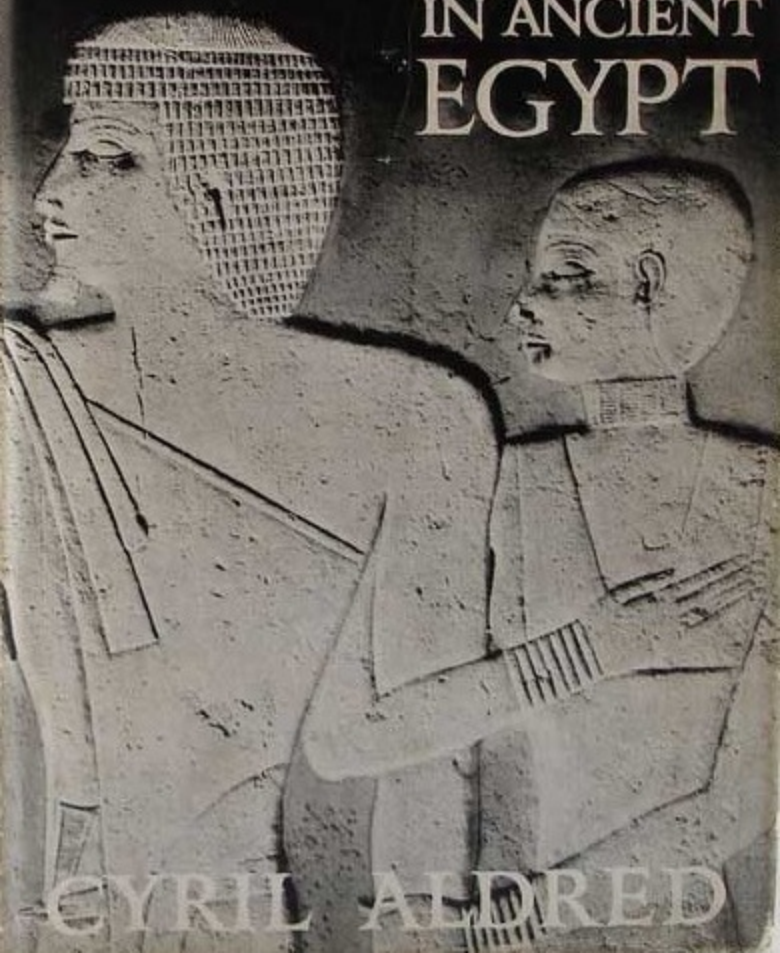


OLD KINGDOM ART IN ANCIENT EGYPT



CYRIL ALDRED

His Majesty, King Sahu-ra, decreed that there should be bestowed upon me a double tomb-portal of Tura limestone; that it should be put in the royal audience chamber and that the high priest of Memphis and his craftsmen should be commissioned for the work which was done in the presence of the King himself . . . There was a daily inspection of the progress of the work; and His Majesty had paint applied and the inscription picked out in blue.

From the tomb-stela of the Chief Physician,

Ne-ankh-sekhmet (c. 2550 B.C.).

Pour d'autres, au contraire, ce que nous nommons art serait une acquisition relativement récente dans le développement humain; ces manifestations trouveraient leur origine dans certaines activités très différentes de celles qui produisent pour nous des impressions esthétiques.

J. Capart and M. Werbrouck: Memphis.

OLD KINGDOM ART
IN
ANCIENT EGYPT

by
CYRIL ALDRED

1949

ALEC TIRANTI LTD.
72 CHARLOTTE STREET
LONDON, W.1

PUBLISHERS' ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The Publishers wish to express their thanks to the EGYPT EXPLORATION SOCIETY of London for their kind assistance and encouragement.

TO MY WIFE

Made and printed in Britain

PREFACE

The aim of this little book is to present to the general reader a brief survey of the art of Ancient Egypt as revealed in its funerary sculpture during the Old Kingdom—the period covered by the first six dynasties (c. 3188 to 2294 B.C.).

It has not been possible within the limited scope available to do more than suggest lines of approach, but the reader who wishes to study the subject in greater detail is recommended to consult the works cited in *Suggestions for Further Reading* on p. 26. This short bibliography must also serve as a partial acknowledgment of the writer's indebtedness to the researches of many scholars for most of the facts and some of the views advanced in the following pages.

On the vexed question of nomenclature, it has been considered best to subordinate accuracy and consistency to the need for presenting a word-form that does not look too outlandish. The technical matters of chronology and the location of ancient sites have been relegated to an historical summary and a map.

In the choice of illustrations, the chief embarrassment has been to decide what to leave out rather than what to include. As far as possible, material has been selected which, while representative, may not be so well known to the general reader in this

country: but of necessity, illustrations of long familiar specimens have had to be included; for though fashions in taste may often bring about a shift in emphasis, they seldom effect a total rejection of what constitutes a masterpiece.

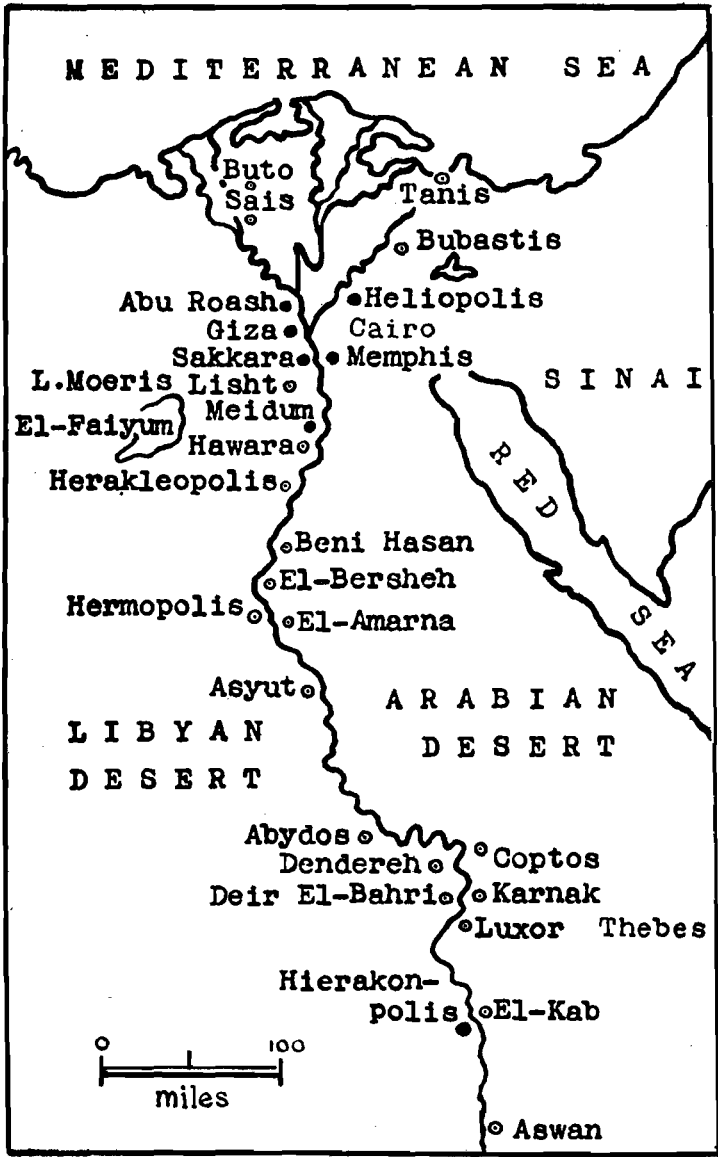
Acknowledgment of the courtesy of various institutions in permitting reproduction of specimens in their collections is given in each case in the *Descriptive Notes*; but the writer would also like to give special thanks to the following individuals for invaluable help in obtaining suitable photographs: — Mr. Bernard V. Bothmer, of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Mr. John D. Cooney of the Brooklyn Museum, New York; Dr. Étienne Drioton of the Service des Antiquités, Cairo; Mr. Otto Koefoed-Petersen of the Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen; Professor R. D. Lockhart of the University of Aberdeen; Professor Gunther Roeder of Hildesheim; Miss Nora Scott of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; and Professor John A. Wilson of the Oriental Institute, Chicago.

EDINBURGH, 1949.

C. A.

CONTENTS

| | |
|---|------------------|
| PREFACE | <i>page v</i> |
| MAP | <i>page viii</i> |
| THE LIMITS OF EGYPTIAN ART IN THE OLD KINGDOM | 1 |
| AN ÆSTHETIC OF EGYPTIAN SCULPTURE | 7 |
| THE DEVELOPMENT OF EGYPTIAN SCULPTURE DURING THE OLD KINGDOM | 14 |
| AN OUTLINE OF EGYPTIAN HISTORY TO 2134 B.C. | 24 |
| SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING | 26 |
| DESCRIPTIVE NOTES TO THE PLATES | 27 |



ANCIENT EGYPT, SHOWING THE MAIN SITES.

The Limits of Egyptian Art in the Old Kingdom

IN looking at the art of the past with the eyes of the present, we are obliged to form our impressions from what time and chance have left us; and to interpret what we see according to the ideas of a contemporary, perhaps alien, culture.

This is inevitable, but it is as well to be aware of our limitations in contemplating Egyptian works of art, the vast majority of which survive in a mutilated or incomplete state, as many of the illustrations in this book will show.

But there are also greater difficulties of understanding to be overcome. We may speak for convenience of the Egyptian sculptor or painter, but we must recognise that the artist as an independent and self-conscious member of society is a recent phenomenon, and did not exist as such in Ancient Egypt. He was rather a craftsman working as a member of a team, for the most part anonymously, in the company of jewellers, joiners and smiths at an hereditary calling. The statues he carved were usually to be hidden away from the eyes of men in special shrines or tomb chambers. Their function was the utilitarian one of acting like the god-sticks of Polynesia as a repository of supernatural force. It is just such a primitive concept as *mana* that induced the Ancient Egyptian to believe that his statues could be infused with a divine power; or that after death, the spiritual essence of a man could reside in his statue for all eternity. But art for the Ancient Egyptian is a com-

pletely practical affair, designed not to move the emotions of the spectator for whom, in any case, it was not produced; but to ensure by magic means the immortality of the person represented. The naturalistic form which Egyptian art often took, and the high degree of technical skill with which it was fashioned, should not blind us to the fact that the ideas underlying it are nearer to primitive Africa than they are to Periclean Athens or Renaissance Italy.

By the time, however, that we make the acquaintance of the earliest dynastic art in the Archaic Period (c. 3000 B.C.), it has already lost the qualities that belong to a primitive communal art, such as for instance that of Melanesia, and has acquired instead the special features of an aristocratic art like that of Benin or the Maori of New Zealand, and reflects the magico-religious beliefs of the cultured, ruling classes for whom it was created. The primitive forces have become tamed, perhaps partly or wholly rationalised, and cease to serve the tribe as a whole but are consecrated to its semi-divine chiefs or governing caste. The forms of the primitive art-style, crystallised at a certain stage of growth like the social structure to which they belong, are worked over rather than organically developed, often in a naturalistic fashion, but are never entirely freed from their original primitive conception. In the wooden panel of Hesy-ra (No. 9), for instance, the exquisite craftsmanship, the realistic rendering of the muscles of the torso and limbs, and the apparent attempt at careful portraiture cannot disguise the fact that the concep-

tion is "primitive"; and that we are confronted with a perceptual, rather than a visual representation of the human form.

The idea of statuary in Egypt probably developed as a part of the cult of kings who became gods upon death. In the course of time, it was extended like so many royal customs and prerogatives to other members of the royal family, then to the court, and eventually to the entire ruling class and its officials: but it never quite forgot its origins. Each tomb statue was completed by undergoing a magic ritual which ensured that it became imbued with the spirit of the dead man and was henceforth hedged with his small divinity. It was afterwards treated with as much care as the all-too-vulnerable corpse of its owner, being insulated from danger in its own special tomb chamber or *serdab*.*

It is apparent that this consecration was effected upon a sculptured form which was an ideal representation of the sitter. Only exceptionally do we meet in Egyptian art figures of deformed or wizened persons (Nos. 52, 53, 57), and these are mostly members of the lower orders whose life in the hereafter would be of limited scope. At whatever age the Egyptian may have died, he is shown in the full prime of a successful life. If his tomb statue represents him as a young man, then he is alert, muscular, confident (Nos. 35, 46): if it reveals him in all the dignity of middle age, then he is corpulent, prosperous, complacent (Nos. 11, 39). In either case, it is a well-nourished, active body in which his spirit will dwell for ever more.

* This word is derived from the Arabic for a cellar.

The same idealism is evident in the treatment of the heads of such statues which in the best examples are probably fairly careful portraits of the deceased. It is portraiture, however, of a special kind. The features of these heads express the individuality rather than the character of the sitter. They look forward to the future, rather than back to what is past. They tell us nothing of an inner human life of fears, hopes and suffering; but there is revealed the serene optimism of an assured eternity.

The sculptor in any case had no need to produce more than an idealised portrait of the current dynastic type. The identity of his sitter could always be secured by the potent magic device of inscribing his name on the statue (cp. Nos. 47, 48). Without such an inscription, an Egyptian statue was incomplete, unanimated, however meticulous the portraiture might be; and it was not uncommon for a statue to be adapted to the needs of a usurper merely by replacing the old name with the new.

In many cases, several statues of the owner were made for his tomb. In an extreme instance, as many as fifty might be provided (cp. No. 43); and it is obvious from the very differing portraits of the same man in such a series, that there was no great insistence that an exact likeness of the sitter should be captured, at least in every statue. The high dignitary, Ur-ir-en, was quite content to furnish his tomb with mediocre representations of himself by some inferior journeyman, while the accompanying statuettes of his servants were by a master hand (cp. Nos. 44, 54). What would appear to be important from the point of view

of the Egyptian was that a statue should be identifiable by having the name and titles of its owner inscribed upon it (cp. No. 53).

Egyptian sculpture, therefore, is not only a religious art, it is an idealistic art too; if it has no Praxiteles to show us gods in the guise of men, its anonymous craftsmen nevertheless show us men in the guise of immortals.

This unexpected idealism is not its only fortuitous parallel with Classical art. There is little Dionysian frenzy in the religion of the cultured Ancient Egyptian—no primitive desire to burst through the restrictions imposed by the senses into another supersensuous world by violence or excess. Even the demons of his underworld are mere intellectualised concepts with little horrific force about them, conforming to the rule of his law. They can be overcome, not by a Mexican ritual of blood-letting or penance, but by the mere knowledge or possession of the appropriate word of power. It is hardly surprising that this should be so: the educated Egyptian looked forward to an eternal life in every way a replica of the one he had passed so pleasantly on earth; and for success in the worldly life he was counselled to be discreet and cautious, and to study moderation. The inhibitions of a well-regulated life are apparent in the classical restraint of Egyptian art.

In conforming to the requirements of ritual and belief, Egyptian art could only develop as religious ideas evolved; and such ideas in turn were modified only as a result of changes in the temperature of the economic, political and social environment—if these,

indeed, were not all different aspects of the same thing. Egyptian artistic ideas were closely identified with Egyptian religious ideas, which did not so much grow as accumulate. Little was ever rejected by this conservative people, and it is probable that Egyptian religion could mean all things to all men, especially all classes of men, from philosophical ideas for the educated few in an age of high culture, to mere superstition for the unquestioning masses at a period of decline. Once Egyptian civilisation had evolved rapidly to a stage that suited the practical aspirations of its architects, it solidified into a form that remained remarkably stable; and this must account largely for the persistence in Egyptian art of an iconography that changed only very slowly in hundreds of years. New forms may have been invented from time to time to satisfy the needs of different ideas and changes in the sensibility of the craftsmen and their patrons, but these are no more than offshoots from the main stock. Hybrid and exotic forms may flourish for a time, but they soon wither, and there is a reversion to type again, either through instinct, or antiquarian recapitulation, or a combination of both (cp. No. 50).

We should be careful, however, not to confuse a somewhat rigid iconography with style. While the subject-matter may not have altered profoundly in several millennia, the artistic treatment of it underwent considerable changes, at times even within decades.

If, then, the function of sculpture in Egypt was entirely different from what we, nursed in an Hellenic cradle, may conceive as its proper purpose; and if the

sculptor was no artist in the sense in which we generally employ the word, that is not to say that Egyptian statuary is not creatively inspired, that its ends were not achieved by æsthetic means, nor its style sustained by a persistent sensibility. Inevitably, the archetypes which determined the iconic form for hundreds of years were instinctively chosen for their artistic function and validity, just as they were created by artists who used, subconsciously perhaps, but none the less cogently, æsthetic means to express an idea.

Such means are the common denominator of human experience; and make the enjoyment of art less an affair of the changing intellect than of the constant emotions. Among other things, they allow us to enjoy the qualities of Old Kingdom sculpture even if we cannot now believe in the ideas which brought it into being.

II.

An Aesthetic of Egyptian Sculpture

The æsthetic which is the peculiar contribution of the Ancient Egyptian to the sum of artistic experience cannot easily be defined. The Egyptian himself with a characteristic lack of speculation never attempted to analyse the means whereby his artistic ideas were realised. If he was aware of them above the level of his subconscious mind, he must have considered them as part of his religious beliefs.

In forming his attitude of mind, which at once determined the values of his religion and his art, the environment in which he lived must have played a fundamental part. For Egypt is unique

in that it is independent of the fickleness of the weather for its prosperity, since it is the annual Nile flood that renews the fertility of the exhausted fields by depositing rich mud over the river banks with monotonous regularity. As soon as the Egyptian had become a cultivator of the narrow strip of arable land on either side of the Nile, he lost the instincts of the nomad who lives in sympathy with his environment and became instead an exploiter of the resources of a Nature which, once tamed and harnessed, remained constant and predictable within its rhythms of seasonal change.

If the conditions by which the Egyptian lived were therefore regular, stable and inevitable, it is small wonder that he displays a parallel conservatism and stability, perhaps a lack of enterprise, in his habits of thought. We can remark in all aspects of Egyptian civilisation, this great instinct for duration, for the maintenance of a *status quo*; natural conditions fostered it—the climate is dry, the deserts and lack of rain encourage desiccation and postpone decay. Egypt is the classic land of mummification.

Nor must geographical conditions be ignored in accounting for the peculiar ingrowing insularity of the Ancient Egyptian. The frontiers of his country were easy to defend; and the mass migrations of Near Eastern peoples left him comparatively unaffected. While conquest and infiltration may have altered from time to time the racial type of his rulers, the peasant on which the character of Egyptian culture, as its economy, ultimately depended, remained unchanged and unchanging.

Yet within these frontiers, the specialised hot-house culture of Egypt is far from being homogeneous, but may be separated, as the Egyptians themselves clearly recognised, into an Upper or Southern, and a Lower or Northern civilisation. From prehistoric times the Delta area seems to have been different in its topography, climate, economy, and inhabitants from Upper Egypt, and had different traditions, and therefore a different outlook; but it was politically more unstable than its less diverse and perhaps less inspired neighbour. Unfortunately, it is difficult in the present state of our knowledge to assess the exact cultural contribution of Lower Egypt, partly because its archaeological exploration has been only sporadic, and partly because it appears to have been dominated for long periods by the South. But its contribution to Egyptian art in the Old Kingdom was undoubtedly very influential, and may be identified as a tendency towards a more naturalistic and instinctive style.*

The character of Upper Egyptian art is easier to recognise because it is from the dry sands of the South that the majority of Egyptian antiquities have been recovered. This Southern art-style is intellectual in its approach rather than instinctive, perceptual rather than visual—tending towards an uncompromising formalism as compared with the naturalism of the North.

For the Upper Egyptian, the universe hemming him about must have appeared as foursquare as a large cube. Looking west and east across the narrow belt of cultivation on each side of the Nile, he could see the confines of his world in the cliffs of the Libyan

* This point will be elaborated in a subsequent volume in this series.

and Arabian deserts. The sky for him, too, was no limitless empyrean, but a weighty ceiling, usually regarded as upheld by invisible poles like a canopy over his head. Again and again, we are aware of this essential Egyptian concept—a feeling stronger than agoraphobia—a kind of claustrophilia. It is significant that the final rest for him should be just such a consummation in the chrysalis of the tomb-equipment. For instance in *The Story of Sinhue*, a popular, semi-historical romance of a later period, the exile is encouraged to return to Egypt by the prospect of a day of burial when he will be decently wrapped in mummy bandages and placed in a coffin beneath a canopy painted to represent the starry sky, and not be buried in a mere sheep-skin like the barbarians who have befriended him. The Pharaoh, too, could feel nothing repulsive in the idea of his swaddled corpse being entombed within a nest of coffins, surrounded by encompassing shrines, in a sealed chamber within the bowels of a stone mountain.

The Egyptian expresses this claustrophilia in a space-conception which is as geometrically finite as the cubic block of his stone sarcophagus. He carefully delimits the boundaries of his universe with an Elymas-like touch as though to emphasise that he is aware not only of its extent, but of its essential rectilinearity—a rectilinearity which is revealed not only in the ground-plans of his buildings, and the block pattern of his friezes and borders, but even in the square word-groups of his hieroglyphic inscriptions, and the unit-scenes which make up the compositions of his reliefs and paintings (Nos. 67, 68).

If we examine, for instance, a typical Upper Egyptian tomb chamber, such as the fairly well-preserved one of Nakht at Thebes (Nos. 70 and 71), we shall find that the walls are separately considered as independent planes at right angles to each other, and the roof is stretched over them like an awning. In the painting of such an interior space, there is evidently no attempt to carry the decoration of one wall over to another, or to the ceiling. The feeling for space is two-dimensional rather than baroque. One wall is bounded by a *kheker* frieze at the top, and a block-pattern border at the sides. The adjoining wall is just as complete and self-contained, with its frieze and side borders. Where the two walls meet, the division is emphasised by a firm boundary of two block-pattern borders.

No attempt has been made to express any spatial relationship of one wall to another. On the contrary, the wall paintings are so arranged that the interest stops short at the edges and is led back to the central space. The figures at the end of each wall face inwards and turn their backs upon companion figures on adjacent walls as if to accentuate the cleavage. The composition is designed not only to take account of the complete independence of each wall, but to emphasise it. Any breaking of the wall surface by a doorway merely imposes a smaller rectangular pattern upon a larger one: the architrave of the doorway is defined and the independence of the egress admitted, and the composition so adjusted as to balance the two halves of the separate spaces thus created. In

the stone-lined niche from the *mastaba** tomb of Kha-bau-seker at Sakkara in the north, some 1400 years earlier than Nakht, we can see right at the outset that the same space-feeling is expressed. The decoration of each wall in both examples is so managed that the attention of the spectator is focused upon the central area where a balance is created which is the antithesis of movement.

If the Egyptian treats in this way the walls of an internal rectangular space, he no less precisely defines the planes of an external cubic area. It has become a commonplace that an imaginary cube can be visualised around most Egyptian statues; but any theory that attempts to accredit this to Egyptian methods of quarrying stone in blocks will beg the question. We must assume that if the Egyptian retained such a volumetric conception of statuary, despite all his technical accomplishment in the working of many different kinds of stone, that was because it satisfied his æsthetic needs. Nor is this cubic feeling brought about by an imperfect freeing of the stone from its matrix. On the contrary, his sculpture from an early phase of partial release during the Old Kingdom (Nos. 11, 49), returns into the womb of the stone in the succeeding age.

In the same way as the walls of his interiors are regarded as separate entities, so are the planes of his cubic sculpture as carefully delimited. The frontal aspect and the two profiles are independently con-

* This word, derived from the Arabic for a bench, is used to describe the rectangular superstructure with sloping sides that was usually built over the tomb of a private person in the Old Kingdom.

sidered and then worked into each other to result in a conception so essentially cubic that in time all adjuncts such as thrones, seats and plinths, tend to lose detail and to become mere blocks. It is significant that the back-pillar which is lacking in the early statues, and cannot therefore have a skeuomorphic origin, assumes an increasing importance in free-standing sculpture, especially after the Old Kingdom. Whatever the ritual reason for this back-pilaster may be, it clearly satisfied the Egyptian idea of æsthetic completeness. In fact, of course, it accentuates the cubic form of the statue.

Just as the Egyptian in dealing with wall decoration concentrates within the central area the dominant interest and the point of balance of his rigidly controlled composition, so in his cubic sculpture, by a similar space-conception, he leads the spectator's eye away from the surfaces of the frontal and side planes to focus upon an inner force in the search for a sympathetic equipoise. In this, Egyptian statuary achieves an impressive power by the inward concentration of its forms. There is no dissipation of the beholder's attention by an outward-looking management of plastic elements, as for instance there is in baroque sculpture where the conception of space is diametrically different—a claustrophobic looking without from within. For this reason, Egyptian statuary rarely attempts to express movement, and cannot do so without forsaking its aims—the violence of a *Laocoon* is an impossibility in Egyptian sculpture which by the organisation of its cubic forms induces all feeling, from a contemplation of the external cor-

tex of the stone, to concentrate upon an inner force as upon the axis of balance.

By this equipoise, by this nice adjustment of masses and forces, Egyptian statuary, as befits its monumental character, becomes static: but it is by no means devitalised. Its inner life, however, is a latent power rather than a kinetic force. In this, by æsthetic means, it achieves its supreme purpose of providing a local habitation and a name for the indwelling spirit of the eternal dead.

III.

*The Development of Egyptian Sculpture during the Old Kingdom.**

Carvings in stone and ivory exist from early pre-dynastic times in Egypt, but they are too few and fragmentary to give more than the impression that they are similar in feeling to primitive sculptures from other peoples in a comparable stage of development (No. 1). By the beginning of the Dynastic Age (c. 3188 B.C.), however, there are several objects which are sufficiently well preserved to show features characteristic of later Egyptian art.

Of these, the most important is the slate palette of Narmer (No. 3), an early king of the 1st Dynasty who fought a series of campaigns as a result of which the Southern kingdom gained dominance over the North, and welded the "two lands" into a political unity.

This palette was almost certainly carved by a craftsman of the royal court and therefore shows the

* This section should be read in conjunction with the *Descriptive Notes* on pages 27 to 40.

standard of the best contemporary workmanship. It reveals clearly that intellectual organisation which is especially characteristic of Upper Egyptian culture. The shield shape of the palette plays no part in determining the decoration of the inner area. The design is ruthlessly imposed upon it, and compressed into organically unrelated compartments by a system of "registers"—a device of the intellect rather than the sensibility. In the top register, the figure of the divine king is made the tallest, not according to demands of pattern or perspective, but because he is the most important person represented.

If this palette, with its design determined by logic, be compared with the confused pattern of another, and probably earlier, palette at Oxford (No. 2), it will be seen how a balance and emphatic clarity are achieved in the Narmer palette at the expense of surface movement. The germ of most dynastic art of Egypt is already apparent, significantly enough, in this representation of a political theme of hegemony.

The obscure archaic period of the first two dynasties was probably an age of fluctuating political strife between the "two lands"; but by *c.* 2815 B.C., the South had once more established supremacy. The few statues that have survived from this period show a tentative reaching towards a distantly perceived style of mortuary sculpture. The only examples which can be definitely dated are those of Kha-sekhem at Oxford and Cairo (Nos. 4 and 5) which show the king in a garb associated with a death-and-resurrection ceremony. Despite the damage they have suffered, their monumental intention is at once apparent; but

the position of the left arm across the midriff creates a state of un-balance by bringing both hands to the same side of the body near to each other. The diagonal neck-line of the cloak also produces a disturbing surface rhythm upon an otherwise static mass and perhaps for that reason was felt æsthetically inappropriate by a later age and accordingly modified (cp. No. 62). The distorted figures of slain foes incised on the pedestals of these statues introduce another discordant element belonging to the turbulent patterns of early slate palettes; and the treatment of the eyes has not entirely lost the decorative conventions of a primitive style (cp. No. 1).

The contemporary, or slightly later, statues of private persons are naturally inferior in technique to the Kha-sekhem statues, and show a similar unresolved conflict between elements proper to life and those associated with deification—between a vision which approaches the naturalistic, and an intention which is towards the monumental.

But in the Step Pyramid at Sakkara, built during the reign of Zoser in the IIIrd Dynasty (*c.* 2800 B.C.), we are suddenly confronted with an art which has adapted the organic forms of nature with a complete assurance (No. 6). The Zoser monument even in its ruin gives an impression not only of boldness and skill in translating into stone the forms of mud-brick construction, but also of great elegance in the execution. The curved wall, the cambered roofs, the engaged columns representing bundles of papyrus stalks, and the columns with pendent leaf capitals, produce an air of fragile vitality, almost of gaiety which is in

severe contrast with the mortuary nature of the buildings (No. 7). When we examine the ground-plan, moreover, and note the confusion of the various constructions within the boundary walls, we are faced with something similar to the instinctive decoration of the Oxford palette. We may, perhaps, see in this the more intuitive approach which we have ascribed to the Northern art style. It is hardly irrelevant that the IIIrd Dynasty came from Memphis, though Zoser himself appears to have been a Southerner who found it expedient to embrace Northern culture.

The art of the IVth Dynasty (*c.* 2690 - 2570 B.C.) which has so far been revealed to us, is in massive contrast to the style of Zoser. For the suave form of the Step Pyramid reaching the sky-realms by easy stages, is substituted the uncompromising wedge of the Pyramids of Giza. The fasciculated columns in the limestone of the North, give way to severe monolithic pillars in the granite of the South (No. 8). The confusion of the Zoser ground-plan is swept away by the logical ordering of the plan of the Khephren temple—no house of the living has here been adapted to the needs of the divine dead, but on the contrary a mortuary style has been immaculately conceived for its own sake. Once more we are aware of an uncompromising intellectual style replacing a more instinctive naturalism.

This formalism suggests a Southern origin and is particularly evident in the royal statuary of the period (Nos. 13 - 17) which crystallises into the archetypes that later generations are content to copy and re-copy. In the diorite statue of Khephren (Nos. 15

and 16), the characteristic dynastic form has been nobly attained. The position of the hands upon the knees has at last found an interesting balance and nothing now breaks the monumental repose of the sculpture.

Private statuary of this period lags somewhat behind the fashion set by the royal masterpieces. The figures of Ra-hetep and Nefert (No. 10) with the diagonal position of the arm on the breast, have not quite forgotten the conventions of the IIIrd Dynasty style, and have not achieved the finality of the Hem-On statue (Nos. 11 and 12). All three sculptures, however, with their inlaid eyes and coloured inscriptions seem to represent the late development of a more naturalistic school associated with the funerary monuments of Dahshur and Meidum—the end of an epoch perhaps, rather than the beginning of a new. The more characteristic IVth Dynasty style is seen in the so-called “reserve-heads”, which were almost certainly from the royal workshops at Giza and give a good idea of the contemporary portraiture. In their simplified planes and stylised individuality, an ideal, classical, formalism is powerfully expressed (Nos. 18 - 22). The masterpiece in this restrained style is undoubtedly the bust of Ankh-haf (Nos. 23 and 24), which seems to be in the tradition of the reserve-heads in conception, though there is a stronger feeling for plastic qualities in its freer execution.

Towards the end of the dynasty in the reign of Mykerinus, who in Egyptian folk-memory lived as a pious king undoing the wrongs perpetrated by Kheops and Khephren, we can detect the re-emerg-

ence of a rather more delicate and vital style (Nos. 25 - 30). The statues of Mykerinus reveal a less aloof personality. The divine king has left his judgment-seat and has stepped forward to be embraced like an ordinary mortal by his spouse (Nos. 26 and 27). A new expression is evident, the impassive stare of the god looking into eternity becomes slightly secularised or vulgarised into the complacent gaze of the magnate looking to his posterity. We are already at the beginning of that trend which ultimately was to reduce the monarch from an autocratic god incarnate to a mere feudal overlord. The statue of the king with his queen (No. 26) appears to have been the first of its kind and to have set the pattern for a number of pair statues which extend from the court circle to private persons during the succeeding dynasties and undergo several variations (Nos. 31, 32, 41, 51).

A democratisation of the court style becomes more apparent in the Vth Dynasty (*c.* 2570 - 2420 B.C.), when the many craftsmen trained on the enormous IVth Dynasty tomb constructions at Giza were free to cater for the needs of the relatively minor officials at Sakkara. The temples and funerary buildings of the "sun kings" of this dynasty lose the massiveness, one might even say, the megalomania, of the Giza style; and with their columns in the form of papyrus clusters or date palms, and their lighter and more delicate construction, seem to have affinities with the architecture of Zoser. The religion of the sun-god, Ra, was centred at Heliopolis in the Delta, and with the rise of this royal cult to paramount importance in this age, we may see the re-emergence of the more

graceful naturalism of Northern culture, though a characteristic stamp had irretrievably been given to the forms of Old Kingdom art by the powerful conventions of the early IVth Dynasty style.

This influence is especially seen in the much damaged reliefs from the royal temples of the Vth Dynasty, particularly during the reigns of User-kaf and Sahu-ra (No. 38). In the classical purity of their line, and the emphasis upon pattern and draughtsmanship, rather than movement or impression, these reliefs continue the traditions of the IVth Dynasty (cp. No. 37). An appreciable decline in the standard of craftsmanship is apparent in the funerary buildings of the later kings of this age, perhaps because the original impetus of the Giza style had been brought to a halt by new influences: the drawing, however, still remains firm and restrained.

Apart from these reliefs, little royal statuary of good quality has survived from the Vth and VIth Dynasties, perhaps because in conformity with the freer spirit of the age it may very well have been made in more perishable wood or metal. Doubtless, supplies of timber from Syria were more plentiful at this time; and wood sculpture, with its technique of addition as well as subtraction and its underlying cylindrical forms, would appeal to a more naturalistic conception of statuary. Moreover, as wood was a rare and valuable commodity in Egypt, we should not infer that statues in wood are inferior substitutes for stone sculpture. Wood, with the limitations imposed by its grain, can be a more difficult medium for the sculptor to work than even hard stone. Some of the best statuary of the period is found in the wooden carvings

(Nos. 39, 41, 42), which on the whole maintain a higher standard of achievement than much of the stone sculpture, especially during the VIth Dynasty.

The vulgarisation of the court style becomes more marked in the VIth Dynasty (*c.* 2420 - 2294 B.C.), which was also of Northern origin. Sculpture in deep relief now begins to decorate the tomb walls of officials on a considerable scale, acquiring a good deal of vitality at the expense of quality in the process, and expressing more successfully than most contemporary statuary a feeling for movement and naturalism (Nos. 49, and 65 - 68). While the subjects are similar to those of the shallow reliefs of the preceding dynasty, their treatment is different—the shadows cast by the deeper cutting lend a flickering air of liveliness to the scenes: dancers now cease to walk but leap and sway, butchers pull down the sacrificial ox only by vigorous exertion, and the animals in procession gambol or look around them (No. 65). It is significant in an age of more sophisticated religious concepts, associated, perhaps, with the increasing importance of the Osiris cult, or the aggrandisement of the feudal nobility, that tomb statues in certain instances are no longer hidden away and protected like the mummy itself in a special chamber, but instead are carved in the open niches of the tomb chapel. Characteristically, however, the old ideas continue to exist peaceably by the side of the new; and the general rule that funerary statues are made to be immured rather than admired is seen in the statue of the dwarf Seneb and his wife (No. 53) which was found sealed in a special box. This group pleases by its naivety and humorous observa-

tion of character: it is really in the tradition of the statuettes of servants and dwarfs made to be animated by magic and to work for their masters in the after-life (Nos. 54 - 57). The idealistic conventions that attach to the statuary of the mighty do not apply so much to them; and in their case a somewhat sardonic realism combined with a desire to express movement and activity is therefore permissible (Nos. 56, 57).

It is apparent, in fact, that by the VIth Dynasty, the monumental character given to the sculpture of the Old Kingdom by the conventions of the IVth Dynasty style, is threatened by the underlying spirit of vulgar and vital exuberance revealed in this *genre* art (cp. No. 32). A decline in artistic standards is usually accredited to the VIth Dynasty, and there is certainly in this period a wider gap between good work and indifferent, just as there was now a deeper social rift between the feudal nobility and a presumably impoverished peasantry. But with a paucity of royal examples, it is difficult to be sure that the best material has survived from which to draw comparisons. The ruined bas-reliefs from the funerary temple of Pepy II show no falling-off (No. 64); and introduce, in fact, admirable features which were an antiquarian source of inspiration to later dynasties; and it would seem that we must attribute a faltering technique and style as much to the stirring of new forces and social unrest, as to political and economic decline.

The movements beneath the surface, however, prove to be death-struggles rather than birth-labours. The long reign of Pepy II brought exhaustion to the

state machine; and the art of the Old Kingdom fades away in the anarchy that followed the collapse of the dynasty, before the new forces had an opportunity, perhaps, of working out their proper formal expression.

But whatever it did not do, the actual achievement of Old Kingdom art is impressive enough, even in the ruined funerary sculpture which is almost all that has survived from so remote a past. Within its own strict limits, it shows an invention and accomplishment that have hardly been paralleled by other religious arts; and we still have not a complete conspectus of the subject. It is not a little of the appeal of Egyptology that any day the spade of the excavator may unearth fresh masterpieces to delight our senses; perhaps even to confound our opinions.

AN OUTLINE OF EGYPTIAN HISTORY TO 2134 B.C.

While the weight of opinion is in favour of the shorter dating employed in this book, the chronology of Egypt is still in dispute. Scholars therefore, find it most convenient to retain the system first sanctioned by the priest Manetho, who in his *History of Egypt* (c. 250 B.C.) grouped the reigns of the various Pharaohs into thirty-one dynasties. Modern Egyptologists have further arranged these dynasties in longer periods, such as the Old, Middle and New Kingdoms, each characterised by a homogeneous cultural style, and separated from the other by intervals of political disintegration.

PREDYNASTIC AGE UP TO 3188 B.C.

During this period, Egypt developed from a region inhabited by isolated tribes living under the protection of local gods, into two separate kingdoms—the North, or Lower Egypt, covering the Delta region from Memphis northwards; and the South, or Upper Egypt, extending from Memphis southwards. The unification of the “two lands” was achieved in historic times by the legendary Menes, who was probably the Pharaoh Narmer.

ARCHAIC PERIOD, DYNASTIES I—II, 3188—2815 B.C.

This union of North and South appears to have been only provisional and during the Archaic period it is believed that there was a struggle for the role of dominant partner, with victory going to the South once more, in the reign of Khasehem (c. 2815 B.C.).

OLD KINGDOM, DYNASTIES III—VI, 2815—2294 B.C.

Dynasty III, 2815–2690 B.C. The history of this dynasty is largely obscure, but it must have enjoyed years of consolidation in which the arts of peace were quickly developed, especially during the reign of Zoser, whose architect Im-hetep was traditionally supposed to have invented several sciences includ-

ing that of building in stone. As Lower Egypt seems to have been more culturally advanced than the South, it is probable that this rapid development was due to a predominant Northern influence.

Dynasty IV, 2690–2570 B.C. Chief Kings: Sneferu, Kheops (Khufu), Ra-ded-ef (Dedefra), Khephren (Khafra), Mykerinus (Men-kau-ra), Shepses-kaf.

This dynasty which appears to have been of Middle or Upper Egyptian origin is notable for the immense pyramid complexes built by Kheops, Khephren and Mykerinus at Giza. The early kings were vigorous autocrats; but palace intrigues appear to have weakened the royal authority by the end of the dynasty.

Dynasty V, 2570–2420 B.C. Chief Kings: User-kaf, Sahu-ra, Ne-user-ra, Isesy, Unis.

Under the kings of this dynasty, the northern culture flourishes with the rise to supreme importance of the cult of the sun-god, Ra, at Heliopolis. Expeditions were sent to the Sudan and Syria whence quantities of timber suitable for building and statuary were imported.

Dynasty VI, 2420–2294 B.C. Chief Kings: Tety, Pepy I, Mer-en-ra, Pepy II.

In this dynasty, Pepy I appears to have been an energetic builder. His sons who succeeded him were the grandsons of a Southerner from Abydos. The younger, Pepy II, reigned for 94 years and died a centenarian.

First Intermediate Period, Dynasties VII—X, 2294–2134 B.C.

During the latter part of the Old Kingdom, district governors ceased to be appointed by the King, and the office became hereditary. These feudal nobles were strong enough to challenge the central power at the end of the long reign of Pepy II. Incursions by Asiatics into the Delta, and social revolution assisted the process of disintegration. After the VIth Dynasty, the prosperity of the country was greatly reduced by anarchy and lawlessness. But by 2150 B.C. two rival princes with their capitals at Herakleopolis and Thebes had re-established some political stability.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

1. BACKGROUND STUDY.

- J. Capart and M. Werbrouck: *Memphis*. Brussels, 1930.
E. Drioton and J. Vandier: *Les Peuples de l'Orient Méditerranéen—l'Égypte*. Paris, 1946.
✓ I. E. S. Edwards: *The Pyramids of Egypt*. London, 1947.

2. HISTORY OF ART.

- E. Baldwin Smith: *Egyptian Architecture as Cultural Expression*. New York, 1938.
W. Stevenson Smith: *A History of Egyptian Sculpture and Painting in the Old Kingdom*. Oxford, 1946.

3. MONOGRAPHS.

- L. Borchardt: *Das Grabdenkmal des Königs Sahu-re*. Leipzig, 1910-13.
C. M. Firth and J. E. Quibell: *The Step Pyramid*. Cairo, 1935.
G. Jequier: *Le Monument Funéraire de Pepi II*. Cairo, 1936-41.
W. M. F. Petrie: *Medum*. London, 1892.
✓ G. A. Reisner: *Mycerinus*. Cambridge, Mass., 1931.

4. ILLUSTRATIONS.

- L. Borchardt: *Statuen und Statuetten von Königinnen und Privatleuten im Museum von Kairo*, Teil I. Berlin, 1911.
N. de G. Davies: *The Mastaba of Ptahhetep and Akhethetep*. London, 1900-01.
P. Duell: *The Mastaba of Mereruka*. Chicago, 1938.
J. E. Quibell and F. W. Green: *Hierakonpolis*. London, 1900-02.
G. Steindorff: *Das Grab des Ti*. Leipzig, 1913.

5. ARTICLES.

- J. D. Cooney: *A Colossal Head of the Early Old Kingdom*, in *Bulletin of the Brooklyn Museum*, Vol IX, No. 3.
✓ H. Frankfort: *On Egyptian Art*, in *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, Vol. XVIII, pp. 33-48.
✓ K. Pflüger: *The Art of the Third and Fifth Dynasties*, in *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, Vol. XXIII, pp. 7-9.
G. A. Reisner: *The Tomb of Meresankh* in *Bulletin of Boston Museum of Fine Arts*, Vol. XXV, No. 151.
✓ A. Scharff: *On the Statuary of the Old Kingdom*, in *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, Vol. XXVI, pp. 41-50.
✓ A. Scharff: *Egyptian Portrait Sculpture*, in *Antiquity*, Vol. XI, pp. 174-182.

DESCRIPTIVE NOTES TO THE PLATES

(With one or two exceptions, the illustrations are arranged in chronological order.)

1. MALE FIGURE: basalt. Height 15½ ins. Predynastic. At Oxford.

This carving probably represents a Northerner or Libyan wearing a heavy beard, skull-cap, and the *karnata* cod-piece. Its cylindrical shape, suggesting an ivory archetype, reveals all the qualities of primitive art, the forms being determined partly by technical limitations, partly by a feeling for abstraction, and partly by an instinct for decorative surface-pattern.

Photo. Courtesy, the Visitors of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

2. PALETTE: (reverse). Slate. Length 17 ins. From Hierakonpolis. Predynastic or early Dynastic. At Oxford.

On each side is carved a jackal(?) conforming to the outline of the palette. The space within is filled instinctively with a confused rout of real and imaginary beasts, according to a primitive desire to avoid *horror vacui*. But these animals have already assumed the forms that occur in later dynastic art.

Photo. Courtesy, the Visitors of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

3. PALETTE OF KING NARMER: (obverse). Slate. Length 26 ins. From Hierakonpolis. Early 1st Dynasty. At Cairo.

In the centre, around the circular depression for grinding eye-paint, are two long-necked lions(?) with attendants, perhaps symbolising a political union. In the upper register, the king, attended by officials, inspects slain prisoners: in the lower, as a "strong bull" he breaks down an enemy stronghold and tramples on the foe. The inner space has been organised intellectually to record a specific event.

Photo. Courtesy, Cairo Museum.

4. STATUE OF KING KHA-SEKHEM. White limestone. Height 24 ins. From Hierakonpolis. II-IIIrd Dynasty. At Oxford. Reconstructed from fragments.

Photo. Courtesy, the Visitors of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

5. STATUE OF KING KHA-SEKHEM. Green slate. Height 22 ins. From Hierakonpolis. II-IIIrd Dynasty. At Cairo.

Photo. Courtesy, Cairo Museum.

These two statues show the king in a festival robe and wearing the white crown of the South. Despite damage, they reveal an equal mastery over different materials; but the cubic character of the underlying forms is more evident in the slate statue: the softer limestone may have encouraged a less formal treatment.

6. STATUE OF KING ZOSER. White limestone. Height 55 ins. From Sakkara. IIIrd Dynasty. At Cairo.

This statue was found in place in its *serdab* but had been damaged anciently by the prising out of its inlaid eyes. The heavy wig, the wig-cover and massive beard are unusual. All traces of archaism have gone—the overthrown foes have been replaced by a soberly balanced inscription (not visible in this illustration); and a more monumental effect has been achieved by the deeper merging of the body of the king into the block of the throne which assumes almost an equal importance.

Photo. Courtesy, Cairo Museum.

7. STEP PYRAMID OF KING ZOSER: showing southern face, with three engaged columns of the "T"-temple partly rebuilt. IIIrd Dynasty. At Sakkara.

Photo. Courtesy, Service des Antiquités, Cairo.

8. VALLEY BUILDING OF KING KHEPHREN: showing large granite pillars in the T-shaped hall. IVth Dynasty. At Giza.

Photo. From A. Mariette: Voyage dans La Haute-Egypte Vol. I, Pl. 2.

9. PANEL OF HESY-RA. Wood. Approx. 24 x 17 ins. From Sakkara. Early IIIrd Dynasty. At Cairo.

This panel, one of eleven found in various states of preservation in the *mastaba* of Hesy, is dated to the reign of Zoser. It illustrates all the qualities of the reliefs, paintings and drawings of later ages, being a perceptual assemblage of visual elements—details are faithfully and naturalistically portrayed but are not visually related to each other. The head is shown in profile; the eye, from the front; the shoulders are seen full-front, but the left breast is in profile, as are the hips: there are two left feet. In this way a symbol, a hieroglyph rather than an image, is created which has considerable decorative value.

Photo. Courtesy, Cairo Museum.

10. STATUES OF RA-HETEP AND NEFERT. Painted limestone. Average height 48 ins. From Meidum. Early IVth Dynasty. At Cairo.

Though carved as separate entities, these statues of a prince and his wife are to be regarded as a dyad. From the circumstance of finding them intact in a tomb chapel in a pyramid cemetery of King Sneferu, it may be inferred that they represent a late development of the now destroyed or as yet unrevealed sculpture of that king's reign. Their vividly painted surfaces obscure the modelling to some extent, but give a good idea of what a complete Egyptian statue should look like.

Photo. Courtesy, Cairo Museum.

- 11 & 12. STATUE OF PRINCE HEM-ON. Limestone. Height 62 ins. From Giza. Early IVth Dynasty. At Hildesheim.

This statue of the vizier and architect of Kheops probably transcends all Egyptian conceptions of statuary, and sets its own

standards. It has several unique features—the corpulent body is as much a portrait as the strongly personal physiognomy; it bears no signs of ever having been painted, though the inscription is inlaid with coloured pastes; and the arms and legs are almost completely released from stone fillings and supports. The position of the hands has already achieved the monumental repose evident in the Khephren statues (Cp. No. 15). The inlaid eyes were smashed from their settings by tomb robbers but have been restored in plaster. This statue, like the two preceding (see No. 10), seems to belong to a less formalistic tradition than that of the Giza school—a tradition which subsequent excavation may reveal.

Photos. Courtesy, Pelizæus Museum, Hildesheim.

13. HEAD OF AN UNKNOWN KING. Red granite. Height 24 ins. From the Memphis area (?) IIIrd-IVth Dynasty. At Brooklyn.

This head, which is larger than life size, has recently been dated to the late IIIrd or early IVth Dynasty on stylistic grounds. It is important as showing an example of Old Kingdom archetypal art which has emerged from its archaic stage, complete mastery over the working of the intractable red granite having been achieved. The preference for hard stone, and the monumental, formalistic nature of the sculpture rather suggest the stronger Southern influence which is apparent in the IVth Dynasty. This head may therefore be from a statue of Sneferu or Kheops; and future excavations in the Memphis area may make a more specific identification possible.

Photo. Courtesy, Brooklyn Museum, New York.

14. HEAD OF KING RA-DED-EF. Red quartzite. Height 11 ins. From Abu Roash. IVth Dynasty. At the Louvre, Paris.

The fragments of statues which have survived from the short reign of Ra-ded-ef suggest that the restrained style of the IVth Dynasty sculpture was firmly established as is apparent in the austere lines of this head. Several new forms appear to have been developed in this reign, such as the pose best seen in the statue of the next king, Khephren (No. 15; cp. also No. 11); and the seated pair statue with the wife squatting at her husband's feet—a pose which is revived at a later date in private statuary (cp. No. 50).

Photo. Courtesy, Archives Photographiques, Paris.

- 15 & 16. STATUE OF KING KHEPHREN. Diorite. Height 67 ins. From Giza. IVth Dynasty. At Cairo.

This statue from the Valley Building of the Second Pyramid at Giza is one of the few remaining out of well over a hundred from the various buildings of the pyramid complex of Khephren. It has achieved a complete expression of the monumental; the pose of the hands—the left flat on the thigh, the right clenched as though holding a sceptre—has established a balance which is without conflict, and is copied especially by royal sculptors for many generations afterwards. The high-backed throne sur-

mounted by the protecting falcon with out-stretched wings is peculiar to the royal sculpture of this period and disappears after the reign of Khephren; but has a curious echo at a later date (cp. No. 62).

Photos. Courtesy, Cairo Museum.

17. HEAD OF KING KHEPHREN. Alabaster. Height 5½ ins. Probably from the king's mortuary temple at Giza. IVth Dynasty. At Copenhagen.

Photo. Courtesy, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen.

- 18 - 22. PORTRAIT HEADS of members of the family of King Kheops.

Photos. Courtesy, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

These so-called "reserve heads" are not tomb statues, but were put in the actual burial chamber, perhaps as substitute heads in the event of the destruction of the bodies of the deceased. In their summary treatment of the planes of the face, they suggest an attempt to reproduce in a more permanent form the plaster masks modelled over the linen mummy-wrappings. They were almost certainly products of the royal workshops; but their use died out fairly rapidly. It may well be that their introduction was due to some alien idea peculiar to the culture of the early kings of the IVth Dynasty.

HEAD OF A PRINCE (18). Limestone. Height 10½ ins. From Giza. IVth Dynasty. At Boston.

HEAD OF A PRINCESS (19 & 22). Limestone. Height 12 ins. From Giza. IVth Dynasty. At Boston.

This portrait head is of the wife of No. 21. The Americans who excavated it regard it as showing negroid characteristics; and although this view has been challenged, it is difficult to refute. A somewhat alien, un-Egyptian physiognomy is evident in several members of the royal family at this period.

HEAD OF A PRINCESS (20). Limestone. Height 10½ ins. From Giza. IVth Dynasty. At Boston.

HEAD OF A PRINCE (21). Limestone. Height 12 ins. From Giza. IVth Dynasty. At Boston.

- 23 & 24. BUST OF PRINCE ANKH-HAF. Painted limestone. Height 20 ins. From Giza. IVth Dynasty. At Boston.

This bust, with its curiously modern appearance, is unique in the Old Kingdom. It probably had a different function from the tomb statues of Ankh-haf which were destroyed. The limestone surface has been coated with a skin of plaster, varying in thickness and painted light red, which seems to have encouraged a less summary treatment of plastic forms than is evident in the reserve heads. Ankh-haf as Vizier undoubtedly was able to commission a royal master sculptor for this bust. It comes as near to realism as the idealistic conventions of the Egyptian style permit.

Photos. Courtesy, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

25. **TRIAD OF KING MYKERINUS AND GODDESSES.** Dark slate, traces of colouring. Height 33 ins. Giza. Later IVth Dynasty. At Cairo.

This triad, showing the king supported by the goddess Hathor and the goddess of the Jackal district is one of four complete groups which were found in the Valley Temple of the Third Pyramid at Giza. Others were in a fragmentary state. They all display differing portraits of the King and his Queen, in whose features the countenances of the goddesses are cast (cp. No. 27). While they are in the same monumental tradition as the Khephren statue (Nos. 15, 16), a less austere conception is evident.

Photo. Courtesy, Cairo Museum.

26. **PAIR STATUE OF MYKERINUS AND HIS QUEEN.** Dark slate, traces of colouring. Height 56 ins. From Giza. Later IVth Dynasty. At Boston.

This statue of King Mykerinus and Queen Kha-merer-nebty II is incomplete; the lower part lacks the paint and polish that have been given to the features. Its restrained feeling for simplified masses is in the tradition of the Khephren statue, yet the intimate pose of husband and wife on an equal scale, and linked by an identity of treatment and feeling, introduces another idea besides that of divine majesty. This statue was the first of its kind and set the fashion for many similar compositions in ensuing dynasties showing wives supporting their husbands; and occasionally, husbands embracing their wives. See also No. 27.

Photo. Courtesy, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

27. **KING MYKERINUS AND QUEEN KHA-MERER-NEBTY II;** upper part of statue shown in No. 26.

Photo. Courtesy, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

28. **HEAD OF MYKERINUS.** Alabaster. Height 11½ ins. From Giza. Later IVth Dynasty. At Cairo.

An unusual feature is the representation of the locks of hair at the edge of the wig-cover in relief.

Photo. Courtesy, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

29. **HEAD OF A YOUTHFUL KING.** Alabaster. Height 10 ins. From Giza. Late IVth Dynasty. At Boston.

This head with its rounded forms probably represents Shepseskaf, who completed the monuments of his father Mykerinus. It was found in the Valley Temple of Mykerinus, and there is a chance that it may represent that king as a young man.

Photos. Courtesy, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

30. **STATUE OF PRINCE KHU-EN-RA.** Yellow limestone. Height 12 ins. From Giza. Later IVth Dynasty. At Boston.

This statue of a son of Mykerinus is one of the earliest complete examples showing the deceased in the important rôle of scribe. Its monumental character is out of all proportion to its

modest size. The summary treatment of the underlying forms is not entirely due to the fact that the statuette is largely unfinished; the face has received its final polish but is still in the idealistic style of the reserve heads.

Photo. Courtesy, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

31. PAIR STATUE OF QUEEN HETEP-HERES II AND HER DAUGHTER, QUEEN MERESANKH III. Yellow limestone. Height 24 ins. From Giza. Late IVth Dynasty. At Boston. Reconstructed from fragments.

This small statue, which is of competent rather than exceptional workmanship, shows an early and unusual attempt to solve the problem of expressing a human kinship by plastic means. The independent figures of the two queens are united by the arm of the taller woman who embraces the neck of her daughter in a somewhat unnatural posture. We are here presented more with a genealogical fact than an expression of family relationship. There is no attempt to associate the two women in anything more than a formal composition, which with its emphasis upon vertical masses, preserves the cubic quality of the sculpture.

Photo. Courtesy, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

32. PAIR STATUE OF THE STEWARD MEMY-SABU AND HIS WIFE. White limestone. Height 24 ins. From Giza. Late Vth or early VIth Dynasty. At New York.

This later statue is illustrated here for contrast with the preceding. The sculptor has solved problems of form and content much more successfully. He has achieved a natural pose, especially in the management of the encircling arms, by making the wife smaller than her husband and so placing her that the contours of her body are complementary to his. The protecting Sabu gazes confidently ahead; the more dependent woman has a slightly different field of vision. Their somewhat coarse, peasant faces, their spatulate fingers and toes, and the expression of an unaffected, personal relationship have transformed the aristocratic monumentality of the earlier sculpture into a vital *genre* style.

Photo. Courtesy, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

33. COLOSSAL HEAD OF KING USER-KAF. Red granite. Height approx. 27 ins. From Sakkara. Early Vth Dynasty. At Cairo.

This fore-runner of the colossal statues of later periods shows a certain simplification or stylisation of forms which is appropriate to sculpture on such a large scale, in so crystalline a stone: but the monumental effect of divine majesty which has been achieved is the more impressive.

Photo. Courtesy, Cairo Museum.

34. HEAD OF SESHEM-NEFER. Red granite. Height 9½ ins. From Giza. Late IVth Dynasty. At Boston.

The treatment of this head expresses the naturalism that

becomes more prominent from the reign of Mykerinus. The unsympathetic nature of the granular stone has encouraged a more impressionistic handling; but the restrained style of the underlying forms is in the tradition of the slate and alabaster statues of contemporary sovereigns.

Photo. Courtesy, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

35. STATUE OF RA-NEFER. Painted limestone. Height 72 ins. From Sakkara. Early Vth Dynasty. At Cairo.

As High Priest of Ptah, the craftsman-god, Ra-nefer had the supervision of the sculptors and painters of the royal capital; and was evidently able to commission master-craftsmen for the making of his large tomb statues which represent at its best the classical, idealistic sculpture of the Vth Dynasty style at Sakkara. The statue here illustrated shows Ra-nefer in a full wig and short ceremonial kilt, and is regarded by some as representing the deceased in the vigour of early manhood.

Photo. Courtesy, Cairo Museum.

36. TORSO OF A WOMAN. Limestone. Height 54 ins. Probably from Giza. Early Vth Dynasty. At Worcester, Mass.

This fragment, representing the body of a woman clothed in a tight-fitting garment, is almost certainly part of a family group which originally was completed by figures of two men and probably two children. The statue of the woman formed the left side of the group, her right arm embracing the body of the man next to her. The striding pose is unusual for a woman though it may be seen in some of the statues of Kha-merer-nebty II (cp. No. 26). This torso must be regarded as one of the masterpieces of Old Kingdom sculpture; but its restrained naturalism is still idealistic—the symmetry of the musculature is unperturbed by the forward placing of the left leg, and the upward raising of the right arm.

Photo. Courtesy, Worcester Art Museum.

37. PRINCE KHUFU-KAF AND HIS WIFE. Limestone. Approx. 30 x 24 ins. Early IVth Dynasty. At Giza.

This relief from the west wall of a *mastaba* chapel at Giza shows one of the sons of Kheops, supported by his wife, receiving the funerary offerings presented to them. It is in the austere, restrained style of the period, making its effect by purity of line rather than the management of bold patterns and the elaboration of detail. It is one of the earliest representations in relief of two figures composed as a group.

Photo. Courtesy, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

38. FUNERARY ESTATES OF KING SAHU-RA. Limestone. Approx. 27 x 22½ ins. Early Vth Dynasty. From Abu Sir (north of Sakkara). At Cairo.

This relief from the north wall of the sadly ruined sanctuary of the mortuary temple of Sahu-ra shows personifications of the funerary estates of the king bringing him offerings from his

domains. The very low relief was originally painted, but is evidently in the tradition of the royal work of the preceding dynasty. There is the same careful drawing, the same use of delicate but firm line, and a high degree of finish in the detail.

Photo. Courtesy, Cairo Museum.

39. STATUE OF KA-APER. Wood. Height 44 ins. From Sakkara. Early Vth Dynasty. At Cairo. Staff and lower part of legs and feet restored.

The native workmen who discovered this famous statue in 1860 called it the *Sheikh el Beled* from its resemblance to their village headman, and the name has stuck to it ever since. It was found with two other wooden statues of Ka-aper and his wife. All are remarkably naturalistic in conception and show great technical ability in the handling of the material and in the careful attention to such details as the convolutions of the ears and the ridges in the close-cropped hair. Originally, the wood was overlaid with gesso and painted; the eyes of the two male statues are inlaid. This statue probably represents Ka-aper in the dignity of a corpulent prosperity, in contrast to the youthful vigour of his other statue. All three statues are the earliest surviving examples of large-scale sculpture in wood—an art-form which maintained a high standard of craftsmanship in Ancient Egypt.

Photo. Courtesy, Cairo Museum.

40. STATUE OF KAY(?) AS A SCRIBE. Painted limestone. Height 21 ins. From Sakkara. Early Vth Dynasty. At the Louvre, Paris.

Usually known as the "scribe accroupi" or the "scribe rouge," this statue is almost certainly of the provincial governor Kay in the important role of a scribe—the educated man. It is remarkable for the faithful carving of the bony structure of the face, shoulders and hands, and the adiposity of the trunk and thighs. This marked realism distinguishes the *Scribe Rouge* from a companion statue of Kay, and indeed sets it apart from most Egyptian sculpture.

Photo. Courtesy, Archives Photographiques, Paris.

41. PAIR STATUE OF AN UNKNOWN MAN AND WIFE. Wood. Height 27 ins. From the Memphis area (?). Probably Vth Dynasty. At the Louvre, Paris.

This group is unique in that it has been designed as a wooden pair statue, the figure of the woman being attached to that of her husband by her encircling arm which is fully visible in the rear view. Unfortunately, warping, decay and damage tend to obscure the quality of the modelling, the lively portraiture and the unusual pose of both the man and his wife.

Photo. Courtesy, Archives Photographiques, Paris.

42. STATUE OF SENEZEM-IB-MEHY. Wood. Height 42 ins. From Giza. Early VIth Dynasty. At Boston.

The inlaid eyes are lacking. Despite destruction, the subtle

modelling is apparent. This statue shows the architect Mehy in the conventional attitude of striding forward; originally his left hand held a staff, and a baton was in his right hand. He is shown naked—a somewhat unusual feature, but not unknown in other wooden statues of the VIth Dynasty.

Photo. Courtesy, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

43. STATUE OF KHNUM-BAF AS A SCRIBE. Black granite. Height 14 ins. From Giza. Early Vth Dynasty. At Boston.

The great *mastaba* of Khnum-baf produced about fifty statues, mostly fragmentary, in various sizes and materials. The specimen illustrated is almost complete. It shows Khnum-baf with his head and neck thrust forward slightly, an attitude which is unconventional and suggests an attempt to record a more naturalistic impression of a scribe actually writing to dictation.

Photo. Courtesy, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

44. STATUE OF KA-EM-KED. Painted limestone. Height 16 ins. From Sakkara. Later Vth Dynasty. At Cairo.

This statue is of the funerary priest of the high dignitary, Ur-ir-en. The kneeling attitude with hands crossed is most unusual, suggesting that the statue was probably intended as a superior kind of servant statue for the service of Ur-ir-en in whose tomb it was found together with other remarkable servant statues (cp. No. 54).

Photo. Courtesy, Cairo Museum.

45. STATUE OF MITRY AND HIS WIFE. Wood. Heights: man 59 ins.; woman 53 ins. From Sakkara. Late Vth or early VIth Dynasty. At New York.

The tomb of Mitry yielded eleven wooden statues of differing types and qualities. The pair shown here, while not exceptional in workmanship, are in a fair state of preservation and reveal a somewhat naïve vitality.

Photo. Courtesy, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

46. STATUE OF NEFER. Painted limestone. Height 14 ins. From Sakkara. Vth Dynasty. At Cairo.

The idealistic art of the Old Kingdom is seen at its most characteristic in this statuette of the Master Brewer, Nefer. The back-pillar has begun to assume an integral importance with the statue itself.

Photo. Courtesy, Cairo Museum.

47. STANDING STATUE OF RA-HETEP. Painted limestone. Height 32 ins. From Sakkara. Vth Dynasty. At Marischal College, Aberdeen.

Photo. Courtesy, University of Aberdeen.

48. SEATED STATUE OF RA-HETEP. Dark granite. Height 24 ins. From Sakkara. Vth Dynasty. At New York.

Photo. Courtesy, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

The *mastaba* (C. 24) of Ra-hetep, who was Scribe of the Royal Portfolio, contained nineteen statues of the owner. Of these,

fifteen are in Cairo, one is in Athens, another in New York, and another in Aberdeen. The remaining statue has not yet been identified. Eleven are in granite, one in alabaster, and the rest in limestone. Some are of a very low standard of workmanship and bear little resemblance to one another, suggesting that unskilled apprentices were commissioned for some of the statues. All are duly inscribed, however, with the name and some of the titles of the owner (mis-spelt in several instances). The two illustrated are notable as being by more competent hands, the granite specimen showing particular accomplishment in the handling of the hard stone.

49. STATUE OF THE CHIEF PHYSICIAN NE-ANKH-RA. Painted limestone. Height 25 ins. From Giza. Early VIth Dynasty. At Cairo.

The asymmetrical attitude of this statue is exceptional; and although it has been explained as representing a cripple, it seems, more plausibly, to be an attempt to catch the movement of a man about to arrange his legs in the normal squatting position. The naturalistic pose of the hands in adjusting the kilt seems to support this suggestion. The new forces at work in the late Vth and early VIth Dynasties are here most clearly expressed; and the normal cubic conception of Egyptian statuary has almost entirely been transcended. Although a similar attitude showing a man squatting with one foot flat on the ground and the other tucked under him, is sometimes found in later times, it invariably conforms to a cubic outline.

Photo. Courtesy, Cairo Museum.

50. STATUE OF AKHY AND HIS FAMILY. Painted limestone. Height 32 ins. From Sakkara. Late Vth Dynasty. At Cairo.

This statue, showing the wife and daughter of the owner squatting at his feet, seems to revive an earlier style already evident in a fragmentary statue of King Ra-ded-ef. The pose of the hands is also similar to that introduced in the reign of Ra-ded-ef (cp. No. 11). Antiquarian sources may have played a more important part in the maintaining of the Egyptian art-style than has hitherto been considered possible. The question is complicated by the disappearance in recent times of many such sources.

Photo. Courtesy, Cairo Museum.

51. STATUE OF SOKAR-NEFER AND HIS WIFE. Limestone. Height 18 ins. From Sakkara. Vth Dynasty. At Cairo.

This group, which has suffered from lying for a long time in water, shows a variation upon the usual pair statue. The man is seated while his wife stands beside him with her right arm on his right shoulder and her left arm grasping his left upper arm. Other fragmentary statues exist where the pose is reversed—the woman sits and embraces her husband who stands beside her, a

pose which is at least as old as one of the Mykerinus triads now in Boston.

Photo. Courtesy, Cairo Museum.

52. STATUE OF KHNUM-HETEP. Painted limestone. Height 18 ins. From Sakkara. Early VIth Dynasty. At Cairo.

Dwarfs seem to have exercised a peculiar fascination for the Ancient Egyptian. This realistic portrait of Khnum-hetep in all his deformity is in the same humorous spirit as his mock-serious and pretentious title—the Master of the Vestments of the Funerary Priests. Its realistic conception is in the tradition of the servant statues with which it is probably to be classed.

Photo. Courtesy, Cairo Museum.

53. SENEB AND HIS FAMILY. Painted limestone. Height 13 ins. From Giza. VIth Dynasty. At Cairo.

This statue in the *genre* style of the later Old Kingdom is interesting as showing the Egyptian sculptor obliged to adapt his traditional ideas of form in dealing with a unique problem—the representation of a family group in which the most important figure was a dwarf. He has made Seneb equal in stature to his wife by showing him squatting on the bench on which his wife sits. The space which would be occupied by a normal man's legs is filled with the conventional child-figures of the son and daughter. The compact cubic conception of statuary has thus been retained. It is evident that the idealising tendencies in Egyptian art were never really in conflict with the necessity for showing the identity of the owner. Seneb, however idealised his portrait may be, is still a dwarf: his personality is as jealously preserved as his name and titles inscribed on the lower part of the plinth.

Photo. Courtesy, Cairo Museum.

54. STATUETTE OF A WOMAN SERVANT. Painted limestone. Height 14 ins. From Sakkara. Later Vth Dynasty. At Cairo. This statuette represents Ishat, a servant of the magnate Ur-ir-en, grinding corn for her master.

Photo. Courtesy, Cairo Museum.

55. STATUETTE OF A MAN SERVANT STRAINING BEER. Painted limestone. Height 16 ins. From Sakkara. Later Vth Dynasty. At Cairo.

Photo. Courtesy, Cairo Museum.

56. STATUETTE OF CHILDREN PLAYING LEAP-FROG(?). Limestone. Height 8½ ins. Probably from Giza. Early VIth Dynasty. At Chicago.

Representations of children playing games appear in the tomb reliefs of the VIth Dynasty, and this little figurine from the *mastaba* of Ne-inpu-kau appears to be an attempt to translate such a subject into three dimensional form. The effect of movement has been achieved and there is a more plastic feeling for

form, but despite the *controposto* the conception is still essentially cubic.

Photo. Courtesy, Oriental Institute, Chicago.

57. STATUETTE OF A POTTER. Limestone, traces of pigment. Height 5¼ ins. Probably from Giza. Early VIth Dynasty. At Chicago.

This statuette, also from the *mastaba* of Ne-inpu-kau, is a masterpiece of almost brutal realism. The undernourished figure of the potter as he squats before his wheel, with his large extremities, his gaunt face, his bony knees, and the ribs sticking out under his skin, is far removed from the representations of his well-fed masters. The sardonic spirit expressed in this little statue recalls the Alexandrine bronzes of some two thousand years later.

Photo. Courtesy, Oriental Institute, Chicago.

58. STATUE OF KA-EM-SENU. Wood, traces of gesso and pigment. Height 47 ins. From Sakkara. VIth Dynasty. At New York.

This statue represents at its best the standard, idealised, life-sized portrait statue in wood that persisted well into the VIth Dynasty. The background shows part of the tomb-portal of Ka-em-senu.

Photo. Courtesy, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

59. STATUE OF METHETHY. Wood, traces of gesso and pigment. Height 30 ins. From Sakkara. VIth Dynasty. At Boston.

Photo. Courtesy, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

- 60 & 61. KNEELING STATUETTE OF KING PEPY I. Green slate. Height 6 ins. Probably from Sakkara. VIth Dynasty. At Brooklyn.

This statuette, which appears to have been intended as an *ex voto*, is the earliest known example of its kind showing a king kneeling to make libation offerings. It is exceptional for its lively realism—arms and legs have been completely freed from stone fillings and the splayed-out toes and grasping hands have carefully finished nails. The alert, vital expression of the face is enhanced by the inlaid eyes. The hole in the headdress was for the insertion of a uræus-snake, which was probably of gold but is now missing.

Photo. Courtesy, Brooklyn Museum.

- 62 & 63. SEATED STATUETTE OF KING PEPY I. Alabaster. Height 10 ins. Probably from Sakkara. VIth Dynasty. At Brooklyn.

This statuette, also probably an *ex voto*, shows the king in a special costume associated with a jubilee ceremony, seated upon a throne. The legs have been freed from stone supports and the figure of the falcon on the back of the throne shows a similar freeing from the matrix. The falcon recalls the protecting

figure of the Khephren statue (cp. No. 15), but also forms an important element in the hieroglyphic titulary inscribed on the back-pillar.

Photo. Courtesy, Brooklyn Museum.

64. OFFERING-BEARERS OF KING PEPY II. Limestone. Approx. 40 x 20 ins. Late VIth Dynasty. At Sakkara.

This fragment from the north wall of the badly damaged sanctuary of the funerary temple of King Pepy II will show the high quality of royal relief sculpture even at the end of the Dynasty. It should be compared with good private work of the earlier part of the Dynasty (cp. Nos. 65-68).

Photo. Courtesy, Service des Antiquités, Cairo.

- 65-68. RELIEFS FROM TOMB OF MERERUKA. Limestone, traces of pigment. Early VIth Dynasty. At Sakhara.

Photos. From Prentice Duell, The Mastaba of Mereruka (Pls. 60a, 60b, 110 and 154), by Courtesy of the Oriental Institute, Chicago.

In this large private tomb are to be found some of the finest private reliefs of the VIth Dynasty. They are outstanding not only for their bold execution but also for the originality of their composition.

65. MEN WITH OFFERINGS. (26 x 13 ins.) Part of a scene showing Mereruka receiving offerings from his estates. The contrast between the simple lines of the striding men and the complicated patterns of the animals and accoutrements is a feature of the later reliefs (cp. No. 66) where movement is expressed by internal rhythms within larger patterns. Note the action of the young calf leaping over the back of its fellow and the careful variations in the pose of the heads of the other animals and birds.
66. MEN WITH GEESE. (27 x 18 ins.) Another part of the preceding scene. Here an attempt has been made to depart from the purely perceptual image and to show by the overlapping figures of the birds a more visual conception which approaches a perspective view of the subject. At the same time an effect of fluttering movement is given to the birds which is in severe contrast to the slow pacing of the bearers.
67. BUTCHERS. (24 x 16 ins.) This relief shows the Egyptian method of designing the scenes in each register as a series of rectangular units, like word-groups in an hieroglyphic inscription. Often an imaginary frame can be drawn around them so as to isolate them. In this case, however, the scene is linked to the next by the running figure. The familiar contrast between the large curvilinear elements in the design of the sacrificial ox and the bold zigzag of the men's limbs helps to emphasise movement.

68. MERERUKA WITH HIS SONS. (106 x 76 ins.) This striking composition shows a similar balance of mass and movement in the bold triangular design of the men in their long kilts and the staccato rhythm of their interlocked hands. Unfortunately, the damaged relief gives no hint of how the composition was completed.

69. STATUE OF PRINCE MER-EN-RA. Copper. Height of head approx. $4\frac{1}{2}$ ins. From Hierakonpolis. VIth Dynasty. At Cairo.

This statue, of which only the head is here illustrated, is the smaller one of a pair showing Pepy I and, probably, his son Mer-en-ra who succeeded him. The quality of the sculpture is difficult to assess owing to the heavy corrosion which it has suffered, but the group is interesting as showing the only surviving example of copper sculpture from this period. Metal statuary may have been more common than is generally supposed—certainly references to it occur in very early inscriptions. The copper appears to have been hammered over a wooden core, though it is possible that a certain amount of casting was also employed. Adjuncts such as clothing, sceptres, and uræus-snake were in gold or gilded plaster; the eyes are inlaid.

Photo. Courtesy, Cairo Museum.

70 & 71. PAINTED CHAMBER IN THE TOMB OF NAKHT. Painted area of north wall approx. 55 x 60 ins. Mid-XVIIIth Dynasty, c. 1450 B.C. At Thebes.

Two views of the north wall in the painted chamber in the tomb of the official Nakht, showing a later but characteristic management of interior space-decoration. The north wall is unfinished and lacks its ornamental *kheker* frieze at the top.

Photos. Courtesy, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

PLATES



1. Predynastic
Male Figure



2. Slate Palette, Oxford



3. Palette of King Narmer



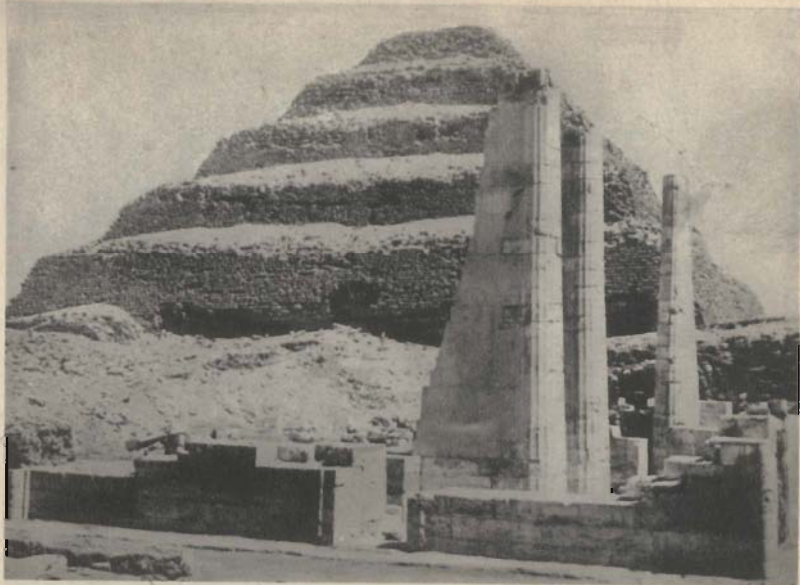
4. King Kha-sekhem, Oxford



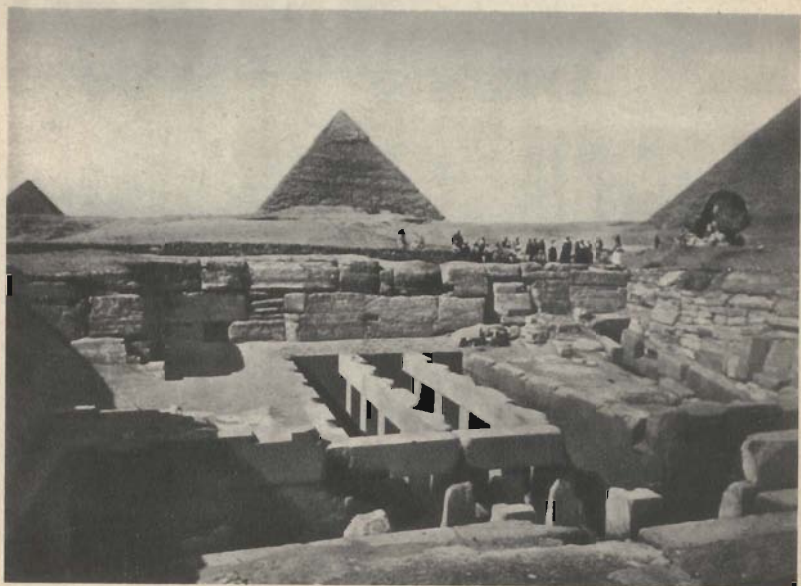
5. King Kha-sekhem, Cairo



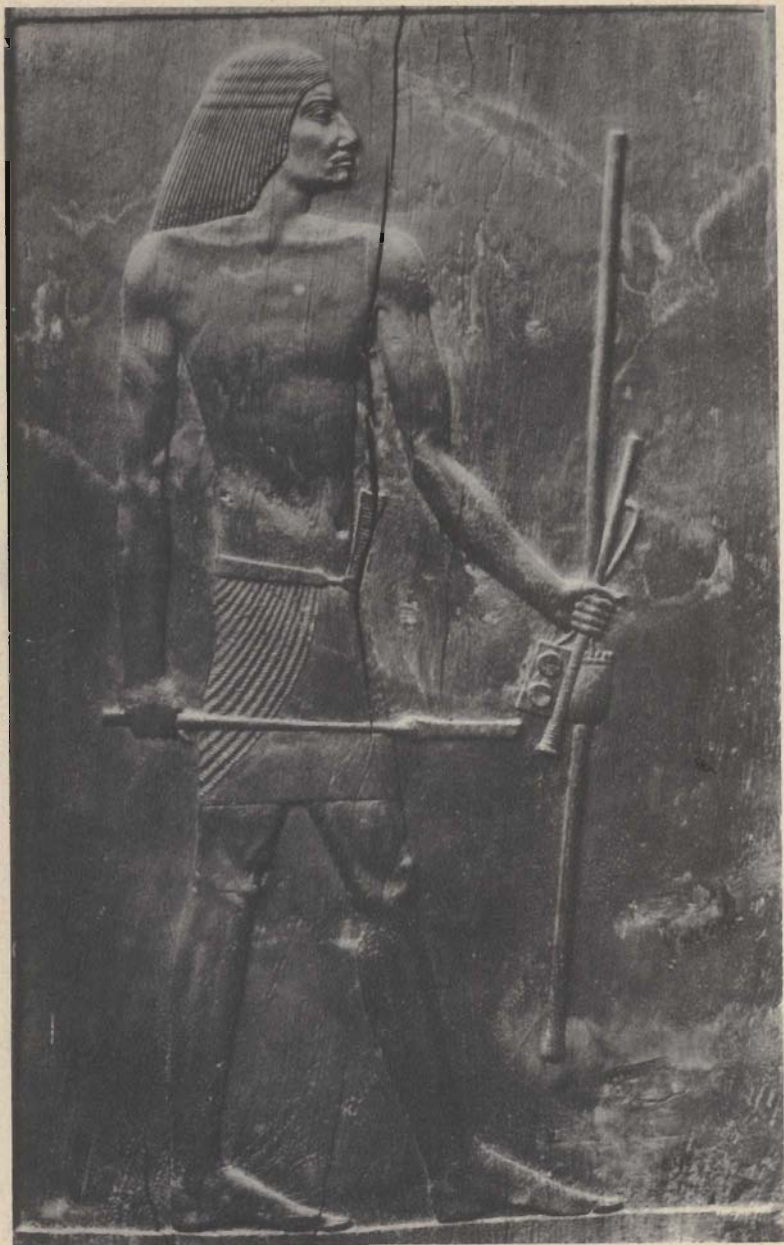
6. King Zoser



7. Step Pyramid of King Zoser



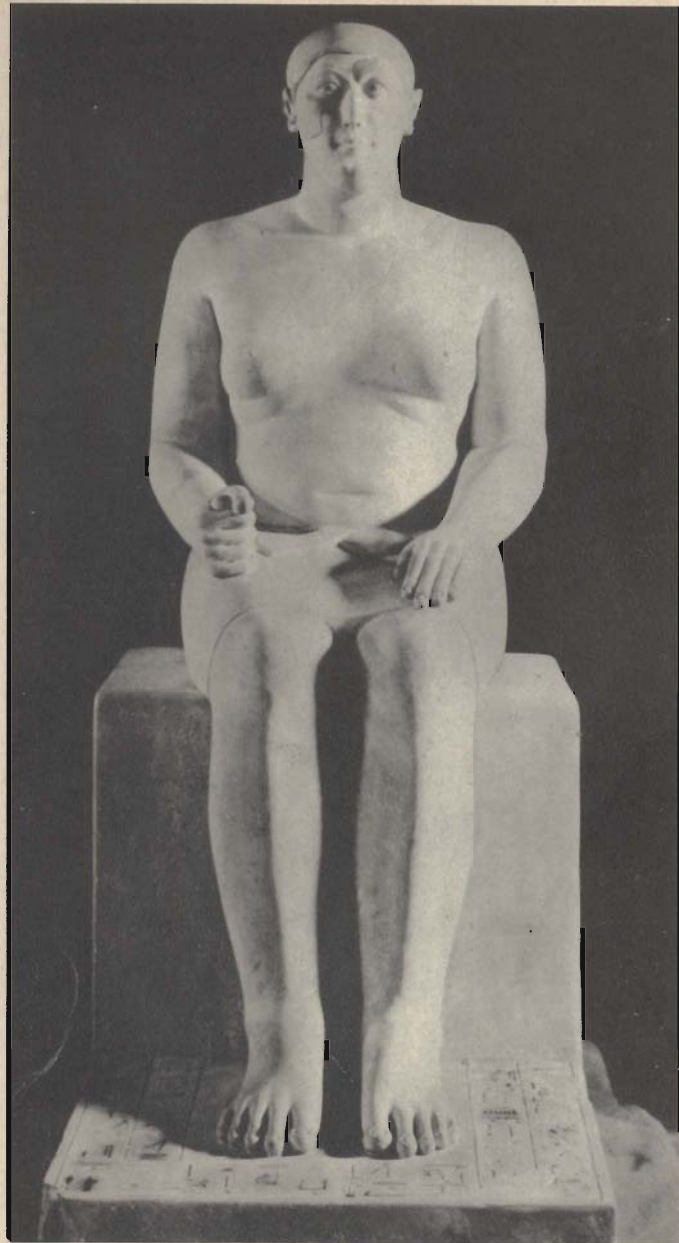
8. Valley Temple of King Khephren



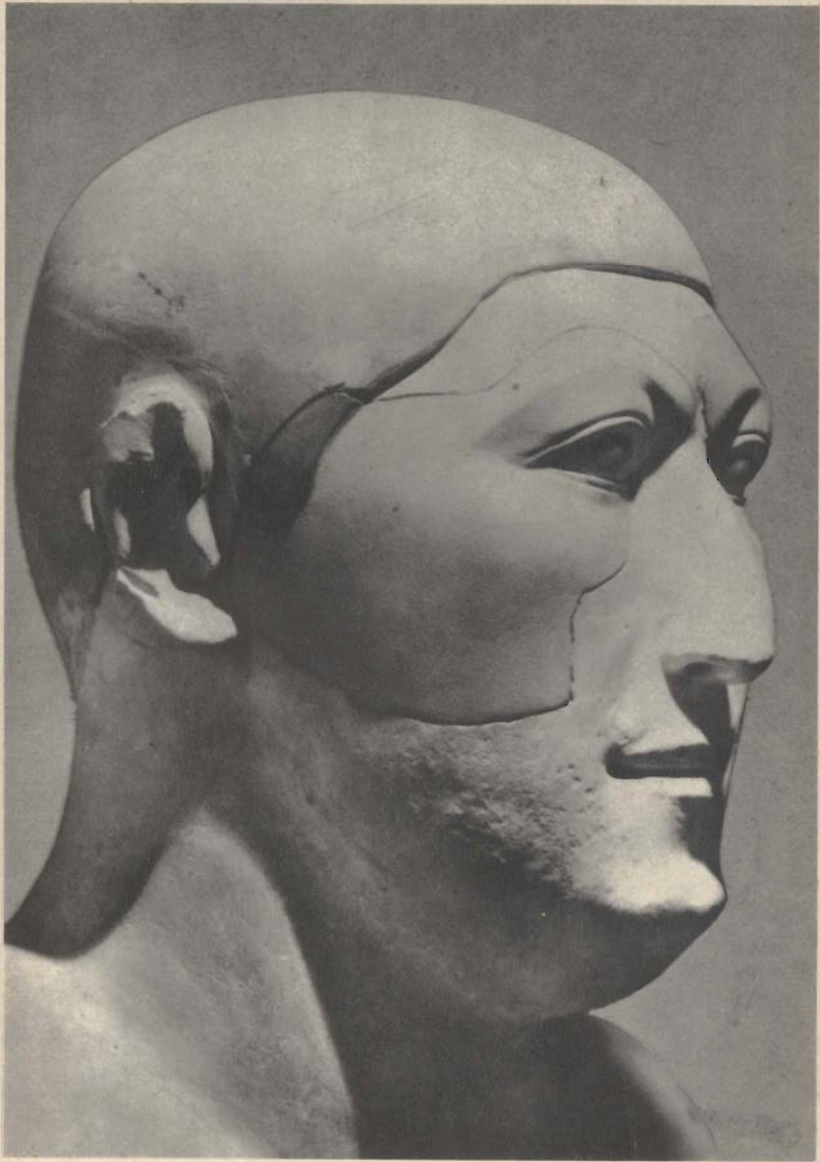
9. Panel of Hesy-ra



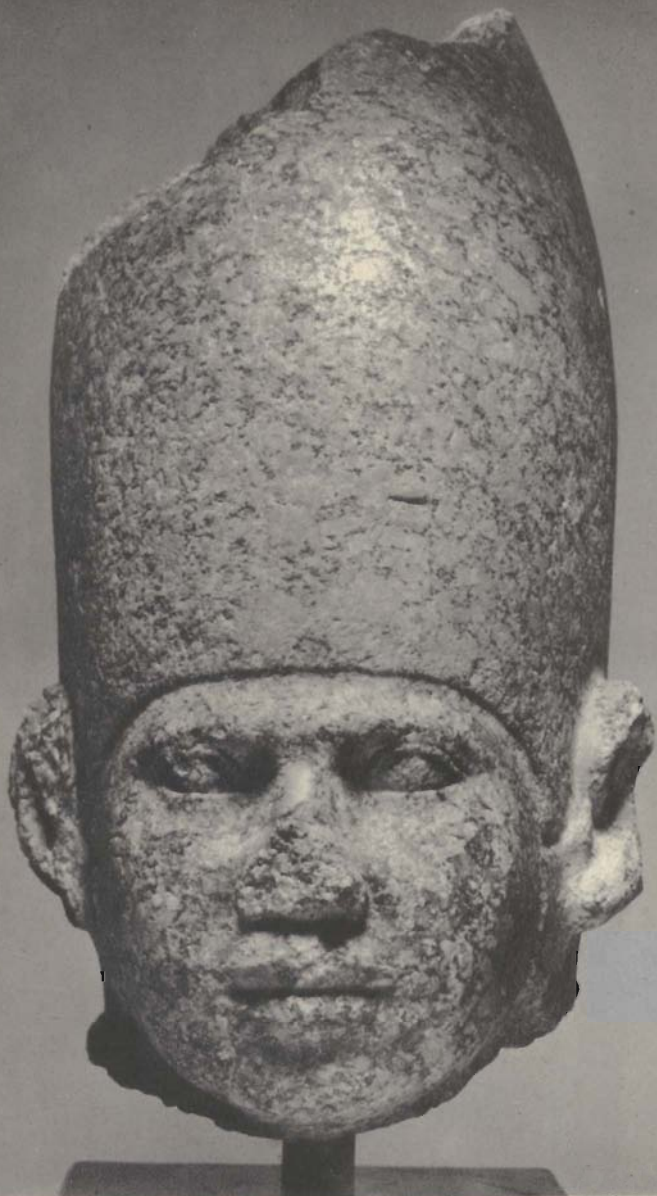
10. Ra-hetep and Nefert



11. Prince Hem-On



12. Prince Hem-On—detail



13. Head of an Unknown King



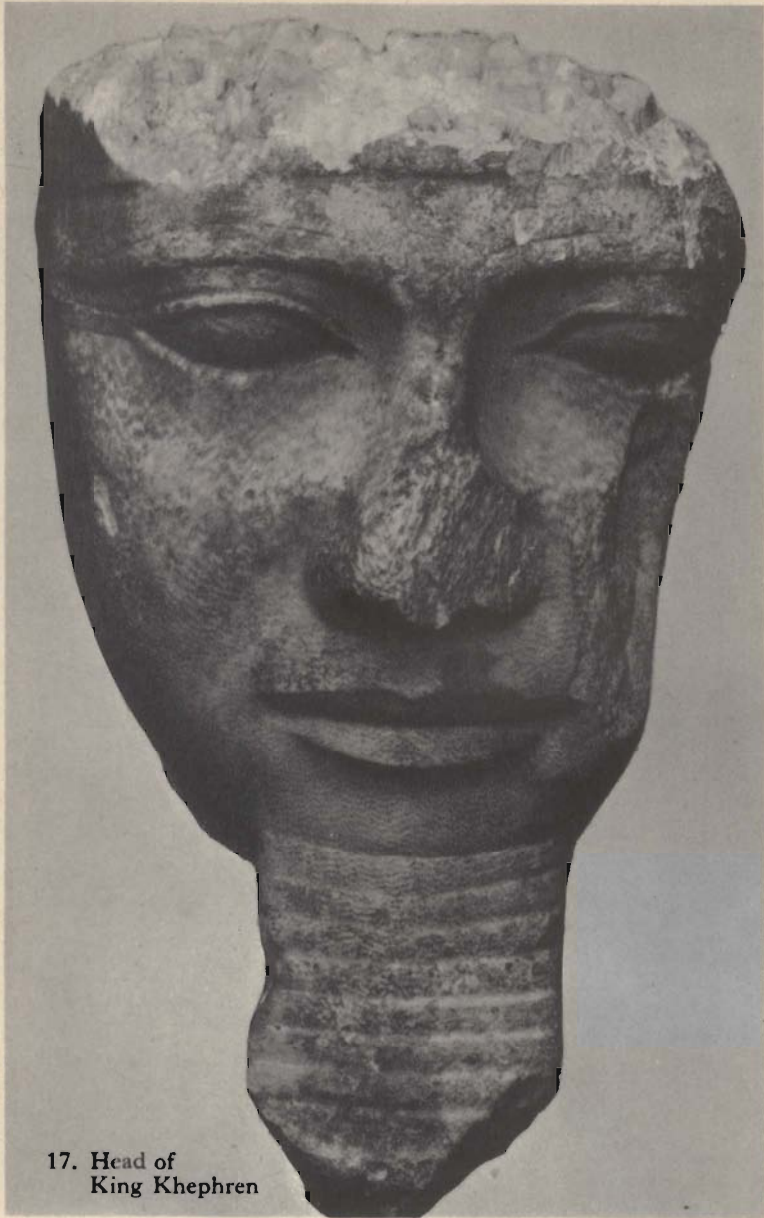
14. Head of King Ra-ded-ef



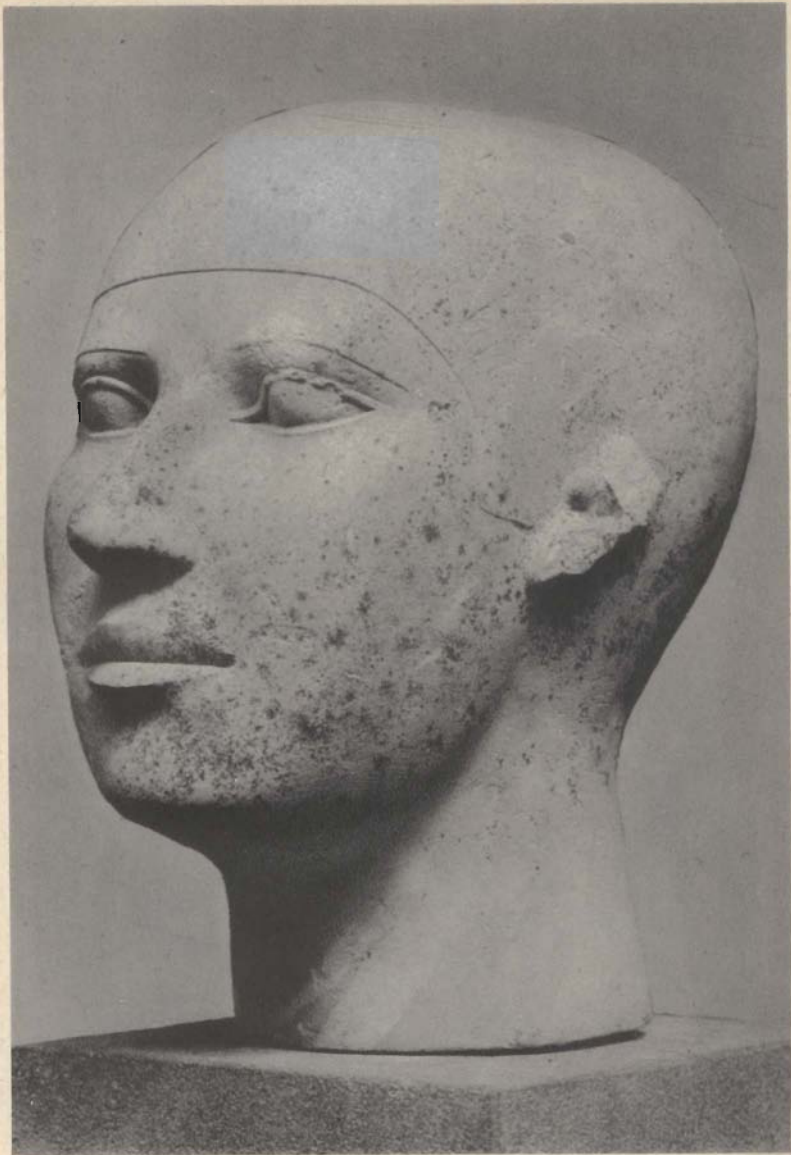
15. King Khephren—side view



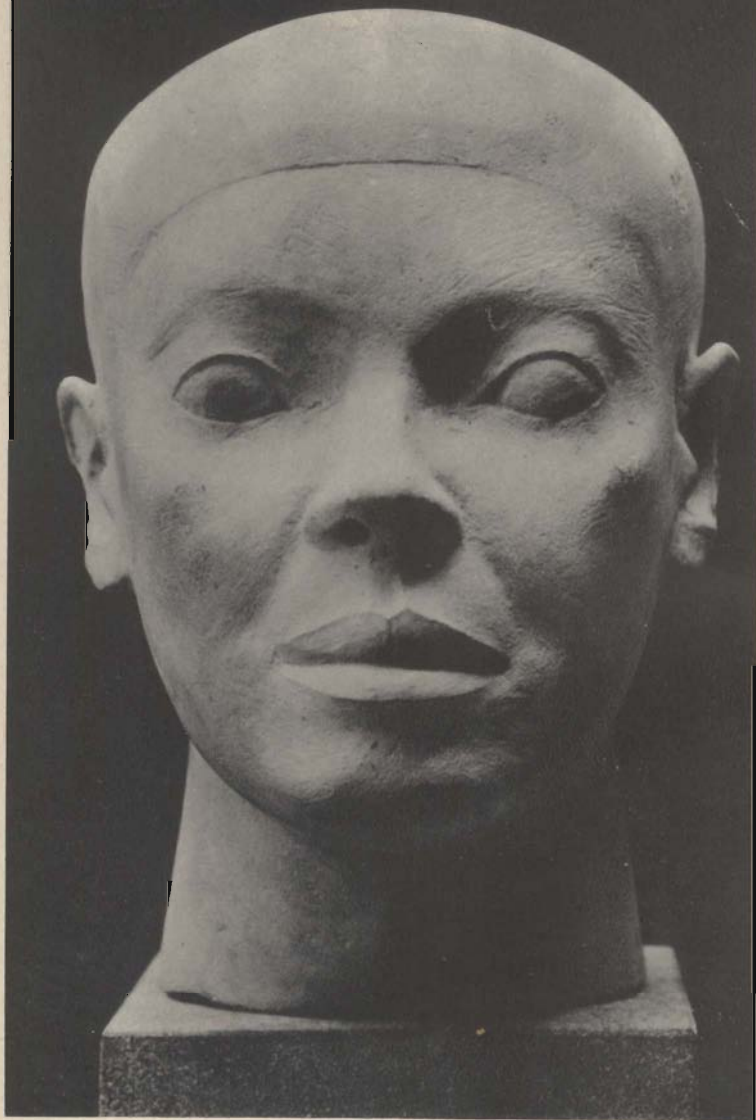
16. King Khephren—front view



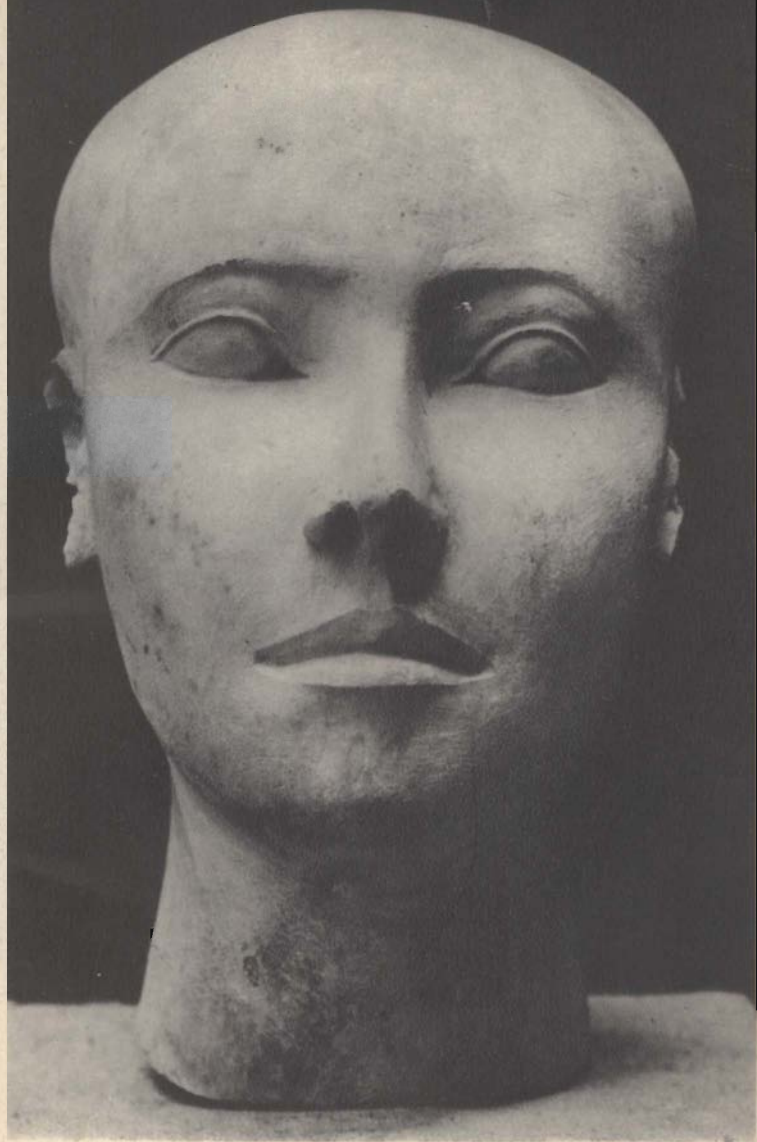
17. Head of
King Khephren



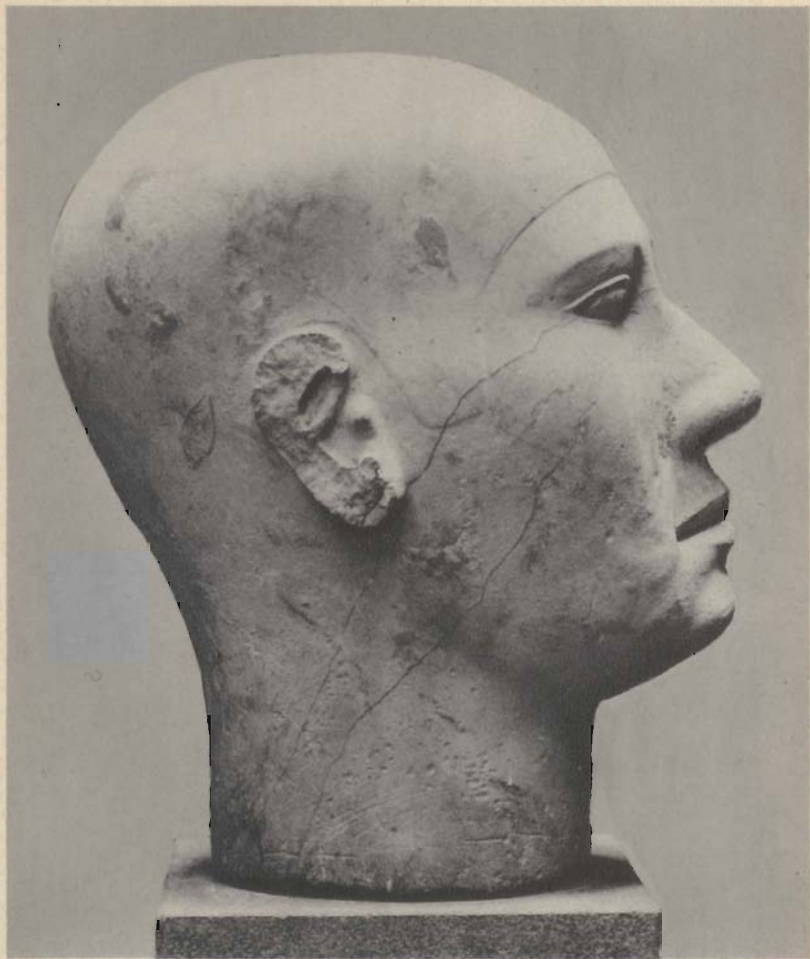
18. Portrait Head of a Prince



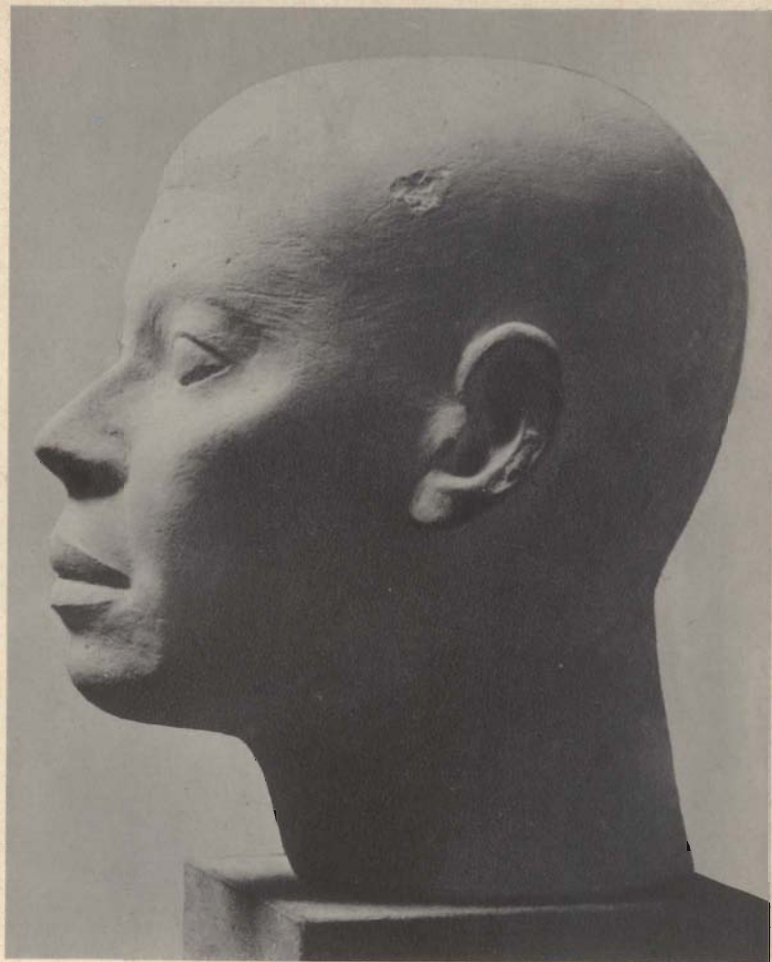
19. Portrait Head of a Princess



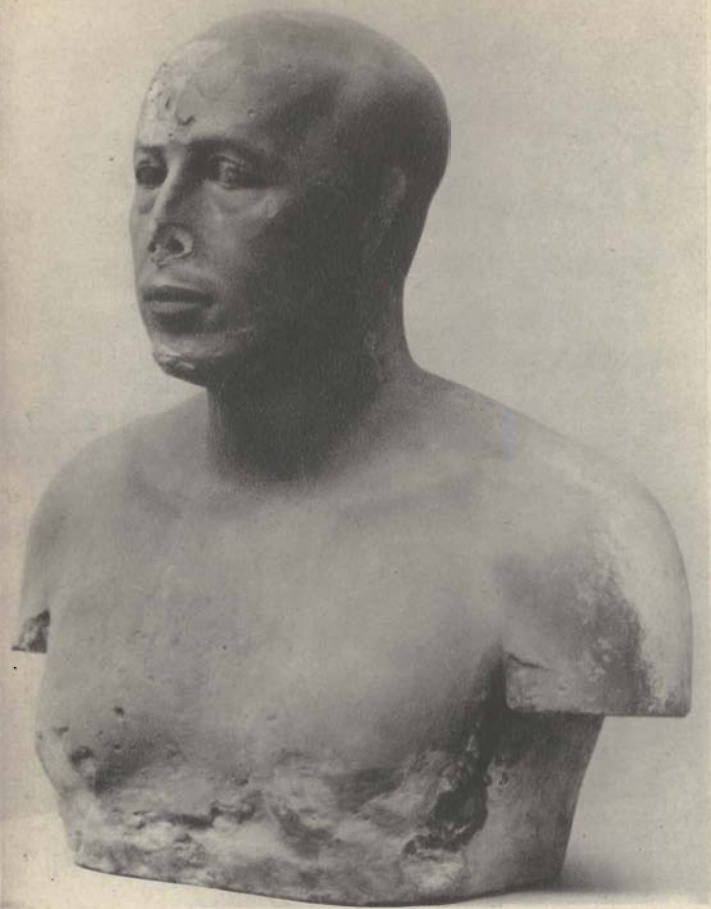
20. Portrait Head of a Princess



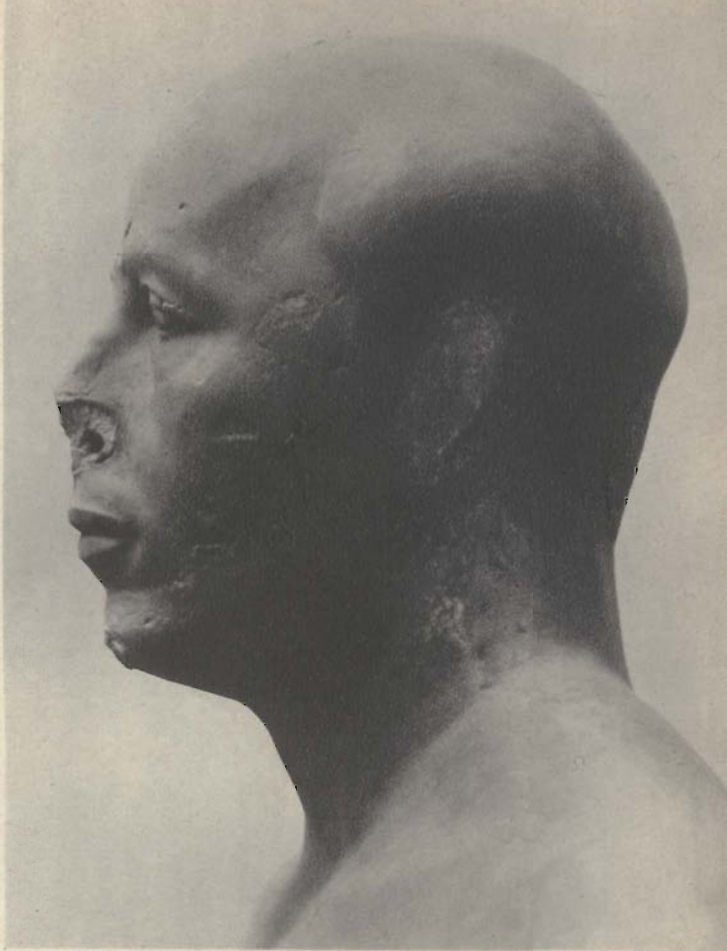
21. Portrait Head of a Prince



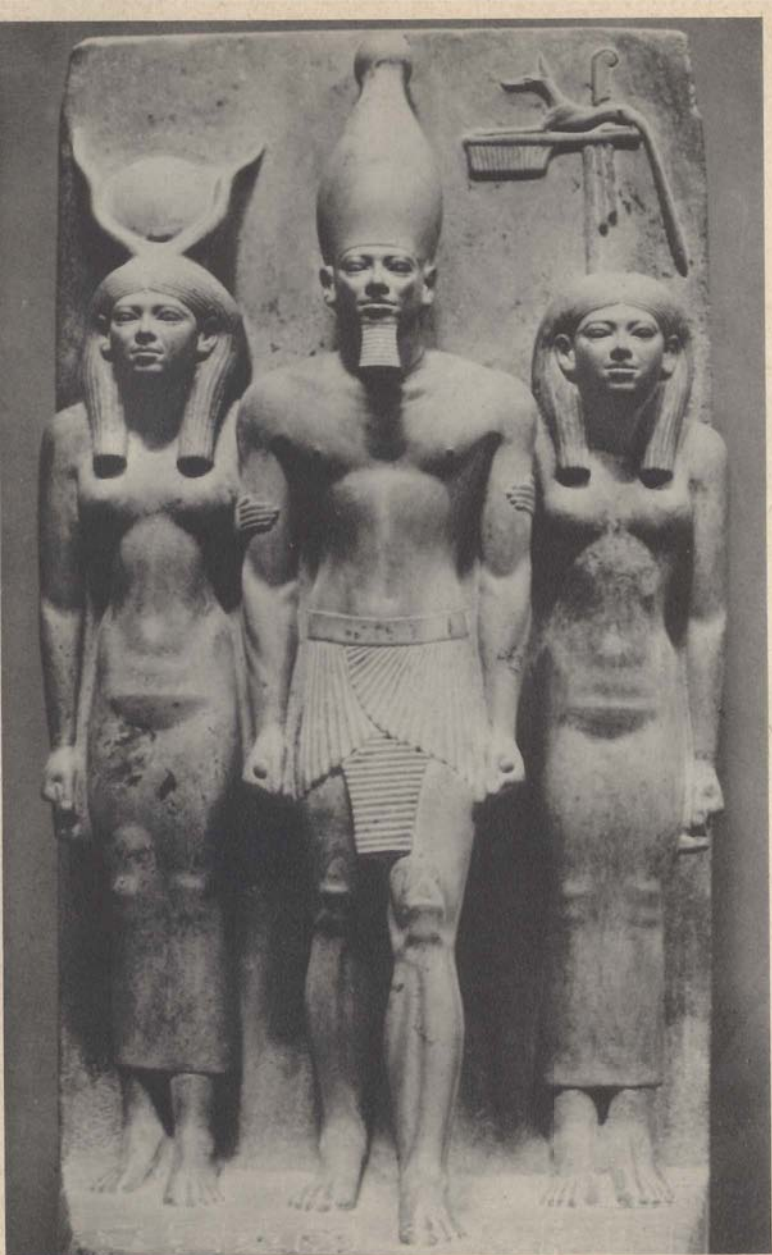
22. Portrait Head of a Princess



23. Bust of Prince Ankh-haf



24. Bust of Prince Ankh-haf—detail



25. Triad of King Mykerinus



26. Mykerinus and his Queen



27. Mykerinus and his Queen—detail



28. Head of King Mykerinus



29. Head of King Shepses-kaf (?)



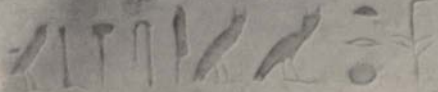
30, Prince Khu-en-ra as a Scribe

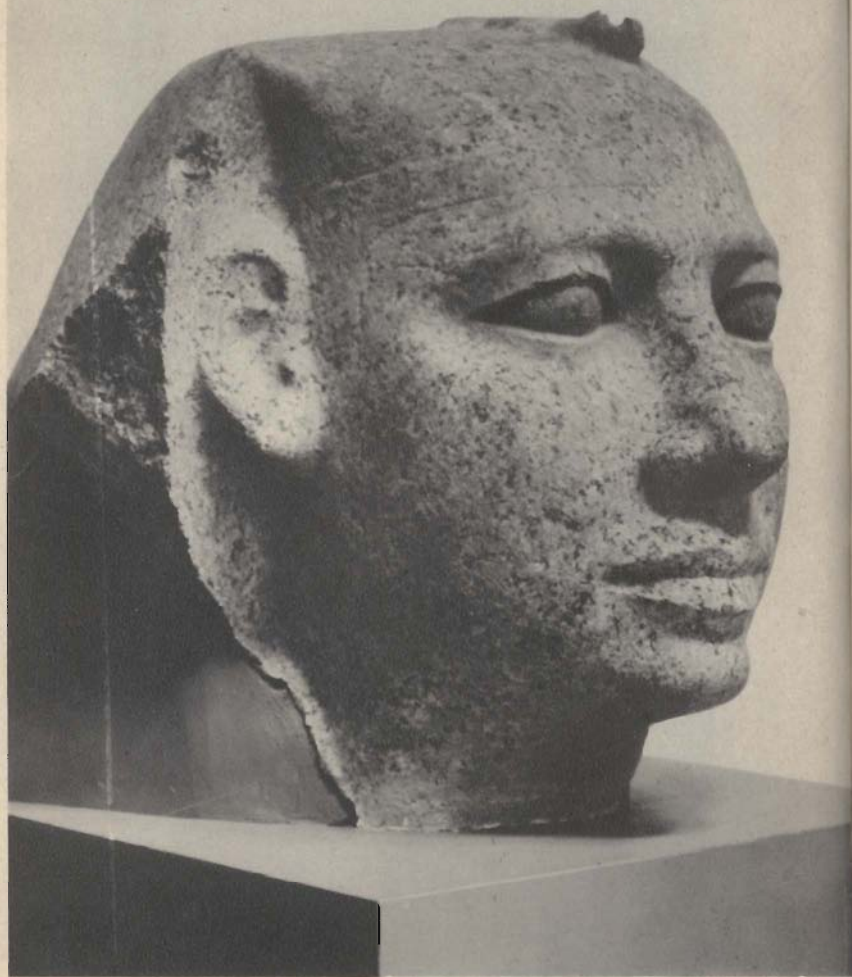


31. Hetep-heres II and her Daughter



32. Memy-sabu and his Wife





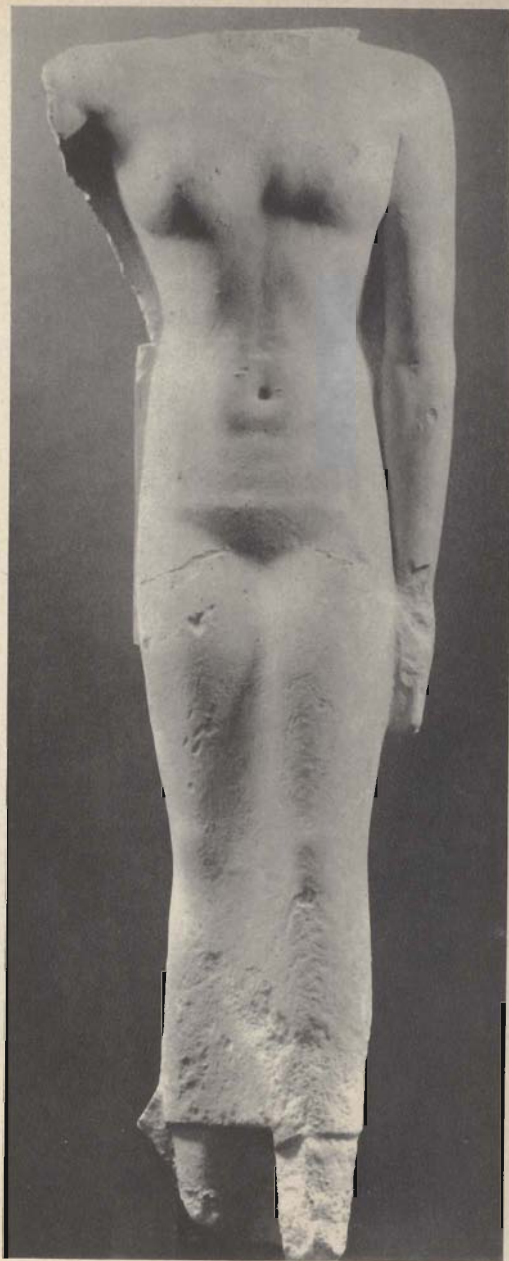
33. Head of King User-kaf



34. Head of Seshem-nefer



35. Ra-nefer



36. Torso of a Woman



37. Prince Khufu-kaf and his Wife



38. Funerary Estates of King Sahu-ra



39. The Priest Ka-aper



40. Kay (?) as a Scribe



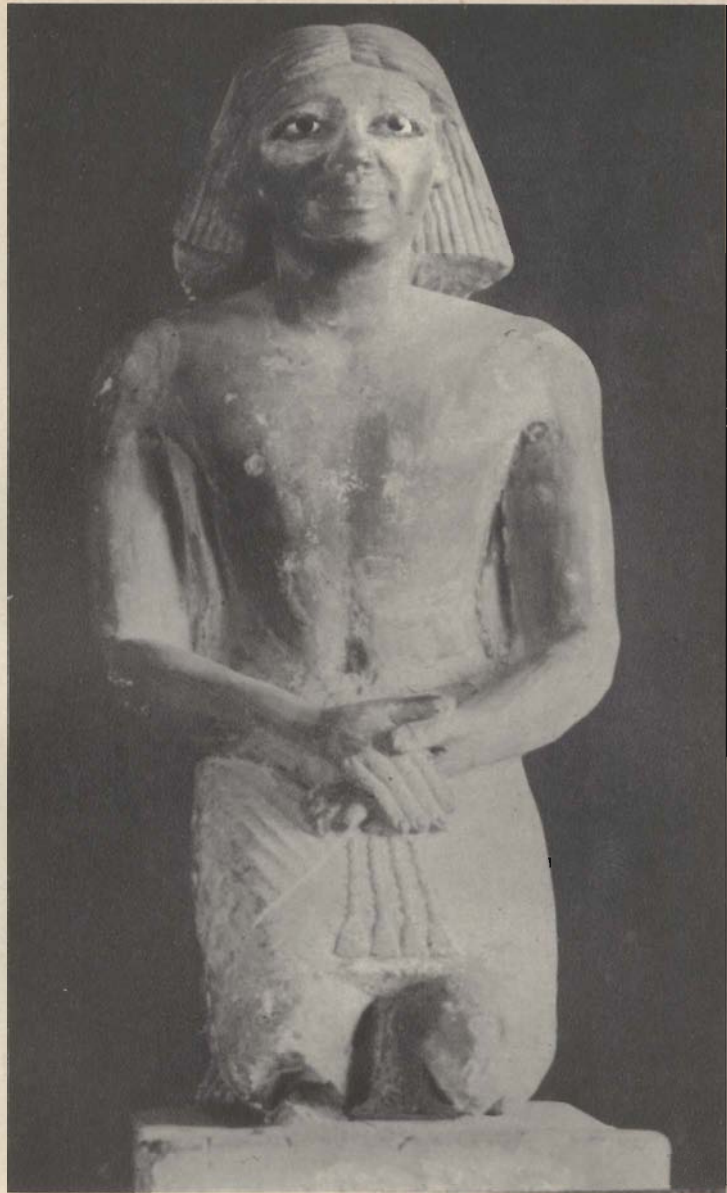
41. Unknown Man and Wife



42. The Architect Senezem-ib-mehy



43. Khnum-baf as a Scribe



44. The Funerary Priest Ka-em-ked



45. Mitry and his Wife



46. Nefer



47. Ra-hetep



48. The Scribe Ra-hetep



49. The Chief Physician Ne-ankh-Ra



50. Akhy and his Family



51. Sokar-nefer and his Wife



52. The Vestry Steward Khnum-hetep



53. Seneb and his Family



54. The Servant Ishat Grinding Corn



55. Servant Straining Beer



56. Children Playing Leap-frog



57. The Potter of Ne-inpu-kau



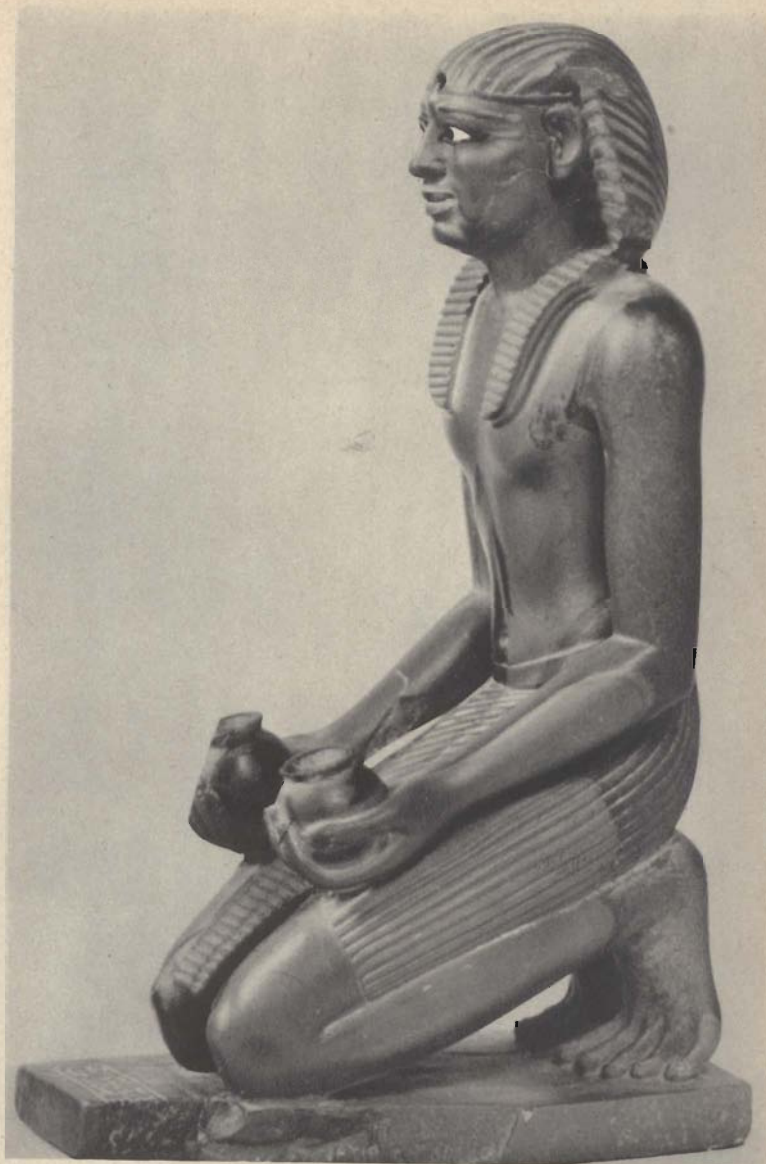
58. Ka-em-senu



59. Methethy



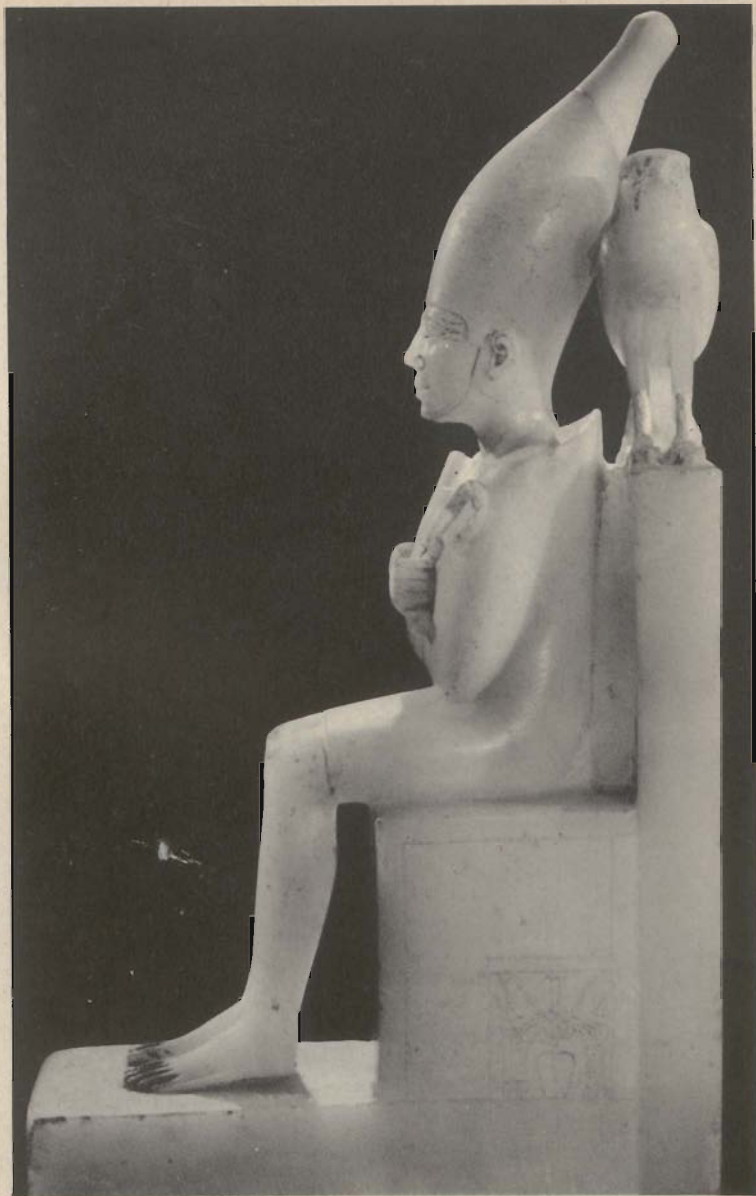
60. King Pepy I—front view



61. King Pepy I—side view



62. King Pepy I



63. King Pepy I



64. Offering-Bearers of King Pepy II



65. Offering-Bearers of Mereruka



66. Bearers Carrying Geese



67. Cutting up the Sacrificial Ox



68. Mereruka with his Sons



69. Copper Statue of Prince Mer-en-ra



70. North Wall



71. North and West Walls