

# SITTING BESIDE LEPSIUS

Studies in Honour of Jaromír Malek  
at the Griffith Institute

edited by

D. MAGEE, J. BOURRIAU and S. QUIRKE

PEETERS

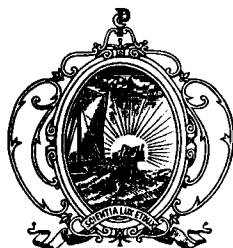
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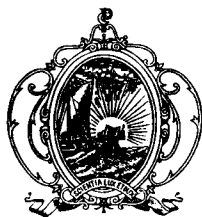
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PEETERS

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## THE LOCATION OF INSCRIPTIONS ON STATUES OF THE OLD KINGDOM

M. EATON-KRAUSS

The impetus to compile a dossier on the location of inscriptions on Old Kingdom statuary goes back to my years as a graduate student at the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University. My acquaintance with Jaromir is not nearly so “ancient”. His help in providing prompt and thorough responses to my many inquiries in connection with this and other projects — not least, those relating to Tutankhamun — has been invaluable. His role as critic must also be acknowledged. This overview which, it must be emphasized, is not based on any thoroughgoing statistical analysis but on observations made over many years, is presented to him in full awareness that he will know many important exceptions, as well as additions, to it.<sup>1</sup>

Visitors to the galleries in museums where statues of the Old Kingdom are exhibited could easily overlook the inscriptions on them. Old Kingdom sculptors did not normally utilize the surfaces provided by the garments worn by their subjects,<sup>2</sup> let alone any of the exposed parts of the body.<sup>3</sup> Initially, they chose the base, and it remained the preferred location; other ‘neutral’ surfaces — the backpillar and backslab, as well as the sides of the seat of seated figures — came to be considered appropriate for the name and title(s) of those depicted and for a few other types of texts, as well as the occasional figure.<sup>4</sup> My principal concerns in the paragraphs that follow are exceptional cases and how to account for them.

<sup>1</sup> A preliminary, oral version of this paper represented my contribution to a day of lectures marking the retirement of Professor Hartwig Altenmüller on September 27, 2003.

<sup>2</sup> FISCHER 1993, 7 n. 23 lists four statues of the Old Kingdom with inscriptions on garments; CG 76 and 268; Boston, MFA 12.1488; and Berlin, ÄgM 8430 (see now PRIESE 1991, 31 no. 19). A few more examples can be added such as a limestone pair statue from debris in the shaft G 7140Z (Boston, MFA, unaccessioned): SIMPSON 1978, 34, pl. XLVII:c. For inscriptions on the kilts of men depicted squatting cross-legged on the ground, see further, below.

<sup>3</sup> FAY 1993 discusses Middle Kingdom sculptures bearing contemporaneous inscriptions on the figure’s body.

<sup>4</sup> For an earlier survey, based primarily on statuary in the Egyptian Museum, Cairo, see SHOUKRY 1951, 93-98.

*Technical note:* Right and left are those of the figure, not the viewer. Dates are mentioned only in those cases where relevant. Bibliographical references are intentionally limited; for sculptures published by Borchardt in the *Catalogue général*, the CG number is considered sufficient. For other statues, a reference to an informative illustration, preferably in color, is mentioned. Abbreviations are those of the *Lexikon der Ägyptologie*, adding KHM for Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, and ÄgM for Berlin's Ägyptisches Museum.

The oldest, securely dated statues with inscriptions preserved are two seated figures of Chasekhemui, the last ruler of Dynasty II. One of them is made of limestone and the other of greywacke. Virtually identical in costume and pose, they differ only insignificantly, in size and in the articulation of the back of the seats.<sup>5</sup> The front, sides, and back of the bases of both statues bear depictions of slaughtered enemies, along with a notation of the 'body count'. The king's name within a small *serekh* is incised on top of the base in front of his feet, and it is oriented towards him. For a person standing in front of the figure, the hieroglyphs are upside down.<sup>6</sup> This is the inverse of canonical orientation.

The seated statue of Princess Rejief in Turin epitomizes the standard which was established in Dynasty III: the text naming her is on top of the base and oriented towards a person standing directly in front of the statue.<sup>7</sup> An inscription in this position was easy to read (indeed, it implies an audience for the sculpture), but at the same time unobtrusive. The label, at either side of her feet, reads from right to left. The use of raised relief for the hieroglyphs is an archaic feature; during the Old Kingdom, raised relief was employed for the figures that might be shown on the sides, front, and, occasionally, the back of the seat in the composition of seated statues (see below), but incision and sunk relief<sup>8</sup> were the techniques preferred for inscriptions on statues.

<sup>5</sup> Oxford, Ashmolean Museum 1896-1908 E. 517 and JE 32161: QUIBELL 1900, pls. XXXIX-XLI (left). For back views, see SOUROUZIAN 1995, pls. 51b and d.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. the similarly oriented inscription on the base of CG 1 that cites the name and title of the kneeling figure depicted: BORCHARDT 1911, 1-2.

<sup>7</sup> Museo Egizio 3065: CURTO 1984, 60-61 (illus.); cf. the orientation of the texts, also in raised relief, on the bases of the statues of Sepa and Nesames which implies that viewers approached the figures from the right: EATON-KRAUSS and LOEBEN 1997, 83-84.

<sup>8</sup> The signs were filled with colored paste in a few early cases: the separate limestone base for the scribe statue of Djedefre's son Setka (Paris, Louvre E 12631: ZIEGLER 1997, 67-68); the statue of Hemunu (Hildesheim, Römer- und Pelizaeus Museum 1962: *Egyptian Art* 1999, 229-31); and the striding statues of the flutist Ipi from Dahshur (see *infra*).

### Inscriptions on backpillars and backslabs

Backpillars are pier-like elements extending from the base of a statue up the back of the figure. Although a few terminate well below the waist of erect as opposed to seated figures, most continue to the lower edge of the wig, or the end of the *nemes*'s queue in statues of kings, unless they are shown wearing the White or Red Crown when the backpillar extends to the top of it. Backpillars vary in width from so narrow that they cannot be seen by a person viewing a statue straight on, to wider than the shoulders of the figure, when they are, properly speaking, backslabs, although there is no generally recognized criterion for distinguishing a backslab from a backpillar by width.

Backpillars are regularly included in the composition of striding figures;<sup>9</sup> they are not always present in statues depicting the owner standing with feet side by side. Backslabs are found with single figures, but groups of two or more figures, whether seated, standing, or striding, are more likely to have a backslab than not.<sup>10</sup> Sometimes, the lower part of such a group has a backslab which at some point above the waist (or the seat of seated figures) divides into separate backpillars, one for each figure.

The backslab apparently preceded the backpillar<sup>11</sup> with the earliest examples occurring more or less simultaneously in statues depicting striding and seated figures (see immediately below). The dating of the earliest backpillar is uncertain. The inscribed elements behind Chephren's legs in two striding statues of him (CG 16 and JE 72213) are perhaps better described as narrow backslabs,<sup>12</sup> rather than backpillars. Wildung supposes that the backslab 'narrows down' to a back pillar 'perhaps as early as Dynasty V'.<sup>13</sup> Four striding statues of the vizier Babaef who died no later than the beginning of Dynasty V have backpillars;<sup>14</sup> all of them are among

<sup>9</sup> For this description of figures with the left leg advanced, see EATON-KRAUSS and LOEBEN 1997.

<sup>10</sup> The absence of a backslab from the composition of CG 392, the so-called *Fischopferer* statue of Amenemhat III, may well be another archaizing feature of the group.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. WILDUNG 1972, 151.

<sup>12</sup> So STADELMANN 1998, 368 with photos 1-2. I am indebted to Michel Baud who advised me (in an email of August 28, 2003) that the inscribed fragments he tentatively assigned to a narrow backpillar from a striding statue of Redjedef (BAUD 1999b, 46, 51; fig. 3a) probably derive instead from a doorjamb.

<sup>13</sup> Wildung 1972, 151.

<sup>14</sup> Two in Vienna, KHM ÄS 7785 and 8566: JAROŠ-DECKERT and ROGGE 1993, 72-76 and 154-56, with bibliographical references for the dating; two in Boston, MFA 24.603 and another (unaccessioned), both fragmentary: SMITH 1949, 51, pl. 19b. The height of the one completely preserved example (ÄS 7785) is 49.7 cm. Smith called the MFA sculptures 'statuettes', and he noted that Egyptian alabaster, the material of three of them



the comparatively small number of Old Kingdom examples which are inscribed down the back. Sculptors continued to use the backslab after the introduction of the backpillar for groups and, occasionally, for single, striding figures such as CG 20 and 212, and JE 44174, which depicts Kaemheset against one of the widest backslabs known from the Old Kingdom.<sup>15</sup>

Down to the present, no specialist has devoted a study to the origin, occurrence, frequency, and/or evolution of the form and shape of the backpillar/slab, despite the feature's ubiquity.<sup>16</sup> The backpillar/slab, like negative space (*Zwischenraum*; *Füllstein*) and emblematic attributes (emblematic staves; *Steinkern*; *Schattenstab*; *rouleau*), is a salient feature of stone statuary; it occurs only sporadically in the composition of a few wooden statues of the New Kingdom and later.<sup>17</sup> Edna Russmann notes that most of them are standard bearing statues.<sup>18</sup> No one has yet suggested that the introduction of negative space<sup>19</sup> was anything other than a solution to a technical problem encountered by sculptors working in stone. The same cannot be said for either emblematic attributes or the backslab/pillar. But I am convinced that a similarly practical motive lay behind the introduction of both.<sup>20</sup> As for the backslab/pillar, I suppose

(ÄS 8566 is made of granodiorite), is 'by no means common' in non-royal sculpture of the Old Kingdom.

<sup>15</sup> CHERPION 1989, 112-15, dates JE 44174 (QUIBELL and HAYTER 1927, pl. 29) to Dynasty IV, but like Jaromir (MALEK 1991, 97) I remain unconvinced; cf. the scepticism implicit in the comment of HARPUR 2001, 299 n. 47; and the review of the conflicting dates by HARVEY 2001, 63, who favors late Dynasty V. Discussing Cherpion's critics, BAUD 1998, 35, mentions the discovery of pre-Dynasty V structures in the area of the Teti pyramid where Kaemheset's tomb lay, but he stops short of affirming her early dating. Note that Cherpion's discussion of dates proposed by others conflates the tombs of two like-named men, one at North Saqqara/Abusir (PM III 499) and the other (with the statue) in the Teti Pyramid cemetery (PM III 542).

<sup>16</sup> See VAN DE WALLE 1984, 318, who remarked this *desideratum*.

<sup>17</sup> The composition of a few bronzes and even faience amulets may include a backpillar, as VAN DE WALLE 1984, 317 n. 2, noted.

<sup>18</sup> In her catalogue entry on BM EA 2319: RUSSMANN 2001, 184-86 no. 93. She suggests the backpillar may have been included in this sculpture to provide a surface for a relief representation of a boy behind the owner's advanced left leg; cf. Berlin, ÄGM 913; HORNEMANN [1951], no. 177, another wooden statue which includes a figure in relief in the same position.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. the bridge between the legs of Sepa's statues (Louvre A 36 and A 37; *Egyptian Art* 1999, 180-82) and in the composition of Saqqara S 167035: SOUROUZIAN 1999, 159 with figs. 14-15, none of which has a backpillar/slab.

<sup>20</sup> I must disagree with my *Doktorvater*'s proposal to account for the 'enigmatic object' (FISCHER 1975); use here and below of the phrase emblematic attribute reflects my conviction that the 'enigmatic object' could represent status indicators such as a walking staff or scepter, as well as a piece of folded cloth.

that the sculptor used it to check the proportions of the figure(s) as he worked.<sup>21</sup> During the sculpting of a statue, the backslab/pillar was the only surface to retain the guide lines, drawn according to the canon, for the figure he intended to produce.<sup>22</sup> In the manufacture of a single seated figure, the sides of the seat also aided him. Of course, the sculptor, his work completed, could have always removed the backslab/pillar (which he sometimes did), but why run the risk of damaging the statue?

It is no coincidence that the backslab, along with negative space and emblematic attributes, makes its initial appearance at the moment when the conventions for both striding and seated figures were established that were to endure down to the end of pharaonic history. The creation of the first statues with a backslab is to be assigned on present evidence to the reign of Sneferu. The well-known and frequently illustrated seated statues of Rahotep and Nofret with their backslabs<sup>23</sup> will have been made before the striding figures with backslabs of their near contemporay Ipi (see below), presuming that the outfitting of the couple's tomb at Medum was contemporaneous with the foundation of Sneferu's pyramid complex there. The placement of texts naming Rahotep and Nofret on the front of their backslabs is unusual, and not canonical.<sup>24</sup> The identical inscriptions at either side of their heads are oriented rightwards. Fragments from the backslabs of seated statues depicting Redjedef from his pyramid complex at Abu Roash are also inscribed with his Horus-, Nebty-, and throne-names in the same position, at either side of his head, but oriented inwards and arranged symmetrically.<sup>25</sup>

Non-royal sculptures with inscriptions on the front of the backslab include CG 89 and 151, JE 66620,<sup>26</sup> Munich Gl. 25,<sup>27</sup> two statues from

<sup>21</sup> For the sculptor's working procedure, cf. ROBINS 1994, 177-81 on sculptors' studies.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. WILDUNG 1972, 152: 'There is no doubt that the back slab offered the sculptor a useful surface for his outline drawing', but Wildung considers this explanation inadequate. He proposes a link to the round-topped stelae of the Early Dynastic Period and to the supposed aspirations of a sculpture's subject — commoner and king alike — to assimilate to the solar cycle. This explanation ignores the primary function of the stelae, viz. to bear inscriptions naming the owner which are, by contrast, not common on the backslabs/pillars of the Old Kingdom. Furthermore, the tops of the earliest backslabs/pillars are not rounded nor are rounded tops common subsequently.

<sup>23</sup> CG 3 and 4; TIRADRITTI 1999, 62-63. HARPUR 2001, 121-58 (with notes 294-302), mistakenly calls the seat with backslab a 'high-backed chair'.

<sup>24</sup> Pre-canonical features of Rahotep's statue include the position of his arms, as well as the fact that he grasps nothing in his hands which are both are simply fisted (an anomaly overlooked by HARPUR 2001, 298 n. 41).

<sup>25</sup> BAUD 1999b, 50-51, fig. 7.

<sup>26</sup> EATON-KRAUSS 1995, 68 (3); TIRADRITTI 1999, 54.

<sup>27</sup> LÖHR and MÜLLER 1972, 38 with pl. 14.

G 2099,<sup>28</sup> another from the excavations of Cairo University at Giza,<sup>29</sup> and a fragment from shaft 151 in the Central Field, Giza.<sup>30</sup> Undoubtedly there are others.<sup>31</sup> JE 66620 is a pseudo-group of two striding men; the other statues depict a woman standing (i.e., feet together) beside a standing or striding man. In all of them there is comparatively little or no space for an inscription on the shallow base, which accounts adequately for the anomalous placement of their texts. With the exception of CG 89, which displays other unusual features (see p. 145 below), the quality is mediocre at best.

The inscriptions identifying the flutist Ipi on both statues from his tomb at Dahshur are canonically placed on the top of the bases; neither backslab was inscribed.<sup>32</sup> If another statue of a flutist named Ipi, now in Munich (ÄS 1600),<sup>33</sup> belongs to the same man,<sup>34</sup> then the sculptor who made (or oversaw the manufacture of) the Dahshur statues may have also been responsible for inventing emblematic attributes, shown in both hands of the figure.

Fischer noted that the backs of backslabs and backpillars were frequently left uninscribed during the Old Kingdom.<sup>35</sup> An early exceptional case is the group in Vienna which depicts the king's eldest son of his body Seshathotep striding beside his wife.<sup>36</sup> There are five vertical columns of his titles inscribed on the back of the backslab; two more texts on top of the base also named him, but there was apparently no label for his wife. Another Fourth Dynasty statue with an inscribed backslab is the standing figure of Queen Meresankh III from her tomb at Giza which also has her titles and name in a horizontal register across the top of the base in front of her feet. The backslab bears not only her title and name,

<sup>28</sup> ROTH 1995, pls. 114-16.

<sup>29</sup> Unpublished; illustrated by HAWASS 2002, 15, 31.

<sup>30</sup> This last discussed by FISCHER 1973, 80-81 with fig. 4. The label of the man continued onto the top of the base.

<sup>31</sup> But not Boston MFA 12.1484, cited along with CG 44 (see further, below), CG 89, and JE 66620 by HARPUR 2001, 294 n. 3. The statue is a pseudo-group depicting the owner standing twice with his wife and two children within a 'doorway' which is inscribed: SMITH 1949, pl. 21d.

<sup>32</sup> Detailed publication of the statues is in preparation by Sourouzian; in the interim, see SOUROUZIAN 1999, 154-58.

<sup>33</sup> PORTER and MOSS 1974-1981, 729; LÖHR and MÜLLER 1972, 41 with pl. 18 (left).

<sup>34</sup> A possibility mentioned by SOUROUZIAN 1999, 158, who will deal with the question in her forthcoming study.

<sup>35</sup> FISCHER 1977, 29.

<sup>36</sup> KHM ÄS 7788; JAROŠ-DECKERT and ROGGE 1993, 87-94. BAUD 1999a, 576-77 [219] dates this prince to the time of Djedefre, but does not exclude the possibility that he might be as early as Cheops.

but also the dedicatory inscription of her son.<sup>37</sup> By contrast, there is no inscription on the backslab of the pair statue depicting the queen and her mother; instead their names and titles are in the standard position on the top of the base.<sup>38</sup>

A sculpture calling for comment is CG 9, a seated statue of Chephren: the back of the tall backslab is inscribed with the king's *serekh* below a figure in the round of the Horus falcon,<sup>39</sup> prefiguring the composition of the significantly later statuette of Pepy I.<sup>40</sup> Other statues of Chephren, such as CG 14 which shows him seated on a stool with lion-legs and protomes,<sup>41</sup> are canonically inscribed on top of the base, with symmetrical texts oriented inwards at either side of the king's feet.

A highly unusual position for an inscription on a backslab is found in the pair statue of Kanefer and Iyefret in Paris which depicts them striding.<sup>42</sup> Their names and titles in the conventional position on top of the base are supplemented by an inscription on top of the backslab which gives additional titles and the name (now lost) of Kanefer. The back of the backslab remained uninscribed.

There are a few statues with inscriptions on the sides of the backpillar. One high-quality example is the striding statue of Userkafankh who died about the time Niuserre ascended the throne.<sup>43</sup> The many titles of this important official are distributed in the five vertical registers on the top of the base and on both sides of the backslab while the back was left blank. Another contemporaneous statue of comparable workmanship is CG 37 which has an inscription on the left side of the backpillar, but again none on the back.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>37</sup> MFA 13.1547a: DUNHAM and SIMPSON 1974, pl. XVIIe. Note that the servant statues from the tomb — perhaps the earliest examples of the genre — are apparently the only ones with backpillars: DUNHAM and SIMPSON 1974, pl. XVIII.

<sup>38</sup> MFA 30.1456: DUNHAM and SIMPSON 1974, pl. XVIIa-b; SIMPSON 1978, fig. 72.

<sup>39</sup> FISCHER 1977, 30 with fig. 31. Fischer noted that the exceptional leftwards orientation of the hieroglyphs in the *serekh* is the result of congruence with the falcon in the round above it which showed the dominant rightwards orientation when the statue was viewed from the front.

<sup>40</sup> Bklyn. 39.120: ROMANO 1998, 240-42, figs. 8-19. *Ibid.* 236-38, figs. 1-2, is a larger, headless statue (present location not known) apparently of the same type also depicting Pepy I. The inscription with the *serekh* on the back faces rightward.

<sup>41</sup> Accurately described by BORCHARDT 1911, 14-15. The seat is not a high-backed chair. The falcon whose wings envelop the king's head perches on top of the backslab.

<sup>42</sup> Louvre E 6854: ZIEGLER 1997, 100-104, there dated to Dynasty IV, temp. Cheops/Redjedef.

<sup>43</sup> Frankfurt, Liebieghaus 1629: FRANKE 1993.

<sup>44</sup> For the inscribed belt of this sculpture, see *infra*.



Neither a backpillar nor a backslab must directly abut the figure in front of it; there may be a bridge, sometimes recessed, carved in one with the negative space behind the legs of a striding figure. Although this vertical surface behind the advanced left leg provided a convenient place for an inscription, it was seldom utilized during the Old Kingdom. One exception is the statue of the inspector of youths Neferenkhuft in Leiden whose name and titles are written on the back of the backpillar.<sup>45</sup> The inscription on the negative space, oriented rightwards (i.e., not congruent with the figure), states that the statue was made for Neferenkhuft by his son. Another example is the statue of Neferherenptah, a priest in the cults of Chephren and Mycerinus, from his tomb at Giza.<sup>46</sup> The rightwards oriented label giving his 'small' name (Fefy) and titles is the only inscription on the statue. The fragment from a striding statue in Vienna preserves two reed leaves from the end of an inscription on the negative space.<sup>47</sup> The hieroglyphs do not belong to the subject's name (Shepseska) which is preserved on the top of the base. None of these three statues is above mediocre quality.

A woman pouring a libation is depicted in sunk relief in the same position on the striding statue of a man in Berkeley which has been dated to the Old Kingdom.<sup>48</sup> The label identifies her as 'his daughter Nebetawi'. Figures in this position are very seldom documented before Dynasty XIX. Other anomalies include the offering formula that introduces the inscription down the backpillar and the owner's name which reads 'Paten'. The sculpture was not excavated by Reisner at Giza, as has been inferred,<sup>49</sup> but acquired by purchase.<sup>50</sup> It is certainly not Old Kingdom; I suspect that it may well be modern.

### Inscriptions on seated statues

During the Old Kingdom, the seated statue normally shows a figure sitting on an undifferentiated block, its upper surface sloping downwards from back to front.<sup>51</sup> In the following discussion, 'seat' refers to this

<sup>45</sup> Rijksmuseum van Oudheden F 1938/7.4: FISCHER 1960, 4-5, pl. XVb-c.

<sup>46</sup> JE 87804: HASSAN 1944, pl. LIII (left).

<sup>47</sup> KHM ÄS 8379: JAROŠ-DECKERT and ROGGE 1993, 7-29.

<sup>48</sup> Phoebe Apperson Hearst Museum of Anthropology and Archaeology 6-19690: LUTZ 1930, 13-14, pls. 20-21.

<sup>49</sup> PM 1974-1981, 177.

<sup>50</sup> I am indebted to Joan Knudson, Registrar, for the information (email dated October 23, 2003) that Reisner bought the sculpture in 1903/04.

<sup>51</sup> EVERS 1929, §301-303, 330. To the examples of seats sculpted to depict actual stools and chairs cited by EATON-KRAUSS 1998, 213-14, can now be added two late examples,

block. Its sides (and occasionally the back as well) are sometimes used for texts identifying the owner and, less frequently, for reliefs.

Metjen's seated statue from the *serdab* of his mastaba at Saqqara<sup>52</sup> displays his name and titles in raised relief (as noted above, this is an archaic feature) on the back as well as on the sides of the seat. The texts on both sides of Metjen's seat are congruent with the figure (i.e., the hieroglyphs face forward, as might be expected<sup>53</sup>), while the text on the back displays the dominant rightward orientation.<sup>54</sup> The seat is set off from the base on the sides and at the back, and these lateral surfaces have a raised, frame-like border which does not imitate the structure of a stool; it is, rather, reminiscent of a feature found on the side and back of seated statues of Chephren (e.g. CG 11 and 15).

A segmented frame in raised relief runs across the top and down the edges of both sides of the seat in two statues of Kaemnefret (CG 65 and 181).<sup>55</sup> This unusual feature resembles a simplified block border. From its introduction in Dynasty IV, the block border is a royal feature;<sup>56</sup> its presence in a non-royal statue is quite exceptional in any period,<sup>57</sup> even in the form found in Kaemnefret's sculptures.

Texts on the sides of seats can be written vertically or horizontally, with or without benefit of register lines. Orientation tends to be congruent with the seated figure, but if only one side is inscribed, the dominant rightward orientation prevails, regardless of whether the inscription is on the right or left side of the seat.

The standard for inscriptions on the front of the seat was established at least as early as the reign of Chephren,<sup>58</sup> and it is epitomized in the mid-Fifth Dynasty statue of Akhtyhotep from his tomb at Saqqara: the texts identifying him are symmetrical and, as in Chephren's case, they continue onto the top of the base at either side of his feet.<sup>59</sup> An unusual example of a text on the front of the seat that begins on one side of

both from the oases and of equally mediocre quality: one from Dakhla (CHERPION 1999) and the other from Balat (VALLOGGIA 1998, 73-75, frontis and pls. LXX-LXXII).

<sup>52</sup> Berlin, ÄgM 1106: *Egyptian Art* 1999, 208-209.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. FISCHER 1977, 27 with fig. 27.

<sup>54</sup> Cf., e.g., the horizontal register of inscription at the top of the back of CG 17, a statue of Chephren.

<sup>55</sup> All five of Kaemnefret's seated statues (CG 61, 65, 66, 181, and 377) have inscriptions with his name and title on both sides of the seat, as well as on their bases.

<sup>56</sup> EVERS 1929, §365.

<sup>57</sup> E.g., in the pair statue of Sennefer and Senetnay, CG 42126: EATON-KRAUSS 1999, 113-14.

<sup>58</sup> E.g., CG 10, 15 (*Egyptian Art* 1999, 253); for inscriptions on the seats of Redjedef's seated statues, see immediately below.

<sup>59</sup> ZIEGLER et al. 2007, fig. 51 and photo 58.

the owner's legs and continues on the other is presented by a statue in Brooklyn.<sup>60</sup> The seated statue of the dwarf Perenankh in Cairo has been described as another, but it is quite unlikely that a rightwards oriented inscription beginning on the right side would continue on the left.<sup>61</sup> I suspect that the inscription at the right, which ends with the dwarf's name, is complete in itself and that a different text was written to the left of the figure's legs.

There are a small number of sculptures with inscriptions on the top of a seat. In all but a single case known to me, such texts are oriented towards the viewer. (CG 21 furnishes the exception: the text naming the statue owner on the top of the seat to his right is written so that he could read it.<sup>62</sup>) Most of these sculptures are groups that include smaller-scaled figures depicted against the front of the seat alongside the legs of the owner. The subsidiary figures occupy the space where an inscription might otherwise appear. In the case of the group depicting Redjedef with his queen beside his left leg, Ziegler suggests that 'given life' inscribed on top of the seat at either side of the king originally followed his name, now lost with the rest of his figure and seat.<sup>63</sup> At the right, a new text begins on the front of the seat with the king's Horus name, followed by King of Upper and Lower Egypt Redjedef on the base.<sup>64</sup>

The statue of Sekhemka in Paris is exceptional; symmetrical inscriptions on top of the seat at both sides of the figure continue down the front and onto the top of the base, concluding with the information that his son commissioned the sculpture.<sup>65</sup>

The group of Nikare with his family in New York depicts his wife squatting to the left of his seated figure and his daughter standing to the right.<sup>66</sup> The texts identifying the women are written on top of the base in front of them, but his inscription is cut into the top of the seat to his left. The same space to his right was left blank, probably because his daughter's head projected well above the seat. Any text in that space, oriented

<sup>60</sup> Bklyn 37.22E: COONEY 1952, fig. 10.

<sup>61</sup> HAWASS 1991, 158.

<sup>62</sup> The statue comes from tomb D 55 at Saqqara (now in Brussels: PM 1974-1981, 583-84) and is dated temp. Neferirkare or slightly later. For the reliefs on the sides of the seat of CG 21, see further, *infra*.

<sup>63</sup> Louvre E 12627: ZIEGLER 1997, 47-49.

<sup>64</sup> The fragment of the side of the seat from another sculpture of the king (Louvre E 11552G: ZIEGLER 1997, 57) has *ḏd w3s* in the same position, with his Horus name again down the front of the seat.

<sup>65</sup> Louvre E 3022: ZIEGLER 1997, 131-34.

<sup>66</sup> MMA 52.19: *Egyptian Art* 1999, 374-76.

towards the viewer like the others, would have been difficult to carve in the first place and hard for a viewer to read thereafter.

The inscriptions identifying Akhi on CG 44, a statue depicting him accompanied by his daughter and his wife, begin on the front of the low backslab and continue on top of the seat.<sup>67</sup> Those for his womenfolk are inscribed on the front of the seat above their heads (see Plate 1a and b). All the texts face rightwards, which accounts for the omission of his wife's name: the minimal space left after her titles, between her head and her husband's knees, was for all practical purposes inaccessible, by contrast to the surface to the right of their daughter.

I can suggest no logical reason why the sculptor cut the inscription that identifies Khentka's small nude son on the top of the seat above his figure (to her right), for there is adequate space available on top of the base in front of him.<sup>68</sup> The inscription with her title, name, and filiation is cut into the top of the seat at her left, and, like his, oriented rightwards. Probably this was the only text identifying her, like the analogous text of her son, but most of base to the left of her feet, along with the toes of her left foot, is not preserved.

### Seated statues decorated with reliefs

William Stevenson Smith briefly described figures shown in relief on the lateral surfaces of the seats of five Old Kingdom statues:<sup>69</sup> CG 21 and 376, JE 35205; and two sculptures in Brooklyn: 37.20E and 37.22E. Five more examples can now be added to his list: two excavated at Giza, one apparently from North Saqqara, the Northampton statue of Sekhemka, and Medunefer's statue from Dakhla. The carving ranges from crude sunk relief, which is little more than incision, through high raised relief of middling quality, to delicate low relief. In every case, the orientation of the figures on the sides of the seat is congruent with the seated figure(s).<sup>70</sup>

<sup>67</sup> For the dating of the group to the first half of Dynasty IV, see CHERPION 1998, 108-10; cf. also RZEPKA 2000.

<sup>68</sup> Vienna, KHM ÄS 7507: JAROŠ-DECKERT and ROGGE 1993, 61-67.

<sup>69</sup> SMITH 1949, 81.

<sup>70</sup> The four examples in the Egyptian Museum (JE 35205, JE 89378, CG 21 and CG 376) are described and illustrated by ALGOHARY 2005. His list of Old Kingdom sculptures with reliefs includes the striding statue in Berkeley whose authenticity is suspect (see above). Alkohary's reading of the reliefs as references to the Opening of the Mouth ceremony is abstruse, especially in the case of JE 89378, for which see immediately below.



Neither statue from Giza can be categorized as better than mediocre. The statue of Raramu from his tomb (G 2099)<sup>71</sup> shows a man censing on the right side of the seat in raised relief. The associated inscription identifies him by name and title as Raramu's son. The figure of his daughter on the left side is crudely incised; her feet are cut into the base line, as Roth notes, and the head is disproportionately large. Her label is oriented rightwards (i.e., towards her). The impression is unavoidable that the figure was added as an afterthought.

Abdel-Moneim Abu Bakr excavated the statue of Ipsekh, a priest of Cheops, seated beside his wife Henutsen, in the Western Cemetery at Giza.<sup>72</sup> Two of their children are depicted in relief on the front of their common seat, a daughter between them and a son to Ipsekh's left, both oriented towards their father. The inscription identifying the girl begins on the front of the seat with the two final hieroglyphs on the base, whereas the son's name is confined to the front of the seat, between him and his father's left leg. Two women shown in relief on the left side of the seat stand with one arm raised, a hand on the breast; both are named. The right side is badly eroded; traces of working led Moursi to suppose that two figures were depicted here as well. He proposed a date in late Dynasty V or early Dynasty VI for the sculpture.<sup>73</sup>

The headless statue of a man named Shepsi (JE 89378) came to light during a sounding conducted by the EAO under the direction of Zahi Nour at Abusir/Saqqarah between June 2<sup>nd</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> 1945.<sup>74</sup> The fine, low reliefs on the sides of the seat include a wealth of beautifully executed detail. On the right side, 'his son, overseer of priests Semdet'<sup>75</sup> lifts the lid from a censer shaped like a lotus blossom. The appropriately labelled female personification of a funerary estate behind him wears a broad

<sup>71</sup> Toledo [Ohio] Museum of Art 49.5; ROTH 1995, 151-52, fig. 80, pl. 116.

<sup>72</sup> MOURSİ 1995. The sculpture was included in the Egyptian Museum Centennial Exhibition (illustrated by Hawass 2002, 14 and 16) where I saw it. The dim lighting made it virtually impossible to verify details. "Giza 73" is written on the back of the seat, along with the date and place of discovery: 29.03.73 tomb 5.

<sup>73</sup> On the advice of Matthias Seidl; MOURSİ 1995, 290.

<sup>74</sup> PM 1974-1981, 698; ALGOHARY 2005, 107-108, figs. 10-11, pl. IVb-d. For information about the discovery, see ABOU-GHAZI 1980, 30-31 and 39 on the offering tables of the statue owner and his wife, CG 57028/JE 89379 and CG 57044/JE 39380, respectively, found with the statue.

<sup>75</sup> ALGOHARY 2005, 107 n. 58, identifies this son with the like-named owner of a tomb among those northwest of the Teti pyramid: PM 1974-81, 520-21; see now LLOYD et al. 1990, 21-31. The name (of problematic reading) is admittedly rare, but the inscriptions in the tomb do not mention the owners's parents nor is the common title 'overseer of priests' among his many titles.

collar with a choker. On the left side, a nude son with a broad collar and amulet on a cord around his neck brings a duck. Behind him, Shepsi's wife sits on a stool with bull's legs. Like the personified estate, she wears a choker with her broad collar. A date in Dynasty V through the reign of Djedkare-Isesi is suggested by Cherpion's criteria 10 (the bulls' leg of the seat), 36 (the amulet worn on a cord by the younger son), and 46 (choker worn with a broad collar).

According to the *Journal d'Entrée*, the seated statue JE 35205 is 70 cm tall — hardly a statuette<sup>76</sup> — and it was found in a pit at Saqqara with another sculpture.<sup>77</sup> There is a single figure in low relief on each side of the seat and one on the back as well. The man on the right is about to open an incense burner; that on the left holds lengths of linen. On the back, another man, oriented rightwards, carries a ewer in a basin on his shoulder and a short strip of cloth. None of the men is labelled. The quality of the relief, like that of the statue, is rather mediocre.

All but one of the remaining five statues from Saqqara also have reliefs on the back of the seat as well as on the sides. On each of the lateral surfaces of CG 21 (cited above, p. 138, because of the unusual orientation of the text on top of the seat) there are depictions of two anonymous offering bearers.<sup>78</sup> Those on the sides face forward, but those on the back 'march' leftwards, by contrast to the expected orientation. CG 376 is one of the three seated statues depicting a seated man with an unrolled papyrus on his lap (see further, below, p. 144).<sup>79</sup> The sculpture is also among the few with a dedicatory inscription of the wife.<sup>80</sup> Her figure, now mostly lost, stood to her husband's right. On her side of the seat, a man wrings the neck of a bird; on the left side, a man and a woman are shown, both with one hand on the breast. The texts identifying these figures as the statue owner's children are inscribed on a raised frame-like surface across the top and down the front edge of the seat's side. The relief on the back of the seat shows two men butchering an ox, flanked by two more, each oriented away from the scene and towards the front of the statue. An appropriate label reading 'cutting up an ox' is oriented rightwards. The figure to the left of the scene carries

<sup>76</sup> So SMITH 1949, 81 who gave a summary description; now published by ALGOHARY 2005, 101-102 with figs. 1-3, pl. Ia-d.

<sup>77</sup> JE 35204, for which see PM 1974-1981, 722: 'Dynasty V'.

<sup>78</sup> ALGOHARY 2005, 102-104, figs. 4-6, pl. IIa-d.

<sup>79</sup> Illustrated and translated but not commented upon by ALGOHARY 2005, 104-106, figs. 7-9, pl. IIIa-d, IVa

<sup>80</sup> Cf. SHOUKRY 1951, 96, who cited CG 190 as well.

a foreleg; the analogous offering in the hands of the man to the right is not preserved.

James has described and illustrated the fine low reliefs on the front and back as well as the sides of the seated statue of Sekhemka in Northampton.<sup>81</sup> The official holds an unrolled papyrus on his lap (see p. 144, below). The small-scaled, three-dimensional female figure squatting on the base to his right is presumably his spouse. Of the figures in relief, only the nude boy to the left of the owner's legs on the front of the seat is identified by name and title which leads James to suppose that he is Sekhemka's son. All but one of the remaining seven male figures — two facing forward on each side and three oriented rightwards on the back — are offering bearers. The seventh, in the center on the back, lifts the lid of a censer. James credits Bernard Bothmer with identifying the statue owner with the like-named subject of a seated statue in the Brooklyn Museum (Bklyn. 37.23E). The diorite sculpture has a separate base made of limestone; across the top at the front of it, offerings — baskets of bread and fruit, vessels filled with beverages, fowl, etc. — are depicted in two horizontal registers. The technique is the same fine low relief familiar from the Northampton statue.<sup>82</sup>

The Brooklyn Museum collection includes two seated statues in limestone with figures in raised relief on both sides of the seats. In publishing detail photographs of one side of each sculpture, Fazzini notes the difference in technique between them.<sup>83</sup> Both pairs of priests on the sides of Bklyn. 37.20E are carved in low relief, as are two women bearing offerings on the seat's back (Plate 2). The terse label for the men (ka-sevants) is also in raised relief. The good quality relief on the left side of this statue is well preserved, but that on the right is damaged by pitting while the women on the back who face leftwards appear to be unfinished. According to Lepsius, *Denkmäler* Text I, 14, this and another statue in Brooklyn (37.17E)<sup>84</sup> come from the tomb of Irukaptah<sup>85</sup> who is datable to the earlier part of Dynasty V.

The Brooklyn Museum also owns two statues belonging to the man depicted in the second sculpture in the collection with reliefs on the sides of the seat (37.22E). But unlike Irukaptah, he is otherwise not

<sup>81</sup> JAMES 1963.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.* pl. III; FAZZINI 1972, fig. 8.

<sup>83</sup> FAZZINI 1972, 42-43, figs. 9 and 10.

<sup>84</sup> *Egyptian Art* 1999, 368-69.

<sup>85</sup> PM 1974-1981, 691-92.

known.<sup>86</sup> The figures of the nude boy and young woman on one side of Bklyn. 37.22E and the scribe writing on the other (Plate 3) are executed in bold but scarcely modelled relief, while the labels identifying them by name are incised.

There are raised 'frames' around the figures on both Bklyn. 37.20E and 37.22E.<sup>87</sup> Those on the sides of the latter, in combination with the backslab, suggest the appearance of a high-backed chair, but the back of the sculpture is quite plain.

Medunef'er's seated statue from his tomb chapel at Dakhla is the product of a provincial workshop of predictably mediocre quality. Quite possibly the preserved scene on the right side of the seat, executed in a semblance of sunk relief, was once paralleled by another on the left (not preserved).<sup>88</sup> A crudely carved figure (probably the statue owner himself<sup>89</sup>) squats on a cushion before an array of offerings. With one hand he holds a perfume jar to his mouth. Behind him the remains of a large jar (another offering?) are to be seen. Cherpion assigns the sculpture to the second third of Pepy II's reign.<sup>90</sup>

### **Inscriptions on statues showing men squatting on the ground<sup>91</sup>**

Many of these sculptures depict the owner as a scribe, a papyrus spread across his lap, either writing or reading. Others show a man simply squatting, without a papyrus roll: the subject's kilt is stretched tautly between his knees, and his hands rest on them. Examples of both types occur among the sculptures of Cheops's son Kawab. A short text with his name and titles cut across the kilt of his squatting statue in Boston is oriented towards a viewer,<sup>92</sup> as are the analogous texts on the kilts in other statues of squatting men.<sup>93</sup> The offering formula in Kawab's favor,

<sup>86</sup> PM 1974-1981, 721: 'late Dynasty V or Dynasty VI'. The other statue is Brooklyn 37.21E.

<sup>87</sup> Cf. the discussion of Metjen's seat, p. 137, above.

<sup>88</sup> CHERPION 1999, 90.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> CHERPION 1999, 93.

<sup>91</sup> For such sculptures, see, in general, SCOTT 1989. In an article focusing on statues holding a papyrus, BERNHAUER 2006, 67, simply states that inscriptions consisting of name and title or an offering formula on the papyrus or the kilt are oriented either towards or away from the subject.

<sup>92</sup> MFA 27.1127: SIMPSON, 1978, pl.VIII d.

<sup>93</sup> E.g., CG 58 and 186; Leipzig 2687: KRAUSPE 1997, 54-55, pls. 43-44. This last is one of two Old Kingdom statues of squatting men with a backpillar. The other, a scribe holding a papyrus on his lap, is JE 60547: PM 1974-1981, 65: HORNE MANN 1957, 410.



inscribed on the papyrus of his squatting scribe statue, also in Boston, is appropriately oriented towards him.<sup>94</sup> Other examples of scribe statues with an offering formula written on the papyrus unrolled across their laps display the same logical orientation,<sup>95</sup> but if the inscription on the papyrus serves simply to identify the owner, then it is oriented to the viewer.<sup>96</sup>

Often enough the squatting figure occupies nearly all the upper surface of the base, which is regularly rounded behind, so that little or no space is available for an inscription. In such cases, the name and title(s) were sometimes written on the front of the base.<sup>97</sup> But there are a conspicuous number of sculptures depicting squatting men that were not inscribed. Scott mentions the possibility that they could have been once set into separately made inscribed bases.<sup>98</sup> The few examples of such statues preserved together with their bases are made of hard stones such as diorite or granite; their separate bases are made of limestone or wood.<sup>99</sup> I doubt that uninscribed scribe statues of *limestone*, such as the Louvre's

I am indebted to Sabah Abdel Razek for supplying the information that the sculpture was excavated at Giza by the Harvard/MFA expedition in 1933 and is now in the museum at Beni Suef. The inscription on the kilt worn by a squatting man reading (i.e. with a papyrus) in a rather mediocre sculpture in Berkeley gives the subject's titles but omits his name: LUTZ 1930, 16-17, pl. 25b.

<sup>94</sup> MFA, unaccessioned: SIMPSON 1978, pls. VIIIa-c. SCOTT 1989, vol. 1, 2-3, notes the logic of the orientation in this case. For other inscriptions on this statue, see further below, p. 145.

<sup>95</sup> E.g., CG 56 (with an inscription naming the owner on the front of the base) and 83 (with an inscription identifying the owner on the top of the base). So, too, the offering list on the papyrus that Sekhemka holds on the lap of his seated figure in Northampton: JAMES 1963, pl. I (for the reliefs on the sides of the seat of this sculpture, see p. 142). Borchardt reported that the papyrus on the lap of the seated statue CG 171 was not inscribed while the text once written on the papyrus on the man's lap in CG 376 (reliefs on the sides of the seat are described p. 141, above) is no longer legible. Apparently an offering list or formula was inscribed on the papyrus on the lap of Irukakhufu's squatting scribe statue, but when publishing the sculpture, Moursi did not indicate its orientation: MOURSİ 1990; for color photographs of this fine early Old Kingdom sculpture, see HAWASS 2002, xvii, 17.

<sup>96</sup> As on the scribe statue of Djedefre's son Setka: Louvre E 12629: ZIEGLER 1997, 64-67; CG 104; ÄgM 15701: PRIESE 1991, 28-29; MMA 48.67: *Egyptian Art* 1999, 373; etc.

<sup>97</sup> E.g., CG 56 and 163, etc.; Boston, MFA 21.931: SMITH 1949, pl. 19a; etc. A high-quality example is one of the wooden scribe statues of Mitry, JE 93165 which also preserves illegible traces of an inscription on the papyrus across the figure's lap: TIRADRIITI 1999, 84.

<sup>98</sup> SCOTT 1989, vol. 1. 67.

<sup>99</sup> E.g., the statue of Setka (see n. 96); CG 162; and a red granite scribe statue once set into Louvre E 12630: ZIEGLER 1997, 59; cf. also the diorite seated statue of Sekhemka in Brooklyn with its inscribed and relief-decorated limestone base, n. 96 above.

‘red scribe’ and CG 36, were ever set into separately made bases with inscriptions identifying the subjects.<sup>100</sup> For anepigraphic sculptures, regardless of their genre, the context of the tomb with its inscriptions will have been considered sufficient to establish their identity.<sup>101</sup>

### Inscribed belts

The ‘buckle’ of the belt worn by Sneferu in at least one of the large striding sculptures from Dahshur bears a cartouche inscribed in raised relief with his name, introduced King of Upper and Lower Egypt.<sup>102</sup> Fragments of Djedefre’s statues from Abu Roash also preserve his name on the belt buckle, but incised.<sup>103</sup> A preserved beaded belt from the burial of a prince named Ptahshepses in the Valley Temple of Unas at Saqqara has a gold buckle inlaid with his name and figure.<sup>104</sup>

Six statues depict men wearing kilts with knotted belts that are incised with their names;<sup>105</sup> two of them have already been mentioned above. The fragment of Kawab’s scribe statue has his name and one title on the belt.<sup>106</sup> The name and titles of the husband, inscribed on the front of the backslab of CG 89, are repeated on his belt. Another notable feature of this fine sculpture is the tripartite wig the wife wears. I would not hesitate to date this statue and the relief panel from the tomb where it was found (CG 1528) to Dynasty IV.<sup>107</sup>

Kapunesut wears a belt inscribed with his name and titles in his wooden striding statue in New York.<sup>108</sup> With it was found a second wooden statue depicting him striding with a small-scaled figure of his son behind his advanced left leg. An scepter, inscribed with Kapunesut’s name and one of his titles, apparently belonged to the composition of this

<sup>100</sup> Even though the inscribed limestone base Louvre E 12632 once belonged to the fragmentary limestone torso found with it; see ZIEGLER 1997, 60-63.

<sup>101</sup> Since many statues lack a provenance or were not found *in situ* even in the course of controlled excavations, I am sceptical that an uninscribed statue is more likely to have come from a *serdab* than from the chapel of a tomb, as Roth’s assertion (ROTH 2002, 108) implies.

<sup>102</sup> STADELMANN 1995, 165, pl. 61.

<sup>103</sup> BAUD 1999b, 46, figs. 3c and 4a.

<sup>104</sup> JE 87078: PM 1974-81, 645; VANDERSLEYEN 1975, pl. LIVa.

<sup>105</sup> FISCHER 1995, 85, listed all except the sculpture of Kawab, but he mistakenly cited one statue twice — as CG 89 and again as the sculpture from tomb B 12 at Saqqara.

<sup>106</sup> Boston, MFA SIMPSON 1978, pl. VIIa-c. The top of the base is also inscribed with Kawab’s name and titles.

<sup>107</sup> Cf. CHERPION 1998, 115 n. 82.

<sup>108</sup> MMA 26.2.7: PM 1974-81, 543.

group.<sup>109</sup> So far as I am aware, this is a unique example of an inscribed accessory for a statue. Both figures of Kapunesut are only slightly underlifesized — unusual for wooden statuary — and their high quality is evident, despite their damaged condition. Determining when they were made depends upon the dating of Kaemheset's tomb, since they come from a *serdab* associated with a chapel that formed part of the same complex.<sup>110</sup>

The three remaining examples of inscribed belts are found on three statues belonging to one man, Seankhuptah, who was the son of Akhtyhotept, owner of the 'Louvre mastaba'. The sculptures from Seankhuptah's yet-to-be-localized tomb at Saqqara are thus datable to mid-Dynasty V.<sup>111</sup> Two of them (one striding CG 37 and one seated CG 196) depict him with his wife, the king's daughter of his body Nubibnebt, squatting at his feet. The third, CG 201, shows him seated, with two sons, one standing at either side of his legs. Another peculiarity of his costume further distinguishes these statues: Seankhuptah wears a king's *shendit* over a plain, non-royal kilt,<sup>112</sup> perhaps a privilege accorded him as the husband of a princess.

Readers of this article will have noticed that I have included assessments of the quality of many sculptures cited, and this for good reason. Sculptures with inscriptions located in exceptional positions fall into two categories: those attributable to mediocre craftsmen ignorant of the 'rules', or disregarding them, on the one hand, and, on the other, statues created by sculptors of above average skill whose products can justly be labelled works of art.

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<sup>109</sup> JE 67369: ZAYED 1956, 1-11, fig. 3 (scepter); HARVEY 2001, 182.

<sup>110</sup> See n.15, above, for the alternatives.

<sup>111</sup> BAUD 1999a, 568-70.

<sup>112</sup> Note the caveat of BAUD 1999a, 569

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Plate 1a-b. CG 44 (details); daughter and wife of Akhi. Photos: Biri Fay.





Plate 2. Back of Brooklyn. 37.20E. Courtesy of The Brooklyn Museum.

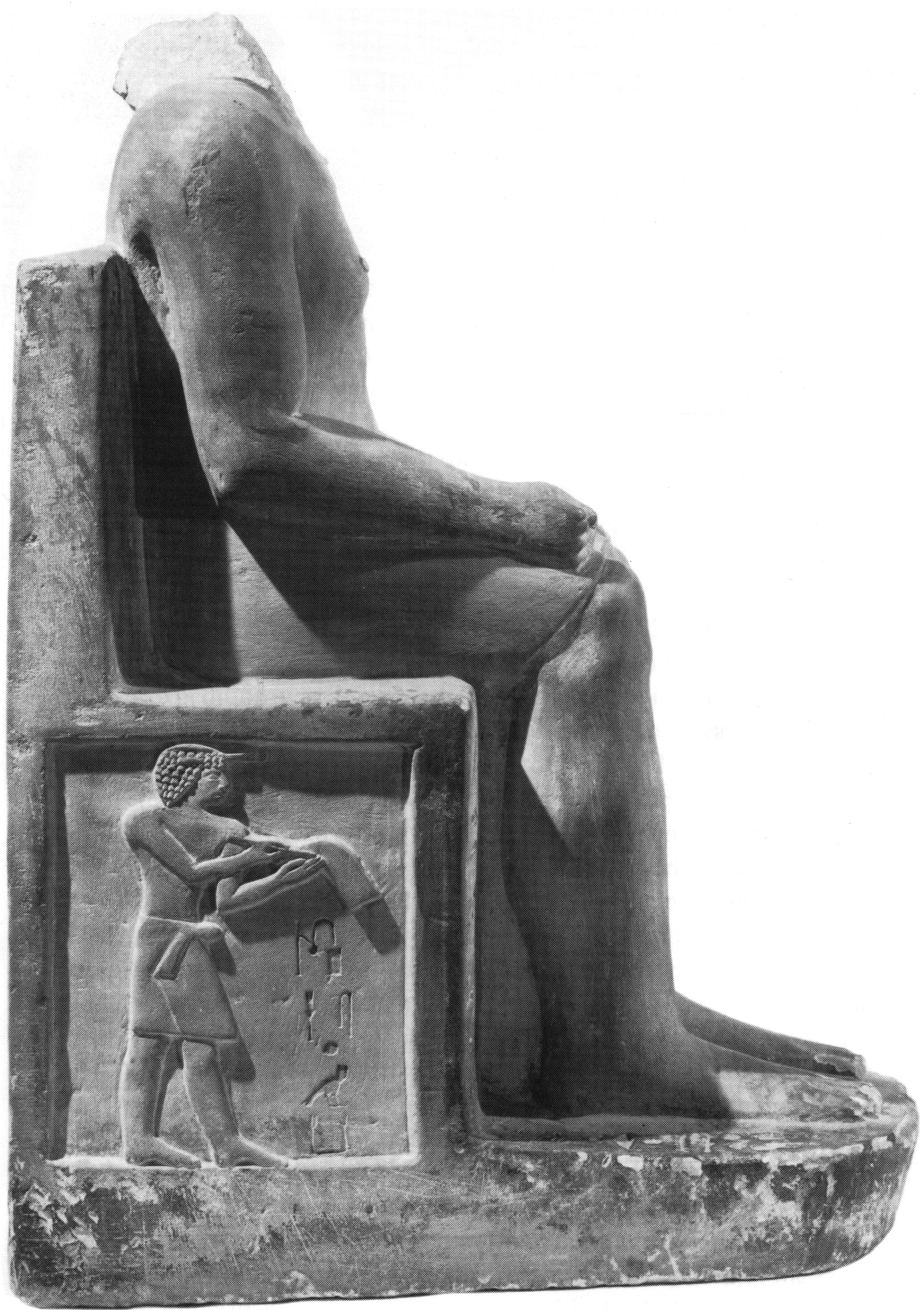


Plate 3. Right side of Brooklyn. 37.22E. Courtesy of The Brooklyn Museum.