

The Northern Pyramid of Zawyet El Aryan: Signs of Ancient Atlantean Technology

by Dirk Gillabel, 2020

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Introduction

Most people don't know that close to the famous pyramid trio in Giza, Egypt, there are two other pyramids of which only the foundations are left. The archaeologists think that these were unfinished pyramids, but I believe that they were actually destroyed, a long time ago. One of them is officially called the Unfinished Northern Pyramid of Zawyet El Aryan (Zaouiét el-Aryân in French), almost 4.5 km, or 3 miles, south-east of Giza; the other, smaller one, is called the Layer Pyramid. I looked around on the web for information about Unfinished Northern Pyramid of Zawyet El Aryan, and found that the information was often wrong and misleading. The pyramid is not unfinished, the subterranean structure is not a funerary chamber or tomb, and the granite tub they found is not a sarcophagus. I always like to go to the original source, which, in this case, is the Italian archaeologist Alessandro Barsanti who found the remains of the pyramid in 1900, and started excavating in 1904. His original report, in the French language, contains descriptions of the subterranean corridors, chamber and the curious oval tub. His description of this stone tub and how it was sealed and protected is truly remarkable. I think why everyone is calling it a sarcophagus is because they have never read the original French report, and as far as I could ascertain nobody has ever translated it into English. So I have translated the entire report myself ([see below](#) in addendum), and from which I will be quoting. Then you will understand

that the pyramids were not tombs, but technological devices.

Although Barsanti was struck by the sheer quality of the stone work of the descending shaft and the open room at the bottom, nobody else did any research into this monument. Since 1964 the pyramid was placed in a military restricted area, and further excavation is forbidden.

In this article, I am going to use the term of Northern Pyramid of Zawyet El Aryan, because I believe that the pyramid was finished and operational in ancient times.

An Atlantean, Technological Pyramid

The entire base of the Northern Pyramid of Zawyet El Aryan is cut out of the local limestone rock. Its base is 200 meters or 660 feet, which would make it almost as tall as the Great Pyramid in Giza! A large descending shaft was cut out of this rock leading to a subterranean chamber. The archaeologists still attribute this interior space to a funerary function, where the pharaoh was supposed to be buried, despite the fact that all stone coffers (which were not sarcophagi) found in pyramids were empty, and all pharaohs and aristocrats were buried in the Valley of the Kings.

As some researchers (Christopher Dunn, Joseph Farrell, and others) have pointed out, the construction of the pyramids and their interior design shows that they were technological devices intended to harvest energy, from the earth and cosmos, and use this energy probably for multiple purposes. Some people say that the builders of the pyramids (in Atlantean times) were using liquids and gases inside the pyramids, which is interesting because of the granite vat found in the foundation of the Northern Pyramid of Zawyet El Aryan. Others say that the underground water veins produced electricity and sound vibrations which were amplified by the pyramid construction. At this time we don't know for sure how the pyramids worked because the Atlanteans used very different technology, and the remains are left in a ruined state.

Yes, most pyramids were built more than twelve thousand years ago during the Atlantean period. After its demise and the destruction of coastal lands by enormous tsunamis, much of what was in Egypt was left in ruins. After several thousands of years, the Dynastic Egyptians settled there, adopting the pyramids and whatever they found, into their own culture. For example, we see that some of Dynastic temples, built with small stones, were built on top of large multi-ton stone blocks, which were the remaining foundation of Atlantean buildings.

What also has been pointed out is that at one time, probably when the Atlantean civilization came to a catastrophic end, there was a malfunction in the pyramid technology, and explosions occurred. In the Pyramid of Cheops there are cracks in granite beams, burn marks in the ceiling of the descending corridor of the Great Pyramid. Its rose granite coffer is now dark colored as if burned, and there are also burn marks on the ceiling just outside the King's chamber. Apparently the explosion there caused the entire outside limestone covering to blow out and

away.

There are other pyramids nearby that show signs of explosive destruction with stone blocks scattered around them. One of them is the Bent Pyramid at Dashur which has one corner stripped away as if by an explosion.

Close to the Northern Pyramid of Zawyet El Aryan is the Layer Pyramid of Zawyet El Aryan, which is a smaller pyramid that could have been blown apart as only its foundation is left. In Abu Roash, just north of Gizah, there is also a once very large pyramid, now completely in ruins.

So, it is possible that the Northern Pyramid of Zawyet El Aryan was also blown apart, as many stones were found scattered around it. The reason why only the foundation remains today, is easy. Over the last thousands of years people nearby have used the stones to build their own houses. Why go mining stones, when you can use already cut stones from old monuments. Apparently, when the Roman empire occupied upper Egypt, they use this monument as a stone quarry. Even in recent times, the stones were used by local people as building materials.

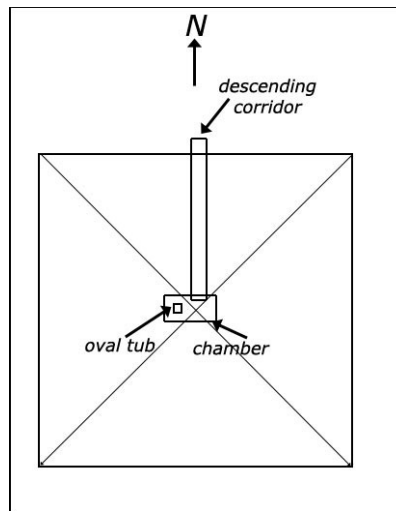
Nevertheless, what remains today of the Northern Pyramid of Zawyet El Aryan, is still very interesting, complete with a mystery that also hints at an unusual, ancient technology.

We first have to go through some general information to get an idea of the construction of its subterranean base. Then we will show that the early archaeologists were surprised and baffled by what they found.

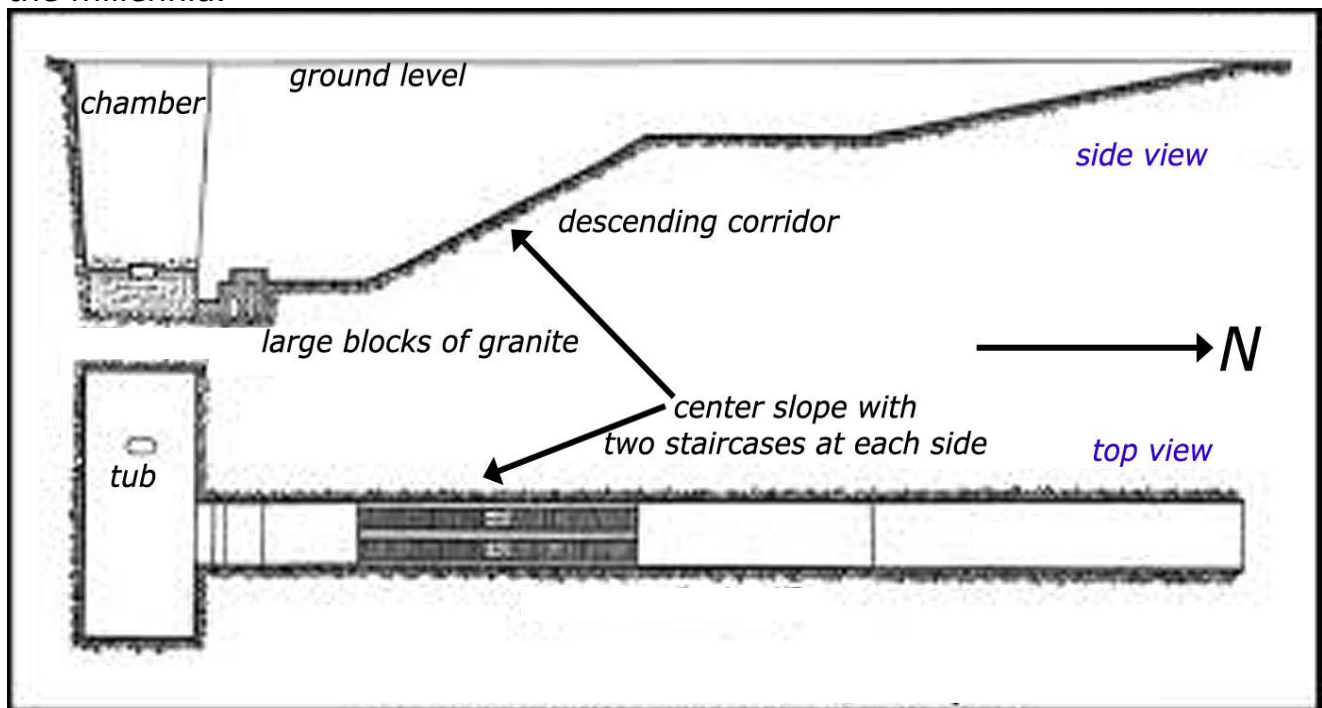
The Layout of the Northern Pyramid of Zawyet El Aryan

The base of the pyramid is around 200 meters or 660 feet. This was a large pyramid, as the base of the famous Great Pyramid (of Cheops) at Giza is 230 meters or 756 ft. As the upper structure has disappeared, we don't know for sure what it looked like (it might have been a step pyramid) or what materials were used.

A North-South corridor leads directly to a chamber that is located exactly under the vertical axis of the pyramid. The chamber measure 11.7 x 24 meters (38 x 78 feet).



Below you can see the descending corridor, which is lined up with the North-South axis; the underground chamber which is oriented on the West-East axis, and the mysterious oval tub about which we will talk later. Neither the descending corridor nor the chamber has a roof anymore. At present they are both open to the sky. The roof probably collapsed and some of these stones have been taken away over the millennia.



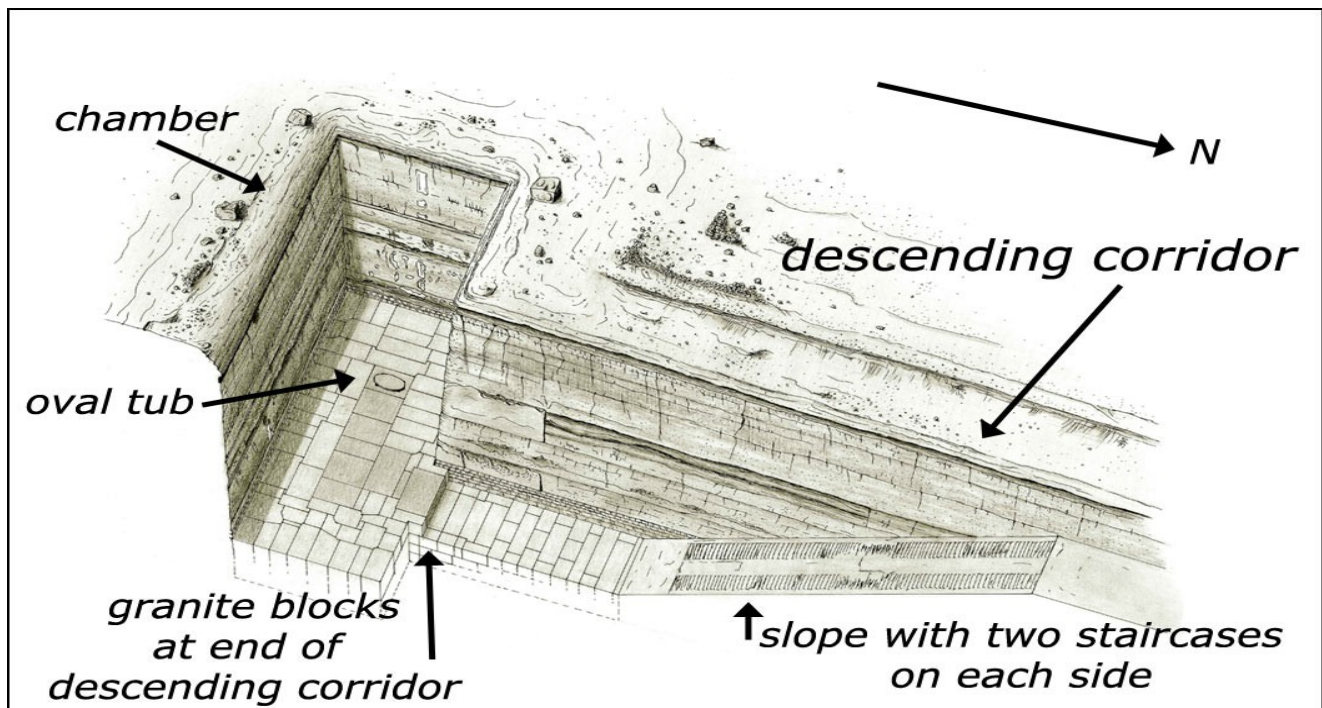
The descending corridor is steep, and for some reason it has a horizontal section about halfway down. Its walls, being cut from bare rock, are smooth, as are the walls of the chamber below.

The entire floor of the chamber is dressed with massive granite blocks. The blocks measure 4.5 m (15 feet) long and 2.5 m (8.2 feet) thick and weigh up to 9 tons each.

At the West end of the chamber is a curious feature: an oval tub cut into one of the granite blocks of the foundation. It is usually referred to as a sarcophagus, but this is clearly not the case as we will see later. The few references you can find on the internet are inaccurate and I wonder if anybody has ever read the original description of this feature when it was first discovered. For example, Wikipedia mentions: "According to Barsanti, small traces of a burial were found inside the sarcophagus, but unfortunately they were never examined closer and today they are lost." But when you read Barsanti's original description, he did not call it a sarcophagus, and he did not find traces of a burial inside, but something quite different.

Remarkable Features

The Italian archaeologist Alessandro Barsanti started excavating the subterranean structure of the Northern Pyramid of Zawyet El Aryan in 1904. He was the only one who has ever examined this structure. He left us some very interesting descriptions. His original (French) report that was published in the *Annales du Service des Antiquités de l'Égypte, Tome VII*, of the *Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale du Caire*, in 1906 (page 260-286). You can find my translation into English [here](#). From this text I will highlight some paragraphs that show the uniqueness of this subterranean structure.



The Descending Corridor

The descending corridor is 100 meters long, 25 meters wide and 30 meters deep. Alexandre Moret, a French Egyptologist (1869-1938) who visited the site after it had been excavated by Barsanti, was impressed by the sheer quality of the

construction: "The walls of the cavity (corridor and chamber) are simply cut out from the the limestone plateau; the profiles have such a sharpness to it that it seems that they have been cut out from the rock with a stretched thread, as if it was a clod of butter." (Source: *Au Temps des Pharaons*, [see addendum](#)). This degree of levelness and sharp corners is typical for all the ancient stone construction around the world, dating from the Atlantean period. I think it is significant that he made this remark, as he did not say that the walls were chiseled from the rock, as this would leave tell tale signs of the chisels used.

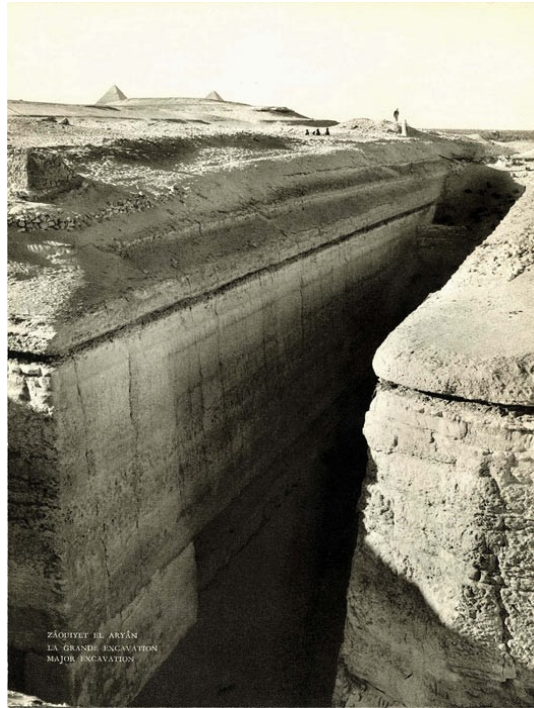
Halfway down the corridor there is strange slope which is smooth at the center, but has on each side a staircase. Moret remarks that this staircase shows signs of usage. Another reason that this was not an unfinished pyramid. The following sketch shows where the slope with the two staircases are located.

When Barsanti started clearing the corridor, he found among the rubble large limestone and granite blocks, "Sometimes, they were of considerable dimensions, and some of them weighed three and four tons." He thought the ancient Egyptians had thrown them in to fill up the space, but they probably were part of the roof of the corridor that collapsed.

It was the first indication that the builders had also used large heavy stone blocks. Bear in mind, that the supposed builders, the Dynastic Egyptians, only had copper, bronze and iron (which is soft) tools. At present we can only cut granite with steel wire or saws that are diamond tipped. Dynastic Egyptians did not cut these large granite blocks, and certainly did not have the ability to move them from far away quarries. Why use multi-ton granite blocks to build a tomb?

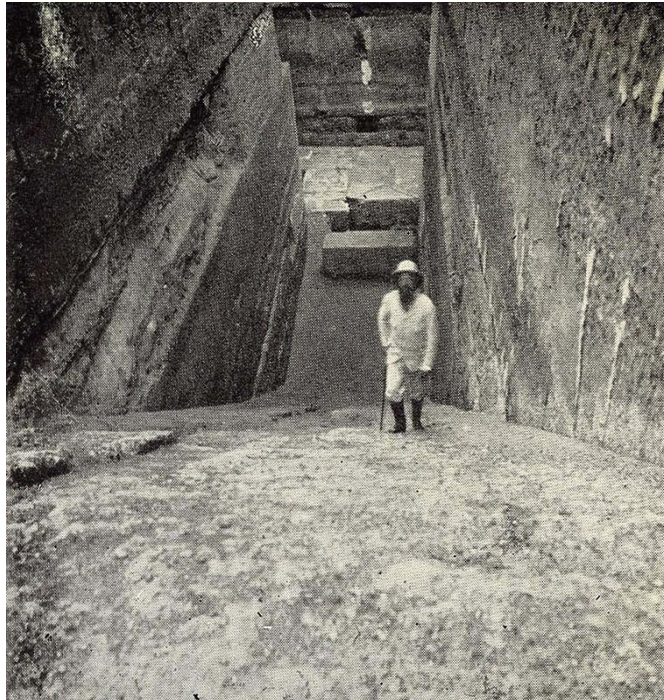
Barsanti mentioned that the first granite block he found was pink granite. later it turned out that the entire stone pavement of the chamber was made from pink granite. The pink granite (which was also used to make the stone coffer and walls and ceiling of the King's chamber, and the Grand Gallery in the Great Pyramid of Cheops, and in other pyramids) came from the quarries at Aswan, 934 km, or 580 miles, south from Giza up the Nile river. Quite a distance to haul multi-ton blocks on supposed wooden rollers and pulled by hundreds of slaves...in the sand!

The ancient Atlantean builders must have had a good reason to incorporate large granite blocks in their constructions. Needless to say, they also had the means to transport multi-tons blocks of stone. By the way, these megalithic, often granite, blocks were used all over the world in these ancient buildings. some people say that granite was used because of the high quartz content, which would allow for piezo-electric effects.



The descending corridor cut out of the limestone bedrock.





The descending corridor, looking down towards the chamber, with large granite blocks of stone at the bottom end of the corridor.

Entrance to the Chamber

When clearing the descending corridor Barsanti found at the bottom end a strange construction made from granite blocks: "Right at this point we encountered a large block of granite weighing about thirty tons, which was placed horizontally on the surface of other blocks which seemed to form the pavement of the pit. At first I imagined that I was standing in front of the gate of the monument, but descending still lower, I met two other blocks of the same or similar size, which were placed side by side, then below two blocks, also of granite, and 1 meter 6 centimeters thick, but placed on the same rock."

Large granite blocks of 30 tons! It becomes really obvious here that whoever made them had no problem transporting these heavy stones, let alone bringing them down here and placing them around. Barsanti also got the first impression that the floor of the chamber behind it was also made of granite blocks.

The Chamber

Having come into the underground chamber, Barsanti found that the entire floor was made of large granite blocks.

Think about it, if you want to build an underground burial chamber, you can easily cut a nice chamber out of the limestone rock. Why go the immense effort of quarrying, moving and paving the chamber with enormous granite blocks? The original builders did want to go through this trouble because it was essential for the technological purpose of the construction, whatever that was.



Looking down into the chamber, with the tub at the West end, still sealed with its oval lid.

The Tub

Although Barsanti never called it a sarcophagus because he clearly saw that this was not the case, modern archaeologist still call it so. Alexandre Moret, the French archaeologist mentioned before, also did not call it a sarcophagus; he called it a vat: "In one of the granite blocks an oval vat (une cuve ovale, in French) has been cut out; it is two meters long and one meter deep; a beautiful lid with four ear cups protects it; The whole thing is polished like a mirror and shaped with the same care as an ornament."

I call it the Tub, because Barsanti said that at one time it had contained a liquid based on the signs he found inside when he opened the sealed vessel. This is Barsanti's description which is quite intriguing. I doubt if anybody today has ever read the original French text:

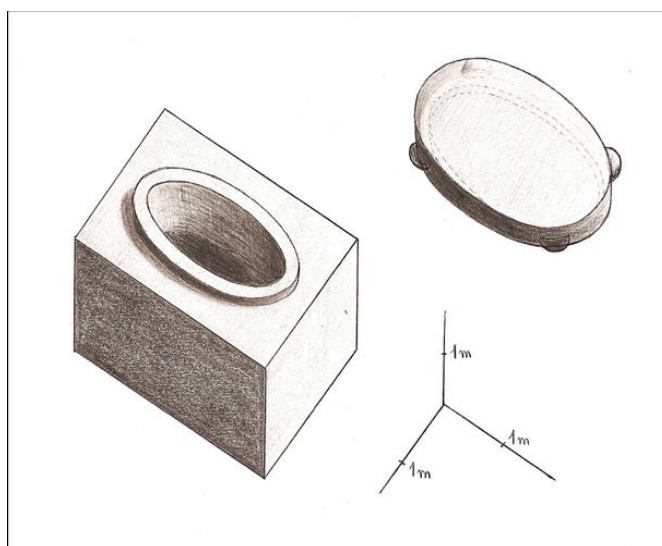
"While this search was continuing on the north side, almost in the center of the west side, on March 12, I discovered an object of an entirely new form. It is a large oval vat (Plate III), made of pink granite, polished like a mirror, and with a depth of 1 meter and 5 centimeters. It is carved out of one of the blocks of the pavement which occupies the bottom of the pit, and the Egyptian architects had taken their measures carefully to protect it. They had spread over the lid a layer of lime, and over the lime a thick bed of well-spread clay, which entirely prevented it from contact with the limestone blocks stacked over it. These had, moreover, been placed regularly on the clay side by side, so as to enclose the precious form with a kind of insulating protection. The lid was luted in the vat with plaster, and it was with real emotion that I put myself in a position to lift it.

All precautions taken made me hope that the contents would be most precious, but I was once more deceived: when the inside of the tank appeared, I found it completely empty. I only noticed that the side walls were lined with a black band that was 0 meter and 10 centimeters in height. It is probably the very light deposit of some liquid enclosed in the vat as an offering or libation, and which would have evaporated over the years. It has been hypothesized that this tank was an unused sarcophagus, but I do not think so. The care with which it was protected, proves that it contained something, and the blackish deposit indicates the nature of this content. One would not have taken the precaution of concealing it under an enormous mass of blocks if it had been empty at that time."

We don't know what this vessel was used for, or why it had to be constructed this way. It is a most unusual form and shape, but it seems to have been extremely important to the original builders, because of the extreme care they took to seal this vat water tight, and to protect it with large stones.



The oval tub, in the middle of the picture, cut out of a granite block. The lid has been removed from the tub and is now sitting on a pile of stones next to the South wall.



an artist's rendering

Reflections

Although not much is left of the Northern Pyramid of Zawyet El Aryan, we can point out some features that make it not a tomb but a technological construction, whose purpose is still unknown to us.

In this pyramid, but also in other pyramids, the builders went to the trouble of quarrying, hauling from a far away quarry large multi-ton blocks, even up to 30 tons for one piece, which were apparently very necessary to use in the construction of the underground chamber. Totally unnecessary if it only a tomb. Also take in mind, granite can only be cut by machines.

The tub is most interesting of all. Why cut it out of one of the pavement granite blocks? It had a perfectly fitting granite lid on top, and it was polished like a mirror on the inside. These features create a very strong link with the Serapeum subterranean granite coffers. These oversized coffers, also mislabeled as tomb (for bulls!), had perfectly fitting lids, and their interior walls were not only leveled to a fraction of an inch and had perfect ninety degree angles, and they also were polished like a mirror. By the way, the Serapeum coffers cannot be made or duplicated by our modern day technology. So, why was it necessary for the tub to have a mirror smooth interior? And why was it oval, which is more difficult to make than a mere rectangular box?

The answer to the mirror like polish of the interior walls of the tub may lie in the fact that it was made to contain a liquid. In that case smooth walls are easy to clean.

The contents of the tub must have been very important to the original civilization that was using the pyramids. I surmise that it was after the destruction of the pyramid (by an explosion), that the caretakers sealed off the tub with a layer of lime and lime stone blocks. They might also have filled up the chamber and corridor with stones and rubble. It is quite possible that these people eventually

didn't survive the catastrophe, and the thus sealed tub remained that way until Barsanti uncovered it again.

There might be more underground passages not yet discovered, as Barsanti noticed that after a heavy rain, "the pit was flooded to the height of three meters. Towards midnight the water dropped abruptly by about one meter. I can only explain this phenomenon by supposing it to be engulfed in some subterranean tunnel, large enough to contain 380 cubic meters of water, and in fact I found traces of moisture in the joints of the blocks for a long time." Unfortunately no further excavations ever happened to this day.

One wonders why the Egyptian authorities are not interested in further excavation. They are always so eager to discover a hidden tomb filled with treasures. And why it was placed in a military zone.

Thus, plenty of mysteries still remain.

Addendum Alessandro Barsanti's report

Source: <https://archive.org/details/annalesduservice78egyp>

Annales du Service des antiquités de l'Egypte

by Egypt. Wizarat al-Ashghal al-Umumiyah; Egypt. Maslahat al-Athar; Institut français d'archéologie orientale du Caire

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Topics Learned institutions and societies

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page 260-286 (translated by Dirk Gillabel)

REPORT

BY

Mr. ALEXANDRE BARSANTI

On the 15th of May, 1900, discouraged by the negative results of the excavations I had just carried out in the pyramid of Zaouiet el-Aryan [See the report of these excavations, in the Annales du Service, 1901, part II, p. 92-94.], I returned to the pyramids of Ghizeh in the company of Ibrahim Fayed, but instead of following the road that runs at the edge of the desert, we went to the upper plateau, and at about a mile and a half to the north of the pyramid of Zaouiet, the foreman pointed out to me that the ground was sown everywhere with granite fragments.

I immediately thought that they pointed to the site of a field where they had worked the blocks and movable objects destined for some great tomb, and that this tomb was to be hidden in the neighborhood. When I examined the place more carefully, I noticed that nearby was a large deposit of granite powder, such as was used to polish the hard stones used in the construction. Loede with these clues, I climbed up a hill next to look over the whole of the site, and suddenly I recognized, to the south of the hill, the remains of an immense rectangular building whose walls barely stuck out of the surrounding land. Large limestone blocks still remained in place, but most of the others lay scattered here and there amid clumps of limestone. It seemed that there were hundreds of pits not yet excavated, nevertheless, the idea came to me that the whole formed a unique monument, probably a great mastaba. So I carefully studied the layout of the grounds, and soon I perceived, in the center of the plateau, a small depression forming a basin, and a sort of trench running from north to south on the main axis of this pretended mastaba. I ended up convincing myself that I was in the presence of an unknown monument, large enough to make the ordinary excavators hesitate. As soon as I returned to the Museum, I submitted my discovery to you: you immediately appreciated its importance, and you promised me to begin work as soon as the resources of the budget permit. For the moment, you were only recommending me to conduct surveys in the field, to see if my conjecture was correct. On the following day, May 16, I took some fifty workmen under the supervision of the foreman Ibrahim Fayed, and in two days time we found that the construction dated back to the ancient empire. Other superficial surveys gave us the precise location of the southeast corner of the great courtyard. Finally, to the north of the plateau, I discovered enormous heaps of marl stone, which came from galleries dug in the rock. Things remained for the time being, but attributing to Mr. Reisner the grounds which he demanded for excavations on behalf of the University of California, you took care to exclude this site.

It was only in the early days of March 1904 that you were able to follow up your plans for excavations. The foreman Ibrahim Fayed began by clearing under my supervision the area of the great court. By the beginning of May, the four corners were clear, and we could already form an exact idea of the immensity of our task: the southern wall of the enclosure is 28 meters long, and those of the east and the west, 14 meters each. Towards the north, at the foot of the hill, I found the remains of the huts inhabited by the ancient workmen; there are scarcely two or three rows of stones roughly mounted on each other. The foreman Ibrahim found inside one of the rooms a greenish schist plate bearing the cartouche of King Didoufrâ, bronze scissors, a small cylinder loaded with unreadable characters, flint tools, fragments of earthenware jugs. In the northern wall of the enclosure, and closer to the east wall than to the west wall, a large corridor was opened, 8 meters and 50 centimeters wide, and 110 meters long (fig. 1), this is the channel itself, which I had noticed when I was up the hill four years ago. The excavation continued till the 20th of June, without giving any results other than those which I have just indicated: the foreman Ibrahim began the clearing of the central depression, but the mass of sand and debris which filled it, allowed us to go down

only 10 meters deep.

The work resumed on October 6, 1904, and three days later, behind a large block of limestone, a strip of a white plaster of 0m. 60 centimeters, and very carefully executed appeared on the west wall. It is placed on a red line which descends vertically and marks the exact middle of the wall (fig. 2), and its sight reanimated my hopes which were beginning to weaken. Finally, six weeks after this discovery, on the 8th of December, a survey at the south-west angle revealed, at a depth of twenty-one meters, the existence of a pink granite block. The wall forms at this depth a sort of rocky outcropping overlaid with a layer of marl: the layer of marl had been allowed to remain, which would protect the hard rock in the event of a compaction of the soil, and the granite unit, of which we had uncovered the first stone, had been placed there. I immediately increased the work on this side, and in a few days we removed several other blocks of granite, which was connected to the first one, and one to another, with a very solid mortar. Their presence increased my ardor. The clearing became very difficult and sometimes even perilous. The Egyptians had filled up the pit by throwing down a number of limestone blocks, which were piled up to the height of 15 meters from the ceiling, and which together constitute about 4200 cubic meters of stone. (fig. 3) I had a strong crane built to remove them, but our workmen could scarcely disengage them because they were stacked on top of each other. Sometimes, they were of considerable dimensions, and some of them weighed three and four tons. As soon as they were level with the ground they were loaded on a Decauville truck, which carried them some distance to the south, in an improvised worksite where I had them arranged in file. I examined them minutely to see if they had a few inscriptions, and after a long perseverance my effort was rewarded. On the 15th of December, I read on two pieces of limestone, which were put together, a cartouche of a king painted in large characters, with a red color (see page 266, n° 1). [Perhaps, as I said in the introduction (page 257), it is the cartouche of King Nofirkari of the II dynasty, and the Ranabou of the documents previously discovered at Abydos and Sakkarah. - G. M.] Other inscriptions followed that I stored next to it and I reproduced them on the sixteen consecutive pages (see pp. 266-281). Descending below, I brought to light on the south wall, just opposite the median axis of the great north corridor, a vertical strip in white plaster, similar to that which was in the middle of the west wall and having a red line in the middle, like this one (Figure 4). I continued with the removal of the blocks and embankments which filled the pit and the descending corridor, while at the same time causing the remains of the outer enclosure to be disengaged. I noticed that the wall was 2 meters and 10 centimeters wide, on average, and that it was built of stone along its entire length. The western part is built up against the top of the pit, on the summit of a slope, probably to prevent the rain falling on the neighboring mountains from invading the tomb. The distance from the wall to the pit is everywhere 120 meters. Apart from the geometrical data, nothing of importance emerged from this accessory work.

At the beginning of February, 1905, we reached the bottom of the pit, and the clearing of the descending corridor was sufficiently advanced for us to reach the

point where it leads to the bottom of the pit. Right at this point we encountered a large block of granite weighing about thirty tons, which was placed horizontally on the surface of other blocks which seemed to form the pavement of the pit. At first I imagined that I was standing in front of the gate of the monument, but descending still lower, I met two other blocks of the same or similar size, which were placed side by side (5, 6, 7, 8, 9), then below two blocks, also of granite, and 1 meter 6 centimeters thick, but placed on the same rock. The whole was caught between enormous blocks of limestone which filled the space left free along the rock face. In order to better understand the depth of this strange construction, I had the blocks of limestone cut to a width of three meters, and I recognized that the granite construction continued on to the north side. So I caused the granite blocks to be pushed northwards, with jacks, to the place that the limestone had occupied, but I experienced a first disappointment: no opening appeared. I then thought that perhaps the door was hiding behind the 30-ton granite block, which was placed horizontally at the level of the pavement of the pit, but again I could find nothing but a second block of granite placed on the floor, which measured 1 meter 020 millimeters in height, which was locked at the bottom with the block of thirty tons by a groove, so that it would not have been possible to move it had it not previously been removed. This did not discourage me, and I began to hope that if I removed all the blocks that were against the faces of the block of thirty tons, I would at last find the entrance so much sought after: I was disappointed that once again, when the blocks were moved, no door was revealed to us.

While this search was continuing on the north side, almost in the center of the west side, on March 12, I discovered an object of an entirely new form. It is a large oval vat (Plate III), made of pink granite, polished like a mirror, and with a depth of 1 meter and 5 centimeters. It is carved out of one of the blocks of the pavement which occupies the bottom of the pit, and the Egyptian architects had taken their measures carefully to protect it. They had spread over the lid a layer of lime, and over the lime a thick bed of well-spread clay, which entirely prevented it from contact with the limestone blocks stacked over it. These had, moreover, been placed regularly on the clay side by side, so as to enclose the precious form with a kind of insulating protection. The lid was luted in the vat with plaster, and it was with real emotion that I put myself in a position to lift it. All precautions taken made me hope that the contents would be most precious, but I was once more deceived: when the inside of the tank appeared, I found it completely empty. I only noticed that the side walls were lined with a black band that was 0 meter and 10 centimeters in height. It is probably the very light deposit of some liquid enclosed in the vat as an offering or libation, and which would have evaporated over the years. It has been hypothesized that this tank was an unused sarcophagus, but I do not think so. The care with which it was protected, proves that it contained something, and the blackish deposit indicates the nature of this content. One would not have taken the precaution of concealing it under an enormous mass of blocks if it had been empty at that time. (fig. 10)

After this work I returned to the descending corridor and I hired several of the

granite tailors who had worked at the Aswan reservoirs in order to force my way through the blocks which I thought were barring access to the burial chamber. After removing about 22 cubic meters of stone, they discovered, right in the center of the pit, a block that seemed to be placed there like a kind of cork. It was embedded between the east wall, which is built with enormous blocks of granite, and a beautiful block which formed part of the west wall; as it lay directly on the rock in the fourth row of masonry, I had reason to believe that it marked the entrance of the inner apartments. It was, moreover, of the same granite as the vat and its lid, which proves that it was attributed a particular importance. So I was going to push the excavation further, when, on the 31st of March, when the work was about to end, a terrible storm surprised us. A veritable whirlwind descended upon the mountain of Zaouiet el-Aryan, and the pit was flooded to the height of three meters. Towards midnight the water dropped abruptly by about one meter. I can only explain this phenomenon by supposing it to be engulfed in some subterranean tunnel, large enough to contain 380 cubic meters of water, and in fact I found traces of moisture in the joints of the blocks for a long time. (Will be continued.) A. Barsanti.

Au temps des Pharaons

by Alexandre Moret

Source: <https://archive.org/details/autempsdesphara00moregoog>

Publication date 1908

Publisher Librairie Armand Colin

Page 156-158 (original text; translation below)

La même émotion se dégage d'un monument énigmatique que M. Barsanti vient de déblayer pour le Service des Antiquités, près de Zaouiet-el-Aryan, à mi-chemin entre Gizeh et Sakkarah. C'est la grande curiosité actuelle de l'Egypte memphite; comme l'édifice est certainement daté de la fin de la période thinite, il permet de situer dans le temps ceux où Ton retrouve les mêmes procédés de construction.

La partie construite du monument apparaît au fond d'une cavité creusée en forme de T, longue de 100 mètres, large de 25 et profonde de 30. Les parois de la cavité sont simplement taillées dans le plateau calcaire; les profils présentent une

netteté telle qu'il semble qu'on ait coupé le roc avec un fil tendu, comme une motte de beurre. On arrive au fond par un plan incliné, comprenant au centre une glissière pour les matériaux et de chaque côté un escalier vertigineux aux marches usées (PL YI, 1). La fosse avait été comblée par des moellons et du sable ; il a fallu retirer plus de 4 000 mètres cubes de déblai pour mettre à nu un pavé en énormes blocs de granit rose. M. Barsanti espérait, en déplaçant un de ces blocs, démasquer un caveau funéraire : précisément plusieurs fragments des déblais étaient inscrits au nom d'un roi Nofirka, de la IP dynastie. La pierre soulevée laissa voir un autre bloc et, au-dessous, trois autres lits superposés, le dernier reposant à même le rocher. Où était le caveau? Pour le découvrir M. Barsanti embaucha des tailleurs de granit, qui avaient travaillé au barrage du Nil d'Assouan, et leur fit percer un tunnel, au travers du granit, travail digne des Pharaons. Le tunnel où j'ai pu circuler en 1907, guidé par M. Barsanti, n'a servi jusqu'ici qu'à démontrer que toute cette masse est compacte; aussi beaucoup d'égyptologues pensent-ils que le dallage ne recèle aucune cachette et serait seulement de plancher à des constructions qui ne furent jamais édifiées. M. Barsanti croit fermement que ce plancher est un plafond qui recouvre une tombe inviolée; sa conviction tire une grande force de la présence, sur le dallage» d'un dispositif singulier. Dans un des blocs de granit» une cuve ovale a été taillée; elle a deux mètres de long et un mètre de creux; un beau couvercle à quatre oreillettes la protège; le tout est poli à glace et travaillé avec le même soin qu'un bibelot (PL VI, 2). c Ce fut — écrit M. Barsanti — avec une émotion réelle que je me mis en mesure de soulever le couvercle; mais lorsque l'intérieur de la cuve apparut, je la trouvai complètement vide. Je remarquai seulement que les parois latérales étaient garnies comme d'une bande noirâtre de 10 centimètres de hauteur. C'est probablement le dépôt très léger de quelque liquide enfermé dans la cuve en guise d'offrande ou de libation et qui se sera évaporé au cours des ans*. » Il se peut, en effet, qu'une chambre funéraire ait été ménagée dans la verticale au-dessous

de la cuve, ainsi qu'il est d'usage pour les mastabas qui portent sur leur toit un dépôt d'offrandes. Pour résoudre cette énigme, M. Barsanti a été autorisé

i: Annales du Service des Antiquités de l'Égypte, VII, p. 285i par M. Maspero à déplacer un à un tous les blocs superposés de la quadruple rangée; il ne les remettra en place qu'après avoir sondé toute la profondeur du puits de Zaouiet-el-Aryan.

Translation by Dirk Gillabel:

The same emotion emerges
Of an enigmatic monument that Mr. Barsanti
To be cleared for the Antiquities Department, near
Of Zaouiet-el-Aryan, halfway between Giza and
Sakkara. It is the great curiosity of
Memphite Egypt; As the building is
Dated from the end of the Thinite period, it
Allows to locate in time those where
Finds the same construction methods.

The built part of the monument appears at
Bottom of a T-shaped hollow cavity, long
Of 100 meters, width of 25 and depth of 30 meters.
Walls of the cavity are simply cut in
The limestone plateau; The profiles have a
Sharpness as it seems to have cut the rock
With a stretched thread, like a clod of butter. We
Arrives at the bottom by an inclined plane,
Center a slide for the materials and
Each side a vertiginous staircase to the steps
(PL YI, 1). The pit had been filled by
Rubble and sand; It was necessary to withdraw more than
4,000 cubic meters of excavated material to expose a
Paved in enormous blocks of pink granite. Mr. Barsanti
Hoping, by moving one of these blocks, unmask
A funerary vault: precisely several
Fragments of the rubble were written in the name of a
King Nofirka, of the IP dynasty. The raised stone
Showed another block and, underneath, three
Other bunk beds, the latter resting
the rock. Where was the vault? To find out
Mr. Barsanti hired granite tailors, who
Had worked at the Nile d'Assouan dam, and

Made them pierce a tunnel through the granite,
Work worthy of the Pharaohs. The tunnel where I could
Circulated in 1907, guided by Mr. Barsanti, served
Only to demonstrate that all this mass
Is compact; Also many Egyptologists
Do they think there is no hiding place in the pavement
And only squeezed from construction to
Tions which were never built. Mr. Barsanti
Firmly believes that this floor is a ceiling
Covers an inviolate tomb; His conviction
A great force of presence on the pavement "
Of a singular device. In one of the blocks of
Granite "an oval vat has been cut; she has two
Meters long and one meter of hollows; a beautiful
Lid with four ear cups protects it; The whole
Is "ice-cold" and worked with the same care
Than a trinket (PL VI, 2). This was written by M. Bar-
Santi - with real emotion that I set myself in
Lifting the lid; But when
The inside of the tank appeared, I found it
Completely empty. I only noticed that
The side walls were lined with
Black band 10 centimeters high. It is
Probably the very light deposit of some
Liquid enclosed in the vat as an offering
Or libation and which has evaporated during the
years*. It may be that a funeral-
Has been arranged in the vertical below
Of the tank, as is customary for mastabas
Who carry on their roof a deposit of offerings. For
In order to solve this puzzle, Mr. Barsanti was
authorized by Mr. Maspero to move one by one all the blocks
Superimposed of the quadruple row; It does not
Only after having surveyed the entire
Depth of the well of Zaouiet-el-Aryan.