

# EGYPTIAN ART IN THE PYRAMIDS

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### RESERVE HEADS

# An Enigma of Old Kingdom Sculpture

CATHARINE H. ROEHRIG

hile excavating at Dahshur in 1894, Jacques de Morgan discovered the first reserve head ever encountered. It came from a tomb dated to the Fourth Dynasty, sometime between the late years of Snefru's reign and the middle of the reign of his son Khufu. This head has close affinities with two others found later in the Western Cemetery at Giza and is probably among the earliest of the entire series. It is also one of only four found outside the Giza necropolis, which has yielded twenty-seven examples, most from the reigns of Khufu and Khafre, who was Khufu's son and second successor in the Fourth Dynasty.

Reserve heads are unique in Egyptian art because each one was made to be complete in itself, not as part of a statue. Every head is cut off flat at the base of the neck, allowing it to stand upright. All are represented with short-cropped hair or perhaps shaven heads. A large proportion also show evidence of intentional damage to the ears and the back of the head. Many reserve heads were carved from fine white limestone with the features well formed and the surface carefully smoothed. Some, however, were quite crudely carved and appear to have been finished with substantial amounts of plaster,<sup>5</sup> and two were made from finely ground Nile mud.<sup>6</sup>

#### RESERVE HEADS AS PORTRAITS

Although there are many affinities among the heads, each has particular characteristics that distinguish it from the others, as can be seen in a photograph of a group from Giza (fig. 46).<sup>7</sup> This individuality has led many scholars to describe reserve heads as portraits. George Reisner,

who discovered more than half of the excavated examples, went a step further, perceiving family relationships among the heads he uncovered.8 For example, on the basis of similarities between heads from mastabas G 4240 (Cairo JE 46215; fig. 46d) and G 4440 (Boston 14.718; fig. 46g) he identified the tomb owners as brothers. At approximately 30 centimeters in height, these heads are two of the largest. The chief feature they share is the long, narrow shape of the face, apparent when they are seen from the front; however, when viewed from any other angle, the resemblance dissipates.10 Reisner also believed he could determine the ethnic background of individuals represented by the heads. For example, he identified Cairo JE 46218 (G 4340; fig. 46c) and Cairo JE 46216 (G 4640; fig. 46a) as west Asiatic, 11 although both have characteristics in common with others he thought represented native Egyptians. While individual reserve heads may have been made to resemble the people in whose tombs they were placed, it is equally possible that the similarities among these works are the result of conventions used by an individual artist or group of artists.

Any study of the reserve heads must involve grouping them according to type, a highly subjective exercise in which each viewer will find different affinities. The chief obstacle to any definitive comparison or analysis of the heads is a lack of good, comprehensive photographs. No photographs exist of certain examples, and only one view has been published of others. In many cases photographs have been taken from different angles: some from above, some from below, some with the head turned slightly to the right or left but almost never rotated to the same degree. And views of the backs of the heads are largely unavailable. There are, however, excellent scaled photographs of most of the examples excavated by Reisner,

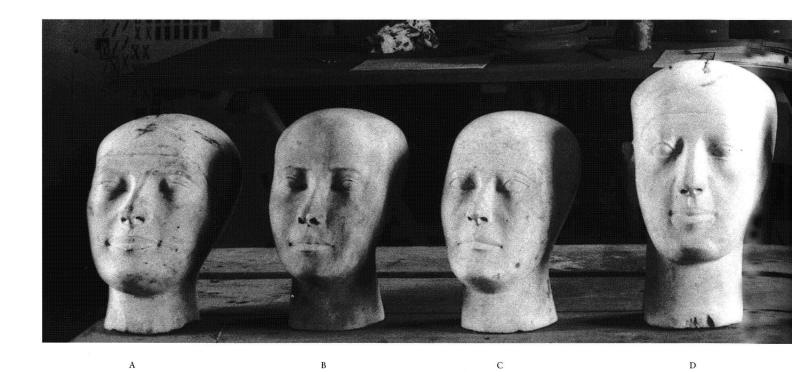


Fig. 46. Eight reserve heads excavated in 1913 at Giza by the Harvard University–Museum of Fine Arts Expedition, displayed at the Harvard Camp, Giza, December 17, 1913. The heads were divided between the Egyptian Museum, Cairo, and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. From left to right, they are: a. Cairo JE 46216 (G 4640); b. Boston 21.328 (G 4540; cat. no. 47); c. Cairo JE 46218 (G 4340); d. Cairo JE 46215 (G 4240); e. Cairo JE 46217 (G 4140); f. Boston 14.717 (G 4140); g. Boston 14.718 (G 4440); h. Boston 14.719 (G 4440; cat. no. 48)

and Roland Tefnin has provided multiple views of many pieces. <sup>12</sup> Using these resources, it is possible to discern numerous stylistic parallels among the sculptures. For example, it is apparent that Cairo JE 46218 (G 4340; fig. 46c), one of Reisner's west Asiatics, has a number of features in common with Boston 14.717 (G 4140; fig. 46f) and Boston 21.328 (G 4540; fig. 46b; cat. no. 47), two heads Reisner considered to represent native Egyptians. <sup>13</sup>

Most of the reserve heads found at Giza probably were created by one or two generations of sculptors whose careers spanned the reigns of Khufu, Djedefre, and Khafre, and it is not surprising that these examples can be divided into other stylistic groupings. <sup>14</sup> More unexpected are the affinities that seem to connect the head unearthed by Morgan at Dahshur, Cairo CG 519, with two excavated at Giza, Berkeley 6-19767 (G 1203; cat. no. 46) and Cairo JE 46217 (G 4140; fig. 46e). <sup>15</sup> The proportions of the three faces, with their full cheeks and soft chins, are very similar, and the mouths, eyes, and sculpted eyebrows have much in common as well. These parallels appear to bind the two Giza heads very closely in date, and perhaps

even in site of manufacture, with the head from Dahshur, a royal necropolis approximately fourteen miles to the south that was diminishing in importance while Giza was becoming the preeminent royal burial ground. <sup>16</sup> Further attempts to link heads stylistically using firsthand examination and up-to-date, comprehensive photographs might produce very interesting results.

#### ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT

The archaeological context of the thirty-one excavated reserve heads is somewhat ambiguous. The majority were found in the substructures of their respective tombs, in either the shaft or the burial chamber, <sup>17</sup> and not one was associated with an aboveground offering chapel. This distinguishes them from other types of Old Kingdom funerary statues, which played a role in the offering cult and usually were either located in full view somewhere in the offering chapel <sup>18</sup> or hidden in a statue chamber, or serdab.

With one exception the mastabas in which reserve heads were discovered had been ransacked by thieves in ancient



 ${\sf F}$   ${\sf G}$   ${\sf H}$ 

times. Some may also have been entered later by ancient Egyptians searching for reusable building materials. The only head discovered in a context resembling its original location was excavated by Selim Hassan at Giza in a tomb that had been penetrated by water and mud but not plundered by thieves. This head was found in the burial chamber in front of the sarcophagus, lying on its side near floor level in the mud that had filled the room. <sup>19</sup> Although it was no longer in its original position, it seems most likely that the head was intended to stand upright on the floor. This find suggests that reserve heads were originally placed in the burial chamber of the tomb<sup>20</sup> rather than in the blocking of the entrance corridor<sup>21</sup> or in the shaft, where most were found, presumably having been thrown there when a tomb was robbed. <sup>22</sup>

#### DISTRIBUTION IN GIZA CEMETERY 4000

The majority of reserve heads were distributed among the three earliest cemeteries constructed to the west of Khufu's pyramid at Giza (collectively called the Western Cemetery). Cemeteries 1200 and 2100 yielded only one head each, but eighteen were found in cemetery 4000, nearly all of them in the group of twenty-one mastabas that belong to the first three building phases identified by Reisner.<sup>23</sup> These structures form three rows of seven tombs to the east of the huge mastaba of Hemiunu (G 4000; fig. 47).

The mastabas in this section of cemetery 4000 and in cemetery 1200 yielded a number of slab stelae (see cat. nos. 51-53). Although most of the stelae were found in cemetery 1200, where only one reserve head was discovered, it seems that these two types of funerary equipment appeared together more often than the numbers imply. While only four complete or fragmentary slab stelae seem to have been found in the tomb chapels in cemetery 4000, nine other mastabas in the earliest tombs of this cemetery contain emplacements for stelae. Only nine reserve heads were unearthed in these thirteen tombs (see fig. 47), but it is quite possible that they all once housed such heads.<sup>24</sup>

Two of the mastabas that Reisner excavated contained two reserve heads each. One of these tombs, G 4140,

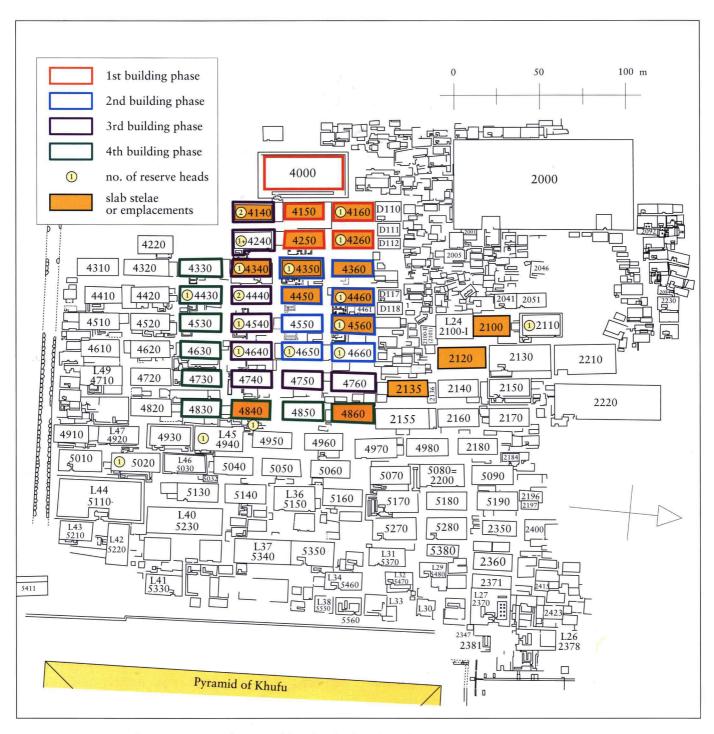


Fig. 47. Map of cemeteries 2100, 4000, and 5000 at Giza, showing locations of reserve heads and slab stelae emplacements. Drawing by Peter Der Manuelian

belonged to the king's daughter Meret-ites, whose name was recorded on a slab stela in her offering chapel. One head was found lying in the burial chamber, and the other had been uncovered near the bottom of the shaft. Reisner identified them as representing, respectively, Meret-ites (fig. 46e) and her husband (fig. 46f). The two heads in the second mastaba, G 4440, were located together near the bottom of the shaft, and these Reisner identified as a prince (fig. 46g) and his Nubian wife (fig. 46h; cat. no. 48). Reisner believed that a third mastaba in the same area had also once housed two reserve heads. In 1913 he had found a head (fig. 46d) and a neck fragment from a second one in mastaba G 4240, which contained a slab stela inscribed for the king's son Snefru-seneb. During a later excavation season, while clearing mastaba G 5020 some distance to the southeast, he discovered a reserve head with a large chip broken out of its neck. The archaeological context of this head, which lay in shaft debris above the burial chamber door, convinced Reisner that it was intrusive, and he suggested that it portrayed the wife of Snefru-seneb and had originally been deposited in G 4240.25

The presence in each of these mastabas of two reserve heads belonging to a husband and wife poses a problem that Reisner failed to address. The large core mastabas in the great Western Cemetery were designed with only one shaft leading to a single, relatively small burial chamber, and the archaeological evidence suggests that they were used for only one burial. Neither mastaba G 4240 nor G 4440 has any contemporary subsidiary shafts for family members, and, since both men and women owned mastabas, a husband and wife might well have had separate, neighboring tombs. In the case of G 4140, the mastaba of Meret-ites, an annex was added to the north end of the superstructure and excavation of a shaft was begun, presumably for the burial of a close family member. However, there is no chamber at the bottom of this shaft, nor was the shaft itself used for a burial.<sup>26</sup> Since each reserve head seems to be an integral part of the burial equipment for a specific individual, one must ask why there would be two heads in tombs intended for only one person. The simplest answer is that one of the heads in each tomb is intrusive. Several of the earliest mastabas of cemetery 4000 that were designed to have slab stelae contained no reserve head when excavated. Three of these, G 4150, G 4250, and G 4450, are immediately north of the three mastabas in which Reisner found a pair of heads. This pattern of distribution leads to the obvious suggestion that one of the heads in G 4140, one in G 4440, and the neck fragment in G 4240 (together with the head from G 5020, if it fits with that fragment)<sup>27</sup> came from the neighboring mastabas to the north, having been displaced by robbers.

Another reserve head, found in G 4940 but considered to be intrusive by Reisner, may also have come from one of the twenty-one earliest mastabas in cemetery 4000.<sup>28</sup> In addition, it should be noted that two heads of unfired clay were uncovered in cemetery 4000, suggesting that some of the mastabas that contained no heads may have been equipped with examples of this more fragile variety, which either did not survive or were so badly damaged that they were not recognized by the excavators.<sup>29</sup>

#### PURPOSE

Since the heads clearly did not play a part in the offering cult, which was carried out aboveground, scholars have long attempted to formulate another explanation for their existence. The earliest theory concerning their purpose was put forward by Ludwig Borchardt, who in 1903 discovered a head at Abusir that was only the second to have been found.3° He suggested that they were intended to protect or replace the head of the deceased,31 an idea with which both Reisner and Hermann Junker generally agreed. Junker went on to suggest that the heads served a purpose similar to that of the plaster face masks (cat. no. 197) uncovered in a number of Old Kingdom tombs. William Stevenson Smith carried this thought a step further, hypothesizing that the heads and masks were precursors of the cartonnage mummy masks that began to appear in the First Intermediate Period.<sup>32</sup>

Theories connecting the reserve heads to the evolution of mummy masks, and perhaps even to anthropoid coffins, are supported by the fact that the heads do not seem to correspond to any other type of funeral equipment documented for later periods. Although there is no evidence that they were used outside the Memphite area during the Old Kingdom, one possible distant parallel, documented at Thebes, appeared some twelve centuries later in the tomb of Tutankhamun. This is the wood sculpture of a lifesize head emerging from a lotus blossom.

The Tutankhamun piece was made in several sections, with the head as a separate element. Although entirely different in style and medium from the Old Kingdom reserve heads, the Tutankhamun head has various features in common with them: it was not made as part of a statue; the neck is cut off flat at the bottom, which would allow it to stand on its own; and the hair, represented by small dots that cover the top of the skull, is

close shaven. This sculpture, whose precise find spot unfortunately is in question,<sup>33</sup> is generally understood to represent the infant sun god being born—a powerful symbol of the pharaoh's anticipated rebirth. Its connection to Old Kingdom reserve heads, although extremely tenuous, suggests a magical function for the earlier works that is consistent with the generally accepted theories associating them with the development of the mummy mask and anthropoid coffin. It is quite possible that reserve heads served as symbols of the sun god or the god Atum appearing at the moment of creation on the primeval mound, which itself may even have been imitated by a mound of earth or sand on the floor of the burial chamber.

#### INTENTIONAL DAMAGE

Although existing theories concerning the function of reserve heads explain why they were placed in the substructure of the tomb, none successfully accounts for the widespread mutilation of the heads.

Since all reserve heads were discovered in disturbed archaeological contexts, it is not surprising that even the best-preserved examples have suffered abrasions and chips to the surface and even occasionally have lost part of the nose. However, two types of damage typically found among reserve heads are notable because they occur rarely in other types of Egyptian sculpture. For this reason they are presumed to represent intentional mutilation rather than accidental damage. Only twenty-six of the thirty-one excavated reserve heads are well enough preserved to be used in a discussion of intentional mutilation and accidental damage.<sup>34</sup>

The most universal form of mutilation is removal of the ears. Among fifteen heads that probably had sculpted ears, only Boston 14.719 (cat. no. 48) has its ears intact. Removal of the ears takes several forms. On some heads, such as Vienna 7787 (cat. no. 49), they have been chiseled off close to the surface in a relatively careful and even manner. On others, for example Berkeley 6-19767 (cat. no. 46), the prominent parts have been chipped away, leaving a distinct outline, or hacked off in a more haphazard fashion, as on Boston 21.328 (cat. no. 47).

Most members of a small group of heads whose ears were made as separate elements and attached with plaster or tenons were found with one or both ears missing.<sup>35</sup> One might assume that these ears broke off due to rough handling by tomb robbers if it were not for the fourteen examples missing their sculpted ears. A third group,

which includes the Dahshur head, was created without any provision for ears. This omission may represent a stylistic preference of a particular artist or patron or may be connected in some way to the intentional removal of ears from at least fourteen heads.

Another type of mutilation suffered by a significant number of reserve heads is the single or double line that was scratched or more often gouged into the finished surface from the crown to the nape of the neck. Because written descriptions of the heads are not always complete and the backs often have not been photographed, this form of damage is not as well documented as the removal of the ears. However, it is known that of the twenty-six examples under consideration fifteen, including cat. no. 49, exhibit these lines and five, including cat. nos. 46–48, do not, leaving six in question.

Junker and Reisner both mentioned that the ears were usually missing from the heads, but neither appears to have found this particularly significant. Both excavators also described the grooves that appear in many examples. While Junker made no attempt to account for this phenomenon, Reisner suggested that the gouges may have been made by thieves trying to determine if the heads were hollow.<sup>36</sup> This explanation is rather unsatisfactory, however, since such information could have been obtained more easily by simply smashing the objects.<sup>37</sup>

In more recent years scholars have put forward a number of other theories regarding the mutilation of reserve heads. Nicholas Millet has proposed that they served as sculptors' models (see introduction to cat. nos. 46–49).<sup>38</sup> In addition he suggests that molds were taken of the heads for the preparation of plaster mummy masks and speculates that the gouges down the backs of some were made when the molds were cut open and removed, a process that also caused the damage to the ears.

This interesting theory finds no support in the preserved record. No contemporary statuary has been found in tombs containing reserve heads,<sup>39</sup> and, in fact, the only type of sculpture that can be connected firmly with them is the slab stela, with its single representation of the deceased seated before an offering table.<sup>40</sup> Thus, there would seem to have been no need for sculptors' models, certainly not ones carved of fine limestone. Moreover, all of the extant plaster masks appear to have been modeled on the mummy itself, not cast (see entry for cat. no. 197).

Another, far more elaborate explanation for the mutilation has been set out by Tefnin.<sup>41</sup> In his detailed study Tefnin catalogues what he believes to be ritual mutilation carried out when the heads were placed in their tombs. He likens this practice to the mutilating of animal figurines and hieroglyphs of dangerous animals on objects deposited in tombs of the First Intermediate Period and Middle Kingdom. According to this theory, the heads had to be ritually "killed" in order to render them harmless to the deceased, because they were in the substructure of the tomb, in close proximity to the body.

Tefnin's suggestions are well presented and intriguing but somewhat problematic. In order to make his case, the author classifies four types of ritual mutilation, 42 which one would expect to see with some consistency in contemporary heads found in the same area if such acts had been performed to protect the deceased. Yet among the heads found in core mastabas of cemetery 4000 at Giza, all of which were probably carved and buried within a generation or two, not a single example exhibits all of Tefnin's forms of ritual damage; at least three show no evidence of a groove cut into the back of the head—the most unequivocal type of intentional damage; and one (cat. no. 48) shows no damage that cannot convincingly be explained as accidental.

A much simpler explanation of the damage found on reserve heads was recently presented by Peter Lacovara, who hypothesizes that the grooves and a number of other marks they display are sculptors' guidelines, comparable to the incised guidelines seen on the so-called trial pieces of the Ptolemaic Period. However, the guidelines on the Ptolemaic objects are always finely and precisely carved on an unfinished flat surface, not gouged or hacked into a finished one like most of the grooves on reserve heads.

In fact, the gouging of lines and damage to ears are inflicted too inconsistently to constitute conclusive evidence of ritual mutilation performed to protect the dead. Yet these forms of mutilation occur far too frequently to allow them to be discounted as accidental, and the gouges are too haphazardly and/or violently executed to be sculptors' guidelines. It seems only marginally more likely that these types of damage were intentionally inflicted when the tombs were robbed or later when they were mined for reusable materials: why would a robber or other intruder who feared the magical powers of the objects take the time to carefully remove the ears and scratch the backs of the heads, when smashing them would have taken less effort? Indeed, plunderers do seem to have broken at least two heads, Vienna 9290 (G 4260) and New York 48.156 (G 7560B), and possibly a third discovered in fragmentary form by Junker in G 4460, about which almost nothing is known.44 And in three other examples, Hildesheim 2158 (G 4160), Boston 36-12-6 (G 7560B), and Boston 27-4-1219 (G 7650C), the face was

separated from the skull by a few well-placed blows and shows much abrasion around the eyes, nose, and mouth.<sup>45</sup>

The question of why many reserve heads suffered unusual forms of mutilation must remain open for the present, since complete documentation of all the excavated examples is not available. One can only hope that new information derived from complete examinations of all the heads will help us to better understand the purpose of this unique group of objects.

Reserve heads are referred to in this chapter by their present city location and a museum accession or inventory number. The museums, which are not named, are as follows: Berkeley, California: Phoebe Apperson Hearst Museum of Anthropology; Berlin: Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin; Boston: Museum of Fine Arts; Cairo: Egyptian Museum; Hildesheim, Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum; London: Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology, University College; New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art; Vienna: Kunsthistoriches Museum.

- This is Cairo CG 519. See Morgan 1895, p. 9, and fig. 7, a drawing that oddly enough, appears to reconstruct the broken nose.
- 2. The other non-Giza heads are all later in date: Berlin 16455 from Abusir is probably Fifth Dynasty; the head found by Fakhry at Saqqara is no earlier than Sixth Dynasty; and a head discovered in 1989 at Lisht by Dieter and Dorothea Arnold is dated to the early Twelfth Dynasty. The Lisht head is only 10.25 centimeters in height and seems to have been part of the debris from a sculptor's workshop that was used as fill (personal communication from Dorothea Arnold).
- 3. Tefnin (1991) documents three unprovenanced reserve heads that do not enter into this discussion: Cairo JE 89611, London 15988, and one in a private collection. The ears found without heads in four mastabas in cemetery 4000 also have not been considered here.
- 4. Twenty-one reserve heads (including the one found in G 5020) can be associated with the early core mastabas in cemeteries 1200, 2100, and 4000, the construction of which Reisner dated to the reign of Khufu, although the tombs were not always used during this king's reign.
- 5. Boston 21.329, for example, has a thick glob of plaster that adheres to the left cheek near the nose and extends from the eye to the mouth. This plaster appears to have a finished surface just above the mouth. The eyes are imperfectly carved, the nose has been flattened, and no attempt has been made to smooth the sharp curves of the brow ridges. Berlin 16455 is almost completely modeled in plaster (see Wildung 1998), but it will not figure significantly in this discussion since it is from a different site and a later dynasty than the majority of the heads.
- 6. One nearly complete example, Cairo JE 44975, was found by Junker in an intrusive shaft east of G 4840; the other, a very fragmentary head, Obj. Reg. 13-12-1, probably in Boston, was discovered by Reisner in G 4430.
- 7. Reisner found eight reserve heads in cemetery 4000 between early November and mid-December of his 1913–14 excavation season. Several photographs of these, including this one, were taken in an expedition workroom on December 17.

- 8. Reisner 1915, pp. 32-35.
- Most heads from the great Western Cemetery are between 25 and 27 centimeters high.
- 10. This is especially evident in the profile views of these two heads published in Reisner 1915, figs. 8, 12.
- 11. On the basis of his consideration of heads found by Reisner and himself, Junker came to somewhat different conclusions, identifying two broad groups, one of more noble and one of more peasant origin; see Junker 1929, pp. 63–65. For an extensive critique of both authors' conclusions, see Tefnin 1991, pp. 62–69.
- 12. See Reisner 1942, pls. 22a-e, 34c-f, 52-56, which usually give a frontal, two profile, and one or two other views of the heads; and Tefnin 1991, which usually offers more than one view of heads that were available for the author's examination.
- 13. See entry for cat. no. 47.
- 14. Boston 14.718 (G 4440) and Cairo JE 46215 (G 4240) have features in common with Hildesheim 2384 (G 4650); the shapes of Vienna 7877 (G 4350) and Vienna 9290 (G 4260) are very similar (unfortunately, the latter has none of the facial features preserved); Boston 21.239 (G 4940) shares many characteristics with Boston 06.1886 (G 2110). Similarities can also be found among the three heads found by Reisner in cemetery 7000: Boston 36-12-6 (G 7560B), New York 48.156 (G 7560B), and Boston 27.4.1219 (G 7660C).
- 15. See entry for cat. no. 46, esp. n. 5.
- 16. It is my belief that these three heads were the earliest made, but further study of the subject is necessary. Unfortunately, there seems to be only one published photograph of Cairo, CG 519, making comparison of it with other heads difficult. This photograph was first published in Smith 1946, pl. 6, and reprinted in later publications (Simpson 1949, p. 289, ill.; Tefnin 1991, pl. 13c).
- 17. Three heads were found in robbers' debris in the streets that separate the large core mastabas at Giza: Hildesheim 2158 was uncovered west of mastaba G 4160 and probably came from this tomb; Cairo temp. 19/11/24/5 was discovered in debris between G 4560 and G 4660 and was assigned by Junker to G 4660; Boston 27.4.1219 was found in the street separating G 7650 and G 7660, and Reisner thought it belonged to G 7660.
- 18. These statues could be either freestanding or carved into the walls of the offering chapel.
- 19. Hassan 1953, pp. 4–5, pls. 3–4a. The excavator proposed that the owner of this tomb was a daughter of Khafre. Whether or not this identification is correct, the tomb probably dates to the late Fourth or early Fifth Dynasty, and it is reasonable to assume that the head was deposited in the burial chamber following the same practice common a generation or so earlier in the great Western Cemetery, where the majority of the heads were found.
- 20. Reisner (n.d., p. 239) suggested that the heads might have been placed on the coffin, on the stone slab used to cover the canopic pit, or simply on the floor of the chamber. I am grateful to Rita E. Freed for allowing me to consult Reisner's unpublished manuscripts housed in the Department of Egyptian, Nubian, and Ancient Near Eastern Art at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.
- 21. Junker, one of the principal excavators of reserve heads at Giza, believed that they were originally placed in the corridor leading from the shaft to the burial chamber. After the burial, these corridors were blocked with stones and the entrance on the shaft side was then covered with a large portcullis. According to Junker, the heads were placed in a niche left in the stone

- blocking immediately behind the portcullis. He equated the holes found in many of the portcullis stones with the holes or slits that usually connect a serdab with its offering chamber and thus symbolically link the statues with the outside world. However, the archaeological evidence does not support this theory; see Kelley 1974, pp. 7–8; and Lacovara 1997.
- 22. The small head found by Fakhry at Saqqara reveals little, if anything, about the use of reserve heads. Fakhry (1959, p. 30) describes its archaeological context as follows: "In the shaft there was found a damaged small reserve limestone head (19.5 cms in height) re used and put in the filling of the shaft just above the entrance." No description of the head is given other than the information about its height, which tells us that it is small (the average height of the Giza heads is 26 centimeters), and no photographs were ever published. Although the thieves who plundered this tomb evidently did not enter through the shaft, it is not clear that the head was placed in the shaft as part of the burial. It is quite possible that the head is a sculptor's small trial piece that was discarded and became mingled with debris used to fill the shaft, like the even smaller example found at Lisht in 1989; see note 2 above.
- 23. Two others, found in G 4940 and G 5020, may also have come from the twenty-one earliest tombs.
- 24. G 4840 does not have a slab-stela emplacement and the fragment associated with this tomb may not be from a slab stela; see Der Manuelian 1998a. The head associated with this mastaba was not found in the principal shaft and may have come from another tomb. If it was from another tomb, this would mean that eight heads were found in twelve mastabas with slab stelae or slab-stelae emplacements.
- 25. Because of its position Reisner (n.d., p. 234) maintained that it could not have come from the burial chamber but had been thrown into the shaft with the debris.
- 26. Reisner (1942, p. 464) describes the shaft as completely plundered or unused.
- 27. I have been unable to find evidence that Reisner ever joined the neck fragment from G 4240 with the head from G 5020, and it seems possible that the chip is part of the fragmentary head that Junker found in G 4260 (Vienna 9290). It is also possible that it belongs to an incomplete head Junker discovered in G 4460. Unfortunately, the current location of the neck fragment is unrecorded.
- 28. According to Reisner (ibid., p. 234), this head was found in the shaft above the burial-chamber door, where it had obviously been thrown during recent illicit excavations. He suggested, parenthetically, that it had come from G 4740.
- 29. Reisner himself (ibid., p. 236) thought that there might have been other heads, particularly in cemetery 1200, where only one was found and where the burial chambers had been stripped of their fine limestone lining.
- 30. This is Berlin 16455.
- 31. Borchardt 1907, p. 133.
- 32. Smith 1946, pp 24-25.
- 33. Of course, the position of this piece when it was discovered by Howard Carter was not necessarily its location at the time of burial, but may have represented a secondary placement made after the tomb was robbed and restored.
- 34. Three examples from Giza mastabas G 4430 (Boston, unaccessioned), G 4460 (Cairo, unaccessioned), and G 4660 (Cairo temp 19/11/24/5) are too fragmentary or too little known to provide the necessary information. The head from Lisht, as has been noted, appears to have been a sculptor's trial piece found in fill and exhibits no mutilations; the one found at

- Saqqara, as has been mentioned, is probably a similar type of object and was never fully described.
- 35. Occasionally one or both of the detached ears were found in tombs with the heads to which they belonged, and whole or fragmentary ears in three mastabas that contained no heads were discovered in cemetery 4000.
- 36. Reisner n.d., p. 238. Reisner also considered the possibility that the grooves were made to secure a layer of plaster over the heads, but he correctly discarded this idea.
- 37. As pointed out in Lacovara 1997, pp. 34-35.
- 38. Millet 1981.
- 39. But see entry for cat no. 46.
- 40. G 4650 (labtit) and G 4240 (Snefru-seneb) contained decorated false doors, and G 2110 (Nefer) had a decorated offering chapel, but these may well have been modifications made after the burials; see "The Tombs of Officials" by Peter Jánosi in this catalogue. It is next to impossible to make a comparison between a reserve head and a slab stela found in the same tomb, since the facial features of either one or the other are invariably damaged. For example, the reserve head believed to

- represent Princess Meret-ites (Cairo JE 46217) is missing its nose, and the figure on her slab stela has a damaged chin, thus eliminating the chance to compare the two most distinctive features of the profile.
- 41. Tefnin 1991.
- 42. Two are the removal of the ears and the gouging of the back of the head, the typical, widespread forms mentioned above. The other two, a line scratched around the neck near the base and a retracing of the hairline, are so sporadic, and often so difficult to discern, that their classification is questionable.
- 43. Lacovara 1997.
- 44. Mentioned in Junker 1929, p. 190. Breakage of the two heads of Nile mud is difficult to assess because of the inherent fragility of the material.
- 45. One of these three faces was not found; the other two are very badly damaged. Hildesheim 2158 and Boston 27-4-1219 were discovered in the street, which may account for some of the damage they have suffered. Another head, Cairo temp. 19/11/24/5 (G 4660), described by Junker as being very much abraded, was also found in the street between the mastabas.