur head and the Giza ones. Stadelmann also pointed out that a completely new artistic style ('Strenge Stil') was already developing in Dahshur during the

The majority of the thirty-one reserve heads with which we are going to deal were unearthed in the so-called 'Western Cemetery' or 'Western Field' at Giza²² (Plate 7), and in particular in the three burial fields in this area extending west of Khufu's pyramid and dating from his reign: cemeteries G 1200, G 2100 and G 4000.²³ The first two cemeteries yielded one head each (G 1203 and G 2110²⁴) but twenty-two were found in cemetery G 4000,²⁵ nearly all of them in the group of twenty-four mastabas that belong to the very first building phases identified by Reisner (Fig. 1, Plate 7).²⁶ These structures form three rows of eight tombs to the east of the huge mastaba of Hemiunu (G 4000), certainly the most important of this cemetery in view of its size as well as its position.²⁷

last years of Snefru's reign. This style would have continued well into Khufu's reign before changing again during that of Khafre. See R. Stadelmann, 'Der Strenge Stil der frühen Vierten Dynastie', in Stadelmann and Sourouzian (eds), *Kunst*, 155–166.

²² Tefnin, *Art et Magie*, 149–150.

²³ Reisner, *BMFA* 13 (1915), 29–36; Reisner, *Giza Necropolis* I, 13–17, 66–74, 85–176, pls 21–22, 34–35, 48–50, 52–56. He called these three groups of cemeteries, together with the Eastern Field G 7000, the 'Nucleus Cemetery' since they form the oldest parts of the Giza necropolis. As to the chronology of the Giza necropolis and recent attempts to reassess the whole archaeological material, see M. Baud, *Famille royale et pouvoir sous l'Ancien Empire égyptien* (BdE 126; Le Caire 1999), 29–56; P.D. Manuelian, 'A re-examination of Reisner's Nucleus cemetery concept at Giza. Preliminary remarks on Cemetery G 2100', in M. Bárta (ed.), *The Old Kingdom Art and Archaeology. Proceedings of the Conference held in Prague, May 31–June 4, 2004* (Prague 2006), 221–230, with further bibliography; P.D. Manuelian, 'On the Early History of Giza: the "Lost" Wadi Cemetery (Giza Archives Gleanings, III)', *JEA* 95 (2009), 105–140. Most of the information concerning the discovery of the reserve heads in the cemeteries near the pyramid of Khufu (Nucleus Cemetery) are to be found in Junker, *Giza* I, although other volumes also contain important information. A brief account of the above-mentioned publication can be also found in Junker, 'The Austrian Expedition, 1914', *JEA* 1 (1914), 249–253.

²⁴ Tefnin, *Art et Magie*, 97–98, 99–100 (cat. 1, 3). For the reserve head from tomb G 1203, see also Roehrig, in Arnold (ed.), *Egyptian Art*, 235–236 (cat. 46).

²⁵ Tefnin, *Art et Magie*, 100–129 (cat. 4–8, 10, 14–19, 23, 25–26, 28–29, 31–33, 36–38). See also Roehrig, in Arnold (ed.), *Egyptian Art*, 236–241 (cat. 47–49).

²⁶ See also Roehrig, in Arnold (ed.), *Egyptian Art*, 75–77. For the building phases of cemetery G 4000 see also P. János, 'The Tombs of Officials. Houses of Eternity', in Arnold (ed.), *Egyptian Art*, 29–32, figs 13–15.

²⁷ Although the chronology of the mastaba of Hemiunu is still discussed by scholars, it seems to belong to the late reign of Khufu. See in particular Junker, *Giza* I, 132–162, especially 157–161; N. Strudwick, *The Administration of Egypt in the Old Kingdom: The Highest Titles and Their Holders* (London 1985), 117 (cat. 96). The style of his famous statue seems to further support this dating: see Junge, in Stadelmann and Sourouzian (eds), *Kunst*, 103–109; Marsha

Seven heads were found outside cemeteries G 1200, G 2100 and G 4000. Two were found in the western field but in slightly later tombs (D 38 and G 5020²⁸) which were, however, very close to cemetery G 4000.²⁹ Four other heads come from the so-called 'Eastern field' G 7000, on the east side of Khufu's pyramid, belonging to the most important members of the royal family.³⁰ All of them, however, were found in very disturbed contexts and in mastabas not belonging to the core of the cemetery certainly built under Khufu's reign but slightly to the south (Fig. 1).³¹ Indeed, three were found in mastaba G 7560 (two heads) and G 7650, while the last one (Boston 36-12-6) was found outside the tomb, laying in the street to the east of the large mastaba G 7510 of Ankhhaf.

The last head found at Giza comes from the Central Field, more specifically from the so-called 'Tomb of Khafre's Daughter' dated in a period spanning the reigns of Khufu and Khafre.³² This tomb, excavated by Selim Hassan at the end of the 1940s, had been penetrated by water and mud but was not plundered. The head was found in the middle of the burial chamber – not so far from the sarcophagus – lying on the floor in the mud that had filled the room.³³ Both for its archaeological context and for other arguments we will look at later in detail, it seems to be the only one from somewhere near the likely original location of the heads inside the burial chamber.³⁴

No tomb yielding a reserve head offered any other decoration or statuary³⁵ aside from slab stelae, an item of funerary equipment that, as clearly demonstrated by Peter Manuelian, seems to be related to the heads more than their number might imply.³⁶ Most of these stelae were found in

Hill, 'Hemiunu seated', in Arnold (ed.), *Egyptian Art*, 229–231 (cat. 44) with further bibliography.

²⁸ Tefnin, *Art et Magie*, 108–109, 116 (cat. 13, 21).

²⁹ On the basis of its archaeological context, Reisner was firmly convinced that the head could not have been come from the burial chamber of tomb G 5020 but belonged to a neighbouring mastaba of cemetery G 4000, having been later thrown into the shaft of the other tomb with the debris (Reisner, *Giza Necropolis* I, 466, pl. 56a).

³⁰ See n. 21 in the present paper for the bibliography. See also Baud, *Famille et pouvoir*, 62–63.

³¹ See Tefnin, *Art et Magie*, 106, 107, 115, 126–127 (cat. 9, 11, 20, 35) with further bibliography. For their placement in the necropolis, see Tefnin, *Art et Magie*, pl. XXXII, to be compared with PM III², pl. XVIII.

³² Tefnin, *Art et Magie*, 118–119 (cat. 24).

³³ S. Hassan, *Excavations at Giza VII. 1935–1936. The Mastabas of the Seventh Season and Their Description* (Cairo 1953), 4–5, pls III–IVa.

³⁴ See also Picardo, *JARCE* 43 (2007), 229.

³⁵ All these tombs also lack a serdab: M. Bárta, 'Serdab and Statue Placement in the Private Tombs down to the Fourth Dynasty', *MDAIK* 54 (1998), 65–75, especially 70 ff. See also János, in Arnold (ed.), *Egyptian Art*, 29–32, fig. 14–15.

³⁶ See P.D. Manuelian, 'The Problem of the Giza Slab Stelae', in

cemetery G 1200, where only one reserve head was discovered, while only four complete or fragmentary slab stelae were found in cemetery G 4000 (Plate 7). However, nine other mastabas of this cemetery, which contained reserve heads, did also have empty emplacements for the stelae.³⁷

Thus, it is quite possible that all the mastabas once housed both stelae and heads—all the more so, as many heads would have probably been made in mud (two examples are known—see the heads mentioned in n. 6 in the present paper) and could not have survived intentional or occasional damage during the centuries.

Therefore, the reserve heads and slab stelae appear to have been closely tied to Khufu and to his ambitious architectural project to arrange all the members of his court in a rigid, schematic hierarchy for the hereafter.³⁸ From the titles engraved on slab stelae, we know that their owners did hold very important offices either in the bureaucratic-administrative sphere, or in the religious one.³⁹ Moreover, they were often also linked to the pharaoh by family ties, the title of *ss/ss-t nswt* being quite commonly found on them.⁴⁰

Their high rank seems to be further confirmed by the existence of very few distinctive tombs in cemetery G 4000 such as the above-mentioned mastaba of Hemiunu. Among all priests and officials certainly dated to Khufu's reign, Hemiunu was the only one who possessed a 'standard' tomb

with a serdab and a substantial decorative programme.⁴¹ We can only find similar, complete tombs endowed with large-scale statuary and elaborate figurative programmes in the eastern field, and these belong to some of the most important persons in the royal family like, for example, Kawab, Khafkhufu I, Herdjedef and Ankhhaf.⁴² Thus, all the elements of our analysis seem to lead to Khufu to whom the riddle of the reserve heads should be traced back.

Old and new theories on the value and meaning of the heads

To explain this puzzle, I take a step backward starting from the very designation of these sculptures as 'reserve heads'. This name, given by Borchardt at the beginning of the twentieth century⁴³ and still in use nowadays, seems to imply a positive meaning: their purpose was to protect and/or replace the actual perishable head of the deceased should it be lost or destroyed. This theory, however, is not particularly convincing since the representation of a complete human figure is quite the norm in the Egyptian statuary which generally avoided, for magico-religious reasons, the depiction of incomplete bodies.⁴⁴

Even the reconstruction of the heads' original position in the burial chamber gives rise to some doubts: Junker suggested the heads were placed in a niche in the burial chamber door blockage, very close to the shaft where many

H. Guksch and D. Polz (eds), *Stationen. Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte Ägyptens. Rainer Stadelmann gewidmet* (Mainz 1998), 115–134, especially 117–120, fig. 2.

³⁷ For the complete catalogue of the stelae see P. D. Manuelian, *Slab Stelae of the Giza Necropolis* (New Haven-Philadelphia 2003) 1–108. A complete, updated plan of the whole corpus of slab stelae, empty emplacements and reserve heads is also to be found in Manuelian, *Slab Stelae*, figs 175, 210.

³⁸ R. Stadelmann, 'Builders of the Pyramids', in J. M. Sasson (ed.), *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East II* (New York 1995), 719–734, particularly 730–731. Helck speaks of 'royal dicta' by the king trying to reduce the funerary equipment of the administration in order to maintain focus on and preserve the essential uniqueness of the monarchy (see W. Helck, *Politische Gegensätze im alten Ägypten* (HÄB 23; Hildesheim 1986), 19–26). Manuelian also stresses the 'prefabricated' character of the tombs of the officials in Giza, probably constructed 'ownerless' and only later assigned by the king to specific dignitaries. See Manuelian, in Guksch and Polz (eds), *Stationen*, 132.

³⁹ Manuelian, in Guksch and Polz (eds), *Stationen*, 125–127. Their upper social status is also testified by the long, rich linen-list: see Manuelian, *Slab Stelae*, 153–160.

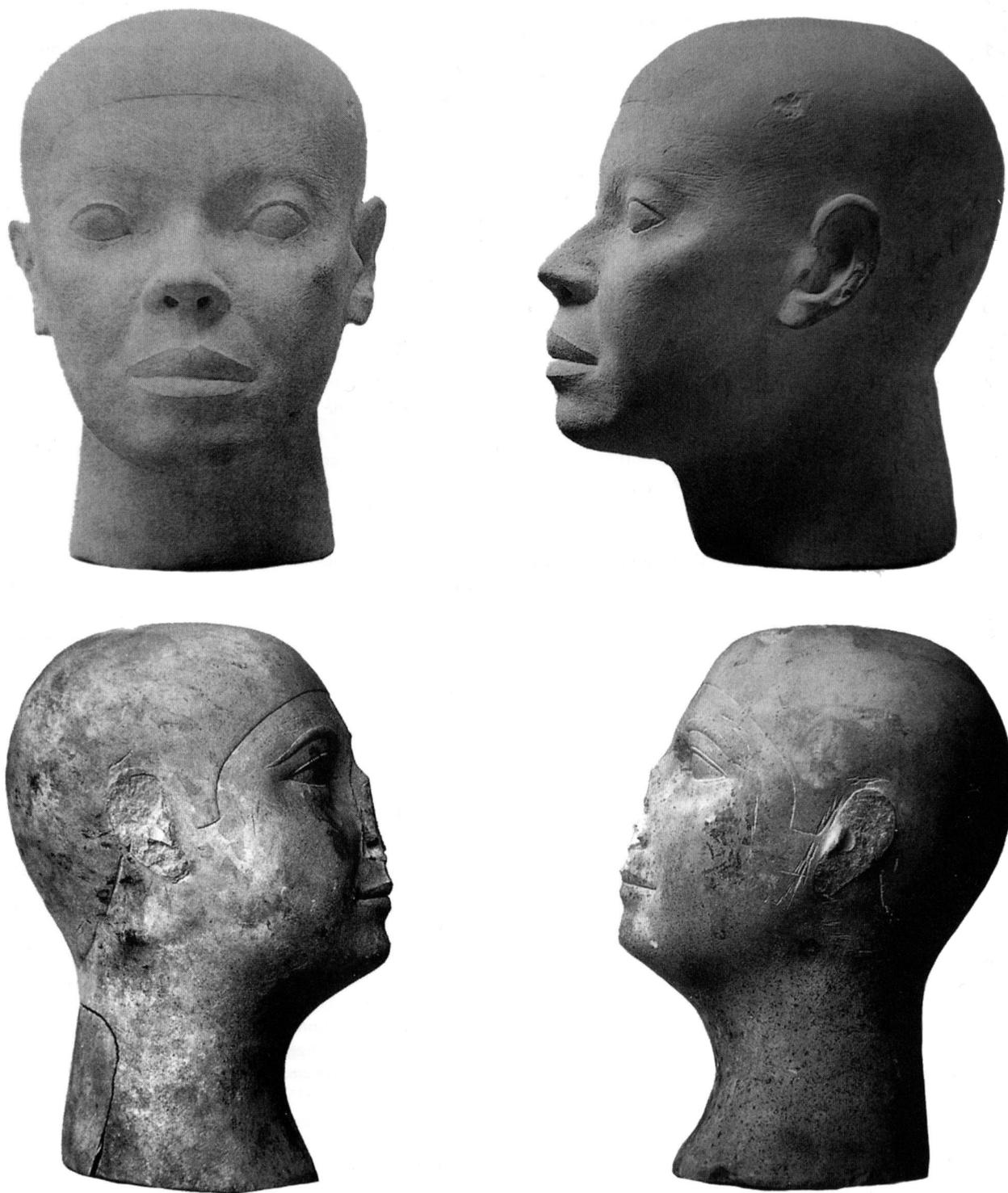
⁴⁰ According to Schmitz, beginning with the fourth dynasty these titles did not entail any real blood relationship between their holders and the king, having been given by the ruler simply as a marker of social elevation and favour (B. Schmitz, *Untersuchungen zum Titel ss-nswt 'Königsohn'* (Bonn 1976), 17–22). However, Baud has pointed out the great uncertainty of the archaeological documentation of the period which should lead us to a more cautious approach to the topic: Baud, *Famille et pouvoir*, 162–189.

⁴¹ According to Junker the tomb of Hemiunu underwent a significant enlargement in a second building phase, receiving two serdabs—one of them endowed with his famous statue—and a long narrow corridor—with two false doors—on its west side. See Junker, *Giza I*, 132 ff, figs 18–20, pls 15–16, 18. Therefore the original project of the mastaba may have been completed slightly after or at the very end of Khufu's reign with the addition of a sculptural as well as a figurative programme which had not been originally envisaged. This is all the more important if we consider that Hemiunu is the only holder of the title *ss-nswt n ht-f* ('son of the king's body') among males buried in cemetery G 4000.

⁴² Reisner, *Giza Necropolis I*, 15–17, 70–75, 115–120, 209–211; W. K. Simpson, *The Mastabas of Kawab, Khafkhufu I and II* (Giza Mastabas 3; Boston 1978). As far as the chronology of the mastaba of Ankhhaf (G 7510) is concerned, many architectural and archaeological elements seem to suggest a dating well into the reign of Khufu: see Strudwick, *Administration*, 77–78 (cat. 34); Baud, *Famille et pouvoir*, 424–425 (cat. 35). This dating seems to be also confirmed by the style of his famous bust. Contrary to this opinion is Reisner, *Giza Necropolis I*, 75, 212, 333, who dated his tomb to the reign of Khafre. For a brief overview of the history of the 'Eastern Cemetery' see also W. S. Smith, 'Inscriptional Evidence for the History of the Fourth Dynasty', *JNES* 11 (1952), 113–128, particularly 127–128; Jánosi, in Arnold (ed.), *Egyptian Art*, 29–32.

⁴³ Borchardt, *Ne-user-re*, 133, named them 'Ersatzköpfe'. His idea was later largely developed by Junker, *Giza I*, 57–61.

⁴⁴ W. S. Smith, *The Art and Architecture of Ancient Egypt* (2nd ed. revised by W. K. Simpson, London 1981), 57; See also n. 12 in the present paper.



*Fig. 2: Limestone reserve heads with completely different treatments of the ears: (above) the head Boston 14.719 from mastaba G 4440 with its ears intact; (below) the head Cairo JE 46217 from mastaba G 4140 with carefully chiselled off ears (after Tefnin, *Art et magie*, pl. VIII, XVIII)*

of them were found.⁴⁵ He also theorised that the round holes found in the stone portcullis slabs which sealed tomb entrances were for the reserve heads to look through as if it were a real serdab.⁴⁶ If so, however, the heads should have been placed in the superstructure of the tomb, and not in the substructure where they could have received no funerary cult and offerings.

Furthermore, the portcullis slabs have a much longer history and wider distribution than the reserve heads themselves. The holes positioned at the top of these slabs, being often more than two, were almost certainly for insertion of the ropes used to lower the slabs into position in the tomb after the burial chamber was sealed.⁴⁷ Moreover, Junker's alleged niche in the door blockage does not have any parallel in Egyptian architecture and would also weaken the original purpose of such blockings.⁴⁸

Theories explaining the heads as prototypes of cartonnage mummy masks (and perhaps even of later anthropoid coffins of the First Intermediate Period)⁴⁹ or simply as sculptors' models like the famous Amarna pieces⁵⁰ also appear to be quite unlikely. On the one hand, the mummy mask was generally modelled directly onto the face of the deceased, a practise which is clearly supported by archaeological evidence from Maidum and Giza itself, dating from the fourth dynasty.⁵¹ On the other hand, sculptors' models would have neither been made in the fine white limestone in which the reserve heads are carved⁵² nor would they have been brought into the tombs by their owners, where the heads would have been devoid of any cult significance while very dangerous for the deceased.⁵³ Moreover, it seems quite odd that these heads would have served as sculptors' models for people who did not have any other statue in

their tombs where in fact the only type of 'sculpture' ever found is the slab stelae.⁵⁴

The most controversial aspect of the topic, however, is the presence of evident 'scratches' on the heads that appear to have been made intentionally.⁵⁵ Of the fifteen heads that probably had sculpted ears, only one (Boston 14.719) has its ears still intact (Fig. 2 upper).⁵⁶

In some heads they have been carefully chiselled off close to the surface (Fig. 2 lower),⁵⁷ on others they seem to have been chipped away rather hastily (Fig. 3 upper).⁵⁸ Sometimes the ears were fashioned separately and attached with plaster or by means of small pegs⁵⁹ (Fig. 3 lower). The rest (about twelve) – also including the Dahshur head, the first of the series⁶⁰ – were created without any provision for ears (Fig. 4 upper).⁶¹ Another group of heads (about 15) show deep lines roughly chiselled into the surface, often extending from the crown of the head down to the base of the neck (Fig. 4 lower).⁶²

Many theories have been proposed to explain these features, without any being completely convincing. Millet suggested that these 'scratches' were made by the sculptors in removing the moulds from the reserve heads.⁶³ While this removal could have caused the vertical scratch on the heads, it could not have been responsible for the damage to the ears.

On other hand, Lacovara proposed that they were simply guidelines for sculptors for modelling the heads, comparable to the incised guidelines seen on the so-called 'trial pieces' of the Ptolemaic Period.⁶⁴ However, the guidelines on the Ptolemaic Period pieces were always finely and precisely

⁴⁵ Junker, *Giza I*, 57–61 and pl. 10. See also Jánosi, in Arnold (ed.), *Egyptian Art*, 29, fig. 14.

⁴⁶ Junker, *Giza I*, 144 ff, 205.

⁴⁷ Lacovara, *KMT* 8/4 (Winter 1997–98), 31.

⁴⁸ Dubis, *Studies in Ancient Art and Civilization* 4 (1992), 24.

⁴⁹ Smith, *HESPOK*, 24–25; Kelley, *JSSEA* 5 (1974), 9–10. The latter idea is halfway between Smith's theory and Millet's one (see next note for bibliographical references).

⁵⁰ Millet, in Simpson and Davis (eds), *Studies in Ancient Egypt*, 129–131; id., in Arnold (ed.), *Egyptian Art*, 233–234.

⁵¹ S. Ikram, A. Dodson, *The Mummy in Ancient Egypt: Equipping the Dead for Eternity* (London 1998), 166–167. Very critical positions are also expressed by E. Brovarski, 'Reserve Head', in S. D'Auria, P. Lacovara and C. H. Roehrig (eds), *Mummies & Magic: The Funerary Arts of Ancient Egypt* (Boston 1988), 83; N. Tacke, 'Die Entwicklung der Mumienmaske im Alten Reich', *MDAIK* 52 (1996), 307–336, especially 315; Roehrig, 'Mummy Mask and Body Covering', in Arnold (ed.), *Egyptian Art*, 476–477 (cat. 197).

⁵² Roehrig, in Arnold (ed.), *Egyptian Art*, 78.

⁵³ Tefnin, *Art et Magie*, 50–52; Bolshakov, in Eyre (ed.), *Seventh International Congress*, 22.

⁵⁴ Tefnin, in Redford (ed.), *Oxford Encyclopedia* III, 146.

⁵⁵ See Tefnin, *Art et Magie*, 19–39 for a complete catalogue of the mutilations.

⁵⁶ Tefnin, *Art et Magie*, 102–103 (cat. 6); Roehrig, in Arnold (ed.), *Egyptian Art*, 238–239 (cat. 48).

⁵⁷ See for example the heads Vienna 7787 and Cairo JE 46217: Tefnin, *Art et Magie*, 113–114, 127–128 (cat. 18, 36); Roehrig, in Arnold (ed.), *Egyptian Art*, 240–241 (cat. 49).

⁵⁸ See for example the heads Berkeley 6-19767, and Boston 21.328: Tefnin, *Art et Magie*, 97–98, 103–104 (cat. 1, 5, 7); Roehrig, in Arnold (ed.), *Egyptian Art*, 235–237 (cat. 46–47).

⁵⁹ See for example the heads Boston 21.329 and Cairo JE 46218: Tefnin, *Art et Magie*, 104–105, 114–115 (cat. 8, 19).

⁶⁰ Tefnin, *Art et Magie*, 108 (cat. 12).

⁶¹ See for example the head Cairo JE 46216: Tefnin, *Art et Magie*, 112–113 (cat. 17).

⁶² See for example the heads Cairo JE 37832, Boston 14.718 and Boston 21.329: Tefnin, *Art et Magie*, 101–102, 104–105, 108–109, (cat. 5, 8, 13). Although largely ruined, the head Hildesheim 2384 also shows a deep vertical line along the nape of the neck: see Tefnin, *Art et Magie*, 123–124 (cat. 32).

⁶³ See n. 50.

⁶⁴ Lacovara, *KMT* 8/4 (Winter 1997–98), 35–36.

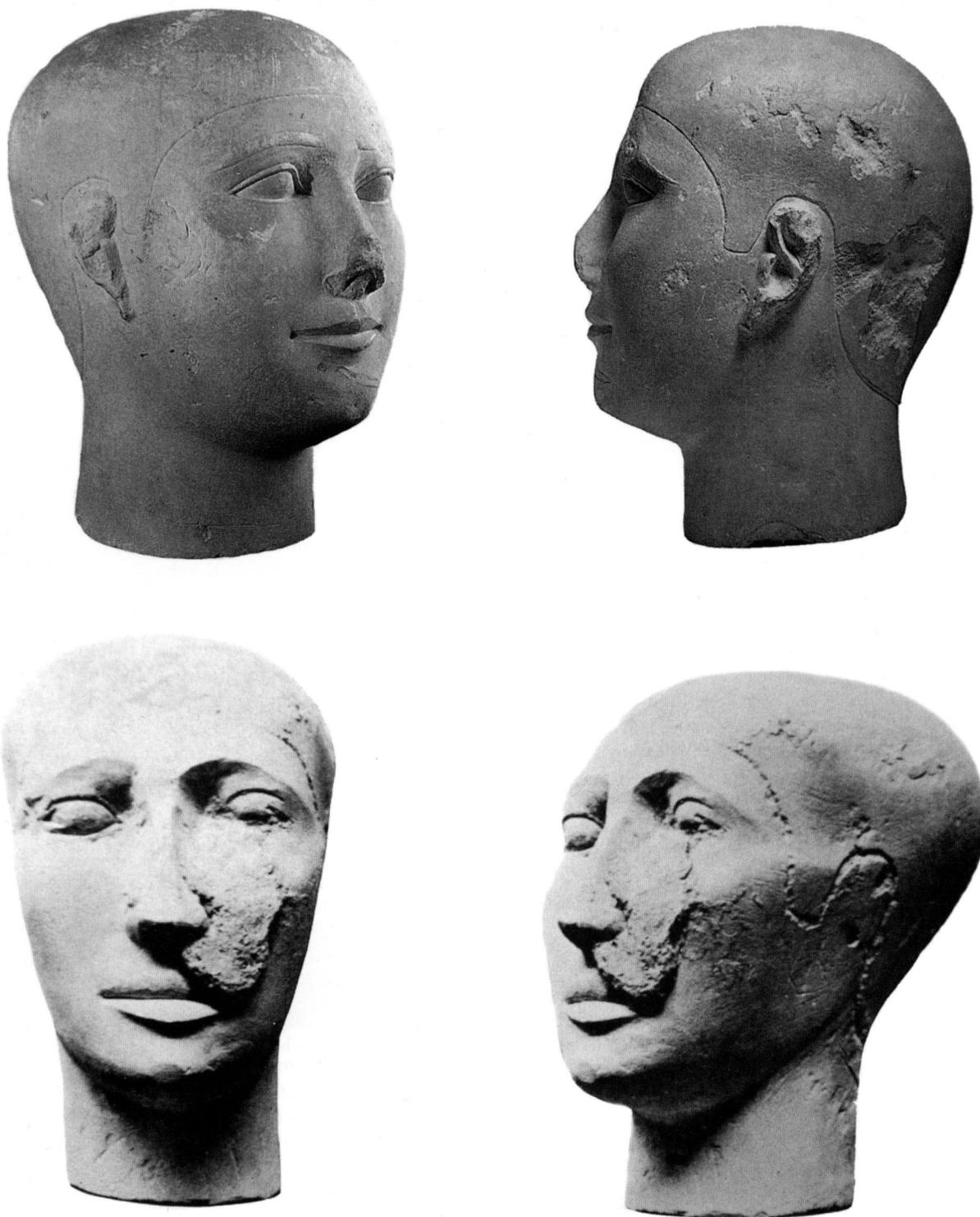


Fig. 3: Two other examples of the different 'ritual' treatments of the heads: (above) the limestone head Berkeley 6-19767 from mastaba G 1203 with hastily chipped away ears; (below) the limestone head Boston 21.329 from mastaba G 4940 which shows considerable use of plaster and small pegs to attach the ears. (after Tefnin, Art et magie, pl. I, IX)

carved on a flat, unfinished surface, not gouged into a finished one like most of the grooves on the reserve heads.

A far more elaborate explanation has been set out in 1991 by Tefnin who believes that these scraps were 'ritual mutilations' intended to 'kill' the heads before placing them in the tombs in order to render them harmless to the deceased.⁶⁵ He likens this practise to the mutilating of dangerous hieroglyphs in the Pyramid Texts or of animal figurines deposited in the tombs of the First Intermediate Period and Middle Kingdom.⁶⁶

Tefnin also linked this ritual mutilation to a specific, somewhat enigmatic moment of the ritual of the 'Opening of the Mouth', a moment of extreme tension among the participants, one of whom wishes to strike the head of the deceased. The eldest son of the deceased or the sem-priest protests against him: 'I shall not allow you to make my father's head become white' (*shḏ*). This 'whitened head', thus, is the reserve head, rendered so from the bleeding out of the head wounds.⁶⁷ According to Tefnin, this ritual, prophylactic violence to the reserve head had to be performed separate from, but still as a complement to, the actual, burial ceremony. In this sense he likens this practice to other execration rituals linked to the Osirian beliefs and well attested at Giza even in the New Kingdom.⁶⁸

Based on the first part of Tefnin's ritual mutilation theory, Bolshakov suggested that the heads could have been the first example of what seems to become the norm in the late fifth and sixth dynasty, when a number of tombs are provided with wall paintings in their substructures. Significant stylistic changes resulted during the reign of Khufu in the almost complete disappearance of statues in the superstructure, and so they have to be transferred to the burial chamber where, however, being dangerous in the vicinity of the dead man, they had to be made harmless in some way.⁶⁹

However, while convincingly explaining the mutilations, neither Tefnin nor Bolshakov have been able to clarify the meaning of the heads themselves and notably their placement in the substructure of the tomb where no other cult statue was kept. Nor have they come up with an explanation for the anomalous incompleteness of the sculptures.

Bolshakov's theory, stressing the *k3* value of all the Egyptian statues—including the heads⁷⁰—seems to clash with the traditional funerary practices according to which the statue had to be placed in the tomb superstructure to be provided with both offerings and mortuary cult.⁷¹ Moreover, as to the position of the heads in the tombs, Bolshakov's theory replaces that of Junker, of the supposed niche between the burial chamber and the shaft, a theory which we have seen is not completely convincing for many reasons.

On the other hand, being aware of the weak points of his theory, Tefnin concludes:

On se posera bien sûr la question de savoir pourquoi, parmi tant de personnages illustres de l'entourage des grands Pharaons de la 4^e dynastie, certaines seulement « bénéficièrent »—si cela fut un bénéfice—d'une « tête magique ». La question reste sans réponse.⁷²

Very recently new interpretations have been set out by Catharine Roehrig and Nicholas Picardo.⁷³ The first one compares the reserve heads with the wooden life-size head emerging from a lily found in the tomb of Tutankhamun.⁷⁴ However, in spite of several similarities, the head of Tutankhamun implies a very clear solar symbolism which seems to be anachronistic for private people in the fourth dynasty, having been certainly a solely royal prerogative. Moreover, the head of the eighteenth dynasty king did not suffer any kind of 'mutilation' and was probably not put in the burial chamber.⁷⁵

also Bolshakov, *Man and his Double*, 37–39.

⁷⁰ This idea is also supported by Assmann, in Manuelian (ed.), *Studies Simpson I*, 61–62; Junge, in Stadelmann and Sourouzian (eds), *Kunst*, 103–109, particularly 108–109. The latter also suggests that the heads simply functioned as gradual attempts to render the human figure, i.e. actual, although truncated, statues like the bust of Ankhaf and/or the 'normal' statue of Hemiunu. In doing so, however, the theory does not account at all for the ritual treatment of the heads and for this reason it seems to be untenable.

⁷¹ See also Picardo, *JARCE* 43 (2007), 238–239.

⁷² Tefnin, *BSFE* 120 (1991), 36.

⁷³ Respectively Roehrig, in Arnold (ed.), *Egyptian Art*, 73–81; Picardo, *JARCE* 43 (2007), 221–252. I am very grateful to the latter author for sending me the complete version of his paper before its publication.

⁷⁴ Roehrig, in Arnold (ed.), *Egyptian Art*, 77–78.

⁷⁵ The precise find spot of the head inside the tomb is still questioned by scholars. However, there is room for thinking that its original placement may have been the entrance corridor of the tomb: see A. Wiese, 'Tutankhamun—Just a Conventional "Tomb Treasure" of the

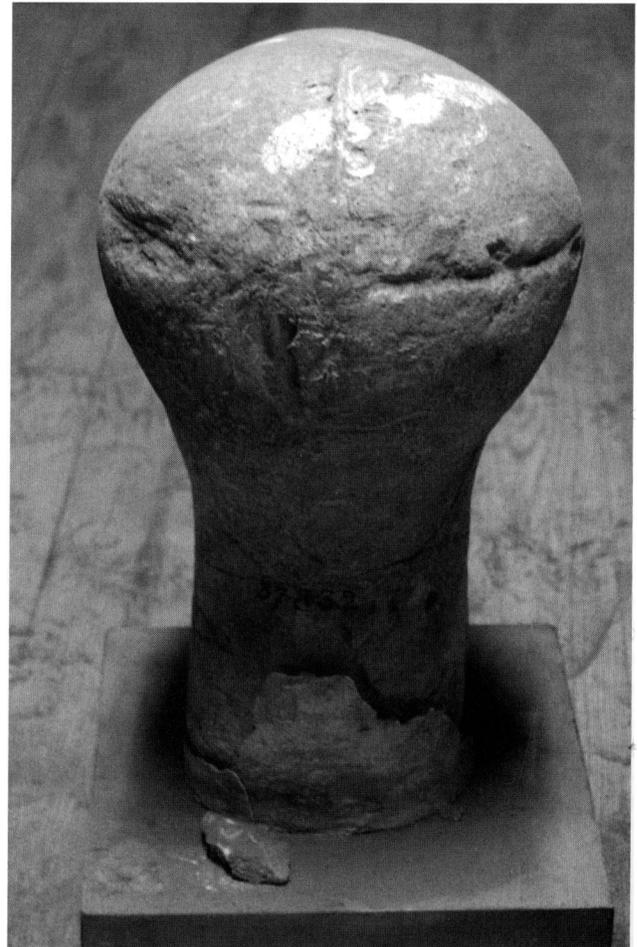
⁶⁵ Tefnin, *Art et Magie*, 75–95. A brief synthesis will be found in Tefnin, in Redford (ed.), *Oxford Encyclopedia III*, 146–147.

⁶⁶ Tefnin, *Art et Magie*, 78–83.

⁶⁷ Bleeding from the wound would have rendered the head (and the body as a whole) deadly pale and anaemic, causing the head/person to die. For further details on the ritual and its symbolic implications see Tefnin, *BSFE* 120 (1991), 25–37, especially 31–33.

⁶⁸ Tefnin, in Redford (ed.), *Oxford Encyclopedia III*, 146–147. As to the later execration rituals see also G. Posener, 'Les empreintes magiques de Gizeh et les morts dangereux', *MDAIK* 16 (1958), 252–270. For a different understanding of the above-mentioned passage of the ritual of the 'Opening of the Mouth' see E. Otto, *Das ägyptische Mundöffnungsritual II* (ÄA 3; Wiesbaden 1960), particularly 67–68. A very different reading of the ritual is offered by A. M. Roth, 'The *ps3-kf* and the "Opening of the Mouth" Ceremony: a Ritual of Birth and Rebirth', *JEA* 78 (1992), 113–147; id., 'Fingers, Stars and the "Opening of the Mouth": the Nature and Function of the *ntrw3* Blades', *JEA* 79 (1993), 57–79.

⁶⁹ Bolshakov, in Eyre (ed.), *Seventh International Congress*, 22. See



*Fig. 4: Head Cairo JE 46216 (above) from mastaba G 4640 with no provision for ears; (below) two examples of the scratches exhibited by the heads on the rear: (left) Boston 21.329 from mastaba G 4940, with a vertical, deep furrow; (right) Cairo JE 37832 from mastaba D 38, with a circular, sharp groove (after Tefnin, *Art et magie*, pl. XII, XVI. Head Cairo JE 37832: photo courtesy Cairo Museum)*

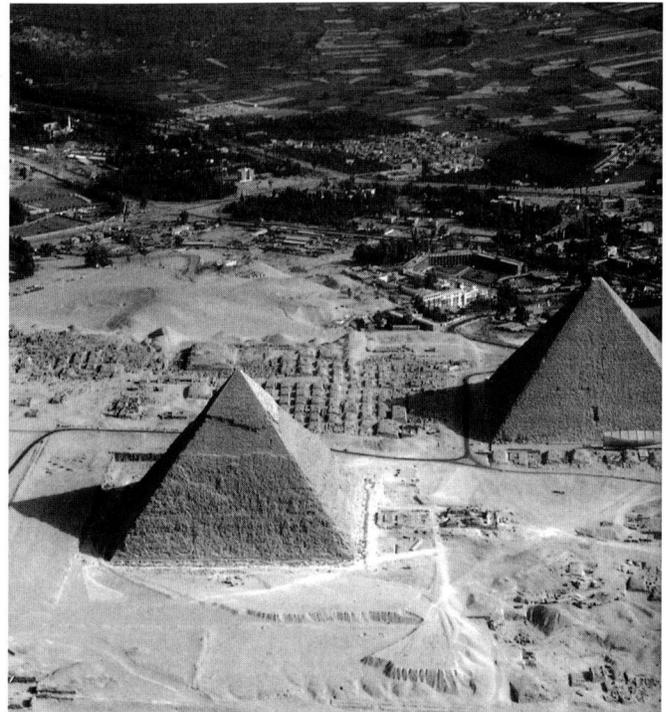


Fig. 5: Two images of the Giza Necropolis seen from above. In both cases the movement of the shadow of Khufu's pyramid gradually permits the sunlight to illuminate the mastabas of the western cemetery

On other hand, Picardo, not dismissing older theories, in particular the relationship between the evolution of the funerary mummy masks and reserve heads, has suggested that the heads would have represented the first attempt to embody, in three-dimensional representation, the concept of the *b3*, which will be later more explicitly developed, both in literature and religion.⁷⁶ However, this theory gives rise to doubts: first of all, the concept of the private *b3* as depicted by Picardo is neither archaeologically nor epigraphically attested during the Old Kingdom and simply mirrors a much later tradition, particularly supported by the funerary texts of the New Kingdom. Moreover, although I would be prepared to admit the existence of the concept of the private *b3* in the fourth dynasty—a fact which is still far from clear⁷⁷—we have to keep in mind, following

Assmann, that the statues (and the reserve heads too in their being statues in a wider sense) were not linked to the *b3* but rather 'served to attract and direct the indwelling Ka by preserving the physiognomy and assuring the recognizability of the subject'.⁷⁸

Additionally, over the whole of Egyptian history, the *b3* was mainly expressed via textual and two-dimensional means rather than statuary. Even when it was, as for example during the Meroitic Period in Lower Nubia, the *b3* statues were always put in the funerary chapel and not in the tomb substructure⁷⁹ where, as admitted by Picardo

18th Dynasty?' in A. Wiese and A. Brodbeck (eds), *Tutankhamun: The Golden Beyond: Tomb Treasures from the Valley of the Kings* (Basel 2004), 83–127, especially 85–86.

⁷⁶ Picardo, *JARCE* 43 (2007), 238–252.

⁷⁷ The most comprehensive study is L. V. Žabkar, *A Study of the Ba Concept in Ancient Egyptian Texts* (SAOC 34; Chicago 1968). He argues that the first attempt to adapt the concept of the *b3* to private people dates back to the late Old Kingdom, possibly the end of the fifth dynasty. However, the first real example is sixth dynasty (Žabkar, *Ba Concept*, 60–61, 76). On the contrary, Altenmüller suggests that in the whole Old Kingdom the concept of both royal and private *b3* had not yet been completely elaborated (H. Altenmüller, 'Sein Ba möge fort dauern bei Gott', *SAK* 20 (1993), 1–15). More recently, starting

from different points, Allen and Hays have demonstrated that many aspect of the royal afterlife were 'shifted' to the private context well into the fifth dynasty, particularly concerning the funerary offering formulae and rituals. (J. P. Allen, 'Some aspects of the non-royal afterlife in the Old Kingdom', in Bárta (ed.), *Old Kingdom Art and Archaeology*, 9–17; H. M. Hays, 'The Death of the Democratization of the Afterlife', in the present volume). However, this phenomenon did not imply either any explicit elaboration of the concept of the *b3* or any representation of it, even less in its much later human-headed bird form.

⁷⁸ Assmann, in Manuelian (ed.), *Studies Simpson I*, 61–62; quotation from 62; The German scholar, however, continues by saying: 'There does not seem to be any functional difference between reserve heads, busts and entire statues'. The latter opinion is not adopted here. On the relationship between statue and *k3*, see also Bolshakov, *Man and his Double*, 106–110, 152–157.

⁷⁹ See for example S. Wenig (ed.), *The Arts of Ancient Nubia and Sudan II. The Catalogue* (New York 1978), 89–90, 227–232 (cat

himself, 'a head-only form of statuary could have also lend to "readings" that could encompass the semantic category of decapitation, implicating with it absolute dissolution after death. This notion will have been all the more unpleasant given that the reserve heads portrayed the deceased already in this dreaded state'.⁸⁰

Finally, this theory too, like all the others, does not explain the major mystery which has also been pointed out by Tefnin (see above): why did eminent individuals of that period of the fourth dynasty not all have this kind of 'privileged' statue in their tomb? If the reserve heads would have functioned as *b3* statues or actual mummy mask-like statues of the deceased, we would expect to find them also in the main tombs of the Giza necropolis dated to Khufu's reign, namely the so-called 'Eastern Field'. However, as we have seen, the situation is very different.

Positive and negative implications: a new approach to the issue

Taking into account all the above-mentioned elements, and particularly the last question, I believe that we should consider another possibility, namely that the heads might have had a different, in some respects 'negative' meaning.

In other words, they could not have represented a positive funerary item for the deceased⁸¹ (or at least not completely positive) directed to replace or substitute the actual perishable head of the person, but rather a negative element intended to play down the resurrection power of the deceased linking it to an 'external factor' upon which their rebirth would have been depended. This element should be examined in the particular archaeological and historical-religious context in which the reserve heads were made, that is, the reign of Khufu.

Rainer Stadelmann has suggested that Khufu actually tried to achieve a merging with the sun-god during his lifetime.⁸² This new, absolute religious policy, probably culminating in his self-divinisation, seems to be demonstrated by many elements: the naming of his pyramid after the solar horizon (*3h3*); the placing of the burial chamber within and not under the pyramid; the definitive establishment of

the pyramid shape of the royal tomb in place of the old stepped shape, and last but not least the introduction by his son Djedefre of the *z3 R'* title, which seems to have been meant, in its first formulation, very literally as 'Son of Re-(Khufu)'.⁸³ The building of a colossal statue, with its solar temple, dedicated to him—the Sphinx—seems to provide definitive confirmation of Stadelmann's theory.⁸⁴

There is room for thinking that the very bad reputation attributed to Khufu in later historical records was not pure chance. Herodotus's account particularly stresses the architectural difficulties in the building of Khufu's pyramid, which he reputes to have required an enormous cost in human lives, as the main reason for his bad reputation.⁸⁵ However, his tale does not completely fit what we know of the building techniques of the period and is even more unlikely if we consider that Khufu's father Sneferu was responsible for the construction of three great pyramids at least, whose overall volume is more than twice that of Khufu's pyramid. A later misunderstanding of Khufu's Horus and Nebty names (*mddw* and *mddw r-nbty*) as ground for his bad reputation,⁸⁶ although plausible from the philological point of view, seems to imply a very complicated process and is not confirmed by reliable archaeological or historical evidence.⁸⁷

⁸³ Stadelmann, *Pyramiden*, 125–126. See also Z. Hawass, 'The Programs of the Royal Funerary Complexes of the Fourth Dynasty', in D. O'Connor and D. P. Silverman (eds.), *Ancient Egyptian Kingship* (Leiden–New York–Köln 1995), 221–255, especially 227–228.

⁸⁴ Stadelmann, 'The Great Sphinx of Giza', in Z. Hawass (ed.), *Egyptology at the dawn of the twenty-first century: proceedings of the eighth international congress of Egyptologists, Cairo 2000 I: Archaeology* (Cairo 2003), 464–469. Stadelmann's theory is not supported by most scholars who strongly maintain that the Sphinx was built by and dedicated to Khafre. For a complete discussion of the issue, see Nuzzolo, *SAK* 36 (2007), 238, n. 104.

⁸⁵ Herodotus II, 124–6: A. B. Lloyd, *Herodotus Book II. Commentary 99–182* (Leiden 1988), 62–63. Wildung also stresses the religious impiety of the king as a explanation for his bad reputation: trying to reach the gods with the impressiveness of his pyramid, Khufu was guilty of hubris, an unacceptable behaviour for the Greek religious mentality, particularly by a king (D. Wildung, *Die Rolle ägyptischer Könige im Bewusstsein ihrer Nachwelt* (MÄS 17, Berlin 1969), 188). Likewise, there is Herodotus' tale of Khufu's daughter who was sent to a brothel with instructions to charge a certain sum to complete the building of the pyramid (Herodotus II, 126; see above for the bibliography). The ultimate aim of the Greek writer was probably to depict Khufu as a cruel, inhuman king.

⁸⁶ M. Baud, 'Une Ephetete de Radjedef et la prétendue tyrannie de Cheops', *BIFAO* 98 (1998), 15–30, especially 25–26. Quite the same idea was also supported by S. Morenz, 'Traditionen um Kheops. Beiträge zur Überlieferungsgeschichtlichen Methode in der Ägyptologie', *ZÄS* 97 (1971), 111–118; E. Graefe, 'Die Gute Reputation des Königs Snofru', in S. Israelit-Groll (ed.), *Studies in Egyptology presented to Miriam Lichtheim I* (Jerusalem 1990), 258–259

⁸⁷ For a different and sounder interpretation of Khufu's names

151–159). Moreover, these *b3* statues were always complete sculptures and never head-only statues. It is also worth noting that real reserve heads, belonging to the same period as the *b3* statues, were found in Nubia, and they show somewhat enigmatic signs on the face usually interpreted as 'scarification': see Wenig (ed.), *The Catalogue*, 89, 232–234 (cat. 160).

⁸⁰ Picardo, *JARCE* 43 (2007), 251.

⁸¹ Smith particularly stressed the royal favour as reason for the placement of a reserve head in the tomb while Dubis speaks of gifts to the tomb owner from the royal workshops to the tomb owner: see Smith, *HESPOK*, 25; Dubis, *Studies in Ancient Art and Civilization* 4 (1992), 23.

⁸² R. Stadelmann, *Die ägyptischen Pyramiden. Vom Ziegelbau zum Weltwunder* (Mainz 1985), 110–126.

Thus, I think that a different explanation has to be sought for this bad reputation, which probably can be found precisely in Khufu's unusual and, in some respects, innovative religious policy, and in his attempt to identify himself with the sun-god changing the ordinary 'dogma' of kingship, as would be the case, *mutatis mutandis*, with Akhenaten over a thousand years later.

The archaeological data seems to lead in this direction: for the first time, a king intervened in the complete planning of the private tombs of his necropolis,⁸⁸ restricting the decoration only to the most important offering scene (the one represented on the slab stelae)⁸⁹ and allowing only the highest members of his court and family to have large scale and complete sculpture (like Hemiunu).⁹⁰ Even the main royal cemetery for the king's children, the 'Eastern field' G 7000, was originally erected and arranged in regular,

anonymous rows of tombs not assigned to specific owners until the very end of Khufu's reign.⁹¹

Seen from the top of his solar horizon (the pyramid), the Giza necropolis in the time of Khufu would have reproduced, in the stone, the strict, hierarchical order of the state, levelling out the king's dignitaries by means of a clear standardisation of their houses for the hereafter as well as their funerary equipment.⁹² Only Khufu himself, in his rising at the horizon as sun-god/sun-king, could have resurrected his dignitaries, whose 'detached heads' would have been magically rejoined to the body. Only then would the owner of the head have recovered his physical integrity with the benefit, in the superstructure of the mastaba, of the funerary offerings represented on the slab stelae.

In this sense, the ritual mutilations of the heads could have been a precautionary meaning for the deceased (as proposed by Tefnin) as well as for the king himself, who would have severely limited, in this way, the actual life and autonomy of his officials in the otherworld. Schmidt also points out that the absence of explicit requests for invocation offerings (*prt hrw*) on the slab stelae could be a proof of Khufu's intentional suppression of the direct cult in private mastabas, a containment which was also accompanied by the reduction of space in tomb superstructure. This restrictive programme would have also included the hacking of the ears of the reserve heads in order to make them incapable of hearing offerings voiced from above.⁹³

Such a funerary belief does not appear entirely new since similar practices of head detachment and body dismembering are certainly documented, although with unknown implications, since the very early Predynastic Period in many Upper and Lower Egyptian cemeteries.⁹⁴

Moreover, a close architectural and archaeological parallel to Khufu's cemetery can also be found at Abydos in the so-called subsidiary burials of king Aha. The latter have not preserved any evidence of dismembering of the body or head detachment, either on the real mummies or on artefacts, since these subsidiary tombs were found

see R. Gundlach, *Der Pharao und sein Staat. Die Grundlegung der Ägyptischen Königstitulaturen im 4. und 3. Jahrtausend* (Darmstadt 1998), 167–169. The reading of Khufu's titles suggested by Gundlach also fits better the royal protocol of Khufu's son, Djedefre, the traditional interpretation of which is not completely convincing. Taking into account their strict religious and historical relationship, further documented by the aforementioned introduction of the *z3 R^c* title, the titles of the two kings as a whole would, thus, receive a complete and plausible explanation. On the fourth dynasty royal titulary see also V. Dobrev, 'Considérations sur les titulatures des rois de la IV^e dynastie égyptienne', *BIFAO* 93 (1993), 179–204. As to the meaning of Khufu's Horus and Nebty names, however, the author writes: 'le sens du mot *mdd* dans le Nom de *Nb-ty* de Khoufou nous échappe complètement' (quotation from p. 188).

⁸⁸ A. M. Roth, 'Social Change in the Fourth Dynasty: The Spatial Organization of Pyramids, Tombs, and Cemeteries', *JARCE* 30 (1993), 33–55, especially 49–50.

⁸⁹ Manuelian, in Guksch and Polz (eds), *Stationen*, 132; Bolshakov, *Man and his Double*, 37–39.

⁹⁰ It is also worth noting that the architectural simplicity and the bare style of the mastabas of Khufu's reign find a close parallel in the overall austerity of the royal complex where the funerary temple—although probably largely endowed with decorations (see D. Arnold, 'Royal Cult Complexes of the Old and Middle Kingdoms', in B. E. Shafer (ed.), *Temples of Ancient Egypt* (London, New York 1997), 51 and the article by L. Flentye, 'The Decorative Programs of the Pyramid Complexes of Khufu and Khafra at Giza', in the present volume)—has a really limited space, the accent being mainly focused on the architectonic impressiveness and monumentality of the pyramid. This would have clearly put the attention solely on the king and the uniqueness of the monarchy. After the reign of Khufu this trend gradually changed, with a particular stress on the decorative programme of the funerary temples. For the evolution of the pyramid temple in the fourth dynasty, see also R. Stadelmann, 'The development of the pyramid temple in the Fourth Dynasty', in S. Quirke (ed.), *The Temple in Egypt: new discoveries and recent research* (London 1997), 1–16. As to the statue of Hemiunu and the chronology of his tomb see also nn 27 and 41 in the present paper.

⁹¹ Reisner, *Giza Necropolis* I, 4–9, 39–56, 66–77, 80–81, 296–300; Jánosi, in Arnold (ed.), *Egyptian Art*, 32.

⁹² Stadelmann, in Sasson (ed.), *Civilizations* II, 730.

⁹³ Schmidt, *SAK* 18 (1991), 338–340. A similar idea as to the mutilation of the ears was also supported by Tefnin, *Art et Magie*, 85–87; id., in Redford (ed.), *Oxford Encyclopedia* III, 147.

⁹⁴ The bibliography on this topic is extensive: some examples are F. A. Hassan, 'Between Man and Goddess: The Fear of Nothing and Dismemberment', in S. Hendrickx, R. Friedman, K. M. Cialowicz, M. Chłodnicki (eds), *Egypt at its Origins: Studies in Memory of Barbara Adams. Proceedings of Conference 'Origin of the State. Predynastic and Early Dynastic Egypt', Krakow, 28th August–1st September 2002* (Leuven 2004), 779–799, especially 792–796; D. Wengrow and J. Baines, 'Images, Human Bodies and the Ritual Construction of Memory in Late Predynastic Egypt', in Hendrickx et al. (eds), *Egypt at its Origins*, 1079–1113, especially 1097–1103.

empty.⁹⁵ Nonetheless, their anonymity and their rigid, geometric arrangement in the necropolis in close proximity to the tomb of their king-master seems to involve a similar, absolute idea of the king to whom all the minor tombs were evidently linked both in this world and in the afterworld.⁹⁶

This theory seems to be further supported by textual evidence: both the Pyramid and the Coffin Texts as well as the Westcar Papyrus provide some parallels. I start with the Pyramid Texts where many spells, dealing with the funerary rituals, appear to echo old practices of rejoining the head to the body before gaining access to the afterlife:⁹⁷

You apes who sever heads, Unis will pass by you in peace, for Unis has tied his head on his neck—and Unis's neck is on his torso—in his identity of Head-Tier, in which he tied the head of the Apis on him on the day of lassoing the longhorned bull. Since Unis has allowed them to eat from their cups and drink from their inundation, so shall Unis be protected in the same by those who see him. (PT 254: § 286–287)

Raise yourself, Teti, for you have received your head, your bones have been assembled for you, your limbs collected for you, the earth on your flesh cleared away from you and you have received your unmouldering bread and unrotting beer. (PT 373: § 654–655)

... awake Teti, Raise yourself! Receive your head, collect your bones and clear away your dust. (PT 413: § 735–736)

Your head has been placed for you. Your head has been set to the bones for you. Give him his eyes, that he may be content. (PT 13–14: § 9)

Similar requests and magic formulae to avoid detachment of the head from the body are to be found in the Coffin Texts, in a non-royal context.⁹⁸

⁹⁵ T. A. H. Wilkinson, *Early Dynastic Egypt* (London-New York 1999), 230–236, with further bibliography.

⁹⁶ In this sense, see also Roth, *JARCE* 30 (1993), 50. According to O'Connor the main difference between the two types of planned, regular cemeteries is that the fourth dynasty mastabas were arranged in patterns centred upon the pyramids while the predynastic subsidiary tombs were ordered in clusters around the main royal tomb. See D. O'Connor, 'New Funerary Enclosures (*Talbezirke*) of the Early Dynastic Period at Abydos', *JARCE* 26 (1989), 51–86, particularly 59, n. 23. However, this does not seem to be completely true for the tomb of Aha which resembles (with its subsidiary tombs) the planned, rigid Giza cemetery in Khufu's time more than the other predynastic royal tombs. See also Wilkinson, *Early Dynastic Egypt*, 230–232 and fig. 7.1.

⁹⁷ For the translations see J. P. Allen, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts* (Writings from the Ancient World 23; Atlanta 2005), 44, 83, 87, 251 respectively.

⁹⁸ For the translations see R. O. Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts I* (Warminster 1974), 182–183. Although much later than the period under discussion, we also included here one sample of the

May you place for me my head upon my neck when you gather together life for the throat. May you make me into a spirit, may you enfold my members, may you knit on my face and build up my soul, may you save me from the fishers of Osiris who cut off heads, who sever necks, and who take souls (*bw*) and spirit (*shw*) to the slaughterhouse of those who eat fresh (meat). My head will not be cut off; my neck will not be severed; my name will not be unknown among the spirits (*shw*)... Hail to you, Lady of Goodness who raised up the head of Osiris and who wailed over him in the Pure Place in this your name of Headrest (?) which is under my head. Place my head on my neck for me, gather up life for my throat for I am in the following of Osiris among the blessed ones, the possessors of offerings, for I have come equipped with my magic, I will not die, breath will not be taken away from my nose and I am a possessor of offerings. (CT 229: § 295–298)

Thus, both in royal and private contexts it is evident that the body lacking its head is completely deprived of all its vital forces and cannot achieve resurrection: only divine power, evoked through the proper magical formulae, could change this situation.

A quite ambiguous but interesting allusion to this practice can be perhaps found also in the Westcar Papyrus and particularly in the tale of the magician Djedi: although this tale is much later than the historical events it recounts and has a clearly literary aim, it might refer to ancient oral traditions of somewhat historical character. Asked by Khufu to sever and reattach a prisoner's head, the magician says:⁹⁹

Not indeed to a man, oh Sovereign (l.p.h.) my lord. For the doing of the like is not commanded unto the august cattle.

As implied by the text, such a thing could have only been done by a god;¹⁰⁰ but Khufu is a god or at least he wants to present himself as a true god in his pyramid-horizon.¹⁰¹ Of course we are dealing with pure speculation and this might be a mere coincidence that has nothing to do with the historical truth. However it is quite surprising that such a record had been linked to this king amongst dozens of possible names of Old Kingdom rulers as it is surprising that

Coffin Texts because of its close semantic and textual relationship to the Pyramid Texts model, although in a private context.

⁹⁹ For the translation see W. K. Simpson (ed.), *The Literature of Ancient Egypt. An Anthology of Stories, Instructions, Stelae, Autobiographies and Poetry* (Cairo 2003), 20.

¹⁰⁰ The reference to the cutting off of heads not being commanded to humanity seems to implicitly mean that only a god could have done this. So, today it is said from the Christian point of view that life is sacred and that nobody should take it away (whether murder or suicide); the implication seems to be that only God can do it.

¹⁰¹ In this sense we can also understand the meaning of the following question by Khufu to Djedi, namely the number of the shrines of the enclosure of Thoth whose knowledge, likely to be embodied in the architectural layout of his pyramid, would have certainly given divine power to the king. See also W. K. Simpson (ed.), *Literature*, 20, n. 13.

the tale of the divine birth of the three sons of Ra, although with predictable historical inaccuracies, was referred to the fifth dynasty kings who brought the solar cult to its climax with the building of the sun temples.¹⁰²

The story of Djedi also contains another intriguing detail that might be useful to understand where the heads were actually placed inside the burial chamber; a detail that seems to confirm the archaeological find in the above-mentioned 'Tomb of Khafre's daughter' (see above). The papyrus says:¹⁰³

So there was brought to him a goose and its head was severed. Then a goose was placed on the western side of the pillared court and its head on the eastern side of the pillared court. Djedi said his say of magic words. The goose arose and waddled and likewise its head. After the one (part) reached the other the goose stood up and cackled.

It is likely, thus, that the heads were placed neither in the burial shaft (where many of them were found) nor in a supposed niche in the burial chamber door blockage but rather on the east side of the mortuary chamber, likely facing eastward towards the rising sun and waiting to be rejoined to the mummified body placed in the sarcophagus on the west side of the chamber.¹⁰⁴

In particular, I suggest that all the heads (and in general all the statues like Hemiunu's as well as the funerary equipment endowed with autonomous vital forces like the slab stelae) would have been arranged facing toward Khufu's pyramid, which is to say towards the actual horizon, since all the mastabas of cemetery G 4000 where reserve heads were found were quite perfectly orientated along the same east-west axis as Khufu's pyramid (Fig. 1, Plate 7). Thus we can imagine that at dawn, the shadow of Khufu's pyramid, as it shrank, would have gradually allowed the sunlight to illuminate the mastabas, from the furthest to the nearest to his pyramid.¹⁰⁵ As it did so, each reserve head would

have been 'resurrected' by the shining of its lord Khufu embodied by the pyramid.

Although not explicitly supported by literary or epigraphic evidence,¹⁰⁶ this symbolism perfectly fits the Egyptian religious beliefs and the absolute solar nature of the king in that period. Moreover, it seems to be also confirmed by the visual evidence in the western field at Giza where this optical phenomenon is clearly observable (Fig. 5), particularly during the solstices, crucial points of the Egyptian religious 'calendar'.¹⁰⁷

By means of a complex magico-religious system, strengthened by the peculiar, rigid plan of his necropolis, Khufu combined old traditions and new solar features to construct a mystical, absolute image of his person which finally integrated and indissolubly linked, in a single place, his destiny to that of his state and society.

On the other hand, his dignitaries, although 'levelled down' and 'made uniform' in their standardised mastabas, would have perpetually benefitted from the king's favour and of his funerary offerings consecrated through his shining glory.¹⁰⁸

Placed in the funerary chamber and ritually mutilated to make them harmless, the reserve heads were, thus, waiting for their resurrection in the shadow of the pyramid of their god-master.

ones to disappear at dusk in the shadow of Khufu's pyramid, from the nearest to the furthest to his pyramid.

¹⁰⁶ Indeed many Pyramid Texts seem to refer indirectly to such a kind of ritual belief: see, for example, the last sentence of the above-mentioned PT 254 (§ 287): 'Since Unis has allowed them to eat from their cups and drink from their inundation, so shall Unis be protected in the same by those who see him', or PT 217 (§ 159): 'Horus, go, announce to the *bas* of the East as well as their *akhs*: "This Unis has come, an imperishable *akh*. The one he wants to live, he will live; the one he wants to die, he will die."' (translations from Allen, *Pyramid Texts*, 44, 33).

¹⁰⁷ In this regard, the summer solstice seems to be of primary importance. As to the astronomy of the Giza Plateau and the specific alignments of the pyramids and the sun, see M. Lehner, *The complete pyramids* (London 1997), 129–130 with further bibliography. See also the very recent paper by G. Magli, 'Akhet Khufu: Archaeo-astronomical Hints at a common project of the two main pyramids of Giza, Egypt', *Nexus Network Journal* 11/1 (2009), 35–50.

¹⁰⁸ We can suppose that the manufacture of reserve heads would have been originally planned for all the tomb owners of both the eastern and western cemeteries. Later on, after Khufu's death, the heads fell out of fashion with tomb owners who, in some cases, also changed the layout of their respective mastabas. As to the development of the Giza necropolis under Khufu and Khafre see also Jánosi, in Arnold (ed.), *Egyptian Art*, 27–39, particularly 29–33).

¹⁰² The historicity of the Westcar Papyrus has often been questioned. This is not the place to discuss this issue in detail. However, I would stress that a real, historical background is to be found in the tale and this certainly means that the compilers of the story had direct access to both historical documents and literary material on which to ground their account. On the historical versus literary value of the tale see: H. Goedicke, 'Thoughts about the Papyrus Westcar', *ZÄS* 120 (1993), 23–36; H. M. Hays, 'The Historicity of Papyrus Westcar', *ZÄS* 129 (2002), 20–30.

¹⁰³ For the translation see Simpson (ed.), *Literature*, 20.

¹⁰⁴ See also Lacovara, *KMT* 8/4 (Winter 1997–98), 31 and fig. at page 33.

¹⁰⁵ A similar reverse process can be imagined for the mastabas of the Eastern Field at the sunset. Indeed, they would have been the first

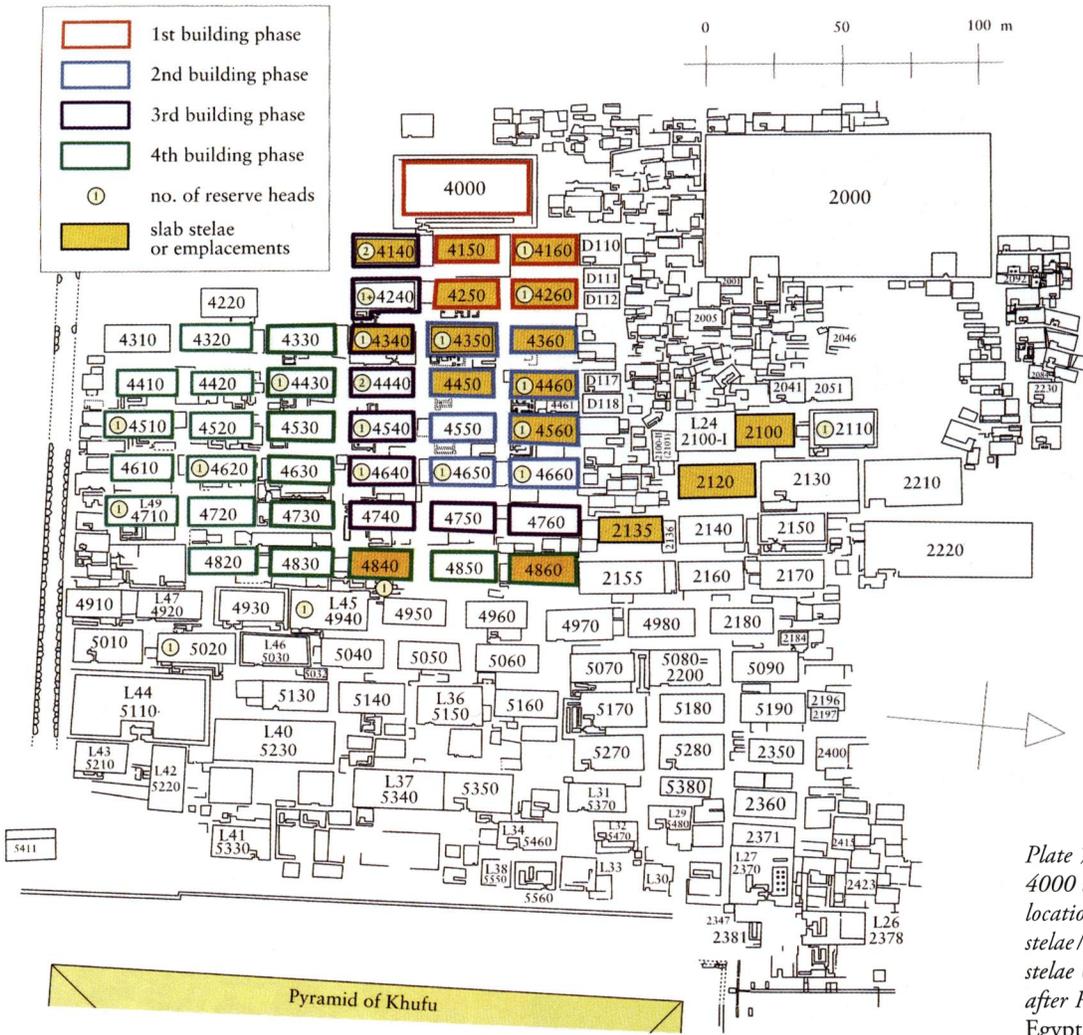


Plate 7: Map of cemeteries 2100, 4000 and 5000 at Giza, showing location of reserve heads and slab stelae/emplacement for the slab stelae (readapted by M. Nuzzolo after Roehrig, in Arnold (ed.), *Egyptian Art*, 76) (Nuzzolo)

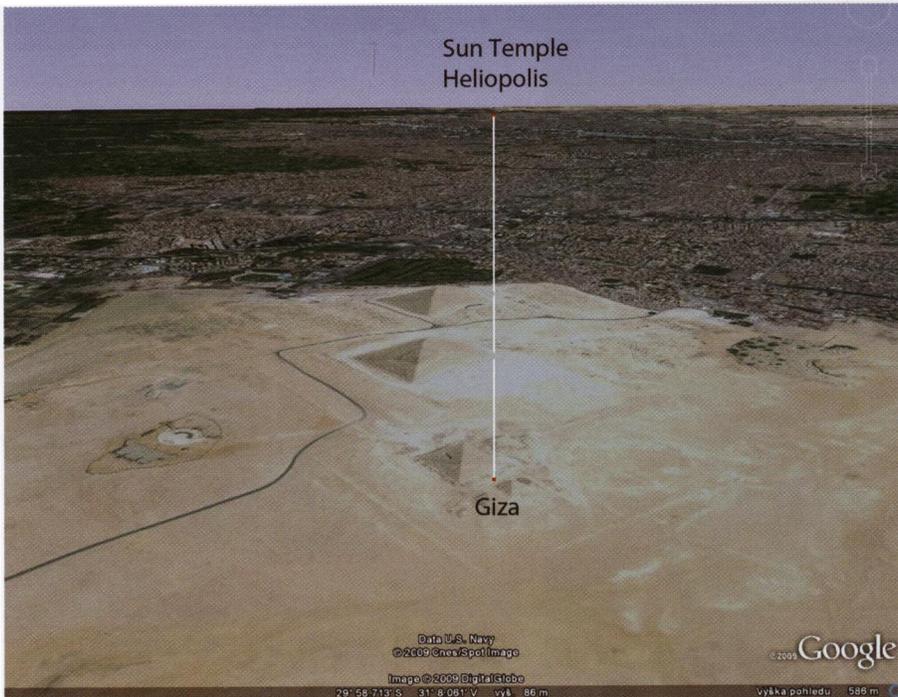


Plate 8: Line linking south-east corners of the Giza pyramids with Heliopolis. The measuring is based on Google Earth. For measurements based on maps see Fig. 3 (Verner)

Addresses of authors

Abdou el-Kerety
Supreme Council of Antiquities
Saqqara
Egypt

miroslav.barta@ff.cuni.cz

Miroslav Bárta
Czech Institute of Egyptology
Faculty of Arts, Charles University
nám. Jana Palacha 2
116 38 Prague 1
Czech Republic

miroslav.barta@ff.cuni.cz

Michel Baud
Département des antiquités égyptiennes
Musée du Louvre
Porte des Arts
75058 Paris cedex 01
France

michel.baud@louvre.fr

V. G. Callender
7 Beresford Road
Thornleigh
New South Wales,
Australia 2120

vgcallender@yahoo.com.au

Marleen De Meyer
Katholieke Universiteit Leuven
Faculteit Letteren, Oude Nabije Oosten
Blijde-Inkomststraat 21 – bus 3318
BE-3000 Leuven
Belgium

Marleen.DeMeyer@arts.kuleuven.be

Andrés Diego Espinel
Centro de Ciencias Humanas y
Sociales – CSIC
C/ Albasanz 26-28
28037 Madrid
Spain

andres.diego@cchs.csic.es

May Farouk
Faculty of Tourism and Hotels
Sadat city
Egypt

mayfarouk21@yahoo.com

Laurel Flentye
Chicago
USA

LaurieatGiza@gmail.com

Florence Friedman
Rhode Island
USA
ffriedman@verizon.net

H.M. Hays
Oude Culturen van de Mediterrane Wereld
Universiteit Leiden
postbus 9515
2300 RA Leiden
The Netherlands
H.M.Hays@hum.leidenuniv.nl

Jaromír Krejčí
Czech Institute of Egyptology
(see Bárta for full address)
Jaromir.Krejci@ff.cuni.cz

Kamil O. Kuraszkiwicz
Department of Egyptian and Nubian
Archaeology
Institute of Archaeology, University of Warsaw
ul. Krakowskie Przedmieście 26/28
00-927 Warszawa
Poland
k.o.kuraszkiwicz@uw.edu.pl

Mark Lehner
Ancient Egypt Research Associates, Inc.
P.O. Box 382608
Cambridge, MA 02238-2608
USA
marklehner@aol.com

Jana Malatkova
Czech Institute of Egyptology
(see Bárta for full address)
Jaromir.Krejci@ff.cuni.cz

Massimiliano Nuzzolo
Massimiliano Nuzzolo
University of Naples "L'Orientale"
Pza S. Domenico Maggiore 12
80134 Napoli - Italy
massimiliano.nuzzolo@libero.it

Gabriele Pieke
Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin
Germany
g.pieke@googlemail.com

Joanna Popielska-Grzybowska
Institute of Anthropology and Archaeology
The Pułtusk Academy of Humanities
17, Daszyńskiego st.
06-100 Pułtusk
joannapopielskag@hotmail.com

Ann Macy Roth
New York University
New York
USA
ann.macy.roth@nyu.edu

Teodozja I. Rzeuska
Institute for Mediterranean and Oriental
Cultures
Polish Academy of Sciences
Warsaw
Poland
teodozjarzeuska@wp.pl

Nico Staring
Leiden University
Zamenhofstraat 22
2312 NV Leiden
The Netherlands
n.t.b.staring@umail.leidenuniv.nl

Ana Tavares
Ancient Egypt Research Associates, Inc.
(see Lehner for full address)
tavares.ana.2008@gmail.com

Stefanie Vereecken
Katholieke Universiteit Leuven
(see De Meyer for full address)
Stefanie.Vereecken@arts.kuleuven.be

Miroslav Verner
Czech Institute of Egyptology
(see Bárta for full address)
Jaromir.Krejci@ff.cuni.cz

Hana Vymazalová
Czech Institute of Egyptology
(see Bárta for full address)
Jaromir.Krejci@ff.cuni.cz

Anna Wodzińska
Department of Egyptian and Nubian
Archaeology
(see Kuraszkiwicz for full address)
annawodzinska@uw.edu.pl

Dr. Alexandra Woods
Department of Ancient History,
Faculty of Arts,
Macquarie University
Sydney
Australia
alex.woods@mq.edu.au

Recent research on all aspects of the Old Kingdom in Egypt is presented in this volume, ranging through the Pyramid Texts, tomb architecture, ceramics, scene choice and layout, field reports, cemetery layout, tomb and temple statuary. The contributions also show how Egyptology is not stuck in its venerable traditions but that newer forms of technology are being used to great effect by Egyptologists. For example, two papers show how GIS technology can shed light on cemetery arrangement and how 3D scanners can be employed in the process of producing facsimile drawings of reliefs and inscriptions.

The authors cover a wide range of sites and monuments. A large part of the work presented deals with material from the great cemeteries of Saqqara and Giza of the Old Kingdom capital city of Memphis but all the smaller sites are discussed. The book also includes a paper on the architecture of mastabas from the lesser-known site of Abu Roasch. The provinces are by no means overlooked, with articles on material from Deir el-Bersha, el-Sheikh Said and Akhmim. Between them, the authors discuss material from the milieu of the king right down to that which concerned the tomb workmen and those who supplied their basic needs, such as bakers, brewers and potters.

Containing papers presented at a conference at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge in May 2009, this book continues a series of publications of the latest research presented at previous meetings in Paris, Berlin and Prague.

Helen Strudwick currently works at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge; Nigel Strudwick has worked at the British Museum and is presently teaching at the University of Memphis. They have carried out fieldwork together at Luxor since 1984 and are the authors of *Thebes in Egypt*.



Oxbow Books
www.oxbowbooks.com

ISBN 978-1-84217-430-2



9 781842 174302

