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A Headless Block Statuette of the XXVIth Dynasty (CGC 941)

NOHA SHALABY

This article deals with the inscribed block statuette CGC 941 kept in the basement of the Egyptian Museum in Cairo.¹ No precise provenance is mentioned in the registers (SR 573), however the statuette belongs to a priest called Pastjenef who presumably lived in Thebes as could be inferred from the citation of “Amun of Karnak” in his title ḫm-nṯr Ỉmn m ṭpr-swt. He is most probably the same priest of Amun mentioned in Brooklyn Papyrus 47.218.3 who lived during the early part of the XXVIth dynasty. The statuette displays a rare XXVIth dynasty occurrence of the title bry-sštȝ n mnḥt ṣpṣ nt b’tw-nṯr, which had been already attested in few examples from the XXIIInd dynasty. In accordance with the hieroglyphic text, which is transcribed by Borchardt in his Catalogue Général (CGC 941),² some brief references to this statuette are found in egyptological literature.³

General Description

The statuette is made of grey granite. It measures 30 cm in height, 18 cm in width, and 17 cm in depth. It depicts a man sitting with his arms crossed over the knees, which are drawn up to shoulder level. The statuette is not in a good state of preservation; head and feet are missing,
left leg and base are partly damaged. Much of the surface is slightly eroded, especially at the front. However, none had affected the clarity of the back and the preserved front inscriptions, which are perfectly shown.

Unlike the usual type of block statues, in which the subject is entirely wrapped in a cloak as a formless mass, the statuette CGC 941 reflects a natural appearance of the body. It shows the figure with the upper part of the body exposed wearing a long, tight and smooth skirt, which, in profile, transparently reveals the shape of the legs and nearly reaches to the ankles. The limbs are free from the cubic structure with bare arms freely modeled three-quarters in the round and feet were left uncovered. Bothmer commented on this type of block statues since the appearance of its prototype in the Middle Kingdom until the beginning of the 1st century BC. He quoted that it was frequent in the XXVth and early XXVIth dynasties, and added that it was abandoned by the end of Psamtik I’s reign to be revived in the IVth century BC. However, Perdu noted recently that examples of this type were attested in the XXVIth dynasty after Psamtik I until the reign of Apries.

Pastjenef was most probably wearing a simple shoulder-length plain wide bag wig, the bottom of which is apparent above the rectangular back pillar. A close view to the top of the latter shows that it extends very slightly beyond the wig surface level, a feature assigned to sculptures of the XXVth and the beginning of XXVIth dynasties.

The right arm crosses over the left. The left hand lies open with palm down while the clenched right one holds a folded kerchief. Block statues holding kerchief are well known since the New Kingdom till the beginning of the XXVth dynasty as it was noted recently by Perdu. But, as Bothmer had stated, the type of CGC 941—torso, arms and feet bare while legs transparently covered—grasping the kerchief are only attested under Psamtik I. In fact, the examples gathered by Perdu attributed to the XXVth dynasty showed only one exact parallel of the type under discussion: the statuette JE 36993 dated by Bothmer to the XXVth dynasty, and in a more recent study to the XXVIth dynasty (reign of Psamtik I).

The short garment is secured at the waist by a band or belt surmounted by a motif. The latter consists of very small vertical adjacent loop shapes. This pattern, found on a number of seated and standing figures, either above the waistband of a skirt or upon the chest area forming the edges of a mantle wrapped around the body, is unusual for a garment on a block statue. It made its debut in the Middle Kingdom and continued to be employed in the costumes on sculptures.

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4 For examples of the prototype dating to the Middle Kingdom, see B. Fay, “Padihor’s Block Statue”, BES 17, 2007, p. 68, n. 11.
7 B.V. Bothmer, *ESLP*, p. 5.
8 See O. Perdu, op. cit., p. 100, 102, n. 16-21.
10 O. Perdu, op. cit., p. 102, n. 17.
11 B.V. Bothmer, in C. Berger et al. (ed.), *Hommages à Jean Leclant II*, p. 67.
from the New Kingdom, the Third Intermediate Period down to the XXVIth dynasty.\textsuperscript{13} In fact, the figure would appear to be a nude sculpture if it were not for the belt with the clear motif visible from the sides and the back, and the bottom edge of the skirt that is evident in the right side. Finally, Pastjenef is seated on a very low round cushion, which was particularly recurrent at the end of the XXVth and the beginning of the XXVIth dynasty.\textsuperscript{14}

**Texts**

The front of the skirt bears five neatly framed lines of hieroglyphic inscriptions, of which the beginning of last three are partly damaged. The back pillar is carved with two columns of inscriptions.

A. **Upon the skirt at the front**

\[\text{[FIG. II & IV a]}\]

\[1\] ḥtp-di-nswt Ỉmn-Rʿ nb ns(w)t ḫwy psd.ttf
\[2\] di.f pr nb\textsuperscript{b} br wdlhsfn ṛ nb n k: n ḥm-ntr
\[3\] Ỉmn bry-st\textsuperscript{c} (n) mnht ṯpst nt b w-ntr\textsuperscript{d}
\[4\] […]Ỉmn/Ỉmn-Rʿ? ḫsr-st\textsuperscript{e} P(ȝ).s-tnf\textsuperscript{f}
\[5\] […] Ḥr-sȝ-ȝst\textsuperscript{g}

\[1\] A boon which the king gives (to) Amun-Re, lord of the thrones of the two lands and (to) his Ennead, \[2\] that he may give all what appear upon his offering table of every day to the ka of the prophet of \[3\] Amun, the chief of the secrets of the august clothing of the divine image \[4\] […] Amun/Amun-Re? Sacred of Place, Pastjenef\textsuperscript{i} […] Hor)siese.

\[13\] For examples of the motif under discussion, see B. Hornemann, *Types of Ancient Egyptian Statuary*, Copenhagen, 1951-1969, I, p. 170; II, p. 396; IV, p. 1001 (for the Middle Kingdom); Types I, p. 178; II, p. 354; III, p. 590 (for the New Kingdom); Types III, p. 746 (for the Third Intermediate Period). A parallel to this motif from the XXVIth dynasty can be shown through the statue from Berlin 17271, which represents a man seated on a chair with a low back in which the motif is clearly shown on the edges of the mantle upon the chest area, see B. Hornemann, *Types III*, p. 764.

Comments


d. Apart from the statuette CGC 941, the title *ḥry-sȝt* (*n*) *mnḥt ḫnṯ nṯr* is encountered on few examples dating to the XXIIInd dynasty, see K. Jansen-Winkeln, *Ägyptische Biographien der 22. und 23. Dynastie*, p. 175-176. For other priestly titles related to clothes such as *hm-nṯr mnḥt* and *wʿb mnḥt*, cf. R. El-Sayed, “Au sujet de la statue Caire CG. 662”, *BIFAO* 77, 1977, p. 106; W.A. Ward, “The Date of the Reused False Door of Nfrtm-m-wꜣf at Saqqâra”, *JEA* 70, 1984, p. 89. For *ḥnṯ nṯr* translated as “image of the god” when clothing is involved, see R. El-Sayed, “À propos de la statue de Pasar CG. 630 au musée du Caire”, *BIFAO* 80, 1980, p. 216 (w).


f. The name *Pȝ.s-ṯnf* is a variant of *Pȝ-ṯnf* (or its complete form *Pȝ-(n-)ṯnf*) attested from the XXIIInd dynasty onwards, *PN* I, p. 121, no. 14, p. 128, no. 20; II, p. 357. For the sign ☐ used in this name (with an added diacritical tick) repeated on the left column of the back pillar, see D. Meeks, *Les architraves du temple d’Esna. Paléographie, Palhier* 1, 2004, p. 200 (§ 546).

g. The suggestion of *[Ḥr]-sȝ-ȝst* (*PN* I, p. 250, no. 13) as father of *Pȝ.s-ṯnf* is that of R.A. Parker (*A Saite Oracle Papyrus*, p. 25).
B. Texts on the back pillar

[FIG. III & IV b]

\[\text{[1] nṯr-nỉwty} \quad n \text{ ḫm-nṯr ḫmn m ḫpt-swt hry-stt; (n) mnḥt ṣpṣ nt hʾw-nṯr imy-st-}
\[\text{[2] (nt-)ʾ} \quad n pꜣ ḫtp ʿȝ wʾb (n) pr ḫmn ḫr sȝ 3-nw Pꜣ.s-šnf ḫt ḫt kꜣ.f m-bȝḥ.f ḫw ny-pw}

[1] (O) the local god of the prophet of Amun at Karnak, chief of the secrets of the august clothing of the divine image, the imy-st-[2] (nt-)ʾ (functionary in charge) of the great and pure offering table of the temple of Amun at the 3rd phyle, Pastjenef, place (yourself) behind (him), at the time that his ka is before him, it is a Heliopolitan!

Comments

a. The Saite Formula nṯr-nỉwty (n) NN ḫt ḫt kꜣ.f m-bȝḥ.f ḫw ny-pw, encountered almost exclusively on the back pillar of various types of statues, is a short text including a common appeal of the owner of the statuette to the local deity; on this formula, see K. Jansen-Winkeln, SAK 28, 2000, p. 83-124.


c. On the title imy-st-(nt-)ʾ n pꜣ ḫtp ʿȝ wʾb n pr ḫmn, which started to be held by the priests of Thebes in the Third Intermediate Period and continued to be used up to the Ptolemaic Period, see J. Quaegebeur, “La table d’offrandes grande et pure d’Amon”, RdE 45, 1994, p. 155-173.

General Commentary

The statuette owner Pastjenef, son of Horsiese, served as a priest of Amun in the 3rd phyle at Karnak where he was in charge of the costumes used to envelop the statue of Amun-Re during the daily rituals. He was also responsible for the great and pure offering table.

The statuette CGC 941 had been merely dated through the texts by Jansen-Winkeln to the XXVIth dynasty.\[15\] However, Bothmer’s general iconographical remark as regards the kerchief (\textit{supra}) had presented a more precise dating criterion. Accordingly, the statuette is most probably dated to the reign of Psamtik I, which corresponds with the date of the procession stated in the Brooklyn Papyrus 47.218.3.

Though at a casual glance this fragmentary example would seem very common among the sculptures of the Late Period, it is a significant piece of Saite art since it displays three points of particular interest. The first is the title (ḥry-st₂ (n) mnḥt ṣpst nt b’w-nṯr) inscribed twice on the statuette for being rarely encountered in general, and being unusual on the sculptures of the XXVIth dynasty in particular. The second is (dṣr-st), which undoubtedly refers to the small temple of Medinet Habu. This gives a possibility that the owner of this statuette could be among the personnel taking part in the Decade Festival, to which there was a rare reference from the XXVIth dynasty. The third is the motif above the waistband employed in costumes on sculptures since the Middle Kingdom. However, it is a rare instance, on which this motif was shown on a block statue.

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16 Cl. Traunecker et al., La chapelle d’Achôris à Karnak II, p. 131; M. Doresse, RdE 31, 1979, p. 42.
A HEADLESS BLOCK STATUETTE OF THE XXVIth DYNASTY (CGC 941)
**FIG. II.** Front of the Block Statuette (CGC 941).
FIG. III. Back of the Block Statuette (CGC 941).
A Headless Block Statuette of the XXVIth Dynasty (CGC 941).

FIG. IVa-b. Block Statuette (CGC 941).