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ON THE STATUARY OF THE OLD KINGDOM<sup>1</sup>

BY ALEXANDER SCHARFF

I CAN only deal in this paper with a few general aspects of Egyptian plastic art during the Old Kingdom. I shall not discuss the law of frontality,<sup>2</sup> which determines the composition of single figures and of groups. But I want to stress two important features characteristic of Egyptian statuary of that time. Every Egyptian statue of a man has a religious aspect; not a single one has been made to be admired by living men. Every statue was a tomb-statue with special functions in the cult of the dead, or, if it was the statue of a king, it was set up in the semi-darkness of a temple hall. Statues of kings set up in full daylight, for instance in front of a temple pylon, are not known to me before the Middle Kingdom. In the time of the Pyramids the statue was withdrawn from the eyes of men as far as possible, in the so-called maṣṭabah-tombs, by setting it up in the statue-room, generally called the *serdāb*, which had no door at all and no connexion with the cult-room save through a slit in the wall, and not even that in all the tombs. Only here and there the tomb-statue stands in the cult-room itself; examples are mostly of the Sixth Dynasty, where, for instance in the huge tomb of Mereruka, the statue forms part of the false door.<sup>3</sup> This is a form of emancipation which we shall remark elsewhere in connexion with the Sixth Dynasty.

By putting the name of the owner on the base or the back-pillar the statue was made the representative of a definite personality. We know many statues of earlier kings which were transformed into statues of one of the Ramessides by the simple expedient of changing the inscribed name. Whatever may have been the reason for this change, we can say with certainty that the ancient Egyptians had no idea of what we call a real portrait of a person. I have dealt with this question of portraiture, which seems to me very important for the understanding of Egyptian sculpture, in an article in *Antiquity*.<sup>4</sup> Here again we see that it is impossible for us to meet Egyptian art on the ground of the conceptions of art to which we are accustomed in modern times. But even if we cannot hope to distinguish a statue of the young Raṁnofre from one of the same man in old age,<sup>5</sup> or, as we shall see presently, to attribute two statues to the same 'master-hand', as the classical archaeologists have the right to do, that does not detract from the value of Egyptian sculpture.

I have just mentioned the two statues of Raṁnofre of the Fifth Dynasty which, to my mind, are among the most perfect works of art in the whole of Egyptian sculpture. There are scholars who designate one as the 'young', the other as the 'old' Raṁnofre. Some years ago Mr. Engelbach, Keeper of the Cairo Museum, made a brilliant experiment, putting a plaster cast of the full wig of the one statue on a plaster cast of the other statue with close-cut hair.<sup>6</sup> The result is really surprising: I cannot find any difference between the two

<sup>1</sup> This paper was delivered (with lantern-slides) by the author to our Society on March 9, 1938 (see vol. 24, p. 131). Here references in the footnotes take the place of the slides, except the twelve which are reproduced in Pls. viii-x.

<sup>2</sup> H. Schäfer, *Von ägyptischer Kunst*, 3rd edn., Leipzig, 1930.

<sup>3</sup> Capart, *Memphis*, Fig. 317.

<sup>4</sup> *Antiq.* 11, 174 ff. Cf. also Schäfer, *Das alltäg. Bildnis (Leipz. Ägyptol. Stud., 5)*.

<sup>5</sup> *JE A* 6, Pl. 26.

<sup>6</sup> *Mél. Maspero*, I, 101 with Pl.

heads (see Pl. viii, 1, 2); so clearly it was the wig alone which suggested the difference in age. But I am sure we should be still more surprised if we could see the real living Ra'nofre, who certainly would not look at all like his statues. I mean by this that the wonderful statues of Ra 'nofre are in my opinion a very perfect, but yet a strictly impersonal expression of Old-Kingdom art. It is the inscribing of the name and the titles which makes the statues become the personality Ra'nofre. It is a striking fact that a work of Egyptian art—relief or sculpture in the round—gains its full significance only in conjunction with the written word. And so, as I hope my English colleagues in Egyptology will agree, one cannot treat Egyptian art without some knowledge of the Egyptian language.

Returning to the question of portrait-sculpture in our sense, I do not deny that this exists in Egyptian art. Its appearance, however, always coincides with a noticeable effort to break the bonds of convention, as we see in the Twelfth Dynasty, in the art of Tell el-'Amarnah, or in the late period, when Greek art was already knocking at the door of Egypt. But within the Pyramid age, with which I am here dealing, I cannot see any piece of real portrait-sculpture. That a statement like this is not derogatory will now, I hope, be understood without further explanation.

Again, it is quite wrong and useless for us, accustomed as we are to modern art-criticism, to try to discover signatures of Egyptian artists or to recognize their individual 'manner'. In ancient Egypt the sculptor did not differ from any other craftsman; thus, the sculptor of a statue is shown, even in the New Kingdom, sitting in the workshops of Amūn at Thebes together with the joiner and the goldsmith, without pretending to be any better than his colleagues.<sup>1</sup> Signatures of artists, in the modern sense, are completely absent in Egypt. For example, several of the famous heads from El-'Amarnah, now in the Berlin Museum, are said to come from the workshop of a sculptor named Djehutmose, but that does not mean that this sculptor made all those wonderful heads himself; this so-called signature is really only a kind of label for the house in which the heads were found. The name of Djehutmose occurs only once on a small object found in the house, so that actually it is not even certain that he was the owner of this sculptor's workshop.

The same applies to the frequently cited examples of artists in the Old Kingdom. In the Fifth-Dynasty tomb of Ptahhotpe at Şakḳārah, for instance, we find behind a scene of sailors fighting with sticks a dignified person called 'overseer of sculptors', sitting in a boat with many good things to eat and drink in front of him.<sup>2</sup> It may be that this 'overseer of sculptors' really made the reliefs or statues in the tomb, but his representation of himself with his opulent meal was doubtless not made because he wanted to show himself as a famous artist, but in order to show his devotion and gratitude to his lord, the owner of the tomb. Another relief of the same kind shows a man sitting in front of an easel on which are painted the names of the three Egyptian seasons,<sup>3</sup> certainly as abbreviations for some pictures of out-door life in the various seasons, such as we know from the Sun-temple of the Fifth Dynasty. This relief is in the well-known Sixth-Dynasty tomb of Mereruka. As no name is written above it, the most simple and the most Egyptian explanation of the picture is that Mereruka himself is represented making draughts for some reliefs in his tomb. There is no ground at all for seeing in this picture the artist of Mereruka's tomb, as for instance von Bissing does.<sup>4</sup>

To end these general remarks I repeat that Egyptian sculpture is as impersonal as the Egyptian artist. But it is not to be appreciated any the less for that.

<sup>1</sup> Wreszinski, *Atlas*, I, 73.

<sup>2</sup> Erman, *ZÄS* 31, 97, with Pl. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Wreszinski, *op. cit.*, III, 1.

<sup>4</sup> *ZÄS* 64, 137. Cf. A. Herman in *Mitt. deutsch. Inst. Kairo*, 6, 150.

In the second part of this paper I wish to consider some special questions relating to Old-Kingdom sculpture and to point out various tendencies in the art of the Third to Sixth Dynasties. The superficial observer is, as a rule, so prejudiced by what he regards as the stiffness of Egyptian sculpture that he does not see how much life and movement is expressed within the scope of the strict frontality which Egyptian sculpture demands. Egyptian art has had its development through the ages like all other kinds of art. The characterization of the style of every period seems to me our task at the moment, and much work has to be done in this direction before we are able to distinguish properly between the different periods by means of stylistic analysis. Then we can hope to place undated statues with more certainty than we do now, and it will be impossible to hesitate between the Middle Kingdom and the Roman period, as happened in a conversation I overheard once in Cairo.

We must try, therefore, no longer to treat Old-Kingdom sculpture as a whole, but to distinguish a Third-Dynasty style from a Fourth-Dynasty style, and so on. Having collected our stylistic evidence from works whose date is well established, we shall then be able to add undated works to each group with a good deal of certainty. This has to be done with architecture, reliefs, and painting, as well as statuary. When we compare our results we shall soon find, as one might expect, that the same tendencies occur in all three kinds of art in any one period. Dr. Junker, in a very good article, has defined such types of architecture for the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Dynasties.<sup>1</sup> I should like to quote some of his material, adding examples of relief which show corresponding tendencies. It will then be easy to consider statuary under the same aspects.

The ground-plan of king Djeser's temple, built at Şakḳārah in the Third Dynasty,<sup>2</sup> shows that the final form of Egyptian architecture had not yet been found. The main temple lies to the north, the main entrance, through a colonnade, lies far away in the south-east corner, while buildings are scattered about here and there without the organic planning so regularly found in the following dynasty and after. However much we admire the first great stone building in the world we must point out that the aspirations of King Djeser and his famous architect Imḥōtep exceeded their ability.

Quite different is the ground-plan of the Fourth-Dynasty temple of Chephren.<sup>3</sup> Here Egyptian architecture has found its best and clearest expression. The temple is situated in front of the pyramid to the east; the division into the three chief parts seems quite clear; from the entrance-temple at the foot of the desert-hill the corridor leads straight up to the main temple. This scheme, which varies only in detail, was adhered to all through the Old Kingdom, so that there is no need to quote other examples from the Fifth and Sixth Dynasties.

Looking at a well-founded reconstruction of a building belonging to King Djeser's temple-complex,<sup>4</sup> we are struck by the smallness of the stones, which seem to be petrified bricks, and the strange stone columns, the first attempt of this kind in Egyptian architecture. Here, even if the architect did conceive a column as an entity with a clearly defined function, he did not dare to use it independently, but connected it with the wall like a pilaster. And so again we find as a characteristic feature of the Third Dynasty interesting attempts in this or that direction, but not yet a well-fixed style.

As Dr. Junker has pointed out, the architecture of the Fourth Dynasty forms a distinct contrast to the experiments which preceded it, as the reconstruction of the pillared hall in the Sphinx-temple of King Chephren shows us.<sup>5</sup> One cannot but feel the magnificence of this room with its enormous granite blocks and the square granite pillars instead of columns.

<sup>1</sup> ZÄS 63, 1.

<sup>2</sup> Firth-Quibell, *The Step Pyramid*, II, Pl. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Hölscher, *Das Grabdenkmal d. Königs Chephren*, Leipzig, 1912, Bl. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Firth-Quibell, *op. cit.*, Pl. 79 A.

<sup>5</sup> Hölscher, *op. cit.*, Bl. 5.

No relief, no inscription disturbs the imposing tranquillity of the room, the sole ornamentation of which consisted of the marvellous statues of the king.

The Fifth Dynasty brings in a new change of style, which in fact really began at the end of the Fourth, about the reign of Mycerinus. In the reconstructed hall of the temple of King Saḥurē<sup>1</sup> we find well-constructed columns supporting the roof and the walls are covered with painted reliefs, the whole expressing a gaiety and brightness in complete contrast with all that went before.

The architecture of the private tombs, the maṣṭabahs, shows similar features. For instance, in the Third Dynasty we have big brick maṣṭabahs,<sup>2</sup> and at the end of this period, at Mēdūm, brick maṣṭabahs with a stone chamber.<sup>3</sup> Here again we see the beginning of architecture in stone. The maṣṭabah of the time of Kings Cheops and Chephren at Gizah, so excellently described by Junker,<sup>4</sup> is as monumental as the pyramid of Cheops itself. Huge, perfectly rectangular blocks are used and no inner room is allowed to break up the massiveness of the building. The perpendicular shaft pierces the maṣṭabah and the rock to a depth of about 60 feet, leading to the sarcophagus-chamber with the square limestone sarcophagus without decoration or inscription. As no separate room for a statue was provided in the maṣṭabahs of this type, a limestone head was set at the entrance of the sarcophagus-room.

As I pointed out in connexion with temple architecture, the change began about the reign of Mycerinus. The usual type of the later, Fifth-Dynasty, maṣṭabah shows the chapel with false door and painted reliefs on the walls inside the maṣṭabah.<sup>5</sup> Here we also find the room for the statue, called *serdāb*, which is sometimes connected with the chapel by a small slit in the wall. This type is the most familiar, but even here one finds that almost every tomb differs a little from the others, and it is quite unjustifiable to speak of 'the maṣṭabah' of the Old Kingdom as if it were a uniform type of building through all four dynasties.

Here we have also to mention the Sixth Dynasty, for the tombs in the cemetery of the courtiers at this period show two distinct lines of development. On the one hand we have the largest maṣṭabahs, as for instance that of Mereruka at Ṣaḳḳārah,<sup>6</sup> containing so many rooms that one can hardly recognize the original maṣṭabah form. On the other hand, there are tombs which are degenerating, brick-building reappears, and all the beautiful order of the regular maṣṭabah-streets is given up.<sup>7</sup> In this contrast between the very rich and the very poor we recognize the disintegration of Egypt at the end of the Old Kingdom.

Relief and painting show the same features. In the Third Dynasty we have very good stone reliefs from the Djoser buildings,<sup>8</sup> and the wooden panels of Ḥesirē<sup>c</sup> are no less excellent, but we also find mural painting in Ḥesirē<sup>c</sup>'s tomb.<sup>9</sup> In Mēdūm, finally, we have in one and the same tomb stone relief, mural painting (*e.g.* the famous geese), and a sort of painting effected by inlaying coloured pastes in the stone.<sup>10</sup> This last technique was only an experiment and so far as we know was never used in later tombs. Here, too, we arrive at the same conclusion: the artists of the Third Dynasty made various experiments without achieving a definitive style.

<sup>1</sup> Borchardt, *Das Grabdenkmal d. Königs Saḥure*, I, Leipzig, 1910, Bl. 6.

<sup>2</sup> *E.g.*, Quibell, *The Tomb of Hesy*, Cairo, 1913, Pl. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Petrie, *Medum*, Pl. 7.

<sup>4</sup> Junker, *Giza I*, especially Pl. 10.

<sup>5</sup> Junker, *Giza II*, p. 135, Fig. 12.

<sup>6</sup> See *The Tomb of Mereruka*, I, Oriental Inst. of the University of Chicago, 1938.

<sup>7</sup> *Cf.*, *e.g.*, Junker, *Vorbericht Giza*, 1927, with map.

<sup>8</sup> Firth-Quibell, *op. cit.*, II, Pls. 15-17 and 40-2.

<sup>9</sup> Quibell, *op. cit.*, Pls. 29-31 (panels), Pls. 7, 1-2; 8 ff. (paintings).

<sup>10</sup> *E.g.*, Petrie, *op. cit.*, Pl. 23 (inlays), 28 (paintings).



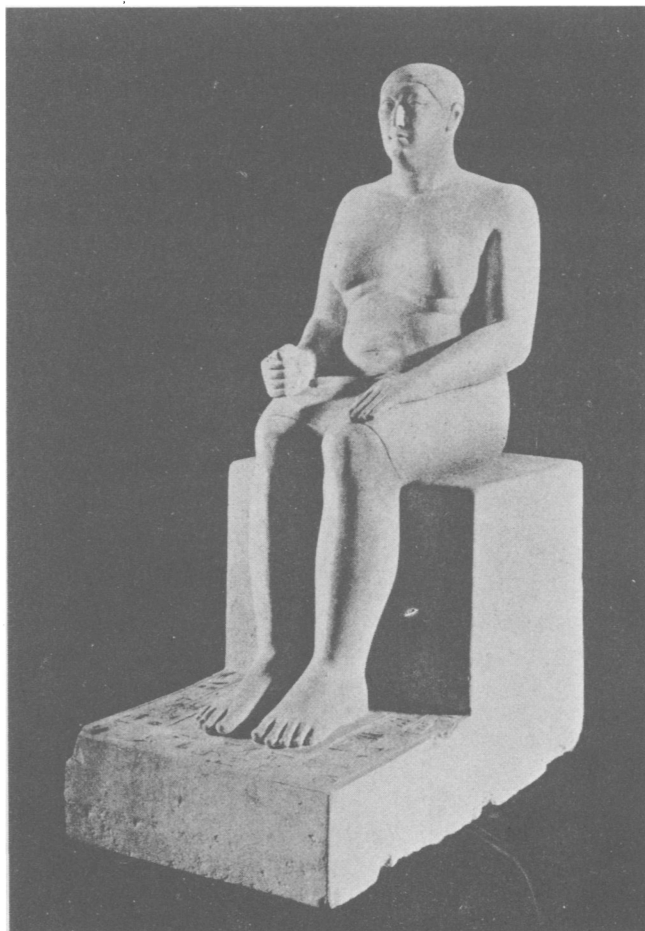
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2



3



4

1. Head of the Raʿnofre statue (5th Dyn.) No. 19 (CCG), from Şakkārah; Cairo.
2. Head of the Raʿnofre statue No. 18 (CCG; from Şakkārah; Cairo), with the wig of No. 19.
3. The shipbuilder Betjmes (3rd Dyn.), from Gīzah; British Museum.
4. The prince Ḥemyun (4th Dyn.), from Gīzah; Hildesheim.

STATUARY OF THE OLD KINGDOM

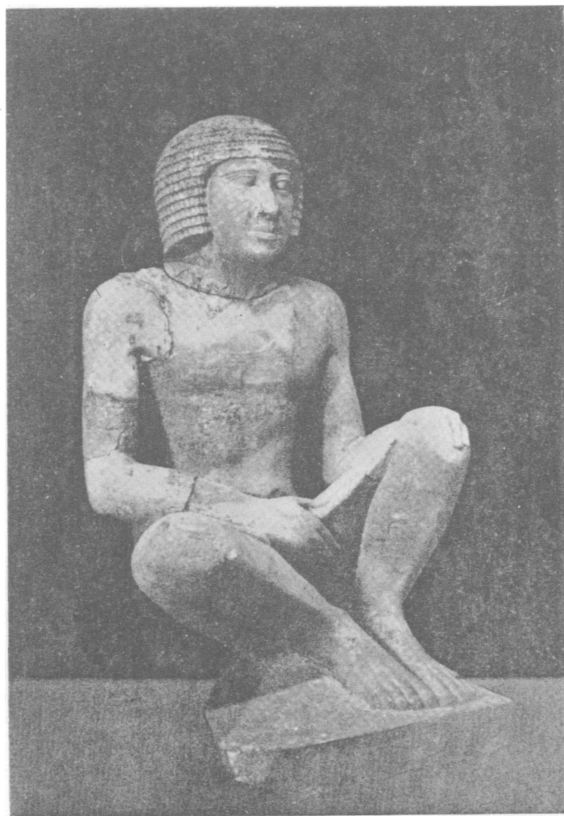




1



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3



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1. The brewer Nefer (5th Dyn.), from Şakkārah ; Cairo.
2. The director of cemetery-workers Ptahiruka (5th Dyn.), from Gizah ; Hildesheim.
3. The physician Ni'ankhrēt (5th Dyn.), from Gizah ; Cairo.
4. King Pepi II as a boy (6th Dyn.), from South Şakkārah ; Cairo.

STATUARY OF THE OLD KINGDOM

The architecture of the Fourth Dynasty did not allow scope for relief and painting, therefore our material is scanty. There exist very few reliefs dated with certainty to the reigns of Cheops and Chephren,<sup>1</sup> and the old opinion that every relief found at Gîzah should be dated as 'good Fourth-Dynasty' has definitely to be given up. The maṣtabahs of this period have only one place on the outside where a rectangular relief is put in, namely at the offering-place, where a slab of this kind shows, in rather high relief, the owner of the tomb seated at the offering-table.<sup>2</sup> The rectangular arrangement of the offerings with their numbers on the right side recalls the rectangular nature of the whole building.

The mass of reliefs in the Fifth and Sixth Dynasties is so large that it is impossible to go into details here, but I will try by a single example to explain the difference in style between these two dynasties. I choose the dancing-scene, though other themes, for instance bulls being led to slaughter, would show the same thing.<sup>3</sup> In the Fifth-Dynasty tomb of Ti we see dancing-girls all together in the same position, walking rather than dancing, with all their arms bent upwards in the same way<sup>4</sup>—it is as if the steady rhythm of an *adagio* or an *andante* were pulsating through the picture. Now look at the dancing-girls of the Sixth Dynasty. They are dancing a *furioso*, throwing one leg up, bending their backs nearly down to the floor.<sup>5</sup> Still more important is another picture of the Sixth Dynasty, showing three dancers in the same movement as in the tomb of Ti, but the fourth (second in the row) is dancing quite a different figure.<sup>6</sup> This dancer disturbs the usual symmetry, so that we do not now feel the harmonious rhythm, so characteristic of the pictures of the Fifth Dynasty. In the destruction of symmetry and rhythm I see the special features of the art of the Sixth Dynasty, which, on the other hand, added some new types<sup>7</sup> to those created by the older artists. This we shall see similarly later on in sculpture in the round.

Sculpture in the round was the last to obtain its classical Egyptian form. At the beginning of dynastic times, during the First and Second Dynasties, we see very crude and badly proportioned works, but even here we admire the various attempts to depict the human figure in different positions. Perhaps the oldest human figure from the Dynastic Period is the one from Hierakonpolis of a man kneeling on one knee,<sup>8</sup> while the well-known granite figure in Cairo (CCG No. 1, from the end of the Second Dynasty) is kneeling on both knees.<sup>9</sup> The sitting figures in Berlin<sup>10</sup> and Naples<sup>11</sup> (of about the Second Dynasty) remain inarticulate. The figure of the king seems much more advanced stylistically in these early times. The sitting statuettes of King Kha'sekhem in Cairo<sup>12</sup> and Oxford<sup>13</sup> have an almost classical aspect; only the strange figures of the slain enemies on the base show the last vestiges of the prehistoric age.

At the beginning of the Third Dynasty the sitting figure of King Djeser, found by Firth in the *serdāb* close to the Step-pyramid,<sup>14</sup> stands out as a real masterpiece. In this figure Egyptian statuary has reached its first high-water mark.

<sup>1</sup> *E.g.*, Junker, *Giza I*, Pl. 17 (from the maṣtabah of Hemiün).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Pls. 26–7, 29; Lutz, *Egn. Tomb Steles (Univ. of California Publns., Egn. Archaeol., 4)*, 1927, Pls. 1–2.

<sup>3</sup> *Cf.*, *e.g.*, Steindorff, *Grab d. Ti*, Pl. 12 (5th Dyn.), with Capart, *Rue de tombeaux*, Pls. 44–5 (6th Dyn.).

<sup>4</sup> Wreszinski, *Atlas*, III, 30.

<sup>5</sup> Firth-Gunn, *Teti Pyramid Cemeteries*, II, Pl. 53 (Kagemni); *cf.* also Wreszinski, *op. cit.*, III, 29 (Mereruka).

<sup>6</sup> Junker, *Vorbericht Giza*, 1926, Pl. 6b.

<sup>7</sup> *E.g.*, Mereruka with a female harpist (Wreszinski, *op. cit.*, III, 5) or the scene wrongly called 'sudden death' (v. Bissing, *Denkmäler äg. Skulptur*, Pl. 18 B) which has been much better explained by Schäfer in *ZÄS* 73, 102.

<sup>8</sup> Quibell-Green, *Hierakonpolis*, II, Pl. 1.

<sup>9</sup> *Le Musée ég.*, I, Pl. 13.

<sup>10</sup> *ZÄS* 56, Pl. 7.

<sup>11</sup> Von Bissing, *op. cit.*, Pl. 3.

<sup>12</sup> Quibell-Green, *op. cit.*, I, Pl. 41.

<sup>13</sup> Scharff in W. Otto's *Handbuch d. Archäol.*, Pl. 54, 2.

<sup>14</sup> Firth-Quibell, *op. cit.*, II, Pls. 28–30.

The statues of private people of the Third Dynasty until the beginning of the Fourth are on the same level. Among these are the well-known 'shipbuilder' of the British Museum<sup>1</sup> (Pl. viii, 3), and the statue of Metjen in Berlin.<sup>2</sup> The figures are more slender, the squareness—the outstanding feature, as we saw, in the time of Cheops and Chephren—is almost complete and is well accentuated by the cubical form of the seat. Only the seat of the woman's figure at Turin<sup>3</sup> has a small back, and the structural detail of the cane-chair of this lady and of the 'shipbuilder' shows clearly that these figures do still belong to the archaic period. In spite of their evident stiffness the statues of Sepa and Nes in the Louvre are interesting in several respects.<sup>4</sup> Most books give only two statues, but there are really three, for Sepa, the man, is represented in two almost identical statues. I think we must consider the three together as a group; if they had been made later they would have been cut out of one block of limestone. The lack of coherence, in what would be the attempt to show three single figures together as a group, seems to me again to be a characteristic feature of Third-Dynasty art, agreeing well with the others. Raçhotpe and Nofret from Mēdūm,<sup>5</sup> whose colouring has been so exceedingly well preserved, must also be regarded as a group like the two Sepas and Nes. They show the same high standard in this type of work as does the statue of Djeser among royal statues.

Coming to the Fourth Dynasty, the reigns of Cheops and Chephren, we have to speak first of the statues of the kings; well proportioned and noble, they suggest divinity rather than royalty. The most beautiful perhaps is the diorite figure of King Chephren with the protecting falcon behind the head,<sup>6</sup> praise of which would be superfluous. The Chephren statues are by no means colossi but of moderate size, sometimes even very small. The head of king Djedefrē in the Louvre belongs to the same category.<sup>7</sup> Mycerinus, towards the end of the dynasty, begins to enlarge the king's figure,<sup>8</sup> and in the granite head of Weserkaf, the first king of the Fifth Dynasty, now in the Cairo Museum, we have the earliest known remains of a colossus.<sup>9</sup>

Just as we found no room for reliefs in the maṣṭabahs and temples, so we do not find statue-rooms in them. Therefore the number of statues certainly dated to the reigns of Cheops and Chephren is extremely small, and a warning must be given against assigning statues to this period unless they are dated definitely by the circumstances of the discovery. The best example is the statue of the corpulent prince Hemyun in the Pelizaeus Museum at Hildesheim (Pl. viii, 4),<sup>10</sup> whose relationship to Cheops was ascertained by Junker. This statue in its compactness shows unmistakably all the main features of the style which we discussed in connexion with the architecture of this period. The prince is certainly by no means an Adonis, but we must remember that from the Egyptian point of view corpulence denotes a respectable age and wealth.

The other characteristic kind of sculpture in the round of this period is the limestone head<sup>11</sup> placed at the entrance of the sarcophagus-room, as mentioned above. Such heads are not parts of statues but replace them. The impressive simplicity of their conception fits in excellently with the imposing picture of the art of this great time.

The line of distinction between two styles of art does not always correspond exactly

<sup>1</sup> Budge, *Egn. Sculptures in the B.M.*, Pl. 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Handbuch d. Archäol.*, Pl. 72, 2.

<sup>3</sup> Steindorff, *Die Kunst d. Ägypter*, 1928, p. 175.

<sup>4</sup> Boreux, *Guide-Catalogue*, I, Pl. 30.

<sup>5</sup> Steindorff, *op. cit.*, pp. 177 f.

<sup>6</sup> *Handbuch d. Archäol.*, Pl. 71, 1; the head alone, Steindorff, *op. cit.*, p. 180.

<sup>7</sup> *Encyclop. fotogr. de l'art*, I, 10.

<sup>8</sup> *Bull. MFA* 33, 21, Fig. 8.

<sup>9</sup> *Ann. Serv.* 29, Pl. 1 of C. M. Firth's art., pp. 64 ff.

<sup>10</sup> Junker, *Giza I*, Pls. 19–22.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, Pls. 12–14.

to the historical periods, marked in Egypt by the dynasties; as we have already seen, the style of the Fifth Dynasty begins in fact with Mycerinus of the Fourth. The only exception to this rule is the colossal head of King Weserkaf which would have been assigned to the Fourth Dynasty if it had not been found in that king's temple. The groups, however, agree with our rule that the style of the Fifth Dynasty began in reality under Mycerinus.

The earliest dated 'group', that is, two persons cut out of one stone, which is known to me, represents King Mycerinus and his queen.<sup>1</sup> As happened with many things in ancient Egypt, the king was the first to bring out a new type, which was taken up by private people soon afterwards. In this group the king seems to descend, as it were, from his divine throne and show himself on a level with his subjects; a good parallel is offered by Amenophis III in the New Kingdom, also at the end of a great dynasty. The group of Mycerinus seems to be much more closely linked with the mass of private groups in the Fifth Dynasty than with the Chephren statues of the Fourth. That this group really is one of the oldest that have come down to us is obvious because we have in a publication by Chassinat<sup>2</sup> the lower part of a sort of group found by the French at Abu Rawāsh, showing King Djedefrē<sup>c</sup>, from the first part of the Fourth Dynasty, with his wife; here the king is the main person, while his wife, a very small figure, is crouching close to his leg, in fact she appears to us as a mere ornament.

Thus I assume that the group of plastic figures was an innovation under the reign of King Mycerinus. The considerable number of groups representing the same king together with Hathor and one of the nome-deities, all found by Dr. Reisner in the pyramid temple of this king,<sup>3</sup> points in the same direction. I think it will be agreed that we have no longer any right to assign undated groups of private people to the Fourth Dynasty, as is often done.

The art of the Fifth Dynasty marks a culmination as regards both the architecture of the maṣtabahs and that of the pyramid temples—notably at Abuṣīr—with all their magnificent reliefs. The great variety in the statues of private people agrees with this, but, strange to say, there are no statues of kings to confirm it. This is a very curious fact indeed, and the lack of statues of kings cannot be explained as due to chance, for the pyramid-temples and the Sun-temple of the Fifth Dynasty were very carefully excavated and yet did not yield a single statue of a king. Taking the statuary of the Fourth and Fifth Dynasties together, therefore, we must conclude that a great change took place: while in the Fourth the statues of kings predominate, in the Fifth they disappear almost completely, giving place to a mass of private statues. A statue of King Neweserrē<sup>c</sup>,<sup>4</sup> for example, is a very poor one, and a few others, similarly crude in style, are still worse.<sup>5</sup> These bad statues of the great kings of this dynasty would seem to be prophetic of the coming decay of the Egyptian kingdom towards the end of the pyramid age.

To gain an idea of the very high standard of the sculpture of this period we have only to deal with the private statues. Here we see those life-size figures like the two Ra'nofres mentioned above, pp. 41-2, or the statue of Tjeyey ('Ti') as a noble, self-confident high official or priest.<sup>6</sup>

It seems to me that the better statues in this period were made for the tombs at Ṣaḳḳārah, the second-rate ones for those at Gīzah. To get an impression of quality we need only compare, for instance, the small statue of the brewer Nefer with his intelligent head (Pl. ix, 1)<sup>7</sup> and the stiff figure of Ptahīruka at Hildesheim (Pl. ix, 2),<sup>8</sup> or the wonderful upper

<sup>1</sup> Reisner, *Mycerinus*, Pls. 54-60.      <sup>2</sup> *Mon. Piot*, 25, p. 59, Fig. 2.      <sup>3</sup> Reisner, *op. cit.*, Pls. 38-46.

<sup>4</sup> *Le Musée ég.*, I, Pl. 10.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, Pl. 11 (Menkauhor); Legrain, *Statues (CCG)*, I, Pl. 2, No. 42004.

<sup>6</sup> Steindorff, *Grab d. Ti*, Pls. 1, 142-3.

<sup>7</sup> Schäfer-Andrae, *Die Kunst d. alten Orients (Propyläen-Kunstgesch.)*, 2nd edn., p. 243, 3.

<sup>8</sup> Roeder, *Denkmäler d. Peliz.-Museums*, p. 51, No. 417.

part of the statue of a young lady from the Carnarvon Collection, now in the Metropolitan Museum in New York,<sup>1</sup> and generally, but without convincing evidence, dated to the Fourth Dynasty, and the wife of the Hildesheim man.<sup>2</sup> One feels at once the difference between first-rate work and work that is not even second-rate.

From the Fifth Dynasty onwards we have a very great number of statues of men in action. To take first the type of the scribe, we sometimes find the owner of the tomb represented in this attitude;<sup>3</sup> in this group I would place the unique scribe in the Louvre,<sup>4</sup> which is perhaps the most magnificent work of art of the whole of the Old Kingdom. On the other hand we see during the Fifth Dynasty the beginning of the custom of putting in the *serdāb* statues of servants performing the functions of scribe, baker, brewer, etc. For this large group of male and female servant-statues it will serve to quote one example: a brewing-woman straining the barley in preparation for brewing.<sup>5</sup> At the end of the Old Kingdom the servant-figures are becoming smaller; they are usually made of wood and gradually develop into the so-called servant-figures of the Middle Kingdom.<sup>6</sup>

The group of man and wife with or without children is quite common in the Fifth Dynasty and the variety of attitudes is simply enormous. I quote only two examples of married couples: one standing group is interesting, because the woman as well as the man has her left leg forward,<sup>7</sup> they both seem to be coming towards us hand in hand. The sitting group of red granite,<sup>8</sup> now in Berlin (Pl. x, 2), was formerly dated by von Bissing to the archaic period on account of the stiffness and crudeness of the figures. But the hollow between the two figures points to the Fifth Dynasty,<sup>9</sup> and on its arrival in Berlin it turned out that the man was the same person as the scribe Dersenedj, whose granite statue (Fifth Dynasty) has been in the Berlin Museum for a long time.<sup>10</sup> Thus this group teaches us, as many other statues do, that stiffness is by no means always a characteristic feature of archaic work.

Nothing shows better than the groups that Egyptian sculpture is not merely conservative and that the number of plastic types is really abundant. The group, very much in favour in the Fifth Dynasty, was later on used to represent any two or more persons or even, strangely enough, one and the same person, perhaps the man at different ages.<sup>11</sup> For example, we find a queen-mother embracing her daughter<sup>12</sup> or a double statue of the same man of which a noteworthy feature is the symmetrical posture of the arms (Pl. x, 3).<sup>13</sup> Finally I add here a reference to the well-known group of Meryettefes, represented twice with her scribe (not her son), a masterpiece in the Leiden Museum.<sup>14</sup> In every history of art this group will be found dated to the Fourth Dynasty. I have for a long time doubted this dating and so I was very pleased when Dr. van Wijngaarden of Leiden found out that the name of the queen Meryettefes, usually connected with the Fourth Dynasty, was put on later and that therefore the lady does not represent a queen at all. Now van Wijngaarden shares my opinion and dates this famous group, together with similar ones, to the Fifth Dynasty.<sup>15</sup>

Finally, it is in this dynasty, so highly important for the whole of Egyptian statuary, that

<sup>1</sup> *JEA* 4, Pl. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Roeder, *op. cit.*, No. 418.

<sup>3</sup> *E.g.*, Junker, *Vorbericht Giza*, 1914, p. 37, Pl. 9, the scribe Heti, now at Hildesheim.

<sup>4</sup> *Encyclop. fotogr. de l'art*, I, 29-31.

<sup>5</sup> Steindorff, *Die Kunst d. Ägypter*, p. 190, right.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Schäfer-Andrae, *op. cit.*, pp. 290, 292.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 242, 1.

<sup>8</sup> Von Bissing, *op. cit.*, Pl. 4; see further Anthes in *Berliner Museen*, vol. 55, pp. 90 f., Figs. 1-2.

<sup>9</sup> Cf., *e.g.*, the scribe in the Louvre, who has gaps between the elbows and the body.

<sup>10</sup> Schäfer-Andrae, *op. cit.*, p. 233.

<sup>11</sup> Called 'Pseudo-groups' by Boreux in *Mél. Maspero*, I, 805.

<sup>12</sup> *Bull. MFA* 34, 4 f.

<sup>13</sup> Selim Hassan, *Excavations at Giza*, I, Pl. 72.

<sup>14</sup> Schäfer-Andrae, *op. cit.*, p. 238.

<sup>15</sup> *Oudheidkundige Mededeelingen*, N.R., 17, 1.



1



2



3



4

1. Wooden group (5th Dyn.); Louvre.
2. Granite group (5th Dyn.), from Gizah; Berlin.
3. Double statue of Mersu'tankh (5th Dyn.), from Gizah; Cairo.
4. The dwarf Seneb with his family (6th Dyn.), from Gizah; Cairo.

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we first meet fairly large wooden statues. They continue the style of the small ivory statues, such as the king from Abydos in the British Museum<sup>1</sup> or the minute Cheops in Cairo.<sup>2</sup> It is characteristic of wooden statues that they were always made in pieces; the arms and legs were carved separately and then fastened to the body. There was thus more scope for that liveliness which makes the wooden statues especially attractive. The only examples I need cite here, the famous Shēkh el-Beled<sup>3</sup> and the woman who is probably his wife,<sup>4</sup> do not require any comment. Less well known is the wooden group in the Louvre,<sup>5</sup> which seems to represent a very high standard of work in spite of all the damage it has suffered (Pl. x, 1).

Turning now to the statues of the Sixth Dynasty we must notice first that the variety of types continues, and perhaps many would not see any difference at all between the statuary of the Fifth Dynasty and that of the Sixth. Even the opinion that plastic art is deteriorating during the Sixth Dynasty is only partly true. It agrees with the fact mentioned before that the tombs to a large extent are becoming smaller and are being built of bricks; the population of the Sixth Dynasty had become poor. It would be useless to quote many examples of very bad Sixth-Dynasty statuary;<sup>6</sup> it is sufficient to say that it has been the rule to date any inferior Old-Kingdom statue without hesitation to the Sixth Dynasty. Ugly and Sixth-Dynasty mean the same to many people. Yet there are other aspects which must not be overlooked. As mentioned above, apropos of pictures of dancing girls, we find in the Sixth Dynasty a strange new type and a kind of reaction against the prevalent laws of art, for instance against symmetry; we find this also in the statuary. The very fine copper statue of King Pepi I with his son is quite a new invention of that period.<sup>7</sup> Or look at a small figure of King Pepi II in alabaster;<sup>8</sup> the king—his name is found on the figure—is represented as a naked boy sitting on the ground with his finger to his mouth like the hieroglyph for 'child' (Pl. ix, 4). I can hardly imagine that such a curious figure could have been created in the Fourth or the Fifth Dynasty. This type of boy seems to have become common, for we have a very fine wooden figure of this kind at Berkeley, California, found by Dr. Reisner in the sarcophagus-room of a Sixth-Dynasty tomb at Gīzah.<sup>9</sup> Another new and strange attitude is shown by a *serdāb*-statue from a Sixth-Dynasty maṣṭabah at Gīzah, found by Junker.<sup>10</sup> It is a sitting figure, similar to that of the scribe, but asymmetrical (Pl. ix, 3). It looks to me as if the sculptor had tried to catch the actual movement of sitting down, as if it were a snapshot. The next moment the man would have been sitting on the ground like the usual scribe.

A closer study of the vast number of groups ought to yield further pieces attributable to the Sixth Dynasty, especially on account of their asymmetrical composition. As is only to be expected with any living art, we cannot draw a hard and fast line between one period and another without finding a good number of overlaps. For instance, the Cairo Museum possesses a group, in spite of its incompleteness a most delightful work, which I should date without hesitation to the Sixth Dynasty on stylistic grounds, if it were not dated by the inscription to the Fifth.<sup>11</sup> Its four figures are spaced quite irregularly on the base; symmetry has disappeared, but this very fact gives a special attractiveness to the group.

But there are also certainly dated groups which show the peculiarities of the Sixth Dynasty mentioned above, for instance, the amusing group of the dwarf Seneb with his

<sup>1</sup> *JEA* 17, Pl. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Petrie, *Abydos*, II, Pl. 13.

<sup>3</sup> *JEA* 6, Pl. 27, 1.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, Pl. 27, 2, and Pl. 23.

<sup>5</sup> *Encyclop. fotogr. de l'art*, I, 16.

<sup>6</sup> *E.g.*, Borchart, *Statuen (CCG)*, Pl. 39, No. 175; Pl. 41, No. 191; Pl. 45, No. 219.

<sup>7</sup> Quibell-Green, *op. cit.*, II, Pls. 50-6.

<sup>8</sup> *Ann. Serv.* 27, Pl. 5.

<sup>9</sup> Lutz, *Egyptian Statues (Univ. of California Publns., Egn. Archaeol., 5)*, 1930, Pl. 40.

<sup>10</sup> Junker, *Vorbericht Giza*, 1929, Pls. 9-10.

<sup>11</sup> Schäfer-Andrae, *op. cit.*, p. 242, 2.



wife and two children (Pl. x, 4).<sup>1</sup> The deformed man is represented with all the realism of the time; in contrast with this it seems comical to see the two children on the spot where a normal sitting figure would have its own legs. This group, which we find so exceedingly attractive, was found standing in the limestone box which may be seen behind the group; nobody had seen the group, nobody had taken delight in it, since it was put with its limestone box into the tomb. It was only intended to play its part in the ceremonies of the dead. It is important, I think, to stress here once again the enormous discrepancy between our modern relation to sculpture and that of the ancient Egyptians to their works of art.

This paper is already very long, but the Old Kingdom was a very long period, and to get a colourful and lively picture of its sculptural development I have had to go into a great many details. It will be a great pleasure to me if I have been able to demonstrate that the art of the Pyramid Age was not at all monotonous, and that within the limits of frontality we find changes, innovations, experiments—in short as lively a development as we are accustomed to recognize in the art of European countries.

<sup>1</sup> Junker, *Vorbericht Giza*, 1927, Pls. 2-3.