

(Fig. 4)

In the years 1898 to 1901, Borchardt and Schafer discovered in the mound of ruins three miles north-west of Abusir, which the Arabs called Abu-Gurab, the imposing foundations of a sanctuary, of which the outstanding remains consisted of a pyramid of gigantic dimensions. (Base about 120 ft. square and height approximately 180 ft.) (L. Borchardt, *Das Re-heiligtum des Königs Ne-Woser-Re*. Bd. I, Berlin, 1905). In front of this pyramid, the largest, oldest, and most splendid of all the temple altars which the ancient Egyptians has up to the present given us, was found. The altar consists of five immense blocks of alabaster which are so grouped that around a round somewhat elevated surface, there are four rectangular tables of which the two larger (the one to the east and the one to the west) cover the ends of the two smaller ones with their sides. Each of the four tables has on its outside a blunt, arrowshaped projection from which a hotep point about 16 centimeters thick is sticking out: In other words, we have four large hotep tables in front of us. The room between the inner and the outer blocks is filled up with small pieces of alabaster. The size of the altar from the point of one Hotep sign to the point of the one opposite is about seventeen feet. The height of the outer plates above the ground is about three feet. The round feet is five feet in diameter and is on the average about  $4\frac{1}{2}$  inches higher than the outer plates. The altar stood on a platform which is still visible today. Certain traces tell us that it was once surrounded by a low wall which Borchardt has since attempted to reconstruct. On the side where one enters, opposite to the altar there was a granite pedestal on which a statue, probably stood at one time. The altar has neither pictures nor pictorial representations. Its usage was probably that of a presentation altar. It did not serve the purpose of an altar for burnt offerings as is proved by the lack of every trace and sign of burning. In the vicinity of the shrine were large precincts for the slaughter of animals where the blood was caught in alabaster bowls. Pieces of the slaughtered animals were placed upon this altar.