

= Sahure =

Sahure ( meaning " He who is close to Re " ) was an Ancient Egyptian pharaoh , the second ruler of the Fifth Dynasty , who reigned for about 12 years in the early 25th century BC . Sahure is considered to be one of the most important kings of the Old Kingdom of Egypt , his reign being a political and cultural high point of the 5th Dynasty . He was probably the son of his predecessor Userkaf with queen Neferhetepes II , and was in turn succeeded by his son Neferirkare Kakai .

During Sahure 's time on the throne , Egypt had important trade relations with the Levantine coast . Sahure launched several naval expeditions to modern day Lebanon to procure cedar trees , people ( possibly slaves ) and exotic items . He also ordered the earliest attested expedition to the land of Punt , which brought back large quantities of myrrh , malachite and electrum . Sahure is shown celebrating the success of this venture in a relief from his mortuary temple which shows him tending a myrrh tree in the garden of his palace named " Sahure 's splendor soars up to heaven " . This relief is the only one in Egyptian art depicting a king gardening . Sahure sent further expeditions to the mines of turquoise and copper in Sinai . He also possibly ordered military campaigns against Libyan chieftains in the Western Desert , bringing back livestock to Egypt .

Sahure had a pyramid built for himself in Abusir , thereby abandoning the royal necropolises of Saqqara and Giza , where his predecessors had built their pyramids . This decision was possibly motivated by the presence of the sun temple of Userkaf in Abusir , the first such temple of the 5th Dynasty . The Pyramid of Sahure is much smaller than the pyramids of the preceding 4th Dynasty but the decoration of his mortuary temple is more elaborate . The causeway and mortuary temple of his pyramid complex were once adorned by over 10 @, @ 000 m2 ( 110 @, @ 000 sq ft ) of fine reliefs , which made them renowned in antiquity . The architects of Sahure 's pyramid complex introduced the use of palmiform columns ( that is columns whose capital has the form of palm leaves ) , which would soon become a hallmark of ancient Egyptian architecture . Sahure is also known to have constructed a sun temple called " The Field of Ra " , and although it is yet to be located it is presumably in Abusir as well .

= = Family = =

= = = Parentage = = =

Excavations at the pyramid of Sahure in Abusir under the direction of Miroslav Verner and Tarek El @-@ Awady in the early 2000s provide a picture of the royal family of the early 5th Dynasty . In particular , reliefs from the causeway linking the valley and mortuary temples of the pyramid complex reveal that Sahure 's mother was queen Neferhetepes II . She was the wife of pharaoh Userkaf , as indicated by the location of her pyramid immediately adjacent to that of Userkaf , which makes Userkaf the father of Sahure in all likelihood . This is further confirmed by the discovery of Sahure 's cartouche in the mortuary temple of Userkaf at Saqqara , indicating that Sahure finished the structure started most probably by his father .

This contradicts an older , alternative theory according to which Sahure was the son of queen Khentkawes I , believed to be the wife of the last pharaoh of the preceding 4th Dynasty , Shepseskaf . Following the discoveries of Verner and El @-@ Awady in Abusir this theory is now considered obsolete .

= = = Children = = =

Sahure is known to have been succeeded by Neferirkare Kakai , who was believed to his brother until 2005 . On this year , a relief originally adorning the causeway of Sahure 's pyramid and showing Sahure seated in front of two of his sons , Ranefer and Netjerirenre , was discovered by the Egyptologists Miroslav Verner and Tarek El @-@ Awady . Next to Ranefer 's name the text " Neferirkare Kakai king of Upper and Lower Egypt " had been added , indicating that Ranefer was

Sahure 's son and assumed the throne under the name " Neferirkare Kakai " at the death of his father . Since both Ranefer and Netjerirenre are given the titles of " King eldest son " , Verner and El @-@ Awady speculate that they may have been twins and that Netjerirenre may have later seized the throne for a brief reign under the name " Shepseskare " . The same relief further depicts queen Meretnebty , who was thus most likely Sahure 's consort and the mother of Ranefer ( Neferirkare Kakai ) and Netjerirenre . Three more sons , Horemsaf , Khakare and Nebankhre are shown on reliefs from Sahure 's mortuary temple , but the identity of their mother is unknown .

= = Reign = =

= = = Chronology = = =

The relative chronology of Sahure 's reign is well established by historical records and contemporary artefacts , showing that he succeeded Userkaf and was in turn succeeded by Neferirkare Kakai . The Turin canon , a king list written during the 19th Dynasty in the early Ramesside era ( 1292 ? 1189 BC ) , credits him with a reign of 12 years 5 months and 12 days . In contrast , the near contemporary annal of the 5th Dynasty known as the Palermo Stone preserves his 2nd , 3rd , 5th and 6th years on the throne as well as his final year of reign and even records the day of his death as the 28th of Shemu II ( 9th month ) . The document notes six or seven cattle counts , which would indicate a reign of at least 12 full years if the Old Kingdom cattle count was held biennially ( i.e. every 2 years ) as this annal document implies for the early 5th Dynasty . If this assumption is correct and Sahure 's highest attested date was the year after the 6th count rather than his 7th count as Wilkinson believes , then this date would mean that Sahure died in his 13th year and should be given a reign of 13 years 5 months and 12 days . This number would be only one year more than the Turin Canon 's 12 @-@ year figure for Sahure . It is also closer to the 13 years figure given in Manetho 's Aegyptiaca , a history of ancient Egypt written in the 3rd century BC .

Sahure appears in two further historical records : on the third entry of the Karnak king list , which was made during the reign of Thutmose III ( 1479 ? 1425 BC ) and on the 26th entry of the Saqqara Tablet dating to the reign of Ramses II ( 1279 ? 1213 BC ) . Neither of these sources give his reign length . The absolute dates of Sahure 's reign are uncertain but most scholars date it to the first half of the 25th century BC .

= = = Foreign activities = = =

#### Trade and tribute

Historical records and surviving artefacts suggest that contacts with foreign lands were numerous during Sahure 's reign . Furthermore , these contacts seem to have been mostly economic rather than military in nature . Reliefs from his pyramid complex show that he possessed a navy comprising 100 @-@ cubits long boats ( c . 50 m , 160 ft ) , some of which are shown coming back from Lebanon laden with the trunks of precious cedar trees . Other ships are represented loaded with " Asiatics " , both adults and children , who were possibly slaves . A unique relief depicts several Syrian brown bears , presumably brought back from the Levantine coast by a naval expedition as well . These bears appear in association with 12 red @-@ painted one @-@ handled jars from Syria and are thus likely to constitute a tribute .

Trade contacts with Byblos certainly took place during Sahure 's reign and indeed excavations of the temple of Baalat @-@ Gebal yielded an alabaster bowl inscribed with Sahure 's name . There is further corroborating evidence for trade with the wider Levant during the 5th Dynasty , with a number of stone vessels inscribed with cartouches of pharaohs of this dynasty discovered in Lebanon . Finally , a piece of thin gold stamped to a wooden throne and bearing Sahure 's cartouches has been purportedly found during illegal excavations in Turkey among a wider assemblage known as the " Dorak Treasure " . The existence of the treasure is now widely doubted however .

In his last year on the throne , Sahure sent the first documented expedition to the fabled land of Punt . The expedition is said to have come back with 80 @,@ 000 measures of myrrh , along with malachite and electrum . Because of this , Sahure is often credited with establishing an Egyptian navy . However , it is known today that preceding Egyptian kings had a high seas navy too , in particular Khufu during whose reign the oldest known harbor , Wadi al @-@ Jarf , on the Red Sea was operating . Nonetheless , the reliefs from Sahure 's pyramid complex remain the " first definite depictions of seagoing ships in Egypt " ( Shelley Wachsmann ) .

In his last year of reign Sahure sent another expedition abroad , this time to the copper and turquoise mines of Wadi Maghareh and Wadi Kharit in Sinai , which had been active since at least the beginning of the 3rd Dynasty . This expedition brought back over 6000 units of copper to Egypt and also produced two reliefs in Sinai , one of which shows Sahure in the traditional act of smiting Asiatics and boasting " The Great God smites the Asiatics of all countries " .

#### Military campaigns

Sahure 's military career is known primarily from reliefs from his mortuary complex . It apparently consisted of campaigns against the Libyans in the Western desert . The campaigns yielded various livestock and Sahure is shown smiting local chieftains . The Palermo stone corroborates some of these events and also mentions expeditions to Sinai and to the exotic land of Punt . However , this same scene of the Libyan attack was used two hundred years later in the mortuary temple of Pepi II ( 2284 ? 2184 BC ) and in the temple of Taharqa at Kawa , built some 1800 years after Sahure 's lifetime . In particular , the same names are quoted for the local chieftains . Therefore , there is the possibility that Sahure too was copying an even earlier representation of this scene .

#### = = = Activities in Egypt = = =

The majority of Sahure 's activities in Egypt recorded in the Palermo stone are religious in nature . During the 5th year of his reign alone the stone mentions the making of a divine barge , possibly in Heliopolis , the exact quantity of daily offerings of bread and beer to Ra , Hathor , Nekhbet and Wadjet fixed by the king and the gift of land to various temples .

Archeological evidence suggests that Sahure 's building activities were concentrated in Abusir , where he constructed his pyramid and probably his sun temple as well . This temple , the second sun temple of the 5th Dynasty and yet to be located , is known to have existed thanks an inscription on the Palermo stone where it is called " Sekhet Re " , meaning " The Field of Ra " . Reliefs which once adorned the temple have been found embedded in the walls of that of Nyuserre Ini ( 2445 ? 2421 BC ) , which suggests either that Nyuserre used Sahure 's temple as a quarry for construction materials or that he constructed his temple on the same site . The palace of Sahure , called " Uetjes Neferu Sahure " , " Sahure 's splendor soars up to heaven " , is known from an inscription on tallow containers discovered in February 2011 in Neferefre 's mortuary temple . The palace was likely located on the shores of the Abusir lake . The fragment of a statue with the name of the king was discovered in 2015 , in Elkab .

South of Egypt , a stele bearing Sahure 's name was discovered in the diorite quarries located in the desert north @-@ west of Abu Simbel in Lower Nubia . Even further south , Sahure 's cartouche has been found in a graffiti in Tumas and on seal impressions from Buhen at the second cataract of the Nile .

#### = = Pyramid complex = =

The main pyramid of Sahure 's mortuary complex exemplifies the decline of pyramid building , both in terms of size and quality . Yet , the accompanying mortuary temple is considered to be the most sophisticated one built up to that time . With its many architectural innovations , such as the use of palmiform columns , the overall layout of Sahure 's complex would serve as the template for all mortuary complexes constructed from Sahure 's reign until the end of the Old Kingdom , some 300 years later .

### === Location ===

Sahure chose to construct his pyramid complex in Abusir , thereby abandoning both Saqqara and Giza , which had been the royal necropolises up to that time . A possible motivation for Sahure 's decision was the presence of the sun temple of Userkaf .

### === Mortuary temple ===

Sahure 's mortuary temple was extensively decorated with an estimated 10 @, @ 000 m<sup>2</sup> ( 110 @, @ 000 sq ft ) of fine reliefs . Many surviving fragments of the reliefs which decorated the temple walls are of very high quality and much more elaborate than those from preceding mortuary temples . Several reliefs from the temple and causeway are unique in Egyptian art . These include a relief showing Sahure tending a myrrh tree in his palace in front of his family , a relief depicting brown bears and a relief showing the bringing of the pyramidion to the main pyramid and the ceremonies following the completion of the complex . The many reliefs of the mortuary and valley temples also depict , among other things , a counting of foreigners by or in front of the goddess Seshat and the return of an Egyptian fleet from Asia , perhaps Byblos . Some of the low relief @-@ cuttings in red granite are still in place at the site . Decorated reliefs from the upper part of the causeway represent the procession of over 150 personified funerary domains created for the cult of Sahure , demonstrating the existence of a sophisticated economic system associated to the king 's funerary cult .

The mortuary temple featured the first palmiform columns of any Egyptian temple , massive granite architraves inscribed with Sahure 's titulary overlaid with copper , black basalt flooring and granite dados .

### === Pyramid ===

The pyramid of Sahure reached 47 m ( 154 ft ) at the time of its construction , much smaller than the pyramids of the preceding 4th Dynasty . Its inner core is made of roughly hewn stones organized in steps and held together in many sections with a thick mortar of mud . This construction technique , much cheaper and faster to execute than the stone @-@ based techniques of the 4th Dynasty , fared much worse over time . Owing to this , Sahure 's pyramid is now largely ruined and amounts to little more than a pile of rubble showing the crude filling of debris and mortar constituting the core , which became exposed after the casing stones were stolen in antiquity .

While the core was under construction , a corridor was left open leading into the shaft where the grave chamber was built separately and later covered by leftover stone blocks and debris . This construction strategy is clearly visible in later unfinished pyramids , in particular the Pyramid of Neferefre . This technique also reflects the older style from the 3rd Dynasty seemingly coming back into fashion after being temporarily abandoned by the builders of the five great pyramids at Dahshur and Giza during the 4th Dynasty .

The entrance at the north side is a short descending corridor lined with red granite followed by a passageway ending at the burial chamber with its gabled roof comprising large limestone beams . Today these beams are damaged , which weakens the pyramid structure . Fragments of the sarcophagus were found here in the burial chamber , when it was first entered by John Shae Perring in the mid 19th century . The colossal roof blocks of Sahure 's temple weighed up to about 220 tons based on estimates by Perring . He estimated the size of the largest blocks at 35 feet by 9 feet by 12 feet . One end of these blocks was tapered so the estimated volume is 95 cubic meters or 2 @. @ 4 tons . The mortuary complex immediately around the pyramid also comprises a second pyramid built for the Ka of the king .

### === Court Officials ===

A number of officials serving Sahure during his lifetime are known from their tombs . These include :

Niankhsekhmet : chief physician of Sahure , he asked the king that a false door be made for his tomb , to which the king agreed . Sahure had the false door made of fine Tura limestone , carved and painted blue in his presence . The king wished a long life to his physician , telling him : " As my nostrils enjoy health , as the gods love me , may you depart into the cemetery at an advanced old age as one revered " .

Pehenewkai : priest of the cult of Userkaf during the reigns of Sahure and Neferirkare Kakai , then vizier for the latter .

Persen : also known as Perisen , he was a mortuary priest in the funerary cult of Sahure 's mother Nephherhetepes . His mastaba tomb is located close to Nephherhetepes 's pyramid in Saqqara .

Ptahshepses : probably born during the reign of Menkaure , Ptahshepses was high priest of Ptah and royal manicure , later promoted to vizier under king Nyuserre Ini .

Sekhemkare : royal prince , son of Khafre and vizier under Userkaf and Sahure .

Washptah : priest of Sahure during the king 's lifetime , then vizier of Neferirkare Kakai . Buried in a mastaba in Saqqara .

Werbauba : vizier during Sahure 's reign , attested in the mortuary temple . Unlike Sekhemkare , Werbauba seems to have been non @-@ royal . This indicates that Sahure pursued Userkaf 's policy of appointing non @-@ royal people to high offices .

= = Legacy = =

= = = In the Old Kingdom = = =

Sahure 's most immediate legacy is his funerary cult , which continued until the end of the Old Kingdom some 300 years after his death . A total of 22 agricultural estates were established to produce the goods necessary for this cult . Several priests serving this cult or in Sahure 's sun temple during the later 5th and 6th Dynasties are known thanks to inscriptions and artefacts from their tombs in Saqqara and Abusir :

Atjema : priest of the sun temple of Sahure during the 6th Dynasty .

Khuyemsnewy : served as priest of Sahure during the reigns of Neferirkare Kakai and Nyuserre Ini . He was also priest of Ra and Hathor in Neferirkare 's sun temple , priest of Neferirkare , priest in Nyuserre Ini 's and Neferirkare Kakai 's pyramid complexes and Overseer of the Two Granaries .

Nikare : priest of the cult of Sahure and overseer of the scribes of the granary during the 5th Dynasty .

Senewankh : priest of the cults of Userkaf and Sahure , buried in a mastaba in Saqqara .

Sedaug : priest of the cult of Sahure , priest of Ra in the sun @-@ temple of Userkaf and holder of the title of royal acquaintance , buried in Giza .

Tepemankh : priest of the cults of kings of the 4th to early 5th dynasty including Userkaf and Sahure , buried in a mastaba at Abusir .

Another legacy of Sahure is his pyramid complex : its layout became the template for all subsequent pyramid complexes of the Old Kingdom and some of its architectural elements , such as its palmiform columns , became hallmarks of Egyptian architecture .

= = = In the Middle Kingdom = = =

At the beginning of the Middle Kingdom period , in the early 12th Dynasty ( 1991 ? 1802 BC ) , pharaoh Senusret I ( 1971 ? 1926 BC ) commissioned a statue of Sahure . The statue was located in the temple of Karnak and it probably belonged to a group of portraits of deceased kings .

The statue of Sahure , now in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo ( catalog number CG 42004 ) , is made of black granite and is 50 cm ( 20 in ) tall . Sahure is shown enthroned , wearing a pleated skirt and a round curly wig . Both sides of the throne bear inscriptions identifying the work as a portrait of Sahure made on the orders of Senusret I .

Another indication that Sahure had not faded from memory during the Middle Kingdom is the Westcar Papyrus , which was written during the 12th Dynasty . The papyrus tells the mythical story of the origins of the 5th Dynasty , presenting kings Userkaf , Sahure and Neferirkare Kakai as three brothers , sons of Ra and a woman named Rededjet .

= = = In the New Kingdom and later times = = =

As a deceased king , Sahure continued to receive religious offerings during the New Kingdom . This is best attested by the " Karnak king list " , a list of royal ancestors inscribed on the walls of the Karnak temple during the reign of Thutmose III of the 18th Dynasty . Unlike other ancient Egyptian king lists , the kings are not listed in chronological order . This is because the purpose of the list was purely religious rather than historical : its aim was to name the deceased kings to be honored in the Karnak temple .

During the 19th Dynasty , prince Khaemwaset , a son of Ramesses II , undertook restoration works throughout Egypt on pyramids and temples which had fallen into ruin . Inscriptions on the stone cladding of the pyramid of Sahure show that it was restored at this time . This is possibly because , from the mid 18th Dynasty onwards , the mortuary temple of Sahure served as a sanctuary for the goddess Sekhmet . In the second part of the 18th Dynasty and during the 19th Dynasty numerous visitors left inscriptions , stelae and statues in the temple . Activities seemed to have continued on @-@ site for a long time , as shown by graffiti dating from the 26th Dynasty ( 664 ? 525 BC ) until the Ptolemaic period ( 332 ? 30 BC ) .