This evolving resource will serve as a centralized online repository for all archaeological activity at the Giza Necropolis, beginning with the Harvard University-Boston Museum of Fine Arts excavations.

Representative “pages” from the Giza Archives Project website on the Internet: http://www.gizapyramids.org

Background photo by the Author.
Air travel and time travel. Two of the greatest obstacles to productive Egyptological research. Too often scholars are separated from the antiquities they need to study by miles, even continents and oceans. A still greater challenge is being forced to interpret the ancient monuments from just a single point in time. Imagine how we could enhance our knowledge of ancient Egyptian material culture if we could study antiquities at different points in their histories, from their creation to their discovery, right down to their present state of preservation.

Egyptologists have yet to conquer time travel to be able to view the Sphinx in the process of being carved, or the usurpation of an Old Kingdom tomb during the Late Period. And no one has yet invented the “transporter rooms” of science fiction, to whisk a student from a remote university library to the tombs and temples of the Nile Valley. However, the information and technology explosion of the past decade has opened some exciting new research opportunities. In the case of the Giza Necropolis, a small step has now been taken towards this new era of scholarly access and research.

Although Giza is perhaps the most famous archaeological
A major part of the archival material resulting from the Harvard/MFA work at Giza are some 21,000 glass-plate negatives recording the excavations, a sampling of which is seen above & opposite: From the left, Raising the sarcophagus from tomb G 7060 in 1929; the Menkaure Pyramid Temple after excavation, 1907; the triads of Menkaure in the Valley Temple, 1908; & a 1936 in situ general view of tomb G 2407, with a statue in shaft D, as found. The Giza Archives Project has converted all 22,000 glass-plate images to digital format.

Photos: MFA, Boston

site in the world, it has never had its own research institute, scholarly journal or other type of center dedicated to its preservation, documentation and publication. With over a century of modern archaeological activity at the site — revealing thousands of tombs, burials, statues, wall carvings, ceramics, stone vessels and other artifacts — Giza is critical to unlocking almost every aspect of Egyptian culture during the classical Old Kingdom, or Pyramid Age. It is time to gather this overwhelming body of material. A new endeavor called the “Giza Archives Project,” represented by a scholarly research website, now allows for in-depth study of the pyramids, temples and mastaba tombs at the site. To quote from the Project's mission statement, “this evolving resource will serve as a centralized online repository for all archaeological activity at the Giza Necropolis, beginning with the Harvard University-Boston Museum of Fine Arts excavations (1902-1947).” Users may consult this website from the comfort of their homes, and they can view Giza at various periods in its long history. Best of all: unlike most content-rich websites, the Giza images and documents are all available for free.

Scholars utilize a variety of sources in their work: the "ground truth" of the archaeo-
logical sites themselves; the objects discovered and now spread throughout the museums of the world; and, finally, the vast secondary source of archival documentation resulting from previous fieldwork. Our efforts could be significantly streamlined if all these disparate data were available from one central source, regardless of their physical location today.

At Giza several major expeditions from the early Twentieth Century amassed artifacts, notes, photographs, plans, drawings and manuscripts. This irreplaceable documentation is now housed primarily in museums and university archives in Egypt, Europe and the U.S. In the fall of 2000, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation (www.mellon.org), recognizing that the largest single corpus of Giza data was in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, awarded the MFA a $750,000 archives grant. The initial goal of the Giza Archives Project was to begin the digital conversion and presentation of Giza materials to scholars and the interested public over the Internet. Since the Project began, 200 people in the Boston area have contributed their time and talents to the diverse tasks at hand. These include MFA curatorial and collections-management staff, Egyptology graduate-student interns, undergraduates from Harvard, Tufts and Brown universities, hired data-entry consultants, MFA Museum Associates staff and a wide variety of volunteers. Throughout the entire Project to date, much of the often-challenging original expedition’s data has been masterfully organized and enhanced by Giza Research Associate Dr. Diane Flores. After four years of work, and a second Mellon Foundation award of an additional $545,000 (2004-2007), Phase 1 of the Giza website is now available online at http://www.gizapyramids.org — or http://www.mfa.org/giza. Without the support of the Mellon Foundation, the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and Harvard University; the Giza Archives Project would never have come into existence. The Project is also indebted to its Scholarly Advisory Board, whose guidance and support have greatly assisted its progress.

AMERICAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL ACTIVITY AT GIZA

How did the MFA in Boston come to be caretaker of the largest collection of archaeological material from the Giza Necropolis? The answer is, through the energy, industry, archaeological acumen and sheer force of will of a single individual: George A. Reisner. Born in Indianapolis in 1867, Reisner began his academic life as a comparative Semiticist, earning BA, MA and PhD degrees from Harvard University (1889, 1891 and 1893, respectively), teaching at Harvard and then translating cuneiform tablets on a traveling fellowship to the Berlin Museum. It was there that he shared office space with two of the field’s greatest Egyptian philologists, Adolf Erman and Kurt Sethe; and from them Reisner caught the “Egyptological bug.”

A short stint cataloguing objects in the Cairo Museum (1897-1899) led to Resiner’s career-changing introduction to American philanthropist Phoebe Apperson Hearst (1842-1919). Mrs. Hearst offered Reisner a five-year contract (1899-1904) to hone his archaeological skills in Egypt, in the service of the University of California, Berkeley. After working at several locations up the Nile, Reisner obtained permission from Gaston Maspero of the Egyptian Antiquities Service to excavate the Giza Necropolis, alongside German and Italian expeditions. The famous story of the division of the site, on the veranda of the Mena House hotel, has been told elsewhere. As of November 1902, Reisner and his “Hearst Expedition” began to plan the strategy for clearing their portion of the vast Western Cemetery.

In 1904 Mrs. Hearst announ-
ced that she could no longer support the work; and so negotiations back in Boston during the summer of 1905 resulted in the creation of the Harvard University-Boston Museum of Fine Arts Expedition, which picked up right where the Hearst Expedition left off. Moreover, the HU-MFA Expedition later absorbed the Italian concession, obtaining two-thirds of the Western Cemetery, and all of the royal Eastern Cemetery.

Reisner's work at Giza resulted in the discovery of a steady stream of antiquities, from utilitarian objects to art-historical masterpieces. As a collection his finds constitute, arguably, the greatest assemblage of Old Kingdom material from any site in Egypt. The finds were legally divided under the jurisdiction of the Antiquities Service between the Egyptian Museum, Cairo, and — first — the University of California, Berkeley, (later the Hearst Museum of Anthro-
ology) and, from 1905 on, the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and Harvard University. Excavations were interrupted only by work at other sites along the Nile, by two seasons in Palestine (1909-1910) and by many seasons spent far to the south in Nubia.

Owning no home in Boston, Reisner lived most of his life at "Harvard Camp," a collection of simple huts west of the Khafre pyramid, with

Two examples of computer technology being utilized by the Giza Archives Project:
Above, an experimental composite image of the Chapel of Wepenmenefret (G 1201), with a recent color photo of the stela repositioned within the original excavation photo (negative B 11810), which has been colorized;
Left, A digital line drawing by the Author of the same stela (no ink used), demonstrating the possibilities of digital epigraphy.

73 Kmt
only a few semesters spent at home teaching at Harvard University and curating the ever-growing collection of the MFA. Both at Boston and in the field, he had the help of several gifted young colleagues, among them Dows Durham (1890-1984) and, later, William Stevenson Smith (1907-1969). Blinded by cataract problems in the last decade of his life, but toiling nonetheless, Reisner remained at Giza, even after sending his wife and daughter home to the States in the middle of the Second World War. He died in June 1942 at his beloved Harvard Camp.

It was not until 1947, well after the end of the war, that Dunham and Smith were able to travel to Egypt to assess the situation at Harvard Camp. They knew that Reisner was ahead of his time in methodically documenting every aspect of his excavations. Thus, what awaited them were a daunting number of photographic negatives on glass plates, thousands of expedition diary pages, object register books, maps, plans, sections, figural drawings, and miscellaneous notes and manuscripts. In fact, during World War II, the expedition staff temporarily buried all of these materials in selected tomb shafts at Giza, in anticipation of a possible German invasion from the west.

By the early spring of 1947, Dunham, Smith and the Museum authorities decided to close down Harvard Camp and ship all the documentation back to Boston. Nevertheless, the spirit of Harvard Camp lived on in the eventual establishment of the American Research Center in Egypt (http://www.arce.org), in a ceremony at the “Club of Odd Volumes” on Boston’s Beacon Hill in 1948.

Over the years the Giza archives at the MFA have served countless scholars and students in their Egyptological research. They enabled Museum curator William Kelly Simpson to establish the Giza Mastabas Series in 1974, with the publication of the extraordinary Fourth Dynasty subterranean tomb-chapel of Queen Meresankh III. This monograph series represents the in-depth, tomb-by-tomb publications that Reisner originally envisaged but did not live to realize.

With Giza Archives Project online resources, researchers can access the above MFA, Boston’s studio photograph of the statue of Khuenkhufu (MFA.37.638), as well the Expedition Diary entry (p. 301, April 18, 1936), right, recording the statue’s discovery, & also its entry in the Expedition Objects Register (not shown). Its excavation photo is at right, p. 71.
Schematic chart by the Author, showing the Giza Archives Project's diverse archaeological data linked to a specific mastaba tomb (center of diagram), all now available online.

To date seven volumes have appeared, by D. Dunham, W.K. Simpson, K. Weeks, A.M. Roth and E. Brossard, and additional studies are in preparation. Despite this progress, the sheer size of the MFAs Giza archives has overwhelmed and defeated many scholars in their quest for thoroughness. Without a protracted stay in Boston, it has proven impossible to locate and process all the materials needed for any particular research topic.

The 2000 Mellon Foundation grant was designed to address this inaccessibility. The Giza Archives Project converted the handwritten diaries and object-register books to digital form (organized in databases and text files). The Project converted the Expedition's approximately 22,000 glass-plate negatives to digital images. Ten thousand maps and plans have been scanned so far, and thousands of pages of books and articles are now processed as text-searchable PDF files.

But the goal aimed to present this massive, unwieldy archive in not just a new medium but also in an integrated and cross-referenced collection, uniting and linking the diverse archaeological materials automatically. Imagine the difference between hunting through an unbound Encyclopedia Britannica, its pages strewn all over the floor, versus searching a website that links photos, notes, diaries, objects and maps together for a specific tomb. Archaeology, like so many fields these days, has to devote major resources just to information management, if it is to avoid drowning in a sea of its own data. If the massive amounts of archaeological data cannot be sifted, gathered and presented in a user-friendly manner, it serves no purpose. Producing “content” in the field is one challenge; the interpretation and presentation of said content is quite a different one altogether.

In order to simplify access to Giza's archaeological legacy, individual mastaba tombs were selected as single unifying “features,” to use an archaeological term, around which diverse data — a data “universe” — revolves. For instance, for any given tomb at Giza, the Expedition produced a combination of photographs, notes, finds, drawings and other documents. Fortunately Reisner devised a four-digit numbering system for the mastaba tombs at Giza, not unlike the grid network of Manhattan streets, and this system is still in use today. A search then for tomb “G 2000” produces all text and images related to that tomb number.

**Navigating the Giza Pyramids Online**

How does one take a virtual tour of the Giza Necropolis? Across the top of the Giza website homepage (see top image, p. 68) are a number of basic subsection pages in a black navigation bar. These pages describe the Project, provide news and announcements, staff listings, instructions on copyright and fair use of the materials posted, a user feedback form, and a sitemap and “Help” page. The navigation bar also provides an “Interactive” page with zoomable aerial and satellite photos and overview maps and plans of Giza, and a “Library” page. This new digital library strives to offer a complete digital collection of Giza-related books and articles (see below).

Individual researchers tend to access information in different ways. Some prefer words, others pictures. Some know the subject matter.
intimately and have very specific search goals; while others, new to Giza, would prefer to browse and follow whatever catches their eye. The Giza website attempts to accommodate all these types of searches, from general to specific, from the textual to the visual.

All of these search methods are accessed by a red navigation bar, just below the black band at the top of the site. This navigation bar allows for three primary ways to sift through Giza data: "Quick Search," "Advanced Search" and "Visual Search." These will be described further below. For those who might first need an overview of the Giza Necropolis, and the common designations for the various areas surrounding the pyramids, the "Giza Overview" button at the far left of the red navigation bar produces the color aerial photo seen in the middle image on p. 68.

What archaeological materials are available on the Giza website? The numbers are constantly changing, but if one simply clicks on the "Go" button in the red navigation bar, the total numbers appear in list form. Each type of documentation is represented by a generic "thumbnail" — photos, diary pages, plans, etc. These repeating thumbnails, recurring all across the entire website, are intended to enhance the user's familiarity with the types of data available. As of this writing, they stand at:

- 2,678 individual Giza tomb records;
- 22,757 original HU-MFA black-and-white excavation photos;
- 21,037 records of finds;
- 3,105 original HU-MFA Expedition diary pages;
- 1,978 ancient and modern people records;
- 9,905 plans and drawings, from overview plans to individual burial shafts; and
- over 200 free downloadable Giza books and articles in text-searchable PDF format.

The "Quick Search" box is designed to search across all the website's underlying diverse database fields. This is the place to type words or phrases ("seated statue," "Sphinx," "false door"), ancient names ("Senedjemib") or modern ones ("Lord Cro-mer"), tomb numbers ("G 2370") or object accession numbers ("11.1738").

For those interested in more specific searching, the "Advanced Search" button leads to more detailed categories and fields. Here users can search for specific types of photographs, diary pages, object finds, plans and drawings, or people. Examples might include all diary pages that mention the Menkaure Valley Temple, or all photos from 1912 taken by Expedition photographer Mohamedani Ibrahim that contain the word "skeleton" in their descriptive caption, or all plans and drawings of tomb G 7110.

These types of cross-referenced data represent somewhat typical, predictable ways to search archaeological materials from a database. A more revolutionary approach is taken with the "Visual Search" page. This shows a black-and-white aerial photograph of the entire Giza Necropolis, montaged together from different eras. From this bird's-eye
view of the site, button controls at
the bottom of the image allow for
zooming in to a very high magnifica-
tion; at closest range one can even
see the tennis court at Harvard Camp
and individuals walking about (on
February 29, 1936).

Two features attempt to give
maximum access to the site, with no
specialized Egyptological or com-
puter-programming knowledge required;
just point and click. First, almost
every tomb has become a red “but-
ton” that flashes when the mouse
cursor rolls over it. Clicking on the
tomb compiles for the user a list of
all available photos, finds, maps and
plans, diary pages and individuals
relevant to that particular site. In
place of typing — or requiring any
Egyptological expertise on Giza tomb
numbers — this graphical approach
to Giza does all the sorting and gath-
ering on the user’s behalf.

The second feature on the
“Visual Search” page consists of
round, pulsating yellow and blue but-
tons placed all over the site. These
represent almost 700 different stand-
points; click a button and a new
browser window takes the user down
to the ground at that very location
showing a color image. Yellow dots
represent outdoor (exterior) loca-
tions, while blue dots take the user
inside a decorated chapel, pyramid or
rock-cut chamber. However, these are
no ordinary photographs, but rather
360-degree interactive panoramas
(known as QTFRs, or “Quicktime
Virtual Reality” movies), which the
user can manipulate to survey the
area in all directions. Until airfare to
Egypt is drastically reduced in price,
this is by far the cheapest way to visit
Giza!

Taken together the red roll-
over tomb buttons and the QTFR
panoramas provide an efficient tool
for studying the Giza monuments,
both at the time of their original dis-
covery and excavation, and as they
appear today. Relative locations and
relationships between scenes, walls,
buildings and even pyramids become
much clearer when viewed in 360 de-
grees, instead of with static two-di-
mensional detail photographs. One
warning: fast Internet connections are
required for this page, as are the
(free) Flash and Apple Quicktime
browser plugins (links provided on
the Giza website).

Many websites offer hundreds
or even thousands of images,
but serious scholarly research
is usually impossible due to the very
limitations of the Internet. Band-
width problems require images to be
formatted too small for detailed anal-
ysis. In an effort to solve this problem
and render the Giza archives useful
for even the most detailed study, the
Giza website employs a special tech-
nology that takes very large image-
files and digitally “breaks” them up
into smaller “tiles.” The result is that
the user can zoom in very closely on
a photograph, a small sketch on a
diary page, or a faded number in an
object register-book entry, while the
computer shows only the portion or
“tile” of the image detail desired. The
bottom image on page 68 shows the
zooming feature for a closeup view of
the female head from a pair-statue
found in tomb G 2009 (Cairo JE
38670). The Internet and computer
are thus not taxed beyond their capa-
bilities with downloading the entire
large image file. This single feature
transforms the Giza website from the
realm of Internet curiosity to serious
research tool. To date all 40,000 items
on the site have been converted using
this zooming technology.

A “DIGITAL BOOKSHELF”
FOR GIZA

Leaving aside the various search
options for Giza archaeological
data, one other large collection
on the Giza website is worth men-
tioning: the “Giza Digital Library.” To
date about 200 works are posted for
free downloading from the “Giza Li-
brary” page. These PDF files repro-
duce the original look and feel of the
original publications’ designs and lay-
outs. But they also contain “added

The Giza Archives Project enables researchers to compare tomb fea-
tures as found (1930), above, with their present condition, right.
The Giza website is intended to enhance the traditional research and publication process, not replace it. The Giza Digital Library page currently contains every Giza-related book and article ever written by George Reisner, Dows Dunham and William Stevenson Smith. It also contains works by a host of other scholars, both past and present. All seven volumes of the MFAs Giza Mastabas Series are online. All 166 Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts articles are likewise available for free downloading. Where entire monographs require large PDF files, these have been broken into individual chapter-files for ease of downloading. The Giza Archives Project welcomes the opportunity to add individual works of serious scholarship to the lists, and it is hoped that copyright negotiations will eventually allow for as complete an online Giza Digital Library as possible.

"GIZA INTERNATIONAL": ELIMINATING THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL "SWISS CHEESE EFFECT"

Thousands of additional images and documents, old and new, remain to be processed in the archives of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and added to www.gizapyramids.org (www.mfa.org/giza). Examples include the History of the Giza Necropolis volumes that Reisner left unpublished at his death in 1942; countless object and tomb wall-scene drawings; and thousands of on-site color images taken by various Giza expeditions between 1970 and 2005. A plan to introduce standardized thesaurus terminology, to allow for better searching, is also underway. And finally the MFA continues to add new color photography of its own Giza objects, as part of an ongoing documentation strategy, funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Mellon Foundation Giza grant. These high-resolution color images will link to their black-and-white discovery photographic counterparts on the Giza website.
Critical as these additional materials are, they concern primarily the Harvard University-Boston Museum of Fine Arts Expedition and its derivative field seasons. Other important excavations at Giza include the work of the German/Austrian expedition, directed by Georg Steindorff and later Hermann Junker, and the Egyptian expeditions of Selim Hassan and Abdel-Moneim Abu Bakr. We hope in the coming years to fill the "holes" in the Giza data, by including the several major "Giza collections" housed in museums around the world, such as those in Cairo, Vienna, Leipzig, Hildesheim, Berkeley and Turin. Perhaps recent excavations by Zahi Hawass for the SCA and Mark Lehner of AERA, will also one day feature prominently in the Giza online repository. And there are always new technologies to test and include, such as digital epigraphy, or the production of computer-aided facsimile drawings of wall reliefs and inscriptions.

By pooling resources and treating Giza in its entirety, we stand to gain an accurate picture of the development of the ancient necropolis and, by extension, one of the most important eras of ancient Egyptian civilization. With his site-management program, Zahi Hawass has done more than anyone else in recent years in terms of preserving Giza in a physical sense; now it is time to gather all the derivative materials (artifacts, photographs, drawings, plans, manuscripts, etc.) in a virtual sense. Should this approach prove successful, it might serve as a model for the amalgamation of archaeological materials for other sites, as well.

The ancient site of the Giza Plateau is neither stable nor permanent, and it is now imperative that international efforts be coordinated to document, preserve and publish it in the widest possible sense of the words. Never before has technology offered such far-reaching solutions to one of the world's greatest cultural preservation problems, while simultaneously providing an exciting and revolutionary educational opportunity for scholars and students of the Pyramid Age.

Notes
1. A listing of the Giza Archives Project staff may be found at http://www.gizapyramids.org/code/emuseum.asp?newpage=staff.
2. The production of the website would not have been possible without the support of many individuals at the MFA: Malcolm Rogers, Katherine Getchell, Arthur Beale, Rita E. Freed, Lawrence Berman, Denise M. Doxey, Maureen Melton, Linda Pulliam, Jeff Steward and Kay Sotomi.
3. The Scholarly Advisory Board consists of: Zahi Hawass, James P. Allen, John Baines, Rita E. Freed, Peter Janosi, Mark Lehner; and Lawrence Stager.
4. For an account of the division of the Giza excavation concessions between German, Italian, American and, later, Egyptian missions, see G.A. Reisner, A History of the Giza Necropolis I (Cambridge, MA, 1942), 22-26; selected discussions of Reisner's Giza work may be found in this writer's "A Month in the Life of a Great Egyptologist" George Reisner in March, 1912," Kmt 7:2 (summer 1996), 60-75; and "A Race Against Time in the Shadow of the Pyramids, 1902-1990," Kmt 1:4 (winter 1990-91), 10-21.
7. The staff of the Mellon Foundation who have lent their support and encouragement for the Giza Archives Project include: Angelica Zander Rudenstine, and Donald Waters; and from ARTstor James Schulman, Neil Rudenstine and Nancy Allen.
8. Tombs with numbers 1000 to 6000 are located west of the Great Pyramid of Khufu (Western Cemetery); those numbered 7000 and higher are in the Eastern Cemetery.
9. The Giza website was created using "eMuseum," the website interface for a very powerful collections-management system known as TMS, "The Museum System." TMS is in use by some 500 museums worldwide, including several with important Egyptian collections: The MFA, Boston; the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; the Hearst Museum, Berkeley; and the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna. For further information on TMS and eMuseum, see http://www.gallerysystems.com. 
10. Why combine such disparate pictures? There is no single point in time when all of Giza is exposed to maximum clarity, thus it was necessary to include as much of the site as possible by montaging multiple images. Even a high-resolution, color-satellite image taken this year would fail to show the many tombs re-buried, denuded or otherwise altered since they were first exposed back in the early decades of the Twentieth Century. http://www.zoomify.com
11. http://www. zoomify.com
15. Additional current or recent expeditions to Giza — such as those of William Kelly Simpson, Kent Weeks, Edward Brovarski, Ann Macy Roth, Günter Dreyer, Eleonora Kormycheva, Mansour Boreik, Mohamed Shiha and Mahmoud Afifi — are also holders of key information on the site.
16. The Giza Archives Project welcomes suggestions, feedback and support, and can be contacted at: http://www.gizapyramids.org/code/emuseum.asp?newpage=contact. In addition those with knowledge of or documents pertaining to the history of George Reisner's archaeological career, or that of his immediate colleagues, are urged to contact Project staff.

About the Author Dr. Peter Der Manuelian is the director of the Giza Archives Project at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and is a lecturer in Egyptology at Tufts University. He is also coeditor of the Giza Mastabas Series along with W.K. Simpson.