

AN UNEARTHED SCROLL OF KHUFU

Who finds this may be blest or cursed,
dependent on my mood. Among
all legacies, the pyramids
are notable, my own and two
of lesser size to complement
horizons near my sepulcher.
Proclaimed as worldly Wonders, these,
most ancient of the Seven, these
alone survive: Kings' monuments
of my design, my contribution.

While other Wonders crumbled, even
mighty Zeus of ivory
and gold, Diana's temple walls,
the bronze Colossus, yes, the crypt
of yet another king, plus things
unworthy of the epithet--
the pyramids withstood the wars
of sand, wild desert winds and time.
The guardian beast, unsleeping Sphinx
still faithful at his post, is mine.

Attune your mortal sense to truth
I let you read. I was a child
who sculpted, studied architecture,
mathematics, physics, natural laws.
My plans and figures laid foundations
for perfect structures made of stone.
That stepped erection at Saqqara,
that jagged effort built for Zoser,
was premature, a clumsy trial,
an early incarnation. I

regret it, but perhaps the gods
experimented too. In this
rebirth, in name of Khufu, I
fulfilled my role, my destiny:
The flawless dune I saw in dreams,
two wizard chamberlains who taught
me weights and measures, served me cups
of sleep and visions, made me blocks
to stack, to incline to an apex--
converged within my dynasty.

(cont.)