



**Mansoura University**  
**Faculty of Tourism and Hotels**

**A HEADLESS SEATED STATUE AT ISMAILIA MUSEUM:  
(No. 2597)**

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— A Headless Seated Statue at Ismailia —  
Museum: (No. 2597)

تمثال جالس بدون رأس بمتحف الإسماعيلية : (رقم ٢٥٩٧)

الملخص:

البحث يركز على نشر تمثال جالس مفقود الرأس، وعلى الرغم من فقدان الرأس وجزء من الرقبة وقطعة من العمود الداعم، إلا أن التمثال محفوظاً بشكل جيد. كان هذا التمثال محفوظاً بالمتحف المصري فى السابق تحت رقم (JE.37213 □ SR. 399) وحالياً معروضاً بمتحف الإسماعيلية تحت رقم: (No.2597) ، التمثال يصور شخص جالس فى الهيئة الأوزيرية ممسكاً برموز العصا والمذبة وهى رموز الملكية المصرية القديمة، علاوة على ذلك، ظهر التمثال بلحية طويلة، تشير إلى الألوهية، ويوجد نقش هيروغليفي أفقي على قاعدة التمثال.

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى توثيق وعرض لهذه القطعة الأثرية الغير منشورة سابقاً. كما يهدف إلى الكشف عن هوية الشخص الجالس بالهيئة الأوزيرية مع تقديم ترجمة للنص الهيروغليفي المسجل على قاعدة التمثال. ويسعى البحث إلى التحقق من موقع إكتشاف التمثال الأصلي. بالإضافة لتحديد الفترة الزمنية لهذا التمثال من خلال تسليط الضوء على السمات الفنية التى تميز بها هذا التمثال، جنباً إلى جنب مع المقارنة مع بعض التماثيل التى تعود إلى فترة العصر المتأخر للوقوف على أوجه التشابه والإختلاف فيما بينهم وإبراز السمات الفنية التى يتميز بها فن النحت فى تلك الفترة.

كما تناول البحث أهمية تصوير الإلهتين إيزيس ونفتيس على جانبي التمثال ودورهما لتوفير الحماية والدعم، كما يتناول البحث التعليق على كلا من:

رمزية وضع الجلوس، ووضع الأيدي المتقاطع على صدر التمثال، والتاج الذى كان من المفترض أن يرتديه التمثال، بالإضافة الى التعليق على قلادة الأوسخ "Wsh" وعصا الحكم "hk3" والمذبة "nh3h3" ولون مادة الصنع، ومع تناول مقترح لرأس تم الكشف عنها مع التمثال لتكون هى الرأس الخاصة بالتمثال محل الدراسة، هذا وقد تناول البحث العلاقة الوطيدة بين المعبود أوزيريس وحاعبى وفيضان نهر النيل.

#### الكلمات الدالة:

تمثال بدون رأس، أوزوريس، حاعبى، العصر المتأخر، متحف الإسماعيلية، خبيئة الكرنك، الفيضان، النحت.

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**Abstract:**

The research concentrates on studying and publishing a headless seated statue that is presently on display at the Ismailia Museum (No. 2597). This study aims to unveil the identity of the represented individual in the Osirian form and provide a copy, translation and commentary on the hieroglyphic text and to ascertain the statue's original discovery location. The study also aims to conclude the period of this headless statue by analyzing its artistic features and comparing it to some statues from the Late Period in order to highlight the similarities and differences between those statues' features and the advantages of that era's sculptural art. The research sheds light on the symbolism of seating position of statue, the position of the two hands, the proposed crown, and statue's attributes: *wsh*-collar and crook "*hk3*" and flail "*nh3h3*", material's color, emphasizing the significance of the depiction of the two deities Isis and Nephthys and their role in safeguarding the statue, a suggestion of a head found with this statue in Karnak Cache to be its head and the association between Osiris, the Nile and inundation.

**Key words:** Headless Statue, Osiris, H<sup>c</sup>py, Late Period, Ismailia Museum, Karnak Cache, Inundation, Sculpture.

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### **Introduction:**

The headless statue represents a seated individual in the Osirian form according to the Ismailia Museum records<sup>1</sup>. Aside from the missing of its head, neck, and a portion of the supporting pillar, the statue is remarkably well-preserved. The statue was registered in Egyptian Museum's records with the number (JE.37213 □ SR. 399) and currently displays at Ismailia Museum (No. 2597).

The headless seated statue was once thought to be crafted from schist according to the Ismailia Museum archives<sup>2</sup>. However, after reviewing Legrain's findings, it was determined that this statue was actually made of basalt. The initial records of the Egyptian Museum, where the statue was originally housed, were also investigated and reviewed by the study and indicating that this headless seated statue was examined and polished before being transferred to the Ismailia Museum confirmed that the statue was actually made of basalt. This statue is roughly 33 cm high and 13 cm wide. It goes back to the Late Period.

It is worth noting that the Ismailia Museum archive does not precisely indicate where the statue was discovered. In

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<sup>1</sup>This headless statue represents a seated figure of Osiris. The date of its discovery was deduced by comparing Legrain's excavation in 1904 (campaign 1903-1904) and the JE number (registration at the Museum in the last batch of the first campaign in July 1904). According to the K-sequence, it is highly likely that this Osiris statue was discovered on April 24, 1904. For more; Coulon, L., "la Cachette de Karnak. Nouvelles perspectives sur les découvertes de G. Legrain", *BdE* 161 (2016), p.89-129.

<sup>2</sup>Ismailia Museum Records: No.2597.

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regards to the statue's discovering, a detailed examination of the Egyptian Museum's records revealed that the statue was found in the excavations of the Karnak Cache that carried out by Georges Legrain. The excavations of the Karnak Cache were among the most fascinating findings in Egyptian archeology. More than eight hundred statues, many assorted paintings and various types of furniture and close to seventeen thousand bronze statues were found across four campaigns between 1903 and 1907. All of these findings constitute vital documentation of religious life at Karnak<sup>3</sup>.

This study begins a comprehensive examination of the statue and a comparative analysis with some similar statues that were discovered during the expedition that Legrain discovered in the Karnak cache.

The Karnak Cache had an enormous number of stone statues portraying deities and monarchs. Within this wide group, statues of kings were represented more than deities. The divine statues were of many gods, such as: Amun, Mut, Khonsu, Ptah, and the child Horus. However, Osiris stands out as the most represented deity, with over thirty statues or stone objects within the divine collection. This number of Osiris statues illustrates the dominance and development of his worship inside the Karnak temple. More than 30 statues of Osiris were discovered, complete or in parts, made of

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<sup>3</sup>Coulon, *BdE* 161, (2016), p. 220; Masson-Berghoff, A., *Statues in Context Production, meaning and (re)uses*, Paris, 2019, p. 209.

limestone or schist, and are now displayed in the Cairo Museum and other museums<sup>4</sup>.

This headless seated statue reflects the artistic characteristics common to statues of the god Osiris in the Late Period. Most sculptures during this period, whether of gods, kings or private individuals, were crafted from hard stone. This seated statue adopts the position of a person resting upright on a roughly cubic-shaped block serving as a seat, with neither foot advanced. This type of sculpture was occasionally made for single figures until the time of Psamtik I and for groups until the reign of Necho II, 26<sup>th</sup> Dynasty<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>4</sup>Bothmer, B.V., *Egyptian Sculpture of the Late Period. 700 BC to AD 100*, New York, 1960, p. 48.

<sup>5</sup>During the Late Period, the development of sculpture in Egypt followed a distinct trajectory. The impact of consecutive dynasties, wars, and occupations had limited effects on the native cultural life. Following the disruptive periods of invasion, there was a revival of sculpture, particularly under the Kushite kings who crafted statues resembling those from the Middle Kingdom. Statuettes created during the twenty-fifth dynasty reflected the excellence of earlier periods, marking the dominance of Kushite sculpture in Egyptian art. This influence persisted, with sculpture continuing and evolving until the end of the ancient civilization. In the late period, there was a notable shift in the function of statuary. Sculptures were primarily placed in temples for public viewing by worshippers. Consequently, efforts were made to enhance the facial features of statuettes, adding a personalized touch to reflect the character and inner life of the subject, see: Bothmer, *Egyptian Sculpture of the Late Period*, p. xii-xiii; Raven, M.J., "Papyrus-sheaths and Ptah-Sokar-Osiris statues", *OMRO* 59-60 (1978-9), p. 283; Steele, Ph., *Ancient Egypt*, New York, 2002, p. 12; Enany, A., "Three Papyrus Sheaths of Priestesses of Amun", *JEA* 107, Issue 1-2 (2021), p. 168.

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**The Description of Headless Seated Statue:**

**Owner:** God Osiris (Fig. 1, 2, 3, 4).

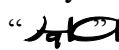

**Previous location:** Egyptian Museum (No. JE.37213/SR.399)

**Current location:** Ismailia Museum (No. 2597)

**Material:** Basalt.

**Date:** Late Period.

**Measurements:** Height: 33cm & width: 13cm.

The seated statue of Osiris is a revered artifact associated with the deity of the underworld from the Late Period. Despite missing its head, neck, and part of the supporting pillar, this statue remains remarkably well preserved.<sup>6</sup> Osiris represents on a low-backed throne<sup>7</sup>. The figure is dressed in a form-fitting robe, which could symbolize a mummified shroud and representing his connection to the afterlife. His two arms are chained close to his body and projecting from his wrappings to hold the crook  in his right hand and the flail  in his left hand, which are ancient Egyptian kingship emblems<sup>8</sup>. His feet and legs are likewise joined. The figure is dressed with a broad collar, known as the “wsx-collar”, typically worn by

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<sup>6</sup>Harris, J.R., *Lexicographical Studies in Ancient Egyptian Minerals*. Akademie Verlag, Berlin, 1961, p. 262; Lucas, A., & Harris, J.R., *Ancient Egyptian Materials and Industries*, London, 1962, p. 523; Penny, N., *The Materials of Sculpture*, New Haven, 1993, p. 318; Nicholson, P.T., & Shaw, I., *Ancient Egyptian Materials and Techniques*, New York, 2000, p. 702.

<sup>7</sup>Fischer, H.G., “Stuhl”, *LÄ* 6 (1986), p. 92-99.

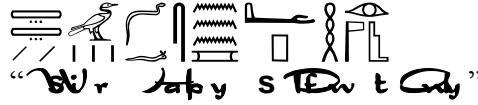
<sup>8</sup>Wilkinson, R.H., *Symbol & Magic in Egyptian Art*, London, 1994, p. 108-109.



both deities and mummies for protective purposes<sup>9</sup>. Despite the damage to the chin, the statue is adorned with a long-carved beard, serving as a symbol of divinity<sup>10</sup>. On both side of the statue are the depictions of the two deities Isis and Nephthys.

### Inscription:

A horizontal text is engraved on the base of the statue in front of the foot. The texts are sunken reliefs and its direction from right to left. The text reads as follows:



“Osiris, Inundation, endowment of two lands”

### Commentary:

#### Osiris:

Osiris was originally venerated as the deity of fertility and agriculture<sup>11</sup>. Osiris was named firstly *Asari* and he appeared as a man headed god. “*nd.ty*” of Busiris<sup>12</sup>, another god of fertility, was one of the very primitive forms of Osiris and his name was well attested in the Pyramid Texts<sup>13</sup>.

<sup>9</sup>George. H., *The Routledge Dictionary of Egyptian Gods and Goddesses*, 2nd edition, New York, 2006, p. 114-124.





<sup>10</sup>Steele, *Ancient Egypt*, p.12; Wilkinson, R.H., *The Complete Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt*, London, 2003, p. 118, 121.


<sup>11</sup>Wilkinson, *Gods and Goddesses*, p. 118; Wilkinson, T.A.H., *The Thames and Hudson Dictionary of Ancient Egypt*, London: Thames & Hudson, 2005, p. 179.

<sup>12</sup>Wb. I, p. 207.

<sup>13</sup>Pyr. utt.364, spell.614a; LGG II, p. 175-176; Wilkinson, *Gods and Goddesses*, p. 118-119; Wilkinson, *Dictionary*, p. 179.

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Osiris' name is inscribed with the sign  for a throne and followed by the sign  for an eye and eventually the sequence was reversed<sup>14</sup>. The name has many meanings, such as: “he who takes his seat or throne”; “place of creation”; “seat of the eye”; the seat that creates”: “the mighty one”<sup>15</sup>. Osiris was a member of Heliopolis' fourth generation cosmogony, “Ennead”<sup>16</sup>. His parents were Geb and Nut. Together with his siblings, Isis, Seth and Nephthys and his son, Horus, represented the components of the cosmos<sup>17</sup>. He had several religious centers; most notably Abydos “” and Busiris “” stand out as being the most significant ones<sup>18</sup>.

Osiris is traditionally depicted in human form wearing the White Crown of Upper Egypt or “-crown”. The constant aspect of the statues of Osiris was its mummified

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<sup>14</sup>Wb. I, p. 359.

<sup>15</sup>Muchiki, Y., “On the Transliteration of the Name Osiris”, *JEA* 76 (1990), p. 191-194; Griffith, J.G., “Osiris”, In: D.B. Redford, (ed.), *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt*. II, Oxford, 2001, p. 615-616.

<sup>16</sup>Clark, R.T.R., *Myth and Symbol in Ancient Egypt*, London, 1978, p. 103.

<sup>17</sup>Wilkinson, *Gods and Goddesses*, p.18.

<sup>18</sup>Abydos and Busiris; Abydos, located in Upper Egypt, is known to have an Old Kingdom temple dedicated to Osiris, as well as a symbolic place of burial of the god, known as Osirion. In Lower Egypt, Busiris located and is considered the city in which the backbone of Osiris was believed to be located and appeared in its Egyptian name with the hieroglyphic sign *ḏd*-column, one of the symbols of the god, see: Quirke, S., *Ancient Egyptian Religion*, London, 1992, p. 52, 54 and 57; Wilkinson, *Gods and Goddesses*, p. 122.

appearance with a close connected legs and this aspect emphasized its funerary significance<sup>19</sup>.

By the period of Old Kingdom, dead kings were perceived as living representations of Horus throughout their lifetimes, and after their death, they were associated with his father Osiris. Gradually, Osiris came to symbolize all deceased souls, serving as a lasting representation of resurrection and after death the kings wished to share the resurrection with him. Osiris became the ruler of the underworld and the judge of the dead by the Middle Kingdom. Similar spells known as the Book of the Dead were inscribed on papyri during the New Kingdom. The significance of Osiris in Egyptian theology is exemplified by the grand temple constructed at Abydos during the reign of Seti I<sup>20</sup>.

#### **Seating Position of Statue:**

The statue represents Osiris in a seating position on his throne. In many references, it is clear that seating position

<sup>19</sup>George, *Dictionary*, p. 114-124; Griffith, In: D.B. Redford, *The Oxford Encyclopedia*. II, p. 615.

<sup>20</sup>Roeder, G., *Ägyptische Bronzwerke, Pelizaeus-Museum zu Hildesheim*, Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichung 3, Hamburg, 1937, p. 89; Cerny, J., *Ancient Egyptian Religion*, London, 1952, p. 85-88; Faulkner, R.O., *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts translated into English*, Oxford, 1969, utt. 271 spell 388, utt. 317 spells 507-8; Bonnet, H., *Reallexikon der ägyptischen Religionsgeschichte*, Berlin, 1971, p. 620-623; Delia, D., "The Refreshing Water of Osiris", *JARCE* 29 (1992), p. 182; Wuttman, M., Coulon, L., Gombert, F., "An Assemblage of Bronze Statuettes in a Cult Context: The Temple of "Ayn Manâwir", In: M. Hill (ed.), *Gifts for the Gods: Images from Egyptian Temples*, New York, 2007, p 167-173.

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is the intermediate stage between death and resurrection. This situation suggests a state of readiness to rise up and undertake the affairs of his life and transformation from the state of death to activating the life cycle of the human body, and here the sitting position indicates Osiris's readiness to stand for resurrection<sup>21</sup>.

**Statue's Crown:**

Despite the missing of a head, it is believed that Osiris would be wore a wig. This expectation stems from one of the earliest known depictions of Osiris. A relief on a block from the pyramid temple of the king Djedkare Isisi of the 5<sup>th</sup> Dynasty portrays a figure bearing the name of Osiris and on its head is a long wig<sup>22</sup>.

As well, Osiris would be adorned with the White Crown. The White Crown was the emblem of Upper Egypt and its predominance in Osiris's early forms indicates that the origin of Osiris is associated with Upper Egypt. However, as of the Middle Kingdom, Osiris is frequently represented wearing the white crown. Another suggestion for the statue's crown is to wear "3tf-crown", which is considered the specific crown of Osiris and through which Osiris is identified in ancient Egyptian painting. "3tf-crown" combines the Hedjet, White Crown, distinguished by two curly side feathers of ostrich, which symbolizing the truth and justice and occasionally featuring horizontal ram's horns and solar disks. All of these features are symbolizing

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<sup>21</sup>على رضوان، تاريخ الفن في العالم القديم، القاهرة، ٢٠٠٢، ص. ٩٨، ٥٠.

<sup>22</sup>For more discussion about this form, see: Griffith, In: D.B. Redford, *The Oxford Encyclopedia*. II, p. 615.

his rule over the underworld<sup>23</sup>. While Osiris is illustrated wearing various crowns, especially in later periods where these forms can be intricate and fused, but the white and *3tf*-crown persist as the standard representations<sup>24</sup>.

Because this headless statue (No. 2597) dates back to the Late Period, and after a comparative study of a number of statues of the god Osiris that date back to the same period, which will be presented in detail when examining the features of sculpture in the Late Period, it becomes clear that, *3tf*-crown is the crown that was most frequently used within Osiris' statue. It is therefore widely believed that *3tf*-crown was the crown of this headless statue.

#### **Bothmer's Proposal for Statue's Head:**

In the collection of Osiris artifacts that is discovered in the Karnak cache, a head<sup>25</sup> without a body is identified as belonging to the god Osiris. The head is displayed in Egyptian Museum (C.G. 38236). This head (Fig.5) is crafted from gray green schist<sup>26</sup> and dating back to the Late

<sup>23</sup>George, *Dictionary*, p. 114-124; Griffith, In: D.B. Redford, *The Oxford Encyclopedia*. II, p. 615.

<sup>24</sup>Griffiths, J. G., *The Origins of Osiris and His Cult*. Brill, 1980, p. 44.

<sup>25</sup>Display in Egyptian Museum C.G. 38236. The head's measurements : Height 28.7 cm. Height of face 7.7 cm. Width 14.5 cm. Depth 19.6 cm. Depth of break, neck only (horizontal) 14.5 cm. Width of break at neck (horizontal) 6.6 cm., at back pillar 9.5 cm, see: Bothmer, *Egyptian Sculpture of the Late Period*, plate. 46, fig 112,113

<sup>26</sup>In the study of ancient Egyptian artifacts, the term "schist" is used by Egyptologists, although it differs from the modern geological definition. In this context, it refers to metasedimentary rocks metagreywacke and metasiltstone. These rocks, derived from greywacke and siltstone, undergo minimal metamorphism, making

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Period. The elevated crown on his head was accompanied by the two feathers symbolizing truth, while the regal cobra gracefully extended above the forehead. A meticulously braided beard adorned the chin, secured in place by a strap<sup>27</sup>.

Bothmer first proposed that this head might be the head of a statue of the deity Osiris (No. 2597). Therefore, this head became the focus of investigation. But Bothmer's interpretation was rejected for two main reasons. Firstly, the statue's and the head's proportions were noticeably different. Secondly, the variation in manufacturing material was substantial, as the head was constructed of schist, while the headless seated statue, under examination, was built of basalt<sup>28</sup>.

**𓆎𓅓𓏏 -collar:**

The statue is adorned with broad collar, known as , "𓆎𓅓𓏏 -collar"<sup>29</sup>, typically worn by both deities and









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

them suitable for intricate carving seen in objects like palettes and vessels. Metasiltstone is sometimes misidentified as slate, and both metagreywacke and metasiltstone are occasionally mistaken for basalt. Despite potential confusion, the term "schist" is accurately applied in specific cases, such as the description of mica schist used by ancient Egyptians for crafting vessels. For more see; Aston, B.G., *Ancient Egyptian Stone Vessels: Materials and Forms*, Heidelberg Orient verlag, Heidelberg, 1994, p. 196; Harrell, J. A., "Ancient Egyptian Origins of some common Rock Names", *Journal of Geological Education* 43 (1995), p. 30-34.

<sup>27</sup>Bothmer, *Egyptian Sculpture of the Late Period*, p.57.

<sup>28</sup>Bothmer, *Egyptian Sculpture of the Late Period*, p.57, plate 46, fig 112,113.

<sup>29</sup>Wb. IV, p. 365; 16.

mummies for protective purposes (Fig.2)<sup>30</sup>. It was depicted on the statue to indicate its purity in the otherworld<sup>31</sup> and gaining a wide protection from everything that would harm in the otherworld<sup>32</sup>. The collar takes the shape of the chest widening, so it was given this name. It appeared since the 3<sup>rd</sup> Dynasty in the temple of Djoser in Heliopolis with the name of “”, not “”. The first appearance of the name of “” was in the mastaba of Mereruka. “” represented the arms of Atum, and its nine rows represent the Ennead. Chapter 108 of the Book of the Dead is devoted to this purpose as it depicts the arms of Atum, when he created the Ennead, he used to embrace them to give them life and protection<sup>33</sup>. “” was used as a basic adornment for the living, the dead, and gods. The purpose was not only for decoration, but rather it carried magical and amulet meanings. “” was fastened around the neck with a weight called  “”, meaning “to

<sup>30</sup>The -collar is attested since the 3<sup>rd</sup> Dynasty and continued until the Greco-Roman Period. It is a broad collar of several rows of beads. It is made out of different materials and they varied in shape. It frequently ends in falcon head terminals. For further, see: Handoussa, T., “Le Collier Ousekh”, *SAK* 9 (1981), p.143-144 and about the representation of -collar in burials and Egyptian funerary art during the late Greco-Roman Period, see: *Wb.* IV, 365: 16; Riggs, Ch., “Forms of the Wesekh-collar in funerary art of the Graeco-Roman Period”, *CdE* 76 (2001), fasc.151- 152, p. 57-68.

<sup>31</sup>Wiedemann, A., “Bronze Circles and Purification Vessels in Egyptian Temples”, *PSBA* 23 (1901), p. 265.

<sup>32</sup>Hermann, A., *Die Stelen der thebanischen Felsgräber der 18. Dynastie*, ÄgForsch 11, Glückstadt 1940, p. 56.

<sup>33</sup>Stahelin, E., *Untersuchungen Zur ägyptischen Tracht im Alten Reich*, MÄS 8, Berlin, 1966, p. 113ff.

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*live*<sup>34</sup>. It is placed at the end of the necklace and hangs behind the back. This weight was composed of the same materials and colors from which “*wsx*” was made. It seems that it had a magical purpose, as it appears from the characteristics given to it that it protected whoever wore it, especially its back, from harm and evil<sup>35</sup>.

**Position of Statue’s Hands (Fig.2):**

The statues can be divided into two primary forms: either seated or standing. Within each classification, distinct subcategories emerge based on the position of the hands. The hands may be arranged side by side without overlapping, with the right hand positioned above the left in a vertical orientation, or crossed over each other at the wrists.<sup>36</sup> Roeder links these various poses to specific geographical regions within Egypt: figurines featuring hands side by side are associated with Middle Egypt, those with hands stacked one above the other are linked to Lower Egypt, and those with crossed hands are found in Upper Egypt. Notably, the placement of the hands appears to be connected to broader stylistic characteristics. For instance, the shroud pulled around the shoulders to create a ridge is predominantly observed in figurines where the hands are arranged one above the other (Fig.10)<sup>37</sup>.

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<sup>34</sup>Wb. II, p. 47; 10- 12.



<sup>35</sup>سلفى كوفيل، قرايين الألهة فى مصر القديمة، ترجمة: سهير لطف الله، ٢٠١٠، ص. ١١٥.

<sup>36</sup>Wuttmann, *et al.*, In: M. Hill (ed.), *Gifts for the Gods*, p 167-173.

<sup>37</sup>Roeder, G., *Ägyptische Bronzefiguren, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin Mitteilungen aus der Ägyptischen, Sammlung 6*, Berlin, 1956, p.133



### **Crook and Flail:**

Osiris is represented with the crook “” and flail “”<sup>38</sup> (Fig.2). In ancient Egypt, the crook and flail held significant political and sociological value. The crook is believed to represent Osiris as a shepherd god. The flail’s symbolism is ambiguous. Perhaps, it is associated with shepherd’s whip, fly-whisk. Flail is believed to be associated with other deities, like: Min. The two emblems appeared with many deities, such as: the god Andjety of the ninth Nome of Lower Egypt. The two emblems are a symbol linked to Osiris, which showing his role as a divine ruler and judge of the dead<sup>39</sup>.

### **Material’s Color:**

Osiris, as a prominent deity in Egyptian mythology, is represented in various forms, each carrying symbolic significance. One depiction portrays him as a human mummy, possibly with the white skin, symbolizing mummy wrappings<sup>40</sup>, while another represents him as a green mummy, signifying themes of vegetation and fertility<sup>41</sup>. In some cases, Osiris is represented in black, symbolizing the

<sup>38</sup>Budge, E.A.W., *Osiris and the Egyptian Resurrection*. I, London, 1911, p. 31; Budge, E.A.W., *From Fetish to God in Ancient Egypt*, London, 1934, p. 189; Bonnet, *Reallexikon*, p. 572.

<sup>39</sup>*Wb.* II, p. 306.4, 11–14; Raven, *OMRO* 59–60 (1978–9), p. 283; Wilkinson, *Symbol & Magic*, p. 108-109; Griffith, In: D.B. Redford, *The Oxford Encyclopedia*. II, p. 615

<sup>40</sup>Wilkinson, *Symbol and Magic*, p.108-109.

<sup>41</sup>Wilkinson, *Symbol and Magic*, p. 109–110; Mathieu, B., “Les couleurs dans les Textes des Pyramides: approche des systèmes chromatiques”, *Égypte Nilotique et Méditerranéenne* 2, (2009), p. 26, 27.

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dark color of Nile silt<sup>42</sup>. These diverse representations highlight Osiris's multifaceted nature, reflecting different aspects of life, death, and the natural world in Egyptian belief<sup>43</sup>.

Osirian symbology is evident in the headless seated statue's color, notably in using a stone that is characterized by a black color and which was being prominent in the majority of his statues. The black color has deep symbolic meaning in ancient Egyptian civilization and Osiris, closely associated with the black color, earned the epithet “*kwt*”, signifying “The Black One”,<sup>44</sup> making it a preferred choice for depicting Osirian figures through painting<sup>45</sup>. Black has a rich symbolic meaning that includes its connections to Egypt's lush black soils and the afterlife<sup>46</sup>. All of which is seamlessly aligning with the concept of resurrection. Furthermore, the black color is a symbol of darkness and the nightly journey undertaken by the deceased Osiris<sup>47</sup>. In addition, this color was valued for its magical and

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<sup>42</sup>Raven, *OMRO* 59–60 (1978–9), p 251–296; Taylor, J. H., “Patterns of Colouring on Ancient Egyptian Coffins from the New Kingdom to the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty: An overview”, In: W.V., Davies (ed.), *Colour and Painting in Ancient Egypt*, London, 2001, p. 166.

<sup>43</sup>Wilkinson, *Symbol & Magic*, p. 108-109.

<sup>44</sup>Raven, *OMRO* 59–60 (1978–9), p 251–296.

<sup>45</sup>Taylor, In: W.V., Davies (ed.), *Colour and Painting in Ancient Egypt*, p. 166.

<sup>46</sup>Wilkinson, *Symbol and Magic*, p. 109–110; Mathieu, *Égypte Nilotique et Méditerranéenne* 2 (2009), p. 26, 27.

<sup>47</sup>*LGG* VII, p. 284.

protective properties against evil supernatural beings<sup>48</sup>. All of these symbolisms of the black color render it as the favored choice for adorning funerary statues, coffins, and various funerary artifacts and it was a tradition that gained prominence during the New Kingdom and persisted thereafter<sup>49</sup>.

### **Depiction of Isis and Nephthys:**

Isis and Nephthys provide Osiris with the protection and support. Isis protects Osiris from Seth's onslaught, searches for his body, and her sorrowful tears cause the Nile to flood. Isis transforms into a kite, along with Nephthys, to find and perform funerary rites for Osiris's body parts. Though, she couldn't find his male member initially, Isis eventually revives Osiris and conceives their child, Horus, whom she raises in a secret place. When Horus matures, he is introduced to the Ennead and asserting his claim to the throne against Seth and becoming the ruler of Egypt. The presence of both Isis and Nephthys on either side of the statue underscores their significance in the myth, symbolizing the protective and supportive roles they play alongside Osiris<sup>50</sup>.

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<sup>48</sup>Pinch, G., "Red things: The Symbolism of Colour in Magic", In: W.V. Davies (ed.), *Colour and Painting in Ancient Egypt* (London: British Museum Press, 2001), p.183.



<sup>49</sup>Enany, *JEA* 107, Issue 1-2 (2021), p.159-175.

<sup>50</sup>Dijk, J.Van., "Myth and Mythmaking Ancient Egypt", In: J. Sasson., (ed.), *Civilizations of the Ancient near East, III, 1697-1709*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1995, p. 1702.

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Isis<sup>51</sup> is frequently portrayed alongside her sister Nephthys in funerary rituals, where they serve as supporters and protectors of Osiris. Their depiction on either side of the headless seated statue underscores their essential role as defensive shields for Osiris. Isis, on the right of the statue (Fig.3), is depicted anthropomorphically, standing and raising her left hand and while her right hand was extended next to her body. She is wearing a long narrow cloak and crowned by the hieroglyph sign , “st”, symbolizing her name. Her presence confirms her crucial role in the monarchy’s succession, particularly in rituals associated with the dead. Isis is revered for her magical healing abilities, known for curing the sick and reviving the deceased. Additionally, she symbolizes motherhood, serving as a role model for all women<sup>52</sup>. While, Nephthys<sup>53</sup>, (Fig.4) is depicted on the left side in anthropomorphic form, adorned with a long, slender cloak and crowned with hieroglyphs sign representing her name , “wt - srt”. She is depicted standing and raising her right hand and while her left hand was extended next to her body. Often Nephthys paired with her sister Isis and sharing the

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<sup>51</sup>Krauss, R., “Isis”, *LÄ* 3, p.186-204; Münster, M., *Studies on the Goddess Isis*, Berlin, 1968, p. 87–89.

<sup>52</sup>Wilkinson, *Gods and Goddesses*, p.144.

<sup>53</sup>Nephthys is a goddess of birth and death in Egyptian mythology, which also represents the goddess Nut in her appearance. In the pyramid texts she was considered the “goddess of the south”; Bonnet, *Reallexikon*, p. 519–521; Rolf, F., *Ägyptische Gottheiten. 2. erweiterte und verbesserte Auflage*, R. Felde Eigenverlag, Wiesbaden, 1995, p. 41–42; Rolf, F., *Egyptian deities*, Wiesbaden 1995, p. 42.

responsibility of safeguarding the mummy and the god Osiris<sup>54</sup>.

### **Osiris and Inundation:**

The natural environment had the profound influence on religious beliefs and practices in ancient Egypt. This influence was deeply rooted in the annual flooding of the Nile River and was an essential event in the agricultural cycle that brought fertility to the land. Thus, the Nile and its inundation are considered the most important elements of life in Egypt. The ancient Egyptian associated Osiris with the Nile and inundation. When the Nile River and the flood decreased, this represented the disappearance of Osiris and lamentation and sadness spread throughout Egypt. While, when the inundation arrived, this coincided with the revival and resuscitation of Osiris and the festivities were held to commemorate that event<sup>55</sup>. Osiris was therefore considered the deity of fertility-producing floods as well as the ruler of the afterlife<sup>56</sup>.

Osiris, as the personification of the rise and fall of the Nile, possessed generative abilities. Osiris was the first to die,

<sup>54</sup>Assmann, J., *Tod und Jenseits im Alten Ägypten*, München, 2003,p.164

<sup>55</sup>Oestigaard, T., "Osiris and the Egyptian Civilization of Inundation: The Pyramids, the Pharaohs and their Water World", *A History of Water*, p.72.

<sup>56</sup>For more, see: Blackman, A.M. 1924. "The Rite of Opening the Mouth in Ancient Egypt and Babylonia", *JEA* 10/1 (1924), p. 47-59; Blackman, A.M., "Osiris or the Sun-God?", *JEA* 11/3-4 (1925), p. 201-209; Lindsay, J., *Men and Gods on the Roman Nile*. New York: Barnes & Noble, 1968; Antelme, R.S., *Becoming Osiris. The Ancient Egyptian Death Experience*, Vermont: Inner Traditions, 1998.

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and his renovation during the flood was the essence of eternal life. When the water level dropped, he was a dying god and the sowing of grain was celebrated as his burial or death. In order to raise the crops, the seed corn had to perish in the earth, and life had to reappear in the Nether World, Osiris' domain (Fig.6)<sup>57</sup>. Paul Hamlyn describes the role of Osiris by saying: “*Osiris represents the corn, vine and trees. He is also the Nile which rises and falls every year*”<sup>58</sup>.

Because of his ability to both die and resurrect, Osiris was highly revered as the principal character in Egyptian funerary belief. Since prehistoric times, the ancient Egyptians associated Osiris with the Nile River, particularly with regard to its rejuvenating and fructifying character (efflux)<sup>59</sup>. Consequently, he is considered the god of agriculture, fertility, and resurrection<sup>60</sup>. Moreover, it was said that Osiris taught agriculture to the ancient Egyptians as his first craft. He also organized the conservation of the River Nile, dug canals, and built dams<sup>61</sup>.

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<sup>57</sup>Frankfort, H., “The Dying God”, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 21/3–4, (1958), p. 146; Oestigaard, *A History of Water*, p.75-76.

<sup>58</sup>Hamlyn, P., *Egyptian Mythology*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1965, p. 56.

<sup>59</sup>Delia, *JARCE* 29 (1992), p. 182.

<sup>60</sup>Osiris is the god of fertility, agriculture, the afterlife, the dead, resurrection, life, and vegetation in ancient Egyptian religion. See more; Blasweiler, J., *The Inundation of the Nile and the Islands of Osiris*, 2017, p.4.

<sup>61</sup>Budge, *From Fetish to God*, p. 178, 181; Hamlyn, *Egyptian Mythology*, p. 54; Armour, R.A., & Baker, A., *Gods and Myths of*

The Nile, as well as Osiris, was symbol of regeneration. The Nile may have been known to the Egyptians as Hꜥpy or Osiris, whom they revered as distinct but associated deities<sup>62</sup>. Therefore, Osiris was connected with Hꜥpy, the god of Nile and inundation<sup>63</sup>. The deceased king was identified with Osiris and would resurrect once again with the waters of Osiris<sup>64</sup>. This water was called in the texts as “*ꜥ b ꜥꜥ*” or, “*ꜥ nꜥꜥꜥ*” and presented to the deceased king to revive him and causing him to be youthful<sup>65</sup>. This water

*Ancient Egypt*, American University Press, Cairo, 1986, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed, p. 42; Bently, P., *The Hutchinson Dictionary of World Myth*, 1996, p. 161.

<sup>62</sup>Bonnet, *Reallexikon*, p. 527-28; Wilson, J.A., “Egypt: the Function of the State”, In: H. Frankfort et al., *Before Philosophy* (Hammondsworth, 1949), p. 72-73; Helck, W., “Osiris”, *RE Supp.* IX (1962), p. 499-500.


<sup>63</sup>Kitat, S., *Water Divinities in Egypt during the Graeco-Roman Period. A religious, archaeological and tourist study*. Faculty of Tourism and Hotels, Alexandria University, 2010, p. 64;





مختار محمد محمد عمارة، المعبود جمعي في الديانة المصرية القديمة منذ اقدم العصور وحتى اليوناني الروماني، رسالة ماجستير غير منشورة، كلية الآثار، جامعة القاهرة، ٢٠٠٤، ص ٢٤٦-٢٥١: حنان محمد ربيع حافظ، طقسة سكب الماء في مصر والعراق القديم، رسالة ماجستير غير منشورة، كلية الآثار، جامعة القاهرة، ٢٠٠٧، ص ٥٢-٥٥.






<sup>64</sup>Kitat, *Water Divinities*, p. 133.

<sup>65</sup>See also: Pyr. utt. 33 spells 24-25, utt. 357 spell 589, utt. 423 spell 765, utt. 482 spell 1002, and utt. 676 spell 2010; On “*ꜥnꜥꜥꜥ*”, see: Faulkner, R. O. *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*, Oxford, 1962, p. 150 & *Wb.* II, p. 443, 25; For “*ꜥbꜥꜥ*”, see: *Wb.* V, p. 26-28; Faulkner, *Dictionary*, p. 277. For the purposes of cool water that was identified with Osiris and the Nile, see: Maspero, J., “La table d’offerandes des tombeaux égyptiens”, *Études de mythologie et d’archéologie égyptiennes* 6, *Bibl. Eg.* 28 (Paris, 1912), p. 331 and 337; Bonnet, *Reallexikon*, p. 571; Griffiths, J.G., *The Origins of Osiris*, MÄS 9, Berlin, 1966, p.100.

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was identified with the exudation “r  that coming out from Osiris itself<sup>66</sup>.

Several spells in the Pyramid Texts stated that Osiris is not only the god of the otherworld, but he also controlled over the offered water in the afterlife as is mentioned in the text [Pyr. utt.32, spell.22a]<sup>67</sup>: , “gb  k ipn  r gb  k ipn hw”, “*This cool water is yours. Oh, Osiris this cool water of yours*”<sup>68</sup>. As well, the coffin text documented this concept as mentioned in (CT. I, spell.64c)<sup>69</sup>.

Osiris is described to be the only one who can give the cool water to the deceased king, such as [Pyr. utt.33, spell.24a-b]<sup>70</sup>: , “ Dndw  r p w m n k gb  k m n k r  pri m k”, “*To say: oh, Osiris (king), take to yourself your cool water, take to yourself the efflux, which goes forth from you*”<sup>71</sup>.

<sup>66</sup>Budge, *Osiris and the Egyptian Resurrection*. I, p. 354-385.

<sup>67</sup>PT I, p. 14.


<sup>68</sup>Mercer, S.A.B., *The Pyramid Texts in Translation and Commentary*, Volume. I, New York-London-Toronto: Longmans, Green and Co, 1952, p. 25.

<sup>69</sup>De Buck, A., *The Egyptian Coffin Texts. I. Texts of Spells 1-75*, The University of Chicago, Oriental Institute Publications. XXXIV, 1935, p. 275; Faulkner, R.O., *The Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts. I. Spells 1-354*, England, 1973, p. 60.






<sup>70</sup>PT I, p. 16. Other spells mentioned the same concept, such as: [Pyr. utt.357, spll.589a] or [Pyr. utt.619, spell.1748a].

<sup>71</sup>Mercer, *Pyramid Texts*. I, p. 25.

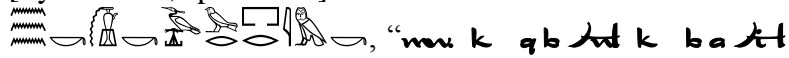


This efflux or cool water “r <sup>72</sup> is both the Nile flood and the life power of the Nile god Osiris. This cool water is the great flood, which issued from Osiris. This relationship between the inundation and Osiris is directly documented in several spells in Pyramid Texts, such as:

[Pyr. utt.436, spell.788a-b]<sup>73</sup>:

  
 “ ndw nwk nk baktk nk r   
 pri m n  prt m  r”, “To say:  
 Your water belongs to you, your (abundance) flood  
 belongs to you, the efflux which goes from the god, the  
 secretion which comes out of Osiris”<sup>74</sup>.

[Pyr. utt.460, spell.868b]<sup>75</sup>:

  
 “nwk qbaktk bakt  
 wr pri mk”, “your water, your cool water-libation  
 is the inundation of the great one who is coming from  
 you”<sup>76</sup>.

[Pyr. utt.536, spell.1291a]<sup>77</sup>:

  
 “ ndw nwk nk baktk nk  
 r  k nk pri m  r”, “To say: Your water

<sup>72</sup> Faulkner, *Dictionary*. p. 156; *Wb*. II, p. 469.

<sup>73</sup> *PT I*, p. 432-433.

<sup>74</sup> Mercer, *Pyramid Texts*. I, p. 149.

<sup>75</sup> *PT I*, p. 484.


<sup>76</sup> Mercer, *Pyramid Texts*. I, p. 160.

<sup>77</sup> *PT II*, p. 222.


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*belongs to you, your (abundance) flood belongs to you, your efflux belongs to you which comes out of Osiris*<sup>78</sup>.

[Pyr. utt.553, spell. 1360a-b]<sup>79</sup>:

  
“*mw.k n.k bʿhi.k n.k rdw.k n.k pri m ḥw33t Wsir*”, “*Your water belongs to you, your (abundance) flood belongs to you, and your efflux belongs to you, which issued from the secretion of Osiris*”<sup>80</sup>.

[Pyr. utt.679, spell. 2031a-b]<sup>81</sup>:

  
“*ḏ nḏw nḏk n.k r ḏk n.k baḏk n.k pri m Wsr*”, “*To say: Your water belongs to you, your efflux belongs to you, your inundation belongs to you, which coming from Osiris*”<sup>82</sup>.

All of these spells of the Pyramid Texts alluded to Osiris’s association with the Nile, and specifically with the flood. During the Great Flood, Hḥpy provided Osiris with the offerings as mentioned in the spell 318 of the Coffin Texts in which Hḥpy says (CT. IV. Spell. 318b-e)<sup>83</sup>;

<sup>78</sup>Mercer, *Pyramid Texts*. I, p. 211.


<sup>79</sup>PT II, p. 245.

<sup>80</sup>Mercer, *Pyramid Texts*. I, p. 220.

<sup>81</sup>PT II, p. 491-492.

<sup>82</sup>Mercer, *Pyramid Texts*. I, p. 300.

<sup>83</sup>De Buck, A., *The Egyptian Coffin Texts. IV. Texts of Spells 268-354*, The University of Chicago, Oriental Institute Publications. LXVII, 1951, p. 136.

 , “*ink ḥꜥpy (hpr).n ḥꜥpy m ḏrw t3 ḥnt.i r ntrw wrw ʿ3w ink ir prt-ḥrw n Wsir m ʿ3gb wr*”, “*I am the Nile-god and the Nile came into existence in the limits of land, I am one who in front of the great gods, I am he who makes offering to Osiris in the Great Flood*”<sup>84</sup>. As well, in the Nile hymns, the rain waters became some efflux of Hꜥpy and in the Quban stele of Ramses II, the king praises to Hꜥpy to let the rain waters fall; “*Let the water come forth on the top of the mountain*”<sup>85</sup>.

In the Papyrus Rhind, the yearly flood had been flowed from the leg of Osiris, which had been wounded by Seth and his leg was buried at that site, near the First Cataract and the ancient Egyptian considered it as the source of the Nile<sup>86</sup>. In later versions of the myth, Osiris’ body was cut into 42 parts corresponding to the 42 ancient Egyptian provinces, which symbolizing to Osiris’ body<sup>87</sup>. Sometimes, Osiris is called “the dismembered”<sup>88</sup>. The 42 provinces were believed to be as Osiris’ limbs, and the land of Egypt as his body. The mummification ritual of Osiris

<sup>84</sup>Faulkner, *Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts*. I, p. 246.

<sup>85</sup>Kitat, *Water Divinities*, p. 64.

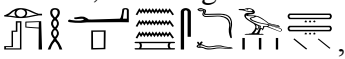
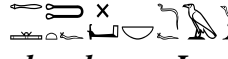
<sup>86</sup>Delia, *JARCE* 29 (1992), p. 185.


<sup>87</sup>Assmann, J., *Death and Salvation in Ancient Egypt*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005, p. 361.

<sup>88</sup>Te Velde, H., *Seth, God of Confusion. A Study of His Role in Egyptian Mythology and Religion*, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1967, p.5.

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included and affected the entire country, uniting, inspiring, and revitalizing it<sup>89</sup>.

The horizontal text of the headless seated statue (No. 2597) described Osiris as inundation and he was the one who provide the land with food, offerings and fertility as the texts mentioed: , “*Osiris, Inundation, endowment of two lands*”. In the late Egyptian story, known as “The Contendings of Horus and Seth”<sup>90</sup>, Osiris is referred to be as the god of abundance and food, such as: , “*great of abundance, Lord of victuals*”. While in the inscription of Dendara, Osiris was responsible for providing the food and corn which emerged from the liquid that is in his body and bears the titles of “*Lord of food-victuals*”, “*Lord of victuals*”, as the mentioned in the following text<sup>91</sup>:

  
“*Osiris, the justified Onnophris, great god, who dwelled in Dendara, lord of Busiris, ruler of Abydos, who made the corn from the liquid that is in him*”

<sup>89</sup>Mojsov, B., *Osiris. Death and Afterlife of a God*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2005, p. 109.

<sup>90</sup>Gardiner, A.H., *Late Egyptian Stories*, Bibliotheca Aegyptiaca. I, Bruxelles, 1932, p. 37ff.

<sup>91</sup>Chassinat, E., *Le temple de Dendara*. I, p.101 & II. p.15-17.

*to nourish the nobles and common people, ruler of food-offerings, sovereign and lord of victuals*<sup>92</sup>.

It can be concluded from the previous textual references that Osiris was closely linked to the Nile and the inundation in ancient Egyptian belief, and he was responsible for granting the common folk with food, offerings that grew and appeared from his body and providing the land with fertility.

### **A Display of Some Models of Late Period Statues of Osiris: Unveiling the Artistic Features of the Karnak Cache Discoveries:**

#### **1- (Figure. 7)<sup>93</sup>**


**Owner:** Osiris

**Current location:** Walters Art Museum (No. 22.207).

**Material:** Greywacke.

**Date:** 26th Dynasty - Late Period.

**Measurements:** 40 × 10 × 24.5 cm.

**Description:** This meticulously crafted seated statue of Osiris, dating back to the 26<sup>th</sup> Dynasty - Late Period, is sculpted from greywacke. Osiris is portrayed in a seated posture, securely draped, and represented as a shrouded mummy. The crook and flail in his hands, along with the ritual “-crown”, unmistakably identify him as a former king, placing the depiction within a mythical context<sup>94</sup>.

<sup>92</sup>Blackman, A.M., “Osiris as the marker of Corn in a Text of the Ptolemaic Period”, *AnOr* 17 (1938), p. 2.

<sup>93</sup><https://art.thewalters.org/detail/21194/osiris-lord-of-the-dead> (accessed 15-11-2023)

<sup>94</sup>George, *Dictionary*, p. 100.

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**Inscription:** The base and back pillar of the statue bear an inscription containing a prayer to “*W̄r wnn-nfr*”<sup>95</sup>. The text described Osiris as eternally incorruptible and is acknowledged as the son of Nut, the head of the gods, the great god, and the ruler of eternity.

**Note:** This artifact is a testament to the exquisite craftsmanship of the 26<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, showing the artistry and religious significance of the Late Period. On occasion, the term “*W̄r wnn-nfr*” was used to denote the combination of the two forms of the god into one entity. However, this practice was not consistent, and more commonly, the combined form of the deity was regarded as a unified whole, with “*W̄l nfr*” being seen as an epithet of Osiris.<sup>96</sup>

**2- (Figure.8)**<sup>97</sup>

**Owner:** Osiris.

**Current location:** Michael C. Carlos Museum (No. 2018.010.121).

**Material:** Bronze and Gilt.

**Date:** 26<sup>th</sup> Dynasty - Late Period.

**Measurements:** 15.4 x 5 x 9.9 cm.

**Description:**


The statue of Osiris is a remarkable artifact dating back to

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<sup>95</sup>“*Wnn-nfr*” was an ancient Egyptian high priest of Osiris at Abydos, during the 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. The title “*Wnn-nfr*”, signifying “the one who remains perfect”, stands as an epithet for Osiris. This term hints to the divine power of Osiris that possesses in the afterlife; *Wb* I, p. 311: 1.

<sup>96</sup>*LGG* II, p. 375.

<sup>97</sup>[https://collections.carlos.emory.edu/objects/38225/seatedosiris\(access-ed 15-11-2023\)](https://collections.carlos.emory.edu/objects/38225/seatedosiris(access-ed 15-11-2023)).

the 26<sup>th</sup> Dynasty - Late Period. Osiris is elegantly portrayed in a seated position, adorned with the distinctive “ - crown”. The hands are meticulously positioned, one above the other, symbolizing his regal stature. The crook and flail held in his hands unmistakably identify him as a former king, further emphasized by his depiction as a shrouded mummy.

**Note:** This bronze and gilt seated statue of Osiris stands as a testament to the artistic mastery of the 26<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, capturing the regality and spiritual significance of the Late Period.

### 3- (Figure.9)<sup>98</sup>

**Owner:** Osiris.


**Current location:** Chicago Museum (No.1894.231).

**Material:** Steatite.

**Date:** 26<sup>th</sup> Dynasty - Late Period.

**Measurements:** 11.5 × 7 × 28.9 cm.

#### **Description:**

The seated statue of Osiris is an exquisite artifact that its origins back to the 26<sup>th</sup> Dynasty - Late Period. Osiris, in the classical depiction, manifests as a green-skinned deity adorned with a pharaoh’s beard. The lower limbs are partially mummy-wrapped, adding a distinctive touch to the representation. Osiris is crowned with the characteristic “ -crown”, and in his two hands, he holds the crook and flail, the emblem of his royal status.

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<sup>98</sup>Allen, T.G., *A Handbook of the Egyptian Collection. The Art Institute of Chicago*, Chicago, 1923, p. 60;  
<https://www.artic.edu/artworks/136583/statuette-of-the-god-osiris-seated> (accessed 17 □11□ 2023).

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**Note:** This Steatite Seated Osiris is a testament to the artistic finesse of the 26<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, capturing the divine attributes and regality of the Late Period.

**4- (Figure.10)<sup>99</sup>**

**Owner:** Osiris.

**Current location:** Egyptian Museum (No. DG A541397).

**Material:** Schist.

**Date:** 26<sup>th</sup> Dynasty - Late Period.

**Description:**

The schist seated statue of Osiris is an archaeological gem hailing from the 26<sup>th</sup> Dynasty - Late Period. This intricately crafted statue was unearthed from a profound pit within the tomb of Psmatik at Saqqara. The statue represents a unique glimpse into ancient Egyptian craftsmanship. The meticulously carved statue captures Osiris in a dignified seated posture, draped in regal attire. Osiris firmly clutches the crook and flail, symbols of authority, in his two hands. The ceremonial “*3tf*-crown” depicts on his head, with a uraeus embellishing the front, underscoring the divine significance of this portrayal. This seated Osiris statue serves as a tangible link to the religious and artistic expressions of the Late Period.

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<sup>99</sup><https://www.bridgemanimages.com/en-US/noartistknown/schist-statue-of-seated-osiris-from-tomb-of-psantik-at-saqqara/object/asset/541397>; Roeder, *Ägyptische Bronzewecke, Pelizaeus-Museum zu Hildesheim*, p. 89; Roeder, *Ägyptische Bronzefiguren, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin Mitteilungen aus der Ägyptischen*, p. 133; Wuttman, *et al.*, In: M. Hill (ed.), *Gifts for the Gods*, p. 167-173; <https://harvardartmuseums.org/collections/object/303639>



**Note:** The Schist Statue of Seated Osiris stands as a testament to the skilled craftsmanship of the 26<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, presenting a captivating connection to the burial practices and religious beliefs of the time.

**5- (Figure.11)<sup>100</sup>**

**Owner:** Osiris.


**Current location:** Harvard Art Museums collection (No.1919.524.A).

**Material:** bronze and adorned with gold.

**Date:** Late Period.

**Measurements:** 11.7 x 3.5 x 5.3 cm.

**Description:**

This bronze seated statue of Osiris, an embodiment of ancient artistry, was meticulously crafted from bronze and adorned with gold during the Late Period, dating back to approximately 664-332 BC. It currently displays at the exhibition halls of the Louvre and is cataloged as part of the esteemed Harvard Art Museums collection No.1919.524.A. The seated Osiris is adorned with the regal “-crown”, its proper right feather delicately broken at the base and top. A uraeus decorates the forehead, its tail gracefully meandering up the crown. Despite the legs being broken just below the shin, skilled modern filing preserves the statue's integrity. His hands are positioned one above the other, and the shroud rises in a distinctive ridge along the back shoulders. Faint incisions suggest the presence of a

<sup>100</sup>Roeder, G., *Ägyptische Bronzwerke, Pelizaeus-Museum zu Hildesheim*, p. 89; Roeder, G., *Ägyptische Bronzefiguren, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin Mitteilungen aus der Ägyptischen*, p.133; Wuttmann, et al., In: M. Hill (ed.), *Gifts for the Gods*, p 167-173.

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broad collar and counterpoise. The long face, with faint traces of a beard attachment, exhibits artful yet basic modeling. Notably, the staff of the crook extends down the front of the shroud, reaching midway onto the lap.

**6- (Figure.12)<sup>101</sup>**

**Owner:** Osiris.


**Current location:** Brooklyn Museum (No 37.430E).


**Material:** Bronze.

**Date:** 26<sup>th</sup> Dynasty - Late Period.

**Measurements:** 20.5 × 6.2 × 9.3 cm.



**Description:**

The seated statue of Osiris is made of a bronze masterpiece and dating back to the 26<sup>th</sup> Dynasty - Late Period. This meticulously crafted statue depicts Osiris in his quintessential form as a mummified deity, holding the crook and flail, and adorned with the “-crown”. Osiris’ eyes, rendered with meticulous detail, are enhanced with gold, imparting a touch of regal splendor. Noteworthy is the absence of the separately crafted seat, a detail that adds an air of mystery to this captivating artifact. This seated statue of Osiris provides a tangible connection to the religious and artistic expressions of the Late Period.



**Note:** Despite the missing seat, the seated statue of Osiris remains a testament to the artistry of the 26<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, introducing a glimpse into the symbolic representation of Osiris during the Late Period. The choice of the “-crown” in these figurines underscores the prominence of the Osirian symbolism attached to the object. In reality, Osiris was so closely linked to this crown that one of his

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<sup>101</sup><https://www.brooklynmuseum.org/opencollection/objects/117082>

titles was the  , signifying 'The one with the “ - crown”<sup>102</sup>.

### Analysis:

Regrettably, the study is unable to utilize the facial features, the type of crown, or the shape and position of the bread as stylistic evidences to estimate the probable time which the statue (No.2597) belonged, because they are broken. However, insights can be drawn from the body features. The overall impression is of a statue resembling a shrouded mummy, with only minimal recognizable features, such as the scepters of kingship, namely the crook “ and the flail “ symbols synonymous with pharaonic authority.<sup>103</sup>

Notably, the position of the arms varied significantly in Osiris figures, and studies have uncovered correlations between these postural differences and regional traditions. In Upper Egypt, Osiris figures typically depict crossed arms, while those in Middle Egypt show the god holding them at an even level. In Lower Egypt, one arm is positioned on the chest, and the other on the stomach. Similar variations extend to the rest of the body, where Osiris figures from Lower Egypt, for instance, do not depict arms protruding through the outer robe and reveal minimal detail regarding the god's legs.<sup>104</sup>

<sup>102</sup>Raven, *OMRO* 59–60 (1978–9), p. 283.

<sup>103</sup>Wilkinson, *Symbol and Magic*, p.199

<sup>104</sup>Wilkinson, *Symbol and Magic*, p.199; Ghoniem, M. A., “A bronze Osiris statuette from The Egyptian Museum in Cairo: Microstructural Characterization and Conservation, *Mediterranean Archaeology and Archaeometry*, Vol. 14, No. 1 (2013), p. 42.



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The headless seated statue of the god Osiris, displayed in the Ismailia Museum as depicted in Figure 1, exhibits both notable distinctions and some similarities with other statues within the research. The statues, that are being discussed, are characterized by their diminutive size, portraying the god Osiris in a seating position with an anthropomorphic representation resembling a human mummy.

A commonality among these statues is the portrayal of Osiris with black skin, symbolizing either mummy wrappings or the dark Nile alluvium. Additionally, each statue features Osiris wearing the *3tf* crown, highlighting his royal stature. However, a noteworthy exception is represented in the Osiris statue under examination, which lacks a head, as illustrated in Figure 1.

In terms of iconography, Osiris is consistently depicted holding the crook “” and the flail “” symbols that underscore his association with kingship and the afterlife. However, there are differences in how Osiris’s hands are positioned on the sculptures; for example, some depict one hand resting atop the other (Figures 7, 9, 10, 11, 12) or both hands crossed (Figure 1. 8).

A commonality feature among the statues is the existence of a back pillar extending from the base to the level of the shoulders or neck (Figure 1), occasionally rising to the level of the head in specific instances (Figures 7, 9, 10). Notably, three statues deviate from this pattern, lacking a back pillar entirely (Figures 8, 11, and 12). Divergence appears in the material of manufacture, with statues crafted from durable

stones such as graywacke (Figure 7), basalt (Figure 1), schist (Figure 10), and steatite (Figure 9). Furthermore, the use of metals, particularly bronze, is evident in certain statues (Figures 8, 11, 12), highlighting the extensive utilization of metalwork during the Third Intermediate Period and the Saite Period.

### **Statues' Sculpture in Late Period:**

The ancient Egyptian artist had a close connection to the environment in which they lived. They were keen observers with a delicate artistic sense<sup>105</sup>. The Egyptian artist was familiar with their religion, knowing the forms of deities, their attire, and symbols. Artists could come from the upper or middle classes, enjoying respect and attention from those around them. They were often depicted engrossed in their work. The artist was given various titles, including the title “*Sobn*”, meaning “giver of life”, symbolizing the importance of their role. Another title was “*gnut y*”<sup>106</sup>, meaning “sculptor”, and the chief was called “*ny - r gnut y*”, emphasizing their leadership role in sculpture<sup>107</sup>.

The characteristics of sculpture in Late Period can be summarized as follows:

1- The ancient Egyptians portrayed their statues in a frontal position, whether the figures were standing, sitting,

<sup>105</sup> محمد انور شكري، الفن المصري القديم منذ أقدم عصوره حتى نهاية الدولة القديمة، الطبعة الثانية، القاهرة، ١٩٩٨، ص. ٧٨-٧٩.

<sup>106</sup>Faulkner, *Dictionary*, p. 290.

<sup>107</sup> نور جلال عبد الحميد، ملامح من فيض الحضارة في العصور القديمة، القاهرة، ص. ١٩٨.

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walking, or stationary. In this stance, the head aligns with the neck, and the center of the torso is on the same plane.

2- Standing statues extend their left legs forward, with the statues supporting their entire weight on the balls of both feet. There is no Egyptian statues depicted standing on one foot while the other is placed on the ground<sup>108</sup>.

3- Coloring statues was prevalent, especially when the statue was made of wood or gypsum. The coloring was simple, devoid of color gradients, and lacked shading<sup>109</sup>.

4- The sculptor endeavored to breathe life into the statues, highlighting psychological nuances and facial expressions. This effort resulted in clear and splendid depictions of characters, emotions, and feelings.

5- The sculptors took precautions to ensure the integrity of the statue, avoiding breaks by minimizing gaps between the arms and the torso, or between the legs and the chair, as well as between the trunk and the base of the stone. Artists paid great attention to points of stress in statues to prevent distortion or breakage, avoiding any appearance of fragility or delicacy in prominent parts. This emphasizes the importance of leaving rear supports, which the Egyptian sculptors often included behind the statues for reinforcement. At times, they would add headgear, hanging it around the statue's neck to the chest, strengthening this vulnerable area. Occasionally, they also carved flowing locks of hair cascading down the shoulders<sup>110</sup>.

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<sup>108</sup> صبحي الشاروني، فن النحت في مصر القديمة وبلاد ما بين النهرين دراسة مقارنة، القاهرة، ١٩٩٣، ص. ١٣٣.

<sup>109</sup> عبد المنعم عبد الحليم سيد، حضارة مصر الفرعونية، الجزء الأول، دار المعرفة الجامعية، الإسكندرية، ١٩٩٧، ص. ٣٨٠.

<sup>110</sup> عبد الحليم نور الدين، آثار وحضارة مصر القديمة، الجزء الأول، الخليج العربي للطباعة، الطبعة الثانية، ٢٠٠٤، ص. ٨٨.

6-During the Saite Period, artists adopted the same artistic styles seen in the Old Kingdom, particularly in the fashioning of clothing and the postures of standing and sitting figures. The sculptors shaped the bodies of men in statues from the Twenty-Fifth and Twenty-Sixth Dynasties in a manner reminiscent of the Old Kingdom. This involved an emphasis on the elevated and projecting chest area, with a central groove extending downward to the middle<sup>111</sup>.

7-One of the prominent features of the Saite Period is the preservation of the form of the back pillar, which distinguishes Egyptian statues since the Old Kingdom from statues in the rest of the world. This back pillar is a vital part of statues, rising behind the statue from its base to the level of the shoulders or neck, and sometimes extending to the level of the head. It is characterized by its engraved surface and upright angles. Historians have long debated the interpretation of the attachment of the Egyptian statue to this column. Some believe it served as a support, similar to the columns attached to early temple statues, providing a foundation for the statues to lean on<sup>112</sup>. Others suggest it acted as protection against breakage, despite leaving the neck exposed, which is the most vulnerable part to breakage. Another perspective sees it as a seat for the ka, a spiritual aspect that rests at its summit as a guardian. The shape of this column helps in dating the statue. In later ages, the top of the back column was square, but

<sup>111</sup>Russmann, E.R., & James, T.G.H., *Eternal Egypt. Masterworks of Ancient Art from the British Museum*, London, 2001, p. 239,241.

<sup>112</sup>Bothmer, *Egyptian Sculpture of the Late Period*, p. xxxii-xxxix.

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modifications by the Twenty-Seventh Dynasty introduced a different form, making the summit semi-flared<sup>113</sup>.

8-Materials used in Saite Period sculptures varied between easily malleable substances like limestone and wood and harder, more challenging-to-carve stones such as granite, basalt, and schist<sup>114</sup>. Artists demonstrated skill and adaptability in working with these challenging materials, producing magnificent artistic creations. In addition to stones and wood, metals were also utilized, with bronze being a prominent choice, especially in sculptures from the Third Intermediate Period and the Saite Period<sup>115</sup>. During the Saite Period, the artist used hard stones such as basalt, giving more attention to their polishing than to representing life and movement. Stones were polished using stone pieces made of quartz or diorite, and realism prevailed, manifesting in capturing the features of life and personal characteristics<sup>116</sup>.

9-The surfaces of statues were adorned with various forms of deities, becoming a distinctive feature of Egyptian sculpture since the beginning of the first millennium BCE. The phenomenon of decorating statue surfaces was repeated in both metallic and stone sculptures. This embellishment was not limited to inscriptions but also included sacred

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

<sup>113</sup> ثروت عكاشة، *الفن المصري القديم، الجزء الأول، القاهرة، ١٩٩٠، ص. ٧٩٨*.  
<sup>114</sup> حسن سليم، *التماثيل المقدمة للناووس من الأسرة السادسة والعشرين حتى الأسرة الثلاثين، رسالة ماجستير غير منشورة، جامعة القاهرة، ١٩٩٠، ص. ٤٤*.  
<sup>115</sup> شويكار محمد سلامة، *التطور الفني في مصر الفرعونية أثناء العصر المتوسط الثالث، رسالة دكتوراه غير منشورة، جامعة طنطا، كلية الآداب، ٢٠٠٦، ص. ١٢٦-١٢٧*.  
<sup>116</sup> جلال أحمد أبو بكر، *أثار مصر في العصر المتأخر، دار المعرفة، ٢٠١٥، ص. ٢١١*؛ مفيدة حسن عبد الواحد الوشاحي، *الفنون في عصر الصحوة الأخيرة للحضارة المصرية (عصر الأسرات ٢٧-٣٠)*، رسالة دكتوراه غير منشورة، جامعة القاهرة، كلية الآثار، ١٩٩٨، ص. ١١.



scenes and drawings of goddesses and gods. These embellishments were intended to allow the statue's owner to join in religious celebrations and ritual activities. The engravings also served to participate in rituals and offer sacrifices, ensuring the eternal recurrence of these ceremonial activities, which, of course, benefited the statue's owner<sup>117</sup>.

### Conclusion:

As the result of a comprehensive examination of the headless seated statue (No. 2597) at the Ismailia Museum and a comparative analysis with similar statues from the Late Period, it has been conclusively determined that this headless seated statue represents the god Osiris. It is crafted from basalt and dating back to the Twenty-fifth - Twenty-sixth Dynasty and was found in the excavations of the Karnak Cache that carried out by Georges Legrain

This artwork showcases distinctive Osirian features. The statue of Osiris is depicted anthropomorphically as a human mummy with the crossed arms over his chest and holding crook  and flail , aligning with common iconography of the statues of Osiris and underscoring his connection to kingship and the afterlife. The statue is adorned with "wsx-collar", typically worn by both statues of Osiris for protective purposes. The depiction

<sup>117</sup>Taylor, J.H., "Figural Surface Decoration on Bronze Statuary of the Third Intermediate Period", In: H. Marsha., *Gifts for the Gods: Images from Egyptian Temples*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 2007, p.66-67.

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of Isis and Nephthys, on either side of the statue underscore their significance and the protective and supportive roles they play alongside Osiris, and further emphasize Osiris significance in ancient Egyptian religious beliefs.

The hieroglyphic inscription on the base of the statue; “*W r Jaf y s TEw t Gwy*”, “*Osiris, Inundation, endowment of two lands*”, reinforces Osiris’s association with the afterlife, resurrection, and fertility, emphasizing his role in the annual flooding of the Nile, symbolizing renewal and prosperity in ancient Egypt and he was the one who provide the land with food and offerings.

In summary, this research affirms the identification of the headless seated statue (No. 2597) as a representation of the god Osiris from the Late Period, providing insights into the intricate details of Osirian iconography and its cultural significance in ancient Egyptian art and Moreover, the study revealed nuances in Osiris’s representation over time, reflecting regional variations and evolving artistic styles.

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**Figure:-**



**(Fig.1):** A headless Seated Statue at Ismailia Museum (No. 2597)  
(Taken by: Samar Mosleh)

— A Headless Seated Statue at Ismailia Museum: (No. 2597) —



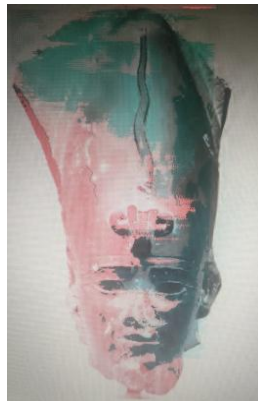
(Fig. 2): The Upper part of the statue, the hands is positioned one above the other. (Taken by: Samar Mosleh)



(Fig.3): The goddess Isis depicts on the right side.  
(Taken by: Samar Mosleh)



(Fig.4) Nephthys appears on the left side of the statue as protector of Osiris. (Taken by: Samar Mosleh)

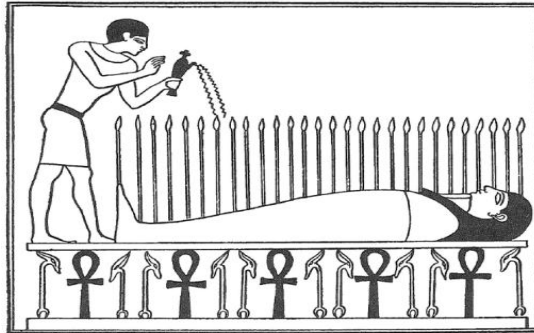


(Fig.5): The head of Osiris crafted from grey-green schist, discovered in the Karnak cache. Display in Egyptian Museum C.G. 38236  
After: Bothmer, *Egyptian Sculpture of the Late Period*, p.57, plate 46, fig 112,113.

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**(Fig.6):** Osiris and wheat growing from his body  
After: Budge, *The Nile*, p.58.



**(Fig.7):** The greywacke seated statue of Osiris, dating back to 26<sup>th</sup>  
dynasty - Late Period, displayed in the Walters Art Museum: No.  
22.207

After: <https://art.thewalters.org/detail/21194/osiris-lord-of-the-dead/>



(Fig.8): The seated statue of Osiris dating back to 26<sup>th</sup> dynasty- Late Period, displayed in the Michael C. Carlos Museum: No. 2018.010.121. After: <https://collections.carlos.emory.edu/objects/38225/seated-osiris>



(Fig.9): Seated statuette of the god Osiris, in The Art Institute of Chicago museum, 26<sup>th</sup> dynasty - Late Period  
After: Allen. *Egyptian Collection*, p. 60;  
After: <https://www.artic.edu/artworks/136583/statuette-of-the-god-osiris-seated>

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**(Fig. 10):** Schist seated statue of Osiris, 26<sup>th</sup> dynasty - Late Period, this statue was discovered in a deep pit in the tomb of Psamtik at Saqqara.

After: <https://www.bridgemanimages.com/en-US/noartistknown/schist-statue-of-seated-osiris-from-tomb-of-psamtik-at-saqqara/object/asset/541397>



**(Fig.11):** The seated statue of Osiris in the Louvre and is cataloged as part of the esteemed Harvard Art Museum's collection:

No.1919.524.A

After: <https://harvardartmuseums.org/collections/object/303639>



**(Fig.12):** Seated Statue of Osiris, 26<sup>th</sup> dynasty - Late Period, made of bronze, Brooklyn Museum: No. 37.430E  
After:<https://www.brooklynmuseum.org/opencollection/objects/117082>