

**THE DATING OF THE TOMBS OF OFFICIALS
OF THE OLD KINGDOM OF EGYPT**

**A thesis submitted for the Master of Arts (Honours)
in the Department of Ancient History, Division of Humanities
at Macquarie University**

by

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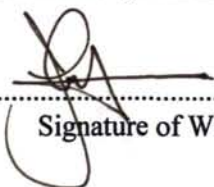
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SUMMARY

This work offers a system for dating the tombs of officials of the Old Kingdom. The system depends on a typological study of the iconography of 106 tomb chapels, which are capable of being dated by evidence that does not derive from wall scenes. From this typological study, 114 features have been identified as having a 'life span' that is dated within the Old Kingdom. These features are accepted as dating criteria and are supported by Tables of their occurrence in the 106 tombs used to establish criteria.

To test the reliability of the criteria and the validity of the system as a dating tool, the criteria have been applied to tombs which either are very broadly or contentiously dated, or have been recently dated by scholars using the latest techniques and knowledge. The resulting 'date profiles', submitted as Charts A to EE, show the criteria and system to be both reliable and valid inasmuch as the testing produced few discrepant results. The dates provided by this method were then compared with the dates assigned to the same tombs by other methods. While there was considerable agreement with the most recently dated tombs, the dating of other tombs tended to support earlier rather than later dates.

Testing showed up some weaknesses in the system, which cannot provide secure dating for tombs in the first half of Dynasty 4 or the last half of Dynasty 6. However, the system appears valid and reliable for the dating of tombs in the second half of Dynasty 4, Dynasty 5 and the first half of Dynasty 6.

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