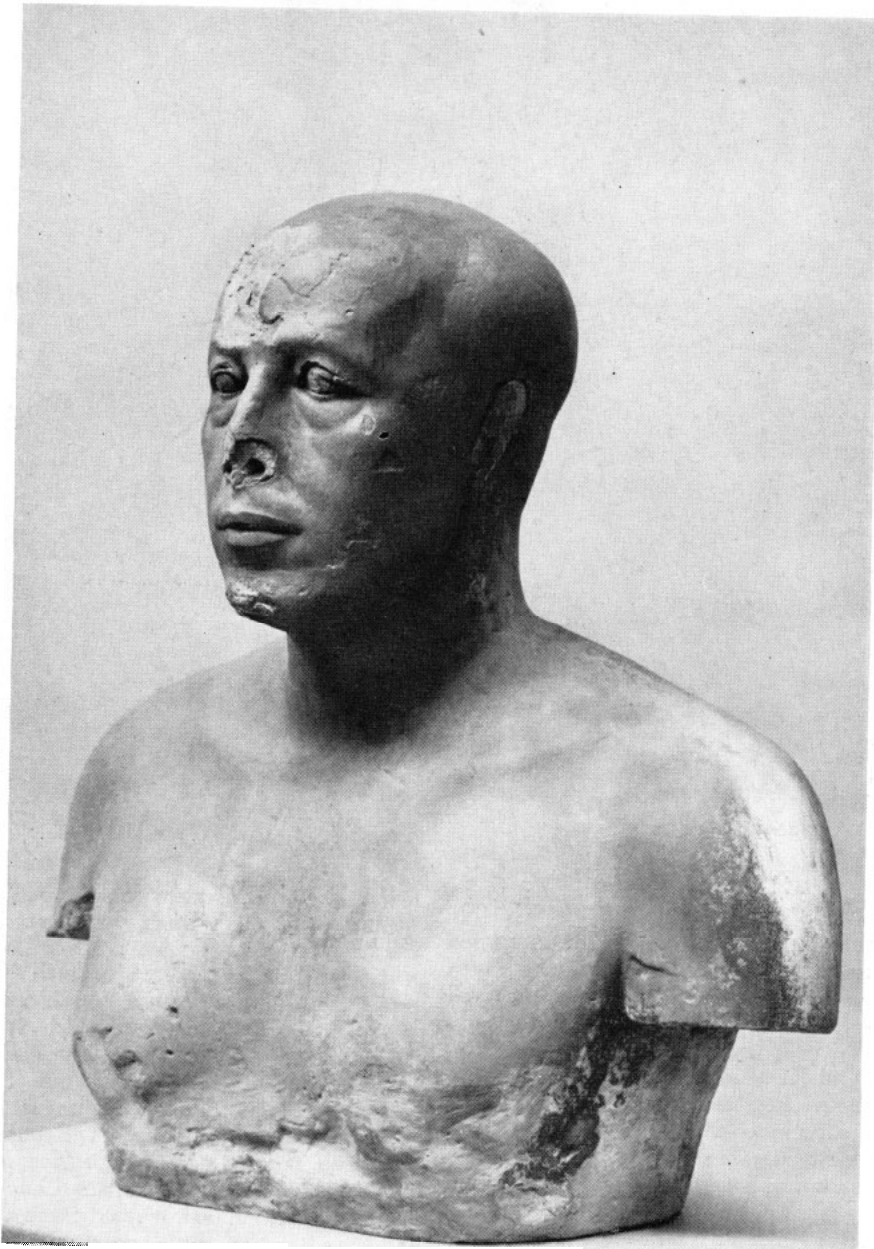


BULLETIN OF THE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS

VOLUME XXXVII

BOSTON, JUNE, 1939

NUMBER 221



Prince Ankh-haf

Egyptian, Fourth Dynasty

Harvard University-Museum of Fine Arts Egyptian Expedition

PUBLISHED BIMONTHLY

SUBSCRIPTION ONE DOLLAR



Prince Ankh-haf

Painted limestone bust from Giza

Egyptian, Fourth Dynasty

The Portrait Bust of Prince Ankh-haf

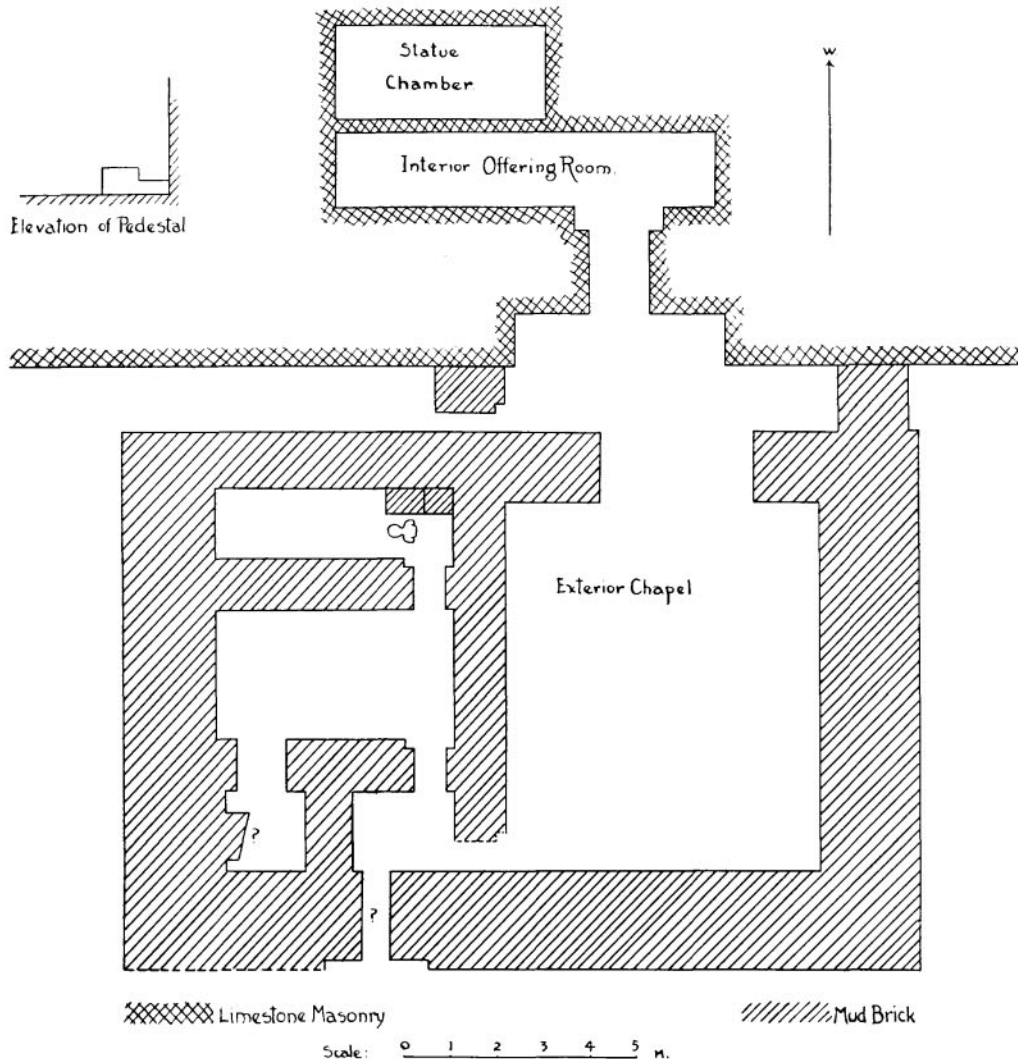
ON the cover of this issue of the BULLETIN the Museum illustrates a fine portrait bust with which frequenters of the Egyptian Galleries will already be familiar.¹ The bust of Ankh-haf ranks as one of the important documents for the study of art in the Old Kingdom, and as such will be published in the Expedition's special book on sculpture, relief, and painting which is to appear shortly.² It has been felt that readers of the BULLETIN would appreciate advance notice of the publication of this outstanding piece of Egyptian portraiture.

The bust of Ankh-haf was found by the Harvard University-Museum of Fine Arts Egyptian Expedi-

tion in the Eastern Cemetery at Giza on February 8, 1925, lying in the débris of the exterior mud-brick chapel of the great mastaba G 7510. In spite of mutilations it is a masterpiece of sculpture. The piece was assigned to the Expedition in a division completed on April 8, 1927, in which the Director General of the Department of Antiquities took for the Cairo Museum the entire contents of the secret tomb of Queen Hetep-heres I, the mother of Cheops.³ The unique household furniture from that tomb, restored by our Expedition, is now deposited in a special room in the Cairo Museum, and consists of the bed, the bed canopy, the carrying chair, the arm chair, and the jewel box containing the queen's inlaid silver armlets. In addition

¹No. 27.442. White limestone and plaster, painted. Height 50.6 cm.
²William Stevenson Smith, *A History of Egyptian Sculpture and Painting in the Old Kingdom*, now being printed by the Oxford University Press. The head will also figure in the definitive publication of the excavations at Giza in the volumes now in preparation by Professor George A. Reisner, *The History of the Giza Necropolis* and *The Giza Mastabas*.

³See the preliminary reports on the tomb of Hetep-heres in the *Bulletin*, Vol. XXV, Special Supplement, May, 1927, "Hetep-heres, Mother of Cheops"; XXVI, No. 157, "The Empty Sarcophagus of the Mother of Cheops"; XXVII, No. 164, "Household Furniture of Queen Hetep-heres I"; XXX, No. 180, "The Bed-Canopy of the Mother of Cheops."



Plan of chapel showing finding-place of the bust

to these pieces of furniture, all cased in gold, the deposit in Cairo includes many other objects used by the queen. The bust of Ankh-haf, beautiful in spite of its damaged details, came to the Expedition and to the Museum in recognition of the brilliant and laborious reconstruction by Dr. Reisner and his staff of the only household furniture of the Pyramid Age ever recovered by excavators.

That Ankh-haf was an important person closely associated with the royal family of the Fourth Dynasty is attested by the fact that his is the largest single mastaba in the Eastern or Royal Cemetery, the major tombs of which belonged to sons and daughters of Cheops and their immediate relatives. Any statement as to his exact relationship to that family must, however, await the definitive publication of his tomb. Here it will suffice to record that he bore the titles of "Prince" and "Eldest Son of the King's Body," but whether this king was Cheops, as seems probable, or another, is not stated. His

wife was named Hetep-heres, and the natural assumption would be that she was Hetep-heres II, daughter of Cheops. The name, however, was too common among women of the period to justify the definite conclusion that he was the son-in-law of that king.

The bust was found lying on its back in the westernmost of a series of rooms in the exterior chapel of the tomb. It lay immediately in front of a white plastered mud-brick pedestal on which it had probably stood facing east. This pedestal was 82 centimetres in length by 55 in height and width, and on its northern end had a low extension of the same width reaching the north wall of the room. Under the bust were found ninety-four plaster models, including models of food offerings, and in the floor débris of the same room were other models and pottery, one piece being the lower part of a bowl stand. Dr. Reisner has reconstructed the probable original arrangement as follows: the bust



Prince Ankh-haf, right profile

Painted limestone bust from Giza

Egyptian, Fourth Dynasty

stood on the pedestal facing out into the room, the plaster models were placed on the low offering bench north of it, and one or two bowl stands carrying bowls stood on the floor before the bust. This grouping of bust and objects constituted an unusual offering place in the western room of the exterior

chapel. The bust was never part of a statue, for its base was finished off flat and the under surfaces of the arms were covered with red color. It does not appear possible that it is a fragment originating in the statue chamber west of the interior offering room, but seems clearly to have been made as a



Prince Ankh-haf, left profile

Painted limestone bust from Giza

Egyptian, Fourth Dynasty

bust and used in the room in which it was found. From a technical point of view the bust of Ankh-haf is of considerable interest. It is made of the white limestone which was so generally used for

sculpture at Giza, but differs from other figures hitherto found in being covered with a coating of gypsum plaster.¹ The delicate modelling has been

¹Calcium sulphate with some calcium carbonate and quartz-sand as impurities.



Prince Ankh-haf

Egyptian, Fourth Dynasty

Painted limestone bust from Giza

executed in this plaster layer, which varies in thickness from a mere film to several millimetres. Finally, the entire bust was covered with a coating of red color of the tone normally used to represent the flesh of men. The man is without a wig, but the outlines of the hair are clearly indicated and show that he had a tendency to baldness. This area also is colored red, contrary to normal practice, but whether because the usual overpainting of black was never added, or for some less obvious reason, is not clear. The eyes were originally white with dark pupils, but their colors have now faded so as to be only faintly visible.

The preservation of the bust is not perfect. Its most obvious blemish is a large abrasion on the forehead where the head must have suffered anciently from a blow. The end of the nose is missing, as are also both ears. The latter were separately made and were not recovered when the head was found.

The point of the chin has also been somewhat damaged, but shows clear indications that the head originally had a beard, probably of the very short type frequently shown in relief representations of men of high rank.

Ankh-haf lived during the reign of Cheops, but the date of his death is not known, and there is, therefore, no way of telling the exact date of the bust. We can only say with certainty that it must have been made during the first half of the Fourth Dynasty. As an example of realistic portraiture this monument takes rank among the finest examples which have survived from the ancient world. In a degree but rarely approached it enables us not only to see the features, but to gain an idea of the personality and character of a man who, something like five thousand years ago, held high rank in the government of what was then the most civilized country on earth.

DOWS DUNHAM.