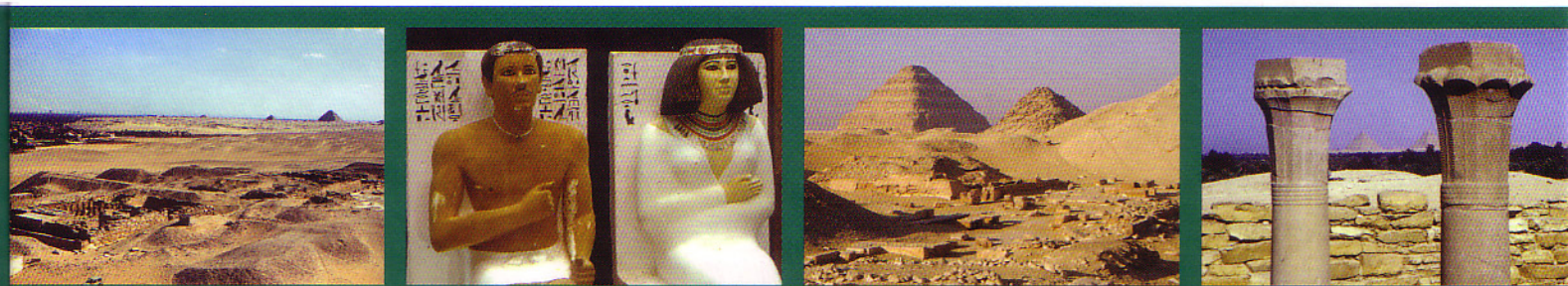


# THE OLD KINGDOM ART AND ARCHAEOLOGY

## Proceedings of the Conference



Prague, May 31 – June 4, 2004

Miroslav Bárta  
editor

# **THE OLD KINGDOM ART AND ARCHAEOLOGY**

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CONFERENCE HELD IN PRAGUE,  
MAY 31 – JUNE 4, 2004

**Miroslav Bárta**  
editor

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## Foreword

It is with pleasure that after more than two years the publication of the lectures held during the conference on the Old Kingdom Art and Archaeology in Prague in the year 2004 (May 3 – June 4) has been made possible.

The conference held in Prague continued the tradition of previous meetings by being dedicated to the same subject: art and its dating in the Old Kingdom of Egypt: the period that forms the first apogee of the developing Egyptian state. The tradition of these irregular meetings was established in 1991 by Hourig Sourouzian and Rainer Stadelmann, at that time the Director of the German Archaeological Institute in Cairo, who organised the first conference.<sup>1</sup> The second meeting also took place in Cairo, at this time the place of the venue was the French Institute of Oriental Archaeology and the conference, held on November 10–13, 1994, was organised by its director Nicolas Grimal.<sup>2</sup> The penultimate meeting took place in Paris, France, on April 3–4, 1998, and was organised by Christiane Ziegler, Chief Conservator of Egyptian Antiquities in the Louvre.<sup>3</sup>

The present volume continues a well-established and successful tradition of post-conference publications. As such, it makes available most of the contributions that were presented during the conference in Prague. It was mainly the scientific profile of the Czech Institute of Egyptology that led us to substantially widen the scope of the conference in 2004. The total of thirty-three contributions presented in this volume cover various aspects connected to Old Kingdom culture, not only its art, but also its archaeology and architecture, selected administrative problems, iconography, texts and the latest, often first time published results of ongoing excavations. From the list of contributions it becomes evident that natural sciences and their application in the widest sense receive general acceptance and support from among Egyptologists. It is one of the few aspects that can in the future significantly enhance our understanding of specific issues connected to the Old Kingdom art and archaeology.

Eng. Marta Štrachová carefully edited the manuscript and was essential in producing this volume. The advice and guidance of Eng. Jolana Malátková also proved indispensable. The Czech Academy of Sciences is to be thanked for the production of the book. Last but not least, it was Prof. Dr. Jean Leclant, Secrétaire perpétuel de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, Paris, and the chair of the European branch of the Fondation Michela Schiff Giorgini, and Prof. Dr. David Silverman, University of Pennsylvania, chair of the North American branch of the the Fondation Michela Schiff Giorgini and the respective committees that approved this publication and agreed to support it financially.

Miroslav Bárta

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<sup>1</sup> The conference was held in the German Archaeological Institute, Cairo, on October 29–30, and the proceedings published in 1995 in the volume *Kunst des Alten Reiches. Symposium des Deutschen Archäologischen Institut Kairo am 29. und 30. Oktober 1991*, Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Abteilung Kairo, Sonderschrift 28, Mainz am Rhein.

<sup>2</sup> N. Grimal, ed., *Lex critères de datation stylistiques à l'Ancien Empire*, Bibliothèque d'Étude 120 (Cairo, 1998).

<sup>3</sup> Ch. Ziegler, N. Palayret, eds., *L'Art de l'Ancien Empire égyptien. Actes du colloque organisé au Musée du Louvre par le Service culturel les 3 et 4 avril 1998* (Paris, 1999).

## Bibliography

Abbreviations for journals, series and monographs used throughout the volume follow the system of *Lexikon der Ägyptologie* (cf. *Lexikon der Ägyptologie, Band VII. Nachträge, Korrekturen und Indices*, founded by W. Helck and E. Otto, edited by W. Helck and W. Westendorf, Wiesbaden 1992, XIV–XXXVIII).

The following additional abbreviations are also used:

ACER – *The Australian Centre for Egyptology: Reports*, Sydney;  
AOS – *American Oriental Society*, Michigan;  
BSAK – *Studien zur altägyptischen Kultur, Beihefte*, Hamburg;  
CA – *Current Anthropology*, Chicago, Illinois;  
Hannig, *Handwörterbuch* – R. Hannig, *Die Sprache der Pharaonen. Großes Handwörterbuch Ägyptisch-Deutsch (2800–950 v. Chr.)*, Mainz 1995;  
Harpur, DETOK – Y. Harpur, *Decoration in Egyptian Tombs of the Old Kingdom. Studies in Orientation and Scene Content*, London and New York 1988;  
Harvey, WSOK – J. Harvey, *Wooden Statues of the Old Kingdom. A Typological Study, Egyptological Memoirs 2*, Leiden 2001;  
KAW – *Kulturgeschichte der Antiken Welt*, Mainz am Rhein;  
LingAeg – *Lingea Aegyptia, Journal of Egyptian language Studies*, Göttingen;  
OrMonsp – *Orientalia Monspeliensia*, Montpellier;  
PAM – *Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean*, Warsaw;  
SAGA – *Studien zur Archäologie und Geschichte Altägyptens*, Heidelberg;  
WES – *Warsaw Egyptological Studies*, Warsaw.



# Old Kingdom tombs and dating – problems and priorities. The Cemetery en Échelon at Giza\*

Peter Jánosi

During Khufu's long reign<sup>1</sup> four core cemeteries were created (G 1200, G 2100, G 4000 and G 7000) around his pyramid at Giza.<sup>2</sup> One of the distinctive features of these earliest tombs is that the building of the mastaba cores, their completion and the final use was in many cases a process separated by several steps of unknown length (i.e. years or even generations). The exact date of the beginning of this vast building project cannot be ascertained on independent grounds<sup>3</sup>, and we can only speculate that building activities in these cemeteries might have been in progress during the last third of the monarch's reign, when his own mortuary complex was nearing completion. Two other core cemeteries at Giza, although built on a unified plan, apparently do not belong to this initial building plan: these are the so-called Cemetery en Échelon to the west and cemetery G I S to the south of Khufu's pyramid.<sup>4</sup>

Some of the tombs in the Cemetery en Échelon were already accessible in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>5</sup> Part of the necropolis was investigated briefly by Ernesto Schiaparelli in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>6</sup> A few years later, on behalf of the University Leipzig, George Steindorff discovered the tomb of Seshemnefer III (G 5170) with its splendidly decorated chapel.<sup>7</sup> Thorough and systematic excavations were carried out by Hermann Junker and George A. Reisner, but only Junker was able to publish his results,<sup>8</sup> while Reisner's work is still kept in the archives of the Museum of Fine Arts Boston.<sup>9</sup> Both archaeologists furnished invaluable and in many parts still unprocessed data that was critical for the history of the necropolis, as well as for tomb development of the Fourth and Fifth Dynasties in general.

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\* It is to 'The Giza Archives Project', currently in operation under the directorship of Peter Der Manuelian, which has the aim of establishing an integrated online access to Reisner's Giza documentation (see <http://www.mfa.org/giza/>) that I dedicate this communication as an encouragement. Peter Der Manuelian also very kindly provided me with information concerning the Western Field and gave permission to publish a drawing of shaft G 4930A (see fig. 3). For correcting the English of my manuscript I am indebted to Vivienne G. Callender. Opinions expressed in this article as well as mistakes rest solely with the author.

<sup>1</sup> According to the latest discoveries and based on the assumption of a regular biennial cattle count during the Fourth Dynasty, Khufu reigned at least 27/28 years, see K. P. Kuhlmann, 'The "Oasis Bypass" or the issue of desert trade in pharaonic times', in *Tides of the Desert, Africa Praehistorica* 14 (Cologne, 2002), *Festschrift Kuper*, 136ff.; R. Kuper, F. Förster, 'Khufu's "mefat" expeditions into the Libyan Desert', *EA* 23 (2003): 25–28.

<sup>2</sup> Reisner, *Giza I*, 13f., 385ff., 417ff., 454ff.

<sup>3</sup> Despite Reisner's ingenious reconstruction of the development of the Western Field, *ibid*, 80ff., there is no conclusive evidence for assigning core cemeteries or individual tombs to a certain date, see P. Jánosi, *Giza in der 4. Dynastie. Die Baugeschichte und Belegung einer Nekropole des Alten Reiches I: Die Mastabas der Kernfriedhöfe und die Felsgräber*, DÖAW 30 (2005).

<sup>4</sup> G I S was excavated by H. Junker in two seasons in 1928 and 1928/29, see Junker, *Giza X and XI*.

<sup>5</sup> See LD I, Bl. 14; LD Text I, 63ff., 70ff. and Mariette, *Mastabas*, 515ff., 566f.

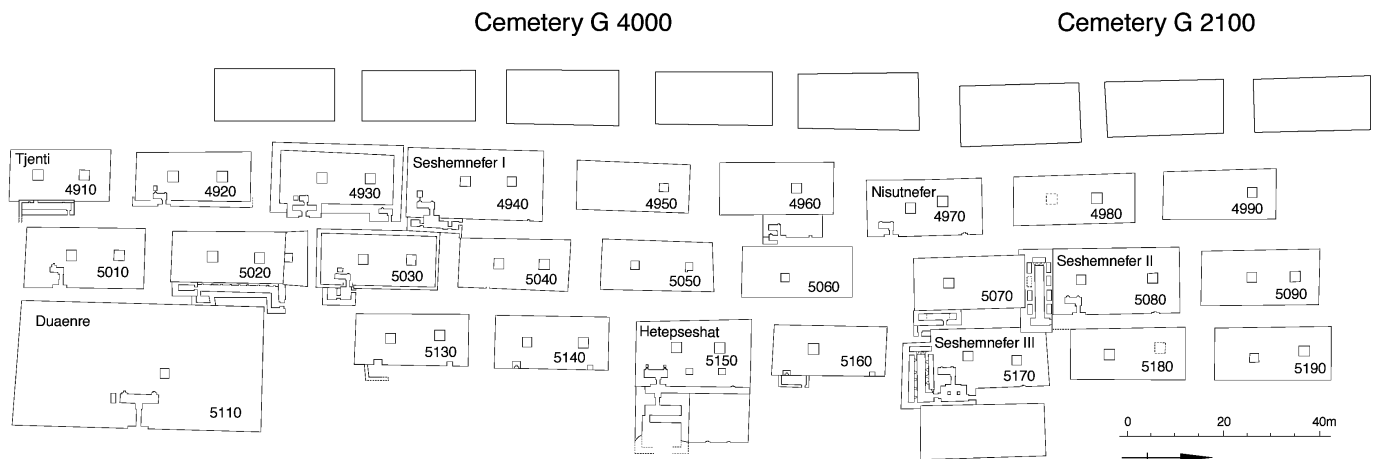
<sup>6</sup> S. Curto, *Gli scavi italiani a el-Ghiza* (Rome, 1962).

<sup>7</sup> Now on display in the University's collection of Tübingen see E. Brunner-Traut, H. Brunner, *Die Ägyptische Sammlung der Universität Tübingen* (Mainz, 1981), 13–26, pls. 3–7; E. Brunner-Traut, *Die altägyptische Grabkammer Seschemnefers III. aus Giza* (Mainz, 1995); I. Gamer-Wallert, *Von Giza bis Tübingen. Die bewegte Geschichte der Mastaba G 5170* (Tübingen, 1998), 17.

<sup>8</sup> See *Giza II*; III; VII.

<sup>9</sup> *PM III*<sup>2</sup>, 141.

The *Cemetery en Échelon* (fig. 1) is built on lower and topographically speaking less favourable ground than the rest of the Western Field. It consists of 25 (or 26 with G 5110) mastabas arranged in three North-South lines and was in all probability built within a short period of time.<sup>10</sup> The two western lines comprise nine mastabas, the eastern line only seven. The two southern cores of this line were – according to Reisner – never built, or else were later destroyed in order to build mastaba G 5110 (which Reisner dated to the reign of Menkaura<sup>11</sup>).



A peculiar feature visible in the line of the cores is the gap between the tombs of the 60- and 70-rows. The cores were not set in straight lines, but the northern part of the *Cemetery* was obviously arranged according to the orientation of Cem. G 2100, while the southern cores follow the eastern line of G 4000 – resulting in the peculiar jog between the two parts.<sup>12</sup> Apart from this curious gap it remains unknown why the architects chose this *en Échelon* arrangement for the cores. The idea that this arrangement allowed the offering place or the door of the cult chapel to remain directly accessible from the east is not fully convincing. The few finished mastabas with chapels show that the tomb-owners still preferred access from the north instead of the east (see the tombs G 4940, G 4960, G 5020, G 5030, G 5080, G 5130(?) and G 5170).

The core structures of the mastabas are all of the same type – IIa – according to Reisner's typology. Type IIa is a filled mastaba with a retaining wall of small drab limestone blocks in low-stepped courses, the interior being filled with sand, gravel rocks and rubbish.<sup>13</sup> This core type is found in most of the cores of the other core cemeteries in the Western Field: all the 10 mastabas in G 1200 are of this type, 10 out of 11 mastabas in Cem. G 2100, but only one (G 4860) is found in the large Cem G 4000. Based on the core type there is – except for Cem. G 4000 – no difference between the other tombs nor is there any difference discernible in the mean size of the cores – 23.5–24.0 × 9.1–10.8 m (45 × 10 cubits).<sup>14</sup> These measurements correspond

Fig. 1 The *Cemetery en Échelon* (after H. Junker and G. A. Reisner)

<sup>10</sup> Junker, *Giza* VII, 7f., did not exclude the possibility that the cemetery might have been erected over a longer period of time comprising even several reigns. Neither the uniform architecture of the cores nor their systematic alignment corroborate such an assumption.

<sup>11</sup> Reisner, *Giza* I, 81.

<sup>12</sup> In order to explain this gap Junker argued that the workmen started building the cores from the north and south simultaneously, thereby following the orientation of the other two core cemeteries to the west, Junker, *Giza* III, 1f.; *idem*, *Giza* VII, 2. Reisner did not provide an explanation for the gap, but refused to accept Junker's idea, Reisner, *Giza* I, 69f., since he was of the opinion that all three lines were built at the same time from south to north. This explanation, however, is not convincing since it is clearly observable that mastaba G 4910 at the southern end of the western line is shorter than the other cores (21.1 × 10.9 m) and was squeezed in between core G 4920 and the southern boundary wall.

<sup>13</sup> G. A. Reisner, C. S. Fisher, 'Preliminary report on the work of the Harvard – Boston expedition in 1911–1913', *ASAE* 13 (1914): figs. 1 and 2; Reisner, *Giza* I, 39.

<sup>14</sup> See Junker, *Giza* VII, 4f.

well with the standard size of tumuli in the other core cemeteries in the Western Field.<sup>15</sup> Only the material used for building these cores was of minor quality resulting in quick decay and heavy weathering of the surfaces of the stones, thus creating the impression today of more devastated tomb structures.

Both excavators – Junker and Reisner – agreed that the *Cemetery en Échelon* was built later than the other two core cemeteries G 2100 and G 4000 to the west. Although their observation is unquestionably correct, it is not possible to determine when exactly the *Cemetery* was constructed. No direct evidence (such as mason's marks) provides a firm chronological clue. Assessing all the available criteria, Reisner limited the timeframe for the creation of this cemetery to the period after the middle of the reign of Khafra, and before the middle of the reign of Menkaura.<sup>16</sup> He arrived at this timeframe because of two mud seal impressions with the Horus names of Menkaura and Shepseskaf found in two substructures (G 5190A and G 5190B). Consequently, the excavator believed that the earliest burials within this cemetery were to be dated into those two reigns.<sup>17</sup>

Even without these seals – which are not an appropriate tool in dating burials (see below) – it is clear that the building of the *Cemetery en Échelon* cannot be later than the reign of Menkaura, since it would be difficult to explain why Shepseskaf or any other king of the Fifth Dynasty would have had an interest in building a core cemetery to a uniform plan at Giza.<sup>18</sup>

Looking closer at the two seal impressions mentioned above and their archaeological setting, one has to realise that they cannot be used as a firm or objective tool for dating the burials. As is well known from other places, mud seals with royal names found in a structure do not necessarily date a burial or monument, since the seal impression (apart from being an heirloom) might originate from a funerary endowment of a deceased king. In shaft A of mastaba G 5190 (= G 2300, anonymous) the Horus name of Menkaura was found<sup>19</sup> in a poorly executed small niche to the east of the shaft. The superstructure of the tomb itself was never finished and it remained as an uncased core without any place for the funerary cult. The archaeology of that tomb points to a later (secondary) burial by using an old and unoccupied mastaba core – a fact which is well documented with a number of mastabas in the Western Field.

In the other mastaba, G 5080B (= G 2200), the Horus name of Shepseskaf was recovered in the burial chamber and the burial dated into that reign accordingly.<sup>20</sup> However, G 5080 can positively be attributed to Seshemnefer II, the father of Seshemnefer III (G 5170), the latter living right into the reign of Djedkara Izezi or longer. Accordingly, the mud seal impression has no bearing on the date of the father's burial, since it is clear from other evidence that the tomb owner, and therefore his death and burial, has to be dated to the reign of the middle of the Fifth Dynasty (see below).

Looking at the few tomb owners documented by inscriptions and their dating, we are faced with the following facts: Leaving aside the larger mastaba of Duaena

<sup>15</sup> Reisner, *Giza I*, 57, 61.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 82.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 82(a). In general, the American excavator put too much emphasis on the occurrence of seal impressions at Giza in order to establish a chronological frame for dating burials, tombs, chapel-types or certain forms of substructures. Reisner, Fisher, *ASAE* 13 (1913): 242: 'In the pit of G 4340, however, we found a mud seal-impression with the Horus name of Chephren; and it is quite clear that this burial took place in the reign of Chephren'; Reisner, *Giza I*, 31: '... at Giza the most certain evidence of the date of the burial is that afforded by mud sealings impressed with the seal of an official of a named king; ..'. 'Thus one example of type (1c) was dated to the reign of Chephren by the sealing found in the burial-chamber (G 4430, No. 21) ...', Reisner, *Giza I*, 199 or 149: 'The earliest example [of shaft type 5] appears to be in G 4430 with a sealing of Chephren', see also *ibid.*, 109.

<sup>18</sup> The date favoured by H. Junker, the end of the Fourth or the beginning of the Fifth Dynasty, is not tenable.

<sup>19</sup> Reisner, Smith, *Giza II*, 51, fig. 50.

<sup>20</sup> Reisner, *Giza I*, 51, fig. 50f.; Smith, *Sculpture*, 52; P. Kaplony, *Die Rollsiegel des Alten Reiches II. Katalog der Rollsiegel*, *MonAeg* 3, (1981), 139f.

(G 5110), whose dating (end of the Fourth Dynasty?) and relationship to the *Cemetery en Échelon* remains problematic<sup>21</sup> we are dealing with 25 cores, of which only six have received a decorated chapel providing enough information about the tomb owners. The few occurrences of royal names of the early Fourth Dynasty in the reliefs of those chapels are not helpful in establishing a date, but rather misleading, since they provide in most cases the names of Khufu (Hetepseshat/Heti, Seshemnefer I, Tjenti)<sup>22</sup> and in one case that of Djedefra (Seshemnefer I).<sup>23</sup> Thus, apparently the royal names are pointing to an early date for the execution of the reliefs which is however not tenable.<sup>24</sup>

**List of tomb owners buried in the mastabas of the *Cemetery en Échelon*:**

- G 5150 Hetepseshat/Heti: end of the Fourth – beginning of the Fifth Dynasty<sup>25</sup>  
 G 4910 Tjenti: date not certain, probably early Fifth Dynasty(?)<sup>26</sup>  
 G 4940 Seshemnefer I: beginning of the Fifth Dynasty<sup>27</sup>  
 G 4970 Nisutnefer: beginning of Fifth Dynasty to Sahura<sup>28</sup>  
 G 5080 Seshemnefer II: Neferirkara to Nyuserra<sup>29</sup>  
 G 5170 Seshemnefer III: Nyuserra to Djedkara<sup>30</sup>

As is apparent from the list above, most of the known tomb owners are of a date later than the proposed creation of *Cemetery en Échelon* (Khafrā–Menkaura). In fact, most of the owners belong to the Fifth Dynasty. It seems quite odd that from 25 tombs only the owners of the late Fourth and Fifth Dynasty are known to us,

<sup>21</sup> See N. Strudwick, *The Administration of Egypt in the Old Kingdom. The Highest Titles and their Holders* (London, 1985), 162; M. Baud, *Famille royale et pouvoir sous l'Ancien Empire égyptien*, 126 (1999), 60, 606f.

<sup>22</sup> Jacquet-Gordon, *Domaines*, 240, 251f., 254.

<sup>23</sup> Junker, *Giza III*, 9; N. Kanawati, *Tombs at Giza I: Kaiemankh (G 4561) and Seshemnefer I (G 4940)*, *ACER* 16 (2000), 51.

<sup>24</sup> Some scholars are indeed inclined to think that those tombs were finished under Khufu or Djedefra already, which would imply that the cores of *Cemetery en Échelon* were erected under Khufu or Djedefra at the latest. It is an established fact, however, that a king's name within the list of estates of funerary endowments or within certain titles or names do not provide a basis for dating the tomb and can only serve as a *ante quem non* criterion.

<sup>25</sup> K. Baer, *Rank and Title in the Old Kingdom. The Structure of the Egyptian Administration in the Fifth and Sixth Dynasties* (Chicago, 1960), 130f. [473] (early Fifth Dynasty); *PM III*<sup>2</sup>, 149 (early Fifth Dynasty); Harpur, *DETOK*, 270 (Userkaf–Sahura); Strudwick, *Administration*, 136f. (early Fifth Dynasty), 44, 312, fig. 6a. The name of Khufu in the chapel's decoration is a *terminus ante quem non*, Jacquet-Gordon, *Domaines*, 251f. The dating of Hetepseshat into the reign of Khafrā, Baud, *Famille royale*, 58, is based on Cherpion's thesis and the re-dated tombs of Merib (G 2100-I-*annex*) and Nisutnefer (G 4970) into the same period. This is a circular argument however since these three tombs form a coherent group because of the chapel's form and decoration and are thus closely linked in time. Since Hetepseshat did not originate from the royal family, one might wonder how he could have held the post of a vizier at that time exclusively occupied by genuine princes, B. Schmitz, *Untersuchungen zum Titel S3 NJSWT 'Königsson'* (Diss. Bonn, 1976), 26, 62, 64, 162. N. Kanawati, *Tombs at Giza II: Seshathetep/Heti (G 5150), Nesutnefer (G 4970) and Seshemnefer II (G 5080)*, *ACER* 18 (2002), 18, dates Hetepseshat/Heti into the reign of Sahura and proposes the identification with a certain Heti shown in the reliefs of Sahura's temple at Abusir.

<sup>26</sup> Reisner, *Giza I*, 214(10); Smith, *Sculpture*, 165f.; Baer, *Rank and Title*, 152f. [567]; *PM III*<sup>2</sup>, 141; Harpur, *DETOK*, 271: V.1–5. The dating of the tomb owner is only based on the form of the chapel, 'chapel probably later than Dyn. IV', Reisner, *Giza I*, 214 (10), which might be misleading. The occurrence of Khufu's name in the chapel's decoration, Jacquet-Gordon, *Domaines*, 254, does not provide a chronological clue. As to the owner's titles see M. Bárta, 'The title "Inspector of the Palace" during the Old Kingdom Egypt', *ArOr* 67 (1999): 1ff. and K. Rydström, 'HRY S3T3 "in Charge of Secrets". The 3000-Year Evolution of a Title', *DE* 28 (1994): 53ff.

<sup>27</sup> Baer, *Rank and Title*, 131 and *PM III*<sup>2</sup>, 142 [476] (Sahura–Neferirkara); Harpur, *DETOK*, 270 (Userkaf–Neferirkara); Strudwick, *Administration*, 138f. (early Fifth Dynasty); Kanawati, *Giza I*, 54f. (Sahura). The dating of Seshemnefer I into the second half of the Fourth Dynasty according to Cherpion's dating criteria alone (which basically rest on the occurrence of royal names) is not tenable, since none of her criteria excludes a date into the early Fifth Dynasty. On the contrary, they do fit into this time frame very well. As N. Kanawati has pointed out recently, *Giza II*, 54, critère 6 (*le dossier est visible sous le coussin*), see N. Cherpion, *Mastabas et*

whereas, from the tomb owners of the earlier period no inscriptions/reliefs have survived. If these cores were really erected in the early part of the Fourth Dynasty, why are there no decisive signs of use from that early period as there are in the other core cemeteries to the west? How can this apparent gap between the date of the creation of the mastaba cores and of their final use be explained?

One solution would be in re-dating some of the known tomb owners to the earlier period, as has been done already by some scholars.<sup>31</sup> But apart from the problematic issue involved in re-dating tombs on epigraphic criteria alone, this does not provide a satisfactory answer since, according to the available archaeological records, the anonymous mastabas or, at least, some of them, seem to be even later than the known owners of the Fifth Dynasty. But, even if we accept a re-dating of some of the owners into the Fourth Dynasty the number is still not sufficient to explain this discrepancy: as we shall see, there are too many architectural anomalies that crop up in such an arbitrary 're-dating'.

None of the finished and anonymous mastabas show features found in the other core cemeteries erected under Khufu. The form of the offering places and the chapel types differ considerably and show no intention of uniformity. There is no evidence for the slab stelae or the mudbrick chapels that are typical for the earliest tombs in the core cemeteries. None of the cores was cased with fine limestone, nor did any of them receive a limestone chapel built against the core (like G 2110). These chapels display a wide range of individual forms by design, position and final execution. All the interior chapels (found in 9 mastabas) were built into the core after removing part of the original masonry and rebuilding the structure – a feature not common with the other core cemeteries (except in three cases in G 2100<sup>32</sup>), but found in GI S.<sup>33</sup> The chapels have – with two exceptions (G 4930 and G 5010) – two false doors in the western wall. Out of these chapels, five belong to known individuals from the *Cemetery en Échelon*. The anonymous chapels – G 4920 and G 5030 – might be dated to the second half of the Fourth Dynasty at the earliest.<sup>34</sup>

On the other hand, nine cores remained without any offering place or chapel, thus rendering conclusions regarding the intended final form of these tombs debatable. Some of these structures seem to have been left unused altogether (a feature also present in Cem. G 4000).

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*Hypogées d'Ancien Empire. Le problème de la Datation* (Brussels, 1989), 30, the form of the chair on which the wife sits in the scene above the northern false door was rare before the reign of Djedkara and common afterwards; see also Baud, *Critères*, 55f.

<sup>28</sup> Baer, *Rank and Title*, 97 [292]: early to middle Fifth Dynasty; Strudwick, *Administration*, 43: Sahura or later; Harpur, *DETOK*, 268: V.1–2. Kanawati, *Giza II*, 36f., based on the date of Hetepshat/Heti proposes a date under Sahura or shortly afterwards. A re-dating of Nisutnefer into the time of Khafra based on Cherpion's system alone is not convincing, since her criteria do not exclude the later date, see Jánosi, *Giza in der 4. Dynastie*, 241f.

<sup>29</sup> As demonstrated above the seal impression with the Horus name of Shepseskaf has no bearing on the date of the tomb; Baer, *Rank and Title*, 131f. [477]; *PM III*<sup>2</sup>, 146; Harpur, *DETOK*, 270: V.6; Kanawati, *Giza II*, 53 (Nyusera, probably in the second half of the reign).

<sup>30</sup> Seshemnefer III was the son of Seshemnefer II and his floruit in the second half of the Fifth Dynasty is undisputed; Baer, *Rank and Title*, 132 [478]; *PM III*<sup>2</sup>, 153; Schmitz, 'Königsohn', 30ff., 85; Brunner-Traut, Brunner, *Die Ägyptische Sammlung*, 13–26, pls. 3–7; Harpur, *DETOK*, 270: V.8E; Strudwick, *Administration*, 139f. (131). In the last edition of the Seshemnefer-chapel Brunner-Traut, *Grabkammer*, 15, 33, note 7, however, favours – although without arguments – a date into the middle of the Fifth Dynasty.

<sup>31</sup> Cherpion, *Mastabas et Hypogées*, 114; *idem*, 'La statuare privée d'Ancien Empire', in N. Grimal, ed., *Les critères de datation stylistiques à l'Ancien Empire*, *BdE* 120 (1998), 97ff.; C. Ziegler in *Egyptian Art in the Age of the Pyramids* (New York, 1999), 286ff. (80); Do. Arnold, in *When the Pyramids were built*, 63.; Baud, *Critères*, 55f; *idem*, *Famille royale*, 56ff., 576.

<sup>32</sup> Tombs G 2130, G 2140 and G 2150.

<sup>33</sup> Tombs G II S, G III S, G VI S and G VII S.

<sup>34</sup> Reisner, *Giza I*, 214, 215 (15), 312 (o). Accordingly the L-shaped chapel with one false door in G 5010 as the older example might be dated to the middle of the Fourth Dynasty, but without any further arguments this attribution rests on thin basis since the L-shaped chapel is attested throughout the entire Old Kingdom. The chapel form of G 4930 does not belong into this category of chapel types but is a developed form datable to the Fifth Dynasty.

The most striking difference in comparison with the other core cemeteries are the positions and forms of the shafts and substructures in the *Cemetery en Échelon*. Most mastabas in this field have two shafts *ab origine*, meaning that two shafts were envisaged from the beginning of the construction.<sup>35</sup> Two-shaft mastabas are attested already in the reign of Khufu although in a different form (twin mastabas, annex-mastabas or mastabas with a second shaft added later [G 4000]). The two-shaft cores in the *Cemetery en Échelon* are therefore to be considered a developed form of the Giza-mastaba including two shafts from the beginning of the construction. The position of the shafts within the mastaba core is, however, dissimilar to the pattern of the other core cemeteries, where regular lines are observable (see Cem. G 4000). In some cases the openings of the shafts in the *Cemetery en Échelon* rarely align on a straight axis of the tomb. On the other hand, the form of the shafts within the mastaba cores is in most cases uniform ( $4 \times 4$  cubits) and well built like the shafts in the mastabas of the other core cemeteries. This might be taken as an indication that not only the cores but also the shafts were constructed according to a straight pattern based on the forms of the older cores.

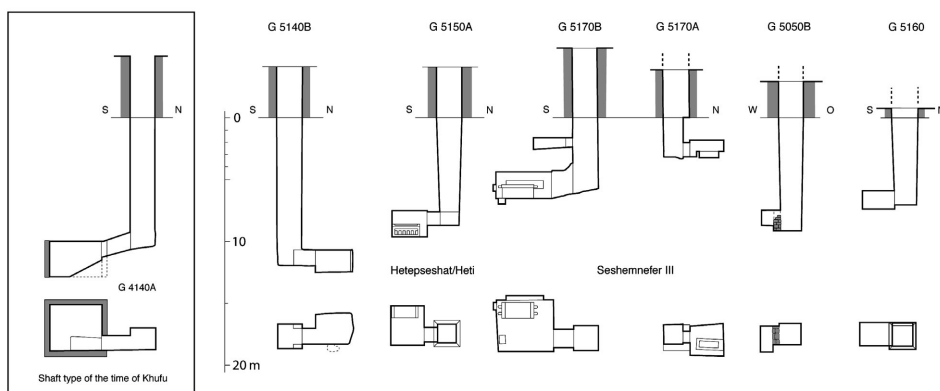


Fig. 2 Some burial shafts and chambers documented in the *Cemetery en Échelon* (after H. Junker)

However, a completely different picture is revealed by the forms of the substructures – i.e. the shafts and chambers hewn into the rock (*fig. 2*). Only a few of the tombs in the *Cemetery en Échelon* display a substructure comparable in form, size and position to the older substructures. None of the burial chambers had a limestone casing or was intended to receive one. Only in a few tombs are stone sarcophagi attested<sup>36</sup>, and the occurrence of canopic pits or niches is very rare.<sup>37</sup> Striking is the shallow depth of a considerable number of the shafts, which hardly exceed a few meters (the shortest being 1.4 m), while in the core cemeteries of the previous period the average depth was 10 to 11 m. Out of 42 shafts in the *Cemetery en Échelon*, only seven exceed the length of 10 m. Another peculiarity is the size of the rock cut shafts. In most cases, the size of  $2 \times 2$  cubits is not followed down to the bottom of the shaft, but the size of the shaft diminishes considerably from  $4 \times 4$  cubits to  $3 \times 3$  cubits or less (see G 5150A, Seshathotep). This feature is well attested in tombs in Cem. G 4000 used later than the reign of Menkaura.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Reisner, *Giza I*, 82(d). A number of cores (6) are apparently without a second shaft and might contradict the statement above. But it is fairly certain that those shafts were simply overlooked by the excavators as is shown by tomb G 5140 documented by Junker as a one shaft mastaba, whereas Reisner 'by mistake' excavated the other although it did not belong to his concession, see Jánosi, *Giza in der 4. Dynastie*, 244, footnote 1508.

<sup>36</sup> The forms of these sarcophagi are bulky. They have nothing in common with the fine types of the Fourth Dynasty, see H. Junker, *Vorläufiger Bericht über die Grabung bei den Pyramiden von Giza* (Vienna, 1926), pl. VIIIa; *idem*, *Giza II*, 23; *idem*, *Giza III*, 30f. Seshemnefer II: Reisner, *Giza I*, 143. Both sarcophagi – a granite one and one made of limestone – were set up in one (!) burial chamber (G 5080B); information kindly provided by Peter Der Manuelian.

<sup>37</sup> Tombs G 4940B, G 5080A and G 5170B.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 102: 'Old shafts of the 2-m. size, which were used later in Dyn. V, were often not excavated in rock to the full size but continued downwards of much less size.'

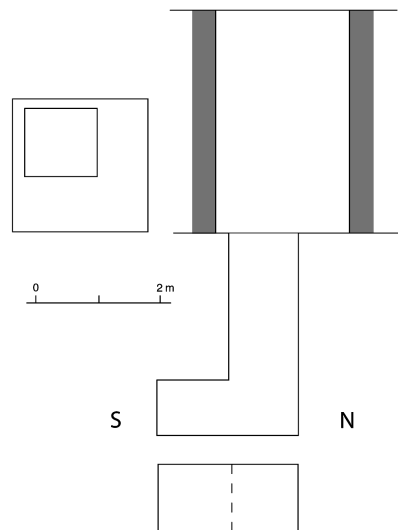


Fig. 3 Shaft G 4930A  
(courtesy Reisner-Archive,  
MFA Boston)

Another feature – which is quite indicative for dating – is apparent in the rock cut shafts: these do not follow the original size of the built shaft of  $4 \times 4$  cubits, but are much smaller and cut in one corner at the bottom of the shaft (fig. 3). Shafts of this type are as a rule short and lead to a small burial chamber, or rock-cut niche large enough to receive the body. These shafts clearly attest to the fact that they were cut at a later date and were intended for interments of the poorer class within the population.

As already mentioned, most of the shafts do not lead into a burial chamber of the usual type found under the reign of Khufu, but have only a rock cut niche on either side of the shaft – very often not to the south, but

to the west or even to the east of the shaft.<sup>39</sup> An exception to this can be seen in the main shafts (shaft B) of the mastabas of Seshemnefer I–III whose depths are not only the longest in the *Cemetery en Échelon*, but also keep the size of the original opening ( $4 \times 4$  cubits) down to the bottom of the shaft (fig. 2). These shafts clearly follow the patterns of the tombs from the time of Khufu to Khafra.

The conclusion which emerges from these observations is that most of the substructures in the *Cemetery en Échelon* were not constructed simultaneously with the erection of the cores but were later in date, as is well attested in the three southern rows in Cem. G 4000.<sup>40</sup> The architects built lines of mastabas with regular shafts within the masonry according to a unified plan (which did not include the excavation of the substructures). The poor quality of these excavations and the small sizes of most of the substructures leave no doubt that the owners of these shafts lacked the ‘financial’ means for a proper burial place. This hypothesis is further corroborated by the fact that those tombs had no offering place or false door, let alone a cult chapel for the funerary services. In consequence, these poorer owners are certainly not contemporary with the creation of the *Cemetery en Échelon* and the anonymous tombs fail to provide enough material regarding their dates. One might well ask if such individuals as Nisutnefer, Hetepshat or Seshemnefer I–III would have chosen a burial ground for their enlarged and splendidly decorated tombs if the cemetery was already occupied by poor secondary interments? If we assume that those persons known from their decorated chapels chose their tombs in the *Cemetery en Échelon* because of their status and wealth the secondary burials should be dated later (i.e. to the second half of the Fifth Dynasty).

Let us return to the facts that led Reisner to believe that the *Cemetery en Échelon* was constructed under Khafra or Menkaura. Picking up Reisner’s major argument used for dating the *Cemetery* after the middle of the reign of Khafra – namely the *en-Échelon*-principle<sup>41</sup> – we note that this point does not exclude the reign of Khufu. In reconstructing the history of the Giza necropolis, Reisner relied on the importance of the Eastern Field as the burial ground of the princes by pointing out that the *en-Échelon*-principle occurred only after Year 13 of Khafra, when the

<sup>39</sup> Reisner, *Giza I*, 89, 95ff., 148ff. (shaft type 6). While in most cases the burial chamber or niche is in the south as usual (25 cases out of 50?) the other chambers are located in a different place (11 to the west, two to the north and one to the east; the position of five burial chambers is not documented). In the tomb of Seshemnefer III (G 5170) the burial chamber of the southern (main) shaft is in the south as usual, while the chamber of the northern shaft is located to the north (fig. 2). This orientation is definitely not known from the Fourth Dynasty.

<sup>40</sup> Compare the shaft types of those to cemeteries which comprise shaft types 3 to 7, while the shaft types of Khufu’s reign is from 1 to 4, see *ibid.*, 107ff. and 142f.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 82(b).

mastaba for Hetepheres II (G 7530/40) was enlarged to the south.<sup>42</sup> Unfortunately, the chronological scheme developed by Reisner for the Eastern Cemetery is not as certain as one might wish it to be, and the dating of the reconstruction of mastaba G 7530/40 is far from clear. Furthermore, it is by no means proven that all 'innovations' in funerary architecture and tomb building appeared first in the Eastern Field and were only later adopted by tomb owners in the Western Field. Looking closer into the development of the core cemeteries, one can see that already the two western lines of tombs in Cem. G 2100 – certainly erected under Khufu – display a sort of *en Échelon* principle (see the tombs G 2100, G 2110, G 2120, G 2130, G 2210).<sup>43</sup>

Are there any other arguments for attributing the creation of the *Cemetery en Échelon* to the reign of Khafra? Apart from Reisner's reconstruction, this attribution is only corroborated by the fact that Khafra returned to Giza as a burial place for his pyramid. This move provides of course no answer to the question why a new core cemetery was necessary in the Western Field. Khafra's sons were all buried in rock-cut tombs, which emerged as a new tomb type at that time. Furthermore, if one looks into the tombs of the other cores of the Western Field it will be apparent that many cores were unoccupied when Khafra started building his pyramid, thus rendering the construction of new tombs on a unified plan not intelligible.

*Mutatis mutandis* these arguments apply also for Menkaura as possible creator of the *Cemetery en Échelon*, although his reign would diminish the time gap between the construction of the cores and their final use during the first half of the Fifth Dynasty. On the other hand, one is puzzled by the architecture of the 'archaic' form of the cores – solid mastabas without a proper offering place or an interior chapel – whereas in other parts of the Giza necropolis, tombs dating to Menkaura's reign exhibit all those features from the beginning of construction. For both reigns the question remains unanswered as to why those kings should have built cores in regular lines, but did not excavate the substructures according to a unified plan as well. For both reigns we are lacking definite proof that, as one would expect, at least some of the cores were used during their reign. As a result we are left with the compelling possibility that the *Cemetery* was created earlier.

The idea of Djedefra being the initiator of the *Cemetery* is an intriguing proposal worth consideration. Both Junker and Reisner have more or less discarded Djedefra's reign and activities at Giza on various grounds.<sup>44</sup> Consequently, in 'our history' of the Giza necropolis we have an artificially created gap that otherwise has to be explained. Thus far, very few facts point to Djedefra's active involvement at Giza (such as the graffiti from one of the southern boat pits<sup>45</sup>), but the recent results of the excavations at Abu Rawash conducted by M. Valloggia indicate that the rule of this king was to all extents neither short (recent indications are that his reign could possibly amount to more than 20 years) nor later persecuted.<sup>46</sup> At the moment, only the fact that Djedefra left Giza as a burial ground seems to exclude this monarch from the list of possible candidates.

Thus we end up with Khufu as the most probable creator of the *Cemetery en Échelon*. I propose the possibility therefore that this *Cemetery* was also part of the

<sup>42</sup> Reisner, *Giza I*.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, Map of Cemetery G 2100.

<sup>44</sup> On this issue see Jánosi, *Giza in der 4. Dynastie*, 231–236.

<sup>45</sup> W. St. Smith, *The Cambridge Ancient History*, Vol. I/2, 173; A. M. Abubakr, A. Y. Mustafa, 'The funerary boat of Khufu', in *Aufsätze zum 70. Geb. von Herbert Ricke, Beiträge Bf. 12* (1971), 11, fig. 6; M. Verner, 'Archaeological remarks on the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Dynasty Chronology', *ArOr* 69/3 (2001): 375f.

<sup>46</sup> M. Valloggia, 'La descenderie de la pyramide de Radjedef à Abu Rawash', in C. Berger, B. Mathieu, eds., *Études sur l'Ancien Empire et la nécropole de Saqqara dédiées à Jean-Philippe Lauer, OrMonsp IX* (1997), 419, 421, note 9; M. Valloggia, 'Le complete funéraire de Radjedef à Abou Roasch: état de la question et prospectiers de recherches', *BSFE* 130 (1994): 11f.; V. Dobrev, 'À propos d'une statue fragmentaire du roi Menkaurê trouvée à Abou Rawash', in Berger, Mathieu, eds., *Études Lauer*, 157ff.; *idem.*, 'La IV<sup>e</sup> dynastie: un nouveau regard', *Égypte Afrique & Orient* 15 (1999), 19ff.



huge building project initiated by that monarch at the very end of his reign, but left unfinished and unassigned to particular individuals at his death.<sup>47</sup> As already mentioned above, the architecture of the cores (core type IIa) is well attested with the cores from the Western Field firmly dated into Khufu's reign. Furthermore the use of poor quality limestone as building material is not a contradiction, but rather fits neatly into the building process observable in the western field during Khufu's reign. Junker and Reisner have observed that the quality of the building material used gradually degenerates from west to east with the presence of poorer quality stone and the work as it stands shows that less attention was paid to the internal structure of the cores.<sup>48</sup> At the death of the king, half of the cores in Cem. G 4000 and probably all of those in the *Cemetery en Échelon* were left unassigned and without substructures. With the abandonment of Giza as a royal burial ground, activities halted in the core cemeteries and were scarcely resumed in the later part of the Fourth Dynasty.

Looking into the later use of the cores originally erected under Khufu, one cannot escape the impression that these core cemeteries were part of Khufu's gigantic mortuary complex not destined to be used or altered by later generations. Even as empty and unassigned mastabas these dummy structures served their purpose in the superior scheme of Khufu's 'mortuary residence' at Giza. I suspect that all those tombs left without proper owners under Khufu were only gradually and much later occupied by persons using these empty structures. When Giza was finally abandoned as a royal burial ground at the end of the Fourth Dynasty, the number of secondary burials increased. These later occupations in the *Cemetery en Échelon* have much in common with some tombs in Cem. G 2100 and definitely with up to half of the cores erected in Cem. G 4000. A conclusive dating of the construction of the *Cemetery en Échelon* and the final use of the individual tombs will hopefully be achieved after Reisner's data and records in Boston are made completely accessible.

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<sup>47</sup> This dating of the *Cemetery* was not proposed in my book *Giza in der 4. Dynastie*, where I adhered to the traditional although unsatisfactory dating between Khafra or Menkaura.

<sup>48</sup> Junker, *Giza I*, 10ff., 38f., 82f., 88f., 91; XII, 36; Reisner, *Giza I*, 66.

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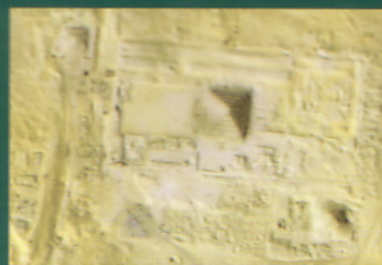
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