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# Bulletin of the Egyptological Seminar

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## Royal Figures Found in Petrie's So-called Workmen's Barracks at Giza<sup>1</sup>

Zahi Hawass

In 1988-1989, in cooperation with Mark Lehner, I carried out excavations in the area west of the Pyramid of Khafre.<sup>2</sup> This site had been explored previously by W.M.F. Petrie, who nicknamed it the "Workmen's Barracks." Among the artifacts we found here were the three royal figures that are the subject of this paper.<sup>3</sup>

### Introduction

During the seasons from 1880-1882, Sir Flinders Petrie excavated a series of structures located west of the outer enclosure wall of the pyramid of Khafre (Figure 1 and Plate 1). He interpreted the groups of rooms that he found as quarters for the workers who labored in the pyramid complex.<sup>4</sup>

The structures consist of long narrow rooms built off a square courtyard. The entrances to the rooms measure from 2.28 m. to 2.54 m. wide. The walls are of rough blocks of limestone cased with mud plaster and measure on average 1.30 m. thick. The roofs were of mud brick, matting, beams, and argillaceous mud, and the floors were plastered with mud. The rooms end to the east in wide limestone columns (Plate 2).<sup>5</sup>

Petrie, who only excavated a small part of the galleries, dated these structures to the reign of Khafre mainly on the strength of their location relative to his pyramid.<sup>6</sup> Also supporting this date is the fact that this part of the larger Khafre complex is removed from

- 1 This article is written in honor of the late Jim Romano. I met Jim during my studies at the University of Pennsylvania. The two of us, along with Diana Patch, worked together in the development of the objects at the Carnegie Museum. Jim was a wonderful man, with a great sense of humor. We lost a great scholar in the history of pharaonic art. His sudden death was a shock, not only to his family, but to all of the Egyptological community. It is to the soul of Jim Romano that I dedicate this article.
- 2 For references to publications of this area prior to these excavations, see Z. Hawass, *The Funerary Establishments of Khufu, Khafre, and Menkaure during the Old Kingdom* (PhD dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1987), 182–86 and 395–98.
- 3 These figures have been published briefly in N.J. Conard and M. Lehner, "The 1988/1989 Excavation of Petrie's 'Workmen's Barracks' at Giza," in *JARCE* 38 (2001), 21–60.
- 4 W.M.F. Petrie, *The Pyramids and Temples of Gizeh* (London, 1883), 101–102. Also see the same book updated by Z. Hawass in the series *Histories and Mysteries of Man* (London, 1990), 120–122. This area had been partly excavated by Vyse in 1837: H. Vyse, *Operations Carried on at the Pyramid of Gizeh* (1840–42), II, 88–89.
- 5 Petrie, *Pyramids and Temples*, 102; V. Maragioglio and C.A. Rinaldi, *L'Architettura della Piramidi menfite V, Le piramidi di Zedefrà e di Chephren* (Rapallo, 1966), 96.
- 6 Petrie, *Pyramids and Temples*, 102.



the actual construction site, as well as the similarity of construction techniques between these walls and the temenos walls surrounding Khafre's pyramid.

Petrie found several types of artifacts in the area of these rooms. Most prevalent were Old Kingdom pottery sherds, large pieces of quartzite, and damaged blocks of granite, some weighing up to 30 tons.<sup>7</sup> Also found were fragments of statues of alabaster and diorite, datable to the Fourth Dynasty on the basis of style.<sup>8</sup>

Petrie, in his analysis of the function of these rooms, felt that they could not have been storerooms, as they are too far away from the pyramid and too large for this purpose. He concluded that the rooms represent workmen's barracks and suggested that they housed the men who built Khafre's pyramid and complex. He calculated that the entire site included about ninety-one rooms housing four hundred men.<sup>9</sup> Of that number, seventy-three rooms ran east-west and measured about 26.9 m. long, 3.17 m. wide, and 2.13 m. high. The other eighteen rooms ran north-south, and were larger than those in the first group.<sup>10</sup> Hölscher, working with data collected by Petrie, calculated that there should have been 111 rooms, housing around 5,500 men.<sup>11</sup>

Maragioglio and Rinaldi suggest instead that these rooms could have been used for the storage of objects used in the maintenance of Khafre's cult. They compare these structures to the houses at Kahun, which is a known pyramid city, and conclude that there is little similarity between the two sites.<sup>12</sup> They do not see the size and number of these rooms as proof against their identification as storerooms, comparing these structures with cult storerooms dating from the New Kingdom in the Ramesseum.<sup>13</sup>

Previous to our own excavations, Lehner discussed in print the alternate hypotheses of Petrie and Maragioglio and Rinaldi, and concluded that the structures were most likely cult storerooms.<sup>14</sup> He pointed out the fact that no settlement debris, such as ash, bones, charcoal, or fiber had been found in the area as proof of this identification. However, it is important to note that very little of the site had been uncovered, and that the excavations carried out by Petrie were not systematic; thus, settlement debris may have been overlooked or may remain to be discovered. A final theory, put forth by Barry Kemp, suggested that these rooms could have been used to store food for the people working in the pyramid complex.<sup>15</sup>

7 Petrie, *Pyramids and Temples*, 103.

8 See Petrie, *Pyramids and Temples*, 103; Maragioglio and Rinaldi, *L'Architettura* V, 96.

9 Petrie, *Pyramids and Temples*, 102.

10 Maragioglio and Rinaldi, *L'Architettura* V, 96.

11 U. Hölscher, *Das Grabdenkmal des Königs Chephren* (Leipzig, 1912), 36.

12 Maragioglio and Rinaldi, *L'Architettura* V, 32, obs. 45; cf. B. Kemp, "The Early Development of Towns in Egypt," *Antiquity* 57 (1977), 185–200; W.F. Petrie, *Kahun, Gurob and Hawara* (London, 1890).

13 Maragioglio and Rinaldi, *L'Architettura* V, 32, obs. 45.

14 M. Lehner, "A Contextual Approach to the Giza Pyramids," *Archiv für Orientforschung* 31 (1988), 32–34.

15 Personal communication by Kemp to Lehner, cited in Lehner, "Contextual Approach," 22.

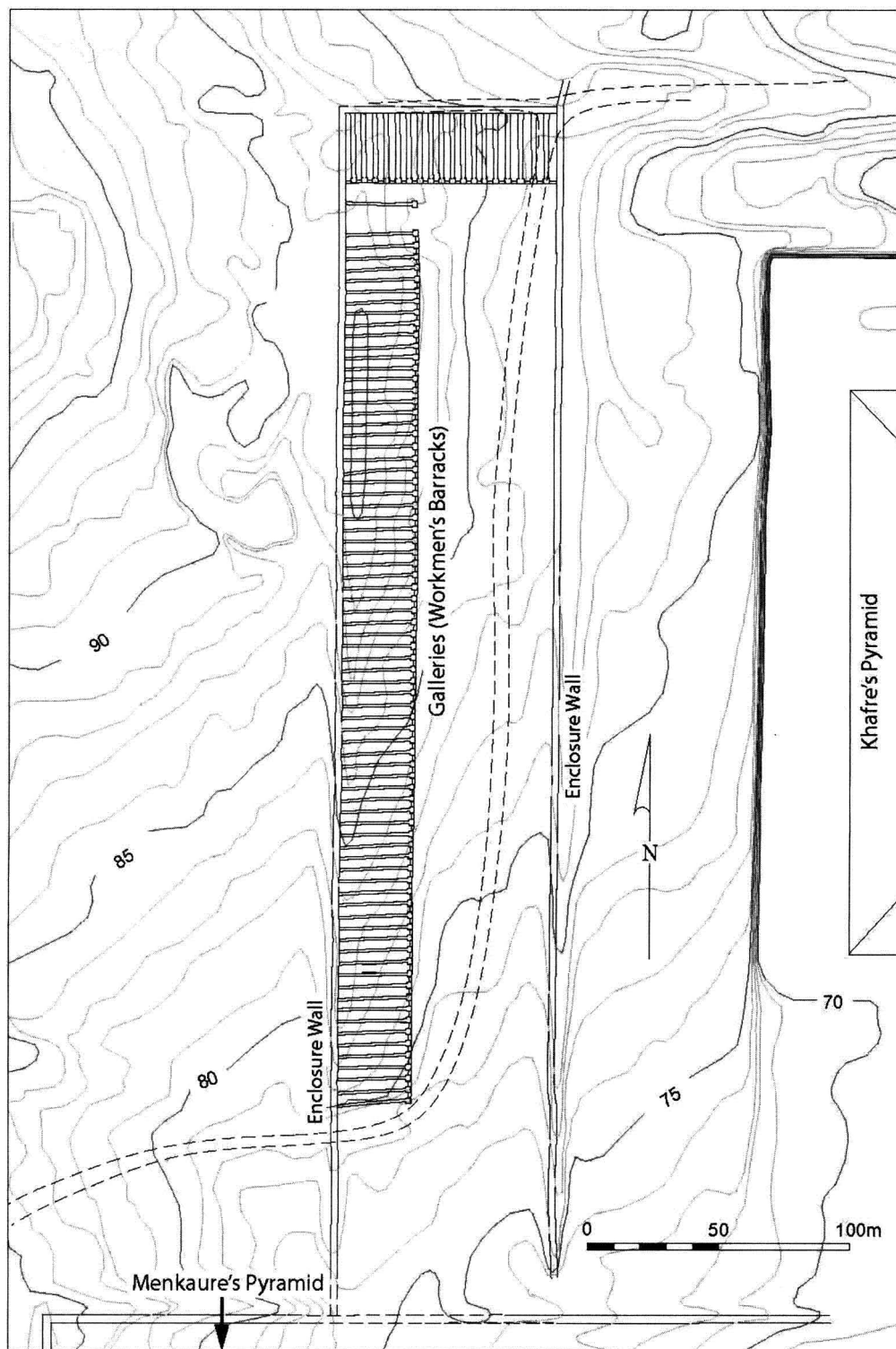


Fig. 1. Plan of the "Workmen's Barracks" showing their location west of the enclosure wall of Khafre's pyramid and the modern road (represented by parallel dotted lines) that runs alongside them. Plan after N.J. Conard and M. Lehner, *JARCE* 38 (2001), 27, fig. 3.

In my dissertation, I concluded that it was likely that these rooms were partly used for the storage of cult objects and food as a part of the workshop that was connected with the architectural components of the pyramid.<sup>16</sup> It seemed to me that the construction of the rooms, with mud-plastered floors, vaulted roofs, and no windows, was more appropriate for storerooms than residences. Petrie's discovery of diorite and alabaster statue fragments supported the theory that objects for the king's cult were stored here, as much statuary was needed for the cult. Some parts of the area might even have been workshops where the statuary was made. According to textual evidence from the time of Khafre, a great deal of food was needed to support the building crews and funerary personnel. The location of these rooms in the higher desert and their vaulted ceilings would have been chosen for reasons of security and ease of administration. However, until scientific excavations were carried out, the function of these rooms could not be settled entirely.

### **The 1998–1999 Excavations**

The purpose of this excavation was to explore the various theories put forth for the function of these structures, and to carry out systematic exploration of the site.<sup>17</sup> Our excavations did confirm that this area was not a settlement. Some objects may give an idea about the original function of the site, such as pendants, possibly loom weights, faience pieces, alabaster and limestone bars, shaped limestone pieces, hammer-stones, a dolerite pounder, granite objects, hard gypsum and limestone objects, a selection of copper pieces, eighteen lion figurines, and the three objects discussed here. Roofing fragments were found in the galleries. (Plate 3)

The most recent archaeological evidence confirms that the structures labeled "Workmen's Barracks" by Petrie actually represent the workshops of Khafre's pyramid complex, as I had suggested earlier.<sup>18</sup> What settlement debris there is can be attributed to use of the area as temporary housing for cult support staff such as guards, bakers using the ovens on the site, and other people. In the pyramid complex there is no area specifically for storage, but in the workshop there would have been an area for the storage of food to be used for the maintenance of the king's cult, as well as an area for making the small objects to be used inside the temples. The building techniques used here indicate that they were erected in the early years of Khafre's reign, as concluded by Lehner.<sup>19</sup>

### **The Royal Figures Found in the Excavations of 1998–1999**

Three royal figures were found in area C5. These are:

1. a statuette of a striding king
2. part of a statue of a standing king
3. a statuette of a standing king.

16 Hawass, *Funerary Establishments*, I, 395–98.

17 Hawass, *Funerary Establishments*, I, 182–86; Lehner, "Contextual Approach," 32–34.

18 Hawass, *Funerary Establishments*, I, 395–98.

19 Lehner, "Contextual Approach," 34.

### 1. Statuette of a Striding King (plates 4, 5, and 6)

Dimensions: Height 7.5 cm.  
 Width 2.5 cm.  
 Width of face 1.0 cm.  
 Width of crown 1.0 cm.  
 Width of upper body 2.5 cm.

Material: limestone

Inventory number: Giza 116 (Giza Storeroom)

Description: This is a statuette of a striding king, left leg advanced. The king wears the crown of Upper Egypt, a plain *shendyt* kilt with a single thin belt, and a beard. The condition of this statuette shows that it was broken into three pieces (on the level of the left cheek and left half of the crown, the neck, and underneath the belt) and glued together. The right arm is broken off at the level of the hip. Both legs are broken off above the knees. The tip of the crown is broken off. The beard was also broken off, and only traces remain.

The king's face is narrow. The eyebrows, which begin at the root of the nose, are curved and run parallel to the outline of the upper eyelid. The upper eyelids are curved, while the lower eyelids are almost horizontal. The inner corners of the eyes are emphasized. The cosmetic lines are broad, long, and horizontal. The king has high cheekbones. The ears are roughly modeled and only the outlines shaped. The nostrils are broad, the bridge of the nose narrow. The mouth is broad with thin lips, and the line of the mouth is horizontal. The eyebrows, outlines of the eyes, the pupils, and the beard have been painted black.

The musculature of the breast, stomach and arms are slightly modeled. The left arm was not intended to be worked, an indication of which is the detailed modeling of the belt on the left side of the body. The left shoulder is cut smoothly. Negative spaces have been left between the arms and the upper part of the body and between the legs; these have been painted black.

One can notice chisel marks on the right arm and on the back. These are vertical ridges set parallel to one another, at a distance of ca. 2 to 5 mm.

### 2. Part of Limestone Statue of a Standing King (plates 7, 8 and 9)

Dimensions: Height 31.5 cm.  
 Width 31.5 cm  
 Thickness: 5.5 cm  
 Width at the waist: 6.9 cm.

Material: Limestone

Inventory number: Giza 115

Description: This royal statue is in poor condition, without the head, neck, part of the shoulders and chest, and the right arm. Also lost are part of the left arm and the legs below the knee. The statue is broken in two large pieces and other smaller fragments. The left side is better preserved than the right.

This is part of a limestone statue of a standing royal figure, apparently wearing the *shendyt* kilt. This piece seems to be a part of a large statue because the part that we have is about 31 cm without the head and the neck and the legs below the knee. The king is standing, with left leg extended. As mentioned above, the head and neck are lost. Thus, the description starts with the left shoulder and upper arm.

The join between the left arm and the shoulder is rendered naturally. The arm muscles are thick, giving the king the appearance of strength. The position of the arm and the muscles indicate that the sculptor was interested in emphasizing the military and athletic might of the subject. The lower part of the arm is missing.

The area of the chest is very simple and beautifully modeled, and the waist is narrow. However, much of this area has also been lost, especially in the area of the navel, and the right side is in bad condition. The left thigh is well muscled. The back pillar is wide, and connected to the statue. The lower part of this pillar has been lost.

### 3. Statuette of a Standing King (plate 10)

Dimensions: Height 6 cm.

Material: limestone

Inventory number: Giza 157

Description: This sculpture was found in three pieces. Put together, they show part of the head of a king wearing the white crown of Upper Egypt. Behind the figure is a back pillar, with a roof-like projection above the crown. This piece shows traces of color imitating red granite.

#### Interpretation

The three royal figures found in this excavation are very difficult to identify. It is impossible to tell from the stratigraphy exactly when these pieces were deposited. The workshops in which they were discovered would have been built during the reign of Khafre, but the cult was maintained until the Eighth Dynasty, so based on the archaeology, the date could be anywhere from the Fourth to the Eighth Dynasties.<sup>20</sup> During the king's lifetime, the workshops would have produced the large-scale statuary for the temples, as part of the program for the components of the pyramid complex, and materials for the king's mummification and funeral. After his death, its function was to produce small artifacts to be used for the maintenance of the king's cult, such as votives (for example small statuettes) and flints, and to prepare food for the fresh offerings. The area was also used for storage.<sup>21</sup>

Only statuette no. 1 is preserved well enough to be used for dating. Statue no. 2 cannot be accurately dated through comparanda, as it is badly damaged and no face is preserved. Statuette no. 3 consists of only a crown and a roof-like projection.

20 Hawass, *Funerary Establishments*, I, 340–99, 568 ff.; II, 619–27.

21 Conard and Lehner, "The 1988/1989 Excavation," 47; as suggested in Hawass, *Funerary Establishments*, I, 367 ff. and 391 ff.

The most likely possibilities for the king represented in statuette no. 1 are Sneferu, Khufu, Khafre and Menkaure—the Giza kings and their ancestor. It is unlikely to be Djedefre, as his cult site was at Abu Rawash. Although it is very hard to draw a firm conclusion, because of the small size and damaged condition of the statuette, it is useful to look at images of these other kings. It could not be a king from Dynasty 5 and 6, because there were no cults for these kings at Giza.

The only image of Sneferu that could possibly be compared with statuette no. 1 shows the king standing, wearing the crown of Upper Egypt and the *shendyt*.<sup>22</sup> Unfortunately, the face of this statue is badly damaged and cannot be used for comparison of the physiognomy of statuette no. 1.

The small ivory figure of Khufu found in the temple of Khentiamtiu at Abydos is still the only inscribed image of this king known.<sup>23</sup> Although there is some evidence that this object dates to the Twenty-sixth Dynasty rather than the Old Kingdom,<sup>24</sup> there are some similarities between this and statuette no. 1. Both have a broad face and a snub nose. More importantly, both are very small, clearly votive in nature. If the Khufu statuette is indeed Old Kingdom, this strengthens the identification of statuette no. 1 as a votive object.

In terms of the face, perhaps the best comparison is to Khafre. We can see, for example, in the famous seated statue of Khafre (CG 15) similar broad, horizontal cosmetic lines, eyebrows that start at the root of the nose, and the ends of the eyebrows at the same level as the end of the cosmetic lines.<sup>25</sup> The Great Sphinx at Giza, believed by most to be an image of Khafre, also has the same shape of eyebrows and cosmetic lines.

According to the iconography of statuette no. 1, it was probably made during the time of king Khafre,<sup>26</sup> although some of the facial features, especially the shape of the eyes, cosmetic lines and eyebrows also appear in Dynasty 5.<sup>27</sup> It is therefore possible that the artist lived in Dynasty 5, using the style of his time to depict a king of Dynasty 4.

Lehner has suggested that statuette no. 3 was made as a model for a large-scale statue that was meant to stand in the courtyard of the mortuary temple of Khafre. This argument is supported by the fact that the back pillar and overhang are painted to resemble granite, which was used to line the temple. Hölscher believes that these statues were Osiris figures,<sup>28</sup> while Ricke thinks they were seated.<sup>29</sup> If Lehner is correct, it would give us new

22 R. Stadelmann, "Eine Statue des Snofru aus dem Taltempel der Knickpyramide in Dahschur," in *Egyptian Museum Collections around the World*, II, (Cairo, 2002), 1133–39.

23 M. Saleh and H. Sourouzian, *Offizieller Katalog, Die Hauptwerke im Aegyptischen Museum Kairo*. (Mainz 1986), no. 28.

24 Z. Hawass, "The Khufu Statuette: Is it an Old Kingdom Sculpture?," in *Mélanges Gamal Eddiin Mokhtar* (1985), I, 379–394.

25 Saleh and Sourouzian, *Offizieller Katalog*, no. 31.

26 Do. Arnold, ed. *Egyptian Art in the Age of the Pyramids*, (New York, 1999), figs. 59, 61 and 63.

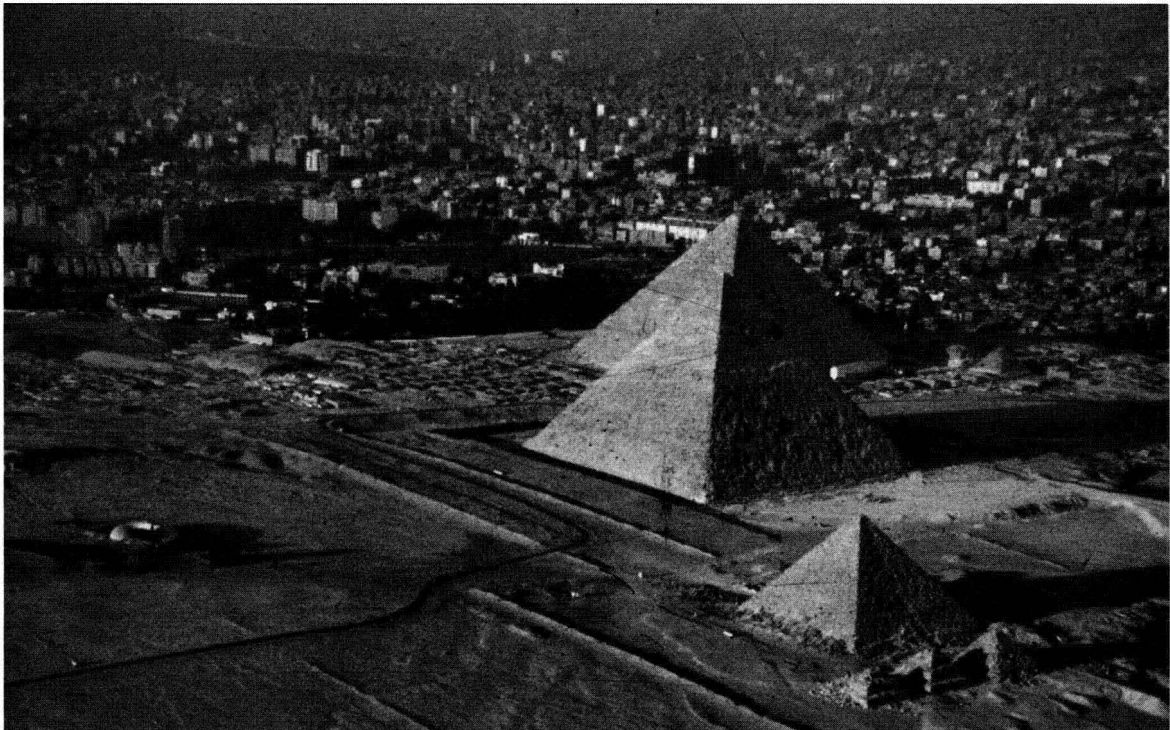
27 Head of King Userkaf: Saleh and Sourouzian, *Offizieller Katalog*, no. 35; bust of Neferefre: M. Verner, *Abusir: Realm of Osiris* (Cairo, 2002), 126.

28 Hölscher, *Das Grabdenkmal des Königs Chephren*, 26–53.

29 H. Ricke, *Bemerkungen zur ägyptischen Baukunst des Alten Reichs* (BABO 4–5; Cairo 1950), II, 50 fig. 18.

information about the statuary program in Khafre's temple, suggesting that some of the statues of the upper temple wore the white crown, and probably that others wore the red crown. However, no other sculptor's models are known from the Old Kingdom. There are no indications of statuettes having been used as practical models by the sculptors. It was only in later times that practical models were used to train students of sculpture.

In conclusion, it is most likely that statuette 1, the only of the three that can be used for dating, was made during the reign of Khafre, or in the later Old Kingdom as a representation of this king. It is likely that at least statuette no. 1 and statuette no. 3 were produced in the workshops in which they were found, to be used for the maintenance of a king's cult, probably that of Khafre. The purpose of the larger piece, statue no. 2, remains unclear.

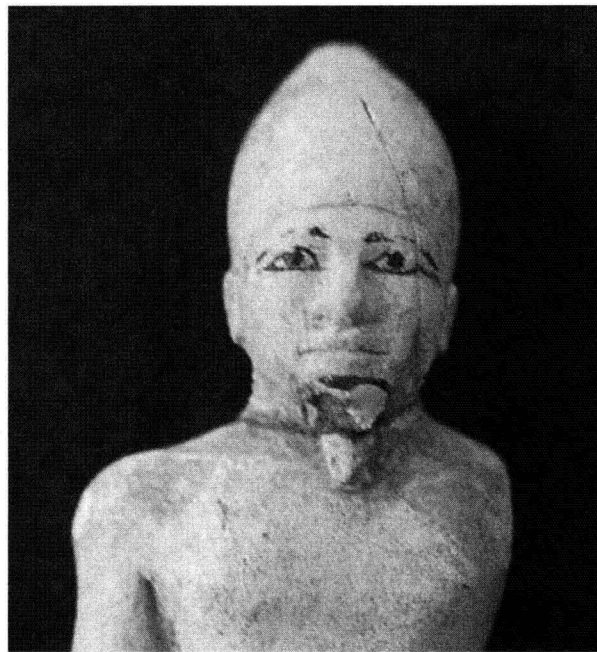


Pl. 1. View of the pyramids at Giza and the "Workmen's Barracks" west of Khafre's Pyramid, from the southwest (Photo: Kenneth Garrett)

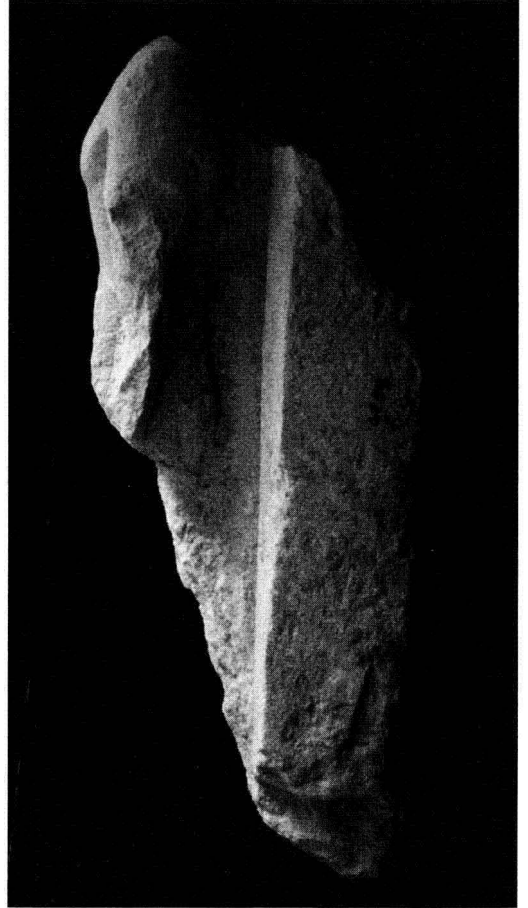


Pl. 2. View of the "Workmen's Barracks," looking from the east (Photo: Archives of Zahi Hawass)





Pls. 3–5. Giza 116, front, right, and close-up showing facial features  
(Photo: Mohammed Megahed)



Pls. 6–8. Giza 115, front, three-quarters left, and left side (Photo: Mohammed Megahed)



Pl. 9. Giza 157, right side (Photo: Archives of Zahi Hawass)