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Statue of Metjetji

Edna Russmann: This figure, made for the tomb of a man named Metjetji, shows him in middle age, or perhaps even approaching old age. Metjetji is shown wearing a long kilt with a pleated front panel.

This in itself was a sign of a successful official's maturity, because of course you can't move about as freely in a long kilt. And by the time you reach that stage, you don't have to. You have young men you can send to do whatever you want them to do.

Like all Egyptian statues of standing men, he has his left foot advanced. Here his arms are at his side slightly bent forward, and the hands are open. Notice how very, very long the fingers are. Other signs of increasing age in this statue are the fact that although he is slender—his limbs are certainly very slender—you can see that he's rather thick through the waist. Also his own short-cropped hair shows signs of balding in front. And the face, to me, conveys a sense of wisdom and even introspection. The cost alone of those inlaid eyes, which are made of black and white stones set in metal rims, would have made this statue very expensive. And my personal belief is that Metjetji also got the most skilled woodcarver he knew to carve this particular statue.

Arnold Lehman: This figure is facing two additional statues of Metjetji at different stages of his life.

Lisa Bruno: The most amazing thing about the Metjetjis are how much paint actually remains on them. They had been restored in the 1950s. All of the losses to the paint were filled. We started to feel that you couldn't really appreciate how much paint was actually original and remaining on the piece with the high degree of restoration that had been applied in the 1950s. So, we slowly started the process of reversing these restorations. When we had finally taken off all the restorations, we were left with an object that had just the original paint. And then we worked with the curators to determine a very, very limited amount of restorations that we would then add on, just so that it would be more complete to the viewer.

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