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A Granite Statue Base of Ḥr-îr-ʿȝ (Cairo N 9107)

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The monument under discussion is a grey rectangular granite base, currently housed in the basement of the Cairo Egyptian Museum, the provenance of which is unknown. It belongs to the court official Ḥr-ỉr-ʿȝ, surnamed Nfr-ỉb-Rʿ-nfr, known as the tutor of king Psammetichus II.¹

General Description

Registration Numbers: M 7273; N 9107
Dimensions: Length: 65 cm; Width: 35 cm; Height: 15 cm.

The base is rather well preserved. The statue which once stood upon it was removed out badly, causing some damage in the upper surface of the base. A hieroglyphic inscription is engraved around the base and on its upper surface, written between two framing lines, a feature well known for the sculpture of the 26th Dynasty. The style of the hieroglyphic signs and their shape are clear and delicate, as it is the case on most statues of the period.

The Inscriptions

*Upper Surface of the Base*

Two horizontal lines, beginning from the right, occupy the surface of the base just in front of the removed statue. Most of the first line had been scratched off as a result of the process of removing the statue.

→

imȝḫ(w) ḫr nswt bỉty Nfr-ỉb-Rʿ ⟦sȝ Rʿ Psmtk⟧
a ʿnḫ mỉ Rʿ
imy-r ruytb ḫr-ỉr-ʿȝ c rn.f nfr Nfr-ỉb-Rʿ-nfr d nb imȝh

The honoured by the king of Upper and Lower Egypt Nfr-ỉb-Rʿ [the son of Re, Psammetichus] may he live like Re.
The overseer of the ruyt-administration ḫr-ỉr-aa, whose beautiful name is Nfr-ỉb-Rʿ-nfr, owner of honour.

a. The ṣ Rʿ name of the king Psmtk\(^2\) has to be restored in this defaced area.
b. The word ruyt appears at the end of Old Kingdom, as a new version for the old ʿrryt,\(^3\) this term was connected with the official's titles but it has no clear and defined meaning. imy-r ruyt could have the meaning of “overseer of the approach to a building/approach area to temple precinct”, and more likely “overseer of the gateway/entrance”.\(^4\) K. Piehl in his article on another monument of ḫr-ỉr-ʿȝ translated this term as “the overseer of the warehouse”.\(^5\) K. Jansen-Winkeln in his comment on this title\(^6\) refers to its connection with the police and judicial administration. The title was carried by some of the senior officials of the Late Period;\(^7\) it can be translated here as “the overseer of the administration”, since the royal tutor has to be chosen among the administrative officials, who are well qualified to train the royal princes.\(^8\)


\(^3\) Wb. II. 407, 13-14.


\(^5\) K. Piehl, *loc. cit.*


\(^7\) For a list of these officials, see R. el-Sayed, *BIFAO* 74, 1974, p. 34 (6).

\(^8\) C.H. Roehrig, The Eighteenth Dynasty Titles Royal Nurse (mn’t nswt), Royal Tutor (mn’ nswt), and Foster Brother/Sister of the Lord of the Two Lands (swmtn mn’ nb ḫtwy), UMI Dissertation Services, 1990, p. 25-33.
c. Commonly used masculine name during the Late Period.9

d. Hor-ir-aa was contemporary with three kings of the 26th dynasty, Necho II (𓊧𓊥𓊧), Psammetichus II (𓊧𓊥𓊧), and Apries (𓊧𓊥𓊧). According to H. De Meulenaere,10 his “beautiful name” might have been Whm-ib-Rʿ-nfr under the reign of Necho II; he changed it for Nfr-ib-Rʿ-nfr under Psammetichus II, but, during the reign of Apries, he used only his main name without mentioning his rn nfr.11

Front of the Base

The text goes from right to left in two horizontal lines:

\[ \text{ировки пт бтн нтт мт ст } \]

\[ \text{нбй мрй нб нбрт бтн нбрт нбрт} \]

\[ \text{нхву бтн онри Мщт } \]

\[ \text{мр(й) нбй нбрт м бтн имй-рт руьт } \text{Хр-йр-т} \]

Hereditary prince and governor, treasurer of the king of Lower Egypt, the sole and beloved companion, the eyes of the king of Upper Egypt and the ears of the king of Lower Egypt, the one who holds Maat, the beloved one of his lord, who acts according to his desire, the overseer of the ruwt-administration, Hor-ir-aa.

e. For other examples dating from the New Kingdom, see R. el-Sayed, “À propos de la statue de Pasar CG 630 au musée du Caire”, BIFAO 80, 1980, p. 227 (l); dating from the Late Period, see U. Rössler-Köhler, Individuelle Haltungen zum ägyptischen Königtum der Spätzeit, GOF 21, 1991, p. 16-17, p. 45 (B3.2).

f. This epithet refers, in my opinion, to the role played by the official during the offering of Mȝʿt by the king in temples, probably responsible for carrying the divine figure of the goddess Mȝʿt. There are only eight cases known till now for non-royal individuals who hold and present a figure of the goddess Mȝʿt in ancient Egyptian art.12

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9 PN I, 246, 4; also see K. Jansen-Winkel, MDAIK 52, 1996, p. 197.
11 See his Louvre bronze group AF 1670, his canopic jars, his offering table. For a detailed discussion on this point, see R. el-Sayed, BIFAO 74, 1974, p. 34 (7); K. Jansen-Winkel, MDAIK 52, 1996, p. 197.
Right Side of the Base

The text is continued facing the right side, but the signs here are taller and slender:

→

\[ wḏ ḥm.f rdỉt twwt \] 遁nw ḏtyw ḥwwt nṯrw nbw šms(w) twt nw nsw
mn m(r(w)t tm br r nb.i mr(y) m.ỉ ḥm.f m bw nb m.ỉ ȝ(t)-n mr.f wi rnn(w) ]

His Majesty ordered to erect the statues of the everlasting of all temples, following the king’s statues, in order to be not far from my beloved master. I was His Majesty’s companion in every place because he loves me, the tutor.

g. twt: this is the archaic word for the statue of a god, a king, or an official, made of any material.13 From the New Kingdom onwards, it could also refer to a block statue14 or a cult statue of the king.15 In the New Kingdom this term together with ḏtyw16 and snn,17 is used to designate the naophorus statues.

h. ḏtyw: nisbe- adjective from ḏt, meaning “eternity”,18 so ḏtyw are those of eternity (the everlasting), or those of Osiris, it is used here to describe a certain type of temple statues; according to the text they will be placed behind the king’s statues. This term (ḏtyw) is mentioned only once in Pyramid Texts: ḏtyw ḥwwt nṯrw nbw šms(w) twt nw nsw.

i. m.ỉ ȝ(t)-n: compound preposition more rarely used than n.ỉ ȝ(t)-n;20 it has the meaning of “in as much as”, “because”, and is often used in connection with the verb mr.21

j. The verb rnn means “to nurse the young god (or king)”,22 and is usually written with the determinative which represents a sitting woman holding a child. Here the word is a title as it appears on other monuments of Ḥr-ỉr-ʿȝ as rnn nb ʿȝw or with different parallel words such as ṣdỉ nswt, mnʿ bỉty; these three titles refer to the function of tutor of the royal

child.24

13 P. Wilson, OLA 78, 1997, p. 1132.
16 Wb. III, 385, 3-10; P. Wilson, OLA 78, 1997, p. 773.
17 P. Wilson, OLA 78, 1997, p. 865.
**Left Side of the Base**

When the king himself saw these statues in front of them, as a holy image, he ordered to pour water before the Majesty of the Horus Menekh-ib, as much as he rewarded me in my place (=my office) more than anyone. Earlier, His Majesty appointed me as a chief who commands those who were witnesses, while coming after giving the road to the people (=direct them through the ceremony).

k. hr.sn: I think the suffix pronoun refers to the gods’ statues or royal figures erected in the temple, where our base had once been.

l. sšm: form or figure, it refers in general to the god’s image.

m. Horus name of Psammetichus II.

n. Only the left part of the sign hs is still preserved. We may also note that the writing of the dependant pronoun as represents the Old Egyptian writing of this pronoun.

o. Graphic transposition between the signs and for aesthetic reasons.

p. m du₂t: adverb of time meaning “early” or “in the morning”, the damaged part was probably occupied by the determinative.

q. rdi m hr n: an expression found since the Middle Egyptian, with the meaning of “to command someone”.

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25 Wb. IV, 295, 14.

26 E. Edel, Ältestägyptische Grammatik, §166.


29 Wb. II, 468, 4.
His Majesty <stood> before them (=the royal statues) and glorified his kȝw, near the bȝ of the humble, lengthening his years for ever, as king of Upper and Lower Egypt.

r. swȝš kȝw.f: the verb swȝš means “to adore/worship by using a praise formula”. It usually has a determinative in the form of a standing person in a gesture of adoration (A 30). It is always connected with other words expressing worship such as “dwȝ”, which is not mentioned in this text. I believe that the king starts to glorify his own statues so that the statue of Ḥr-ỉr-ʿȝ, which is placed nearby, will also benefit from the favour of the god.

s. hr bȝ n bȝk: as the bȝ is “the personification of vital forces… of the deceased”, it can be considered that the ceremony performed before the statue of Ḥr-ỉr-ʿȝ will help his bȝ “to come into existence”. The preposition means here “near”. The official wants to focus on the existence of his statue and secondly he lays stress on the great benefit he will get as a result of its excellent position.

t. swȝḥ rnpwt.f: The expression is well known, meaning “to make prosperous years”. The regular writing of the verb since Middle Kingdom is , with the meaning of “to endure”, “to lengthen”.

To sum up our comments, we can notice that the text mostly relies on Old and Middle Egyptian in writing as well as orthography, that the determinatives in most cases are omitted, that signs are replaced by others. All these features are characteristic of the Egyptian writing in the Late Period, more specially of the archaism, which prevailed in art, writing and language in the time of the Kushite and Saite Dynasties.
Provenance

The provenance of the base is questionable, one could assume that it comes from one of the numerous sanctuaries where Twenty-Sixth Dynasty material was found, for example Saïs, the dynastic chief city, or Memphis where Ḥr-ỉr-ʿȝ has already left some monuments.39

K. Jansen-Winkeln40 registered the discovered monuments of Ḥr-ỉr-ʿȝ; we can add a monument published by O. Perdu, leading to the following list:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objects</th>
<th>Provenance</th>
<th>Bibliography</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 Lower part of a naophorus statue Cairo CG 658</td>
<td>Sais</td>
<td>R. el-Sayed, <em>Documents relatifs à Sais et ses divinités</em>, <em>BdE</em> 69, 1969, p. 93-108, pl. XII-XIII.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Offering table Louvre D65</td>
<td>Saqqâra</td>
<td>PM III² 2, 1979, p. 588.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Socle Stockholm NME 43</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>PM III² 2, 1979, p. 588.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Canopic Jars</td>
<td>Saqqâra</td>
<td>PM III² 2, 1979, p. 588.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Wooden coffin</td>
<td>Saqqâra</td>
<td>PM III² 2, 1979, p. 588.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Tomb</td>
<td>Saqqâra</td>
<td>PM III² 2, 1979, p. 588.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the above table, Ḥr-ỉr-ʿȝ has seven statues discovered at various sites. Two of them represent the owner presenting a naos, one shows Ḥr-ỉr-ʿȝ standing, another one kneeling with a space before his feet for the inscriptions like the base under consideration. Four of the six statues were certainly discovered in temples.

This statue quite certainly dates back to the reign of King Psammetichus II. As for the type of the statue, which once stood upon this base, one can conclude that, it is most probably a kneeling statue of Ḥr-ỉr-ʿȝ, holding a divine symbol or bearing a naos with a god or a goddess figure, like Cairo CG 807 and Cairo CG 658 belonging to the same owner. According to the text inscribed on the base, it has been erected in a temple together with statues of King Psammetichus II. The text also explains how Horiraa, as a royal tutor, was respected and loved by this king.

41 A large number of the 26th Dynasty statues are shaped in this position even holding or not a divine symbol, e.g.: H. De Meulenaere, BIFAO 60, 1960, pls.XI-XIII; H. De Meulenaere, BIFAO 63, 1965, pl. 4; R. El-Sayed, BIFAO 74, 1974, pls. VI-VII; R. El-Sayed, BIFAO 77, 1977, pls. XVI-XVII; H. Satzinger, Das Kunsthistorische Museum in Wien. Die Ägyptisch-Orient-

42 About the naophoros statue, which can be traced back to the second half of 18th Dynasty and is widely represented throughout the Late Period, see J. Vandier, Manuel d’archéologie égyptienne III, Paris, 1952, p. 460-470; J.A. Josephson, M.M. Eldamaty, op. cit., pls. 4, 21, 33, 36, 47, 49; B.V. Bothmer, ESLP, 1960, figs. 6-7, 57-59, 83, 87, 98-99, 100, 106-108, 123, 134, 139, 155; B.V. Bothmer, “Apotheosis in Late Egyptian sculpture”, in M.E. Cody (cd), Egyptian Art. Selected Writings of Bernard V. Bothmer, New York, 2004, figs. 16.6, 16.27, 16.29.
FIG. 1. Cairo N 9107; upper surface of the base.

FIG. 2. Facsimile.
Fig. 3. Cairo N 9107; front of the base.

Fig. 4. Facsimile.

Fig. 5. Cairo N 9107; right side of the base.

Fig. 6. Facsimile.
A GRANITE STATUE BASE OF ḤR-ỉr-ʿȝ (CAIRO N 9107)

FIG. 7. Cairo N 9107; left side of the base.

FIG. 8. Facsimile.

FIG. 9. Cairo N 9107; back side of the base.

FIG. 10. Facsimile.