
THE FOREIGN INFLUENCES ON EGYPTIAN PRIVATE STATUARY DURING THE PERSIAN PERIOD “27TH & 31ST DYNASTIES”

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ABSTRACT

The most beautiful thing in the Ancient Egyptian art since its first ages until the late ages is that its features are determined and distinguished all along the ancient Egyptian civilization. It has been marked with the unity of character even if it was differed over the different history phases. Each phase had a special artistic style that accorded with that phase, but the Egyptian general style is like a comprehensive framework that includes many units which are consistent in generalities and differ in particulars.

The researcher noticed that the phrase "foreign influences" was used a lot in the studies which dealt with the Egyptian art during the late period especially under the foreign rule of Egypt, therefore it was suggested to shed light on the foreign artistic influences during the late period under the reign of Persian rulers which began exactly with the start of the Twenty Seventh Dynasty. It is one of the ambiguous periods in the ancient Egyptian history, maybe because the researchers haven't studied and analyzed it enough. So, we don't have a complete work which defines the foreign influences on the ancient Egyptian art during that period.

The aim of this study is revealing the powers which affected the artistic changes that contributed in the progress of artistic works in that period, because the foreign influence during that period is one of the important aspects which largely affected the Egyptian civilization in general and the Egyptian art in particular.

KEYWORDS: Foreign influences; Twenty Seventh Dynasty; Persian Period; private statuary.

INTRODUCTION

The ancient Egyptian arts witnessed some imported artistic influences mainly because of the cultural relations between Egypt and the neighboring countries which produced new concepts as a result of the

Egyptian artist's awareness of the outside world, or because of the foreign invasion to Egypt and contacting with new civilizations, therefore, the Egyptian artist has become more aware of the customs, traditions and artistic styles which characterized the arts of the foreign countries resulting in influencing his works.

The most prominent of these arts during the Late Period precisely the twenty seventh dynasty and thirty first dynasty is the "Persian art" which is considered by many scholars as a quoted foreign work and its traditions as the most notorious among the arts of the ancient world ⁽¹⁾. Some of them may be right that Persians quoted their arts from the ancient world countries especially Egypt, but what may be overlooked by some is that Persians had clear artistic marks derived from their civilization. The little information and few archaeological traces about that period and the absence of any serious attempts to research this important historical period may be the reasons for overlooking the elements that distinguish the Persian art by some people, in addition to the scarcity of the writings about this art especially the Egyptian art during the Persian time.

This must be a motive for scientific curiosity especially because of the confusion in explaining the Persian artistic elements; therefore, they were wrongly attributed to other nations and civilizations including the Greek civilization.

We can say that this period was the time of the return of the soul to the ancient Egyptian art, It was the time of the real renaissance which can be proved by the new artistic style which appeared, that was characterized with the idealism of the Old kingdom, the realism of the Middle kingdom and also many characteristic of the Saite period. They kept balance between evolution, tradition and imitation. They have developed the ancient heritage.

The following lines shall display the most important foreign influences that appeared on the Egyptian individuals' statues and showing the new artistic spirit which influenced the community because of integration with the incoming culture, and on the other hand will present the characteristics that confirm the ancient Egyptian's adherence to his identity. Despite the obvious foreign influence on his statue, the same statue bears the Egyptian artistic characteristics, which confirm its adherence to his predecessors' cultural heritage. So the coming culture couldn't make him abandon his ancient traditions, whether artistic or religious.

PERSIAN CHARACTERISTICS

1. CLOTHES

The Persians did not notably like statue making so that most Persian arts in Iran were restricted in reliefs, and also in Egypt they had reliefs in the temple of "Hebes" which was completed by king "Daruis I" where he appeared as an Egyptian Pharaoh King.

It should be noted that the Persian costumes worn by Egyptians during that period were different in some details from the costumes of Persian' individuals in Iran.

The wears of the Persian royal court engraved in the palaces of Persepolis and Susa consisted of one piece with loose sleeves fixed in the middle by a belt. Here we can rely on the reliefs to know the shapes and styles of wears of the Achaemenian Persians because Persians, as mentioned before, haven't left statues that can help in this direction ⁽²⁾. Also they wore a long complicatedly woven skirt consisting of small pieces of cloth with a separated upper robe and a tight shirt with loose sleeves, the upper part of the shirt is fixed under the skirt ⁽³⁾ (Fig. 1).

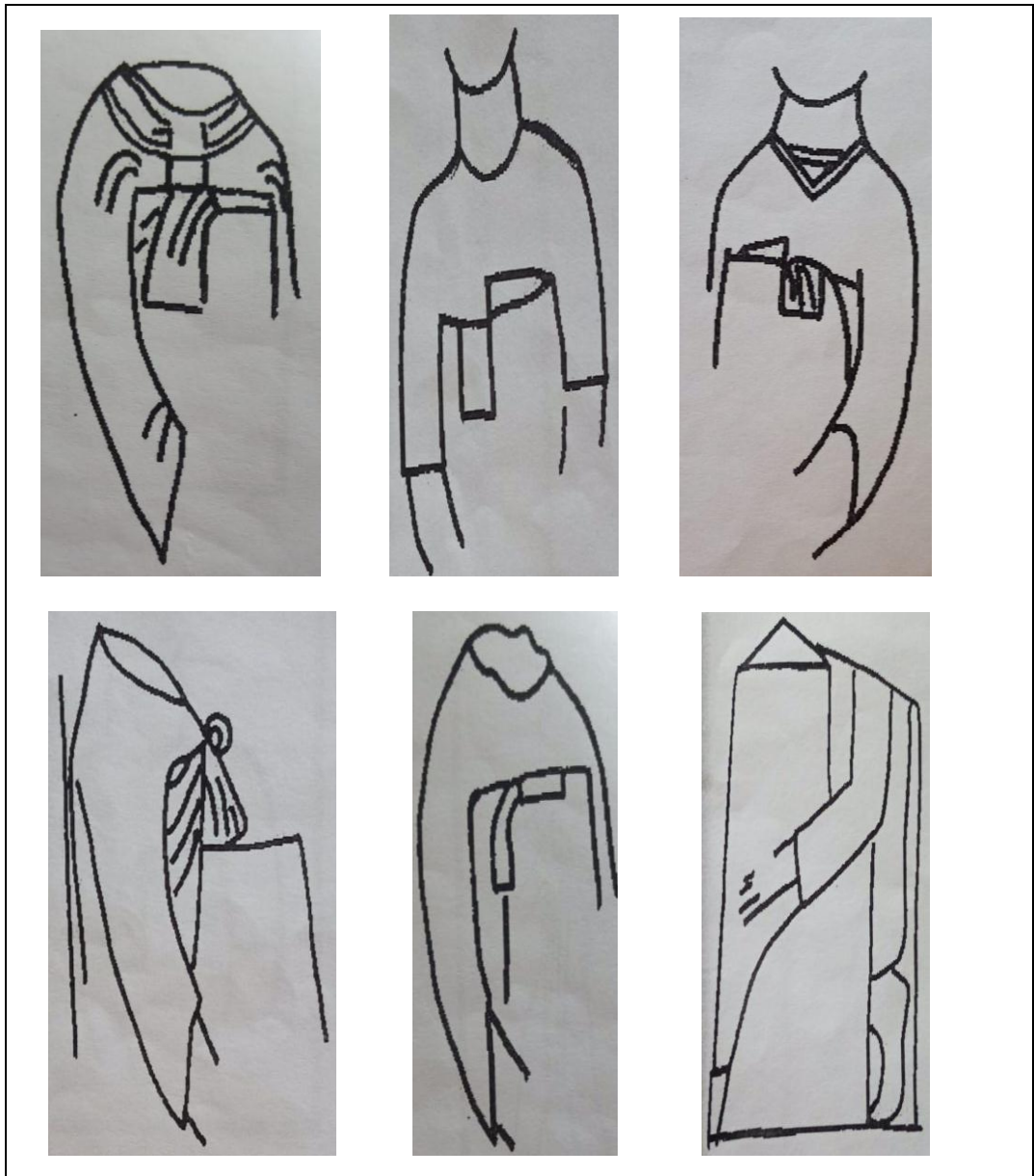


(Fig. 1), Model of Achaemenian Persians Clothes.

After: Roes, A., *Achaemenid influence upon Egyptian and Nomad Art*, (1952), p.37.

The clothes of the Egyptian elites and great persons of the Persian Period notably didn't follow the complexity of the Persian model, but followed the same steps that formed the Persian garment like the long skirt but was undecorated while the upper shirt resembled the common Persian style.

The only difference was the loose sleeves which extended from the shoulder to the wrist in Iran's depiction, while in Egypt they were depicted tight from the shoulder to the elbow then become loose starting from the elbow to the middle of the forearm, sometimes to the wrists and sometimes they don't exceed the elbows but most of the time ended in a slanted backward form (Fig. 2).



(Fig. 2), Models of clothing styles worn by Egyptian individuals during the Persian era.

We can count two types of Persian clothes worn by Egyptian employees:-

1. A robe with a V-cut collar and tight sleeves on the elbow, which become loose downwards to the hand (Fig. 2).
2. A robe with a round collar with tight sleeves reaching the wrist (Fig. 2).

"Bothmer" suggested that the two types represent a regional difference as the first one belongs to the Delta and the other belongs to Upper Egypt⁽⁴⁾, but "schulman" rejected this opinion when he applied on a stela found in Memphis depicting a man with a Persian gesture.

He also noted, as "Bothmer" suggested, that the robe belonged to Upper Egypt⁽⁵⁾, this of course, contradicts finding the stela in the Delta.

The Fold of the garment worn by most statues of this dynasty were shown in various forms (Fig. 2), but the most common: -

The First Style Where the left fold is depicted on the chest directly over the garment's edge, and the right fold is hanging down like in the statue of "Psmatik-Sa-Neth" (Fig. 3) and "Henat" (Fig.4).



(Fig. 3), Statue of "Psamtik-Sa-Neith".

Egyptian Museum. 27th dynasty

After: the researcher



(Fig. 4), Statue of "Henat".

Florence Museum. 27th dynasty

After: Bosse, K., Menschliche Figur, Äf 1, Taf.V-a.

The Second Style Where the left fold is depicted on the upper edge of the garment or part of it is depicted on the chest and the other is hanging down as in the “Brooklyn bust” (Fig. 5).



**(Fig. 5), “Egyptian Man in a Persian Costume”.
Brooklyn Museum. 31st dynasty.**

After: <https://www.brooklynmuseum.org/opencollection/objects/3807>

The Material used for making the Persian clothes is unknown. While the Egyptian clothes were mostly made of Linen, the styles of Persian clothes, with their multiple folds and a complicated form like “Ptah-Hotep” robe (Fig. 6), are supposed to be made of a harder material⁽⁶⁾.



(Fig. 6), Statue of “Ptah-Hotep”. Brooklyn Museum. 27th dynasty.
After: <https://www.brooklynmuseum.org/opencollection/objects/3431>.

2. ORNAMENTS

2.1. BRACELETS

The Persian elements which appeared in the private statues during the Persian time included bracelets and necklaces. The wrist in the statue of "Wdja-Hor-Snt" (Fig. 7a) is decorated with a bracelet with a lion's head-shaped end which some thought is of Achaemenian style while others thought it is of an Assyrian style ⁽⁷⁾. Similar bracelets were also found decorating the wrist of the statue of the female with a lion's head-shaped end (Fig. 7b).



(Fig. 7a), The bracelet in the statue of "Wdja-Hor-Snt" which is decorated with a lion's head-shaped end.



(Fig. 7b), The bracelet in the statue of "Persian Lady" which is decorated with a lion's head-shaped end.

2. 2. NECKLACES

seemed more common than bracelets, such as the important necklace in the statue of "Ptah-Hotep" (Fig. 8a) which has two ibexes in a running position in both of its ends, the wide semi-circular necklace, which ends with two lions holding the end of the necklace with their mouth as in the "Statue of Florence" (Fig. 8b), and the metallic necklace which has an ibex-shaped end in "Brooklyn's bust" (Fig. 8c) and finally the complicatedly detailed necklace in the statue of the "Persian Lady" (Fig. 8d) which followed the Egyptian style in the shape but differed in details.



(Fig. 8a) "Ptah-Hotep" necklace.
27th dynasty.



(Fig. 8b) "Statue of Florence" necklace.
31st dynasty.



(Fig. 8c) "Brooklyn's bust" necklace.
31st dynasty.



(Fig. 8d) "Persian Lady" necklace.
31st dynasty.

2.3. EARRINGS

Were less common and notably appeared only in the Persian-styled art works, in another meaning, the works that depicted native Persians such as the barrel-shaped earring in the statue of the “Persian Lady” (Fig. 9) which has no counterparts in the Egyptian artworks.



(Fig. 9), The barrel-shaped earring in the statue of the “Persian Lady”.

It is noted that the main animal-shaped decorations in the Persian jewelry focused on lions and ibexes which resembled the main basics in the Achaemenian Persian decorations which were widespread in the golden jewelry and the handles of pots ⁽⁸⁾.

The kings of the New Kingdom were known to grant a golden medal (bracelets or necklaces) to the highly ranked employees as an appreciation to their efforts and bravery. No evidence that such a tradition lasted after the time of the New Kingdom, therefore, featuring jewelry in the statues of noblemen during the Persian time can't be explained as just jewelry, they are more likely to be medals granted by the king to the highly ranked employees in return for their services ⁽⁹⁾. As confirmed by the historical documents, the individuals who served Persians got prestigious positions and most of them had titles and positions since the time of the 26th Dynasty, this can be explained by their wearing of Persian clothes, it is not reasonable that they don't pay a compliment to the king even by wearing costumes belonging to the culture of the invaders in the time he gives them his grants.

3. PERSIAN GESTURE

The Persian elements which were common in the Egyptian art during the time of the Persian time included the Persian gesture which appeared in the statue of "the man with persian gesture" (Fig. 10) and the statue of the "Persian Lady" (Fig. 11). But the origin of the gesture doesn't belong to the Persian art, it was more common in the Sumerian art as appeared in a big number of Sumerian statues, moreover it was common in other arts like the Japanese art but its existence in this art is latter than the other ancient arts. It also existed In the Buddhist statues but it was symbolic as Asians were the first to express the position of the hands, which contained the hands of "Buddha" gently holding the secret of the universe. In the Sumerian art gesture resembled the symbol of prayer in that culture where the worship is one long-timed prayer and everlasting litanies and sanctification like the statue of "Abi-Eil" (Fig. 12).



(Fig. 10), "Man with Persian Gesture Walters Art Museum. 27th dynasty



Fig. 11), "Persian Lady" Brooklyn Museum. 31st dynasty



Fig. 12), statue of "Abi-Eil". Louvre Museum

In art, generally, gesture has become the symbol used by the sculptor to symbolize the eternity which exists in the human being and as a result the statue has a similar relation with him ⁽¹⁰⁾.

We can say that the gesture which appeared on the Persian-styled statues is an improved copy of the gesture known by the Sumerians in the 22nd century BC, which showed the left hand holding the right one ⁽¹¹⁾.

In some statues the two hands were crisscrossed, sometimes the left hand held the right wrist or the right hand held the left one. The left hand was depicted clenched and the right hand held it. In all of these positions we note that the hands were put nearly on the chest or a little down the chest ⁽¹²⁾.

The gesture was also featured in the Assyrian Reliefs, it is considered the oldest gesture which appeared in the Persian art because the Assyrian one is dated back to the end of the 8th century and the start of the 7th century BC; It is very similar to the Persian one ⁽¹³⁾.

The Persian gesture had one certain position, that is, the left hand gently holds the wrist of the right hand except in the Egyptian statue of "the man with persian gesture" (Fig. 10).

Hands in all Persian statues and stelae (Fig. 13) were positioned almost at the belly except in the statue of the "Persian Lady" (Fig. 11) where the hands are put directly down the chest in a similar way as the Sumerian statues which start from the belly.



(Fig. 13), A stela held a scenery of the guardians of King "Daruis I" within the inscriptions of Persia exhibiting the "Persian gesture". Persopolis.

After: Steindorff, Catalogue Egyptian Sculpture (W.A.G), No.276, Pl.LVI.

4. THE SHOE

One of features, which appeared in the statues, is wearing a shoe as in the statue of the "Persian Lady" (Fig. 11). Shoes looked almost similar in the Persian models including the female shoe which was a tight slipper with no laces ending with a round part in the front, such a kind was used exclusively by the royal family as it was in the Persian Achaemenian art ⁽¹⁴⁾.

The difficulty of closely detecting the Persian influences is noted, moreover, it is difficult to follow them. We also note the rarity of Egyptian sculptures and reliefs during that period, which need more research by the specialists ⁽¹⁵⁾. In spite of the big group of Egyptian employees during that period, they left only few monuments on the contrary to the nature of Ancient Egypt, which liked making statues. Whatever the reasons are, all the remaining Persian influence over the Egyptian arts is a secondary influence made by the employees who cooperated with the occupation as a kind of gaining the favor trust of the royal family.

The Egyptian art took from the Persian art and gave so much as well, it provided the ideas which were quoted by the artists and were implemented in Persia. Many Egyptian artists participated in the production of the Persian art, in addition to the important role played by the Egyptian rock sculptors in Iran, whereas an Egyptian sculptor was mentioned in the records of the treasury in the city of Persia so the movement of sculptors between Egypt and Susa was usual in addition to what "Darius I" stated in the instrument of Susa that the men who decorated the wall were Egyptians ⁽¹⁶⁾.

The monuments left by the Persian kings are notably many influences by the Egyptian art as they quoted many of its decorations to decorate their palaces and rock-graved tombs, which followed the style of Pharaoh tombs in the Kings Valley. The few remaining royal antiquities of that age followed the Egyptian traditional style as in "Hibis" temple which was completed by king "Darius I" where he looked as an Egyptian Pharaoh to conciliate Egyptians and get involved in the Egyptian community. At the time Persians exerted their efforts to adopt Egyptian arts, it was clear that Egyptians didn't reward that compliment. This is clearly evidenced by the rarity of the Achaemenian Persian influence on the Egyptian art, this may be resulted by the Egyptians' tough reaction after the Persians' expulsion out of the country. Most of the monuments belonging to the employees who adhered to the occupation and cooperated with Persians were surly destroyed because the existence of such monuments in their sight should form a painful memory, which reminds them of Persians.

It's clear that Egyptians didn't even try to adopt anything related to Persians but they adhered to their past more than ever and insisted to stick

with the beloved merits of the past in addition to taking aggressive reactions against every foreign or strange thing ⁽¹⁷⁾. Therefore, the remaining monuments that had Persian influences are individual inventions produced in special and unknown conditions at the same time. But, by all standards, they did not express the opinion of the Egyptian people whose religious beliefs, on which the art is based, strengthened during that period and all other occupation periods.

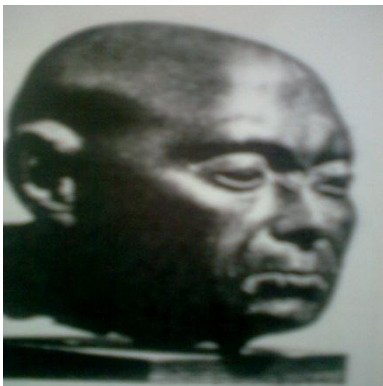
EGYPTIAN CHARACTERISTICS

This part shall display the Egyptian characteristics that appeared on statues of the same period.

1. FACIAL FEATURES

Face features got special care by that time's artists who highlighted the pure Egyptian features, which reflected the Egyptian people's life, pain and suffer from the occupation. The artist skillfully expressed depression and sadness and the stable look to the world, which was full of problems (Figs. 14 a, b, c, d).

It is of course an important civilization indication that clarifies how great was their achievement in sculpture at that late time of the Egyptian history and how skillful was the artist under the bad circumstances which the country faced. By his delicate sensitivity, he could transfer the history of his time to us through the faces of the statue. This unknown artist left pieces which are about to speak and reflected a real vision of that time-honored nation.



(Fig. 14a) “**Basalt head**”
Collection Fouquet. 31st dynasty
After: Bosse, K., *Menschliche Figur*,
Äf 1, Nr. 20



(Fig. 14b) “**Sand stone head**”
British Museum. 27th dynasty
After: Hall, H. R., *JEA* 13, (1927), Pl.XI



(Fig. 14c) statue of “**Imhotep**”
British Musuem. 27th dynasty
After: Selim, H., JEA 76, (1990),
Fig.2, Pl.3



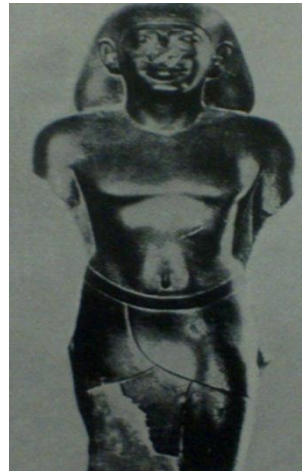
(Fig. 14d) statue for an unidentified person
Leipsig Inv. 27th dynasty
After: Bosse, K., Menschliche Figur, Äf 1, Taf.Vc.

2. CLOTHES

Clothes are the most artistic feature to be influenced by the Persian culture, that is represented in the "Persian mantle" which appeared on some statues of the Persian period, but the pure Egyptian style didn't vanish as a result of the new influences, it remained in not a few number of statues at the same time. We found some statues wearing the soft short kilt with a belt over the belly (Figs. 15 a, b). This only shows the commitment of the Ancient Egyptian to the inherited traditions of his grandfathers to keep balance between the new influences over the ancient Egyptian civilization and the long-timed inherited customs.



(Fig. 15a) Statue of “**Hr-Wdja**” .
Baltimore(W.A.G) . 27th dynasty.



(Fig. 15b) Statue of “**Wah-Ib-Ra**” .
Bologna Museum. 27th dynasty.

After: Steindorff, (W.A.G), No.154, Pl.XXIV. After: Bosse, K., *Menschliche Figur*, Af 1, Taf.1

3. SYMBOL OF GOD

In ancient Egypt neither creativity nor arts can only stem except from religious beliefs, this is clearly proved by the presence of Gods with the statues of the same period. For instance, we find the Naopharous statues(Statues that represent someone holding a naos with a symbol of the God) like God Wseir: “Wdja-Hr-Rsnt” (Fig. 16) , "Psmatik-Sa-Neth" (Fig. 3). Goddess Neith: “Imhotep” (Fig. 14c). God Imhotep: “priest statue” (Fig. 17). God Ptah: “Bak-na-nfw” (Fig. 18).

They are considered the Gods of the ancient times and their appearance along with the statues of the Persian era forms an important civilization indication that is the attempt to restore the ancient civilization personalities or as called in the slang language "the good predecessors" to support in confronting occupation and as a kind of gaining their favor to clear their concerns and give them patience. We note that those Gods sometimes appeared with highly ranked Egyptian employees who occupied high civil positions during the Persian occupation time like “Wdja-Hr-Rsnt”who had important titles during the Persian era such as "chief of physicians”, “ chief of royal protocol and the king's guide to all ancient Egyptian customs".

His presence with one of the ancient Gods proves the same meaning we mentioned before, he is Egyptian and his country is occupied and tough he was described as a traitor and charged with facilitating the Persian invasion to Egypt, the inscriptions on his statue prove that he wasn't a bad man as he asked “Cambyses” to take out his army which camped in the temple of "Neith" and also take all their belongings out of the temple's walls.

Inscriptions also stated that “Cambyses” accepted his request and ordered to enter the temple of great "Neith" and celebrate the feasts as before ⁽¹⁸⁾. The researcher thinks that what “Wdja-Hr-Rsnt” did, as mentioned in the inscriptions on his famous statue, is a defense to his attitude towards his country as he wanted his successors to know that he deserved to be appreciated by his family, city and specially his Gods.

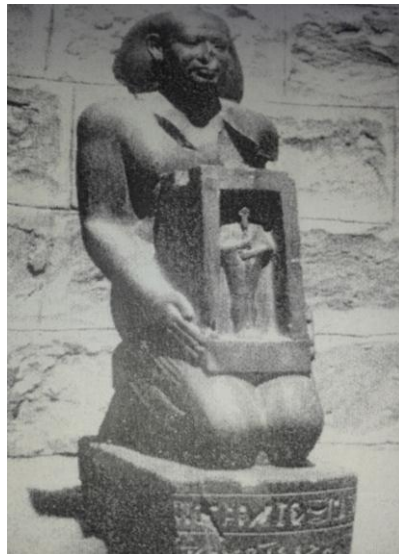


(Fig. 16), Statue of “Wdja-Hr-Rsnt” presents a statue of god Wseir. Vatican Museum. 27th dynasty.

After: <https://egyptianaemporium.wordpress.com/2014/08/25/museum-piece-16-cat-22690/>



**(Fig. 17), “Priest Statue” presents a statue of god Imhoteb.
Brummer Collection. 27th dynasty.
After: Wildung, D., Mäs 36, (1977), Taf. IVϕ18.**



**(Fig. 18), Statue of “Bak-na-nfw” presents a statue of god Ptah.
Tronto Royal Ontaria Museum. 27th dynasty.
After: Smith, H. S., A Visit to Ancient Egypt, (Warminster 1974), Pl. 60.**

4. TITLES OF GODS

It is one of the artistic features that existed during the same era which proved the commitment of the ancient Egyptian to his inherited customs and how he was affected by the religious beliefs so that the sculptures were characterized with dignity and tranquility. All the Egyptian arts all over the generations closely connected to religion, the population of that period used for themselves the titles of Gods like "Ptah-Hotep", "Psamtik-Sa-Neith", "Ahmos-Sa-Neith", "Ankh-Hor", and "Wesir-Wr". These names of course had a clear civilization indication as a kind of asking for mercy and gaining the favor and the blessings of the Gods of the ancient times.

5. NAMES OF KINGS

Among the civilization artistic types which existed during that time and showed how the ancient Egyptian kept his identity as some Egyptians used royal titles for themselves indicating their nostalgia to the Egyptian kingship. Some names belonging to that period were used for previous kings like "Psamtik-Sa-Neith", "Ahmos-Sa-Neith", "Wah-Ib-Ra", moreover, some cartouches belonging to the kings of the Saite period appeared on some statues of the Persian time; this has a special civilization indication, that is, reviving the memory of the previous kings and expressing the nostalgia to their time as an expression of their rejection to the invader kings.

6. STATUES' POSITIONS

Sticking to the old positions of statues which were known since the Old Kingdom was one of the civilization artistic features of that time such as the traditional pose with the left leg forward (Fig. 15b). However, there were new positions due to the Persian Influence though they were very few may be not more than three statues (Figs. 5, 8).

THE ARTISTS OF THAT PERIOD FOLLOWED TWO SCHOOLS

- First Imitating the ancient style in the North especially the positions of the Memphite old style of which continued after the time of "Alexander The Great", the best saying about this school is what is written by the great archaeologist "Maspero" (This style is like tender people who have special feeling of their great history) ⁽¹⁹⁾, the artists also imitated some subjects of the 18th century in addition to the old and middle kingdoms.
- Second It was in the South where the artists followed the realistic style in carving the features, and the statues were made of hard stones and polished in both schools.

CONCLUSION

This period was previously looked at as a period of deterioration for the ancient Egyptian art, it is said that Egyptians were forced to continue the acceptable undeveloped old classic style, but the Ancient Egyptian art has proven that is a distinct enduring art as it influenced in other nearby arts of the ancient world. In spite of the serious attempts of the Persian kings to adopt the Egyptian arts, Egyptian reacted violently to such attempts; they destroyed most of their Persian monuments after getting them out of Egypt.

Finally, the subject of the arts of that time is still controversial, some supported the presence of foreign influences as a result of occupation and contact with new civilizations which led to transferring new foreign artistic experiences to Egypt, while others rejected this and considered it a natural result of the artistic development in Egypt.

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- (10) André Parrot, A., Sumer: The Dawn of Art (The Arts of Mankind), 1979, pp. 58ff.
- (11) Judia has a group of statues in the Louvre Museum with the same gesture, three of which are seated nos. (AO. 1), (AO. 2), (AO. 3293) and the fourth is standing no. (AO. 9504).
- (12) Frankfurt, H., Sculpture of The Third Millennium B.C. from Tell Asmar and Kharajah, (Chicago 1939), pls. 18, 24, 28-b, 29, 41-a.
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