

## Menkaure & Queen and Akhenaton

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Old Kingdom Menkaure & Queen



New Kingdom Akhenaton

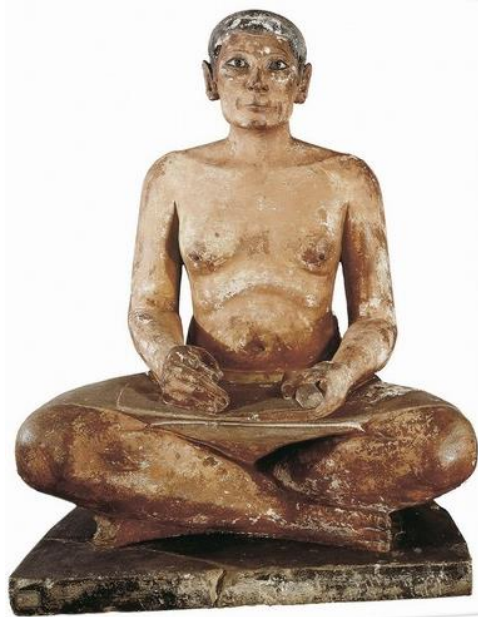
The pieces we're comparing – The Old Kingdom– what I found most startling was that the artwork of the Old Kingdom reflected an idealized view of the pharaohs and nobility – and not the reality of what they really looked like. They were all portrayed with rigidness and specific form and proportions. Royal trappings were also included to identify them as royalty. Their bodies were youthful and in this case the stone used was polished to present an even more awesome appearance. From an engineering standpoint, I'm wondering if the artists had not yet figured out how to deploy these two characters as complete sculptures in the round, but had to leave material between arms and legs to make it more stable and unbreakable and so made it more of a high relief than a pure 3D sculpture. I'm guessing they may have had many failures in attempting pure large sculptures using the stone material available, which may have been too brittle or unstable to do otherwise. Sorry for diverting.

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I also wonder what he was holding. I can't seem to find any answers, but I'm guessing it's some kind of "royal" rod or some other cylindrical object that signifies his station.

Comparing him to Akhenaton he, he is described him as having an "Androgynous" form, but looks way more feminine than a combination of man-woman to me. At any rate, that piece shows the short-lived break in style from

very rigid to a looser and less literal and idealized style of depicting pharaohs. He also saw himself as the son of one god - "Anton" and so maybe there is some symbolism of all that mysticism in this statue. It was a long time - maybe about 1000 years between the 2 pieces of art, so both style and carving techniques changed. As well as beliefs.



A point about the scribe being a sculpture in the round, vs. my complaint that the Menkaure piece was "only" a high relief. It was about the same time, but in a different location, so I've come up with a couple of thoughts (they may be wrong, but what the heck) I am always interested in the "technical" aspects of how a piece of art is created, and it is possible that the type of stone used for the scribe made it more possible to create a statue in the round, and also I see that the arms are connected to the legs of the body, so there is not that much space for the piece to break off. Also, maybe the black Menkaure Statue was Meant to be a relief because it might have stood up against a wall or flat surface which required a flat back. If that's the case, I feel better.

BUT...this whole conversation made me think about some other aspects. I enlarged the photo above on my screen to 500% to see more details (including about the elusive thing in his hand) and – even though the Egyptians had the "Canons of proportions" all well-defined, and the figures on the statue looked amazingly fit and well proportioned. Do you see their Legs and Feet? They are Ridiculous. They don't have ankles!!!! Just stumps for legs. Look at the Queen's legs. Total tree trunks, and it's not pants, it's her legs. And the feet and toes. Please, real toes are not all the same size and do not flair out and toes do not line up like a rectangle. I don't get it – how everything else looks great and the feet look so dumb. Did they lose interest as they got further down on the carving? Also the hand of the Queen around Menkaure – again, realistically, the Queen would have had to have a very long arm and be double jointed to wrap her Entire hand around his waist at a 180 degree angle, and there's no wrist showing at all, to boot!! Just a flat hand top lying on top of his abs. Sorry to be so grouchy, but that is the way I look at art. I would have gotten a D if I handed in an assignment like this in figure drawing. Nice body from the knees up, but the Old Kingdom needs to do more homework.