

Egypt unveils ancient funerary temple south of Cairo

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A trove of ancient coffins and artifacts on display that Egyptian archaeologist Zahi Hawass and his team unearthed in a vast necropolis, in Saqqara, south of Cairo, Egypt, Sunday, Jan. 17, 2021. (AP Photo/Nariman El-Mofty)

Egypt's former antiquities minister and noted archaeologist Zahi Hawass on Sunday revealed details of an ancient funerary temple in a vast

necropolis south of Cairo.

Hawass told reporters at the Saqqara necropolis that archaeologists unearthed the temple of Queen Neit, wife of King Teti, the first king of the Sixth Dynasty that ruled Egypt from 2323 B.C. till 2150 B.C.

Archaeologists also found a 4-meter (13-foot) long papyrus that includes texts of the Book of the Dead, which is a collection of spells aimed at directing the dead through the underworld in ancient Egypt, he said.

Hawass said archaeologists also unearthed burial wells, coffins and mummies dating back to the New Kingdom that ruled Egypt between about 1570 B.C. and 1069 B.C.

They unveiled at least 22 burial shafts up to 12 meters (40 feet) deep, with more than 50 wooden coffins dating back to the New Kingdom, said Hawass, who is Egypt's best known archaeologist.

Hawass, known for his Indiana Jones hat and TV specials on Egypt's [ancient sites](#), said work has been done at the site close to the Pyramid of Teti for over a decade.

The discovery was the result of cooperation between the Antiquities Ministry and the Zahi Hawass Center at the Bibliotheca Alexandrina.



A trove of ancient skulls and bones are on display that Egyptian archaeologist Zahi Hawass and his team unearthed in a vast necropolis, in Saqqara, south of Cairo, Egypt, Sunday, Jan. 17, 2021. (AP Photo/Nariman El-Mofty)



A trove of ancient skulls are on display that Egyptian archaeologist Zahi Hawass and his team unearthed in a vast necropolis, in Saqqara, south of Cairo, Egypt, Sunday, Jan. 17, 2021. (AP Photo/Nariman El-Mofty)



A trove of ancient artifacts on display that Egyptian archaeologist Zahi Hawass and his team unearthed in a vast necropolis, in Saqqara, south of Cairo, Egypt, Monday, Jan. 17, 2021. (AP Photo/Nariman El-Mofty)



The excavation site where Egyptian archaeologist Zahi Hawass and his team unearthed a trove of ancient coffins, artifacts, and skulls in a vast necropolis south of Cairo, Sunday, Jan. 17, 2021, in Saqqara, south of Cairo, Egypt. (AP Photo/Nariman El-Mofty)



The excavation site of the funerary temple of Queen Nearit, the wife of King Tetiwhere, that Egyptian archaeologist Zahi Hawass and his team unearthed in a vast necropolis, in Saqqara, south of Cairo, Egypt, Sunday, Jan. 17, 2021. (AP Photo/Nariman El-Mofty)



Ancient skull and bones are on display that Egyptian archaeologist Zahi Hawass and his team unearthed in a vast necropolis filled with burial shafts, coffins and mummies dating back to the New Kingdom 3000 BC, Sunday, Jan. 17, 2021, in Saqqara, south of Cairo, Egypt. (AP Photo/Nariman El-Mofty)



An ancient coffin is on display that Egyptian archaeologist Zahi Hawass and his team unearthed in a vast necropolis filled with burial shafts, coffins and mummies dating back to the New Kingdom 3000 BC, Sunday, Jan. 17, 2021, in Saqqara, south of Cairo, Egypt. (AP Photo/Nariman El-Mofty)



An archaeologist brushes ancient skulls for the media on display that Egyptian archaeologist Zahi Hawass and his team unearthed in a vast necropolis filled with burial shafts, coffins and mummies dating back to the New Kingdom 3000 BC, Sunday, Jan. 17, 2021, in Saqqara, south of Cairo, Egypt. (AP Photo/Nariman El-Mofty)



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The Saqqara site is part of the necropolis at Egypt's ancient capital of Memphis that includes the famed Giza pyramids as well as smaller pyramids at Abu Sir, Dahshur and Abu Ruwaysh. The ruins of Memphis were designated a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1970s.

In recent years, Egypt has heavily promoted new archaeological finds to [international media](#) and diplomats in the hope of attracting more tourists to the country.

The vital tourism sector suffered from years of political turmoil and violence that followed a 2011 uprising that toppled autocrat Hosni Mubarak.

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