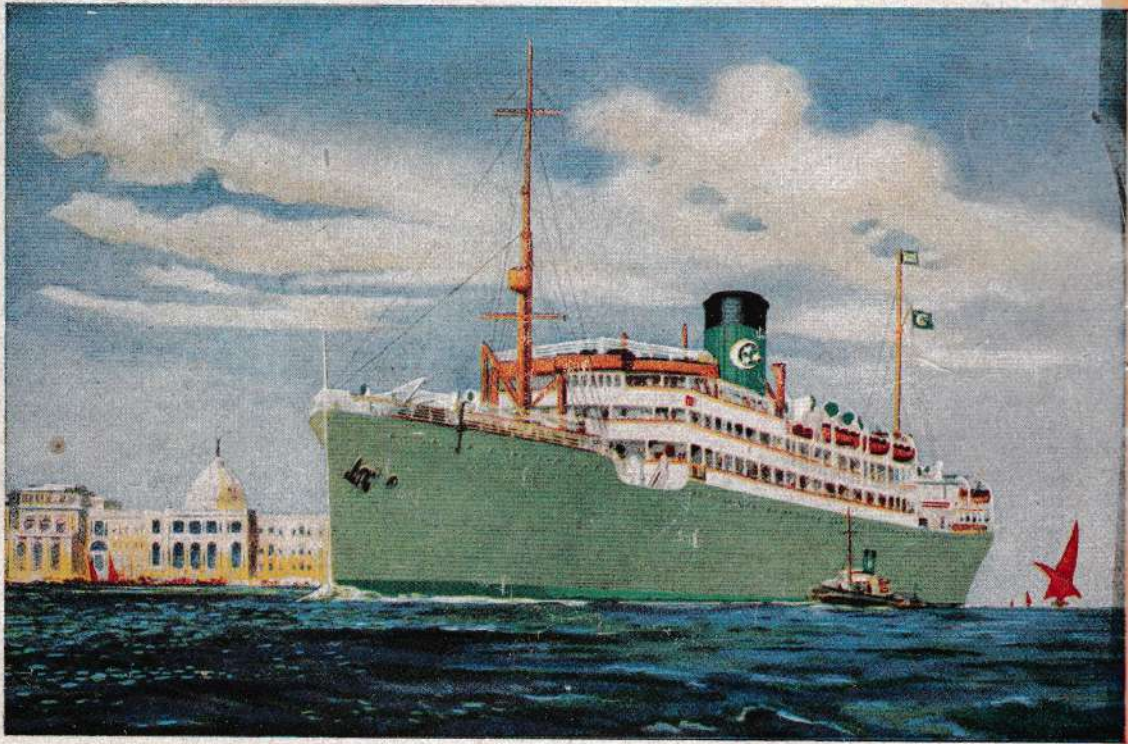


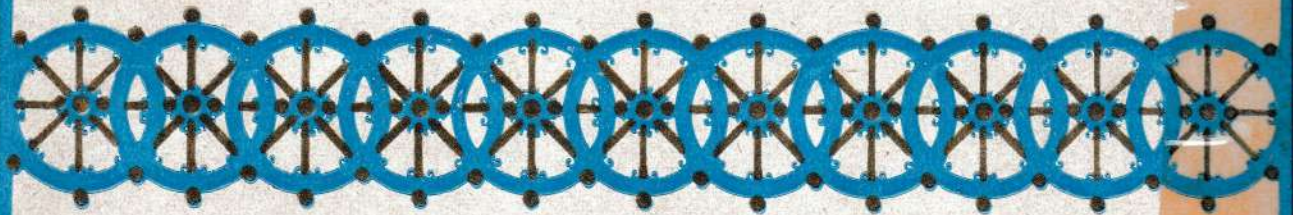
PHARAONIC

MAIL LINE

GAZETTE



T.S.S. "MOHAMED ALI EL-KEBIR"



SPIRIT AND FORM IN THE ART OF EGYPT

BY GEORGES CATTAUI

Immotus nec Iners

I.

PHARAONIC ARCHITECTURE AND SCULPTURE

AT the dawn of time Egypt appears mature, as though it had owned no childhood.

Egypt is in duration, as it is in space, a river flowing from the remoteness of time and never wholly losing itself in the sands.

In the course of seven thousand years, four civilisations, distinct and original, have flourished by the Nile. No other country has shewn so long a period of success. The first phase lasted from 3300 B.C. to the end of the Saite age, when pharaonic art was superseded by greco-roman style. In its spirit and its form, Egyptian art, one has said, carries "the conviction of a mysterious import, baffling and withheld and, consequently, instinct with spiritual illumination."

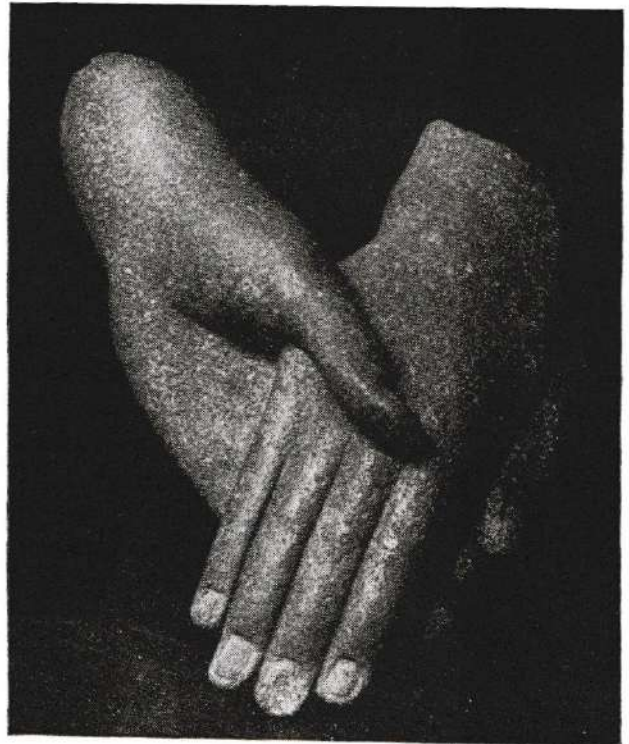
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Amidst all its transformations and fluctuations, through centuries of superimposed cultures, an original and native element has survived in Egypt, and we are able to discern certain fixed traits due to permanent influences of race and soil.

As has often been observed, the architecture which developed in Egypt was in harmony



This Limestone Statue, now in the Museum of Fine Arts, in Boston (U.S.A.), is one of the finest and most characteristic works of art of the IVth Dynasty, probably the greatest of all the periods of Egyptian Sculpture, by its power of rendering the aspect of life and developing the plastic possibilities of the human figure as well as by its precocious understanding of portraiture and its technical perfection. This bust reminds us of the most modern works of contemporary sculptors.



Two hands from a statue group from El Amarna.

with the horizontal and vertical lines of the landscape. Moreover the great plain and smooth surfaces, the slightly inclined slopes of the walls, the sharp angles, the deep grooves of the pylons all present powerful contrasts of light and shade, clear cut yet massive silhouettes. Indeed, it is from Egypt that originally emanated these eternal shapes: column, obelisk, pillar, pylon, architrave and cornice.

Furthermore, sculpture, reliefs and painting, far from being independent, were subordinated to the laws and requisites of the Architecture, which indicated the character and purpose of the whole edifice, and this under the influence of essential rules, transmitted from generation to generation. For Egyptian masonry had a ritual character and required an initiation.

In other words, as S. R. K. Glanville writes in his delightful work on *The Egyptians (Black)* "in spite of their practical purpose, the finest Egyptian reliefs are among the world's