

Subject: History of Architecture - 1

Topic: Egyptian Architecture - 3

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# The Old Kingdom

(3050-2686 B.C.E)

## MAIN FEATURES:

- Capital city was at **Memphis**
- Large work force having a population of several millions
- Abundance of stones like red granite, white marble, black basalt and sand stone

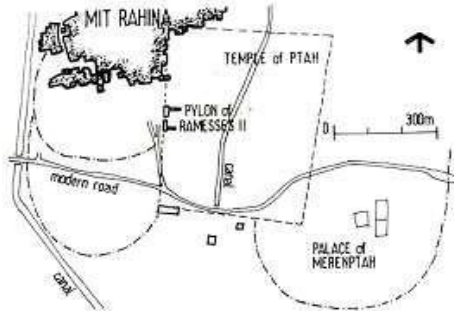
## ARCHITECTURE:

- 41 meters high Obelisk near Aswan
- Material used is Red Granite



# National capitals – Memphis and Thebes

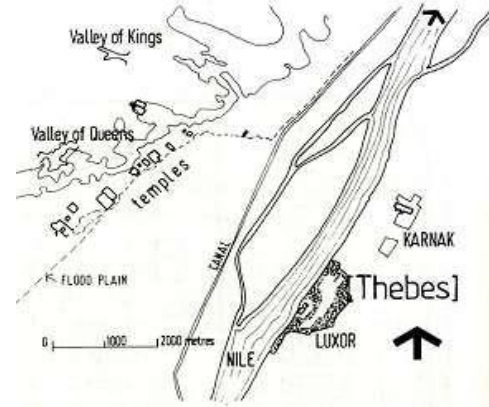
- National capital / administrative centres – most important towns
- Memphis – Capital of Northern Egypt
- Thebes – Capital of Southern Egypt



Memphis; located about 21 km south of the medieval Islamic nucleus of modern Cairo

On the fertile west bank of Nile

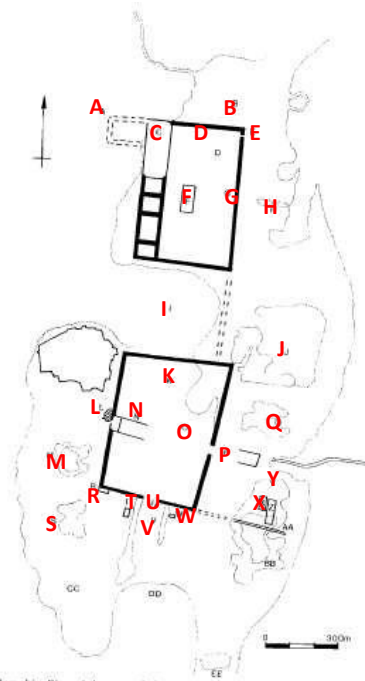
Numerous temples and palaces, and pyramid complex of Sakkara (step – pyramid of Djoser)



On east bank of Nile, houses Temple of Luxor, Temple complex at Karnak with the great temple of Amun (c.1991-785 BC)

Right across on west bank, was the Necropolis of Thebes – Tomb of Tutankhamun

# Memphis



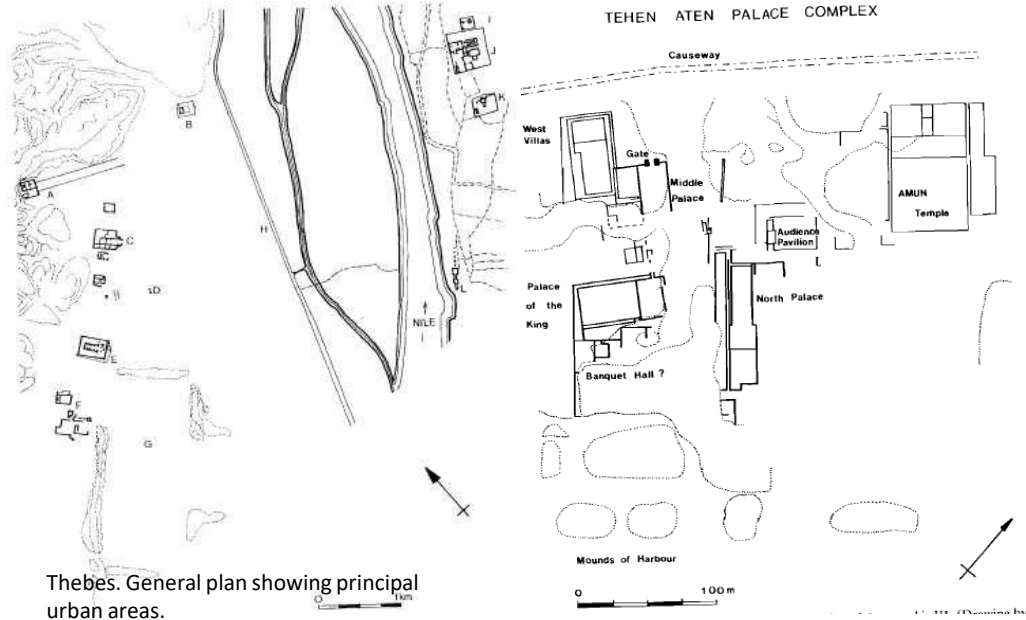
24. Memphis. Plan of the central city area and principal monuments: A, extension to C; B, temple of Neith (?); C, palace of Apries; D, late enclosure; E, great gate; F, small temple; G, Kom el-Kelb; H, Kom dal Baby; I, lake of Ptah; J, Kom en Naby; K, Kom el-Khanzir; L, pond; M, Kom el-Fakry; N, west hall; O, temple of Ptah; P, Ptolemy IV approach; Q, Kom el-Abbayn; R, temple of Ramesses II; S, Kom er Rabya; T, Hathor temple; U, Colossus; V, Dromos; W, temple of Ramesses II; X, temple of Merneptah; Y, Kom el-Qal'a; Z, palace of Merneptah; AA, late wall; BB, Kom el-Qatama; CC, Siamen; DD, Temple of Apis (?); EE, Kom Helul. (Drawing by Helena Jaeschke.)

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25. Memphis. View of the site of the Ptah temple showing ruins of the great hall. (Photograph by Eric P. Uphill.)

# Thebes



Thebes. General plan showing principal urban areas.

26. Thebes. General plan showing principal urban areas on both sides of the river. West bank: A, Deir el-Bahri; B, Qurna temple; C, Ramesseum; D, colossi of Memnon; E, Medinet Habu; F, Tehen Aten complex; G, harbour; H, canal; East bank: I, Temple of Montu; J, Karnak; K, Temple of Amun; L, Luxor temple. (Drawing by Helena Jäschke.)

## The Old Kingdom - Architecture

### ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES:

- Tombs
- Temples
- Mortuary Complex
- *Mastabas and evolution of Pyramids from them*

### AVAILABLE BUILDING MATERIALS:

- Mud, reeds, palm trunks, bricks and stone, mainly Limestone (in northern region)
- Sandstone and granite was available in abundance in central and southern regions respectively.

A very distinct reminiscence of the primitive **reeds tied together** at intervals, and **crowned with the lotus bud**, is found in the later granite column and capital.



## Tombs during Middle Empire – Mastabas and Rock – Cut Tombs

- In the Middle Empire tombs were either of the Pyramidal form, as at Abydos, or were rock-cut, as in the vertical cliffs bounding the Nile valley.



# Mastaba

3100 BC

*Dwelling house – Mere temporary lodging ; Tomb – Permanent abode*

**Mummy – Embalmed corpse wrapped in linen bandages for burial**

The 'Ka' was a spiritual double, born with every man and lived on after he died as long as it had a place to live. Hence tombs had a statue of Ka.

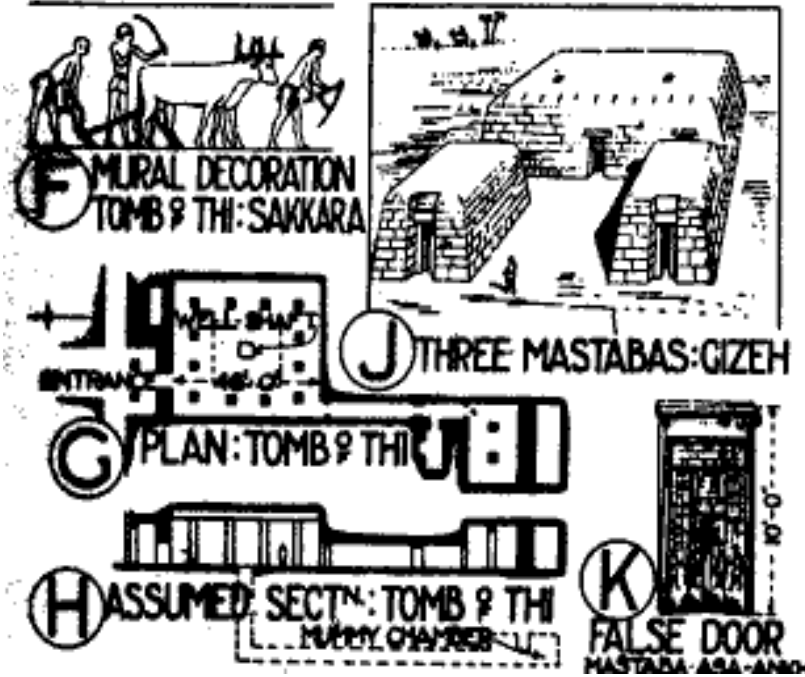


- Ancient form of Tombs – **Flat roofed rectangular structure with sloping sides**
- **Mastaba** – Arabic word for 'bench of mud'
- Probably derived from heaps of stones piled up over earlier mummy holes
- Design and decoration on the tombs
- Standard type of tombs for the Pharaohs and also the social elite
- Brickwork



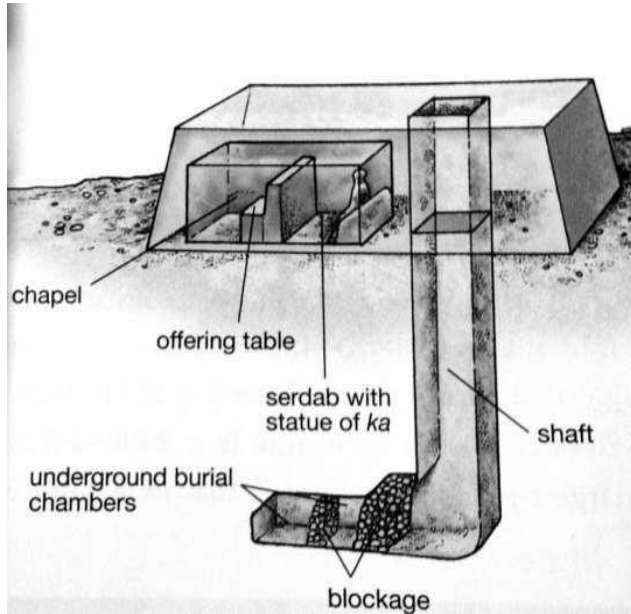


# : MASTABA TOMBS :

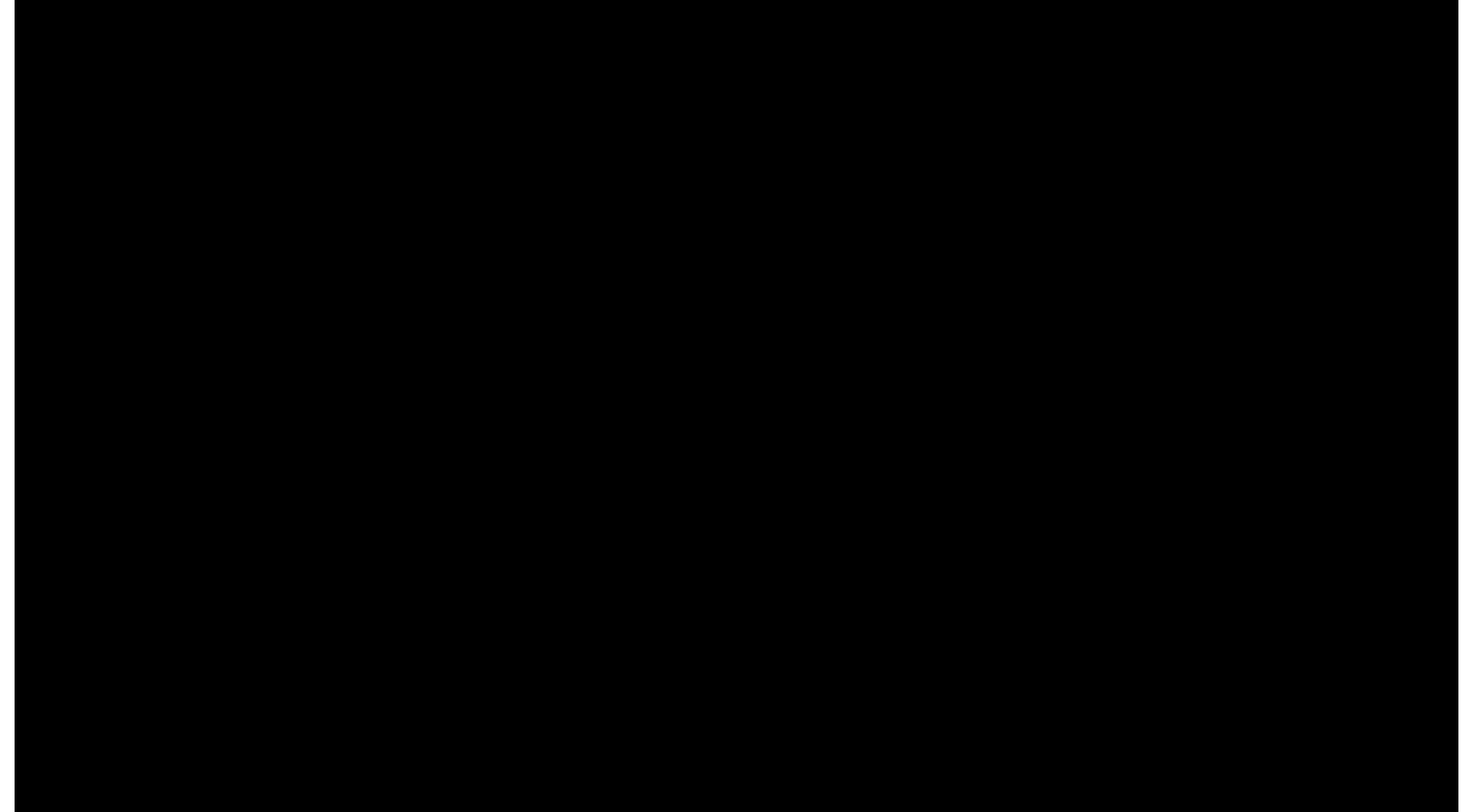


- At first priests & high ranking officials came to be buried in tombs that were known as mastabas. Most of them had many storage chambers for storing all types of goods needed in the next life. However, due to frequent thefts, an under ground tomb known as the stairway mastaba came to be preferred. The picture above shows the early mastabas at Giza with false doors & other safety devices.

## Mastaba – Further evolution

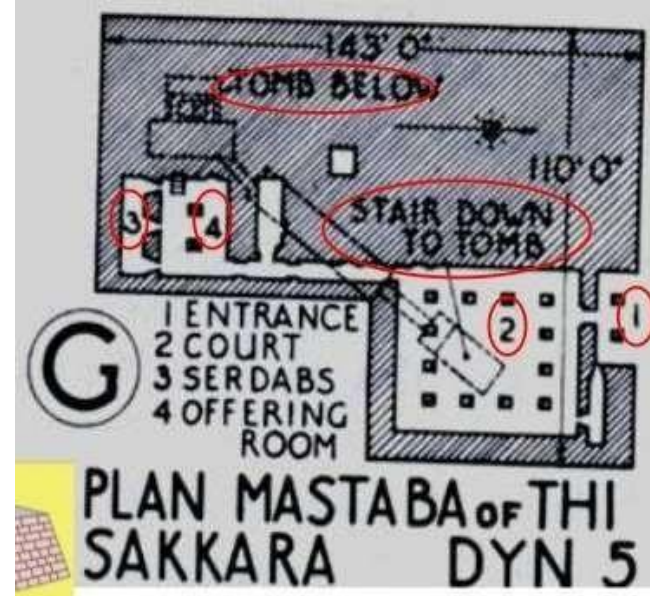


- These were rectangular structures, with sides sloping at an angle of 75 degrees, and having flat roofs
- They were divided into three parts:
  - I. **The outer chamber**, in which were placed the offerings to 'Ka', having its walls decorated with representations of festival and other scenes
  - II. **Inner secret chamber**, known as the 'serdab', containing statue of Ka and other items- grains, clothes, jewellery, etc
  - III. **A shaft of great depth**, leading to the chamber containing the sarcophagus with its mummy



## Example - Mastaba of Thy, Sakkara

- Well preserved and restored.
- **Thy** was a **royal architect and manager of pyramids** in 5<sup>th</sup> dynasty.
- It consists of a **small vestibule**, beyond which is a **large court** where offerings to the deceased took place, and from which a mummy **shaft** led through a passage to a **tomb chamber**
- The masonry of this tomb is carefully jointed and covered with flat reliefs.
- The **decorative reliefs** represent harvest operations, shipbuilding scenes, scenes representing the arts and crafts of the period, the slaughtering of sacrificial animals, and Thy himself sailing through the marshes in a boat with papyrus plants surrounding



- **Pharaoh Djoser** – capital city of Memphis
- Burial site changed from Abydos to Sakkara
- **Imhotep** – Architect, Astronomer, High Priest
- Low Mastabas were no longer considered to be worthy of Pharaohs
- Hence- Original Mastaba was covered with a stone super structure
- Expanded again into a 60 m high structure (6 steps)
- Complex consisted of courtyards and temples

