

Object Analysis

The chosen object for this analysis is figure four from Egypt. The object is from the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. The figure is a statuette with an inscription for Harsiese the High Priest of Memphis in the Third Intermediate Period. For this analysis, many things should be considered including the form and substance of the object, as well as the inscriptions and other details like the purpose behind the statuette. The object was purchased in 1968 by Nicolas Koutoulakis for a museum in Geneva.

Figure 4: <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/552927>

The statuette is inscribed on both the front and back with hieroglyphs dedicated to the High Priest of Memphis, Harsiese from the Third Intermediate Period (The Met 150). The front is translated to "The Lunmutef Priest Harsiese, True voi(ce)" (The Met 150). The back is translated to "The Sem Priest, greatest of the directors of craftsman. The great official, Harsiese true (of voice) (The Met 150).

The object with the inscribed back for Harsiese High Priest of Memphis is sixteen inches tall, eight inches in width and four inches in diameter (The Met 150). The statuette is made from sandstone and greywacke, (The Met 150) which is a grey earthy rock and a variety of sandstone. It can be characterized by its hardness and colour.

There are degrees of completeness on the statuette. It can be seen on the right hand that there is a relatively large chip, taking out most of the hand excluding the fingers. Chips have also occurred across the back of the statuette where the hieroglyphs are, as well as the bottom of the statuette where there is a clear break which is very noticeable on the left side. There are scratches across the whole statuette and the object has signs of wear although it is in a relatively good condition.

In terms of where the statuette was built, it is believed to be from Levant or Byblos during the Third Intermediate period (The Met 150). It is also thought that the Middle Kingdom statuette was from the Early New Kingdom in the twelfth to eightieth dynasty (1981-1550 B.C.E) (The Met 150).

The Third Intermediate period (1069-525 B.C.E) followed the New Kingdom of Egypt and preceded the Late Period (Mark, 2016). The difference between the first two periods and the third period is number of scholars (Mark, 2016). This helped characterize the era as the end of the Egypt's history and the collapse of the Egyptian culture (Mark, 2016).

The object has been handled with care due to the statuette being in such good condition for an ancient object. The few chips, marks and breaks it has obtained makes the object in good condition compared to other ancient figures. The statuette may have been for both religious and decoration purposes. We can say this as it was a statuette for the High Priest Harsiese, and the inscriptions are dedicated to him. The inscriptions praise him in their religion and his leading position as the High Priest. Harsiese was a High Priest of Ptah in Memphis during the twenty-first dynasty (Kitchen K.A, 1996). The priest was said to be a contemporary of Pharaoh Psusennes I (Kitchen K.A, 1996). This suggests that Harsiese was a very powerful individual, with a lot of influence and would have been high on the social ladder.

The community that made the object must have valued and respected the high priest to create the statuette. He was probably extremely important figure of the community, if not one of the most important. This can be said as he was a high-ranking priest. As it was most likely to be an ornament the statuette was most likely to be for exhibition purposes, we can suggest this due to it not having any day to do purposes and it is dedicated to the high priest. As it would be displayed, it was not meant to be held or touched but admired. The statuette could have been for memorial or commemorative purposes as the inscription on the object praises the high priest Harsiese. This was not an object designed to be practical or useful in everyday life however, it was used to display to others in the higher social classes.

Bibliography

Kitchen, K.A. 1996, *The Third Intermediate Period in Egypt (1100-650 B.E)*. Third Edition. Aris and Philips Limited.

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