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Black Cat in a Chair

M. and M. Karolik Collection

Wittkamp

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SUBSCRIPTION ONE DOLLAR

feet are crossed and a spike is driven through, and from this wound flows blood which is caught in a chalice by a kneeling angel in a red robe with yellow hair. A wing shows over and behind the head. Opposite and facing the angel is the kneeling figure of Mary Magdalen who has her arms around the foot of the cross. The print is damaged here and all that can be seen of the Magdalen's embrace are her fingers on the far side of the cross in front of the angel's face. The lovely profile of the Magdalen is silhouetted against the reddish-brown centre of the halo. Her long yellow hair falls over the blue metallic neckband of an undergarment and under a bluish tinted outer robe. The figure, smaller than the three central figures, is about the same size as the angels.

On Christ's right is the bowed, sorrowing figure of the Virgin Mother looking down, with her hands clasped in front. This figure is painted with broad strokes of light blue color entirely covering the printed lines. The face, like the others, is a light flesh tone; the lines of the face are the printed lines of the woodcut. The halo has a lavender centre, an outer band of blue metallic color, and a sixteenth of an inch circular brown line printed just inside the band.

The remaining figure is the Apostle John standing with raised right hand in a beatific expression of compassion for the sorrowing Mother. St. John's left hand is at his waist gathering up his robe. The robe is a faded deep purple with a pale blue undergarment which hangs in beautiful folds in the lower front. The hair is dark brown. This figure, like all others, is badly damaged, particularly around the face and head. St. John's halo has a lavender centre with a quarter-inch border of blue metallic pigment covering a simple patterned design. The bottom of the picture for about seven inches up, around and about the figures, was at one time green, representing grass. This is known because a small segment of the original green under the moulding has survived the ravages of the silverfish.

The dirt, insect pests, bacteria, atmospheric conditions, sulfate stain from the wooden back, all have contributed to the oxidation and changing of some of the colors as well as to the general decay of the paper on which the woodcut was printed and of the wooden back to which the print was mounted. It is hoped that the restoration and treatment with plastic will prevent more of the decay and discoloration which in the past resulted in a brittle and darkened picture that could scarcely be handled or read.

"Christ on the Cross" has great charm in its present state, and a beautiful design with the powerfully modelled, tragic figure of the Savior in a setting of balanced angels and accompanying figures. One might suspect from its stature in design and in size that this woodcut was the creation of a master painter-draughtsman. In its original condition with the true colors — the

green grass, individually colored flowers, the brilliance of the robes, and the mellow tones of the flesh and the background — it must have been a magnificent print.

FRANCIS W. DOLLOFF

The Signs of Age

EGYPT is a land of many wonders, and one of the curious, almost anachronistic, features of her history is that the millennium of decline which sets in with the end of Dynasty XX (ca. 1085 B. C.) poses more problems to the archaeologist than any previous period. One might think that these comparatively recent times, when contact with other countries increased, would be better known since, in addition to native sources, the testimony of neighboring nations should provide sufficient material on which to base an outline of archaeological developments. But just the opposite is the case. The fluctuations of the political scene,¹ invasions from the south and northeast, recovery of national independence at various intervals, and a gradual change of religious beliefs result in a heterogeneous picture, and consequently the art history of this period is rather involved. While it is feasible in most cases to assign a relief or a piece of sculpture of earlier ages to a definite dynasty or, within a dynasty, to the reign of a particular king, this is possible far less frequently with regard to works of art produced during the Late Period.² Not that the physical evidence is lacking; on the contrary, there is ample material to work with. But how to fit it into the framework provided by a relatively small number of well dated monuments poses a series of problems most of which have yet to be solved.³

Due to the lack of an all-pervading central power whose royal studios set a style more or less valid for the whole country, the work of Late Egyptian artists was subjected to several conflicting trends, and it can be noted that, at one and the same time, different currents were dominant in Late Egyptian art. First, there was always the traditional line, continuing the old forms, which became more and more lifeless and, in Roman times, resulted in a style which from our point of view offers almost a caricature of things Egyptian. Beside it, a strongly archaizing tendency can be observed which, time and again, produces works based on monuments of the Old, Middle, and New Kingdoms. And thirdly we find in Late Egyptian art, beginning with Dy-

¹For a short survey of Late Egyptian history, see W. S. Smith, in *Ancient Egypt as Represented in the Museum of Fine Arts*, second edition (Boston, 1946), pp. 133-144, and in *Bulletin M.F.A.*, vol. XLVII, no. 268, June 1949, pp. 21-25.

²Labels such as "Late Period" (comprising roughly 1000 years), "Saite-Ptolemaic" (ca. 663-30 B. C.) and "Graeco-Roman" (ca. fourth century B. C. to second century A. D.) are still affixed to many sculptures in Egyptian collections.

³Such a framework of dated sculptures can be culled, at least in part, from K. Bosse, *Die menschliche Figur in der Rundplastik der ägyptischen Spätzeit von der XXII. bis zur XXX. Dynastie* (Glückstadt — Hamburg — New York, 1936) = *Ägyptologische Forschungen*, Heft 1; a publication which unfortunately includes much undated sculpture made after Dynasty XXX and leaves out the dated material of the Ptolemaic Period.



Fig. 1. Portrait Head, black granite
Martha A. Willcomb Fund Third century B. C.

nasty XXV, the true signs of a new period, the break with tradition, the invention of new forms, the frequent expression of individualistic features, and the use of stylistic means which had been first developed in foreign countries. Here we see Late Egyptian art at its best, when it reaches beyond the limits of a time-bound heritage and creates a style of its own; a "late" achievement, to be sure, but certainly not one that should be labeled a sign of "decadence." Since the artistic documents of this group are the expression of a more independent outlook, of a cosmopolitan viewpoint, they bear hardly any reference to contemporary historic events and are frequently without inscriptions. To place them properly within the range of Egypt's last centuries presents great difficulty, and yet their place has to be found in order to understand better the nature of a declining civilization.

The head illustrated in Figs. 1-6 is, despite its somewhat battered state, a fine example of the qualities inherent in the new trend of Late Egyptian sculpture.¹ It is made of fine-grained black granite containing small specks of quartz or feldspar. The entire surface has suffered

much damage; the nose and ears are partly broken off. The head belonged originally to a statuette, probably a standing figure. The upper part of the unincised back pillar is preserved. There is no indication of the hair on the well-modeled cranium which is composed of many planes. Its prominent features are the height of the forehead which becomes narrower in its rise, thus forming a depression at each temple, and the bulging width of the crown of the head where a flat spot marks the occipital lambda in close observation of anatomical detail. The ears are placed nearly vertically, with long earlobes descending toward the angle of the jaw. A shallow groove over each eye on the forehead seems to indicate heavy eyebrows. The head is narrow at the temples, and therefore the corners of the eyes, not the bone, mark the greatest width of the face at this point. The eyelids are drooping and partly cover the laterally curved eyeballs at the outside where the fold is drawn over the lower lid. The area below the eye is set off against the surface of the cheek. A deep groove runs down from each nostril, ending at the level of the firmly closed mouth.

The philtrum¹ is not shown, and it seems that the upper lip had been very thin. The energy ex-

¹Acc. No. 50.3427; Martha A. Willcomb Fund. Height 10.4 cm., width 7 cm., depth 10 cm.; provenance not known.

²The depression on the upper lip.

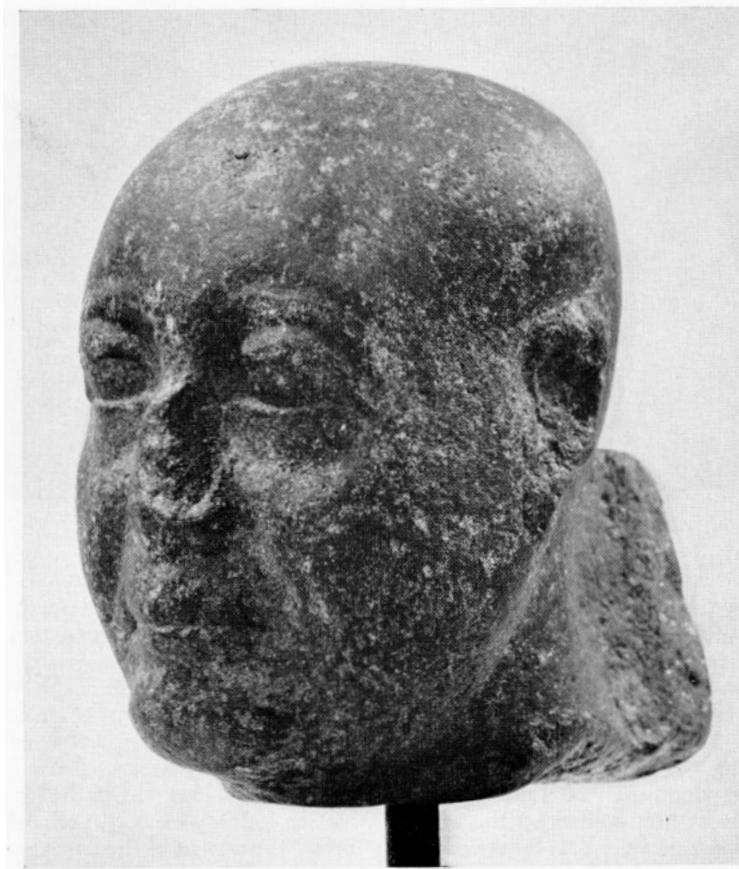


Fig. 2. Portrait Head, actual size
Martha A. Willcomb Fund
Third century, B. C.

pressed in the mouth is underlined by the marked depression which separates the chin from the cheeks and from the lower lip. Along both jawbones and especially on the skin between chin and neck numerous small chisel marks dot the surface. Under strong magnification it becomes apparent that they had been applied *after* the stone was polished, and one is inclined to believe that an attempt had been made to indicate the stubble of a strong beard.¹ If this was the case (and the present state of the head does not permit a more definite statement) we have here a technique nowhere else observed on Late Egyptian sculptures.

The general impression gained in the study of the head is that a man past middle age is represented; a person with a grave mien, serious, serene, in short *σεμνός*. One cannot help feeling that the head was modeled from life, that it is a true likeness, a portrait in the modern sense of the word. This impression is enhanced by the realism expressed in the features by very simple summary means. There is a mood embodied in the face, and this accounts for the fact that it appears so life-like and real and truly human despite its grave expression, and that it does not seem re-

mote or aloof as Egyptian sculptures often do. Intelligence and humility are both perceptible in the head, and this characterizes the breakdown of the barrier formed by tradition; and that it was at all possible to overcome this barrier is due to the spiritual affinity linking Late Egypt with the Mediterranean world and thus with Western conceptions.

This head shows the signs of age and belongs to a group of similar sculptures, all worked in hard stone, of which the so-called "Green Head" of the Berlin Museum has long been acclaimed the outstanding example.¹ They all represent gravefaced, baldheaded men; most of them bear no inscriptions on the back pillar, and in only two instances has the whole statue been preserved.² Since Gaston Maspero published his fundamental study *L'Archéologie égyptienne* (Paris, 1887) there has been much discussion as to the period to which these heads should be assigned since the absence of inscriptions and the lack of a conspicuous

¹A recent discussion and extensive bibliography of most of these heads is found in Heinrich Drerup, *Ägyptische Bildnisköpfe, griechischer und römischer Zeit* (Münster in Westfalen, 1950) = *Orbis Antiquus*, Heft 3; cf. also Bosse, *l.c.*, nos. 203-210.

²Statue of Sema-tawy; from the Cowper Collection (*Ancient Egypt*, 1917, pp. 146-148, with 3 pls.; Bosse, *l.c.*, no. 102).

Uninscribed statue, Berlin Inv. Nr. 10972 (Fr. W. von Bissing, *Denkmäler ägyptischer Sculptur*, 108 b; H. Schäfer and W. Andrae, *Die Kunst des alten Orients*, third edition, 445.1).

¹Chr. Desroches-Noblecourt, in *Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale* 45 (1947), pp. 185-211.



Fig. 3. Portrait Head Third century B. C.

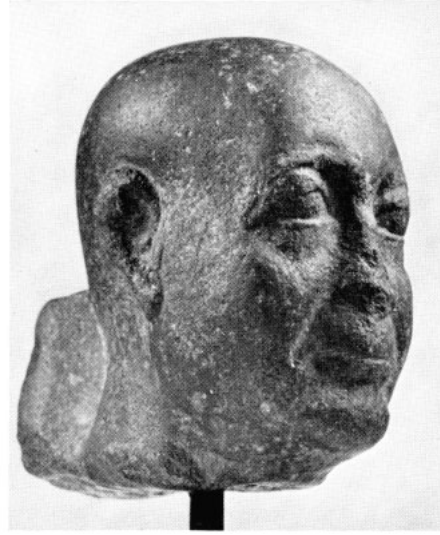


Fig. 4. Portrait Head Third century B. C.

headdress deprive the student of important clues by which the date of an Egyptian sculpture can be established. Indeed the main piece of the group, the Berlin "Green Head," has been attributed to every century from the Saites to the Ptolemies.

In undertaking the study of what might be termed the "development" of Late Egyptian sculpture, one is at first baffled by the diverse tendencies outlined above. Yet, by strictly observing the sequence of definitely dated pieces, a general picture, be it ever so vague for the present, can be obtained, and this will help to determine the period to which the age-lined heads must be assigned. During Dynasties XXI-XXIV the tradition of the New Kingdom was followed and no new forms were developed. This trend changed rapidly with the conquest of Egypt by the rulers of Dynasty XXV (751-656 B. C.) whose origin was in Kush, the lands to the south of Egypt. The presence of these foreigners, who assumed Egyptian customs without being able to conceal their barbarian descent, deeply influenced Egyptian sculpture for nearly one hundred years, and in the statues of their stewards we find the first of the new trends which beset the waning life of Egyptian art before its final exhaustion. Heads such as those of the Mentuemhat family,¹ of the Nubians Irigadigan² and Harwa,³ of Meren-Ptah⁴ and Petamenophis⁵ and the unnamed courtier in the Boston Museum⁶ are char-

¹Bosse, *l.c.*, p. 100.

²*id. ibid.* no. 2; Scharff, in *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache* 75 (1939), p. 95. For the element \bar{n} in royal names of Dynasty XXV, see D. Dunham and M. F. L. Macadam, in *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 35 (1949), pp. 139-149, nos. 19, 37, 48, and 56.

³Bosse, *l.c.*, p. 100; *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache* 73 (1937), p. 28, note 2; *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 7 (1948), p. 165.

⁴Bosse, *l.c.*, no. 69; Anderson Photo no. 10789.

⁵Bosse, *l.c.*, no. 58 A; R. Anthes, in *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache* 73 (1937), pp. 25-35.

⁶M. F. A. 37.377; D. Dunham, in *Bulletin M. F. A.*, vol. XXXV, no. 211, October 1937, pp. 70 and 72. Cf. the head in Munich (no. 1622); A. Scharff, in *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache* 75 (1939), pp. 93-100.

acteristic for their lined faces full of brutal strength and bitter determination, foreshadowing the events in which Assyrians drove Kushites from the hallowed banks of the Nile. These portraits are the forerunners of the heads with which we are concerned here, but hardly any trace of them is left in the art of the Saites (Dynasty XXVI, 663-525 B. C.), of the First Persian Domination (525-404 B. C.), and of the last decades before the advent of the Greek gods.

Although age-lined faces had been represented intermittently in Egyptian art,¹ it was not until Dynasty XXV that they set the style of an entire period. This may have been due to the lack of tradition among the Kushite conquerors and to the effect their presence had upon the religious life of the conquered nation. A complete reversal took place under Dynasty XXVI, a violent reaction which manifested itself, among other things, in the erasure of the royal names of Dynasty XXV.² The style of sculpture differs greatly from that of the previous period; the prevailing tendency is archaizing, and the heads have invariably pleasing, rather full features, often accentuated by a smile, in which the experience of a lifetime finds no reflection.³ Indeed, there is not a single dated sculpture of Dynasty XXVI known which shows the lines of age, or any signs of age for that matter, and the same holds true for the succeeding period down to the accession of the Ptolemies. Yet, the "green heads" and related portraits have frequently been dated to pre-Ptolemaic times on secondary evidence which is entirely unconvincing. Reliefs and sculptures of

¹*Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 10 (1951), p. 66.

²J. Yoyotte and S. Sauneron, in *Bulletin de la Société Française d'Égyptologie* no. 2, October 1949, pp. 45-49.

³The most striking picture of this reversal is presented in two of the eight known statues of Petamenophis who lived at the end of Dynasty XXV and the beginning of Dynasty XXVI. Berlin Inv. Nr. 23728 is one of the best examples of the sculpture of the Kushite period, while Cairo J. d'É. no. 37341 is typical of the Saite style; cf. the references in the left column, note 5.



Fig. 5. Portrait Head Third century B. C.

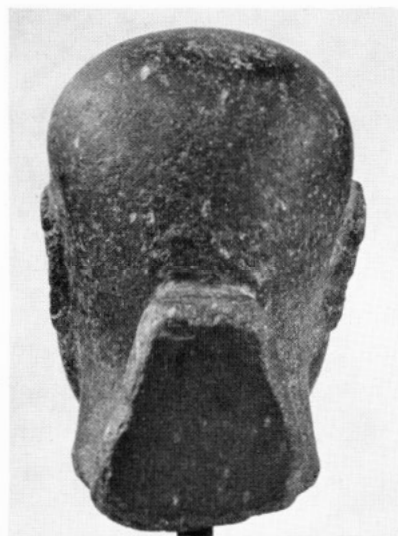


Fig. 6. Portrait Head Third century B. C.

Dynasty XXX testify to the archaizing and traditional trends which persisted continuously since Saite times, and only by a *tour de force* could any outstanding portrait be assigned to a period which singularly lacked the basis for the development of strong individuals and inventive artists.

With the defeat of the Persians by Alexander the Great and the establishment of Ptolemaic rule, a new era set in, an era of peace and free exchange of ideas among the nations bordering on the Mediterranean from which Egypt benefited greatly. The new kings were essentially foreigners and remained so until the very end of their rule. Yet, Greeks and Egyptians seem to have followed their pursuits side by side, and the mixture of Greek and Egyptian styles in the tomb of Petosiris in Upper Egypt¹ is just as much typical of the period as purely Greek work created on Egyptian soil, and traditional Egyptian statues not the least influenced by the liveliness of contemporary Hellenistic sculpture.²

On the other hand a latent influence can be detected, and that is best exemplified by the group of heads to which belongs the portrait under discussion. As in the time of the foreign kings of Dynasty XXV, the Egyptians were again subjected to a ruling class whose beliefs were not offended by the representation of an aging face, and thus a mode of portraiture was developed which, in itself, set the Egyptian apart from the Greek. A few archaeologists and art historians with a wide range of connoisseurship have long recognized that these heads belong mainly to the Ptolemaic period, i.e., that they were created between the end of the fourth century B. C. and the

middle of the first century B. C., but the actual development of the type is still very much disputed. It has become clear, however, that several of these portraits are definitely related to Roman heads of late Republican and early Imperial times, and thus a "later" group can be segregated.¹ But how much earlier the remaining heads are and at what time in the beginning of the Ptolemaic reign the type was established, has not yet been clearly defined. Also, there seems to have existed no definite standard of quality, and excellent works of art appear to follow remarkably poor portraits, and vice versa.²

The Boston head shows a number of distinctive features which separate it from the later group of age-lined portraits. The modeling follows faithfully the structure of bone and flesh, but does not reproduce the skin as such; no wrinkles and crow's-feet modify the surface. Also, the philtrum is not indicated, and these subordinate details are of importance since they betray the convention of a limited period. The lack of the philtrum is very rare in Ptolemaic times. It is found in the head of Ptolemy II (ca. 285-247 B. C.) in Strasbourg³ and in the basalt portrait of an old man in the Allard Pierson Museum of Amsterdam.⁴ In the absence of skin wrinkles our sculp-

¹To give just one example: The "Green Head" Berlin Inv. Nr. 12500, of highly polished hard stone, cannot be removed more than one generation from the bust of Julius Caesar (Berlin, R 9), made of the same highly polished stone, and in many details of the modeling surprisingly like it. This interrelation of Late Egyptian and Roman heads has recently been pointed out by B. Schweitzer, in *Die Bildniskunst der römischen Republik* (Leipzig and Weimar, 1948), and by Drerup, *op. cit.*, who, however, dates the Berlin "Green Head" to the early Ptolemaic Period without taking into consideration that it forms the result of a long development rather than the beginning.

²One of the last Egyptian statues, the striding figure of Horsihor in the Cairo Museum (Cairo 697; Borchardt, *Statuen* III, pp. 39-40; Encyclopédie Photographique de l'Art, *Le Musée du Caire*, pls. 217-218), is actually one of the best sculptures of the "Roman" type.

³W. Spiegelberg, *Ausgewählte Kunst-Denkmäler der ägyptischen Sammlung* (Strasbourg, 1909), no. 17, pl. X, figs. 5-7.

⁴Allard Pierson Stichting, Universiteit van Amsterdam, *Archeologisch-historische Bijdragen* 11 (1942); C. S. Ponger, *Katalog der griechischen und römischen Skulptur*, no. 79, pl. XVII, and pp. 38-39 where it is dated to the third century B. C.

¹The construction and decoration of the chapels of this tomb were done over a number of years. Petosiris died probably about 310 B. C.; see *Annales du Service des Antiquités de l'Égypte* 39 (1939), pp. 739-743.

²It has generally been overlooked how strongly the traditional style of sculpture persisted under the Ptolemies; cf. the life-size statue of Pikaas in the Cairo Museum which is made of black schist and dated, by its inscriptions, to the reign of Ptolemy XIII (47-44 B. C.); see P. Montet, in *Kami* 8 (1946), pp. 69-70 and 105-112, pls. XXI-XXV.



Fig. 7. Green Schist Head Fourth century B. C.
Cairo Museum

ture is closely related to four heads, the earliest of which was probably made in the second half of the fourth century B. C. (Fig. 7),¹ while the other three² may be contemporary with the Boston portrait and are remarkably similar in the modeling of the skull. The fine portrait in the Gulben-

¹Cairo 718; see L. Borchardt, *Statuen* III, p. 56, and Fr. Chamoux, in *Revue archéologique* 26 (1946), pp. 144-146. Cf. also the head of Cairo 700 (Borchardt, *l.c.*, pp. 41-43), according to P. Montet, in *Kémi* 7 (1938), pp. 141-151 and pp. 158-159 to be dated to the second Persian domination, which however, from an archaeological viewpoint, appears to be too early.

²The Detroit Institute of Arts, Acc. No. 40.47, black granite, height 19.7 cm.; this head shows the same grooves over the eyebrows as the Boston portrait.

The Detroit Institute of Arts, Acc. No. 40.48, black basalt, height 8.9 cm.

Gulbenkian Collection, on loan at the National Gallery of Art; *Posse, l.c.*, no. 205; G. Maspero, *L'Archéologie égyptienne* p. 228, fig. 201; *Illustrated London News*, Dec. 5, 1936, p. 1011, fig. 8; Temporary Exhibition, *Ancient Egyptian Sculpture Lent by C. S. Gulbenkian, Esq.* (London: The British Museum, 1937), p. 2, pls. V-VI; National Gallery of Art, *Egyptian Sculpture from the Gulbenkian Collection* (Washington, 1949), no. 19, pp. 27 and 61, where it has been dated to the Saite Period.

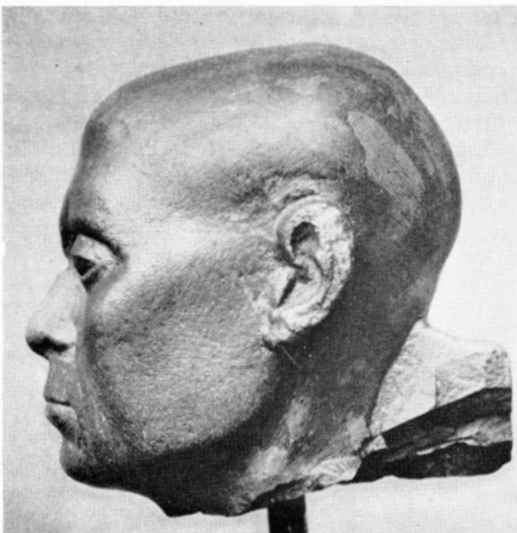


Fig. 8. Green Schist Head in the Gulbenkian Collection.

kian collection (Fig. 8)¹ is especially noteworthy in this connection as it shows the same treatment of the heavy-lidded eyes.

Assuming that the fashion of realistic portraiture could not have begun in Egypt before the time of Alexander, we may safely date the Boston head to the third century B. C.² With its closest companions, the heads in Detroit and in Washington, it represents the purest "Egyptian" style in a world of changing values and conceptions. The later group of the "green heads" with the emphasis on detail in the treatment of the skin belongs to the same period as the series of Late Hellenistic and Roman Republican portraits which show comparable emphasis of the surface. They begin after the middle of the second century B. C.,³ and it is only then that a direct influence of Greek workmanship can be found in Late Egyptian sculpture.⁴

BERNARD V. BOTHMER

¹After the British Museum exhibition catalogue, pl. VI.

²John D. Cooney agrees.

³Cf. E. Buschor, *Das hellenistische Bildnis* (Muenchen, 1949); Schweitzer, *op. cit.*

⁴That the Roman portraits were made by Greek artists has recently been shown by Miss Richter, in *Proc. Am. Philos. Soc.* 95 (1951), pp. 184-191.

Catalogue of the M. and M. Karolik Collection of American Paintings 1815-1865

THE COLLECTION described in this volume offers visual proof of the vigor and excellence of American painting during the hitherto disregarded half century between the work of Copley and Stuart and the achievements of Homer, Eakins, and Ryder. The Catalogue is therefore an important new chapter in the history of American painting and will become the basis of future investigations in the artistic activity of this unexpectedly rewarding period.

Pages: LX + 544; 233 collotype plates. Bound in cloth. Price, \$25.00; mailing charges additional. Orders should be addressed to The Sales Desk, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston 15, Massachusetts.

Austrian Art Exhibition

AN EXHIBITION of Art Treasures from the Vienna Collections, lent by the Austrian Government, will be held in the Museum from Wednesday, October 31 through Sunday, December 16. There will be a private view for Members of the Museum on the evening of Tuesday, October 30 from half past eight until half past ten o'clock.

The exhibition will occupy the Main Galleries in the Evans Wing, the Tapestry Gallery, and the Special Exhibition Galleries. There will be an admission fee of fifty cents; (students, twenty-five cents); any money received beyond that covering the expense of the exhibition will be given to the Austrian Government for the benefit of the Vienna Museum.