

***Limestone Statue of the Steward Mery***  
**The British Museum**

From Thebes, Egypt  
11th Dynasty, around 2050 BC



Mery is shown on a cuboid seat, with his feet resting on a plinth. The top of the plinth is inscribed with hieroglyphic text, reading from right to left, with the name of the owner at the end. His costume is typical of the time in which he lived. His short wig is decorated with incised lines to represent hair and his brief kilt is heavily pleated.

The modelling of the facial features and body does not represent how he appeared in life. It follows the conventions current at the time. Mery's prominent ears are a characteristic feature of statues dating to the Middle Kingdom (2040-1750 BC). The same can be said of his narrow waist and long feet. There is little modelling on the body, apart from the knees and lower legs, the muscles of which are well defined. The heavy eyebrows and eyelids and the long cosmetic lines at the outer corner of the eyes do not reflect nature, but are an artistic convention. This style is called 'plastic' as the brows and eyelids look as if they have been applied to the face, rather than being a part of it.

E.R. Russmann, *Eternal Egypt: masterworks of* (University of California Press, 2001)