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PYRAMID RESEARCH

From the Archaic to the Second Intermediate Period

Lists, Catalogues and Objectives *

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INTRODUCTION

Ancient Egyptian pyramids and pyramid-like monuments have held fascination for countless numbers of travellers who have flocked to see them from earliest times. One might assume that their fame should position pyramid research among the major branches of Egyptology. Unfortunately, this is not the case; pyramid research has never been selected for a special section or workshop in any of the IAE or other important congress meetings. Notwithstanding this oversight, pyramid research has been conducted since antiquity. The remarkable work of Perring, Lepsius and Petrie in the last century has been followed by many investigations, and excellent studies are currently underway. Yet we have not acquired a satisfactory volume of information and data on pyramids nor thoroughly explored the fields and subjects of pyramid research, and consequently, our knowledge about pyramids remains relatively inadequate. Meanwhile, pyramids are in a state of deterioration. The reasons for my judgement are the following: considerable numbers of monuments have not been sufficiently investigated, published and protected; our knowledge of some pyramid subjects is based on speculation; and many questions cannot be answered with certainty. In order to begin to ameliorate this situation, I have begun systematically organizing accumulated information and data under tentative categories. My objective is to take the first steps towards creating lists and catalogues of pyramid and pyramid-like monuments, and towards exhorting that restoring missing pyramid material should be an objective of pyramid research.

* This study is presented to Professor Jean Leclant, a friend and great scholar who is constantly enriching our knowledge by his unfailing Egyptological energy; his contribution to pyramid research is invaluable. Since I submitted this paper two pyramid discoveries were made at Saqqara and Giza; the first was the pyramid of a queen of Pepi I in the excavations of A. Labrousse, and the second was the pyramid very

much destroyed, located 8 m. west of the south pyramid of a queen of Khufu, south east of the Great Pyramid of Khufu, and Z. Hawass decided to follow Reisner's numbering and refer to it as G1d. Consequently the total number of funerary pyramids becomes 111, and the grand total becomes 139. I thank Ms. Pamela C. Reynolds for assistance in editing this paper.

THE FIELDS AND SUBJECTS OF PYRAMID RESEARCH

The main substance of pyramid knowledge is information obtained from historical documents and data obtained from pyramid sites. Fields of study include: pyramid concepts, pyramid construction, pyramid history, pyramid developments and others which emerge from the information and data and eventually yield interpretations and theories on pyramids and pyramid-like monuments. These fields are further broken down into subjects within each field. For example, subjects of pyramid concepts include studies on: origins, functions and composition of each monument. Subjects of pyramid construction include studies on: planning, logistics, building and administration of the ancient builders. Subjects of pyramid history are accounts on the periods of: construction, cult maintenance, neglect and discovery of the monument. Subjects of pyramid developments include studies on: political, religious, economical and technological reasons. Most of these subjects are applicable to all monuments, large groups of monuments or monuments in relation to each other; a few of these subjects apply only to individual monuments.

THE PRESENT STATE OF KNOWLEDGE ON PYRAMIDS

Pyramid knowledge is the ultimate goal of pyramid research. Presently, we cannot claim to have a sufficient degree of knowledge about the fields of study and their subjects mentioned above. Consequently, the first step is to devise lists of the monuments, along with accompanying information and data, and to indicate the pyramid material we need to acquire. I have developed such preliminary lists which appear in this article. The need for the extension of these lists into pyramid catalogues and objectives of pyramid research is clear.

In order to promote knowledge about pyramids, more materials must be processed and fields and subjects developed. An important aside, however, concerns some problems that limit our ability to do so. First are issues that are beyond the control of most scholars. They include: restricted access to some pyramid sites; unpublished, deteriorating and lost pyramid materials; inadequate funding of pyramid investigations; and a shortage of pyramid scholars. Second, as one would expect, some difficulties are encountered in any attempt to formulate the lists, catalogues and objectives. For example, pyramid lists are subject to debatable chronology and the misplacement of unidentified monuments. The pyramid catalogues will not only suffer from inaccurate data, tainted material and speculative subjects but also from the missing material resulting from incomplete and unpublished excavations. The objectives will not only suffer from the problems mentioned above but also from many other factors, for example disharmony among scholars and scientists. Nevertheless, the need for compiling lists and catalogues far outweighs the problems that are encountered in constructing them.

THE PYRAMID LISTS

The scope of pyramid research in the wider sense spans pyramids and pyramid-like monuments in general. Such ancient monuments are found in Egypt (pyramids), Mesopotamia (ziggurrats), Mexico and Central America (pyramid temples and tombs), India (stupa platforms), Rome (pyramids and tumuli), England (barrows) etc. and modern pyramids in Cairo, Paris, Richmond, Virginia, Chicago, Memphis, Tennessee etc. In Ancient Egypt pyramids and pyramid-like monuments are built from the Archaic to Ptolemaic Dynasties at the Delta, Nile Valley and Nubia. These could be divided into three divisions: **1) Royal, 2) Private** and **3) Nubian** monuments. The lists I present here are an elementary reckoning of a major part of the first division built before the end of the Thirteenth Dynasty; they total 137 monuments.¹

The following five lists of funerary and religious pyramids; and funerary, religious and civil pyramid-like monuments, contain limited information because of the space constraints of this article. References to the monuments include: dynasties, common name, very limited or no description and occasional reference to the owner, location, uncertainties, subtotals and totals. Because of their complexity established numbering systems are avoided except for Lepsius numbers, which are kept to a necessary minimum. Some chronological disagreements and brief commentaries are found in footnotes 4-22.²

1. Funerary pyramids.

Funerary pyramids are layered, embankment-filled, solid, cross-walled and compound constructed creating forms of step, bent, benben and true pyramid shapes serving as: pyramid-tombs, pyramid-cenotaphs and ritual or subsidiary pyramids. Listed below are 109 pyramids of that nature:

THE STEP PYRAMID (LAYER PYR.) OF NETJERYKHET AT SAQQARA.
 THE UNFINISHED LAYER PYRAMID OF SEKHEMKHET AT SAQQARA.
 THE UNFINISHED PYRAMID OF NEBKARA AT ZAWYET AL-ARYAN NORTH.³

1. This article omits several monuments of the first division, the royal ones, because we know very little or nothing about some or because the monuments are not related to pyramids. With some exceptions these are the royal tombs of Dynasties VII-X and XIV-XVI. During the XVIIth and early XVIIIth Dynasties pyramid tombs and pyramid cenotaphs were built before the era of the Valley of the Kings, Dynasties XVIII-XX. Some royal tombs were found within the temple enclosure at Tanis; tombs in temples may be the case for Dynasties XXI-XXIV, XXVI, XXVIII-XXX. Alexander the Great and the Ptolemies were

buried in Alexandria under *pyramides* or *extractus mons*, i.e. pyramid tumuli, according to *Lucan VIII*, 692-699.

2. The question mark in parentheses (?) indicates the uncertainty of the item it follows: the present existence of the pyramid, the classification mentioned or the owner to whom it has been attributed.

3. For an argument of the position of this pyramid in the Third Dynasty opposing its position in the Fourth Dynasty according to J.-Ph. Lauer, see N. SWELIM, *Some Problems on the History of the Third Dynasty* (Alexandria, 1983) 125-179.

THE LAYER PYRAMID AT ZAWYET AL-ARYAN SOUTH.
 THE BRICK PYRAMID AT ABU RAWASH, (LEPSIUS I).⁴
 5 funerary pyramids during the Third Dynasty (5 subtotal).

THE LAYER PYRAMID OF SNOFRU AT SEILA, AL-FAYUM.⁵
 THE PYRAMID OF SNOFRU (?) AT MEYDUM.
 THE SUBSIDIARY PYRAMID OF SNOFRU (?) AT MEYDUM.
 THE BENT PYRAMID OF SNOFRU AT DAHSHUR SOUTH.
 THE SUBSIDIARY (?) PYRAMID OF SNOFRU AT DAHSHUR SOUTH.⁶
 THE RED PYRAMID OF SNOFRU AT DAHSHUR NORTH.
 THE GREAT PYRAMID OF KHUFU AT GIZA.
 THE NORTH PYRAMID OF A QUEEN (?) OF KHUFU AT GIZA.
 THE MIDDLE PYRAMID OF A QUEEN (?) OF KHUFU AT GIZA.
 THE SOUTH PYRAMID OF A QUEEN (?) OF KHUFU AT GIZA.
 THE ABANDONED PYRAMID PROJECT, REISNER'S "GIX" AT GIZA.
 THE ABANDONED PYRAMID PROJECT, PETRIE'S TRIAL PASSAGES AT GIZA.
 THE ABANDONED PYR. PROJECT (?) JUNKER'S NEBENPYRAMIDE AT GIZA.
 THE PYRAMID OF DJEDEFRA AT ABU RAWASH.
 THE SUBSIDIARY PYRAMID OF DJEDEFRA AT ABU RAWASH.
 THE PYRAMID OF KHAFRA AT GIZA.
 THE SUBSIDIARY (?) PYRAMID OF KHAFRA AT GIZA. ^{see 7}
 THE PYRAMID OF MENKAURA AT GIZA.
 THE EAST PYR. OF A QUEEN (?) SOUTH OF MENKAURA.
 THE MIDDLE STEP PYR. OF A QUEEN SOUTH WEST OF MENKAURA.
 THE WEST STEP PYR. OF A QUEEN WEST SOUTH WEST OF MENKAURA.
 21 funerary pyramids during the Fourth Dynasty (+ 5 = 26 subtotal).

THE PYRAMID OF USERKAF AT SAQQARA.
 THE SUBSIDIARY (?) PYRAMID OF USERKAF AT SAQQARA. ^{see 7}

4. Rediscovered on December 16, 1985, and appeared in a preliminary study, SWELIM, *The Brick Pyramid at Abu Rawash, number 1 by Lepsius* (Alexandria, 1987).

5. Excavation report forthcoming. See my newsletter, *The Pyramid of Seila Locally Called "el Qalah"*, season 1987 (March 1987, unpublished); J. LECLANT and G. CLERC, *Orientalia* 57/3, 1988, p. 336, pl. XXXII, XXXIII, Figs. 40, 41.

6. Doubt that this pyramid is a subsidiary to the Bent pyramid is based on the fact that all the subsidiary pyramids in the time spanning between the subsidiary to Meydum and the subsidiary to

Senusert I have bases that measure 1/5 of the base length of the principal pyramid. This pyramid and two others south of the pyramids of Khafra and Userkaf are likewise doubtful because their base lengths are greater than that relationship. SWELIM, "Funerary pyramid lists and dimensions of their superstructures," *The Greatness of Egypt* (Provo, Brigham Young University, forthcoming?) submitted July 1986.

7. An unfinished pyramid seen northwest of the pyramid of Sahura and southeast of the sun temple of Userkaf on an aerial photograph in H. RICKE, *Das Sonnenheiligtum des Königs Userkaf, BÄA 7, 1965* Taf. I.

- THE PYRAMID OF A QUEEN OF USERKAF AT SAQQARA.
 THE PYRAMID OF SAHURA AT ABU SIR.
 THE SUBSIDIARY PYRAMID OF SAHURA AT ABU SIR.
 THE PYRAMID OF NEFERIRKARA AT ABU SIR.
 THE PYRAMID OF SHEPSEKARA (?) ON AERIAL PHOTO OF ABU SIR.⁷
 THE UNFINISHED PYRAMID OF RANEFEREF AT ABU SIR.
 THE PYRAMID OF NEUSERRA AT ABU SIR.
 THE SUBSIDIARY PYRAMID OF NEUSERRA AT ABU SIR.
 THE PYRAMID OF QUEEN KHENTKAUS AT ABU SIR.
 THE SUBSIDIARY PYRAMID OF QUEEN KHENTKAUS AT ABU SIR.
 THE NORTH SMALL PYRAMID AT ABU SIR.
 THE SOUTH SMALL PYRAMID AT ABU SIR.
 THE PYRAMID OF MENKAUHOR (?) AT DAHSHUR NORTH, (LEPSIUS L).⁸
 THE PYRAMID OF DJEDKARA AT SAQQARA.
 THE SUBSIDIARY PYRAMID OF DJEDKARA AT SAQQARA.
 THE PYRAMID OF A QUEEN OF DJEDKARA AT SAQQARA.
 THE SUBSIDIARY PYRAMID OF A QUEEN OF DJEDKARA AT SAQQARA.
 THE PYRAMID OF UNAS AT SAQQARA.
 THE SUBSIDIARY PYRAMID OF UNAS AT SAQQARA.

21 funerary pyramids during the Fifth Dynasty (+ 26 = 47 subtotal).

- THE PYRAMID OF TETI AT SAQQARA.
 THE SUBSIDIARY PYRAMID OF TETI AT SAQQARA.
 THE PYRAMID OF QUEEN KHUIT AT SAQQARA.
 THE SUBSIDIARY PYRAMID (?) OF QUEEN KHUIT AT SAQQARA.⁹
 THE PYRAMID OF QUEEN IPUT I AT SAQQARA.
 THE SUBSIDIARY PYRAMID (?) OF QUEEN IPUT I AT SAQQARA. ^{see 10}
 THE PYRAMID OF A QUEEN MOTHER; OF USERKARA (?) ¹⁰
 THE PYRAMID OF USERKARA (?) UNDER THE VILLAGE AT SAQQARA.¹¹
 THE PYRAMID OF PEPI I AT SAQQARA.
 THE SUBSIDIARY PYRAMID OF PEPI I AT SAQQARA.

8. R. STADELMANN, *Die Ägyptischen Pyramiden*, Darmstadt, 1985, p. 179, Abb. 23. It has been thought by other scholars that the pyramid under the village at Saqqara belongs to Menkauhor; see footnote 12.

9. Information on the existence of the two subsidiary pyramids of the queens of Teti: Khuit and Iput I, was given to me by J.-Ph. Lauer, whom I thank.

10. Reused parts of this pyramid were found in the pyramid complex of Pepi I; information by A. Labrousse, whom I thank. The attribution that

I am giving here, however, is tentative.

11. It was generally believed that this was the pyramid of Menkauhor before Stadelmann suggested the pyramid Lepsius L for this king see footnote 8. STADELMANN, *LÄ IV*, 1982, col. 1219, dates this pyramid to the Third Dynasty; I do not believe that the architecture could support that early dating. Consequently I have suggested Userkara, but the pyramid could be from the First Intermediate Period as well.

- THE EAST PYRAMID OF QUEEN NOUBOUNET OF PEPI I AT SAQQARA. ^{see 26}
 THE MIDDLE PYRAMID OF A QUEEN OF PEPI I AT SAQQARA. ^{see 26}
 THE OCCIDENTAL PYRAMID OF A QUEEN OF PEPI I AT SAQQARA. ^{see 26}
 THE SOUTH PYRAMID OF QUEEN MERITITES II OF PEPI I AT SAQQARA.¹²
 THE PYRAMID OF MERENRA AT SAQQARA.
 THE SUBSIDIARY PYRAMID OF MERENRA AT SAQQARA.
 THE PYRAMID OF PEPI II AT SAQQARA.
 THE SUBSIDIARY PYRAMID OF PEPI II AT SAQQARA.
 THE PYRAMID OF QUEEN OUDJEBTEN AT SAQQARA.
 THE SUBSIDIARY PYRAMID OF QUEEN OUDJEBTEN AT SAQQARA.
 THE PYRAMID OF QUEEN NEITH AT SAQQARA.
 THE SUBSIDIARY PYRAMID OF QUEEN NEITH AT SAQQARA.
 THE PYRAMID OF QUEEN IPUT II AT SAQQARA.
 THE SUBSIDIARY PYRAMID OF QUEEN IPUT II AT SAQQARA.

24 funerary pyramids during the Sixth Dynasty (+ 47 = 71 subtotal).

- THE PYRAMID(?) OF ITY MENTIONED IN WADI HAMMAMAT.¹³
 THE PYRAMID(?) OF NEFERKARA MENTIONED AT SAQQARA.¹⁴
 THE PYRAMID OF KAKARA IBI AT SAQQARA.

3 funerary pyramids during the Eighth Dynasty (?) (+ 71 = 74 subtotal).

- THE PYRAMID (?) OF MERYKARA MENTIONED AT SAQQARA.¹⁵

1 funerary pyramid during the Tenth Dynasty (?) (+ 74 = 75 subtotal).

- THE PYRAMID OF AMENEMHAT I AT LISHT.
 THE PYRAMID OF SENUSERT I AT LISHT.
 THE SUBSIDIARY PYRAMID OF SENUSERT I AT LISHT.
 THE PYRAMID OF QUEEN NEFERU, SOUTH NUMBER 1 AT LISHT.
 THE PYRAMID OF PRINCESS ITAKAYET, SOUTH NUMBER 2 AT LISHT.
 THE PYRAMID SOUTH NUMBER 3 AT LISHT.
 THE PYRAMID WEST NUMBER 4 AT LISHT.
 THE PYRAMID WEST NUMBER 5 AT LISHT.
 THE PYRAMID NORTH NUMBER 6 AT LISHT.
 THE PYRAMID NORTH NUMBER 7 AT LISHT.
 THE PYRAMID EAST NUMBER 8 AT LISHT.
 THE PYRAMID EAST NUMBER 9 AT LISHT.

12. A. Labrousse kindly showed me this very recent discovery when I visited the site on May 9, 1991. The name of the queen was found on a gateway in the enclosure wall of her pyramid.

13. *LD II*, pl. 115, no. 41.

14. G. JÉQUIER, *Les Pyramides des reines Neit et Apouit*, p. 53.

15. J.E. QUIBELL, *Excavations at Saqqara 1905-1906*, pl. 13-15.

THE WHITE PYRAMID OF AMENEMHAT II AT DAHSHUR.

THE BRICK PYRAMID OF SENUSERT II AT EL LAHUN.

THE BRICK PYRAMID OF QUEEN NEFERU AT EL LAHUN.

THE BRICK PYRAMID OF SENUSERT III AT DAHSHUR.

THE BLACK, BRICK PYRAMID OF AMENEMHAT III AT DAHSHUR.

THE BRICK PYRAMID OF AMENEMHAT III AT HAWARA.

THE BRICK PYRAMID(?) OF PRINCESS NEFERUPTAH AT HAWARA.

19 funerary pyramids during the Twelfth Dynasty (+ 75 = 94 subtotal).

THE STONE PYRAMID OF NORTH MAZGHUNA.

THE BRICK PYRAMID OF SOUTH MAZGHUNA.

THE BRICK PYRAMID OF AMENEMHAT (?) (LEPSIUS LIV).¹⁶

THE BRICK PYRAMID OF KHINDJER AT SAQQARA.

THE BRICK PYRAMID OF THE QUEEN OF KHINDJER AT SAQQARA.

THE UNFINISHED BRICK PYRAMID AT SAQQARA (LEPSIUS XLVI).

THE DEMOLISHED BRICK PYRAMID (LEPSIUS XLIV) AT SAQQARA.

THE BRICK PYRAMID OF AMINIKIMAU AT DAHSHUR.

THE BRICK PYRAMID (?) NORTH OF AMINIKIMAU AT DAHSHUR.¹⁷

THE BRICK PYRAMID (?) NORTH WEST OF AMINIKIMAU AT DAHSHUR. *sec 18*

THE BRICK(?) PYRAMID OF MERNEFERRA AY AT KHATAANA(?).¹⁸

THE SECOND BRICK (?) PYRAMID AT KHATAANA(?). *sec 19*

THE THIRD BRICK (?) PYRAMID. *sec 19*

THE UNIDENTIFIED BRICK PYRAMID (LEPSIUS LIX), EAST OF DAHSHUR(?).

THE UNIDENTIFIED SUBSIDIARY BRICK PYRAMID(?),(SUBSID. LEP. LIX).

15 funerary pyramids during the Thirteenth Dynasty (+ 94 = 109 total funerary pyramids).

2. Religious pyramids.

Seven of the religious pyramids mentioned below are layered, squared-base constructions which differ from funerary pyramids by their lack of a substructure or funerary aspect; the eighth no longer exists.

16. The name of this king was found at the site of this monument. I thank Ahmed Moussa for giving me this information. It is difficult at this stage to draw any conclusions further than to date this pyramid to the Thirteenth Dynasty by the architecture.

17. This and the following pyramid northwest of Aminikimau are suggested by D. ARNOLD, *MDAIK* 31, p. 172.

18. This pyramid and the two which follow are confirmed by pyramidions in the Cairo Museum: for

the first two, *ASAE* LII, 471-479; the third is half a pyramidion which was reused as an anchor. It is on display east of the Atrium, above 23, temporary number is 5/1/15/12, thanks to May Trad. The preserved side is uninscribed; the hole of the anchor rope is worked through the upper part. Two partly preserved sides show the seated gods Anubis and Horakhty; a hand and part of an arm can be seen in front of the latter. The fourth side is the break, see plates I, II in, A. NIBBI, "A half pyramidion as an Egyptian anchor shape", *GM* 56, 1982.

