

Some Royal Portraits of the Middle Kingdom in Ancient Egypt

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IN MEMORIAM

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AMONG THE GLORIES of Egyptian art are the royal sculptures of the Middle Kingdom “that record with searching accuracy not only the facial characteristics of each king, seen at a specific moment of his life’s span, but also something of his mood and underlying character.”¹ Thanks to the acumen of its curators, the skill and industry of its archaeologists, and the unstinted support of its patrons, The Metropolitan Museum of Art now enjoys the prerogative of housing the finest and most comprehensive collection of these sculptures outside Cairo. Nowhere is it possible to study this particular art in more sympathetic surroundings than in the galleries of the Museum, where a splendid collection of masterpieces ranges over the field of royal portraiture during the greater part of the XIth and XIIth Dynasties.

The astonishing realism of these portraits of Egyptian kings and queens is unique in the art of the ancient world, and was a phenomenon of relatively brief duration. While some eleven hundred years later it provided fresh inspiration and a point of departure for eclectic Egyptian sculptors who sought to recapture an antiquarian remembrance of things past, it remained outside the mainstream of pharaonic art. Some incidental words will be required, therefore, to explain the milieu in which it arose and had meaning.

The royal statues of the Old Kingdom are somewhat rare and mostly fragmentary. With a few exceptions they have been recovered from the great pyramid complexes of the age and reflect an exclusively mortuary art. Only a small number of these sculptures have been found in circumstances which suggest that their purpose was not funerary, such as the ivory statuette of Cheops excavated from the levels of an early temple at Abydos,² and the dyad of Sahu-rē³ from Koptos, in the Metropolitan Museum;³ but what has survived is sufficient to suggest that those statues which represented the king as intermediary between gods and men in the shrine of the local deity did not differ in form and feeling from the statues destined for the mortuary chapels. All alike express the character of the ruler as a god incarnate, calm, dignified, aloof from human cares.

Conversely, the statues of Middle Kingdom pharaohs have been found mostly on the sites of temples

1. W. C. Hayes, “Royal Portraits of the Twelfth Dynasty,” *BMMA* n.s. 5 (1946–1947) p. 119.

2. W. M. F. Petrie, *Abydos*, II (London, 1903) pls. xiii, xiv.

3. W. C. Hayes, *The Scepter of Egypt*, I (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1953) p. 71. Also the head from the sun temple of Weser-kaf at Abusir: H. Ricke, “Dritter Grabungsbericht über das Sonnenheiligtum des Königs Userkaf bei Abusir,” *ASAE* 55 (1958) pp. 73–75, pl. iii.

that were raised to local gods all over Egypt. In such widespread building the pharaohs appear to have been more active than their Old Kingdom predecessors, though the almost complete denudation of the older levels has bequeathed us a very incomplete picture of the true achievement of earlier kings. The relatively few examples of statuary that have been recovered from the pyramid temples of the Middle Kingdom, on the other hand, show that the funerary art of the time differs in mood from the contemporary "official" sculpture and has a character all its own.

Perhaps the uniformity of Old Kingdom sculpture was achieved by strong traditions of craftsmanship handed down by one generation of artists to the next, all working under the auspices of the creator god Ptah of Memphis, whose high priests were the master artists and designers. This religious and court art was penetrated toward the end of the period by new tendencies that find their consummation in the Middle Kingdom. The decay of the central authority and the rapid growth of feudalism in the Vth and VIth Dynasties promoted the rise of a number of provincial towns to greater importance. The regional governors now occupied offices that were hereditary. They no longer sought burial around the pyramid of their lord but hewed their rock tombs in the vicinity of their residence cities. A widespread demand was thus created for the funerary arts, including sculpture, which had developed in Memphis during the early Old Kingdom in the service of the pharaoh and his intimates. It can safely be assumed that the provincial art centers would have been founded or greatly influenced by Memphite craftsmen attracted by the opportunities offered by a new class of patron. They would have trained in their turn local workmen to carry on the traditions they had transplanted, but the chief court artists would hardly have been allowed to relinquish their studios at Memphis, even if they had felt so inclined. Much provincial art in the VIth Dynasty bears the stamp of the uninspired journeyman content to copy old formulae to extinction; and where a piece of more than average quality has survived,⁴ it is to be suspected that it is an import from the capital.

These tendencies were intensified during the First Intermediate Period when the Heracleopolitans fell

heir to the Memphis workshops and their trained personnel, while rivals such as the princes of Thinis, Dendera, Moalla, Asyut, and Thebes developed their own distinctive versions of the Memphite style in splendid isolation. When, however, the various warring states were pacified under the sovereignty of the Theban Mentu-hotpes of the XIth Dynasty, the old influences once more reasserted themselves as the new rulers took over all the traditional trappings of pharaonic power, and their artists refreshed themselves at the fountainhead of pharaonic art—the monuments and traditions of Memphis, the chief cultural and administrative center since the time of the first pharaoh.

We shall have more to say on these stylistic influences later; here we must emphasize the considerable shift in political power that characterized the First Intermediate Period, and the change in outlook that it effected. In place of the lonely god incarnate, there was now a multiplicity of petty monarchs ruling independent districts, who emphasized their divine right to govern less than their ability to keep their provinces orderly and prosperous through their temporal might and public works. This form of benevolent despotism was carried over into the principles of government during the Middle Kingdom when the pharaoh promoted wide-scale economic development by irrigation works, land reclamation, the establishment of trading posts in the Sudan, and the exploitation of mines and quarries for the benefit of the entire nation. The motive force that had built the mighty pyramid complexes of the IIIrd and IVth Dynasties had been the desire of the populace to secure their own welfare by the preservation of their greatest divinity, their pharaoh. In the XIIth Dynasty, however, the wheel had turned a half circle, and it was the concern of the pharaoh to preserve his people by his mighty works. Ammenemes I declared that none was hungry in his time and no one was thirsty; men dwelt in peace through what he said and wrought.⁵ His son, Sesostri I, announced that God had made him the Herdsman of the land of Egypt for He knew he would keep it in good order for Him.⁶ In such boasts the pharaoh was doing no more than repeating the claims of the many provincial governors during the First Intermediate Period that they had saved their people by

4. E.g., the statues of Nen-kheft-ka (late Vth Dynasty) from Dishasha, and a statue of K̄ar (VIth Dynasty) from Edfu; see also The Metropolitan Museum of Art, acc. no. 62.200, from Gebelaw: *BMAA* n.s. 22 (1963–1964) p. 65.

5. A. Erman, *Literature of the Ancient Egyptians*, trans. A. M. Blackman (London, 1927) p. 74.

6. Erman, *Literature*, p. 50.

their successful armed forays and by their measures against civil disorder and local economic distress caused by famine, the inevitable concomitant of anarchy in Egypt. The pharaohs of the XIIth Dynasty up to the last three kings were little more than first among equals, their founder, Ammenemes I, having apparently usurped supreme power with the support of the feudal nobility, whose former possessions and offices were restored to them.⁷ The pharaohs now had to share their authority with provincial governors who dated events to their own years of rule, maintained their own armed forces and fleets of ships, and quarried stone for their own monuments, some of which were of considerable size.⁸ Under Sesostri III, however, there was a further change in the political scene. The series of tombs hewn by the provincial lords near their seats of government came to an abrupt halt, and the feudal rule of the great landowners was replaced by a bureaucracy of modest state officials serving in various departments of the central palace administration, a system that was to be developed during the ensuing years of the Second Intermediate Period and the New Kingdom.⁹

These various factors—the changes in political power and ideas of government, as well as the rise and fall of provincial towns as centers of culture—had their impact on the character of the art of the period and determined its distinctive features, as we shall remark in passing.

The last great monument of the Old Kingdom was the pyramid complex of Pharaoh II at Saqqarah, which seems to have been specially hallowed in afteryears as the final utterance of the legendary pharaohs of a classical age.¹⁰ Not only did Sesostri I in the Middle Kingdom copy its plan and decoration for his mortuary temple at Lisht,¹¹ but Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahri and Amenophis II at Karnak also returned to its reliefs for

fresh inspiration in the New Kingdom.¹² The influence of the Pharaohs monument on Middle Kingdom art was profound, in both an unconscious and a deliberate fashion. By the end of the Old Kingdom a certain style characteristic of Memphite art was disseminated among the other provincial centers of Egypt. Its features can be seen in reliefs from the Pharaohs monument where a sharp ridge is often used to define the edges of the lips, and the muscles at the wings of the nose are carefully delineated.¹³ Such details are particularly evident in the work of lesser sculptors and became exaggerated into a distinctive mannerism by copyists in the provincial centers. The reliefs produced at Thebes, for instance, during the early years of the XIth Dynasty, emphasize not only these idiosyncrasies but also the long lobes of the ears, so characteristic of some of the Pharaohs reliefs,¹⁴ albeit the attenuated proportions are in the tradition of the First Intermediate Period at Thebes and Asyut.

The contemporary royal statuary of the late Old Kingdom is practically nonexistent, the surviving statuettes of Pharaohs I and II being on too small a scale to furnish fully reliable data. Nevertheless, the kneeling statuette of Pharaoh I at Brooklyn¹⁵ and the squatting statuette of Pharaoh II at Cairo¹⁶ show significant features in the ears placed high, the shallow crown of the head, the large wide eyes with pronounced inner canthi, the eyebrows worked in relief as distinct appliqué, the fleshy lips defined by a sharp line or edge, and the muscles emphasized around the corners of the mouth and nose (Figure 1). These peculiarities, distorted to a formula, are reflected in the contemporary statues of private persons such as that of Idy (Figure 2)¹⁷ in the Metropolitan's collection or those of Nekhebu at Boston.¹⁸ Such a mannerism inspired local schools of artists at Asyut and Thebes, which developed along

7. W. C. Hayes, "The Middle Kingdom in Egypt," *Cambridge Ancient History*, 2nd ed., I, chap. 20 (London, 1961) p. 35.

8. E.g., the alabaster colossus, over 20 feet high, erected by Djehuti-hotpe in the reign of Sesostri II; P. Newberry, *El Bersheh*, I (London, 1895) pp. 23–24.

9. Hayes, "Middle Kingdom," pp. 44–45.

10. In Middle Kingdom literature the reign of Snefru of the IVth Dynasty was regarded as a golden age; see B. Gunn, "Notes on Two Egyptian Kings," *JEA* 12 (1926) pp. 250–251.

11. Hayes, *Scepter*, I, p. 183.

12. G. Jéquier, *Le Monument Funéraire de Pepi II*, II (Cairo, 1936–1940) pp. 26–27; W. S. Smith, *Art and Architecture of Ancient Egypt* (Harmondsworth, 1958) p. 134.

13. Jéquier, *Monument Funéraire*, II, pl. 40.

14. E.g., Jéquier, *Monument Funéraire*, II, pl. 49; A. M. Blackman, "The Stele of Thethi, Brit. Mus. no. 614," *JEA* 17 (1931) pl. viii.

15. C. Aldred, *Old Kingdom Art* (London, 1949) nos. 60, 61.

16. G. Jéquier, "Rapport préliminaire sur les Fouilles exécutées en 1925–1926 dans la Partie Méridionale de la Nécropole Memphite," *ASAE* 26 (1926) pl. v.

17. Acc. no. 37.2.2, limestone, height 38 cm., provenance unknown. William C. Hayes, "Two Egyptian Statues," *BMAA* 33 (1938) pp. 107–108.

18. W. S. Smith, *Egyptian Sculpture and Painting* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1946) pl. 26 a, b.

independent lines during the First Intermediate Period.

The first examples of royal statuary in this provincial version of the late Old Kingdom style are the sandstone statues that Mentu-hotpe Neb-hepet-rē erected in the forecourt of his mortuary temple at Deir el-Bahri, a complete seated example of which, carefully bandaged like a corpse, was found by Howard Carter in the Bab el-Hosan under its pyramid.¹⁹ These statues are probably little older than the earliest parts of the monument, such as the reliefs from the chapels of the princesses and those from the sides of their sarcophagi.²⁰ The Museum is fortunate in possessing the head of a standing statue from this group of sculptures found by its Egyptian expedition in 1921–1922 in the forecourt of the king's temple at Deir el-Bahri (Figures 3, 4).²¹ The importance of this head excavated in an unambiguous context hardly needs to be stressed since it is the means of placing in the period of the XIth Dynasty a number of heads that otherwise might have been dated to the latter half of the VIth Dynasty.²² It infuses the mannerisms of the Phiops II style with a primitive brutal force that in effect creates a new archaism and makes the head a point of departure rather than a late variation on an earlier theme.

The stylistic features are clear for all to see. The wide staring eyes with their long inner canthi and pro-

nounced paint stripe, the eyebrows in relief, the thick lips with their edges defined by ridges and pursed up at the corners into a grimace, and the muscles at the wings of the nose are all present, if less emphasized, in the kneeling statuette of Phiops I at Brooklyn (Figure 1). The same elongated canthi are seen in the reliefs of Neb-hepet-rē in the Hathor shrine from Denderah, where the earlobes are also fleshy and prolonged.²³

During his reign, Neb-hepet-rē overthrew the Her-

19. H. Carter, "Report on the tomb of Mentuhotep Ist, at Deir el-Bahari, Known as Bab el Hoṣan," *ASAE* 2 (1901) pp. 201–205; K. Lange and M. Hirmer, *Egypt*, 4th ed. (London, 1968) pls. 80, 81.

20. E. Naville, *The XIth Dynasty Temple at Deir el-Bahari* (London, 1907–1913) I, pls. xvii–xix, II, pls. xi–xx. The costume worn by the king in these statues does not necessarily mean that he had already celebrated a jubilee. It is probable, however, that one of the statues was improvised as a substitute for the corpse of the king and buried in the Bab el-Hosan as part of the jubilee rites concerning the death and resurrection of the pharaoh.

21. Acc. no. 26.3.29, height 2.03 m.; H. E. Winlock, "Egyptian Expedition, 1925–1927: The Museum's Excavations at Thebes," *BMAA* 23 (1928) part II, p. 24, fig. 25. It should be noted that this head has been joined to a headless statue of the same king, which it happily completes although it evidently came from another statue in the same series.

22. E.g., Louvre, no. E.10299; Vandier, *Manuel*, p. 37, note 1.

23. G. Daressy, "Chapelle de Mentuhotep III à Dendérah," *ASAE* 17 (1917) pp. 226 ff., pl. 3.

FIGURE 1

Head of kneeling statue of Phiops I. The Brooklyn Museum, Charles Edwin Wilbour Fund, 39.121

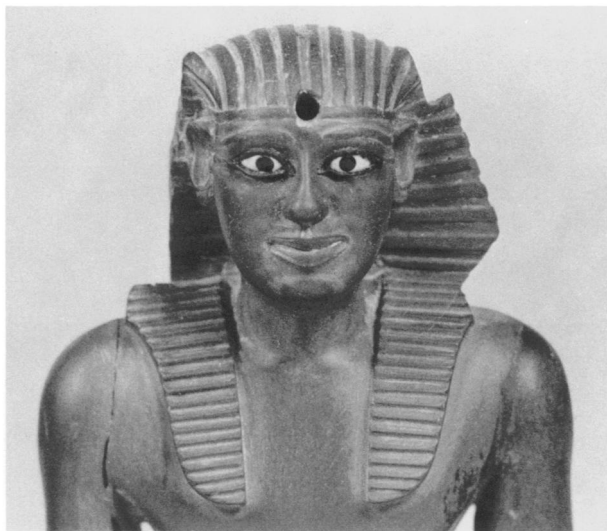
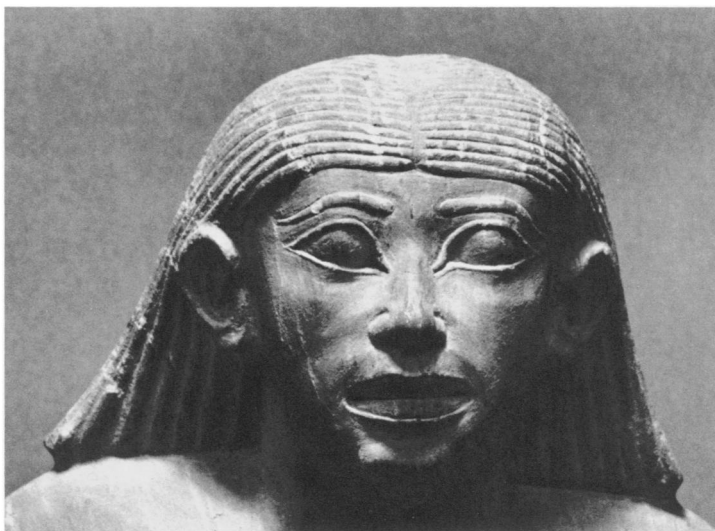
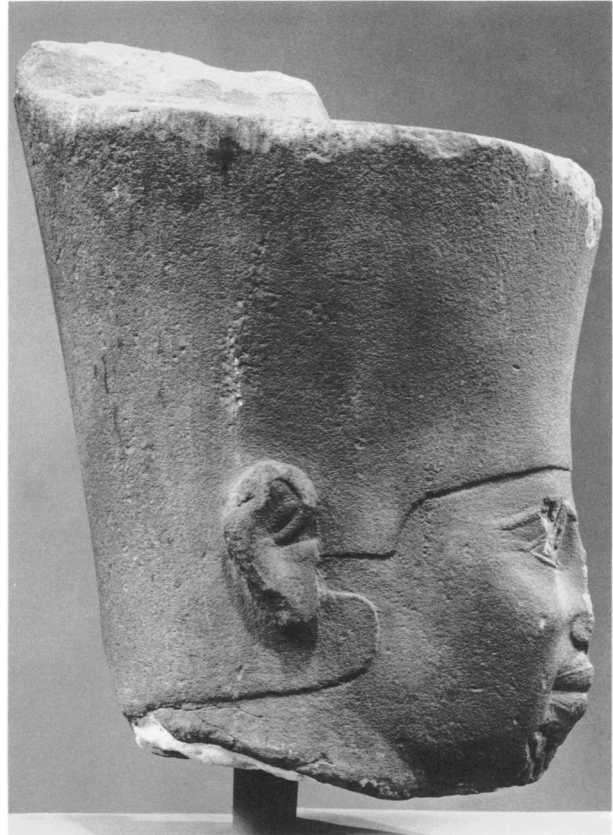
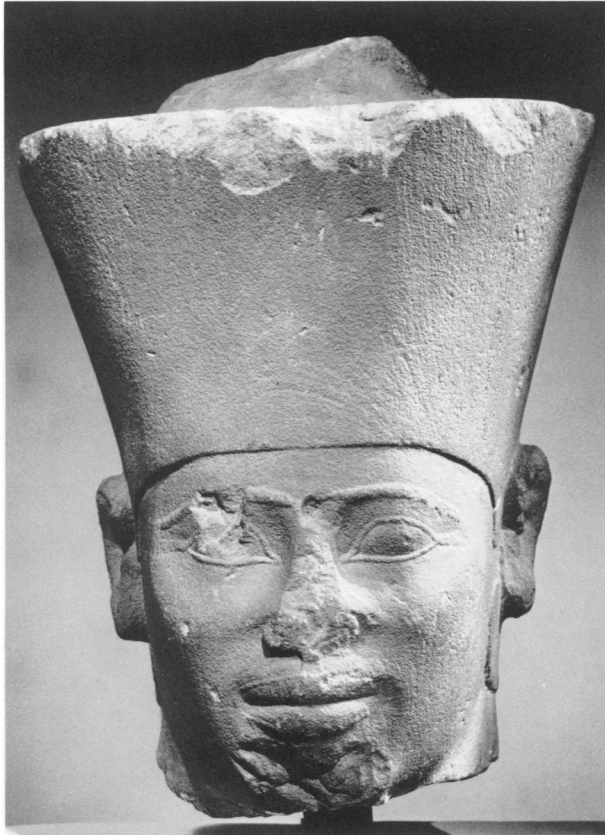


FIGURE 2

Head of seated statue of Idy. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 37.2.2





FIGURES 3, 4

Head of Mentu-hotpe Neb-hepet-rē. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Museum excavations, 1921–22, 26.3.29

acleopolitan power and united the Two Lands under the rule of a sole pharaoh. It may be surmised that this great victory brought the Thebans into sustained contact with the culture of Memphis and its skilled craftsmen and officials. Indeed, Inyotef-nakhte, the chief sculptor of Neb-hepet-rē, had evidently served under the last of the Heracleopolitan kings.²⁴ A more sophisticated influence is apparent in the later work of the reign, as may be seen in some of the reliefs from Deir el-Bahri²⁵ and particularly from Tôd,²⁶ where an elegance of proportions and a more assured handling of the material reveal that the traditions of pharaonic art were being revived, though infused with a new dynamism.

This progression steadily continued under the successors of Neb-hepet-rē, the reliefs of Mentu-hotpe Se'ankh-ka-rē from Tôd showing a decided refinement

over those of his predecessor, though preserving all their essential features.²⁷ The influence of the Phiops II monument is seen, for example, in the relief from Armant in Brooklyn,²⁸ with its return to more classical proportions and elegance in its drawing. Such idiosyncrasies as the *nemes* headcloth with a long, narrow-pleated lap-pet and the striped wig-cover without a frontlet, as

24. Hayes, "Middle Kingdom," p. 23.

25. E.g., Naville, *XIth Dynasty Temple*, II, pls. v c, vi a, b, d; see also H. G. Fischer, "An Example of Memphite Influence in a Theban Stela of the Eleventh Dynasty," *Artibus Asiae* 22 (1959) pp. 240–252.

26. F. Bisson de la Roque, *Tôd, Fouilles*, *Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale* 17 (1934–1936) pl. xviii.

27. Bisson de la Roque, *Tôd*, pl. xxi.

28. R. Mond and O. H. Myers, *Temples of Armant* (London, 1937) pl. xcvi, 1.



FIGURE 5
Head of Mentu-hotpe Se'ankh-
ka-rē' (?). Cairo Museum, J.
d'Entrée 67345



FIGURE 6
Head of Mentu-hotpe Neb-
hepet-rē' (?). Edinburgh, Royal
Scottish Museum, 1965.2



FIGURES 7, 8

Head of Mentu-hotpe Neb-hepet-rē (?). Bristol Museum, H 5038

well as the loving delineation of the muscles at the wings of the nose, suggest direct copying.²⁹

To this period must be dated a number of fragmentary statues that have been considered to represent various kings. The upper part of a gray granite seated statue from Tôd (Figure 5) has been identified as of King Achoris of the XXIXth Dynasty,³⁰ but obviously belongs to this group. It bears a generic resemblance to the quartzite heads in Bristol and Edinburgh (Figures 6–8)³¹ and the gray green arkose head at Basel (Figure 9).³² All are characterized by their thick everted

FIGURE 9

Head of Middle Kingdom ruler, XIth or XIIth Dynasty. Basel, Kunsthalle, III, 8397



29. Jéquier, *Monument Funéraire*, II, pls. 63, 64.

30. Cairo, J. d'Entrée no. 67345, height 65 cm.; *Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale* 50 (1952) pl. II; F. Bisson de la Roque, "Tôd, Fouilles antérieures à 1938," *Revue d'Égyptologie* 4 (1940) p. 73; see note 32 below. Part of a statue of a king seated beside a queen or divinity. I identify the king as Seankh-ka-rē, the work appearing a little too sophisticated for the major part of the reign of Neb-hepet-rē. The monuments of both kings are common at Tôd. There is no trace of the work of Achoris on the same site.

31. Royal Scottish Museum, acc. no. 1965.2, height 12.5 cm., provenance unknown; Bristol Museum, acc. no. H5038, height 11 cm., provenance unknown. These heads are so alike in material, size, and style that they form a pair, or two in a larger series.

32. Basel, Kunsthalle, acc. no. III, 8397, height 15 cm. This head was dated by Ursula Schweitzer, "Ein Spätzeitlicher Königs-

FIGURES 10–12

Head of Ammenemes I (?). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fletcher Fund and gift of Dr. and Mrs. Edmundo Lassalle through the Guide Foundation, 66.99.3

lips, eyebrows in relief, wide staring eyes, fleshy-lobed ears set high, rather flat-topped headcloths with wide single stripes and tall lozenge-shaped uraei-hoods springing from the base of the frontlet with seven or more windings to the body and a tail that extends almost to the back pillar or to the pigtail of the *nemes*. They seem to represent a development in the portrait sculpture of the period, with the Bristol and Edinburgh heads at the beginning and the Basel head at the end of the series.³³ This last specimen marks the transition to the more sophisticated work of the successors of Neb-ḥepet-rē.³⁴ Related to it is the head in hard yellow limestone from the Gallatin Collection in the Metropolitan Museum (Figures 10–12),³⁴ which J. D. Cooney has dated to the later years of the XIth Dynasty and has considered most probably to represent Se'ankh-ka-rē.³⁵ The muscles around the corners of the mouth and nose have the emphatic quality of the work of this period, as Cooney remarks; other features such as the uraeus with its seven loops and the wide-striped headcloth with narrow-pleated lappets are in the style of the dynasty, but the more naturalistic treatment of the eyes and mouth betrays the hand of a craftsman who

kopf in Basel," *Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale* 50 (1952) pp. 119–132, to the Late Period by comparison with royal heads in Turin, Berlin, and Vienna (no. 37: see note 76 below). I am unable to follow her arguments; to my mind her study is a travesty of stylistic analysis. She has failed to appreciate the entirely different handling of the Basel head, the radically different treatment of eyes (with a cosmetic line in the case of the Basel specimen), eyebrows, uraei, mouth, ears, chin, and *nemes*, and the different proportions of the various elements in the heads under discussion. It is equally disturbing to note that she has also lumped Cairo J. d'Entrée 67345 with the Basel head in the work of the Late Period.

33. Probably the Louvre head (E.10299) mentioned in note 22 above should precede the Edinburgh head in this grouping. The eyebrows of this specimen, however, are not in relief but inlaid, though of the same form; the uraeus does not spring from the base of the frontlet but from a little above; the headcloth is not flat-topped in profile but describes a complete arc, as is seen in the wig of Neb-ḥepet-rē on the Denderah shrine.

34. Acc. no. 66.99.3, height 18.1 cm.

35. J. D. Cooney, "Egyptian Art in the Collection of Albert Gallatin," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 12 (1953) pp. 3–4, no. 7.





has left behind him the archaisms of an artistic revival. A stylistic feature that relates it to the Basel head and some others of this period (see below) is the lack of tabs on the frontlet before the ears, but it differs from the Basel head in the vertical fall of the wings of the headcloth when seen in a side view.

In the absence of comparable material identified by unimpeachable inscriptions, it would be rash to insist that the king represented in the Gallatin head is Se'ankh-ka-rē' in preference to the last Mentu-hotpe of the dynasty or to the latter's successor, Ammenemes I. It does bear a resemblance to two of the heads of the Osiride statues excavated by the Egypt Exploration Society at Armant.³⁶ Though restored by Mineptah, they are generally recognized as originally of a Mentu-hotpe of the XIth Dynasty, most probably Se'ankh-ka-rē', who was particularly active at Armant.³⁷ The specimens at Boston³⁸ and Cairo³⁹ show a close likeness in the treatment of the muscles at the corners of the mouth, the slightly smiling lips, the sharp inner canthi of the eyes, and the rather bulbous chin. Se'ankh-ka-rē' had a brief reign, and much of his work may have been left unfinished; the Osiride statues, for instance, ap-

pear to have lain uninscribed for about six centuries before Mineptah reused them. The summary treatment of the ears of the Gallatin head may therefore be an indication that the statue lacks the final touches, and is a further argument for its identification as Se'ankh-ka-rē'.

Whoever it represents, however, the Gallatin head bridges the work of Neb-hepet-rē' and that of the early XIIth Dynasty. Its stylistic features resemble those of the red granite colossus of Ammenemes I from Tanis,⁴⁰

36. Mond and Myers, *Temples of Armant*, pl. xvi, nos. S.102, S.435.

37. B. Porter and R. Moss, *Topographical Bibliography*, V (Oxford, 1937) pp. 157, 160; Mond and Myers, *Temples of Armant*, pp. 166-168.

38. Museum of Fine Arts, acc. no. 38.1395; W. S. Smith, *Ancient Egypt as Represented in the Museum of Fine Arts*, 3rd ed. (Boston, 1952) p. 79.

39. Cairo Museum, J. d'Entrée no. 67378.

40. Cairo Museum, J. d'Entrée no. 37470; Evers, *Staat*, I, pls. 15-17.

FIGURE 13

Head of seated statue of Ammenemes I. Cairo Museum, J. d'Entrée 60520



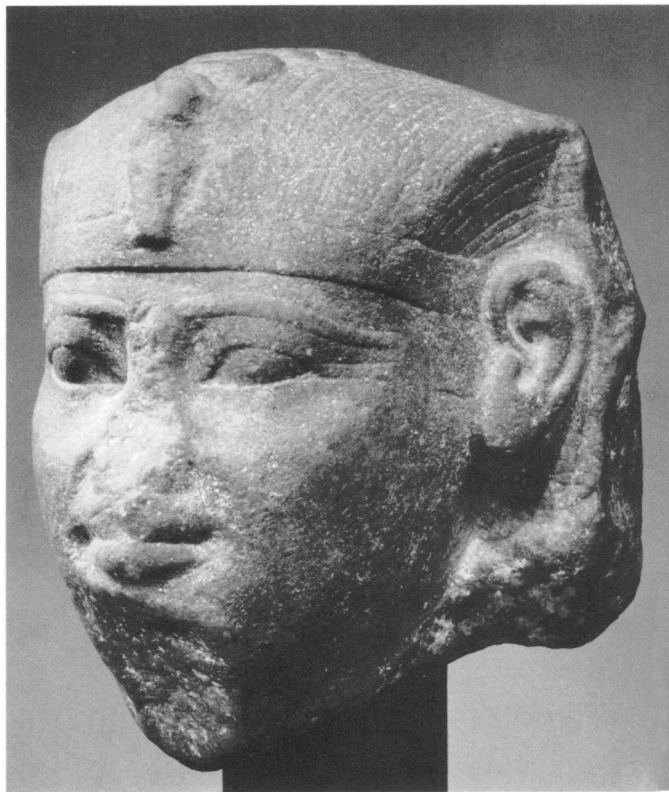


FIGURE 14-16

Head of a sphinx (?), early XIIth Dynasty. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fletcher Fund and gift of Dr. and Mrs. Edmundo Lassalle through the Guide Foundation, 66.99.4

with its round face, prominent chin and cheekbones, and faintly smiling lips. The red granite statue of the same king from Faqus (Figure 13)⁴¹ displays a closely similar treatment of the muscles at the corners of the mouth with the same fold of flesh running in an arc toward the chin. The ears, too, lie at the same angle to the cheek; the wig-cover has a closely similar profile, and the root of the pigtail slopes with the same inclination. The frontlet also lacks tabs before the ears and carries its uraeus at the same distance from its lower edge. It differs only in that the frontlet lies directly horizontal above the ears, a reversion to the convention seen in the Brooklyn statue of Pharaoh I. This anomaly cannot, however, rule out the distinct possibility that the Gallatin statue represents Ammenemes I, whose monuments, though scanty despite his thirty years of

rule, may be expected to have survived in greater quantity than those of Se'ankh-ka-rē' and the latter's ephemeral successor, Neb-towy-rē'.

To this same period is to be attributed another head in the Gallatin Collection (Figures 14-16), which is reputed to have been fished from the seabed off Tyre and is carved from green dolomitic marble, a rare stone for statuary in Egypt, though other examples in marble from the XIIth Dynasty have survived.⁴² The great length of the head from back to front, and the high placing of the shoulders, indicated by the springing of the lappets from the side wings of the headcloth, suggest that this fragment may have come from a sphinx. The stylistic features approach those of the larger Gallatin head. The lozenge-shaped uraeus hood with eight

41. H. Gauthier, "Une Nouvelle Statue d'Amen-em-hêt I^{er}," *Mémoires de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale* 66, part 1 (1934) pp. 43-53.

42. Acc. no. 66.99.4, height 16.4 cm. Other examples in marble in the Metropolitan Museum are acc. no. 29.100.150 (Figure 29 below) and acc. no. 22.1.1638 (H. G. Fischer, "Two Royal Monuments of the Middle Kingdom Restored," *BMAA* n.s. 22 [1963-1964] p. 235).



loops to the body emerges from the same point on the frontlet. The wig-cover has a low crown and a similar profile. The eyes are treated as flat planes defined by pronounced paint stripes and inner canthi. The eyebrows are in low relief as appliqué. The ear lies at a similar angle in the corner formed by the cheek and wing of the headcloth and has a thick lobe. The frontlet carries no tabs before the ears. The thick lips are nearer to those of the Bristol, Edinburgh, and Basel heads, but the damage that this head has suffered makes a complete appraisal difficult; nevertheless, the muscles at the wings of the nose are visible. A date in the early XIIth Dynasty, more specifically, in the reign of Amenemhat I, seems probable. It might be objected that the triple-stripe wig-cover is a datum that places this head in the reign of a later king, since such a pattern of *nemes* was not revived before the reign of Amenemhat II.⁴³ In Egyptian art, however, we must always be prepared for stylistic "sports" that anticipate the conventions of later reigns.⁴⁴ The triple-stripe wig-cover already appears on the colossus from Alexandria, identified by H. Evers as of Sesotris I;⁴⁵ and since this

king had a ten years' co-regency with his father, it is not outside the bounds of possibility that the Alexandrian bust was contemporary with Amenemhat I, if it is not actually of that king. One factor that militates against dating the Gallatin head as late as the reign of Sesotris I is the size, shape, and position of the ear. In the reign of that monarch such features tended to be large and to project from the side of the head in a manner that became a convention for statues of kings wearing the *nemes* during the rest of the XIIth Dynasty.

Large projecting ears resting flat against the wings of the headcloth are seen, for instance, in the head of a gray granite sphinx of Sesotris I excavated by Georges Legrain at Karnak in 1903 (Figure 17).⁴⁶ Other features, such as the wide-open eyes with their pronounced inner canthi, the broad, thick mouth, the edges of which are defined by sharp ridges, and the ears placed high, indicate that in a particular regional studio the conventions of the XIth Dynasty style could persist, and raise the vexing question of whether several independent schools of sculptors operated during the Middle Kingdom. Some Egyptologists have sought to define stylistic features which suggest that different traditions were followed by sculptors working at a few main art centers. So acute an observer as J. Vandier,⁴⁷ for instance, has claimed to recognize four schools, at Memphis, at Thebes, in the Delta, and in the Faiyum. Such identifications are apparently based upon the finding of statuary on or near different sites—a somewhat arbitrary classification and one that has been properly abandoned in the case of Tanis: no one now speaks of a Tanite school of sculpture since it has become clear that statues of different periods were moved from sites in the Delta to this town in Ramesside or post-Ramesside times.⁴⁸

That there were local groups of sculptors serving the

43. Evers, *Staat*, II, sec. 60.

44. E.g., the statue of Tuthmosis III in the Metropolitan with the seam on the inner edges of the lappets of the *nemes* (Nora Scott, *Egyptian Statuettes* [New York, 1946] no. 17), which anticipated the later XVIIIth Dynasty convention by two or three generations.

45. Evers, *Staat*, I, pl. 36, II, sec. 59.

46. Evers, *Staat*, I, pl. 33.

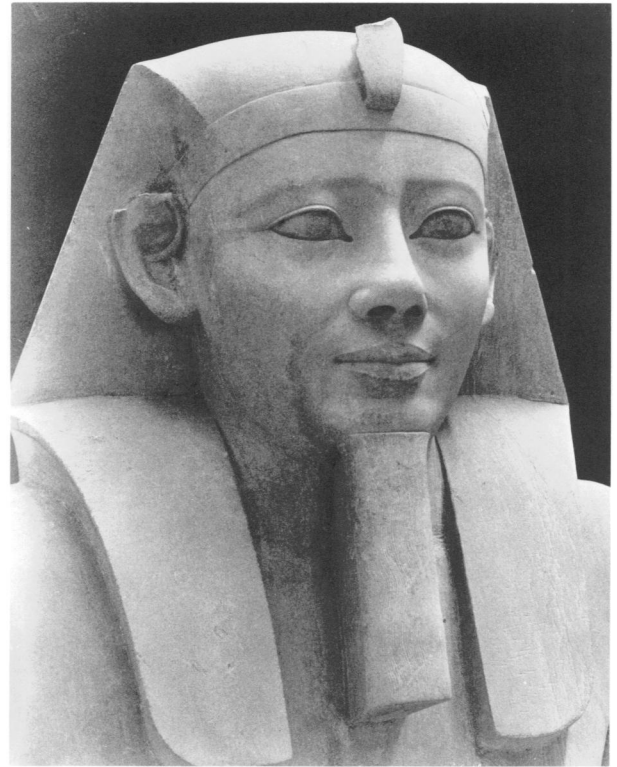
47. Vandier, *Manuel*, pp. 173–178.

48. W. C. Hayes, "Egypt from the death of Amenemhat III to Sequenre II," *Cambridge Ancient History*, 2nd ed., II, chap. 2 (London, 1962) p. 11, with note 8; H. Kees, *Ancient Egypt, A Cultural Topography* (London, 1961) pp. 198–199; L. Habachi, "Khatâna-Qantîr: Importance," *ASAE* 52 (1952) pp. 443–559.



FIGURE 17
Head of a sphinx of Sesostri I. Cairo Museum,
Cat. Gén. 42007

FIGURE 18
Head of seated statue of Sesostri I. Cairo Museum,
Cat. Gén. 415



needs of such centers as Abydos and Elephantine as well as the residence cities of the feudal governors during the greater part of the Middle Kingdom is reasonably certain; but that there were regional schools of sculpture directly patronized by the court is open to serious doubt. The Mentu-hotpes were Upper Egyptian princes, who, even when they had reunited the Two Lands, appear to have retained Thebes as their main residence and the site of their tombs and mortuary temples. The kings of the XIIth Dynasty, however, despite their Southern ancestry, found that a capital city in the North was administratively more convenient. They established their residence near the modern Lisht, not far from Memphis, the traditional pharaonic seat, which also continued in their favor. In this they may have been forestalled by the last king of the XIth Dynasty. They would almost certainly have attracted to their patronage the most skilled sculptors in the land, who would have abandoned local studios, whether at Thebes or elsewhere, to settle at the court. The king's chief sculptor would have been the sole designer of statuary destined for the monuments of the king, whether they were made in soft or hard stones; and if they be-

tray a variety of styles and feeling, this may well be due to factors other than regional art traditions.

In the first place, the earlier kings of the XIIth Dynasty enlisted the aid of publicists to strengthen their claims to the throne vis-à-vis their feudal rivals, and in contemporary literary works they are represented on a heroic scale as powerful terrestrial rulers as well as beneficent gods.⁴⁹ It seems to the writer that the skill of the sculptor was also enlisted to serve the same ends of propaganda, so that in the local shrine, the statue of the pharaoh as intermediary between man and the god would express a latent energy and a formidable brooding power that would overawe all who beheld it. The traditions of the Theban sculptors who had infused the earlier statuary of Mentu-hotpe Neb-hepet-rē' with a primitive force were well adapted to serve such needs. The granite statues of Ammenemes I and his son Sesostri I found on Delta sites⁵⁰ impress not only by their size but by their brutal appearance, the simplified planes and masses expressing the concept of the king

49. G. Posener, *Littérature et politique dans l'Égypte* (Paris, 1956) esp. pp. 19-20, 60, 86, 115, 140-144.

50. Evers, *Staat*, I, pls. 36-41.

as ruthless overlord. This tendency, springing from the stylistic peculiarities of the Theban style, and carried on by its own momentum once it was established, gave a distinctive realistic character to Middle Kingdom portraiture.

Another factor that has to be considered is the generally long and stable reigns of these XIIth Dynasty monarchs, most of whom celebrated jubilees in their thirtieth regnal years.⁵¹ It is almost certain that they outlived many of their chief craftsmen and that fresh influences were brought to bear on the production of works of art during a long reign. There are also reasons for believing that deliberate changes in portraiture were introduced during the reign of a particular king. The writer has elsewhere⁵² sought to show that at a king's advent, a coronation series of statues was produced for him which fixed the official portrait and stylistic features for most of his reign. If, however, he celebrated a jubilee, a new series of statues was produced, often showing changes in his appearance as well as in the contemporary art style. The phenomenon can most readily be demonstrated in the New Kingdom, particularly in the XVIIIth Dynasty, but there is nothing to show that the same practice was not followed in the XIIth Dynasty. Several scholars, for instance, have distinguished portraits of Sesostri III as a youth and as an aged king.⁵³ For the many temples erected on various sites during this period, both within the borders of Egypt and elsewhere, large quantities of royal statues would have been required for installation in the sanctuaries; and some idea of the activity of the studios can be gleaned from the account of an expedition of over 17,000 men to the Wady Hammamat in the thirty-eighth regnal year of Sesostri I, to cut stone for sixty sphinxes and one hundred twenty statues.⁵⁴ More than one master sculptor would be required to carve such a wealth of statuary, and the opportunity for different interpretations and emphases would arise, though all the artists would have to copy more or less faithfully the officially approved portrait modeled by the king's chief sculptor and reproduced by plaster casting, according to a practice that is known for a later period from the studios at Amarna.⁵⁵

Such statuary may be described as "official," and the new uses to which it might be put are seen in the statue that Sesostri III set up on his southern frontier at Semna in the Second Cataract,⁵⁶ and also in the

seated colossi of Ammenemes III erected on podiums at Biahmu in the Faiyum.⁵⁷ It should be distinguished in purpose and feeling from the sculpture that was produced for the contemporary mortuary temples. When the kings of the XIIth Dynasty abandoned the rock-hewn tomb of their Theban predecessors as the basis for the design of their last resting-places and reverted to the Old Kingdom idea of a royal pyramid built on the desert verges, they also took over the Old Kingdom style of mortuary art. We have already mentioned that Sesostri I copied the plan and decoration of the funerary monument of Phiope II; and the same Memphite tradition is found in the statuary with which these complexes were furnished (Figure 18).⁵⁸ The king is represented in the idealistic manner of Old Kingdom art as an immortal. In some statues he is shown as Osiris, the personification of kingship, and two such examples from the covered causeway to the mortuary temple of Sesostri I at Lisht, recovered by the Metropolitan Museum's Egyptian expedition, are exhibited in the galleries. "The faces," wrote William C. Hayes, "though unquestionably inspired by the royal physiognomy, lay no claim to being realistic portraits of the King."⁵⁹ All such statues, whether of the ruler in the costume of the living or as Osiris, are carved in limestone, though only examples from the funerary monuments of Sesos-

51. W. K. Simpson, "The Single-Dated Monuments of Sesostri I: An Aspect in the Institution of Coregency in the Twelfth Dynasty," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 15 (1956) pp. 214-219; C. Vandersleyen, "Un titre du Viceroy Mérimose à Silsila," *Chronique d'Égypte* 43 (1968) pp. 249-250.

52. C. Aldred, "The 'New Year' Gifts to the Pharaoh," *JEA* 55 (1969) pp. 78-79.

53. E.g., Vandier, *Manuel*, pp. 185, 186.

54. G. Goyon, *Nouvelles Inscriptions Rupestres* (Paris, 1957) no. 61.

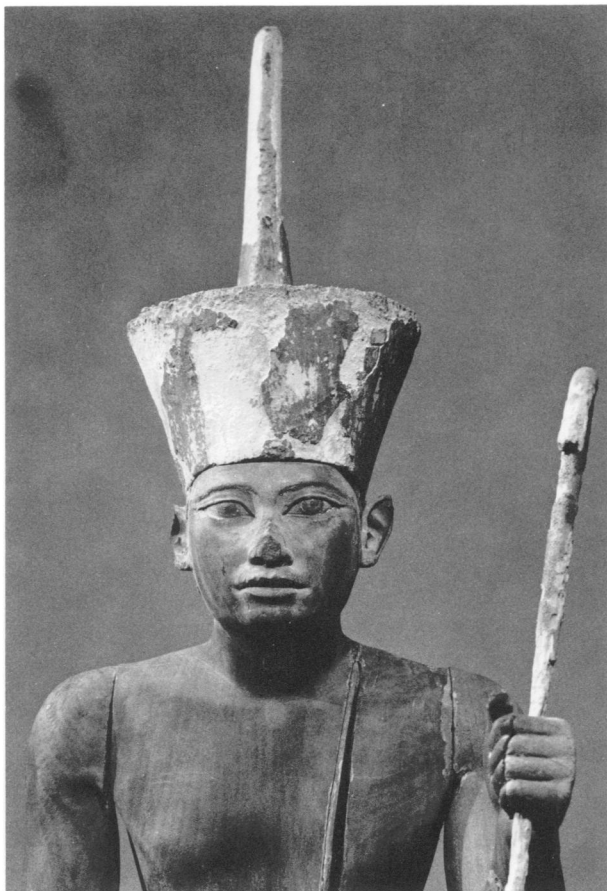
55. G. Roeder, "Lebensgrosse Tonmodelle aus einer alt-ägyptischen Bildhauerwerkstatt," *Jahrbuch der Preussischen Kunstsammlung* 62 (1941) pp. 145-170; I. E. S. Edwards, "An Egyptian Plaster Cast," *British Museum Quarterly* 22 (1960) pp. 27-29.

56. J. M. A. Janssen, "The Stela (Khartoum Museum No. 3) from Uronarti," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 12 (1953) pp. 51-55. P. Kaplony, "Das Vorbild des Königs unter Sesostri III," *Orientalia* 35 (1966) pp. 403 ff., challenges the view that the text refers to the erection of a statue, but despite his ingenious arguments, I am not wholly convinced that he has presented a watertight case.

57. W. M. F. Petrie, *Hawara, Biahmu and Arsinoe* (London, 1889) pp. 54-55.

58. Evers, *Staat*, I, pls. 26-29.

59. Hayes, *Scepter*, I, p. 185; for acc. no. 08.200.1 see *BMMA* 3 (1908) p. 171 and fig. 3; for acc. no. 09.180.529 see *BMMA* 4 (1909) p. 120. See also Evers, *Staat*, I, pls. 31-32.



FIGURES 19, 20

Upper part of statuette of Sesostri I. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Museum excavations, 1913–14, with contribution of Edward S. Harkness, 14.3.17

trisi I and Ammenemes III have survived. The softer stone encouraged a less bold handling on the part of the sculptor in order to achieve the required degree of idealization. As far as the portraiture and stylistic details are concerned, these are nearer to the official style than is sometimes recognized.⁶⁰ It is due to the accidents of time that hardly any funerary statuary from this period has survived, while statues in the official style from various sites in Egypt are well represented.

A statue that appears to be in the funerary tradition, since its purpose was apparently to serve as a cult object in the burial ceremonies of the high priest Im-hotpe, is the painted cedarwood statue of a king wearing the Red Crown of Lower Egypt and carrying a long *hekat*-scepter (Figures 19, 20).⁶¹ Together with a companion statue wearing the White Crown, now in Cairo, it was

found by the Museum's expedition buried in a chamber in the enclosure wall of Im-hotpe's mastaba-tomb adjoining the pyramid of Sesostri I at Lisht. For this reason the two statues have generally been identified as representing that king, though they are uninscribed. The modeling of the body is accomplished with a bold assurance, and the articulation of the limbs is far removed from that unhappy paralysis which so often characterizes the wooden sculpture of the First Intermediate Period and sometimes that of the Old Kingdom. While this statue is a masterpiece in the Memphite

60. Evers, *Staat*, I, pls. 29, 44.

61. Acc. no. 14.3.17, wood, traces of pink flesh colors, garments coated with gesso and painted, height 58 cm.; A. M. Lythgoe, "Egyptian Expedition, II: Excavations at the South Pyramid of Lisht, 1914," *BMMA* 10 (1914) supplement, pp. 16–17.

style, the portrait, with its round wide face, prominent cheekbones, large flat eyes with pronounced canthi, and eyebrows in relief, owes much to the Theban traditions of the XIth Dynasty. The docility of the medium has allowed the sculptor to achieve a greater subtlety in the carving of the corners of the mouth and in the convolutions of the ear, which is correctly placed. The ear also attains something of the enlargement that is characteristic of most portraits of the remaining reigns of the XIIth Dynasty, and as in these cases, it also projects sharply outward.

Statues of Ammenemes II and Sesostri II are rare anywhere, and there are no examples in the Museum's collection;⁶² but those of their successors are well represented and show the development of the art of royal portraiture during the heyday of the Middle Kingdom. The first in the series is a limestone head found by the Museum's expedition in the filling of a tomb shaft adjacent to the causeway of the pyramid temple of Ammenemes I at Lisht (Figures 21, 22), and as a consequence identified as from a statue of that king.⁶³ It bears little resemblance either in portraiture or stylistic

details to the statues of Ammenemes I, however, and there is little doubt that it represents Sesostri III as a young king. What it was doing at Lisht is something of a mystery, but it may have come from a statue dedicated to Ammenemes I by Sesostri III⁶⁴ in the mortuary temple of the earlier king. Its characteristic features are sufficient to distinguish it quite clearly from the work of the first half of the dynasty. The *nemes* wig-cover is of unequivocal triple-stripe pattern, a fashion that became general with Sesostri II,⁶⁵ and its frontlet

62. The only example in America known to me is the diorite bust of a king in the Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore (acc. no. 22.351), which I identify as of Sesostri II; see G. Steindorff, *Egyptian Sculpture* (Baltimore, 1946) no. 98, pl. vii.

63. Acc. no. 08.200.2, height 14 cm.; Arthur C. Mace, "Egyptian Expedition: Pyramid of Amenemhet," *BMMA* 3 (1908) pp. 186, 187, 220, fig. 4.

64. Similar statues made in a contemporary style but dedicated to earlier kings are found throughout the dynasty, e.g., Cairo Museum, no. 42.004, in the style of Sesostri I for Saḥu-rē; Royal Scottish Museum, no. 1905.284.2, in the style of Ammenemes III for Snefru. D. Wildung, *Die Rolle Ägyptischer Könige*, München Ägyptologische Studien, no. 17 (Munich, 1969) p. 135.

65. Evers, *Staat*, II, sec. 60.

FIGURES 21, 22

Head of Sesostri III. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Museum excavations, 1908, 08.200.2





FIGURES 23, 24

Head of Sesostrius III. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fletcher Fund and gift of Dr. and Mrs. Edmundo Lassalle through the Guide Foundation, 66.99.5



carries tabs before the ears. The uraeus emerges higher up the frontlet, and its body has only three windings. Though the ears have become much larger and project like wings, their lobes are smaller, and they are placed at a natural height. The damage to the chin and the abrasions to mouth and nose have upset the proportions of the face by overemphasizing the muscular nexus around the mouth, which is clearly turned down along its medial line, a characteristic of several portraits of Sesostrius III.⁶⁶ The eyebrows are no longer defined by arcs carved in raised relief but follow the natural line of the brow. The most striking features, however, are the large, somewhat bulging eyes, with the lids indicated by incised lines, and the inner and outer canthi of similar shape and lacking any exaggeration. These are quite different in their heavy-lidded effect from the flat treatment of the eyes in the portraits of earlier kings. The Lisht head is a somewhat restrained

66. E.g., British Museum, 160 (686); Cairo Museum, no. 42011, 486; Kansas City, William Rockhill Nelson Gallery of Art, 62.11.

version, perhaps because it is carved in the idealistic mortuary tradition, of the characteristic physiognomy of Sesostri III as a young man. As his reign wore on, his portraits developed a realism and an exploration of the underlying structure of the face that can only be the result of the appointment as his master sculptor of an unknown artist of genius.

The evolution of this style can be seen in the black gabbro head in the Gallatin Collection (Figures 23, 24),⁶⁷ where the eyes have been treated as orbs lying within their sockets and have lost the last vestiges of the earlier flat treatment. The folds of flesh from the inner corners of the eyes, indicated in the Lisht head by incised lines, hint at the developing pouchiness of the king's later years. The head, however, is in the official style and represents Sesostri III as a man in the full vigor of life. It bears a resemblance to the statue of the same king, said to be from Medamūd, in The Brooklyn Museum,⁶⁸ which, however, has been carved with a

less adventurous chisel and probably belongs to a "coronation series."⁶⁹

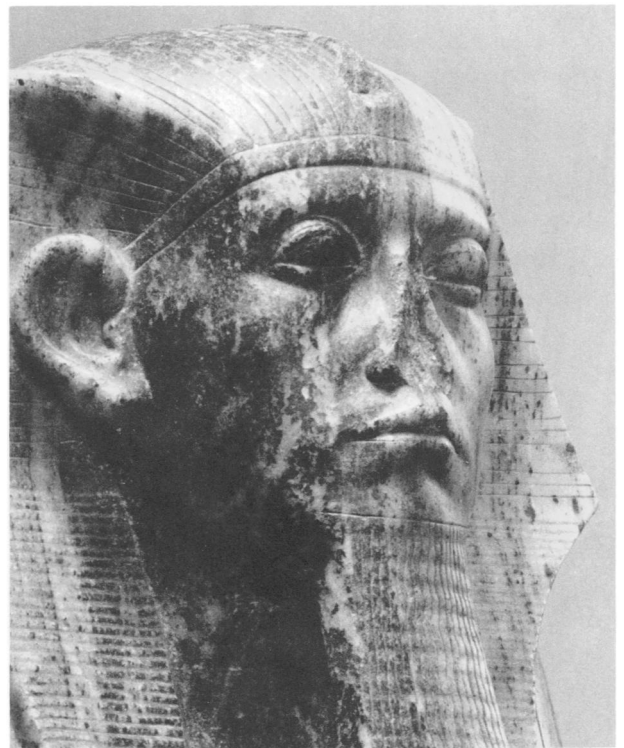
A further stage in the development of the portraiture of the reign is evident in the head of the sphinx (Figures 25, 26),⁷⁰ carved in gem-hard gneissic diorite,

67. Acc. no. 66.99.5, height 13.5 cm., provenance unknown; Cooney, "Collection of Albert Gallatin," p. 5, no. 11. Correctly identified by Cooney as of Sesostri III as against my tentative attribution to Ammenemes III (C. Aldred, *Middle Kingdom Art* [London, 1950] no. 70). The form of the loop in the body of the uraeus, however, is not exclusive to Sesostri III, as Cooney maintains, since a statue of Ammenemes III from Karnak in the Cairo Museum has an uraeus with similar convolutions. Enough of the damaged nose remains to suggest that in profile it was probably of aquiline form (cf. the obsidian head in the Gulbenkian Collection), as compared with the more snub shape of Ammenemes III. The *nemes* with its uniform broad bands anticipates the fashion of the succeeding reign.

68. J. D. Cooney, *Five Years of Collecting* (New York, 1956) no. 3.

69. See note 52 above.

70. Acc. no. 17.9.2, height 42.5 cm., provenance unknown; "The Fiftieth Anniversary Exhibition," *BMMA* 15 (1920) p. 129.



FIGURES 25, 26

Head of sphinx of Sesostri III. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, gift of Edward S. Harkness, 17.9.2

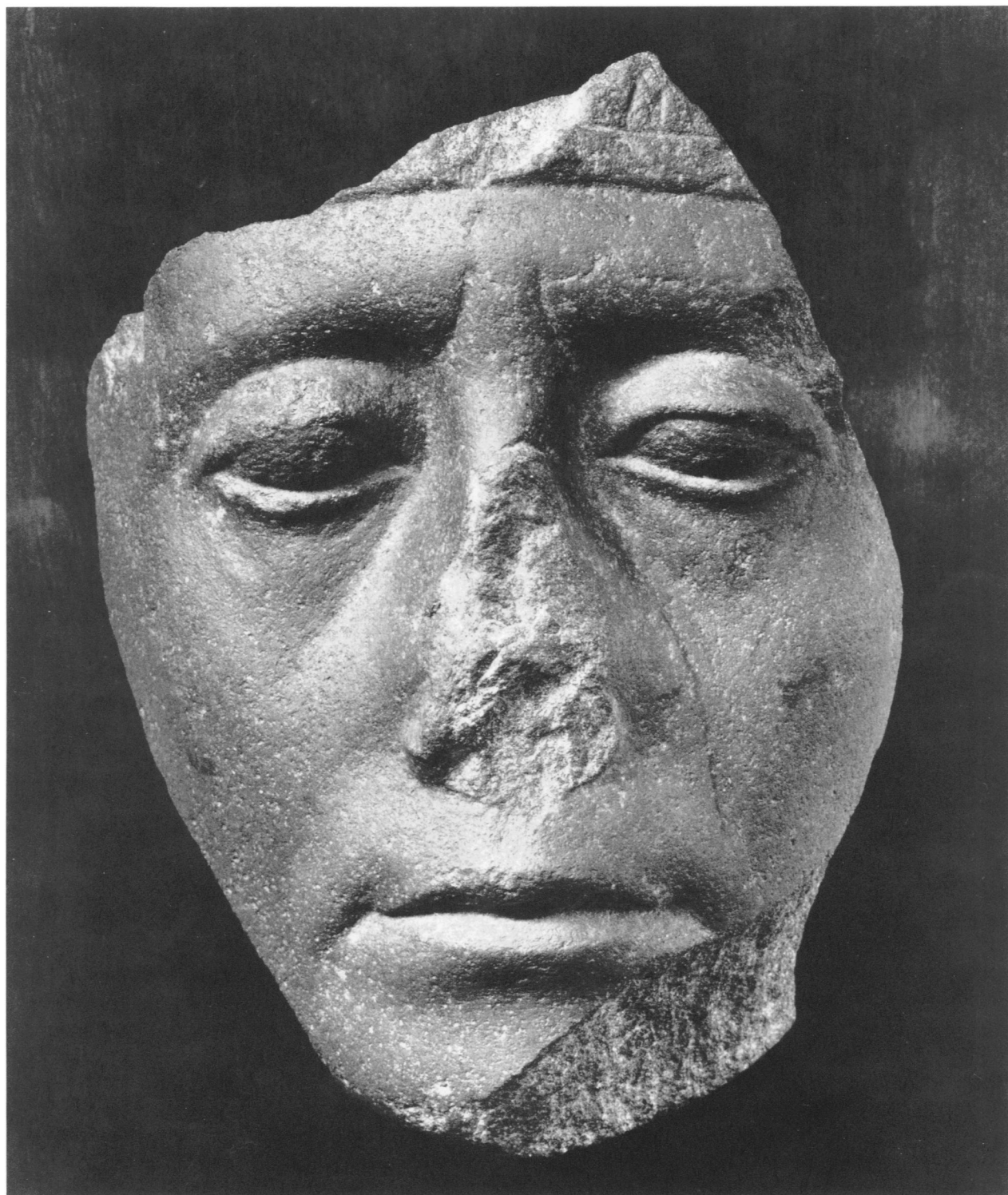


FIGURE 27
Head of Sesostri III. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Carnarvon Collection, gift of Edward S. Harkness, 1926, 26.7.1394

where the dynamism of the earlier years is replaced by a grimmer expression on the face of a king who not only so reorganized the Egyptian possessions in Nubia and the Sudan that he was afterward worshiped there as a protector of the region, but also broke completely the power of the landed nobility at home, reducing the nomarchs to the status of crown servants. The burden of authority that such measures must have placed upon the pharaoh appears in the brooding latent power of this crouching sphinx with its haunting portrait of an autocrat. With the head shown in Figure 3, it is the only Middle Kingdom royal statue in the Museum's collection that may be identified by an inscription naming the king whom it represents, and therefore making recognition possible on grounds other than those of style and physiognomy. It is one of the few of the reign showing the king wearing the royal beard. The eyeballs within their sockets are carved in the realistic mode of the mature years. The musculature of the face has achieved a little of the flaccidity of advancing years, a transformation that is complete in the magnificent quartzite fragment, one of the world's masterpieces, that was formerly in the Carnarvon Collection and is now in the Metropolitan (Figure 27).⁷¹ Here the grimness of the earlier portraits has been replaced by something less harsh, achieved by the consummate modeling of the very hard stone. The powerful superman, all passion spent, has become the careworn shepherd of his people.

During the long reign of Ammenemes III, the last great king of the XIIth Dynasty, a slight but appreciable modification in the realism of the sculpture of Sesostri III is detectable, and the conventions of the XIIIth Dynasty style are already adumbrated in such features as the summary modeling of the torso with the pectoral muscles joined together, the navel placed at the base of a deep ventral furrow, the disappearance of the sternal notch, and the rise of the corners of the *nemes* headcloth to prominent peaks. Such formulae are a sure indication of the proliferation of lesser studios with sculptors content to copy in isolation. By the reign of Ammenemes III a change had come over the social structure of Egypt, foreshadowing the conditions that were to prevail during the New Kingdom. The pharaoh had secured once more a lonely eminence. The estates of the former provincial barons must have been parceled out among the temples of the chief gods as well as the de-



FIGURE 28

Head of seated statue of Ammenemes III. Cairo Museum, Cat. Gén. 385

partments of the palace administration, and their expert staffs, including sculptors, had doubtless been absorbed by the new state machinery. Though the Middle Kingdom temple of Amūn is in too ruined a condition for much evidence to have survived, it was clearly wealthy and patronized extensively by the pharaohs of the Middle Kingdom, particularly by the last two rulers of the XIIth Dynasty. It would appear that the workshops of Amūn would already have been established and accepted responsibility for carving statues of the pharaoh, as was the practice in the New Kingdom. It was such temple ateliers that were called into requisition whenever a massive supply of statuary was suddenly required, as for a new building or at the beginning of a reign or for a jubilee. Such a supplementation of the royal studios in the now centralized state of the late Middle Kingdom probably accounts for the varied styles of portraiture that are characteristic of the period, and makes the identification of statues as representations of Ammenemes III an often hazardous undertaking.⁷²

71. Acc. no. 26.7.1394, height 16.5 cm., provenance unknown; Hayes, "Royal Portraits," pp. 119-124.

72. Hence the sphinxes and twin Niles from Tanis, and the bust from Mit Faris, as well as the Copenhagen head (Evers, *Staat*, I, pls. 111, 112, 120-125, 127-129), have been identified with kings other than Ammenemes III.



FIGURES 29–31

Head of Amenemhat III, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The H. O. Havemeyer Collection, bequest of Mrs. H. O. Havemeyer, 29.100.150

A limestone seated statue of the king found near the ruins of the great labyrinthine funerary temple adjoining his pyramid at Hawara (Figure 28)⁷³ evidently represents the Memphite mortuary style in its latest manifestations. The portrait is idealistically treated, the eyes achieving a flatter effect than was the fashion in his father's reign, and the lips, though unsmiling, having lost the severe cast of the mouth of Sesostri III. Complete monumentality is attained by resting the palms of both hands flat upon the upper thighs, a convention that now entered the repertoire and became almost obligatory for seated pharaohs in this costume.

This idealistic style is seen in a number of portraits

73. Cairo Museum, Cat. Gén. no. 385; Evers, *Staat*, I, pls. 102–104.

of the king, all probably of Memphite inspiration, such as the alabaster head of a sphinx in the Louvre,⁷⁴ the head of a king wearing the White Crown in Copenhagen,⁷⁵ and possibly the head of an unidentified pharaoh in Vienna.⁷⁶ The Metropolitan has an outstanding example in this tradition in the head in mottled gray marble from the Havemeyer Collection (Figures 29–31),⁷⁷ which is exceptional for the complete state of the

face, the nose having the same slightly arched form with a blunt tip seen in the serpentine head in the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge and in the statues in the Louvre and the State Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts in Moscow,⁷⁸ while the eyes are rendered in the characteristic flat relief of the reign. The mouth has that furrow in the middle of its lower lip which is seen in other portraits of the king.⁷⁹

74. Louvre, no. E.10938; P. Krieger, "Un Portrait d'Amenemhat III," *Revue d'Égyptologie* 11 (1957) pp. 73–75.

75. Evers, *Staat*, I, pls. 111, 112.

76. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, no. 37. This head is rather an enigma although B. V. Bothmer is not prepared to date it to the Late Period (cf. Schweitzer, note 32 above). The large ears, lappets without seams, single broad-stripe *nemes* without frontlet (see Louvre sphinx, no. A.23, of Ammenemes II), profile rising to an apogee above the occiput, and uraeus with compressed S-loop high on brow suggest the Middle Kingdom. The portraiture, despite damage, resembles that of Ammenemes III at the Hermitage in Leningrad (no. 729). The natural line of the eyebrows, the flat treatment of the eyes, the profile of the chin, and the pronounced cheeks belong to his reign. Only the mouth worked into an emphatic smile is uncharacteristic of the period, although

incipient smiles are found on some statues of the reign (e.g., Leningrad, Hermitage, no. 729, and Cairo Museum, no. 383). There are a sufficient number of individual works from this reign for such an idiosyncrasy to be tolerated. Vienna no. 37 could be an idealistic portrait by the same studio that produced the more realistic or mature version in Copenhagen, no. AEIN 924.

77. Acc. no. 29.100.150, height 9 cm.; "The Exhibition of The H. O. Havemeyer Collection," *BMMA* 25 (1930) p. 75.

78. C. Ricketts, "Head of Amenemmes III in Obsidian, from the Collection of the Rev. W. Macgregor, Tamworth," *JEA* 4 (1917) pp. 211–212 (Cambridge); Vandier, *Manuel*, p. 202, no. 2 (Louvre and Moscow).

79. E.g., the Fitzwilliam head (see preceding note); the Bubastis Colossus (Evers, *Staat*, I, pl. 114); the Louvre statuette N.465 (O. Rayet, *Monuments de l'Art Antique*, I [Paris, 1884] pl. 9).

FIGURES 32, 33

Bust of Ammenemes III. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 45.2.6



Many of the features of the statuary of Sesostri III, however, were a point of departure for the official style in the reign of Ammenemes III, who was co-regent during his father's last regnal year at least. The two vertical furrows in the brow of the later Sesostri III, for instance, are present in the Louvre statuette,⁸⁰ though this represents Ammenemes in his youth, and are also seen in the upper part of a black granite statue in the Metropolitan (Figures 32, 33).⁸¹ Despite the battering that this bust has suffered, the resemblance to a series of granite statues of the king found at Karnak,⁸² as well as a head in the Aegyptisches Museum in Berlin,⁸³ is striking. The wig-cover reverts to the single broad-stripe pattern of the earlier years of the dynasty, but

80. Louvre, no. N.465, see preceding note; cf. Metropolitan Museum, acc. no. 26.7.1394 (Figure 27) and Evers, *Staat*, I, pls. 83, 88.

81. Acc. no. 45.2.6, height 20 cm., provenance unknown; Hayes, "Royal Portraits," p. 122.

82. G. Legrain, *Statues et Statuettes*, I, *Musée du Caire, Catalogue Générale*, XXX (Cairo, 1906) nos. 42014-42016, 42018, 42020.

83. Evers, *Staat*, I, pl. 133.

FIGURE 34

Head of Ammenemes III. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, gift of Dr. and Mrs. Thomas Foulds, 24.7.1



FIGURES 35, 36

Head of Ammenemes III. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 12.183.6

the peaks at the upper corners are more pronounced; at the same time the lappets lack the seam to their inner edges, so common in the work of the succeeding reigns.⁸⁴ The bossy cheeks and large ears are characteristic of the portraits of Sesostri III and persisted as a convention, together with a prominent chin, in the work of his son, possibly because both kings inherited a similar physiognomy. The eyes, bulging less from their sockets, and the design of the single compressed S-coil of the uraeus, which now springs from above the frontlet, put this bust firmly in the reign of Ammenemes III. The damage to the face is to be deplored the more because, while this fragment appears to be the work of a Theban studio, presumably sited in the workshops attached to the temple of Amūn, the portrait seems more

84. Evers, *Staat*, II, sec. 70.



accomplished than that of its congeners in this group.

Another head of official type in the Museum collection shows the king with the marks of old age in the sagging of his facial muscles (Figure 34).⁸⁵ Here, although the eyes are sunk more within their sockets, they are not carved as independent orbs. The uraeus, with its single compressed S-coil placed behind the hood, is a critical dating factor. A similar head, also wearing the Double Crown, seen some years ago in the art market, and a head of Amūn with the features of the king, now in Cairo,⁸⁶ suggest a Theban provenance for this piece. The expert carving of the eyes and ears and the subtlety of the modeling of the face, which eludes all but the most favorable lighting, show that this is the work of a very accomplished sculptor, whose skill is not entirely obscured by the damage the head has sustained.

The last work to be considered is a quartzite head (Figures 35, 36)⁸⁷ that has been accredited to earlier kings, but which in the writer's opinion must be dated to the reign of Ammenemes III. It is in the idealistic style of the studios of Memphis, in the proximity of which its honey brown quartzite was doubtless quar-

ried. The stylistic features are uncompromisingly of the reign of Ammenemes III. The uraeus, springing from above the frontlet, with a compressed S-turn set high on the brow, the upper curve of the *nemes* rising to a peak at each corner, and its crown reaching an apogee near the back of the head before descending rapidly to the root of the pigtail are in the fashion of this period, as is the single-stripe headcloth with its unseamed, narrow-pleated lappets. So are the prominent cheekbones and the everted lips with the double curve on their medial join. The philtrum, however, which is less pronounced than usual, and the relaxed mouth with its incipient smile, are in marked contrast to the tensions represented in the two foregoing heads. Nevertheless, they are found on one of the two colossal heads excavated by E. Naville at Bubastis in Lower Egypt and generally identified as of Ammenemes III on inscrip-

85. Acc. no. 24.7.1, height 42 cm., provenance unknown; Hayes, "Royal Portraits," pp. 123-124.

86. Vandier, *Manuel*, p. 201, pl. LXVII, 2.

87. Acc. no. 12.183.6, height 18.3 cm., provenance unknown; Hayes, "Royal Portraits," pp. 122-123.

FIGURE 37

Head of Ammenemes III. British Museum, 1063



tional grounds (Figure 37).⁸⁸ The only exceptional features are the peculiar eyes with their elongation toward the inner canthi. Each is carved, however, in the flattish relief of the reign, and the idiosyncrasy of their unusual shape is not critical enough to deny that they depict Ammenemes III, particularly in view of the variation in the representation of the eye on statues inscribed with his name.⁸⁹ Similar eye shapes occur elsewhere on portraits from the dynasty, as on the Gallatin head of Sesostri III (Figure 23). Despite the almost complete loss of the chin and the difference of scale, the quartzite head bears a striking resemblance, particularly in profile, to the colossus from Bubastis in the British Museum.⁹⁰

The portraits we have considered here are not the only examples of royal sculpture of the Middle Kingdom in the Metropolitan Museum, but they form a broad conspectus of the subject, showing the development of an art form that can scarcely be studied more conveniently anywhere else. If, to the eye of the layman,

some of the visages may appear brutally shattered, they are still impressive in the melancholy ruin that the hands of time and men have brought upon them. At least half a dozen (Figures 10, 19, 23, 25, 27, 29) are among the supreme masterpieces of their kind, of which any great collection would count itself privileged to display but one example. That the Metropolitan Museum can muster so many among such a comprehensive range of royal portraits must be accounted its good fortune and its sober pride.

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88. Evers, *Staat*, I, pl. 115.

89. E.g., Cairo Museum, nos. 385, 42014, 42020; Leningrad, Hermitage, no. 729.

90. Evers, *Staat*, I, pl. 116.