

## THE MINOR CEMETERY

## § A. Topography

The undulating desert plateau which borders the valley of the Nile from Abu Roash in the north to Dashur in the south, was from the IVth Dynasty onward utilized for the necropolis of the great capital <sup>M</sup>emphis which lay in the valley below. ~~Naturally~~ This cemetery did not form one uninterrupted stretch between the two limits, for the conformation of the cliff <sup>y</sup> naturally tended to break it up into several well defined areas. These ~~were~~ <sup>became</sup> also roughly dynastic divisions as well as topographically. Chief among these groups are the two cemeteries of Giza and Sakkarah. ~~The~~ <sup>at</sup> Sakkarah ~~cemetery contains~~ <sup>there is</sup> at least one great monument of the III dynasty, the so-called step pyramid, <sup>but</sup> the Giza area was not developed <sup>been designed from the</sup> until the time of Khufu, but seems to have ~~become at once~~ <sup>the</sup> the great royal cemetery of the period.

<sup>is</sup> When the pyramid of Khufu was being built the area to the west of it was set apart for the tombs of ~~the chief officers of state and~~ <sup>the</sup> members of the royal family and for the chief officers of state. ~~It was divided when~~ <sup>erection of the</sup> the succeeding pyramids of Kephren and Mycerinus ~~were erected, no change the only result was poss-~~ <sup>ed</sup> sibly to limit the extension of the cemetery towards the south. No additional tombs are to be found west of the second ~~and~~ and third pyramids, although the priests of the Mycerinus pyramid at one period had a small <sup>e</sup> cemetery area of their own to the southeast <sup>e</sup> of that pyramid. ~~The area therefore west~~ The ~~royal~~ original royal cemetery therefore developed only towards the west and north as far as the natural configuration of the surface made it practicable. This area was from the first laid out <sup>according to</sup> in a fairly regular and pre-determined plan. In the reign of Khufu, the western <sup>portion</sup> and part of the northern area <sup>were</sup> was divided up into a series of regular

plots of ground, which were assigned to the different members of ~~the~~  
the court by lot or ~~selected~~ selection, and on them were built  
a <sup>group</sup> ~~series~~ of similar mastabas, ~~which became in time by the addition~~  
~~of new faces and chambers somewhat different from each other.~~

<sup>1</sup> For a description of the royal cemetery, its chronology and  
details of the various types of mastabas ~~see~~ cf. Reisner and Fisher,  
Preliminary report on the work of the Harvard-Boston Expedition  
in 1911 - 13, in Annales du Service des Antiquites, Vol. XIII, pp.  
227 ff.

<sup>the reign of</sup> With Kephren began a <sup>break in</sup> ~~change in plan and~~ the regularity of <sup>the</sup>  
<sup>and</sup> plan, ~~was broken,~~ <sup>were constructed</sup> the newer mastabas ~~being laid out~~ not in straight  
rows as before but en echelon. As the area became filled, the  
open passages between the large mastabas were used for smaller  
tombs which were built against the sides <sup>and ends previous ones,</sup> of the ~~former~~. In time  
the spaces became so filled with tombs ~~and intrusive~~ that the  
means of access to any tomb became somewhat difficult. Still later  
when the ~~newest~~ cemetery had <sup>lost its distinctly royal character</sup> ~~ceased to be a royal one,~~ the older  
structures were used for a number of intrusive burials, placed  
wherever seemed most convenient.

From the first we <sup>may</sup> ~~must~~ assume that certain areas were set  
apart for the <sup>minor</sup> ~~higher~~ officials, and ~~that not until these areas~~  
~~became congested did the necessity arise for building in.~~ <sup>outside this plotted</sup> ~~portion,~~ These  
would have been to the north near the edges of the plateau and to  
the west where extension was ~~unlimited~~ limited only by the ~~distance~~  
~~away from the plain valley~~ desirability of keeping within some  
reasonable distance of the valley. ~~Doubtless many of the tombs~~  
~~filling the passages were built before.~~ Just west of the western  
portion of the royal Khufu cemetery, at the end of the series of  
regular mastabas of this period was ~~an area~~ one of these areas.

This was the space excavated by our expedition and which ~~I have~~ <sup>is here</sup>

called the Minor Cemetery.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. On Pl. II the left end of the black line under the word W Cem. is the centre of the area uncovered by the Eckley B. Coxe Jr. Expedition in 1915. ~~and the subject of this memoir.~~

The area uncovered was about 60 m. square. On the south it joined a similar area cleared by Dr. Reisner some years previously. The cemetery extended still further north ~~by~~ beyond the limits set for our work and as far as the edge of the cliff, but the tombs grew poorer and smaller and apparently of a later period as their distance from the pyramid increased.

## § 2. Conditions

Beyond the limits of the area already opened, the surface of the ground presented little evidences of the character of the bombs beneath or of the general plan of the area (Pl. 1). The surface was ~~very~~ <sup>regular</sup> ~~level~~, with a slight slope towards the north. Here and there patches of harder material, stone chips or debris surrounded by patches of yellow drift sand, <sup>sometimes</sup> marked off the difference between solid structures and open spaces. This plateau is exposed to severe wind and all masonry especially bricks was subjected to a gradual but steady de-  
trition. At some places the wind had spread over the surface a thin layer of detritus made up of the filling of the matabas, bits of stone, bricks and pottery mixed with the inevitable ~~sands~~.

The tops ~~of~~ many of the matabas, especially those with stone casings or facings were just below this layer

of denudation. From a height  
to a half of the height of the  
structures had been destroyed  
in this way. As soon as the  
mass of debris and sand  
had filled up the surrounding  
space, passages offering  
rooms, etc., the remaining  
structures ~~were~~ protected by  
this mass, and after this  
the process of denudation went  
on much more slowly.

Even during the use of the  
cemetery it would have required  
constant labor to keep the  
passage ways and even the  
offering rooms free from the  
blown sand. As soon as  
tombs began to be neglected  
the filling up ~~of~~ made rapid  
progress. Another element  
entered into the destruction.  
The coarsed stone facings  
of disused ~~monuments~~ <sup>monuments</sup>  
were often stripped off and  
re-used for casing later  
~~monuments~~ tombs. Even brick-  
work did not escape a similar  
use. In ~~the case of~~ cases

SOURCE

BUILDING

NO.

SITE

core masonry, the removal  
of the casing did not destroy the  
interior mass, but when ~~the~~  
debris filled masonry were  
stripped the filling having  
no support gradually spilled  
out over the surrounding passages.  
~~In clearing the cemetery~~  
~~the various strata of debris~~  
~~became~~

These various conditions  
were clearly seen during the  
excavation of the cemetery.  
The passages or open spaces  
were the first to be filled in. Here  
were successive layers of  
yellow sand ~~with rubble~~ and  
debris, the latter varying in thickness  
and contents. Near the bottom  
the debris layers were thicker  
or more compact, masses of  
debris filling, masses of  
mud plaster and bricks,  
with now and again loose  
stones from ceilings or rubble  
retaining walls. Higher up  
the yellow sand ~~was~~ was  
in layer proportion.  
In the offering rooms the  
foam of the roofs either of  
wood or brick in the brick  
masonry, made a thick  
layer of heavy debris over the

first drift sand deposit. The  
stone could ~~not~~ <sup>possibly</sup> be of the  
corridor type usually had  
flat stone slab roofs and these  
appeared to have been carried  
off <sup>by other means</sup> before they had fallen  
in. In the shaft a similar  
stratification was found.  
Here however drift sand & debris  
could not begin to accumulate  
until the covering <sup>or part of it</sup> ~~was broken through~~  
~~at the bottom of the shaft~~ <sup>had given way</sup>. ~~Then the~~  
~~broken through by plunderers.~~  
Thus at the bottom of shaft  
was usually the stones  
& bricks from the door sealings.  
The covering material debris  
of the covering of the shaft  
and some rubble or bricks  
carried down from the  
tops of the linings. Then  
above this layers of yellow  
sand and masses of  
debris filling which had  
poured in from the gaps  
in the linings, and stones  
and bricks from the linings them-  
selves. Near the top the  
sand strata became more  
and more clean and  
unmixed.

when taking off the stone  
coverings the plunderers had  
taken away the stone niche  
skeletal and from the ~~main~~  
back faced structures the  
flat and stone lintels from over  
the niches. Unfortunately these  
were the inscribed blocks of  
the finer quality of limestone.  
Brick niches with common  
rough slabs for lintels  
were not disturbed. Lintels  
and libation basins were some-  
times cast aside in the  
passages after they had  
been pulled from their  
positions.

Some of this plundering  
for stone and perhaps for  
antiquities took place at a  
~~late~~ comparatively recent period.  
Certainly shaft A of G 3030  
was entered in ~~very~~ recent  
years. The plundering of the  
burials however seems to have  
been done at an early date  
and ~~the evidence~~ one is strongly  
inclined to suspect that most  
of it was done at the time  
of burial. The most interesting  
example of this was in A

of G 304). The chamber door  
was ~~blocked~~ <sup>sealed</sup> with rough blocks  
undisturbed. The coffin lid  
was in situ. Yet the ~~body~~ ~~had~~  
~~with a~~ ~~feet~~ ~~had~~ ~~been~~ linen  
wrappings ~~of~~ around the neck  
wrists and ankles had been  
ripped open in order to remove  
the necklaces, wristlets and  
anklets which had been there.  
After this was done the lid of  
the coffin was returned to its  
place, ~~and~~ the chamber sealed up.  
(Pl. 41).

SOURCE

BUILDING

SITE

NO.