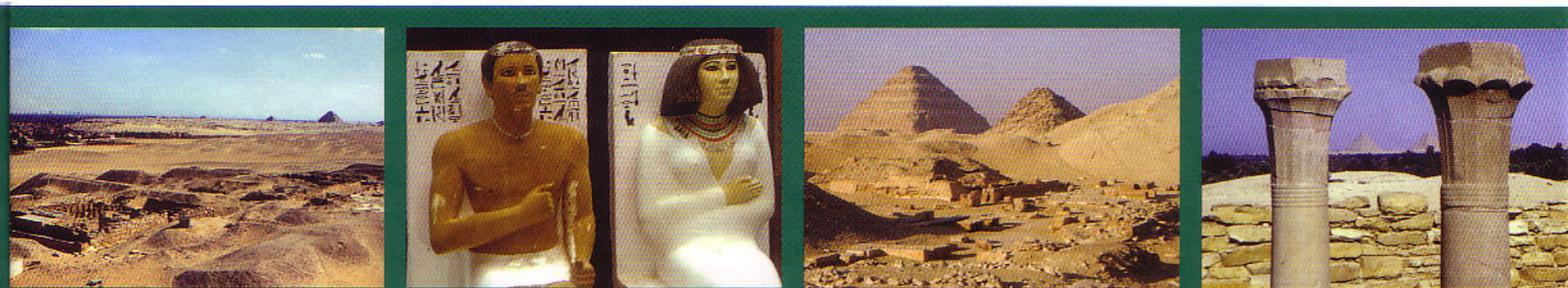


THE OLD KINGDOM ART AND ARCHAEOLOGY

Proceedings of the Conference



Prague, May 31 – June 4, 2004

Miroslav Bárta
editor

THE OLD KINGDOM ART AND ARCHAEOLOGY

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CONFERENCE HELD IN PRAGUE,
MAY 31 – JUNE 4, 2004

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Foreword

It is with pleasure that after more than two years the publication of the lectures held during the conference on the Old Kingdom Art and Archaeology in Prague in the year 2004 (May 3 – June 4) has been made possible.

The conference held in Prague continued the tradition of previous meetings by being dedicated to the same subject: art and its dating in the Old Kingdom of Egypt: the period that forms the first apogee of the developing Egyptian state. The tradition of these irregular meetings was established in 1991 by Hourig Sourouzian and Rainer Stadelmann, at that time the Director of the German Archaeological Institute in Cairo, who organised the first conference.¹ The second meeting also took place in Cairo, at this time the place of the venue was the French Institute of Oriental Archaeology and the conference, held on November 10–13, 1994, was organised by its director Nicolas Grimal.² The penultimate meeting took place in Paris, France, on April 3–4, 1998, and was organised by Christiane Ziegler, Chief Conservator of Egyptian Antiquities in the Louvre.³

The present volume continues a well-established and successful tradition of post-conference publications. As such, it makes available most of the contributions that were presented during the conference in Prague. It was mainly the scientific profile of the Czech Institute of Egyptology that led us to substantially widen the scope of the conference in 2004. The total of thirty-three contributions presented in this volume cover various aspects connected to Old Kingdom culture, not only its art, but also its archaeology and architecture, selected administrative problems, iconography, texts and the latest, often first time published results of ongoing excavations. From the list of contributions it becomes evident that natural sciences and their application in the widest sense receive general acceptance and support from among Egyptologists. It is one of the few aspects that can in the future significantly enhance our understanding of specific issues connected to the Old Kingdom art and archaeology.

Eng. Marta Štrachová carefully edited the manuscript and was essential in producing this volume. The advice and guidance of Eng. Jolana Malátková also proved indispensable. The Czech Academy of Sciences is to be thanked for the production of the book. Last but not least, it was Prof. Dr. Jean Leclant, Secrétaire perpétuel de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, Paris, and the chair of the European branch of the Fondation Michela Schiff Giorgini, and Prof. Dr. David Silverman, University of Pennsylvania, chair of the North American branch of the the Fondation Michela Schiff Giorgini and the respective committees that approved this publication and agreed to support it financially.

Miroslav Bárta

¹ The conference was held in the German Archaeological Institute, Cairo, on October 29–30, and the proceedings published in 1995 in the volume *Kunst des Alten Reiches. Symposium des Deutschen Archäologischen Institut Kairo am 29. und 30. Oktober 1991*, Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Abteilung Kairo, Sonderschrift 28, Mainz am Rhein.

² N. Grimal, ed., *Lex critères de datation stylistiques à l'Ancien Empire*, Bibliothèque d'Étude 120 (Cairo, 1998).

³ Ch. Ziegler, N. Palayret, eds., *L'Art de l'Ancien Empire égyptien. Actes du colloque organisé au Musée du Louvre par le Service culturel les 3 et 4 avril 1998* (Paris, 1999).

Bibliography

Abbreviations for journals, series and monographs used throughout the volume follow the system of *Lexikon der Ägyptologie* (cf. *Lexikon der Ägyptologie, Band VII. Nachträge, Korrekturen und Indices*, founded by W. Helck and E. Otto, edited by W. Helck and W. Westendorf, Wiesbaden 1992, XIV–XXXVIII).

The following additional abbreviations are also used:

ACER – *The Australian Centre for Egyptology: Reports*, Sydney;

AOS – *American Oriental Society*, Michigan;

BSAK – *Studien zur altägyptischen Kultur, Beihefte*, Hamburg;

CA – *Current Anthropology*, Chicago, Illinois;

Hannig, *Handwörterbuch* – R. Hannig, *Die Sprache der Pharaonen. Großes Handwörterbuch Ägyptisch-Deutsch (2800–950 v. Chr.)*, Mainz 1995;

Harpur, *DETOK* – Y. Harpur, *Decoration in Egyptian Tombs of the Old Kingdom. Studies in Orientation and Scene Content*, London and New York 1988;

Harvey, *WSOK* – J. Harvey, *Wooden Statues of the Old Kingdom. A Typological Study, Egyptological Memoirs 2*, Leiden 2001;

KAW – *Kulturgeschichte der Antiken Welt*, Mainz am Rhein;

LingAeg – *Lingea Aegyptia, Journal of Egyptian language Studies*, Göttingen;

OrMonsp – *Orientalia Monspeliensia*, Montpellier;

PAM – *Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean*, Warsaw;

SAGA – *Studien zur Archäologie und Geschichte Altägyptens*, Heidelberg;

WES – *Warsaw Egyptological Studies*, Warsaw.

Rethinking the rules for Old Kingdom sculpture

Observations on poses and attributes of limestone statuary from Giza

Rita E. Freed

Visiting museums with Egyptian collections and reading books on Egyptian civilization, scholars and lay people alike have consciously or unconsciously formulated concepts of how Egyptian sculpture should look. Historians of Egyptian art have reinforced these ideas through the development of a set of rules governing such aspects as proportions, poses and attributes. The vast majority of works conform to these patterns. However, a surprisingly large number do not. Some variations seem deliberate and meaningful, while others might be best interpreted as mistakes. Whatever their significance, it is clear that no rule in Egyptian art remained unbroken. This paper examines non-royal limestone statuary excavated from an Old Kingdom context at Giza¹ and is limited to a consideration of unusual poses and attributes.²

Poses

Leg and foot position

Artists depicted standing males in Egyptian sculpture with the left leg advanced³ and weight resting on the rear, right leg. So basic was this pose that when the Greek sculptors of the Archaic Period attempted their first large-scale works, they copied it.⁴ In Egypt for over three thousand years it was invariable – almost. One noteworthy exception is the statue of Pehenptah found by Reisner in Giza tomb G 5280 (old G 2320)⁵ (fig. 1), where the right leg is extended. In all other ways, the sculpture is stylistically consistent with its mid-to-late Fifth Dynasty date.⁶ It was found in the tomb's serdab together with other sculptures which are not particularly noteworthy.⁷ Could there be an explanation for Pehenptah's right-foot-forward stance other than a sculptor's mistake? The tomb was plundered. Perhaps it once contained another image of Pehenptah with his left leg forward. If so, in view of the Egyptian fondness for symmetry, perhaps a pair were made as mirror images to flank the serdab opening. A later example of an extended right foot providing symmetry is seen on a dyad from the time of Amenemhat III.⁸



Fig. 1 Pehenptah; Cairo, JE 44609 (Giza tomb G 5280), Harvard University – Boston Museum of Fine Arts Expedition (photographer: Bishari Mahfud)

¹ Easy access to the copious records of the Reisner excavations have only recently become possible, thanks to the work of Peter Der Manuelian and a grant from the Mellon Foundation.

² It is envisioned as the first in a series. Future articles will focus on those Old Kingdom Giza sculptures that ignore the canon of proportion and those where an individual artist's hand is identifiable.

³ Vandier, *Manuel III*, 62.

⁴ H. Schäfer, *Principles of Egyptian Art* (Oxford, 1974), 322.

⁵ Cairo, JE 44609 discussed by Smith, *Sculpture*, 54; height 130 cm.

⁶ For a review of the dating, see E. Brovarski, 'A Triad for Pehenptah', *WES I* (1997), 269ff.

⁷ There were at least four and as many as six additional sculptures. For a full listing, see *ibid.*, 266–267. I am grateful to Peter Der Manuelian for providing me with this reference.

⁸ Cairo, CG 392, in M. Saleh, H. Sourouzian, *The Egyptian Museum Cairo* (Mainz, 1987), no. 104.

Men stood in other non-traditional ways as well. An unscribed male statue from the tomb of Shepsesptah⁹ stands with both feet together, a pose traditionally associated with women.¹⁰ This piece was one of between fourteen and seventeen statues of various types distributed between the tomb's two serdabs.¹¹ As a group, according to the excavator Hermann Junker, they were 'keine Werke wirklicher Kunst'.¹² He noted the unusual foot position of the statue, and cited other examples of the same,¹³ including one from the tomb of Rawer,¹⁴ where three unscribed males sharing a common back slab stand with both feet together.¹⁵ The same foot position may be seen on



Fig. 2 Triad of palace attendants; Boston, MFA 06.1882 (Giza tomb G 2009), Harvard University – Boston Museum of Fine Arts Expedition (photographer: Albert Morton Lythgoe)

another triad of three men from the serdab of tomb G 2009, named Nikaukhufu, Khuptah, and Hes all of who bear the modest title 'Palace Attendant' (fig. 2).¹⁶ Another palace attendant named Raramu from Tomb 2099 is shown twice with his feet together on his pseudo-stature, and a like pose is assumed by his small son who stands between his two images.¹⁷ The same man is shown with his wife on another statue in the tomb, and both stand with feet together.¹⁸

A number of pair statues of husband and wife stand with feet together, but examples vary tremendously in quality. Imisetka and his wife do likewise on the only statue found in his tomb.¹⁹ He held more than twenty titles, including Overseer of the Department of Palace Attendants. However, about the quality of this sculpture, Junker commented that it was 'eines der schlechtesten der Rundbilder, die auf unserem Grabungsabschnitt zutage kamen'.²⁰ One might say the same about Cairo JE 35565²¹ where man and wife stand as above. In contrast, the quality is exceptional on the pair statue of Memi and his wife Sabu, who also stand with both feet together.²²

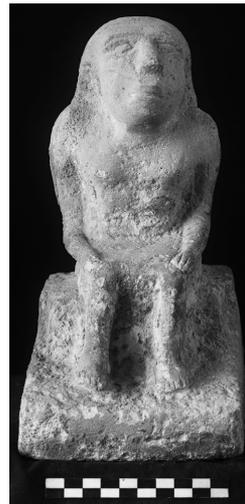


Fig. 3 Small seated man from G 7772; Egyptian Museum, Cairo, Harvard University – Boston Museum of Fine Arts Expedition (photographer: Mohammedani Ibrahim)

⁹ Junker, *Giza* VII, pl. 21c; height 51 cm (103).

¹⁰ Less frequently woman were shown with the left leg slightly advanced.

¹¹ For additional woman statues, see *ibid.*, 93ff. and pls. XIX–XXIII.

¹² *Ibid.*, 103.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 105.

¹⁴ Hassan, *Giza* I, 1ff. The tomb of Rawer contained over 100 statues distributed among its 25 serdabs and 20 niches.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pls. 22 and 21; height 62 cm.

¹⁶ Boston, MFA 06.1882; height 25 cm. Mosi, also a palace attendant was the owner of this Fifth Dynasty tomb. See *PM* III², 67.

¹⁷ A. M. Roth, *A Cemetery of Palace Attendants including G2084–2099, G 2230 + 2231, and G 2240. Giza Mastabas 6* (Boston, 1995), 151 and pls. 114–115. Roth dates the mastaba to prior to the end of the Fifth Dynasty, based on the style of the statues (154).

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pl. 114.

¹⁹ Junker, *Giza* VI, pl. 23 a.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 216.

²¹ From the Ballard excavations, illustrated in Vandier, *Manuel* III, pl. XLI, 4.

²² C. Roehrig in *Egyptian Art in the Age of the Pyramids* (New York, 1999), 294–295, where the sculpture is ascribed to the Fourth Dynasty. This pose was not rare, and a number of other examples might be cited.

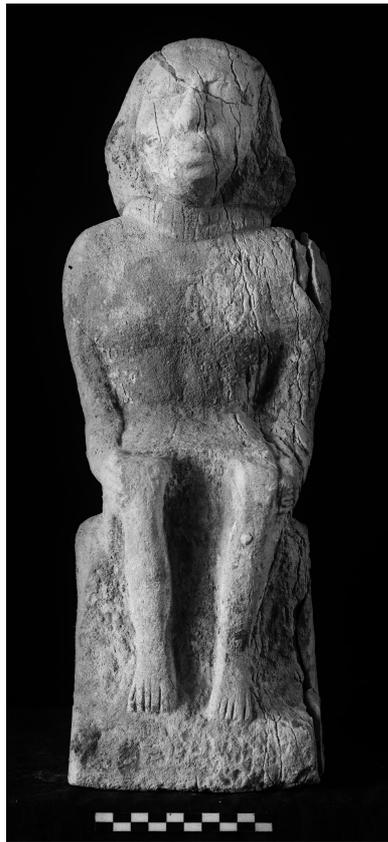


Fig. 4 Larger man from G 7772;
Boston, MFA 39.832,
Harvard University – Boston
Museum of Fine Arts
Expedition (photographer:
Mohammedani Ibrahim)

Was this pose part of a trend toward greater variety of statue types in the Fifth Dynasty?²³ Or was it the creation of inexperienced artists at a time when the desire for statues exceeded the number accomplished artists could produce? Could it have had a specific meaning? Rather than conveying forward motion, it is static. Occasionally found on statue niches or in relief on false doors, it has been suggested that it signifies that the deceased has exited the land of the dead and entered the land of the living.²⁴ It may also, or alternatively, signify a lesser status, as suggested by the modest scale and quality of most examples, the minor significance of their titles and the fact that they do not usually represent the tomb owner.

For standing as well as seated stone statues, feet traditionally rested on a projecting, rectangular base rather than directly on the ground. In addition to providing stability and guarding the feet from breakage, the base also served as the location for an inscription identifying the subject and his office. An exception to this rule is an uninscribed seated male statue found by Junker atop Giza tomb S 2411,²⁵ where the feet are unsupported by any base. In this case, stability is not an issue because of a substantial cubic seat. The unnaturally small size of the feet and the rendering of the toes as simple incised lines protected them from damage.

Arm and hand position

The man in the small statue described above is depicted with fistful hands both of which rest vertically on his knees²⁶ and clench a rounded protrusion, often called a folded bolt. This represents a deviation from the classic hand position for seated males, where the left hand is flat and the right hand is clenched.²⁷ Exceptions to this rule occur more frequently than is generally assumed. On an admittedly crude male statue (*fig. 3*), both hands rest flat atop the knee, a position characteristic of women.²⁸ This object was found, according to Reisner, 'in debris above the northwest corner of *dubsh* core of mastaba G 7772'.²⁹ Nestled against it was a second seated statue, no doubt by the same artist, whose hands are placed against the sides of his legs (*fig. 4*).³⁰

Although it was the right hand that traditionally was clasped in a fist and the left placed flat on the knee, this too was not invariable. From the serdab of Giza

²³ E. Hornung, *History of Ancient Egypt. An Introduction* (Ithaca, 1999), 35.

²⁴ Junker, *Giza VII*, 105 and P. Der Manuelian, 'The Giza Mastaba Niche and Full Frontal Figure of Redi-nes', in D. Silverman, ed., *For His Ka. Essays offered in Memory of Klaus Baer*, SAOC 55 (1994), 71–72.

²⁵ Leipzig 3025; height 14.6 cm. See R. Krauspe, *Katalog Ägyptischer Sammlung in Leipzig I* (Mainz, 1997), pl. 51, no. 111 and Junker, *Giza IX*, pl. VIII and 38–40.

²⁶ In another example, the statue of Nisuwesert from the mastaba he shares with Sekhemankhptah, vertically oriented fistful hands spill over his lap to the sides of his legs (Hassan, *Giza II*, pl. XIV); height 55 cm.

²⁷ Vandier, *Manuel III*, 65.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 67 and Smith, *Sculpture*, 71, where he cites a second example from G 1903, found walled up in a niche in the upper part of the shaft of a rock cut tomb.

²⁹ Giza Object Register number 28-5-219. The piece measures 26 cm in height.

³⁰ Boston, MFA 39.832, illustrated in R. Freed, L. Berman, D. Doxey, *The Arts of Ancient Egypt* (Boston, 2003), 97; height 47 cm. It is uninscribed.

tomb G 1608 comes a statue of Inspector of *Ka*-servants Senunew where the reverse appears.³¹ A seated woman found outside Giza S 4040 (*fig. 5*) curls her left hand over her left knee and, also unusually, places her right hand diagonally over her chest.³² In this both charming and pitiable statue, the arms emanate not from the shoulders, but from the front of the chest!



Fig. 5 Seated woman; Hildesheim 3111 (found outside Giza tomb S 4040; photo courtesy of Roemer–Pelizaeus Museum)

Fig. 6 Uninscribed male statue; Giza, University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology 13521 (photographer: Jean Walker)

Arguably the statue mentioned above (*fig. 5*) is one of the oddest works Giza's cemeteries have yielded to date. From Clarence Fisher's excavations for the University of Pennsylvania, an uninscribed male statue (*fig. 6*),³³ likewise crudely made, places his left arm and hand directly across his chest. Further, his right arm extends across his abdomen, a pose assumed by females frequently in the Archaic Period, but in reverse.³⁴ It was found in the debris over the serdab roof of G 2086. The diagonal arm pose is not, however, limited to works of questionable quality, as shown by the quite respectable standing statue of a female from the mastaba of Dag, who places her right arm on her left shoulder,³⁵ or on the pair statue of two men, who, presumably for the sake of symmetry, place their outer arm on the opposing shoulder while their inner arms hang at their sides.³⁶

Several squatting male statues, perhaps scribes, cross both hands over their chests.³⁷ Figures with one or both hands across their chests are found frequently in relief, most often on attendants of both sexes who present themselves to the tomb owner.³⁸ The gesture and the intrusive context of many of the statues that display it make it clear that it signifies supplication or respect.³⁹

³¹ Vandier, *Manuel* III, pl. XVII, 4 and 57 where he argues plausibly for a Fourth Dynasty date.

³² Hildesheim 3111. Junker, *Gîza* IX, 38 and pl. VIII d.

³³ University of Pennsylvania Museum 13521; height 37 cm. C. M. Fisher, *The Minor Cemetery at Giza* (Philadelphia, 1924), pl. 43 and facing page. Vandier, *Manuel* III, 67 and n. 6 tentatively identifies it as female, but the separation of the legs and lack of hemline makes it much more likely that a male is represented.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 66.

³⁵ Hassan, *Gîza* II, 59–60 and pl. XVIII, 2–3. In *PM* III², 271, the tomb, located in the Central Field of the Western Cemetery is ascribed to the Sixth Dynasty.

³⁶ Cairo, JE 66620, illustrated in Vandier, *Manuel* III, pl. XXXIII, 1.

³⁷ Smith, *Sculpture*, 77. The statues he cites were found by Hassan in the sphinx quarry.

³⁸ For an example from Giza, see the false door of Nisuwesert illustrated in Hassan, *Gîza* II, 38.

³⁹ Smith, *Sculpture*, 58.

Head and body position⁴⁰

Traditionally Egyptian sculptures gaze directly ahead into a transcendental beyond until the Roman Period, when B. V. Bothmer noted that a few examples look upward in what he termed apotheosis.⁴¹ This upward tilt of the head can occur

Fig. 7 Small seated man profile; Harvard University – Boston Museum of Fine Arts Expedition (Giza tomb G 7772; photographer: Mohammedani Ibrahim)



Fig. 8 Uninscribed male statue profile; University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology 135212 (photographer: Jean Walker)



much earlier. A profile view of the seated male statue found outside G 7772 (figs. 3, 7) shows a head angled decidedly skyward. Although only a head is preserved from a statue found in G 1225, there is no doubt that it too looked upward.⁴² On a seated statuette of the Royal Acquaintance Nykaura found in the debris of Giza tomb G 1033⁴³ not only does the head tilt up, but also the artist sculpted the upper body so that it leans backward, thereby capturing a body movement that would logically accompany the tilt of the head. The same upper body position is found on a statue of a man named Inekh currently in Munich.⁴⁴ On the latter example, the artist has also extended the legs forward so that the subject almost appears to recline. It is possible that the artists who created these statues did not originally intend for them to be that way. What is clear is that most of these pieces are small and come from intrusive contexts.

Statues may lean back and look up, but it appears they may also gaze down, as in the case of the statue from the University of Pennsylvania excavations mentioned above (figs. 6, 8). Finally, they may tilt sideward, as do both a seated scribe and a double statue from the tomb of Shepsesptah. In its two serdabs, this tomb also contained the sculpture of a man standing with both feet together, as well as twelve to fifteen additional sculptures. The two finest,⁴⁵ found together in the eastern serbab, were inscribed with the owner's name. The rest, crammed into the western serdab, were anepigraphic with the exception of one of several serving statues.⁴⁶ It is possible the western serdab group represented the staff of Shepsesptah's estate. In view of their lesser status, the leaning statues may have resulted from hasty carving, carelessness or inexperience.

⁴⁰ Exclusive of serving statues.

⁴¹ B.V. Bothmer, 'Apotheosis in Late Egyptian Sculpture', *Kêmi* 20 (1971): 37–48.

⁴² Although found in the chapel of that tomb, P. Der Manuelian, *Slab Stelae of the Giza Necropolis*, *PPYE* 7 (2003), 61 questions whether it may have been intrusive because it is stylistically so different from the slab stela also found in the tomb.

⁴³ Boston, MFA 06.2604; height 7.5 cm. Smith, *Sculpture*, 62–63.

⁴⁴ Munich AS 6797; height 24 cm. S. Schoske, *Egyptian Art in Munich* (Munich, 1993), no. 9. Its provenance is not known, but Giza is certainly possible.

⁴⁵ As measured by sensitivity of carving and adherence to the standard canon of proportion.

⁴⁶ Junker, *Giza* VII, 94 and pl. IX.

Interactions

Emotion – joy, sorrow, or affection – was generally alien to the Old Kingdom Egyptian sculptor's repertoire. This is understandable because tomb sculpture was designed to capture a timeless eternity rather than a fleeting moment. Even in pair statues where husband and wife stand side-by-side and the wife clasps her spouse, bodies did not otherwise touch. They gaze impassively into a transcendental beyond, as seen in Boston's statue of Menkaura and Queen and many private sculptures.⁴⁷ However, there are a few exceptions where emotion is expressed in a more direct fashion, although it is not clear that this was the intended result. For example Iaiib stands slightly in front of his wife Khuaut so that his left shoulder obscures her right⁴⁸ and his arm presses against her torso. Viewed from the front, therefore, their bodies appear nestled together. Although the body position is similar, the outstanding quality of this sculpture is hardly matched by the pair statue of Nefer and his wife found by Ballard in the Western Cemetery at Giza (fig. 9).⁴⁹ Exceptionally, Nefer's wife's head is shifted decidedly in his direction as if to emphasize her affection for him. The result is touching, but comical.

In pair statues of a man and wife, generally it is the man, as the person of higher status, who stands with both hands at his sides as he receives his wife's embrace.⁵⁰ Such is the case in a pair statue recently published by Zahi Hawass from the Abu Bakr excavations, where the man's body overlaps his wife's as in the sculptures mentioned above. However, her extra-long arm is draped over his far shoulder, rather than around his waist in a gesture which can only be described as possessive.⁵¹ The well-known statue of Memi and his wife Sabu (mentioned above in the section on leg position) is unusual in that husband and wife embrace each other.⁵² Specifically, Memi extends his left arm over his much-shorter wife's shoulders and drapes it over the front of her chest, covering her breast. At the same time Sabu extends her arm behind Memi's back and clasps his waist. Their differing height is not the only explanation for this unusual



Fig. 9 Pair statue of Nefer and wife; Egyptian Museum, Cairo (Giza Western Cemetery)

⁴⁷ Boston, MFA 11.1738 (Menkaura and Queen) and Boston, MFA 06.1876 (Ptahkenwy and Wife), illustrated in Freed, Berman, Doxey, *Arts of Ancient Egypt*, 86–89.

⁴⁸ Leipzig 3684 from the chapel of the mastaba of Itju, Krauspe, *Ägyptische Sammlung Leipzig*, 47–48 and pls. 36, 1–4 and 37, 1; height 73 cm. For a recent discussion of the statue where it is dated to the Fourth Dynasty, see Roehrig, in *Egyptian Art in the Age of the Pyramids*, 293–294. A similar body position is found on the pair statue of Nenhefeka and his wife Neferseshemes found at Deshasheh (Chicago, OIM 2036 A-B in E. Teeter, *Ancient Egypt. Treasures from the Collection of the Oriental Institute University of Chicago* [Chicago, 2003], 26–27) but perhaps made at Giza. Teeter (26) attributes the statue to the Fifth Dynasty.

⁴⁹ Smith, *Sculpture*, 68 and pl. 26d.

⁵⁰ W. K. Simpson, 'Amor Dei: *Ntr mrr rmt m t3 w3* (Sh. Sai. 147–148) and the Embrace', in J. Assmann, E. Feucht, R. Grieshammer, eds., *Fragen an die Altägyptische Literatur. Studien zum Gedenken an Eberhard Otto* (Wiesbaden, 1977).

⁵¹ Z. Hawass, *Hidden Treasures of Ancient Egypt* (Washington, D.C., n.d.), 115; height 65 cm.

⁵² NY, MMA 48.111, Roehrig, in *Egyptian Art in the Age of the Pyramids*, 294–296, where other examples are listed. Simpson in Assmann, Feucht, Grieshammer, eds., *Fragen an die Altägyptische Literatur*, 496, speculates that this statue may have come from her tomb. (Its provenance is not known.)

⁵³ Boston, MFA Giza Object Register numbers 12-11-21 and 39, illustrated in Smith, *Sculpture*, pl. 25f.

embrace, as the same arm position may be seen on a pair statue from G 2353 B⁵³ where husband and wife are nearly the same size. Although a hand placed over a breast may be seen as an erotic gesture, it is certainly not the only explanation. Hetepheres II drapes her arm over the shoulder of her daughter Meresankh III, and her hand too rests on her daughter's breast.⁵⁴

Adult males in group statues most often stand with their arms at their sides with hands clasping the rounded protrusion. A striking exception is an anepigraphic group of two men from G 2185 where the man on the right, adorned in a wig of chin-length, places his arm around the waist of his companion, who wears a shoulder-length wig.⁵⁵ Equally surprising is to see the three Palace Attendants from G 2009 (fig. 2, mentioned above) holding hands, as statues depicting a husband and wife occasionally do.⁵⁶

If holding hands and clasping waists are to be interpreted as signs of affection, then a woman in the middle of an anepigraphic rock-cut triad in the tomb of Njwedjaptah displays both. She holds the hand of the man to her right and embraces the man to her left. The excavator interprets them as her husband and son.⁵⁷

Nowhere is the sense of yearning better expressed than on a statue of a mother and her toddlers said to be from Giza's Western Cemetery.⁵⁸ The girl, who is oriented diagonally across her mother's lap clasps her mother's left nipple in an attempt to draw it to her mouth. Her mother assists with her right hand, while her left hand cradles the child's head. Meanwhile, behind on the right, what may be a twin brother⁵⁹ reaches up, throws his head back, and pulls his mother's right breast around her back and into his mouth. There is no better example of an Old Kingdom artist abandoning the usual profile and frontal orientation and capturing a poignant moment in time.⁶⁰

Nearly impossible poses

Serving statues unquestionably display the greatest variety of poses. Two found in the tomb of Nykauhathor are among the most creative. A woman grinding grain kneels in the usual fashion, but curls her right foot around the ankle of her left.⁶¹ Selim Hassan, who excavated the tomb, conjectured that this pose gave her the greatest forward momentum. While he may be correct, it, like the mother with twins described above, represents a fleeting moment, because it is extremely difficult to remain in that position for more than an instant.⁶²

Profile and frontal orientation

Hassan described a second serving statue from the same tomb as a cook or baker tending a fire, with the fire now missing (figs. 10, 11).⁶³ Studiously following the rule of profile and frontal orientation, the artist carved the woman's body so that every element is oriented on a straight axis or perpendicular to it. Her head is turned ninety degrees to the right so that it is only seen when the statue is viewed in profile, her left hand is placed at the nape of her neck and is only visible from her left side,

⁵⁴ Boston, MFA 30.1456, illustrated in Smith, *Sculpture*, pl. 16c. The statue is from the daughter's tomb, G 7540.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 73 and pl. 21a.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 69 (MFA 06.1882). For a list of statues of a couples holding hands, see Krauspe, *Ägyptische Sammlung Leipzig*, 56–57.

⁵⁷ A. M. Abu-Bakr, *Giza 1949–1950* (Cairo, 1953), 115, fig. 95 E and pl. LXI top.

⁵⁸ NY, MMA 26.7.1405; height 10.5 cm., illustrated in *Egyptian Art in the Age of the Pyramids*, 393.

⁵⁹ They are approximately the same size.

⁶⁰ There are additional three-dimensionally conceived representations of mother and children. For a list, see Hill, in *ibid.*, 393–394 and n. 2–3.

⁶¹ Hassan, *Giza* VI.1, 178 and pl. LXXIV. She is the *ka*-servant Henutsen.

⁶² Chicago, Oriental Institute 10638 from the mastaba of Nykauinpu (provenance not known) illustrated in Teeter, *Ancient Egypt*, 21 is another example of this pose. She dates this tomb to 'probably the reign of Nyusera'. Vandier, *Manuel* III, 95, n. 5 mistakenly cites others.

⁶³ Hassan, *Giza* VI.1, 180 and pl. LXXVIII.

and her right foot wraps around her body and is only seen from the back. The result is a rigid angularity that makes the piece almost comical.



Fig. 10 Serving statue of baker; Egyptian Museum, Cairo (Giza, tomb of Nikauhathor)

Fig. 11 Serving statue of baker (rear); Egyptian Museum, Cairo (Giza, tomb of Nikauhathor)

A similar two-dimensional orientation is apparent in another statue that resembles a serving statue, but is not performing an act of service. Instead it shows a young boy and girl engaged in a game of leapfrog.⁶⁴ All body parts are oriented to the front or rear, except for the head of the girl, who is on the bottom. She turns her head ninety degrees to the right.

Another stark contrast to the mother nursing twins mentioned above is provided by a statuette of a mother, probably from the serdab of G 1093x/2091x, who gazes into the distance as she extends her arms out to clasp the child seated stiffly on her lap (fig. 12).⁶⁵ So that the child's feet are supported, a special base is provided on the side of the mother's chair. The child and its chair are perpendicular to the mother and her chair. This is strikingly reminiscent of the statue of Pepy II on the lap of his mother, generally thought to be from Saqqara.⁶⁶ If the non-royal mother and child statue is not intrusive, then it may predate the royal example, since it comes from a late Fifth Dynasty context.⁶⁷ Should the tomb from which it came be later, it is tempting to think that it was made by a junior apprentice from the same royal workshop as the Pepy II statue.



Fig. 12 Mother and child; Egyptian Museum, Cairo (Giza tomb G 1093X / 2091X), Harvard University – Boston Museum of Fine Arts Expedition (photographer: Mohammedani Ibrahim)

⁶⁴ Chicago, OI 10639 from the mastaba of Nykauinpu, illustrated in Teeter, *Ancient Egypt*, 21. For another rigid profile and frontal orientation, see a serving statue from the Abu Bakr excavations illustrated in Hawass, *Hidden Treasures*, 15.

⁶⁵ Cairo, JE 72142, height 10.1 cm. Smith, *Sculpture*, 70–71.

⁶⁶ Brooklyn 39.119 discussed by Roehrig, in *Egyptian Art in the Age of the Pyramids*, 437–439.

⁶⁷ Roth notes a possible confusion in the provenance records in *Cemetery of Palace Attendants*, 139–141. The tombs in the area are ascribed to late Fifth Dynasty (*ibid.*, 137).

Attributes

Absence of clothing

In three-dimensional stone sculpture, unclothed adult males are occasionally found.⁶⁸ From Giza two are worthy of special mention.⁶⁹ One, discovered 'in the debris at the entrance to the mastaba of Hesy', is seated with his legs spread widely apart, proudly exposing large genitals, whose size is further emphasized by overly thin limbs.⁷⁰ The second nude adult male stands beside his fully clothed wife, a combination that appears to be unique.⁷¹ Since nudity is the rule in representations of children, and children provide proof of the fertility of their parents, it is possible that adult male nudity connotes fertility and regeneration as well.⁷²

Even though their sheath dresses are normally so tight that they appear to be nude, unclothed women in stone statuary from Old Kingdom Giza are extremely rare. Although the breasts and a triangular pubic area are frequently modeled into the stone, Nefret's nipples and pubic triangle have been further highlighted in black on her white dress in a statue from the serdab of Ahu.⁷³ She bears the rare Old Kingdom title *mjtr(t)*, generally translated as lady or concubine.⁷⁴ On another clothed woman also named Nefret from the same excavations, vagina, labia and pubic triangle are incised.⁷⁵ There is only one example from Old Kingdom Giza known to the author where a woman is totally devoid of clothing, as shown by the absence of hemline. On this female from the tomb of Nefermetet, labia are marked by a vertical incised line inside a prominent pubic triangle.⁷⁶

Jewelry

Jewelry was not only an indicator of status, but also had amuletic significance. Both men and women wore broad collars.⁷⁷ In addition, men occasionally wore single-strand necklaces with amulets,⁷⁸ and women might wear chokers. On a statue in Boston (*fig. 4*),⁷⁹ however, a male wears a choker, and his artist made sure it would remain with him for eternity by incising it on his neck. It covers the neck in its entirety.

Painted on the chest of the statue of the King's Acquaintance Satmeret⁸⁰ is both an elaborate broad collar and a vertically oriented rectangular beaded pendant. An even more elaborate parure may be seen on Mesi's wife from G 2009, who wears a choker, broad collar, floral pendant, multi-strand bracelet, and anklets. The excellent state of preservation of these pieces provides a reminder of how much information is lost when paint fades.

⁶⁸ For speculations on the meaning of nudity, see Wolf, *Kunst*, 160.

⁶⁹ Junker, *Gîza* VII, 40–41. In all, he lists nine nude male statues of stone. Four examples are from sites other than Giza, one is a serving statue, and one which forms part of a triad (Junker no. 13, 41) must be a youth on the basis of its relative scale. It is possible that one of the remaining examples is a youth.

⁷⁰ Hassan, *Gîza* III, LXXI, 2 and 256; height 15.5 cm.

⁷¹ H. Lutz, *Egyptian Statues and Statuettes in the Museum of Anthropology of the University of California* (Leipzig, 1940), 24 and pl. 35b; height 48 cm. See also Smith, *Sculpture*, 63, where he mentions the same tomb, G 1032, contained another statue of a man described as 'very crude'.

⁷² Krauspe, *Ägyptische Sammlung Leipzig*, 51.

⁷³ Abu-Bakr, *Giza 1949–1950*, pl. LII and 90.

⁷⁴ D. Jones, *An Index of Ancient Egyptian Titles, Epithets and Phrases of the Old Kingdom I*, BAR International Series 866 (Oxford, 2000), No. 1572.

⁷⁵ Hawass, *Hidden Treasures*, 14; height 43 cm.

⁷⁶ Hassan, *Gîza* V, 200 and pl. 12c; preserved height 34 cm (head and feet are missing).

⁷⁷ For broad collars, see E. Brovarski, 'Old Kingdom Beaded Collars', in J. Phillips, ed., *Ancient Egypt, the Aegean, and the Near East. Studies in Honor of Martha Rhoads Bell I* (San Antonio, 1997), 137–162.

⁷⁸ Boston, MFA 39-1-19, illustrated in Roth, *Cemetery of Palace Attendants*, pl. 113b.

⁷⁹ Boston, MFA 39.832, cited above for the unusual position of his hands.

⁸⁰ Hassan, *Gîza* V, 283 and pl. LIV; height 53 cm. In *PM III*², 253, the tomb is ascribed to the Fifth Dynasty or later.

Objects held

By far the most common object held by male statues is a short stick with rounded ends clasped in one or both fists. It can represent a staff of office, walking stick, document case, or folded bolt of cloth,⁸¹ all of which signified the elevated status of an official in the Egyptian bureaucracy. However, only in rare instances in three-dimensional stone statuary is the identity of this implement certain. Both Khafra in the famous statue from his Valley Temple⁸² and the colossal statue of Menkaura from his Pyramid Temple⁸³ clearly hold a folded cloth, the uneven ends of which are depicted on the side of their right legs. This fully articulated manner of depicting the cloth appears to have been restricted to royalty in the Old Kingdom, except for a few instances. The King's Hairdresser Khakara holds it in his standing statue from G 1314,⁸⁴ and in two seated sculptures from his tomb, the King's Acquaintance Wetethetep clasps the handkerchief as well.⁸⁵ Like royalty, these men also hold it in their right hands.

Holding the rounded protrusion was confined to males exclusively – almost. An exception was found in Steindorff's tomb D 215, where Ankhathor, standing beside her seated husband Iymhetep, holds this element in her fist.⁸⁶

Entirely different objects – *ntw* pots – are offered by a kneeling priest in a statue from a tomb found by Abu Bakr in 1950.⁸⁷ The tomb is ascribed to the Fifth Dynasty. If its attribution to the Fifth Dynasty is correct, then it pre-dates the first known royal example of a statue in a similar pose, the statue of Pepy I in the Brooklyn Museum.⁸⁸



Fig. 13 Pair statue with short back pillar; Ägyptisches Museum der Universität Leipzig 3684 (Giza; photographer: Karin Kranich)

Back pillars

Back pillars, once described as 'perhaps the most peculiar – and the most mysterious' attribute of Egyptian sculptures,⁸⁹ certainly provided protection from breakage, among other functions.⁹⁰ One thing they did not consistently do was to support the back or the legs. Occasionally they extend from the statue's base only to the small of the back,⁹¹ to the buttocks (fig. 13),⁹² or below.⁹³ In the pair statue

⁸¹ This is apparent in relief representations of wood statues such as Wepwawetemhat (Boston, MFA 04.1780), illustrated in Freed, Berman, Doxey, *Arts of Ancient Egypt*, 114.

⁸² Cairo, CG 14, illustrated in Saleh, Sourouzian, *Egyptian Museum*, no. 31.

⁸³ Boston, MFA 09.204, illustrated in Freed, Berman, Doxey, *Arts of Ancient Egypt*, 80.

⁸⁴ Now Hearst Museum 6.19780, illustrated in Lutz, *Egyptian Statues and Statuettes*, pl. 22 and Smith, *Sculpture*, 65–66. In *PM III*², 61, the tomb is attributed to the second half of the Fifth Dynasty.

⁸⁵ Hassan, *Giza II*, pl. I and Smith, *Sculpture*, 77. Hassan attributes the mastaba to Fourth – Fifth Dynasties (4).

⁸⁶ He bore the title 'Assistant Leather Worker', and the tomb is attributed to the late Fifth Dynasty. See *Das Alte Reich. Ägypten im Zeitalter der Pyramiden* (Hildesheim, 1986), 57–58 and Smith, *Sculpture*, 70.

⁸⁷ Hawass, *Hidden Treasures*, 18; height 33 cm.

⁸⁸ J. Romano, 'Sixth Dynasty Royal Sculpture', in N. Grimal, ed., *Les Critères de datation stylistiques à l'Antique Empire BdE 120* (Cairo, 1997), 242–243 and figs. 20–30.

⁸⁹ E. R. Russmann, *Egyptian Sculpture. Cairo and Luxor* (Austin, 1989), 7.

⁹⁰ See especially *ibid.*, 7–8. G. Robins in *The Art of Ancient Egypt* (Cambridge, MA, 1997), 20 suggests it contributed to an impression of strength and power.

⁹¹ Hassan, *Giza V*, pl. LIV.

mentioned above from Giza tomb D 215, a back pillar is only found behind the woman who stands beside her seated husband.

Conclusions

The small selection of sculptures described above have in common the fact that they differ from what Egyptologists and art historians expect. They vary in size, function, identity and quality. All but a few come from scientific excavation, making their authenticity unquestionable. Isolating material from a single site—Giza—and from a designated time period—the Old Kingdom—illustrates in a microcosm just how rich and varied Egyptian sculpture is and how many basic assumptions need modification to allow for these exceptional pieces.

For example, there is a tendency on the part of art historians to assume that sculpture can be dated on the basis of its quality, and that material that deviates from the norm or is substandard in quality comes from the declining years of an era, in this case, the end of the Sixth Dynasty or the First Intermediate Period. Although many of the sculptures discussed above cannot be dated on the basis of their inscriptions or archaeological evidence, a number that are datable come from the second half of the Fifth Dynasty. This was hardly a time of decline, but rather a time when large-scale sculpture of reasonable quality continued to be made.

The end of the Fifth Dynasty was a time of change in both the political and religious spheres. In the royal sphere, the cult of Ra gained prominence, and the size and complexity of royal sun temples often exceeded that of pyramid complexes. At the same time, the cult of Osiris also grew in importance. Participation was open to all and guaranteed resurrection and the fulfillment of all needs in the afterlife.

In the political sphere, in Egypt in the Fifth Dynasty became an increasingly administrative society, although not one run exclusively by royal family members as it had been earlier.⁹⁴ Papyri from the funerary temples of Neferirkara and Neferefra illustrate meticulous record keeping.⁹⁵ Each department required an official in charge, and that official had a staff. Egypt's bureaucracy expanded geometrically in both the sacred and secular arenas, and titles proliferated. Although it is not always clear which titles signified real offices and which were honorific, they functioned in the same manner. Both granted privileges and access, including burial for those who had the means.

Burial at Giza in the Fourth Dynasty was the prerogative of the king and his family members. The latter were buried in large mastabas, laid out in rows planned at the same time as the royal burials. That changed in the Fifth Dynasty, when royal burials were located elsewhere. However activity at Giza did not cease, and a population responsible for protecting the necropolis and maintaining the endowed cults of the Fourth Dynasty kings thrived, at least through the Sixth Dynasty.⁹⁶ When Giza's officialdom expanded well beyond the king's relatives,⁹⁷ royal permission was no longer a prerequisite for burial at Giza.

As the number of bureaucrats increased, so too did the demand for proper burial. Those who could located their mastabas on Giza's outskirts and adjacent to or between the earlier ones. Mastaba construction, decoration, and provisioning, including the carving of statues provided employment for artists and artisans. Even

⁹² Leipzig 3684, illustrated in Krauspe, *Ägyptische Sammlung Leipzig*, pl. 36, 2. Height 73.5 cm.

⁹³ Leipzig 3028, illustrated in *ibid.*, pl. 39, 4. Height 46.8 cm.

⁹⁴ B. Trigger, B. Kemp, D. O'Connor, A. Lloyd, *Ancient Egypt: A Social History* (Cambridge, 1983), 77, where it is noted that all Fourth Dynasty viziers were kings' sons, but in the Fifth Dynasty, only one is known to have been.

⁹⁵ W. S. Smith, 'The Old Kingdom in Egypt', in *CAH I, 2A*, 184 and J. Malek, 'The Old Kingdom', in I. Shaw, ed., *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt* (Oxford, 2000), 109–111 and M. Verner, 'OLD KINGDOM: An Overview', in D. Redford, ed., *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt* (New York, 2001), 589.

⁹⁶ Reisner, Smith, *Giza II*, 41, 54.

⁹⁷ See note 94.

if burial was not possible, a statue placed either in the vicinity of a tomb chapel (fig. 14) or intrusively in or around a serdab (fig. 15) provided a place for the owner's *ka* to reside.⁹⁸ In that manner, the interloper gained a place in the netherworld and access to the offerings provided for the tomb's real owner.

In the Fifth Dynasty, the most prosperous officials may have been able to commission statuary from royal workshops outside Giza, but petty bureaucrats probably made do with local ateliers. Possibly their personnel were the descendants of artists and laborers from the royal workshops who continued working at Giza to fill this need, and their apprentices became the next chief sculptors. As time went by, memories dimmed, and a group of minimally trained or even self-taught artists arose to meet increased demand.

The statues described above demonstrate an approach that was often more creative than canonical. As William Stevenson Smith so aptly wrote, 'It is a fact in the history of Egyptian sculpture that unskilled workmen often attempt innovations which better-trained fellows would instinctively avoid'.⁹⁹ It is clear that an entire class of what might be called folk art available to those of low status existed beside the more formal statuary for the privileged few. This situation prevailed not only in post-Fourth Dynasty Giza, but at other times and places as well. For the artists who created this material, no rule was sacrosanct and every statue had the capacity to meet the tomb owner's needs. Clearly authenticating and dating on the basis of quality alone is woefully inadequate. Current excavations at Giza's Workman's Village are providing more examples of exceptions to art historical 'rules' and will ultimately yield a more balanced picture of possibilities for the afterlife.



Fig. 14 Statues in vicinity of tomb chapel; (Giza tomb G 7772) Harvard University – Boston Museum of Fine Arts Expedition (photographer: Mohammedani Ibrahim)



Fig. 15 Imhotep in serdab of Nary; Egyptian Museum, Cairo (Giza)

⁹⁸ D. Arnold, 'Old Kingdom Statues in their Architectural Setting', in *Egyptian Art in the Age of the Pyramids*, 44.

⁹⁹ Smith, *Sculpture*, 77.

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