The Old Kingdom came to an end when a member of the house of Khety of Heracleopolis took over the Memphite throne under circumstances that are as yet unknown. The usual designation for the period to follow, the "First Intermediate Period," refers to a short phase of conflicts between the south and the north for dominance of the country. The new dynasty of the Herakleopolitans (Ninth/Tenth Dynasties) was only recognized from Lower Egypt to the area south of Assiut. Thebes was hostile from the outset. There the ruler of the city had overcome his opponents in the south. With the help of Nubian mercenaries and during the course of extended fighting, the Thebans succeeded in overpowering the Middle Egyptian blockade at Assiut. Under the leadership of Mentuhotep II (2046-1995 BC), the Thebans finally seized the Memphite throne as well, founding the Eleventh Dynasty. Mentuhotep was justified in calling himself "the usherer of the two lands." From a historical point of view, the reunification of the realm marks the beginning of the so-called Middle Kingdom.

The Position of the King in the Middle Kingdom

Since the Old Kingdom, belief in the absolute power of the king in a theological sense had been lost. The history of the following period is characterized by the antagonism between the king and powerful families who assert their influence in the provinces. With the help of literature and of theology, an attempt is made to strengthen the position of the king. The literary form of the "royal novel" serves as both justification and propaganda. The origin of the royal birth legend, declaring the king to be the son of god, dates from the Twelfth Dynasty. Just as in earlier periods, the true person of the pharaoh during the Middle Kingdom also remains largely a mystery. The hymn to the king portrays the ruler as the ideal of an omnipotent father figure, whose education included training in warfare and hunting. But any intimate details about impulsive acts, of intrigues, and even murder, which surely also occurred at court during the Middle Kingdom, have generally not survived. A spectacular exception is the assassination of Amenemhat I.

Foreign Policy during the Middle Kingdom

The pharaoh's interests at this period regarding the Syro-Palestinian area concentrated primarily on the maintenance of trade routes. The Herakleopolitan area already strengthened the royal military presence at Qantir at the eastern arm of the Delta. Here began an important
viscer Ammenemhet overlapped the last ruler of the Theban dynasty, Mentuhotep II, and seized the throne as the founder of a new dynasty, it also seems that not all governors simply went along with the new developments. Ammenemhet I was only able to assert himself through internal struggles. He departed from the policies of his predecessors and deliberately chose to follow the traditions of the north. Near El-Lisht, south of Cairo, he built his new residential city, It-tawy, "Conqueror of the Two Lands," and a monumental pyramid complex. As we can read in the "Teachings of Ammenemhet," which was commissioned by his son Sensores I and handed down for generations, Ammenemhet I was murdered in his sleep at the result of a harem conspiracy. This unprecedented event led to chaos within both the royal family and the administration. The first task for the new pharaoh was therefore to consolidate territorial control. Structures were reorganized, the territorial borders were drawn anew. Thus the independent governors gradually became governors of the king.

#### The Hyksos

Foreigners who had settled in Egypt were employed in great numbers in the military, in trade, and in craftsmanship already toward the end of the Eleventh Dynasty. At that time there was a second wave of migrations from southern Palestine and Syria as a result of violent upheavals there. From an archaological point of view, their presence in the area is proved by the singularity of their burial customs (donkey's graves) as well as through artifacts dating from this period, among them pottery from Cyprus. The latter indicates the presence of groups of foreign merchants pursuing long-distance Mediterranean trade. A local ruler, Nehesi, Egyptian for "the Nubian," was finally able to gain independence again and held a small fortress in the area the third cataract to counter the threat of the kingdom of Kema, which had prospered through trade with central Africa, and begun to expand from the Dongola Basin to both the south and the north.

#### Internal Developments in the Middle Kingdom

The victorious dynasty developed Thebes as its capital, just at the moment of the new unification of the realm under Mentuhotep II, however, the provincial rulers, the so-called nomarchs, gained strength, in order to judge from the archaological sources and the tomb inscriptions. This is a possible indication that Mentuhotep II had to show them his gratitude in exchange for being accepted as king in Memphis. When the

*Figures 2 and 3 appear on page 196.*

Memphite rulers had retreated. The Hyksos Semitic Egyptian double names were intended to correspond to both groups of peoples. Their dominance was supported by a chain of settlements of alien populations in the eastern Delta and as far as southern Palestine, who profited from the trade. Thus vessels and scroabs bearing the names of Hyksos rulers have been found throughout the Mediterranean region.

Middle and Upper Egypt were divided into various spheres of power. In Thebes, minor rulers who ascended and assumed the ruling title are known as the Seventeenth Dynasty. In Middle Egypt and in the towns of Gebelein, south of Thebes, the local rulers remained loyal to the Hyksos kings. Thebes began to arm itself in secret.

Thebes (c. 1780 BC) initiated conflict with the Hyksos vassals but was killed in battle. His son Kamose eventually perpetrated with his fleet as far as Aswan but was forced to turn back at the fortified walls of the cataract. It was only his brother and successor Ahmose, founder of the Eighteenth Dynasty, who about 1550 BC was able to expel the Hyksos rulers and reunite Egypt under the leadership of Thebes. This event is equated with the beginning of the New Kingdom.
The Tombs of the Pharaohs – Between Tradition and Innovation
Rainer Stadelmann

The long reign of Pepi II toward the end of the Sixth Dynasty turned out to be a "catostrophe" for Egypt. After the completion of his impressive pyramid complex dating from, at the latest, the first anniversary in the thirtieth year of his reign, nothing noteworthy happened for over thirty or even sixty years. Sculptors and painters were still partially engaged in working on private tombs, so in the artistic sphere the tradition of the royal cemeteries continued without interruption. The well-trained workmen, stonemasons, upholsterers, and engineers proceeded for decades without a state commission, thus the training of the next generation was also neglected and the organization forgotten. Projects for large pyramid complexes could therefore no longer be undertaken by the kings of the Heliopolitan era in the area around Memphis. The few, only nominally known tomb complexes were surely small and possibly never completed.

First steps toward the construction of a monumental king's tomb of a completely different form were evident at Thebes in Upper Egypt, where the renewed unification of the realm originated. The minor kings or rulers of the Eleventh Dynasty in that area were buried in cliffs- side tombs with large outer courts. The unifier of the kingdom, Mentuhotep II, gave this tomb type its monumental effect by choosing the wide valley of Deir el-Bahari opposite modern Luxor as a sort of court yard for his tomb. This took the form of a terraced temple, which was expanded several times during his long reign, and included not a burial pyramid, but more likely a stylised prismatic mound about 11 m high surrounded by an elevated portico with three rows of columns. Adjusting this to the west began the funerary temple proper, a large court with a portico, and a hypostyle hall with several naves including a sanctuary for the deceased king and the god Amun.

The tomb itself is sunk fully 150 m into the mountainside and contains a granite chamber with an elaborate shrine. During an early building phase, six shrines for princesses or priestesses of Hathor were constructed whose walls and coffins show scenes from the princesses' lives and of their function as priestesses with reliefs in the bold style of Upper Egypt. From the outer court a deep shaft leads under the bulk of the central structure where an empty coffin and the famous, black-painted, seated statue of Mentuhotep stood in a roughly hewn chamber. A long, wide ramp used for processions led from the flood-

plain to the outer court with its rows of scarred statues of the king under sycamores and tamarisks. At the southern and northern rims of the valley, the high officials of the late Eleventh Dynasty were permitted to build their sepulchres, splendid corridor tombs with courts sloping upward.

The kings of the Twelfth Dynasty left Thebes in order to establish the residence It-taw, "Conqueror of the Two Lands," in the north near modern Lisht. There they resumed the traditions of pyramidal tombs, although with substantial construction changes. During the late Old Kingdom, a more or less standard measurement for pyramids of approximately 65-75 m (≈125-150 ancient Egyptian cubits) base length to a height of approximately 35 m (≈100 cubits) had become customary. Experience had taught that with measurements a solid exterior facing would be able to hold even a hastily hewn inner wall structure for a long time, which doubtless facilitated construction and shortened building time.

This knowledge is presumed to have still existed when Amenemhat I built his pyramid at el-Lisht since his tomb exhibits both these
The sacred statue of Mentouhotep II was found—allegedly buried—in a "Osiris tomb" under the burial structure. The face and body were subsequently painted black, but the color of the god of the dead. Mentouhotep meant the white and funeral cloth, a very large area spread, and the Red Crown of Lower Egypt.

Among the numerous relief fragments recovered in the badly damaged funerary temple during excavation work in 1961–62 for the Egypt Exploration Fund, the New York example is an important piece due to its size and its exceptionally well-preserved painting. The block originally belonged to a representation on the northern exterior wall of the sanctuary. It shows the king in adoration before Amun-Re (this pyramid) while himself is being followed by the goddess Hathor (right). Mentouhotep II wears the White Crown of Upper Egypt, a broad collar, and a garment with straps knotted over his shoulders. The king's divine nature is emphasized by a long ceremonial beard slightly rolled up at the end.

The kings of the Twelfth Dynasty erected once again near the old capital of Memphis and associated to construct pyramids the idea of their Old Kingdom predecessors.

Mentouhotep II focused for the most part on the example of Seth Dynasty pyramid complexes. However, with a star-shaped skeletal structure of limestone, his pyramid is aligned differently and exhibits new construction techniques.

The Ladies of Mentouhotep II
Western Thebes, Deir el-Bahari, funerary temple of Mentouhotep II, Eleventh Dynasty, ca. 2030 BC; painted limestone, H. 106 cm, W. 47 cm. Cairo, Egyptian Museum, JE 6.3595.

The temple relief of Amenemhat I

The temple relief of Amenemhat III

The temple relief of Amenemhat IV

The temple relief of Amenemhat V

The temple relief of Amenemhat VI

The temple relief of Amenemhat VII

The temple relief of Amenemhat VIII
measurements and the building method. During construction, however, Amenemhat's master builders broke all rules of ethics and ignored the king's own instructions by stealing their materials from the funerary temples of the pyramids at Giza and possibly also at Saqqara and using them as core masonry.

This was surely not an act in pious commemoration of a great past, as it is sometimes explained, but deliberate theft by a state organization that apparently was no longer able to undertake the construction of large new pyramids.

This was to change during the reign of Amenemhat's powerful son and successor, Sesostris I. His pyramid, also at el-Lisht, was already somewhat larger and built with a new technique. A star-shaped skeleton supports the basic masonry, which as before consists of unworked stones. A strong facing made of sandstone joined, fine limestone blocks once gave these structures the necessary solidity. It was only the removal of stones during the medieval Arab period that caused the modern-day erosion of these pyramids.

The burial chamber was built of granite blocks. Today it ends below the water table, as does the burial corridor in the pyramid of Amenemhat I. Perhaps the burial chamber lay at the bottom of a deep shaft. The pyramid temple is a simplified copy of corresponding late Old Kingdom structures. The ramp differs from its predecessors in the addition of a row of six engaged statues at its end and on each side. There may have replaced seated statues of Sesostris that were probably already carefully buried during the time of construction.

The inner pyramid complex was enclosed by a tall limestone wall, which was decorated both inside and outside with one hundred twenty-meter high representations of the Horus name of Sesostris I in high relief. The relief fragments from the mortuary cult complex show the image of a self-assured, authoritative ruler — an image that is impressively confirmed by his statues and inscriptions. The queens and princesses were buried in nine smaller pyramids in the outer court of the larger pyramid.

The changes in the corridor and chamber system inside the pyramid on the one hand and in the outer pyramid complex on the other shed light on the transformation of the world view and the concept of the royal afterlife. The transformation of the pharaohs during the pyramids inspired the master builders of the Middle Kingdom to devise ever more complicated safety measures.

Beyond this, stelae were clearly no longer sufficient by themselves. During the course of the Twelfth Dynasty the entrances, which were traditionally set in the middle of the pyramid's north face, were placed in less obvious positions or in deep shafts. The entrance to Sesostris II's tomb at el-Habu leads from the shaft of a tomb for queens outward and under the pyramid. Some corridors terminate in dead ends. The real burial corridors lead farther at a higher level, turning corners to end finally in the royal burial chamber that is, for the most part, faced in granite. The coffins chambers are protected by massive sealing slabs and arches. The sarcophagi are in all cases made of costly red granite with gold decor. The antechambers are developed into halls that would have served the manuering of the granite blocks but in which we can recognize the tribunal chamber of Osiris. The symbolism of the "Osiris tomb" was also clearly suggested by the planting of thick clusters of trees around the pyramid complex. The belief in an afterlife in Osiris's underworld, where the king and Osiris become one, now replaced to a large extent the heavenly afterlife with the sun god.

Through the worship of Osiris during the Twelfth and Thirteenth Dynasties, this god's cult site at Abydos became a holy city. The "Osiris tomb" was discovered in the First Dynasty royal cemetery in Umm el-Ghaab, doubtless originally the tomb of a king of that time.

As a result, kings and private individuals of every class wanted to have actual tombs, symbolic tombs (seredipes), or stelae on the monumental street at Abydos leading past the spot in order to identify themselves with Osiris. Sesostris III built a gigantic cliff corridor tomb at Abydos that contained three successive false tombs and an "Osiris tomb," the latter remaining incomplete. In its technique and religious concepts, this cliff tomb is a model for later royal tombs of the New Kingdom. Several of Sesostris III's successors in the Thirteenth Dynasty followed his example of constructing a symbolic tomb at Abydos. Perhaps the kings are even buried in these funerary structures.
The limestone-faced brick pyramid stood in such an enigmatic chapel as the gabled, teak-walled, wooden, four-sided, wooden, tetrahedral, stone structure of the Pharaoh's tomb.

The pyramid of Amenemhat III at Hawara, 18th Dynasty, ca. 1820 BC, granite temple, H. 190 cm, W. 300 cm, Cairo, Egyptian Museum (E.G. 1972-24265).

Like other sculptors in the round of Middle Kingdom long ago, the sculptors who fashioned the statue were never to see their finished work. The statue was never to be seen by the Pharaoh himself.

The statue of Amenemhat III at Hawara, 18th Dynasty, ca. 1820 BC, granite temple, H. 190 cm, W. 300 cm, Cairo, Egyptian Museum (E.G. 1972-24265).

The statue of Amenemhat III at Hawara, 18th Dynasty, ca. 1820 BC, granite temple, H. 190 cm, W. 300 cm, Cairo, Egyptian Museum (E.G. 1972-24265).

The pyramid of Amenemhat III at Hawara, 18th Dynasty, ca. 1820 BC, granite temple, H. 190 cm, W. 300 cm, Cairo, Egyptian Museum (E.G. 1972-24265).
Seventh statue of Amenhotep III had artfully already ordered the construction of a grandiose pyramid complex at Dahshur which, in an expansion in the south, shows elements of the New Kingdom "Houses of Millions of Years." Outside the enclosure walls, entire ships were once buried in deep shafts, as had been customary during the Old Kingdom. His son Amenemhat III developed these changes further in his huge pyramid complex at Hawara in the Fayum. With its decorated chapels and rich array of statues, among them sculptural works of unusual form and expressive power such as the so-called fish-offering statues, this temple complex later impressed the Greek historian Herodotus so much that he believed it to be the original model for the Labyrinth.

The later pyramids at Dahshur and Hawara were built as solid constructions of unbaked mudbricks, as were the smaller, secondary pyramids for queens and princesses. The women were also buried in shaft tombs surrounding the pyramids, however. Astonishingly, the shaft tombs of the princesses of the Twelfth Dynasty, including the precious jewelry buried with the deceased, have remained for the most part undisturbed by thieves. The fact that they are intact suggests that the pharaoh of the Middle Kingdom pyramids took place only once knowledge of the previous objects in the secondary tombs had been forgotten.

Thus the passageways leading to the royal tombs were apparently uncovered only when, in relatively modern times, the limestone facing of the royal pyramids was removed and used for other purposes.

The subterranean complexes of the pyramid tombs of the late Middle Kingdom kings, however, become even more confusing and complicated. Their construction resembles a Serpent game issue, a type of dice game with obstacles that the deceased played in his tomb in order to reach the netherworld. Presumably the pyramidal superstructures built over these elaborate subterranean complexes, which took years to erect, were hardly ever completed despite the fact that the crownings basalt pyramids with their inscriptions were already delicately carved, as in the tomb of Rameses III, topped by statues, the chest of the pharaoh. All of these complexes were surrounded by undulating enclosure walls, possibly representing the prismatic waters, whereas the pyramid symbolizes the prismatic mound rising from them.

The last impressive subterranean complex at south Saqqara seems particularly enigmatic. It consists of an upper system of corridors that cut many corners, and are planned on different levels, but then after several passage blockings, finally lead to a burial chamber closed off by a single block of quartzite weighing more than 150 tons. Upon the block rests a sealing stone of almost equal weight, so that it seems, was never lowered.

Despite all the effort to construct it, apparently this grave remained unused. Still it must have been the tomb, or perhaps the cenotaph, of one of the important kings of the Thirteenth Dynasty who was eventually buried in Aswan. As a result of waning centralized power, his successors in the final years of the Middle Kingdom, residing of Edfu-Sheikh-El-Kebir as well as of Thebes, could erect only small brick pyramids that are known only through meager remains and written records.
Architecture

The largely autonomous nomarchs, or governors of the Middle Kingdom, begin to build necropolises in their own provinces. We can recognize echoes of royal complexes and continuations of Old Kingdom traditions, but entirely independent developments are evident at individual necropolises.

During the First Intermediate Period, the necropolises of Meryra II were situated south of Thebes on the east bank of the Nile opposite that of Gebelein on the west bank. The traditional tomb form of the mastaba was still used at the necropolises of the royal residence near Memphis, though now in a considerably more modest form than during the late Old Kingdom. As a rule the superstructure is no longer accessible, and only the subterranean coffin chamber is decorated.

The most impressive necropolises of the Middle Kingdom are found in Upper Egypt and especially in Middle Egypt. For the most part, they are constructed at sites with striking natural features, in the cliffsides along the Nile, and have an imposing effect. The power and self-assurance of the ancient builders of the Middle Kingdom are felt by every modern visitor.

During the Eleventh and Twelfth Dynasties, necropolises were built on the steep slopes of the eastern mountain range at Beni Hasan and, to the south, at el-Bersha and Qua el-Kebir, as well as at Mir, Asiat and Deir Rifa in the western side of the Nile and, at the southern border of the territory, at Qubbet el-Hawa opposite Aswan.

Despite differing local developments, the aforementioned cemeteries share the same basic features: influenced by Old Kingdom traditions in building cliff tombs, and using rooms of the simplest design that continued until the Eleventh Dynasty. In the course of development, the concept of the tomb as a house for eternity was emphasized by elements borrowed from secular architecture. First, columns were included, then the tomb facade evolved into a colonnaded portico. Finally, during the Twelfth Dynasty, a central axis from the entrance to the statue chamber at the rear wall of the offering room results from an alignment of successive chambers, thus assimilating the element of a procession or journey from concepts of the hereafter in tomb architecture.

The rulers’ tombs at Asiat and Qua el-Kebir, unfortunately very poorly preserved, are among the largest non-royal complexes of the Middle Kingdom. Like the royal burial complexes, individual tombs were built in valleys and included a ramp, pylons, an atrium, a terrace with a hypostyle hall and a sunken room with pillars, and the cliff tomb proper with a transverse hall and smaller chambers.

At Thebes, a special tomb type was developed in the necropolises on the west bank of the Nile, known as the Saff tombs. In the flat plain at the foot of the mountains, an outer court of generous dimensions is circumscribed by an enclosure wall. The tomb facade with pillars forming a type of gallery is hewn from the cliff. Along the tomb’s central axis, a corridor descends to a cult chamber, and from there a shaft leads to the burial chamber. A second Theban tomb type clearly reflects the change in concept of mortuary architecture. The tomb is now conceived as a representation of the tomb of Osiris and the underworld given form by a system of corridors leading deep within the mountain to the cult and burial chambers. This new type was important above all for the development of royal tombs during the New Kingdom.

The construction of large cliff tombs stopped abruptly when the governors under Seti I lost their power and independence.

Technique

The cliff tombs were carved out of the solid rock. In order to preserve the facade of the tomb, the cliff face was hewn in a vertical, even surface from the top to the bottom; the entrance or a narrow hypostyle hall was carved into the facade. While digging, builders worked a wide breadth of rock from the entrance towards the rear of the tomb, allowing for the carving of eventual architectural elements such as buttresses, architraves, and so forth. The left-hand blocks of stone were transported to the outside in large pieces or were smashed. Stone hammers, copper chisels, and wooden mallets served as tools for the work.

The second step involved chiseling the walls to produce an even surface. Surfaces destined to be decorated with reliefs were filed smooth with stones. Any protruding, uneven spots in the wall surface were levelled and smoothed with a mortar of limestone and sand that was laid on in varying thicknesses as needed. The final step in the preparatory work was the application of a dissolvent. This served as a painting ground that could support color yet preserved the raw stone from absorbing too much of the paint’s binding agent. The dissolvent was kept in a neutral tone that blended with the original color of the stone and made corrections in the mortar invisible.

Colors used included blue and turquoise tones, which were already being synthetically manufactured, natural ochre with many variations of yellow, red, and brown, hematite or chalk, and black made from soot. Presumably a water-soluble tempera based on resins and other organic matter served as a binding agent.

24 Coffins of the necropolis Dhiban-nauf (amun of Amenemhat, son of Aaneb), the pertain of Dhiban-nauf (1514). Elephantine, Dynasty IX. 2050 BC. Unknown, painted. length: 262 cm; Boston Museum of Fine Arts, 20102/6. Dhiban-nauf’s large three coffins are with- out doubt among the most magnificent coffins of all time. Especially the rich decorative paintings on the inside of the outer coffin are considered to be an absolute masterpiece of ancient Egyptian painting. All details of the composition – here the central figure of the king’s statue – are depicted with such an unimpeachable sense of extension and style that no discovery of the plane (saying 1973) the coffin was at first mistaken for an Islamic tomb from the days of the Twelfth Dynasty.
25 Outer court and facade of the tomb of Senenmut
Qubbael-Hawwa (tomb 36), Twelfth Dynasty, ca. 1900 BC

Following the model of royal tomb complexes, this tomb included a structure in the valley from which one entered a rectangular space. The facade is formed from the red sandstone, in front was a narrow hall whose roof was supported by six pillars only partially preserved. At both ends of the hypostyle hall was a statue of the deceased in a niche. The six pillars bear inscriptions and representations of the tomb owner in columns. The tomb facade itself shows a frontispiece with the entrance, the large figure of the deceased followed by a second figure and two dogs, adorning it on the left, Suarezes space placed is a small front, in the scene above he is depicted eating.

26 View into the tomb of Senenmut II
Qubbael-Hawwa (tomb 36), Twelfth Dynasty, ca. 1900 BC

In this complex, the tomb architecture, the arrangement of rooms is strictly axial with an entrance hall, corridor, and cult chamber inside. The austerity of the first, undecorated room is striking with its mighty, arched sandstone pillars. Narrow steps lead up to the mastaba area. The long, narrow, with a retable (ka) is decorated on each side by three statues, tall figures of Senenmut in the form of the Osiris standing. This innermost room is the square cult chamber. From the entrance to the cult niche, the ceiling height decreases from one room section to the next. The level of the floor, this has the effect of emphasizing the cult niche as the tomb’s intermediate sanctuary.

27 View of the northeastern corner of the tomb of Khafre
Boulaq Museum (tomb 137), Twelfth Dynasty, ca. 1950 BC

This tomb is an example of the middle phase in the architecture of Twelfth Dynasty. The rear wall of the room is subdivided by two rows of three pillars in the form of branches of lilies that run parallel to the entrance facade. They are joined to an ambulatory that continues in narrow passages on the side walls and down to the base. They recall the monolithic columns of a dwelling in terrestrial form and thereby clarify the motion of the tomb as a house for the living. The original paintings in colors, and blue in still preserved on the painted columns that imitate four-lane streets with closed arches.

28 Plan of the tomb of Amenemhat II
Boulaq Museum (tomb 38), Twelfth Dynasty, ca. 1950 BC

The succession of rooms consists of an outer court, a colonnaded peristyle, the burial chamber, and inner niches.

29 Tomb of Amenemhat III
Boulaq Museum (tomb 38), Twelfth Dynasty, ca. 1950 BC

The entry to the tomb is impressive. Four 18-sided columns stand in the entrance hall. Two massive colossal columns connect them in pairs and divide the room into three broadened naves. The ceiling vault, which is decoratively divided in pattern, runs parallel to the main axis. The floor of the room’s axis is the same color as the rest of the wall containing the sculptures of the figure of the deceased, his wife, and his mother.

30 Portico facade of the tombs IB 3, 4, and 5
Boulaq Museum (tomb 38), Twelfth Dynasty, ca. 1950 BC

The tomb facade rises out vertically into the sky, standing in front of a cult chamber bordered at the sides by the remaining walls. The sculptures of three statues inside the Boulaq Museum are adorned with figures with two or five-white columns and large statues. These elements are borrowed from similar architecture of the Middle Kingdom. The rectangular houses with other architectural motifs on the surrounding walls of the palace, they are particularly clear on the facade of IB 3. The form of the columns is determined by posters, and it anticipates the frames and edges of later close columns.
Painting and Relief

In the private tombs of the Middle Kingdom, pure painting was often preferred over relief carving for the decoration of walls. This can be explained as not merely a consideration of cost, efforts to save time, or technical problems with poor-quality stone. Painting in the sole decorative element for Egyptian private tombs is nothing new; the earliest example, a tomb at Hierakonpolis, dates to predynastic times. Other examples follow from the Third Dynasty (the tomb of Heny at Saqqara), from the Fourth Dynasty (the mastaba of Nefermaat and his wife Aret, the provenance of the famous group of Mesdum), and from the Sixth Dynasty (the tomb of Kaiemankh in Giza).

Both techniques were also used during the Middle Kingdom. While in the necropolises at el-Bersha, Mit, and Qua el-Kelaf the wall pictures were executed as painted reliefs, the gigantic wall surfaces of Beni Hasan, for example, are decorated with paintings. Relief carving was used there only for the false doors. The owners of these large and elaborate complexes of the Twelfth Dynasty decided quite consciously in favor of painted decoration, surely since they appreciated the particular appeal of the possibilities in painting at that time. This expresses a new way of thinking on the part of the projects' commissioners.

Painting in the Middle Kingdom developed from the energy and enthusiasm that characterized the artistic reawakening of the First Intermediate Period, during which innovations are clearly recognizable. It is a powerful style that consistently liberates itself from the canons of the Old Kingdom, from all superfluous elements and utterly refined detail in favor of clear, well-defined order and easily comprehensible, unambiguous images. Most striking among the formal means of the First Intermediate Period is the clear picture composition, achieved, for example, through the avoidance of overlapping individual motifs.

A number of characteristic perspectives of an object are often combined, which is important for the clarity of representation. The

11 Kitchen scene Western Thebes (TT 66), Tomb of Atenemhat, Twelfth Dynasty, ca. 1990 BC, painting on plaster on stone

12 Double-carrying calf Gebel el-Sagha, mastaba of Jf; First Intermediate Period, ca. 2130 BC, painting on straw, 14.85 cm. Thebes, Museum Egipcio, 14570

The animal is depicted rendered with precise contour lines and a clear distribution of color. With the help of thinking perspective, the scene is quite straightforwardly made to understand that the double-carrying cow would have been at the left end with ropes. The booklet hanging on the far side of the animal, which is normally invisible, is hid in upward in the painted image.

13 Bird in an acacia tree Beni Hasan (BF 5), tomb of Kheperkheper II, Twelfth Dynasty, ca. 1990 BC, painting on straw over limestone

One of the most famous images from the tombs of Beni Hasan is this detail from the bird house scene. The background is formed by the tree with its sturdy trunk, sturdy bough branches, delicate green leaves, and yellowish-brown blooms. On top of that is a second line with a variety of birds. The image is abandoned from cutout, by the characteristics of color and patterns can be discerned spatially but the individual birds can be identified without difficulty. Despite the application of the motif, the artist was able to understand how to recreate a harmonious whole.
harmonious proportions of figures and an aesthetic, ideal body type no longer seem to be so important. The size of a represented object in a scene is determined by the significance of its function in life on earth.

The register lining from side to side and dividing the relief surface into horizontal bands is done away with entirely or is replaced by short baselines for individual figures or scenes. The established range of colors varies freely, resulting in completely new combinations. The new, creative use of color is particularly striking. Quite unique solutions are found, such as very strong color contrasts, a rather severely limited color palettes, or the most delicate gradations of color, all betraying a sensitivity for special effects and a joy in the use of color.

Precisely this aspect is further developed by the painters of the Middle Kingdom. During the Twelfth Dynasty, a rich color palette of many different shades, free brushwork, the use of opaque color, smooth color transitions, and glazing techniques all mark a highly refined painting culture. The advantages of painting by itself; instead of the rather limiting possibilities of relief sculpture, are due to its ability to unfold freely over the picture surface.

Above all in scenes from nature, impressive moods are achieved through the differentiating of color nuances and the use of complex compositions. Arid landscapes that express, for example, the atmosphere of the desert or palmland, are executed without a register line. Painted patterns are cleverly composed in order to fit the surfaces dictated by the architecture; cycles of themes are placed with a good deal of consideration.

At the climax of the development, complex compositions and variations on individual scenes are striking that work, for example, with multiple planes in space, the placing of one motif behind the other, overlapping, and even with attempts to paint in linear perspective, optical foreshortening, and effects of light and shade. In painting and reliefs a certain naturalism is attained through the most precise observation of textures, movements, and positions in space, of incidental details. This is the expression of a new interest in the endless variety of nature. The arts of this era develop a sensitivity for visually interesting details and relationships, they attempt innovations with evident pleasure in experimentation and also have, not least, the skill to transmit them technically.

Since the Twelfth Dynasty there is evidence of the use of auxiliary lines much like a proportional grid in the flat sculpture pictures. They were used on occasion for the sketching of rather large figures. The grid represents a further development of the system of coordinates used during the Old Kingdom to establish the proportions of figures with a vertical body axis and seven horizontal lines at the level of particular body parts. The proportional grid developed during the Middle Kingdom, which was based on a unit of coordinates corresponding to the width of a fist, and which divided the height of a standing figure into 18 squares, was retained virtually unchanged in Egyptian art for over 1,000 years. At has already been observed in architecture in earlier chapters, unique local styles developed in the Upper and Middle Egyptian regions. This is true for painting as well as for relief sculpture in private tombs. These appear lightly modeled, but do not achieve the freedom that painting does in wall composition. During the late Middle Kingdom, reliefs eventually show a tendency toward detailed, realistic representation. Those who commissioned the works made a conscious decision in favor of painting alone, however, since they preferred its possibilities for delicate interior drawing, gradations of color, and fine shading.

The themes are all familiar ones from the Old Kingdom; the function of subjects represented is still to provide the deceased with everything needed for the hereafter. Thus continuation into the First Intermediate Period and Middle Kingdom of scenes of agriculture, cattle-breeding, trades, hunting, and tables laden with food show that these are still the most important subjects. The only truly new motif is the pilgrimage to Abydos, the illustration of the deceased’s voyage along the Nile to the city of Abydos.

For the traditional themes, the artists of the Middle Kingdom devised a sheer endless variety of new compositions, approaches, and ways to embellish or develop motifs. The scenes come to life, their figures move with energy.

Although the objects represented were intended for the hereafter, the dead people of the governors adhered an exceedingly vivid picture of contemporaneous daily life, and even of particular events in the lives of the individuals who commissioned them. These men address the viewers of the images, wishing to communicate their essence through the impressive and representative impact of their tombs.
Stelae

In the First Intermediate Period, painted funerary complexes such as those at Gebel el-Saqqara or Muša’al are rather the exception. For the most part, the decoration of a cippus tomb or a simple mudbrick mastaba was reduced to a stone table embedded in the wall. Similarly, at the Middle Kingdom necropolises of the residence at Memphis, the walls of the superstructures over the private tombs are virtually devoid of decoration; a simple stela often is the only surface on which texts and images appear.

This stela is the indispensable minimum decoration of a tomb. In principle, it contains three elements needed to ensure the afterlife of the deceased. First and foremost, the inscriptions must be mentioned along with their most important component, the offering text. This is a request for the provision of all necessary items for the afterlife. Also included in the inscriptions are prayers, the name of the deceased, his or her title, dates, and genealogical information. The second element of the stela is the representation of the tomb owner who thereby lives on an eternal plane. The third is the offerings table piled high with food, guaranteeing that the deceased will always be provided for.

In their artistic and technical execution, Middle Kingdom stelae vary, with scenes usually produced by a combination of incision and decoration. The stelae were also affordable for members of the lower classes. Indeed, with their tests they are an important source for our understanding of the daily life of the common people. Most stelae of the Middle Kingdom have a vertical format, the upper edge is rounded, the figures are executed in low relief, and the text in sunk relief.

Funerary Sculpture

As in the Old Kingdom, the sculptural representation of the tomb owner during the Middle Kingdom was an essential part of the private tomb. Whereas this figure was once scaled in a chamber, the urukh, and thus hidden from visitors to the tomb, it now stood in a prominent position, for example in a statue niche, the focal point of the sepulchre. It is now obviously intended to be seen by the visitor and also meant to be a means of identification. In addition, the tomb statue retains its traditional function, to serve as a substitute image for the represented individual who, through it, could exist for eternity and receive the mortuary cult. Unfortunately, almost no funerary statues have been preserved whole and in their original location, and it is therefore an exception when we can associate a statue with a particular tomb. The majority of tomb statues are of rather small size. Their often undifferentiated, schematic execution and rough styling lead us to surmise that they were mass-produced for members of the lower classes.

The classical poses of the Old Kingdom are still the most commonly used; the seated figure, signaling that the tomb owner is of an elevated social class, and the standing figure, suggesting his

46 Female amunet playing ball. Añett-Mous (1912 AD), 13th of Baken. Thuthíth Dynasty, ca. 1973 BC, painting on stucco over limestone. A popular theme in the tombs of First House is the frequent game of ball and frisbee. Here these girls play an acrobatic ball game, shown in a skilfully composed drawing style. Each player sits on her partner’s back and frames the ball in the player opposite. The girl wears long-sleeved white dress with epaulets, amuletic-collared garment, jewelry on arms and ankles, and broad collars. These long, wide bands ending in tassels are attached to their close-cropped wigs.

47 Horizon. More (1913), tomb of Ahhotep, Thuthíth Dynasty, ca. 1930 BC, painted limestone. A sculptured stele from the tomb of Ahhotep in the Thuthíth Dynasty. The two women are dressed in the typical Egyptian manner, with the typical headdress, a large, hood-like form. They are seated side by side, with their arms around each other’s shoulders. The inscriptions on the stela are written in hieroglyphics, each character is divided into four squares.

48 Horizon. More (1913), tomb of Ahhotep, Thuthíth Dynasty, ca. 1930 BC, painted limestone. A sculptured stele from the tomb of Ahhotep in the Thuthíth Dynasty. The two women are dressed in the typical Egyptian manner, with the typical headdress, a large, hood-like form. They are seated side by side, with their arms around each other’s shoulders. The inscriptions on the stela are written in hieroglyphics, each character is divided into four squares.

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The sculptors of the Middle Kingdom show rich decoration. In private coffins, locally differentiated types developed. For the most part their form and painted decoration reflect the notion that they serve as a home for eternity. The most common coffin type is made of single planks of wood in a rectangular form, with an exterior painted with architectural and decorative elements borrowed from the construction of tombs. Despite the course of the Middle Kingdom, anthropoid (human form) coffins appear for the first time as inner coffins are painted to represent a mummy swathed in linen. This coffin form became the most important during the New Kingdom. The coffin is oriented facing east; consequently at or near the head end a pair of eyes is often painted, enabling the deceased to "see" outside. He or she could thus observe the sun rising in the east, watch the journey of Re throughout the day or his or her own participation in it, and observe the ankh-shaped objects in pictorial form of which the deceased make can take place in the tomb. Here we most often see the depiction of a false door that was to allow the soul of the deceased to leave and enter. Among other motifs, the so-called scene of gods should be mentioned, a listing ofordial objects in pictorial form of which the deceased can make use in the hereafter. On the inside walls are offering formulas and lists. Also included are the so-called coffin texts, a collection of spells intended to accompany and protect the deceased on his journey to the hereafter.

**Shabtis, Servant Figures, Models**

"O you Shabti, if I am obliged to perform any task that is performed in the underworld — that is if a man is ordered to perform the performance of his task — then oblige yourself (to) which that is done there, to cultivate the fields and irrigate the banks, to ferry over the 'sand' (fertilizer) of..."
the east and the west. I will do it, I am here, you should see.” This text appears at the end of the Twelfth Dynasty on the so-called shabti, a small, mumiform figurine laid in tombs and fashioned mostly of stone, wood, or faience. The name shabti ("answerer") explains its function. They are "answer figures," who must respond to their master’s order to work and, on his behalf, take upon themselves the unpleasant tasks of irrigating and fertilizing in the life beyond. Leftovers regarded as drudgery compared to the work of ploughing, sowing, and harvesting. Since the beginning of the Middle Kingdom they form part of the burial equipment, in first only for private individuals. As procurers of the figures, one might consider the small, substitute mummies, the naked wax or clay figures wrapped in bandages and buried in tiny coffins in order to replace the mummy of the deceased in case of damage or destruction. Some of the shabti can be identified as belonging to particular tomb owners due to the names and genealogical information inscribed upon them. As of the Twelfth Dynasty they also bear offering formulas.

A further group of statuettes that were produced exclusively as burial equipment are the so-called statue figures that are shown carrying out particular tasks. Contrary to the function of the shabti as representatives of the tomb owner, the function of such statues is also fulfilled by tomb reliefs and paintings as statues, reliefs or paintings, they ensure the continuous existence of the tomb owner in the hereafter, provide him with food, uphold the social status prescribed by his public offices, and entertain him.

While Old Kingdom servent statues as individual sculptures are made of limestone with relative ease, during the Middle Kingdom they are for the most part fashioned in wood and painted. Since the First Intermediate Period, several individuals could be mounted on a board and combined to create model groups. These figurative groups are complemented by the appropriate surroundings, buildings, craftsmen’s tools, and so forth. Thus entire workhouses, houses, carpenters’, and weavers’ workshops are assembled, as well as diverse models of ships for travel, trade, or for the journey to Abydos, for example, but also ships with troops of soldiers commemorated with the tomb owner’s office.

Such scenes are already familiar from the decorative programs on the walls of the great Old Kingdom mastabas where they are separated into single motifs and juxtaposed in registers. But now the groups of models include the surroundings of the action and, in their three-dimensionality, gain a sense of space. Furthermore, within that space they can show the interplay of several separate yet simultaneous activities involving many figures, making the scene seem more lifelike and realistic, like a modern-day snapshot.

The scenes in these models differ greatly in style and technical execution; some are finished very neatly and with great care. Most of them show the mark of a practiced and sure hand, but also appear to have been made quite quickly, in which case fine detail and the working of the surface are unimportant.

During the Middle Kingdom it became usual to place the models in the shaft or the subterranean burial chamber where they were safer from tomb robbers. The sites where they are found are concentrated in Middle and Upper Egypt. Only at the beginning of the Twelfth Dynasty does the production of these servant figures come to an end.

The figures in the model groups represent no particular individuals; they remain anonymous and their sole purpose is to fulfill an important function for the continued existence of the tomb owner. The decisive difference from sculptures representing the tomb owner or his or her family is that with the servant figures the artist freely varies the canon of figural representation and makes numerous exceptions to the usual rules. A great variety of poses are often shown almost exaggerated, with sweeping gestures; rigorous composition and frontality were abandoned. Portraiture too can play no part here. The facial expressions are unforced, the proportioning is, on the whole, careless. But it is precisely in this way that they gain in expressive quality and do not seem staged but rather grant us - although intended for the hereafter - a glimpse of earthly life in Egypt during the closing years of the third millennium BC.
Between Heaven and Earth —
Temple to the Gods in the Middle Kingdom
Regine Schulz

In ancient Egypt, temples were meeting places for humans and gods, the living and the dead. They symbolized and guaranteed the existence and permanence of creation. This guarantee was secured on the one hand through the daily practice of the cult and observance of the festivals, and on the other through the magical power evoked by the concept of the shrine with its architectural layout and program of texts and images. The different levels of this system stem from a common notion, but were only effective as a whole. In its context, the cult rituals performed in the temple is to be understood as communication between a human and a deity whereby the initiative is taken by the human, and the god functions as the beneficiary of the cult ritual.

Temples were considered part of heavenly and earthly reality. Inside them on a heavenly plane, the gods were provided for and given satisfaction by the king; in the exterior region on the earthly level, humans were heard by the gods. Mediators between these levels were: the king and his attending priesthood. The king possessed a double function, however, as he performed not only the cult of the gods, but was himself also the beneficiary of a cult. The concept and practice of the cult in Old and Middle Kingdom temples to the gods can only be reconstructed to a very limited extent, however, due to the buildings' poor state of preservation. Texts that could give clues about them exist only as fragments or do not tell us much of value.

From the Cultic Hat to the Temple of the Gods
Cults of kings and gods characterized life in Egypt from prehistoric times. The first cult image or fetish hut consisted of a wooden framework and woven mats. Their exterior form varied and was independent of the object of the cult, its function, or its location. In early dynastic times, mudbrick structures began to replace these more transitory construction, and by the beginning of the Old Kingdom at the latest, stone was also used for door frames, supports, and shrines. The spatial articulation of these complexes began to be ever more differentiated, and evidence suggests that, next to the chamber holding the cult image, there were also visitation rooms and offering table rooms.

The image and text program, that is the decoration of these buildings, can no longer be reconstructed. It is certain, however, that besides the cult images in the sanctuaries, there were also figures in the temple or the exterior area, which facilitated the meeting of the humans and the gods.

The Gods and the Omnipotence of the King
This picture changes at about the time of the pyramid age. Whereas for earthly and heavenly sites in this world, that is for residential buildings, palaces, and temples to the gods, mudbrick continued to be used as building material, for the deceased king huge stone complexes for the funerary cult were created. Temples constructed exclusively of stone, such as the Sphinx Temple at Gizah or the obelisk-like solar shrines built with monolithic stones, must be seen as exceptions for they stood in direct relationship to the royal pyramid complexes. Accordingly, their function lay not only in the joining of heaven and earth, but also in the joining of this life with the next. For the pharaoh was believed to be the divine Horus and son of the sun god, and was thus the guarantor for all aspects of creation. Creation was not thought to be a completed act, and needed continual confirmation as well as individual and constant renewal through every newly enthroned king.

The Gods and the King — A Powerful Partnership
The steady waning of royal domestic political power during the Sixth Dynasty led to the collapse of the Old Kingdom, to the internal division of the land, and to a deep-seated religious crisis. The trust in pharaoh's omnipotence was destroyed, and the presence of the gods on earth was endangered. Now humans were responsible for life on earth while the heretofore was the responsibility of the mythical god-king Osiris, who was independent of the actual circumstances of this world.

It took over 150 years before Mentuhotep II (Eleventh Dynasty) managed to reunite the country and inspire new trust in the religious
principle of the cult as a guarantee of creation. The fundamental belief was that the gods chose the ruler and imbued him with the necessary legitimacy so that he in turn could see to the preservation of world order, ward off chaos, and provide for both humans and gods. The cult of the king thus became a permanent element in the cult of the gods, and chapels for royal statues were integrated into divine temples. In the pictorial program of these chapels, motifs such as the designation, procession, and coronation of the king by the gods as well as the conquest of enemies by the ruler (as in Gebelein or Dendera) were of primary importance.

A type of mixed architecture in brick and stone was characteristic of many sacred buildings of this period. Some complexes were connected as analogies to the rooms of secular dwellings, which underlined the connection to life on this earth. On the other hand, the relationship of these temples to the hereafter was reflected by other elements. Monumental pillar statues of the king exemplify this concept expressing the connection between the material ruler and Osiris. Among the oldest examples of this type are those erected for Mentuhotep II in the temple of Montu at Armitron, near Thebes.

Temples for Eternity

Countless building projects were undertaken during the forty-five-year reign of Mentuhotep II. This king built temples of stone at almost all the country’s important cult sites; these replaced the older brick constructions. Monuments were conceived not only for gods, but also to venerate ancestors such as Snefru and to patron deities such as Horus in Edfu. The variety of the decorated shrines corresponded to the many forms of divine presence for the enhancement of royal power.
Along with the rise of the god Amun in the Middle Kingdom came the importance of his cult site of Karnak. Sesostris I had the older buildings completely replaced.

The front of the complex consisted of an open garden surrounded by columns and a group of Osiride pillars in front of the facade; the rear consisted of a succession of three central cult and auxiliary rooms. A cult image shrine of Amun made of grandiose, which was found south of the seventh pylon, must also have belonged to the main temple.

Another building of Sesostris I in Karnak ranks among the most beautiful of the Middle Kingdom. The so-called "White Chapel," a way station erected on the occasion of the king's first festival of renewal (edfu), was torn down during the New Kingdom and its materials rebuilt into the foundation of the pylons of Amunophi III. The structure, which today has been almost completely reconstructed from the original blocks, has six pillars and two access ramps opposite one another. The existence of sanctuaries I known as the "White Chapel" is considered a masterpiece of ancient Egyptian architecture and relief sculpture. The temple is laid out in a different structure stood on a platform. A hall overlooks and architecture topped by a corbel cornice and stone molding and roof enclose the room. The original site of the chapel is disputed, though it might have stood in the area of the temple.

Temples in Amara and Semna in Nubia, and also in Serabit el-Khadim in Sinai. In Egypt proper, numerous statues and stele were consecrated, and temples extended or rebuilt. Amenemhat III paid special attention to the Fayum and constructed numerous complexes there.

One of these is the cult site of Biiyadu with two 18-m-high colossal statues (now restored) of the deified king. In Medinet Madi he consecrated a small temple to the crocodile god Sobek and the goddess Renenpet, and in old Shebit, modern Medinet el-Faiyum, he remodeled the Sobek temple. A series of statues showing the king in extremely unusual vestments or as a sphinx with an enormous lion's mane surely also came from there.

Certainly, the few Middle Kingdom temples that still exist show heterogeneous basic structures, but included in almost every case are a sanctuary with cult image chambers, an offering table hall, and a visitors hall along with a court area. Each of these temples must be understood as an independent, powerfully evocative complex. Landscape and architecture, surface images and inscriptions, statues and reliefs form a conceptual whole in which gods and kings play their parts.
Living Images – The Statue Programs of the Temples

A divine sculptural image in the round worshipped by the cult was an essential part of every temple in ancient Egypt. These cult images have almost all been lost since they were completely or partially made of precious metals and were therefore stolen and melted down. Two-dimensional images on temple walls show that for the most part the statues must have been standing or enthroned figures. They were believed to be living images and thus elements of the divine being, which is why only the king or a priest acting on the king's behalf were permitted to approach them. Outside the sanctuary too were figures of gods fashioned primarily of stone and approachable by initiated individuals such as priests and leading administrators. Only the barque with the processionual status was on display for the entire population during large festivals.

The Multifunctional Nature of Royal Sculpture

Statues of kings were indispensable components of every temple to the gods; they were also believed to be alive. Since their exact provenance can be reconstructed in only a very few cases, we must surmise their function on the basis of their appearance. The statue type plays an important role here, suggesting various functional levels. Royal statues can take on an active as well as a passive role. As Supreme Lord of the cult, they move before the gods, for example, in the forms of offerings or praying figures who kneel or stride forward. As embodiments of divine and royal power, they demonstrate the guarantee of creation through the king, such as in the form of sphinxes. They are worshipped and provided for by humans as the cult focus, shown as either standing or enthroned figures. They enjoy the protection and acknowledgment of the gods as chosen individuals. We find them in statue groups, for example, in which king and god touch each other. Iconographic elements identify the depicted individual as well and emphasize his function, such as the unusual attire of the so-called priest figure of Amenemhat III or the umbilicus held by the pillar statues of Sesoco I as a third and definitive element, the body and facial features play a central role in determining the expressive effect of the figure. Analogous to the king’s tutelary, each and every ruler established his own formal criteria that still allowed for functional and stylistic variations. If we observe the development in royal portraits of the Eleventh and Twelfth Dynasties, significant differences become apparent: concentrated mass and powerful weight for Mentuhotep II, formalic symmetry for Sesoco I, taut intensity for Amenemhat II, great concentration and force of will for Sesoco III, and energetic severity for Amenemhat III.

In principle the appearance thus leads from great formalism and a “hieroglyphic” composition of details over a balanced aesthetic to psychologizing naturalism.

62. Statue of Seti I from Abydos. Abydos, ca. 1800 BC. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. This gracefully expressive sphinx is characterized by an apparent contrast between the double-jawed, grave features of an aging Sesoco III and the muscular measurements of the king’s body. Yet both elements equally contribute to a great sense of self-assurance, and the head raised high emphasizes the alert tension of the body, creating a harmonious whole.
Private Temple Sculpture — The Chosen Observer

While both divine and royal sculpture was directly involved in the magical safeguarding of the cults, the statues of other persons bore a completely different significance. During the Old Kingdom, statues of private individuals who were neither kings nor gods were most likely placed along the paths of cults and processions. Since the Middle Kingdom at the latest, such figures could also be seen in the temples themselves. They represent individuals who did not actively participate in the cult, but who enjoyed the privilege of being present and "observing" the rituals. They were thus involved in the temple’s redistributive system. The inscriptions on the figures also suggest their association as participants in cult rituals, since they contain for the most part formulas invoking participation in the provision of offerings for the divinity. Many of these statues show a squatting position with the legs folded under the body, or the knees held up and pressed close to the body. Such a squatting pose suggests a passive position of repose and is suitable for neither the gods nor the king. In order to guarantee the permanence of this participation in the cult and the resulting provision in an enduring manner, both in this life and the next, a new iconographic element is added: a cloak wrapped tightly around the body. Combined with the crossed arms and partially covered hands, it suggests the aspect of Osiris. During the late Middle Kingdom, standing figures were also added. Their arms hang close to the body and their hands are either at their sides or extended in the front along the kilt.

The individuals represented are high-ranking priests or officials who also in reality were directly involved in the cult. With this development the Egyptian temple during the Middle Kingdom opened itself to non-royal persons in two phases. As "observers," they were granted access to the temple and later, as worshippers, were even allowed to participate in the rituals of the cult.