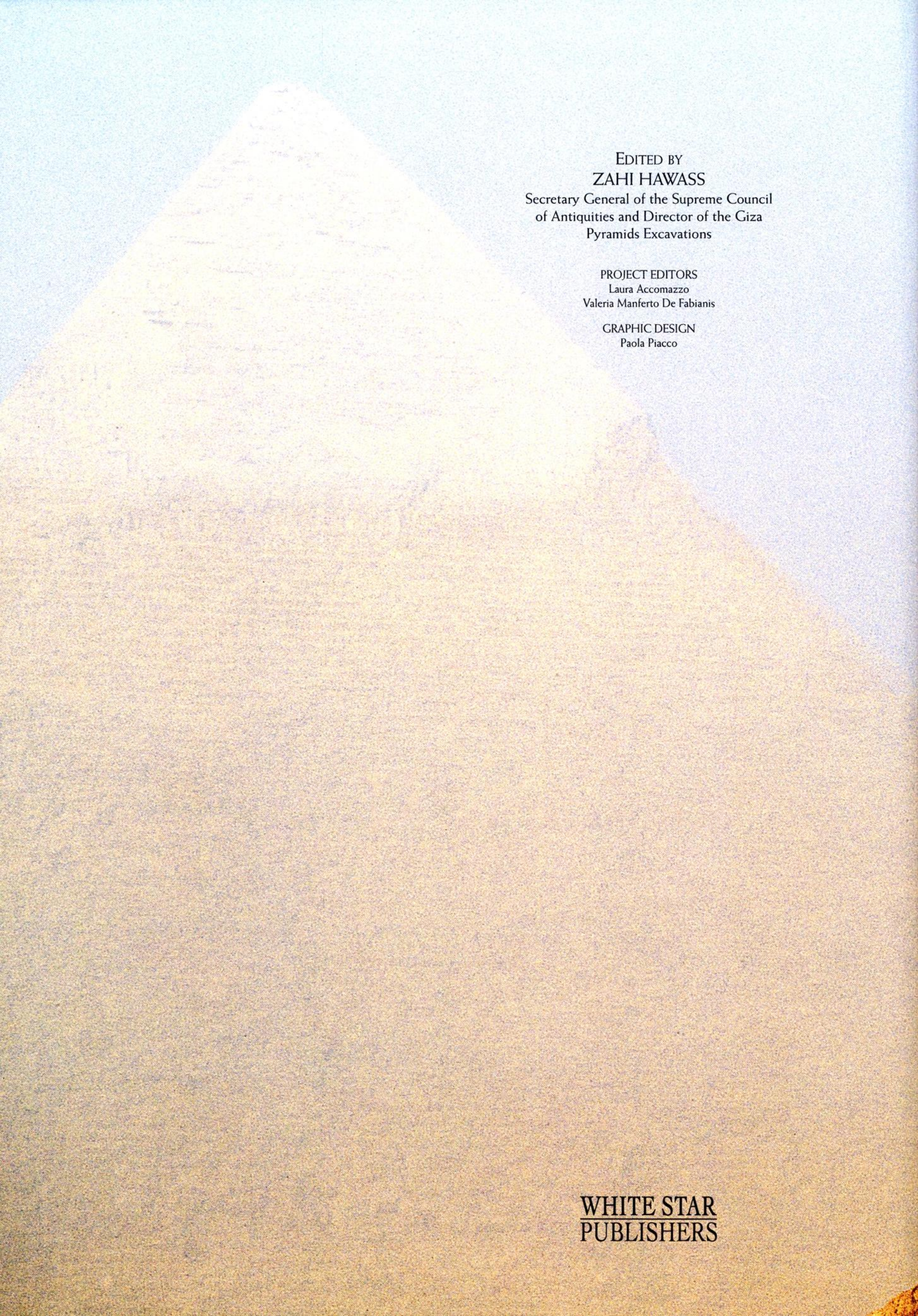


An aerial photograph of the Great Pyramids of Giza in Egypt. The pyramids are constructed from dark, weathered stone blocks, showing significant erosion and some missing sections. The Great Pyramid of Giza is the largest and is positioned in the foreground, slightly to the right. Behind it, the two smaller pyramids are visible. In the background, a dense urban area with numerous buildings is visible under a clear blue sky. The lighting suggests it's either early morning or late afternoon, with long shadows cast across the desert floor.

ZAHÍ HAWASS

THE TREASURES OF THE PYRAMIDS



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THE TREASURES OF THE PYRAMIDS





Contents

INTRODUCTION	Page	5		
by H.E. Mrs. Suzanne Mubarak				
THE PYRAMIDS	Page	12		
by Zahi Hawass				
CHRONOLOGY	Page	18		
CHAPTER 1				
WHY A PYRAMID? PYRAMID RELIGION				
by James P. Allen	Page	22		
CHAPTER 2				
THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE PYRAMID				
by Vassil Dobrev	Page	28		
CHAPTER 3				
BUILDING AN OLD KINGDOM PYRAMID				
by Mark Lehner	Page	32		
CHAPTER 4				
THE ARCHITECTURAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE EGYPTIAN ROYAL TOMB				
by Zahi Hawass	Page	46		
CHAPTER 5				
THE ARCHITECTURAL COMPONENTS OF THE PYRAMID COMPLEX				
by Zahi Hawass	Page	50		
CHAPTER 6				
THE PREDYNASTIC PERIOD				
by Renee Friedman	Page	54		
CHAPTER 7				
THE TOMBS OF THE FIRST AND SECOND DYNASTIES				
AT ABYDOS AND SAQQARA				
by Günter Dreyer	Page	62		
			CHAPTER 8	
			THE ROYAL MORTUARY ENCLOSURES OF ABYDOS AND HIERAKONPOLIS	
			by Matthew Adams and David O'Connor	Page 78
			CHAPTER 9	
			THE STEP PYRAMIDS	
			by Ali Radwan	Page 86
			CHAPTER 10	
			THE PYRAMIDS OF THE FOURTH DYNASTY	
			by Rainer Stadelmann	Page 112
			CHAPTER 11	
			THE QUEENS' PYRAMIDS OF THE FOURTH DYNASTY AT GIZA	
			by Zahi Hawass	Page 138
			CHAPTER 12	
			THE SATELLITE PYRAMID OF KHUFU	
			by Zahi Hawass	Page 150
			CHAPTER 13	
			THE MYSTERY OF HETEPHERES	
			by Zahi Hawass	Page 152
			CHAPTER 14	
			THE SECRET DOORS INSIDE THE GREAT PYRAMID	
			by Zahi Hawass	Page 156
			CHAPTER 15	
			THE PYRAMIDION	
			by Zahi Hawass	Page 160
			CHAPTER 16	
			THE ROYAL BOATS AT GIZA	
			by Zahi Hawass	Page 164
			CHAPTER 17	
			THE SPHINX	
			by Mark Lehner	Page 172



CHAPTER 18

THE TOMBS OF THE HIGH OFFICIALS AT GIZA

by Peter Der Manuelian

Page 190

CHAPTER 19

THE 'UNFINISHED' PYRAMIDS OF THE FOURTH DYNASTY

by Michel Valloggia

Pag. 224

CHAPTER 20

THE PYRAMIDS OF THE FIFTH DYNASTY

by Miroslav Verner

Pag. 236

CHAPTER 21

THE SURPRISING ABUSIR BLOCKS

by Zahi Hawass and Miroslav Verner

Pag. 260

CHAPTER 22

THE PYRAMIDS OF THE SIXTH DYNASTY

by Audran Labrousse

Pag. 264

CHAPTER 23

THE DECORATIVE PROGRAM OF THE OLD KINGDOM PYRAMID COMPLEXES

by Zahi Hawass

Page 282

CHAPTER 24

THE TOMBS OF THE FIFTH AND SIXTH DYNASTIES AT SAQQARA

by Karol Mysliwiec

Page 286

CHAPTER 25

THE PYRAMIDS OF THE MIDDLE KINGDOM

by Dieter Arnold

Page 326

CHAPTER 26

THE TOMBS OF THE NOBLES IN THE MIDDLE KINGDOM

by David P. Silverman

Page 348

CHAPTER 27

ROYAL AND PRIVATE STATUES OF THE OLD AND MIDDLE KINGDOMS

by Hourig Sourouzian

Page 366

INDEX AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

Page 392

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10-11

Scene showing the 'Meidum geese',
Egyptian Museum Cairo, Old
Kingdom.

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The Queens' Pyramids of the Fourth Dynasty at Giza

by Zahi Hawass

The Giza kings each had a number of queens associated with them. Some of these queens were buried in the *mastaba* cemeteries that cover the plateau; others were given their own small pyramids in the complexes of their husbands or sons.

There are seven queens' pyramids at Giza: three in the complex of Khufu, one in the complex of Khafre, and three in the complex of Menkaure.



138 left

The three pyramids of Khufu's queens, located at Giza and dating to the Fourth Dynasty.



138-139

Menkaure's three queens' pyramids, dating to the Fourth Dynasty, in front of the pyramids of Menkaure, Khafre, and Khufu, at Giza.





140-141

This aerial view, taken from the eastern side, shows the three queens' pyramids of King Khufu, the Great Pyramid of Khufu, and the pyramids of Khafre and Menkaure at Giza, Fourth Dynasty.

141 top right

This photograph shows the area surrounding the Pyramid of Khufu: two of the solar boat pits of Khufu, the satellite pyramid, and the three pyramids of Khufu's queens are visible, Fourth Dynasty.

Queens' Pyramids

THE QUEENS' PYRAMIDS IN THE COMPLEX OF KHUFU

Three small pyramids, generally attributed to queens of Khufu, lie in a north-south row just outside the east enclosure wall of the Great Pyramid and to the south of the causeway. Archaeological evidence for a small chapel exists on the eastern side of each pyramid; two boat pits were also found, one each on the southern sides of the northernmost and the central pyramids.

These pyramids were first explored in modern times by Vyse in 1837; the area was excavated again early in the 1900s by George Reisner, who recorded most of the architectural components. As part of my site management plan, our Egyptian team did some clearance work around these pyramids, which added to the understanding of these monuments.

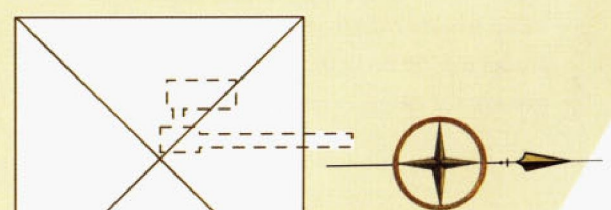
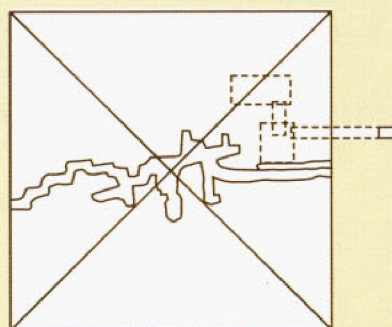
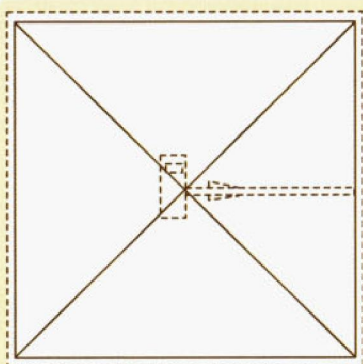
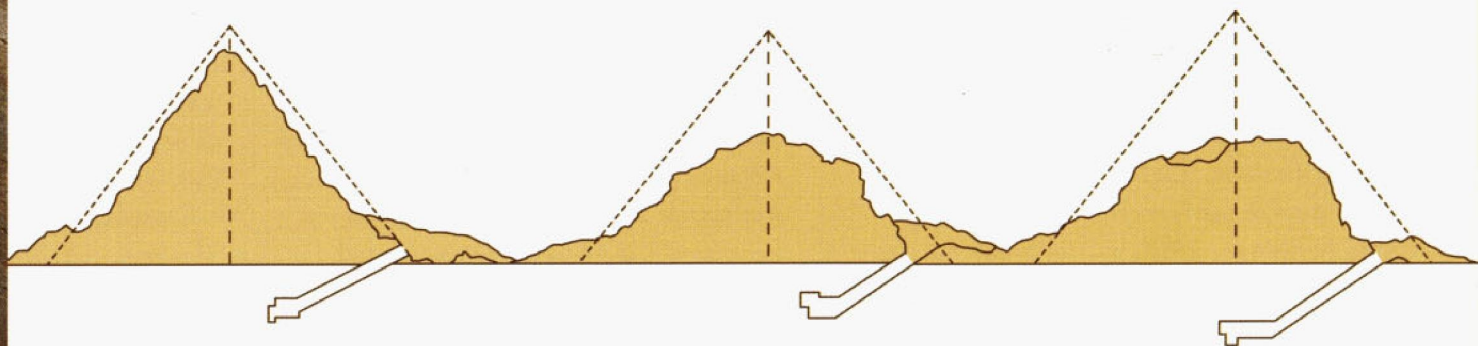
The pyramids are not part of the inner complex of Khufu since they are outside the inner enclosure wall which surrounds the Great Pyramid. Instead, they seem to be part of the eastern field containing the *mastabas* of Khufu's closest relatives. Access from the north of the plateau would have been through a tunnel cut under the causeway.



141 bottom

These plans and sections refer to King Khufu's queens' pyramids: G 1c, G 1b, and G 1a (from left to right). The top drawing depicts the reconstruction of the three pyramids; the lower drawings

illustrate the design of the pyramids, showing each with a sloping passage leading to a chamber, with a right-angle turn that leads into the burial chamber.



Queens' Pyramids



THE NORTHERN PYRAMID: G 1A

This pyramid lies 61 meters from the base of Khufu's pyramid. Its base measures 49.5 m, and it would originally have stood 30.25 m high. It has been stripped of most of its casing and has lost almost two-thirds of its height. The entrance is just east of the center of the north face, slightly above ground level.

The interior chambers were cut into the bedrock of the plateau. The burial chamber was lined with limestone, and Reisner believed that it originally housed a sarcophagus made of limestone or granite. A shallow recess, within which several fragments of basalt were found, was carved into the west wall of this chamber. Vyse believed that these were fragments of a basalt sarcophagus that once stood there, but Italian scholars Maragioglio and Rinaldi suggested instead that the basalt fragments were from the pavement of the upper temple of Khufu. This latter

explanation is reasonable, since other fragments of this pavement have been found scattered all over the area east of Khufu's pyramid.

The area just east of pyramid G 1a was cleared to the level of the bedrock, in which cuttings forming a rectangle can be seen. These cuttings are thought to be emplacements for a platform on which a cult chapel would have been built; unfortunately, these traces in the bedrock are all that remain of the chapel. A boat pit was found cut into the bedrock on the southern side of the pyramid. There is a ledge near the upper edge of the walls of this pit on which roofing slabs would have been laid.

Due to the proximity of G 1a to the *mastaba* of Khufu's crown prince, Kawab, Reisner assigns this pyramid to Kawab's mother, who would have been the main queen of Khufu. An inscription in Kawab's *mastaba* reads: "Her son, her beloved, Kawab, the daughter of her God, [she who is in charge] of the affairs [of the

im3t], Meritites [his mother] who bore [him] to Khufu." A stela found by Mariette, for which there is no exact provenance, but which was presumably found in the eastern field, calls Meritites "The great officiant of Sneferu and Khufu, revered by Khafre." Meritites was clearly important enough to merit a pyramid tomb, and the position of Kawab's tomb nearby makes it likely G 1a was indeed her monument.

An alternative suggestion has been made by Mark Lehner, who proposes that G 1a was originally built as the tomb of Hetepheres I, Khufu's mother. He interprets one particular group of cuttings in the bedrock as evidence that G 1a was begun farther to the east, and notes that the shaft in which her burial equipment, but not her body, was found is aligned with the original position of G 1a on the north. Later, after G 1a in its modified position was completed, her body was moved to its burial chamber with a new set of burial equipment.



THE MIDDLE PYRAMID: G 1b

This pyramid is about 10 meters south of G 1a and lies on the same north-south axis. Its base is 49 meters square and its original height would have been 30 meters. It is also in poor condition, having lost most of its casing and almost half its height. Its entrance is located in the center of its north face, just above ground level. As is the case for G 1a, all of the subterranean passages were cut from bedrock, and the burial chamber is lined with limestone.

It is certain that a simple cult chapel stood against the east face of G 1b. A boat pit similar to the one alongside G 1a was found on the south side of G 1b by Kamal El Mallakh in 1953. It was filled with stone and rubble by the excavator because it projected into the area where the modern road was to be built, and thus is not visible today.

Reisner proposed that G 1b be assigned to an unknown queen of Libyan origin. She would have been the mother of a secondary group of Khufu's children, including Djedefre. He cited the facts that Djedefre built his pyramid at Abu Rawash rather than Giza and that the tomb of Djedefhor, also possibly a son of this queen (although other scholars believe he was a son of Meritites), was purposefully destroyed, as evidence that there was disagreement between various branches of the family after the death of Khufu. More recent work at both Giza and Abu Rawash tends to contradict the theory of a family feud, and Reisner's idea of a Libyan origin for this queen has also been disproved. However, G 1b might still have been designed for the burial of the unknown queen who bore Djedefre. Lehner suggests, alternatively, that this pyramid was built for Meritites; Stadelmann agrees with this interpretation.

142

The northern queens' pyramid of Khufu, the Great Pyramid, and the pyramid of Khafre in the background. Giza, Fourth Dynasty.

143

The middle pyramid of Khufu's queens' pyramids. Giza, Fourth Dynasty.



THE SOUTHERN PYRAMID: G 1c

This is the best preserved of the three small pyramids; it retains much of its core and several courses of its casing. It lies about 3.8 m south of G 1b, and is offset slightly to the east. The length of its base is 46.25 m and its original height was 29.62 m. Its entrance, like that of the others, is located on the north face, approximately in the center and just above ground level. Several casing blocks remain *in situ* around the entrance. Just west of the entrance are blocks of limestone at a right angle to the face of the pyramid; Maragioglio and Rinaldi think that these represent a later addition. The layout of the underground chambers is similar to the other queens' pyramids; the burial chamber is again lined with limestone. There is a four centimeter-deep niche in the south wall of the burial chamber; Maragioglio and Rinaldi suggest that this served an unspecified ritual purpose.

On the eastern side of the pyramid, a later temple to Isis incorporates the remains of the Fourth Dynasty cult chapel. The Fourth Dynasty chapel was built on a platform of colossal limestone blocks that abutted the eastern face of the pyramid. The original entrance was in the east wall, the outer face of which was decorated with a design of matting carved in shallow relief. On the west wall of the chapel, only one block of limestone from the south end remains. This block has a niched design carved on it. Later additions and modifications have destroyed the original interior plan of the chapel.

Since both of the other queens' pyramids had boat pits on their southern sides, I wanted to see whether G 1c might also have a boat pit associated with it. We did not find a pit, but the area to the south had been prepared for a pit that was never cut. We also found evidence that the pyramid superstructure had been left unfinished—two perpendicular lines carved into the bedrock, which indicated where the corner would have

been set. G 1c is generally attributed to Henutsen on the basis of a stela, usually referred to as the 'Inventory Stela,' which was found by Mariette in the Isis temple that was built onto the eastern chapel. The relevant part of this stela reads: "Live Horus Medju Hor, king of Upper and Lower Egypt, Khufu, given life. It was beside the house of the Sphinx on the northwest of the house of Osiris, lord of Rostaw, that he established the house of Isis. It was beside the temple of this goddess that he built his pyramid. It was beside this temple that he built a pyramid for the king's daughter, Henutsen."

This stela is dated to the Eighteenth Dynasty, but may be a modified copy of an earlier inscription. If it were an exact copy, it would mean that the Sphinx had been carved before the reign of Khufu, which we know to be incorrect. In any case, Henutsen is an Old Kingdom name, and in the absence of any other evidence for or against this attribution, it seems reasonable to let it stand.



THE DECORATION OF THE CHAPELS

Decorated fragments that may have come from the chapels of the three pyramids discussed above have been found in several areas. These fragments are comparable in artistic style, quality, and subject matter to other reliefs from funerary temples of the Old Kingdom. The subject matter of the relief fragments can be sorted into six categories: queens' titles, names of royal children, palace façades, boats being paddled with oars, the bringing of offerings and offering lists, and miscellaneous fragments of inscription.



POST-OLD KINGDOM HISTORY

At some point, presumably after the fall of the Old Kingdom, the small pyramids and their chapels were badly damaged. As mentioned above, all of the pyramids have lost most of their casing blocks, and G 1a and G 1b have lost much of their cores. The chapels of G 1a and G 1b have left only very meager traces.

As is generally the case at Giza, there is no archaeological or textual evidence of cultic activity at any of these pyramids during the Middle Kingdom. It is not until the Eighteenth Dynasty that any interest was taken in these monuments. During this period, the chapel of G 1c was used as a temple to Isis, probably in connection with the worship of the Sphinx. The name, Henutsen, which is given to the owner of G 1c contains the hieroglyph *Henwt*, which means 'mistress,' providing a link to the cult of Isis as Mistress of the Pyramids. The chapel was added to in the Twenty-first and Twenty-sixth Dynasties, and eventually spanned the area from the east face of G 1c to the west face of the *mastabas* of Khufukhaf and his wife (G 7130–71400).

At some point, the boat pits of G 1a and G 1b were divided by walls into compartments. It has been suggested that they were used in later periods for burials, or possibly as magazines in the Twenty-sixth Dynasty.

THE SUBSIDIARY PYRAMID OF KHAFRE G 2A

A single subsidiary pyramid (G 2a) lies to the south of Khafre's pyramid, in the area between the inner and outer enclosure walls. It is on the north-south axis of the pyramid, about 29 meters from its base. Very little of the superstructure remains, but blocks of local limestone found on the site indicate that it was built of this material, and show that the inclination of the faces was between 53 and 54 degrees.

There are two entrances to the rock-cut substructure of this pyramid. The first is a series of steps leading downward in the center of the pyramid's north side; a second descending passage leads into the pyramid from a point beyond the northern base. The walls of the burial chamber were plastered and numerous reference lines, whose purpose is unclear, can



be seen. Pieces of wood, ox bones, fragments of stoppers from jars or vases and two carnelian necklaces were found inside the burial chamber. One of the stoppers bears an inscription which reads: "The eldest royal son of his body, beloved by him, the sole friend." No trace of a stone sarcophagus was found in the substructure of this pyramid. The wood fragments have been reassembled by Ahmed Youssef; they once formed a type of shrine known as a 'divine booth,' the sort of structure which is shown in tomb scenes with a statue inside. There are traces of what may be part of an altar on the north side of the entrance; if there was a chapel on the east, it is now completely destroyed and no traces remain. Some scholars believe that G 2a belonged to a queen of Khafre, citing its location, the size of its burial chamber, and the necklaces found inside. Others think that, since no stone fragments that could have belonged to a sarcophagus were found, it was a ritual pyramid, or even a temporary burial place for the king's body while the main pyramid was being completed. Lehner supports the identification as a ritual pyramid, citing the wood pieces from a statue shrine as evidence that it was used for the burial of a statue dedicated to the *ka* of Khafre. I believe that it was a queens' pyramid. The tombs of two of Khafre's queens, Khamerernebty I (mother of Menkaure) and Meresankh III, are known to us, but there are at least two other queens whose tombs are still unidentified.

144-145

The southern queens' pyramid from the east side with the Isis temple, and the pyramids of Khufu, Khafre, and Menkaure in the background. Giza, Fourth Dynasty.

145 left

In this aerial view, just behind the summit of the pyramid of Khafre, one can recognize the structure of the subsidiary pyramid of Khafre. Giza, Fourth Dynasty.

145 right

The base of the subsidiary pyramid of Khafre from the southern side. Giza, Fourth Dynasty.

QUEENS' PYRAMIDS IN THE COMPLEX OF MENKAURE

Three subsidiary pyramids lie to the south of the pyramid of Menkaure. They are located just outside the inner enclosure wall of the pyramid and inside the outer enclosure wall. The three pyramids were first recorded by Lepsius, and then investigated by Vyse. Reisner was the last to enter and describe them until recently, when I entered the burial chamber of the easternmost of the three.

The three pyramids lie on the same east-west axis. On the east side of each is a mud-brick temple. An 80 centimeter-thick wall of stone rubble surrounds the

three pyramids; this wall can be entered via the northwest corner of the temple of the easternmost of the pyramids, by a road lined on either side by a thick wall that connects to the upper temple of Menkaure. The fact that this is the only access to the temples of the small pyramids suggests that the priests who performed the daily rite for Menkaure also performed them for the occupants of the small pyramids.

THE EASTERN PYRAMID: G 3A

This pyramid is the largest of the three and is the only one built as a true pyramid; it is sometimes referred to as the fourth pyramid of Giza. The pyramid was built

of local limestone and the lowermost course was cased with granite. It is thought that the rest of the pyramid was cased with Tura limestone, but there is no evidence for this; the casing could also have been constructed completely in granite.

Pyramid G 3a measures 44 meters on each side, and it originally stood at a height of 28.4 meters. The main entrance to the interior chambers is located in the north face. The subterranean apartments consist of a narrow descending corridor cased with limestone, which opens into a roughly square area closed by a portcullis; then a short corridor leading to the burial chamber. I recently explored these apartments during a live television special, and got stuck while squeezing



146-147

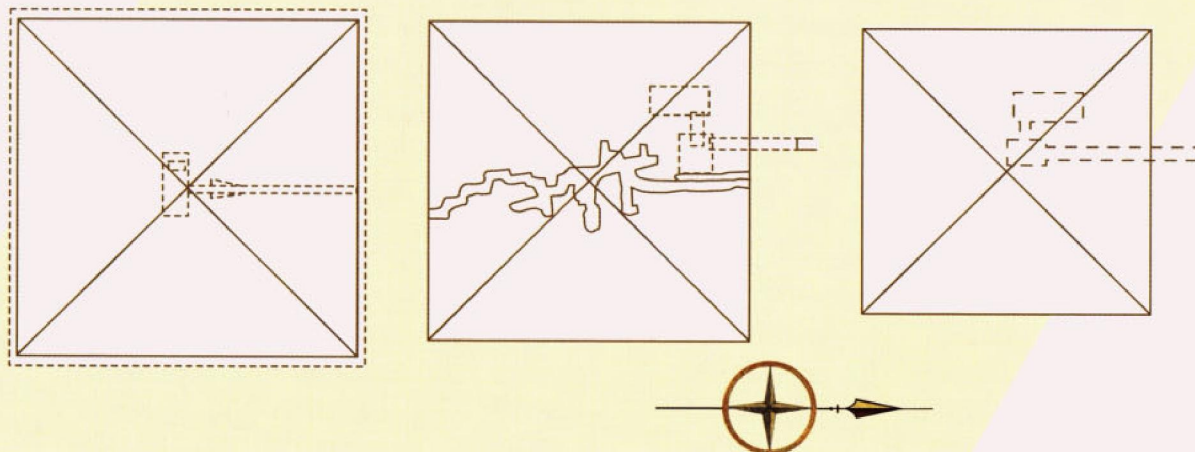
The queens' pyramids of Menkaure, dating to the Fourth Dynasty, stand in the desert area of the Giza Plateau.

146 bottom

These plans show the queens' pyramids of Menkaure: G 3c, G 3b, and G 3a (from left to right).

147

The cross sections, which refer to the queens' pyramids of Menkaure G 3c, G 3b, and G 3a (from left to right), clearly illustrate the different constructions of the three structures.



under this portcullis because of the camera on my back!

The burial chamber was unlined, and a granite sarcophagus was found embedded in a hole in the western side of the floor. This sarcophagus contained fragments of red pottery, green glazed pottery, and remains of burnt wood and reeds. The name of Menkaure was written in red ink on the ceiling of the burial chamber.

The temple to the east was built of mud brick on a platform of local limestone, which suggests that it was planned by Menkaure and built by his son and successor, Shepseskaf. Restoration was done in the temple in the Fifth and Sixth Dynasties, indicating that the cult of this queen was maintained at least to the end of the Old Kingdom.

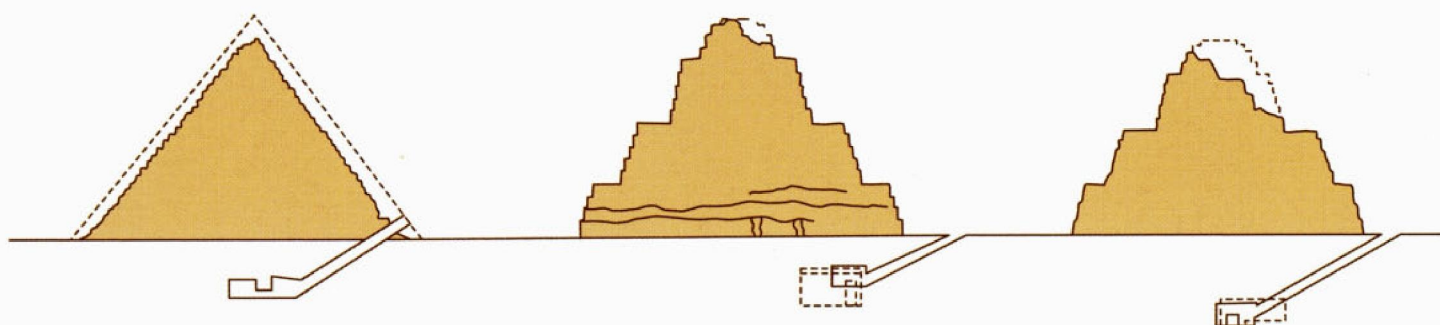
The entrance to the temple is the at northeast corner. It is considerably more complex than the chapels associated with the pyramids of Khufu's queens. The temple can be divided into two sections: exterior spaces, which include a courtyard; and interior chambers, including a sanctuary. A number of finds were made in the exterior rooms: the remains of an altar of stone slabs; coal and ashes; and eight offering jars.

place, consisting of seven slabs of stone, was set into the floor. In one of the horizontal slabs is a small depression which could hold a small stone or pottery bowl. A rectangular basin rested on the floor beside the offering bench. In the debris, before the bench was found, about fifty to sixty small offering jars and red brown pottery saucers were discovered.

A mud-brick base north of the doorway may have supported a small obelisk, connected with the worship of Re, and was possibly added to the room during the Fifth or Sixth Dynasties. Fragments of an alabaster statue of a queen, fragments of other statues, a small pot containing five alabaster model cups bearing the name of the "King's son Kay," and a slate cup with no inscription were found in this hall.

A doorway in the center of the west wall of this room leads to the sanctuary. There is a niche in the center of the western wall, in which a statue of Hathor or Neith might have been placed. Another possibility is that the niche contained a false door for the queen, and that an altar was placed in front.

The sarcophagus found in the burial chamber of G 3a leaves little room for doubt that this pyramid was



Reisner believes that some of these rooms were used as kitchens, and Maragioglio and Rinaldi suggest that the animals used for sacrifice in the courtyard were cooked in this area. However, these rooms are paved, and most kitchens were unpaved; it also seems to me inappropriate to place a kitchen inside the temple itself—the cooking should have been done elsewhere. Instead, I believe that these rooms were used as storage magazines during the Old Kingdom and that they were not converted into kitchens until the Roman period, when many tombs and temples in Egypt were used for this purpose.

The private part of the temple includes a long hall called the 'Hall of Niches.' The west wall of this hall is decorated with two large complex niches, one to each side of the door leading to what I believe was the sanctuary, and each was flanked by a total of six smaller niches. In the northwest corner of this room, an offering

used for burial. That the owner was a queen is strongly suggested by the statue fragments found in the temple, and by the arrangement of the compound niches in the inner offering room, which parallels the arrangement found in private chapels of the Fourth Dynasty. In private chapels, there are usually two niches, one for the tomb owner and one for his or her spouse. In the temple of G 3a, the niches should be for the queen and Menkaure.

Reisner has suggested that G 3a belonged to Khamerernebty II, the main queen of Menkaure, who is portrayed with him in several of the group statues found in the king's lower temple. He suggests that 'Kay,' whose name was found on five model cups, was the son of the queen who was buried here. This does seem the most likely attribution; however, both Ricke and Stadelmann believe that this pyramid was originally built as the satellite pyramid of Menkaure.

THE MIDDLE PYRAMID: G 3B

This pyramid is located about 10.15 m west of G 3a; it is a stepped pyramid of local limestone built in four stages. It measures 36 meters square and now stands to a height of nine meters. No casing blocks have been found, but it has been suggested that it was cased with fine limestone in such a way that the casing would have converted it into a straight-sided pyramid.

From an entrance in the north side of the pyramid, a rock-cut passage leads to an antechamber, in which an inscribed stone fragment reading "giving life" was found. This epithet usually follows a royal cartouche, which indicates that the person buried here was from the royal

family. The temple east of G 3b was filled with debris of decayed mud brick mixed with sand, ashes, dust, and coal. The temple foundation was built of massive stones, and the temple itself was completed, presumably by Shepseskaf, in mud brick. It is not as large as the temple associated with G 3a. The temple entrance is just east of the center of the north side, and is entered via the road from Menkaure's upper temple. The entrance leads to a rectangular room which is thought to have been a kitchen, magazine, or an anteroom. A doorway in the west wall of this room leads to a square chamber, thought to be a guardroom by Reisner; I believe it held temple equipment. In the eastern corner of the southern wall of the anteroom, a doorway leads to an open court,

was probably a magazine. I believe that the precious objects of the temple were stored here, and that it would have been closed and sealed with official seals. There is a compound niche in the southeast corner of the northern room; there was probably a matching niche on the north side, and a base or niche in the center on which, a statue of Hathor or Neith would have stood to represent the queen who was buried in the pyramid. This room is opposite the burial chamber, thus I believe that this room functioned as the temple sanctuary. Since skeletal remains of a young woman were found buried in a sarcophagus in G 3b, its designation as a queen's pyramid seems fully justifiable. This attribution is also supported by the fragments of a



family. In the anteroom were also found pottery fragments, a piece of a green statuette, and a stick of uncertain date.

Beyond the anteroom is a burial chamber lined with granite. In this chamber, an undecorated sarcophagus of a size to fit a smallish person was found; inside were some bones and teeth belonging to a young woman. Quarry marks in red ink on the roof of this chamber contain the name Menkaure in a cartouche.

the floor and walls of which were plastered with mud.

A doorway in the southern wall of the court leads to a long north-south hall. In its northeast corner is an altar built of limestone slabs under which is a basin; the altar is of the sort seen in the temple of G 3a. Sacrifices were probably performed in front of the altar and the basin. Two doorways in the western wall of this hall lead to rectangular rooms. The southernmost of these rooms had walls covered with thick plaster; this room

statue found inside the temple which indicate that the cult was kept up after the queen's death. The name of Menkaure found in a cartouche inside the pyramid, along with the fact that she is buried in his complex, supports the theory that this queen was related to Menkaure. It is likely that this queen was the mother of Shepseskaf. However, Reisner suggests that the queen who was buried in this pyramid was a secondary wife of Menkaure, who died after the king.

Queens' Pyramids

THE WESTERN PYRAMID: G 3C

This pyramid lies about 13.6 m west of G 3b. It was built as a step pyramid of local limestone in four stages, and, as in the case of G 3b, may have been intended to be cased so that it formed a true pyramid. It is in very poor condition, and only three of the stages are now visible. It is 36 meters square and stands at a height of nine meters.

An entrance in the north face leads through a descending corridor to an unfinished antechamber, and then through a short passage to the burial chamber, which was also left unfinished. Decayed wood, from something other than a coffin, and stones were found in all of the subterranean apartments, but no sarcophagus was found in the burial chamber.

The temple against the east face of G 3c was built of mud-brick walls placed into trenches cut in the rock of the plateau. The temple underwent at least one change of plan; the walls were plastered and white washed and the floor was made of gravel and paved with mud. The temple entrance is located on the north side and consists of a doorway closed by a two-leaved door leading to a room east of the temple axis. A door in a cross-wall made of brick on the west side of the room gives access to a smaller room to the west. An offering jar, four rough-ware trays, six small model jars, two model bowls, and part of the neck of a jar were found in this room, suggesting that it was used for storage. The east room may have been a guardroom.

The temple also includes a large open court. The east, west, and north walls of this court are decorated with a series of simple and compound niches; on the south side was a portico. A great many objects were found in the area of the portico, including 620 small model offering bowls, 278 small offering models of various types, the lower part of the stand of a low bowl, and fragments of several bowls.

The temple contains a number of other chambers, including storage rooms and a hall lined with niches that appears to have been the sanctuary. A rectangular base of mud brick lies on the floor in the southwest corner of this hall; in front of this is an uninscribed basin of limestone. Among the finds from this hall were a small bag-shaped jar without a neck; 34 model offering jars, and 76 model offering bowls. The door in the west wall leads to another long hall, which may have functioned as the inner offering room, or possibly as a magazine for the precious objects of the cult.

The attribution of G 3c is very difficult, as there is no evidence of a burial. The burial chamber was not lined, and there is no sarcophagus. Vyse believed that G 3c was never used as a tomb in the Fourth Dynasty. However, his excavations in this pyramid and its temple convinced Reisner that a burial had been made in G 3c during the Fourth Dynasty. He believes that statue fragments found in the temple, along with the fact that

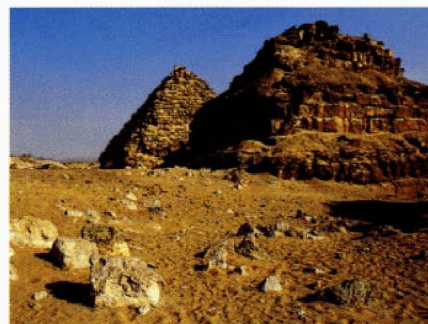
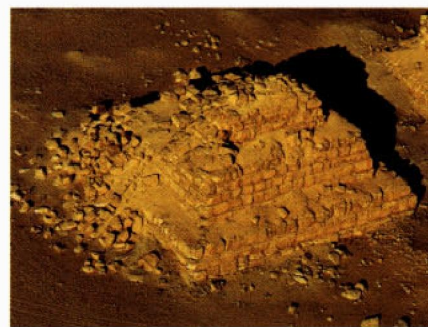
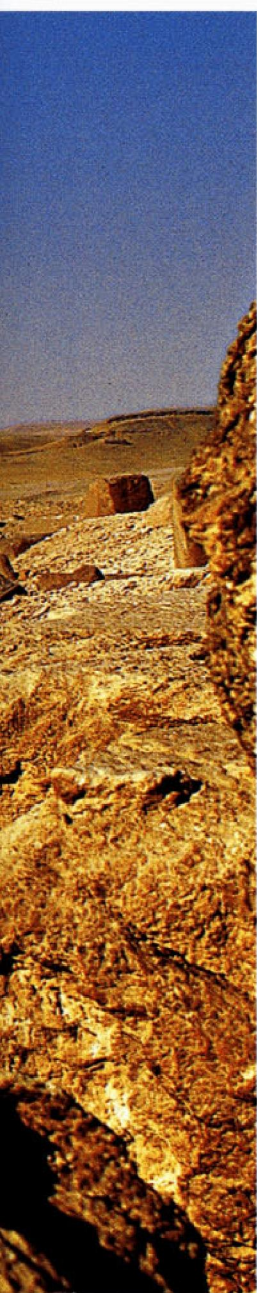
a cult was maintained in the temple after the Fourth Dynasty, prove that the pyramid was used for a royal burial. Maragioglio and Rinaldi add their observation that the temple had been replastered many times in the Old Kingdom, indicating that a cult was practiced here for a considerable amount of time. They comment that even if the temple had not been completed, the pyramid could have been used for a burial.

However, the evidence only proves that there was an active cult here; the temple could have been used for something other than the cult of a queen buried in the pyramid. The fact that the burial chamber was found empty and unfinished supports Vyse's contention that the pyramid was never used as a tomb. The owner of the pyramid has not been identified, and nothing was found inside or outside the pyramid, or inside the temple of G 3c to indicate the name or the rank of the owner of this pyramid. We have no records giving us the name of a third queen of Menkaure.

I suggest that this was the cult pyramid of Menkaure, and that the cult practiced here was a cult of Menkaure himself. It seems reasonable to expect that Menkaure would have a ritual pyramid, in keeping with the cult layouts of the other Old Kingdom pyramids. As discussed above, some scholars assign the function of ritual pyramid to G 3a, since it is the only true pyramid of the three, was partially or wholly cased with granite, and lies on the north-south axis of the main pyramid. It would then have been used afterward for a burial. This reasoning is not convincing for several reasons. First, there is cause to believe that both G 3b and G 3c would have been cased so that they acquired the forms of true pyramids. The partial granite casing of G 3a could reflect the importance of the tomb's owner rather than a ritual function. The fact that G 3a was undoubtedly used for a burial is good evidence that it was not the ritual pyramid.

The ritual pyramids of the Fifth and Sixth Dynasties are located east of the main pyramids' axis and Menkaure's complex contains many parallels to the Fifth and Sixth Dynasty complexes. Pyramid G 3c is the only one of the three pyramids that did not contain a burial. Thus, it is the most likely candidate for ritual pyramid. However, the fact that it has a temple associated with it is a problem, since none of the known ritual pyramids have temples. Despite this difficulty, G 3c remains the best possibility for the ritual pyramid of Menkaure.

The royal family of the Fourth Dynasty included many fascinating people. We have records of a number of powerful queens who would have been considered incarnations of the goddess Hathor, and thus fit mothers and consorts for their respective kings. The fact that so many of these queens were honored by burial in their own pyramids stands as tribute to their importance to the royal cult and the high honor in which they were held by their sons and husbands.



148-149

Menkaure's queens' pyramids seen from the east side. Giza, Fourth Dynasty.

149 top

Aerial view of the western pyramid of Menkaure's queens' pyramids, also known as G 3c. Giza, Fourth Dynasty.

149 bottom

The middle pyramid of Menkaure's queens, also known as G 3b. Giza, Fourth Dynasty.

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THE PYRAMIDS OF THE FOURTH DYNASTY
Text by Rainer Stadelmann

Born October 24, 1933 in Oettingen/Bavaria as son of a professor of classical languages, he studied Egyptology at the Universities of Munich and Heidelberg. He first visited Egypt between December 1955 and April 1956 and participate in excavations at the Sun Temple of Userkaf at Abusir. Completed his PhD in spring 1960 with a thesis on "Syrisch-Palästinensische Gottheiten in Ägypten" and became Assistant Lecturer of Egyptology at the University of Heidelberg. In 1967 he completed a second Ph.D., Habilitation, in Heidelberg with a thesis on: "Altägyptische Bauinschriften und Namen von Bauteilen" and became Assistant Professor. In April 1968 he became Scientific Director of the German Institute of Archaeology in Cairo and Honorary Professor at the University of Heidelberg. In 1989 he became First Director of the German Institute of Archaeology in Cairo. He has at Elephantine Island and the Mortuary temple of Sety I at Gurna and the Pyramids of Sneferu at Dahshur. Newest excavation and conservation work at the Temple of Amenhotep III and the Colossi of Memnon. He has published several books about the pyramids and ca. 100 scholarly articles in German, English, and French in international periodicals.

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THE QUEENS' PYRAMIDS
OF THE FOURTH DYNASTY AT GIZA
Text by Zahi Hawass

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THE SATELLITE PYRAMID OF KHUFU
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THE SECRET DOORS INSIDE
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Text by Zahi Hawass

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