

Origins and Development of the Funerary Complex of Djoser



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WILLIAM KELLY SIMPSON HAS ALWAYS SHOWN GREAT INTEREST IN the development of royal funerary installations and especially cult traditions at Abydos and Memphis/Sakkara. He has strongly stimulated the excavations and investigations at Abydos. I hope that dedicating this essay to a long-standing friend and great scholar will please him.

No other religious or funerary complex in Egypt plays such an important role in the development of architecture and research in Egyptian mortuary concepts as the funerary precinct of Djoser in Sakkara.¹ It is nowadays commonly accepted that Djoser's funerary complex originally grew from a much smaller precinct by the enlargement of the royal tomb and the addition of new elements into the harmonic ensemble we can still recognize today. More intensive research will, however, be needed, as well as more profound surveying in the complex on the individual buildings. This will provide us with precise, large-scale plans and sections allowing us to differentiate the sequence of construction phases and recognize the reasons behind them. Even if we sometimes claim to understand a building or recognize and identify its prototype, there are still many questions to answer and hypotheses to investigate (fig. 1).

About fifteen years ago W. Kaiser put forward some substantial remarks concerning the origins and the development of the Djoser complex.² His two main theories are as follows. First, the complex was originally considerably smaller and was enlarged when the step mastaba was converted into a step pyramid. Secondly, the solid masonry buildings in the complex would originally have been free-standing chapels which were bound and connected in a later construction phase by massive fillings. In answer to these ingenious proposals Lauer accepted the first thesis about the enlargement. He refused, however, with convincing

¹ Jean-Philippe Lauer, *La Pyramide à degrés. L'Architecture. Fouilles à Saqqarah* (Cairo, 1936).

² W. Kaiser, "Zu den königlichen Talbezirken in Abydos und zur Baugeschichte des Djoser-Grabmals," *MDAIK* 25 (1969), pp. 1ff.

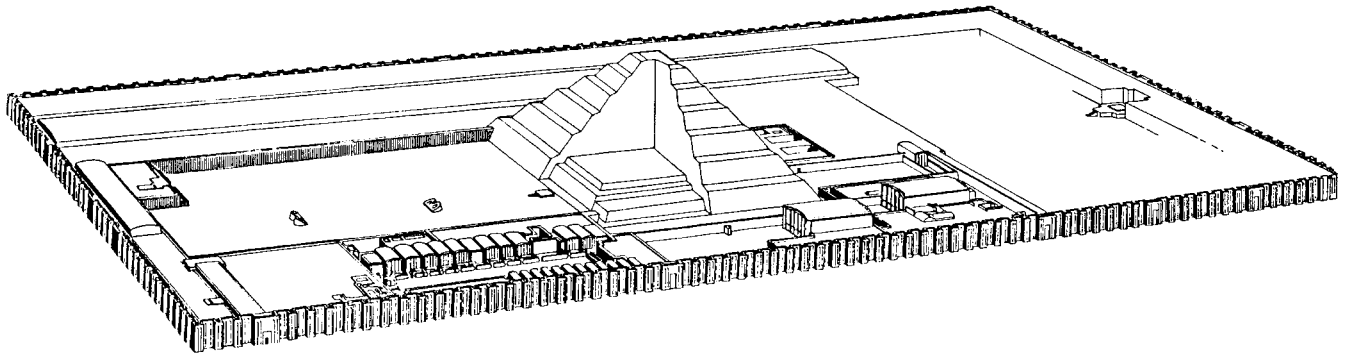


Fig. 1. Isometric plan of the Djoser complex (drawing by Nairi Hampikian).

criteria, the interpretation of an evolution of the solid masonry buildings out of originally free-standing rows of chapels.³ Lauer's arguments, that the casing of the chapels enclosed in the solid masonry was not smoothed, clearly demonstrate that the solid masonry enclosing of the chapels was intended and belonged already to the first construction phase. This does not mean that Kaiser's astute assumption is completely incorrect. It shows, however, that during the planning concept of the complex two steps were skipped: the intellectual transition from existing structures built of wood and bricks to those model edifices built in stone, and the reassembling of these models into cult ensembles. These are the massifs of the *heb-sed* court, the massifs of the two "maisons" and the solid masonry construction north of the entrance hall. It is therefore more reasonable to remain with the cautious interpretation of Lauer and to differentiate between the solid core masonry buildings not intended for practical cult use and those of the mortuary temple or temple T which came to serve an enduring mortuary cult.

It follows that Kaiser's final conclusion, that these solid core masonry structures may have been abandoned relics of an earlier cult and construction phase, must also be questioned. He has correctly observed that these dummy chapels and solid core masonry buildings do not exist any more in the subsequent complexes of the Third Dynasty nor in the pyramid temples of the Fourth Dynasty. Yet they do not disappear completely. They become incorporated into the structural and pictorial program of the later pyramid temples.⁴ The five statue chapels of the later pyramid temples that are enclosed in a massive core construction

³ Lauer, "Sur certaines modifications apportées au complexe funéraire de Djoser au cours de son regne," in J. Baines et al., eds., *Pyramid Studies and Other Essays Presented to I.E.S. Edwards* (London, 1988), pp. 5ff. and 9.

⁴ Perhaps already in Dahshur/North, cf. Stadelmann, in *MDAIK* 49 (1993), pp. 260–63 und Abb. 1b.

may be duly traced back to these massive constructions of the Djoser complex.⁵ Some of the other dummy buildings can be found transformed into two-dimensional reliefs but with the same function on the walls of the later pyramid temples.⁶

The interpretation of the model chapels and their true nature certainly has a great influence on the interpretation of the total complex and on the development of the Djoser complex and the pyramid temples. Lauer recognizes in the complex the eternal residence of Djoser, a true copy in stonework of the white enclosure wall and the *heb-sed* courts of the royal residence in Memphis.⁷ Following the harsh criticisms of von Bissing⁸ and Ricke, he referred to the great mastabas with paneled facades in Sakkara and Nagada.⁹ Ricke too had no doubts in the character of a residence, however, under the particular aspect of an eternal residence.¹⁰ According to Ricke each individual building in the Djoser complex has its prototype in the residence. They are, however, not simple copies but were carefully chosen under the aspect of the king's requirements for his eternal residence and with respect for the historical differences between Upper and Lower Egypt and their traditional and symbolic constructions.

This outstanding and well-documented synopsis has, however, in its sometimes rather dogmatic statements, often provoked fierce criticism and opposing interpretations. In the eyes of those scholars convinced that the royal tombs of the First Dynasty are exclusively the tombs at Abydos, and that the great palace facade mastabas of Sakkara/North are not royal but merely the tombs of courtiers, Ricke's view of the Djoser complex as an amalgamation of nomadic Upper Egyptian—Abydene—burial traditions with predominantly rural Lower Egyptian—Memphite—traditions lost its foundations and became unacceptable. For the following argumentation this discussion is of rather secondary importance, because I am insisting mainly on discernible architectural factors and influences. Reflections on whether a residential cemetery is

⁵ In the archives of Abusir this chapel mount ist called *tpht* "the cave," see Posener-Krieger, *Les Papyrus d'Abusir, Les archives du temple funéraire de Néferirkarê-Kakai II*, pp. 502–503.

⁶ Ricke, *Bemerkungen zur ägyptischen Baukunst des Alten Reiches I*, BÄBA 5, (Zurich, 1950), pp. 34–35; Arnold, "Rituale und Pyramidentempel," *MDAIK* 33 (1977), pp. 10–12; Stadelmann, *Die ägyptischen Pyramiden* (Mainz, 1985), pp. 206–207.

⁷ Lauer, *PD I*, p. 90.

⁸ v. Bissing, *Ägyptische Kunst I*, p. 51.

⁹ *Histoire monumentale des pyramides d'Égypte*, BdE 39, pp. 171ff.; idem, "Développement des complexes funéraires royaux en Égypte," *BIFAO* 79 (1979), pp. 366ff.

¹⁰ Ricke, *Bemerkungen zur ägyptischen Baukunst des Alten Reiches I*, pp. 66ff. In den *Bemerkungen II*, pp. 1ff., Ricke modified this term to "Butisches Königsgrab."

conceivable without royal tombs—and especially the cemetery inaugurated by Menes when he founded the royal castle of Inebu-hedj—cannot, however, be excluded implicitly.¹¹

It was Helck who first assumed that the so-called *Talbezirke* at Abydos might be the direct prototypes of the Djoser complex.¹² In his view they might have been the stage for the burial ceremonies but primarily statue palaces for the *ka*-statue of the kings of the Thinite Period who resided in distant Inebu-hedj in the Memphite area and not at Thinis. For Lauer, these *Talbezirke* were the magazines for the temple of Chontamenti at Abydos,¹³ a view that can no longer be upheld after the detailed investigations of Kemp¹⁴ Kaiser¹⁵ and O'Connor.¹⁶ On the other side, Kaiser emphasizes strongly and surely the funerary aspect of the *Talbezirke*¹⁷ with regard to the Djoser complex and dismisses the idea of a statue palace. In his view, the light building material of the older enclosures¹⁸ and the untraceable constructions inside—pavilions made from tents, wood and mats—strongly indicate that these complexes were not intended to be monuments for eternity. They might also have been used for the reception of the funerary cortège coming from the

¹¹ There is a clear reference and relation between all important residence cemeteries and founders of a dynasty or outstanding kings:

Abydos: chieftains and kings of the Predynastic Period to Dynasty 0;

Sakkara/North: Menes?;

Sakkara/Center: Djoser;

Dahschur: Snofru; Giza: Cheops;

Sakkara/South: Pepi I;

Thebes/Taref: Antef kings;

Asasif: Mentuhotep II;

Dra Abu el-Naga/Sheikh Abdel Gurna: kings of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Dynasties;

Lischt: Amenemhat I.

¹² Helck, "Die Herkunft des abydenischen Osirisrituals," *Archiv Orientalni* 20 (1952), pp. 72–85; idem, "Pyramiden," in *RE* 23,2 (1959), 2172; idem, "Zu den 'Talbezirken' in Abydos," *MDAIK* 28 (1972), pp. 95–99. This concept was already expressed by Petrie, *Tombs of the Courtiers and Oxyrhynchos*, p. 3 who vaguely assumed they might have been valley temples for the tombs in Umm el-Qaab und repeated by Reisner, *Tomb Development*, pp. 10–11 and 246; his large-scale reconstruction as valley temples in the form of "dummy mastabas" has been rightly refused by Ricke, *Bemerkungen* I, p. 130 n. 164.

¹³ Lauer, *Histoire monumentale des pyramides d'Egypte*, BdE 39, p. 60.

¹⁴ B. Kemp, "Abydos and the Royal Tombs of the First Dynasty," *JEA* 52 (1966), pp. 13–22.

¹⁵ Kaiser, *MDAIK* 25 (1969), pp. 1–5; idem, in Kaiser–Dreyer, "Umm el Qaab, Zweiter Vorbericht," *MDAIK* 38 (1982), pp. 242–60.

¹⁶ O'Connor, "New Funerary Enclosures (Talbezirke) of the Early Dynastic Period at Abydos," *JARCE* 26 (1989), pp. 51–86 and idem, "Boat Graves and Pyramid Origins," *Expedition* 33 (1991), pp. 5–17.

¹⁷ *MDAIK* 25 (1969), pp. 15ff.

¹⁸ Yet according to the newest field investigations by O'Connor, *JARCE* 26 (1989), pp. 51–86, the enclosure of Djer was already constructed in brick.

residence in the north—as Helck thinks¹⁹—and the performance of the funerary ritual, however, not as statue palaces, according to Helck their predominant purpose.

Kaiser also applies this conception consistently for the complex of Djoser.²⁰ According to him, all the solid core masonry constructions in Djoser's complex would have enclosed chapels and edifices which once served the funerary ritual at Abydos and were now transferred at Sakkara into eternal stone construction—a kind of petrified stage of eternal funerary rites. Some of them may even have become obsolete, falling into disuse.

Kaiser imagines the origins of the Djoser complex in an amalgamation, an architectural combination of the Abydos enclosures/*Talbezirke* at the edge of the cultivation and the far-off royal tombs in Umm el-Qaab into a homogeneous cult- and funerary complex. This view was until now accepted by all scholarly theories concerned with the development of the pyramid complexes. Only Helck had some substantial reservations, emphasizing the importance of the statue cult in the enclosures/*Taltempel* and the later valley temples and pyramid temples.²¹

In recent years critical reflections about this theoretical model have occurred to me. In particular, I have two objections. Both the royal tomb and the enclosures/*Talbezirke* at Abydos develop at the beginning of the First Dynasty towards a certain norm or standard that is completed not later than the middle of the First Dynasty in the reign of Den/Udimu with the addition of a monumental staircase for the tombs in Umm el-Qaab and the palace facade enclosure of the *Talbezirke*.²² Later on, there was no additional evolution at Abydos. The recent excavations of the German Institute of Archaeology in Umm el-Qaab have even furnished the striking evidence that the superstructures of the royal tombs were just shallow sand heaps not surpassing the natural desert level by more than about one meter.²³ The traditional view of the Upper Egyptian tumulus tomb as the ideal prototype of the Memphite pyramid tomb

¹⁹ Helck, *Archiv Orientalni* 20 (1952), pp. 72ff.

²⁰ Kaiser, *MDAIK* 25 (1969), p. 21. In a later investigation to "Rituale und Pyramidentempel," *MDAIK* 33 (1977), pp. 1–14, D. Arnold points out a controversial concept of the funerary temples. According to him, the pyramid complexes served only as installations for securing the eternal existence of the king, the preservation of royal power, the domination over enemies and the preservation of royal deification. He does not see or accept any installation for the royal funerary ritual. This is without doubt too contradictory and cannot be completely maintained, see Stadelmann, *Die ägyptischen Pyramiden*, p. 213.

²¹ *MDAIK* 28 (1972), pp. 95–99.

²² In accordance with Kaiser, *MDAIK* 38 (1982), p. 253.

²³ Dreyer, "Zur Rekonstruktion der Oberbauten der Königsgräber der 1. Dynastie in Abydos," *MDAIK* 47 (1991), pp. 93–104.

must therefore be revised. This terminus of evolution after reaching a certain norm also seems to be valid for the second component of the Abydene installations. In the reign of Djer the enclosures/*Talbezirke* have accomplished their definite form of large, wide, brick-built enclosures with palace facade paneling outside and light material constructions inside. It is only in the Second Dynasty that a small brick construction near the entrance is attested.²⁴ Through the end of the Second Dynasty these main features do not change; the essential evolution is towards monumentalization in the reign of Khasekhemui.²⁵ It should be mentioned that similar enclosures also exist at Sakkara from the First Dynasty²⁶ and at Hierakonpolis, dated to Khasekhemui, which surely complicates the findings.

Between this mature period in the middle of the First Dynasty at Abydos and the presumed merger of the two components at Sakkara in the complex of Djoser lies a considerable stretch of time. All the important innovations of this period, in particular the technique of carving a deep shaft in hard limestone rock,²⁷ the evolution of the dominating three-chamber system and the design and formation of a monumental superstructure with impressive facades, took place in the residential cemetery at Sakkara and not at distant Abydos. It was definitely at Sakkara where the new type of the royal tomb of the Second Dynasty was innovated. Following an increased demand for more tomb deposits, not only provisions but also deliveries of furniture and equipment for the royal representation, the tombs had to be enlarged with the means of expanded subterranean magazines of 150 m to 200 m in length and 50 m in width. The superstructures of these tombs remain at present unknown. It is, however, reasonable to assume that they followed the

²⁴ Kaiser, *MDAIK* 25 (1969), pp. 1ff.

²⁵ The relation and the time sequence of the enclosure at Hierakonpolis to that of the same king at Abydos is not evaluated.

²⁶ Enclosure of Den/Udimu near Serapeum, see Rizkallah Makramallah, *Un cimetière archaïque de la classe moyenne du peuple à Saqqarah*, Fouilles à Saqqarah, (Cairo, 1940), and Kaiser, "Ein Kultbezirk des Königs Den in Sakkara," *MDAIK* 41 (1985), pp. 47–60; for the Second Dynasty enclosures see Stadelmann, "Die Oberbauten der Königsgräber der 2. Dynastie in Sakkara," in *Mélanges Gamal Eddin Mokhtar* II, BdE 97/2 (Cairo, 1985), pp. 304ff.

²⁷ Kaiser, *MDAIK* 38, and also "Zur unterirdischen Anlage der Djoserpyramide," in I. Gamer-Wallert and W. Helck, eds., *Gegengabe. Festschrift für Emma Brunner-Traut* (Tübingen, , 1992), pp. 167–90, gives much importance to the increased depth of the tombs at Umm el-Qaab but without regarding the respective underground. Without any doubt it was much easier to carve the sandy underground at Umm el-Qaab, and there might even have been more reason to go deeper there for the sake of security. At Sakkara this was much more difficult and a real innovation in the reign of Hor Aha. But already by the middle of the First Dynasty the tombs at Sakkara have reached a greater depth than those at Abydos.

design of the large Memphite mastabas in an even more monumental form.²⁸ For these large structures there was no space on the cliffs at Sakkara/North, which was already built up. It was therefore abandoned in favor of the terrain in the center of Sakkara, which had the advantage of tafl underneath, a kind of shale which is softer than the rocks of the northern cliffs. The work of carving was easier and more time-efficient there. This choice was surely not accidental but intentional. All subsequent pyramid constructions up to the reign of Cheops deliberately sought out this specific underground, regardless of whether the substructure construction was accomplished through an open shaft or with the help of a rock-cut corridor. At Abydos, however, the tombs of Peribsen and Khasekhemui were built as a brick construction in the same sandy underground. This kind of subterranean construction looks like an application in brickwork of the original rock-cut galleries. The superstructure of the Abydos tombs is likewise unknown.²⁹ They cannot, however, have been smaller than the subterranean construction nor much larger; these tombs were in any case certainly smaller than the comparable Sakkara tombs of the Second Dynasty. This fact confirms my feeling that the Abydos tomb of Khasekhemui might have been a cenotaph—regardless of the solid historical reasons Kaiser cited and the mention by Dreyer that Amelineau had found parts of a skeleton in the Abydos tomb.³⁰ In its final condition this tomb has two entrances, one from the north and one from the south, which is an addition. This reminds me of the entrance into the burial chamber of Djoser's south tomb which was also arranged from the south.

In the light of these considerations, the thesis that at the beginning of the Third Dynasty the two funerary installations separated at Abydos for centuries would have been simply merged in the new residential cemetery of Sakkara by putting one into the other seems more than questionable and problematic, especially since at the same time Abydos was definitely abandoned as a royal cemetery. This idea requires a dimension of abstract intellectual thinking, an academic distance from the predominant essentials of Egyptian royal ideology, that is to say, victory/conquest/triumph over death and deification by means of an adequate and correct burial and an enduring cult in the eternal palace of

²⁸ For different views see Stadelmann, in *Mélanges Gamal Eddin Mokhtar* II, pp. 295–307 and Kaiser, "Zu den Königsgräbern der 2. Dynastie in Sakkara und Abydos," in *Essays in Egyptology in Honor of Hans Goedicke* (San Antonio, 1994), pp. 309–16.

²⁹ See Kaiser, note 28.

³⁰ The large so-called western mastaba in the Djoser complex which I suppose to be the Sakkara tomb of Khasekhemui also had a burial in one of its central chambers, see Stadelmann, in *Mélanges Gamal eddin Mokhtar*, BdE 97/2, pp. 298ff.

the hereafter. Changes and innovations in the arrangements of the tomb and the cult installations are the visible expression of an eternal search for an ideal, spiritual security in the hereafter.

Fundamentally, we should question why the merger of the tomb and the funerary enclosure happened only two hundred years later at Sakkarā and not much earlier at Abydos itself. The reason cannot be a lack of space or the short distances at Abydos. It might have been the same Upper Egyptian ideology that later in the New Kingdom resulted in the separation of the tomb and cult installations at Thebes. Dreyer states historical arguments: the kings of the First Dynasty had to be buried in the traditional cemetery of the earlier chieftains and kings, whereas the funerary cult demanded location and installations near the residence (personal communication). This is all, however, at this point very conjectural.

Misgivings about these uncertainties and the actual lack of evolution at Abydos have prompted O'Connor recently to undertake a painstaking re-excavation and investigation inside the enclosure/*Talbezirk* of Khasekhemui.³¹ In the midst of Late Period brick walls, tombs and burials of animals, he came across a layer of Early Dynastic bricks laid at an angle on a sand bed. O'Connor interprets these admittedly rather scanty findings as the rests of a large mound which was covered with a brick skin, a first step towards the pyramid form within an enclosure. Indeed, such a mound—a primæval hill—might be envisaged within the stage of a holy precinct connected with the funerary cult and resurrection. But even if this meager row of bricks would once have formed a primæval hill, the most essential part of a tumulus tomb would be still missing: the burial pit and the grave! Above all, it is the pit over which a mound, a mastaba, and finally a pyramid was built, and it was the grave that existed from the beginning, not the mound! For these reasons I do not see any basic approach in this setting for the evolution of the pyramid and the pyramid complex.

The origin and evolution of the Djoser complex must be, in my opinion, sought in the traditions and ideas of the area where the complex was innovated and realized. This is the residential necropolis of Sakkara. At Sakkara/North, already 300 years earlier under Hor Aha/Menes, a monumental tomb shape had been developed, the "Butic Mastaba" up to 100 cubits long and 10 to 15 cubits high, with white palace facade paneling towering above the limestone cliffs and attracting the eyes from the nearby residence and fortress Inebu-hedj. The royal tombs of the Second

³¹ O'Connor, *JARCE* 26 (1989), pp. 51–86, esp. pp. 82–83 and idem, *Expedition* 33 (1991), pp. 5–17, esp. pp. 9–10 and figs. 6 and 7.

Dynasty at Sakkara presumably used the same shape in a much more monumental extension as superstructure covering the subterranean galleries. The South Tomb and the western magazines in the Djoser complex most likely represent the appearance of this tomb type.³² Like the last (royal) mastaba S 3505 of the time of Qa, they might have had a funerary cult temple at the northern face covering and protecting the entrance to the tomb.³³ None of these installations is preserved. The funerary temple of the South Tomb lies consequently on the northern face of the South Tomb in the southern court. The cult installation of the western magazine—which would have been the Sakkara tomb of Khasekhemui—was integrated into the northwestern extension of the Djoser complex and is still today only superficially excavated. In a nearby shaft Mariette discovered the two lion-shaped offering tables made of alabaster, which are definitely of royal origin.³⁴

Ricke has viewed the Djoser complex as a gigantic “Butic Mastaba.”³⁵ His presentation of the development of the tomb palace of the Lower Egyptian princes into the shape of the Memphite “Butic Mastaba” within two or more centuries is generally accepted even by scholars who do not agree that these mastabas were royal tombs of the First Dynasty kings. The main steps of this transition are at the beginning a real palace lying under palm trees in a residential area which was closed after the death of the prince, the courts leveled with filling materials and sustaining walls and the outside enclosure walled up (fig. 2). Out of this developed a palace type tomb with massive core filling which left only the burial chambers accessible, and recessed and paneled enclosure walls in front of which palm trees were planted, later on merely depicted in wall painting. This setting is still represented in the so-called Menes tomb at Nagada from the beginning of the First Dynasty. The burial chambers are still constructed above the ground level; their arrangement is, however, already very systematic, one block of two magazine rooms respectively with the actual burial chamber in the middle. At Sakkara we find already the next step: tomb 3357 of Hor Aha/Menes or his contemporary—probably about ten years later than the Nagada tomb—is already more advanced in its architectural plan. The burial chambers lie in a pit cut into the hard limestone rock. The superstructure shows a

³² See note 28.

³³ Emery, *Great Tombs* III 10 und pls. 24–27; Lauer, “Le premier temple du culte funéraire en Égypte,” *BIFAO* 80 (1981), pp. 161ff.; Stadelmann, *Die ägyptischen Pyramiden*, pp. 2–27.

³⁴ Mariette, *Mastabas*, pp. 83–86; Cairo CG 1321 = *Cairo Official Catalogue*, p. 18.

³⁵ Ricke, *Bemerkungen* II, pp. 20–22.

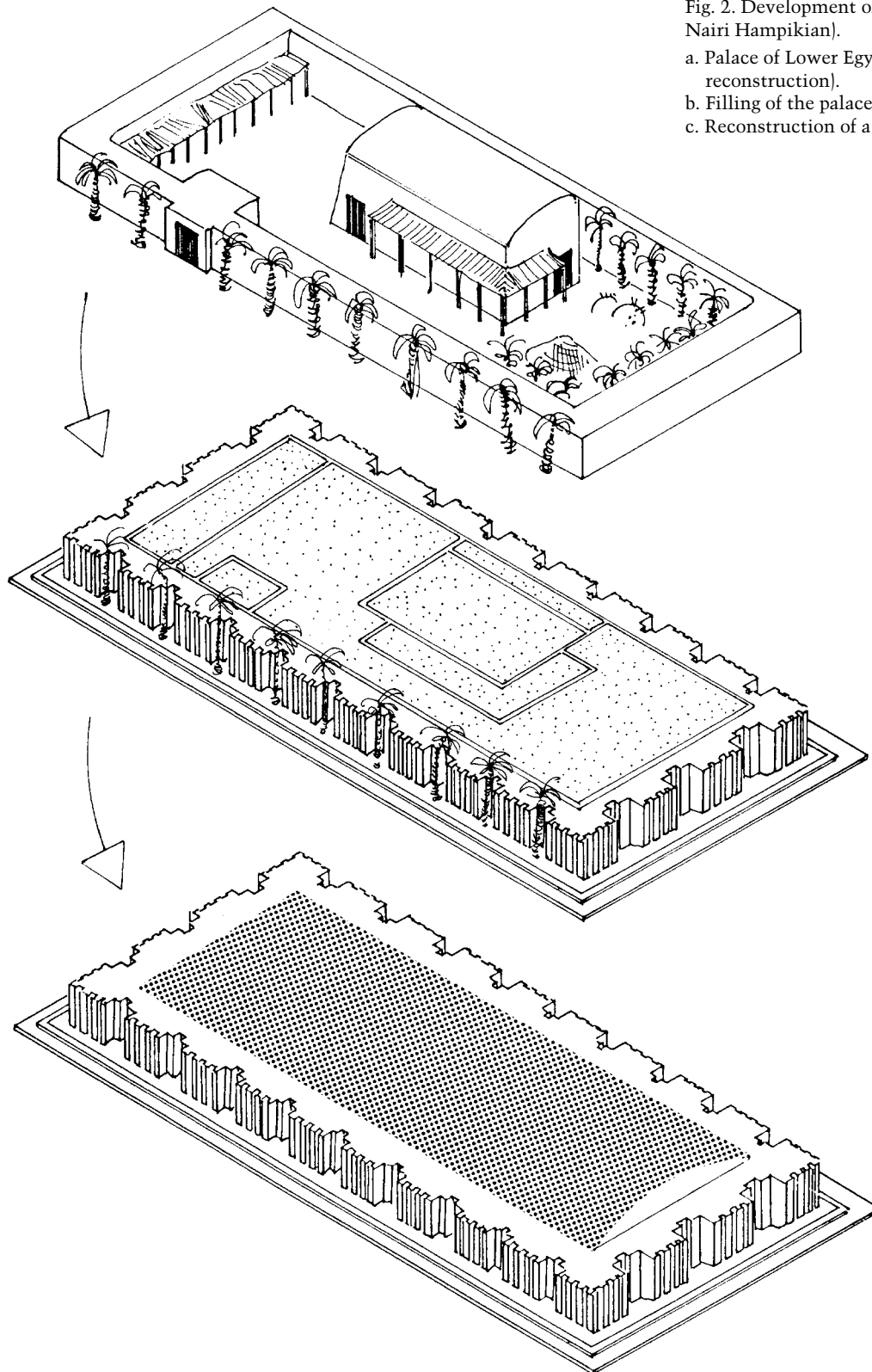


Fig. 2. Development of the "Butic Mastaba" (drawings by Nairi Hampikian).
a. Palace of Lower Egyptian prince (suggested reconstruction).
b. Filling of the palace.
c. Reconstruction of a developed "Butic Mastaba."

strictly regular chessboard pattern of walls and rooms which are, as Kaiser has proved, not additional magazines but purely fillings. The further development at Sakkara is even more radical: with progress in technique, the pits in Sakkara are carved deeper and wider into the hard rock, and the arrangement of the chambers kept to a canonical three-chamber system. The large gallery tombs of the Second Dynasty at Sakkara do not digress from this evolution. The technical progress of carving the rock was expanded into the width instead of the depth by excavating extended corridors and rooms. The 28 m deep pit underneath Djoser's step mastaba is finally the consequent continuation of this development into the depth and the breadth. The pit with the burial chamber is again more or less centered under the superstructure, whereas the magazines extend from the central pit.

Regardless of all technical and logistical progress, the act of carving in hard rock always remained a fundamental difficulty. This becomes evident in a nearly regular alternation in the construction of the subterranean parts of the tombs by means of an open pit or a corridor carved through the rock.³⁶

The shape of the royal tombs of the Second Dynasty at Sakkara—or at least the known subterranean extension—was determined by an increased demand for storage rooms for goods for the hereafter of the king, whereas the installations for the funerary cult were presumably not elaborated. They may have been restricted to enclosures comparable to the *Talbezirke* at Abydos but situated to the west of the necropolis in the desert, known as Qisr el-Mudir and Great Enclosure.³⁷ These settings change fundamentally at the beginning of the Third Dynasty. The subterranean magazines around the tomb pit are not diminished but become more regular and concise. Additionally, the funerary cult installations gain substantial in space and dominant importance. The idea of the tomb as an eternal residence from which the deceased king rules and exercises his cultic obligations as he did in the world of the livings gains supreme importance. He celebrates eternal Sed-Festivals that grant him everlasting existence in the hereafter; he performs the cult for the gods of the unified land. Included in these commitments are his court and

³⁶ Stadelmann, *Die Ägyptischen Pyramiden*, p. 221. This substantial difference of carving in silificated sand underground and in rock is widely disregarded in Kaiser argumentation, *Gegengabe. Festschrift für Emma Brunner-Traut*, pp. 185ff.

³⁷ These enclosures are mostly attributed to the later Third Dynasty, see *PM III*, p. 417, Swelim, *Some Problems on the History of the Third Dynasty*, chapter II. For a contrary opinion see Stadelmann, in *Mélanges Gamal eddin Mokhtar*, BdE 97/2, pp. 304ff. Recent investigations by the Geophysical Survey of the EES at these enclosures seem to favor an attribution to the Second Dynasty, friendly communication by H.S. Smith.

subjects in his eternal residence and existence—quite different from the forced execution and burial of courtiers during the First Dynasty. All these ceremonies were in need of a new setting for the ritual stage. In this process we witness an essential change in the religious consciousness of the hereafter, from the supply of the deceased from a purely material aspect, to a more ideal supply from spoken and written offering formulae and the representation of offerings and ritual scenes.

To create the arena for these new installations, Djoser's architect and the elite society at Memphis around Djoser recalled the origins of the great Memphite niche mastabas. It was presumably never forgotten that these superb mastabas had originally been actual palaces transformed to palaces of the hereafter by a filling with walls and solid materials. In the time of Djoser and under the instruction of Imhotep the contrary proceeding takes place (fig. 3): the paneled palace facade enclosure is extracted and becomes once again an outer enclosure wall. The sand and debris filling is removed, the courts are virtually emptied and in the newly gained empty space all necessary cult installations can be constructed: the entrance gate and hall (for actual use), the solid core constructions with the recognizable facades of the royal entrance palaces north and south of the entrance hall, the *heb-sed* court with the solid core chapels, the small temple palace—temple T—west of it, the massive constructions of the sanctuaries of Upper and Lower Egypt, with their respective courts, and the actual and real mortuary temple to the north of the pyramid tomb. Only the actual installations for the rites of the funerary ceremony and the continuing cult, the entrance hall and the mortuary temple, could actually be entered and used; all the other constructions are dummy buildings transformed in stone from real ones in the worldly residence of the king at Inebu-hedj/Memphis.

After the completion of the first building phase with the step mastaba in the center, the complex, seen from the Nile Valley, must have looked like an enormous niche mastaba of the Second Dynasty. If one had decided to fill the courts with debris, it would have just barely surpassed the older tombs. The intention behind the alteration in the plan, however, was grandeur. In a second and third building phase, the step mastaba was enlarged to a towering step pyramid. With this proceeding the new and truly monumental shape of the royal tomb was created. For a harmonic balance the whole complex had to be enlarged to the west and to the north. In the west the so-called western magazines were included, presumably originally an older royal tomb from the end of the Second Dynasty, perhaps the tomb of Khasekhemui (see notes 28 and 30). In the north, a pendant to the great court in the south was created

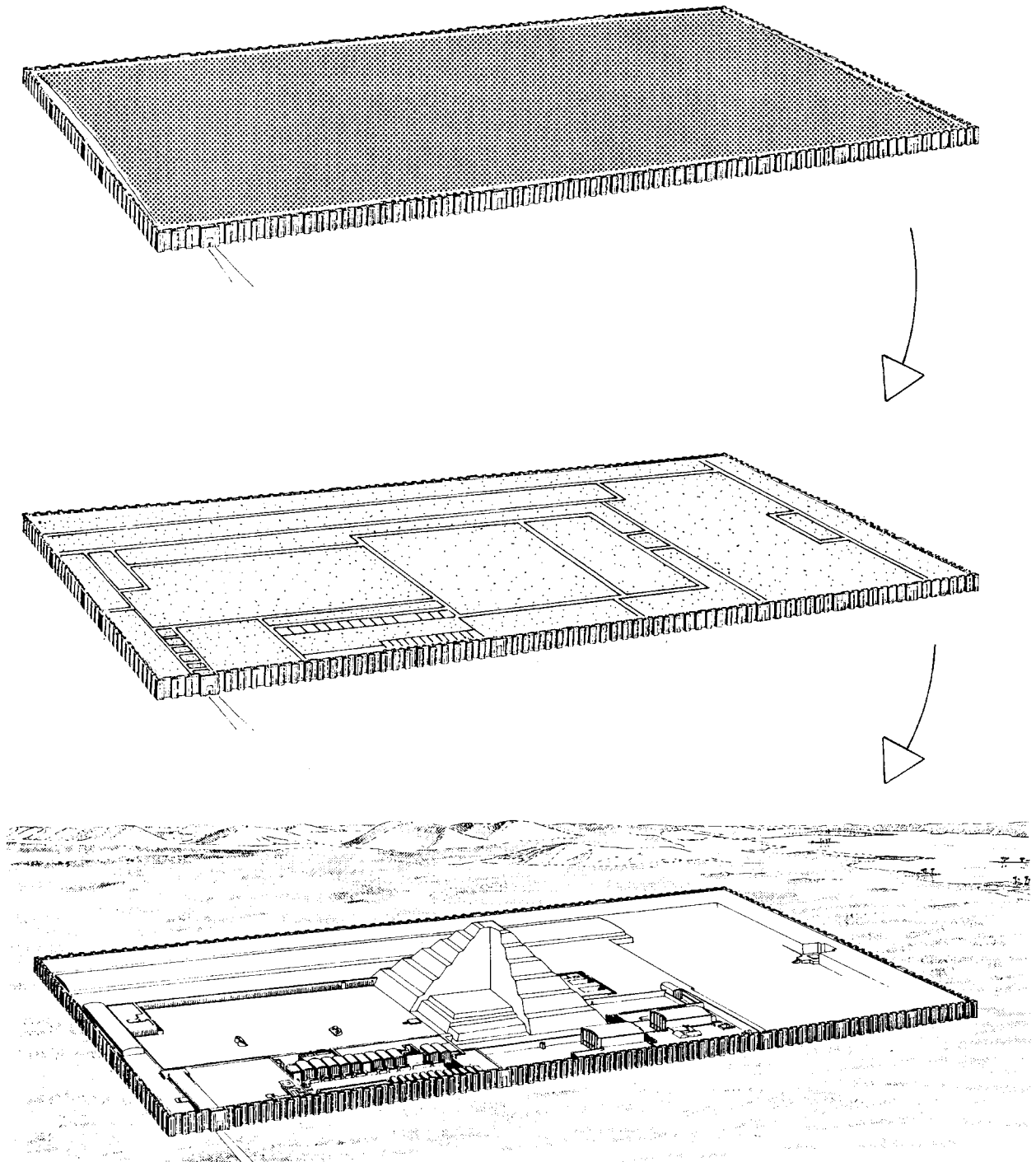


Fig. 3. Development of the Djoser complex.
a. Monumental "Butic Mastaba," suggested Second Dynasty royal tomb.
b. Re-exavating the fillings of the suggested "Butic Mastaba."
c. Djoser Complex, final phase.

with an imposing altar in front of the interior of the northern enclosure wall where a large gallery magazine was carved underground.³⁸ These alterations were, however, more than simple enlargements. Like the later mortuary temples of the Old and New Kingdom, the complex of Djoser is a replication, the eternal image of all of Egypt. Just as the secular Egypt in the time of Djoser had acquired through colonization the Delta marshes, the eternal Egypt, represented by the funerary complex, was enlarged to the north by a wide court, personifying these marches. The products of the marshes supplied funerary offerings to the northern magazine. On the other hand, the inclusion of the western magazines—if these were indeed originally an older royal tomb—could symbolize that this superb architectural idea and planning even included the necropolis of the west, the world of the deceased, and the tombs of deified predecessors. The singularity of this architecture and the universal importance of Djoser's funerary complex was still alive in the consciousness of the Egyptians in the New Kingdom. Since the Middle Kingdom, tradition credits Djoser with the invention and innovation of stone construction. In the Turin Royal Papyrus Djoser's titles *nswt-bit* are singled out by a rubrum, the only one in the papyrus to receive such emphasis.³⁹



³⁸ Stadelmann, "Das vermeintliche Sonnenheiligtum im Norden des Djoserbezirkes," *ASAE* 69 (1983), pp. 374ff.

³⁹ Wildung, *Die Rolle der ägyptischen Könige im Bewußtsein ihrer Nachwelt* (Berlin, 1969), Dok. XVI 60 and XVI 80. I kindly thank Dr. Peter Der Manuelian for editing the English of this manuscript.