

Re-evaluation group statue of King Merenptah at Abydos

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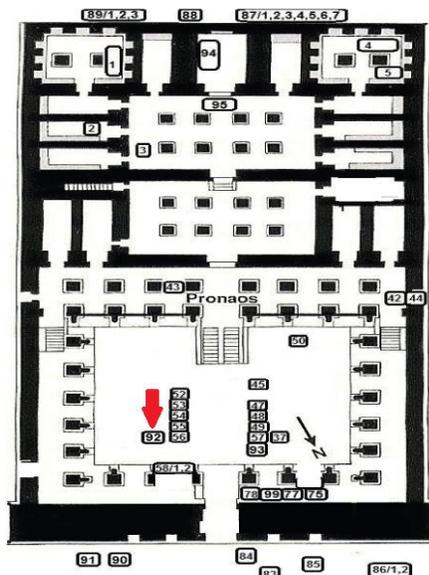
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0. Introduction

The statue is in the Temple of Ramses II¹ at Abydos  in the second courtyard behind the second pylon on the left side; **Zayed** publish it at 1964, he said that the statue was found in the nearby village of Beni Mansour and brought to this place for safe keeping. (**Zayed, A.**, Rde 16, 1964, 204)

The statue is registered in the temple register under the No. RII 92, it was dedicated by Merenptah to the god of Abydos, Osiris. (**Sourouzian, H.**,1989,132)



Plan of Ramses II Temple appears the site of the statue²

1. Statue description

A group statue (triad) of King Merenptah with a rectangular pillar, its pillar inscribed with sunk relief from the back, the two sides and top of statue. The statue was made from alabaster, its dimensions: Height 116 cm, Width 77 cm, Thickness 35 cm. The statue crushed in the front, and all faces destroyed completely (figure1), in the middle statue of God Osiris was wearing the *3tf* crown ³ (**Collier, S.**, 1996, 37, fig.10), and on his right the statue of King Merenptah was wearing *šwtj* over *nms* ⁴ (**Collier, S.**, 1996, 53-56, fig.21), putting a royal false beard, the left leg is ahead of the right leg, and wearing a short apron, and the right arm lost while left-arm embrace

God and decorated with bracelet, The left statue to lady may be Merenptah's wife Isetnefret II ⁵ (**Iskander, S.**, 2002, 39) was wearing a long wig hair but its crown was damage, also wearing a long tight dress with retractor legs (the legs are straight) ⁶, the left arm lost while right-arm embrace God. The foot and the base of the statue completely missing (destroyed).

But Zayed thought that The left statue was the goddess Isis , and he said that she wore the vulture crown, surmounted by the disk and horns. (**Zayed, A.**,1964, 204)

But I think that she is the king's wife for these reasons .

A- The name of the Goddess Isis doesn't exist in the statue's inscription, while often the royal group statue's text mention the relations between the king, the god and the goddess which represented with him .

for example: Group statue of Ptah, Sekhmet and Ramesses II from Memphis (**Moussa, M.A.**, 1981, 285-288, Pl.6-8) (Figure 6), its consists of a form of Ptah in the Middle, and Sekhmet to his left and Ramsses II to his right, on the back pillar of the statue are found four vertical lines of hieroglyphic Inscription, these lines explain the relationship of the king to both Ptah and Sekhmet.

"*mrj Shmt ʿ3t nbt pt dj.s htpw n nswt-bitj wsr-m3ʿt-Rʿ.....*"

"Beloved of Sekhmet the great, mistress of heaven; may she give years of peace to the king of upper and lower Egypt....."

"*mrj Pth nb m3ʿt dj.f ʿnh w3s nd mj Rʿ n nswt-bitj wsr-m3ʿt-Rʿ.....*"

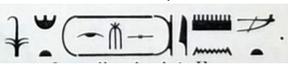
"Beloved of Ptah, lord of truth; may he give all life and prosperity to the king of upper and lower Egypt....."

B- There is a royal group statue consisted with the god between the king and his wife.

For example: Triad of Thutmose I, Amon and Iah-mose, CG42052, made of Alabaster, Karnak cachette (Figure 7) (**Legrain, G.**, 1906, 31-32, pl.XXVIII); (**Hornemann, B.**, 1957, Pl.1379).

On the left Thutmose I, Amon in the middle and Iah-mose on the right, the three characters are seated on a square section seat.

The name of the king is on the seat to the left of the king 

And the name of the queen is on the seat to the right of the queen 

The statue was painted, there are traces of Egyptian blue color⁷ (**Bimson, M. & Cowell, M.R.** 1987,); (**Mazzocchin GA et al**, 2004, 129) on the inscriptions which are in the right side and the top of the statue. I suggest that it is Egyptian blue because



[*hr*](*f*) *it.f*⁹ *Wsir imj wn.i hr.k mj s3.k Hr 3h.i n.k mj 3h.f mr.n tw*

(He) [said] to his father Osiris, let me be for you like your son Horus, my usefulness will be like his usefulness which you love.

4.3. The left side (figure 4)

There is one column of hieroglyphic inscription on the left side. .(**KRI IV**, 60 (II-ii))



[.....]*f*¹⁰ *n3j.i 3hw m-b3h Wsir s3c nhh dt*

My souls [.....] in front of Osiris who originate eternity forever.

4.4. The top of the statue (figure 5)

At the top of the pillar there is a hieroglyphic inscription written from left to right, consists of cartouche inside it name of the king Merneptah "Ba-n-Ra Mery- Amun" (Bull Ra, beloved Amun), the cartouche surround by wards "ntr nfr" The good god, "mrj [Wsir]" beloved [Osiris].



ntr nfr (b3-n-R^c-mrj-Imn) dj [nh]

The good god "Ba-n- Ra- Mery-Amun", given [life]

3. Conclusion

The reason for choosing this topic explain another opinion of the female personality

This is a group statue for The King Merneptah and his wife to approach and protected from the god Osiris.

The royal group statues in the New kingdom often consist of triad the god, the goddess, and the King as their Son

But it was proved that there are statues in this period consisting of the king and his wife with the god to approach from him, like this statue

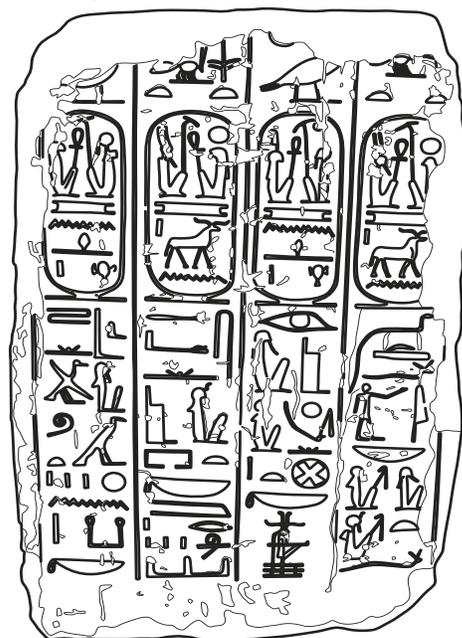
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(1)Figure
Front of the statue
(Photo by the researcher)



(2)Figure
Back of the statue
(Epigraphy and photo by the researcher)

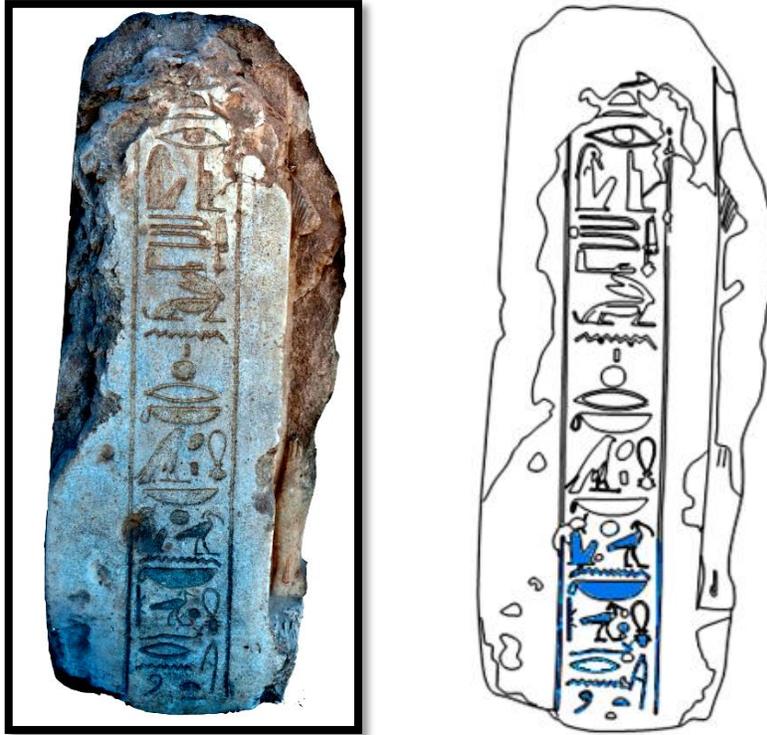


Figure (3)
Right side (Epigraphy and photo by the researcher)

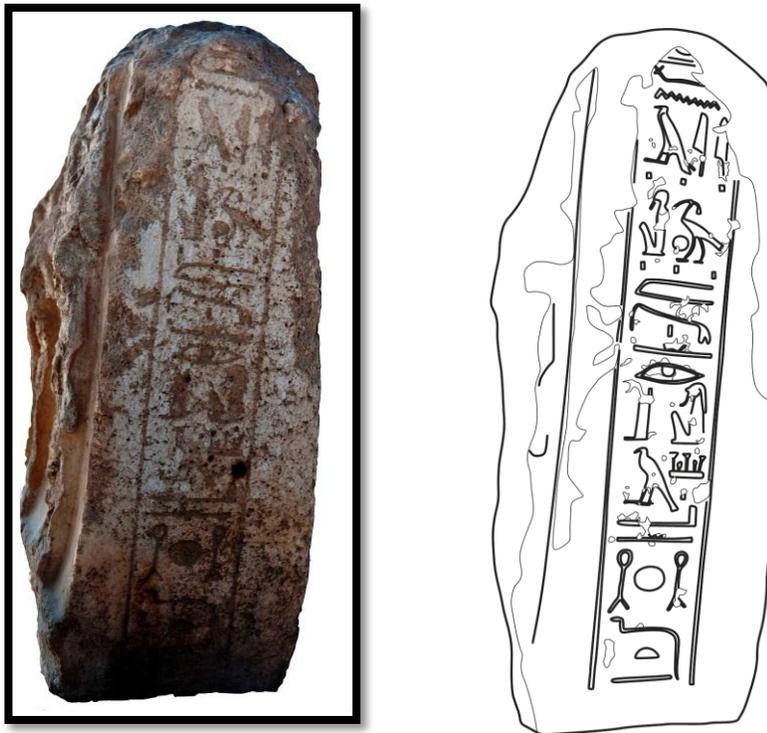


Figure (4)
Left side (Epigraphy and photo by the researcher)

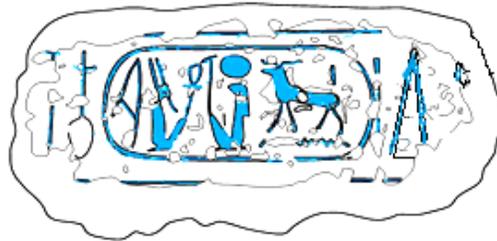


Figure (5)
Top of the statue
(Epigraphy and photo by the researcher)





Figure (6)

Group statue of Ptah, Sekhmet and Ramesses II from Memphis

Moussa, M.A., (1981), p.278, Pl.6-7

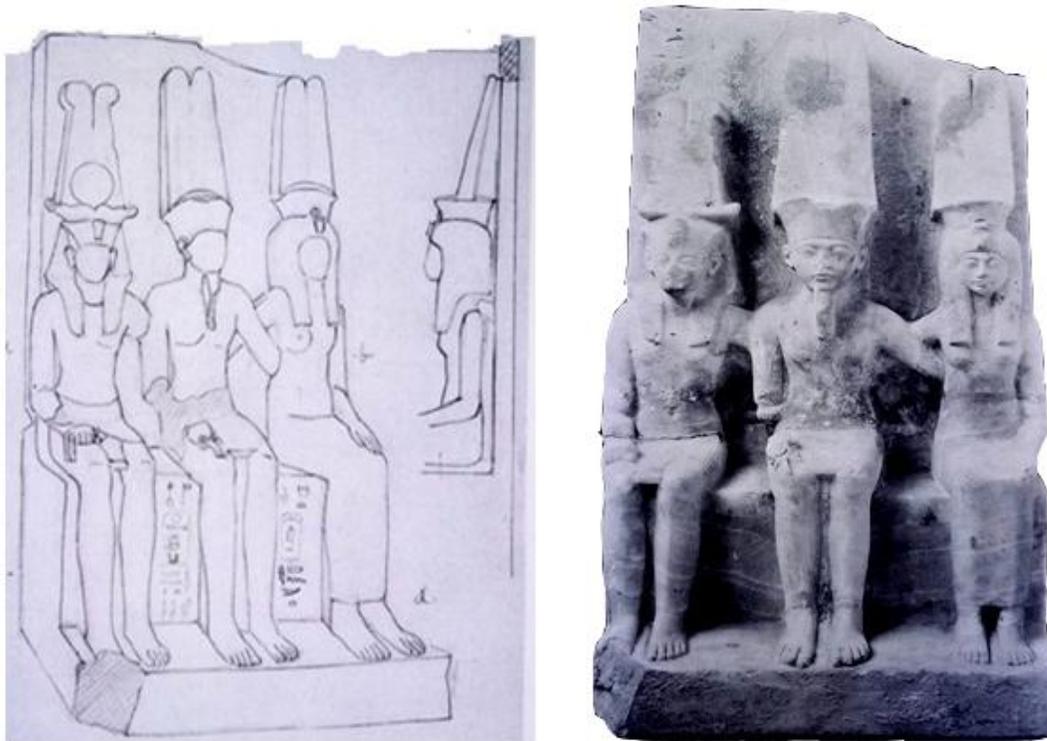


Figure (7)

Triad of Thutmose I, Amon and Iah-mose,

CG42052

¹ Temple of the King "Ramses II" Located to the northeast of the temple of "Seti I" at Abydos, which was prepared by Ramses II also for worship of the god "Osiris" Unfortunately, this temple was greatly affected as a result of lack of maintenance in the past decade. Some walls are meter and half height. It seems that the remains of this temple consists of a courtyard (Osirin court) with columns decorated with Osirin statues, followed by two hypostyle hall, and behind them, the Holy of Holies, which is surrounded by other rooms; (**Arnold, D.**, 2000, 213)

² Unpublished Report of the committee counting, registration and documentation Scattered objects inside the temple of Seti I and Ramses II at Abydos, The Ministry of State for Antiquities, Balyana 2015, p.7.

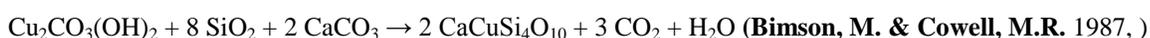
³ The Atf consists of conical cup which appears to be made up of plant stems bundled together and is flanked by two curved feather. (**Collier, S.**, 1996, 37, fig.10)

⁴ The Swty consists of a pair of feathers, which may be straight or curved. (**Collier, S.**, 1996, 53-56, fig.21)

⁵ It is important to point out from the outset that there were at least three royal women whose names was Isetnefret, may be even four. The first was the wife of Ramses II, the mother of Merenptah, the second was the sixth daughter of Ramses II who was presumably the wife of Merenptah called here Isetnefret II. The third was the daughter of Khaemwast son of Ramses II, called here Isetnefret III. If the daughter of Ramses II (Isetnefret II) was not the same woman who was the wife of Merenptah, there might have existed yet another woman with the name Isetnefret IV. (**Iskander, S.**, 2002, 39)

⁶ Why the ancient Egyptian artist was depicts a woman with retractor legs? In fact, there are many views on this question: I think that may be signify the lack of movement and lack of a livelihood pursuit and the lack of exit from the house where the lady of the house "nbt pr", princess or noble must be dignity, modesty, quiet movement and balance overriding the feature, this is preparing more If a woman did not move her leg.

⁷ Egyptian blue was called in ancient Egyptian *hsbd-iry*, several experiments have been carried out by scientists and archaeologists interested in analyzing the composition of Egyptian blue (a copper calcium silicate) and the techniques used to manufacture it. a crystalline multiphase material that was produced by heating together quartz sand, a copper compound, calcium carbonate, and a small amount of an alkali at temperatures ranging between 800 and 1,000 °C (1,470 and 1,830 °F) (depending on the amount of alkali used) for several hours. The result is Egyptian blue, carbon dioxide, and water vapor:



⁸ In early periods the lapis lazuli blue color (a type of blue copper carbonate) was used, but after some time has proved that the color change and tends to green so that Egyptian was making Egyptian blue. (**Lucas, A.**, 1991, 559); (**Lorna, L. & Quirke S.**, 2000, 104-120).

⁹  verb xr meaning to say; (**Lesko, L.**, 1984, vol. II); (Wb III, p.317-318; p.369); (LRL.16R8).

¹⁰ Probably a verb was present in this lacuna, its end with letter f, the state of the stone don't allow an identification of the sign.