

archaeological target for systematic excavations and recordings beyond the single-tomb-strategy. Around the turn of the century, the interest of archaeologists in the mastaba cemeteries on the Giza Plateau was so substantial that the Department of Antiquities under Maspero simultaneously granted a general excavation concession to three different expeditions; the plateau had to be divided into "claims." In 1902, during a meeting of Ernesto Schiaparelli, Ludwig Borchardt, and George Andrew Reisner, the "Great Western Cemetery" was subdivided into three equal east-west strips (numbered 1-3 from south to north). Drawing lots, "the southern strip fell to the Italians, the middle strip to the Germans, and the northern strip to the Americans" (Reisner, *A History of the Giza Necropolis*, vol. 1 [Cambridge, Mass., 1942], p. 23). Following this original subdivision of "claims," excavations of the northwest part of the Giza plateau were conducted by American, Austrian, Egyptian, German, and Italian archaeological missions, under Steindorff (1903-7), Schiaparelli (1903-5), C. S. Fisher (1911-13), Junker (1912-14 and 1926-29), Selim Hassan (1929-37), and Reisner, respectively.

As director of the Harvard University-Museum of Fine Arts, Boston Expedition, Reisner undertook extensive excavations in his "northern strip." In several field seasons from 1936 to 1939, he investigated an area in the northwestern part of the Western Cemetery where a large number of late Fifth Dynasty mastaba tombs were discovered. Reisner, however, was only able to start the intended full publication of the results of his excavations there; his "Giza Manuscript" was left unfinished and now forms—together with the excavation's notebooks, field records, tracings, maps, and additional material (now in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)—the major source for the publication under review here.

Ann Macy Roth's *A Cemetery of Palace Attendants* is the sixth volume of the Giza Mastaba Series, which, under the editorship of Peter Der Manuelian and William K. Simpson, is dedicated to the full publication of Reisner's excavation project in the Giza necropolis.

The book is divided into two major parts that are preceded by a comprehensive introductory section (pp. 1-9). The introductory section includes a helpful summary of conclusions (pp. 1-2) as well as remarks on the old excavation records on

A Cemetery of Palace Attendants Including G 2084-2099, G 2230+2231, and G 2240. By ANN MACY ROTH. Giza Mastabas, vol. 6. Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1995. Pp. xxvi + 175 + 210 pls. + 91 figs. \$100.

The Old Kingdom mastaba cemeteries on the Giza Plateau are among the key areas of Egyptian archaeology. These extensive fields of more or less regularly laid-out private tombs around the pyramid of Khufu early became a major

which the publication is primarily based (pp. 2–6) and on methodological and technical conventions employed throughout the volume (pp. 7–8).

Part 1 (“Analysis of the Cluster,” pp. 13–58) presents the main results of Roth’s investigation of the tomb cluster. This part is subdivided into the following four chapters: in chap. 1 (“Description of the Cluster,” pp. 13–21), Roth first describes the architectural features of the superstructures and the subterranean parts of the mastabas; she then comments briefly on the placement and techniques of the mastabas’ decoration.

Chap. 2 (“History and Dating of the Cluster,” pp. 23–38) contains the important discussion of both the absolute and the relative dating of the tombs in the cluster. Her analysis of the tombs allows her to establish a sequence of tomb construction that can be subdivided into four different consecutive phases. Roth also includes several paragraphs on later activities in that part of the Giza Necropolis.

Chap. 3 (“The Tomb Owners,” pp. 39–47) deals with the tombs’ owners and their families. The original human remains could not be included in the publication as they are lost (p. 39). Therefore, Roth uses the epigraphic data of the tombs’ decoration and inscriptions to comment on the social status and family ties of the tomb owners. Her main concern here is a thorough discussion of the title *hntj-š*, which seems to be the connecting link between the tombs and their owners of this part of the Giza Necropolis. Roth convincingly points out that most of the tomb owners in this part of the Giza Necropolis share the same profession, that of “palace attendants” (i.e., *hntjw-š*). The chapter continues with remarks on the family relationships of the tomb owners (pp. 43–45) and ends with several pages under the heading “Comparative Iconography” (pp. 45–47), a heading that is somewhat misleading, as Roth’s point is not so much a comparative discussion of *iconography* or iconographical details but more a comparison of certain *topics* in the tombs’ decoration programs.

Finally, chap. 4 (“Patterns of Tomb Building,” pp. 49–58) concludes this first part of the volume with several subsections on different aspects of the entire tomb cluster. The clear organization of this chapter leads the reader from more general aspects (“mastaba area,” “mastaba

position”) to the architecture and decoration of the tombs, and finally to “grave goods and mummification.” This fourth chapter of part 1 is one of the most essential parts of the present volume: Roth successfully attempts to utilize the available chronological, archaeological, and architectural data of the tombs in the cluster to generate an explanation of how the social status of the tomb owner is reflected by the size, layout, and ornamentation of their tombs. The approach is, of course, not entirely new; unlike earlier endeavors, however (for example, Kanawati, *The Egyptian Administration in the Old Kingdom* [Warminster, 1977], Endesfelder, in *OLZ* 79 [1984]: 5–17), Roth’s investigation is based on an almost unique cluster of tombs, both in terms of chronological homogeneity and in the fact that all of the tomb owners were officials of the same institution albeit of widely differing levels. The results of Roth’s chap. 4 are encouraging and will certainly initiate future research on the connection between social rank and tomb equipment.

Part 2 (pp. 59–166) of the volume is a meticulous presentation of the entire corpus of material. In twenty-two chapters (although not labeled as such), Roth presents the twenty-nine mastaba tombs of the cluster according to the numbers assigned to them by Reisner. In most cases, the tombs are dealt with separately; there are a few exceptions, however, in which the tombs are presented in small groups (“subsidiary mastabas” or “subsidiary buildings”). The presentation of the material follows a standardized layout. Each of these chapters begins with a short “summary of Reisner’s description,” based on his notes and, if applicable, a paragraph on “excavation,” which also includes other available information, such as, for example, the diary of the chief of the workmen or of other members of the expedition. The presentation continues according to the standardized layout with the following categories for each tomb complex: finds, architecture, shafts and burials, date, decoration of the chapel, tomb owner and dependents, and a concluding paragraph on conservation by Pamela Hatchfield. Given the nature of the available records, it is no surprise that this scheme could not be followed in every case. The scheme, however, is extremely useful for the reader interested in certain aspects or special topics of the corpus of material. Part 2

is followed by 4 indexes (pp. 167–75) and 210 plates.

I have found only a few minor points on which some comments seem to be appropriate:

- (1) The date “about 2475 B.C., in the latter part of the fifth dynasty” (p. 1) must be a misprint; regardless of what chronological framework one uses, this date seems to be too “high” and should perhaps read 2375 B.C.
- (2) Roth makes frequent use of the term “matrix,” which is not among the technical expressions commonly used by Egyptologists. In archaeology, “matrix” usually refers to the patterns that rule the sequence of layers in archaeological stratigraphy (for example, “Harris-Matrix,” Edward Harris, *Principles of Archaeological Stratigraphy*, 2d ed. [1989]). Roth, however, uses this term only a few times in this latter sense (e.g., p. 4 and fig. 4); in almost all other cases “matrix” simply refers to the “archaeological deposition,” “backdirt,” “debris,” or “dump” (pp. 3–4 and Index 1). A word of explanation may not have been inappropriate.
- (3) The general plans on pls. 133–35 are slightly confusing, particularly if compared to the old Floroff plan (pl. 132). In several cases, the lines indicating the outer course of the mastabas’ masonry are either interrupted or simply end “in the air” (e.g., pl. 133, tomb nos. 2093–95). This is certainly due to the fact that parts of the mastaba field have been destroyed or buried under sand again, and a reexcavation of those areas was outside the scope of the present project. Outlines of architecture, however, do not simply end somewhere.
- (4) The line drawings of the tombs’ decoration on pls. 138–210 lack consistency: despite the fact that not all of the drawings were produced by the author or members of staff (the drawings on pls. 155–60, for example, were made by Norman de Garies Davies in 1905–6; see p. 4), a certain amount of consistency could have been employed in the final inking and/or reproduction of the plates. To give a few examples: a comparison of the line drawing of the pillar decoration in tomb 2091 (pl. 161a) with the photographic plate of the same scene (pl. 47) reveals that the latter shows in fact more detail than the former (see, especially, the hieroglyphic signs). The same discrepancy occurs on pls. 160b and 44. On pl. 159 the baseline is completely omitted from the drawing but

very well visible on the photographic plates (42a, b). Finally, the same inconsistency exists in the graphic treatment of destroyed, mutilated, or otherwise disturbed areas of the decoration: in some cases, these areas are indicated by finer lines, in others they are not indicated at all (compare, for example, pls. 179 with 178 and pls. 189 with 188). In a few examples, both systems of graphic indication or nonindication of disturbed or destroyed areas are used on one and the same plate (pls. 192 and 206).

These minor remarks, however, are by no means meant to discredit the outstanding quality of the volume. On the contrary: Roth’s *A Cemetery of Palace Attendants* is an admirable piece of work and a highly welcome addition to the publications of Old Kingdom mastaba cemeteries. It is an extremely carefully written publication of an important part of the Giza Necropolis, and it certainly deserves our full respect. Working with excavation records that were produced by someone other than the author or her staff and that are partially hand written, partially decayed, and, despite all possible efforts, far from complete, is a tremendously time-consuming task. In addition, this particular type of publication is usually—albeit unjustly—not regarded as genuine scholarly effort. In reexamining the site, its tombs, and the sometimes scarce remains of the archaeological record, Ann Macy Roth did far more than just publish the notebooks and records of an archaeological project that took place more than half a century ago. Her detailed analyses of tomb locations and dimensions (including the subterranean parts) and her study of the tombs’ architecture and decoration form a well-founded basis for further investigations on the *use-life* of Old Kingdom necropoleis. If the records of all of the other unpublished excavations still buried in museums and archives were published half as comprehensively and with as much detail as Roth’s volume on *A Cemetery of Palace Attendants*, our discipline would have much better access to primary sources.

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