

## Two Unpublished Bronze Statuettes of Osiris from the Egyptian Museum in Cairo

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### Abstract

The study highlights one of the most significant periods through the ancient Egyptian history. The research deals with two divine Statuettes from the twenty-sixth dynasty in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo.

Furthermore, the definition of the late period emphasizes that the reason for the use of term "Late period" is due to the late of the time not the late of the Civilization because during this period, there were strong dynasties in Art, Civilization and the Policy.

Moreover, the research represents a full explanation of the two divine Statuettes, their positions, materials, their natures, jewelers and their insignias.

**KeyWords:** Divine Statues, Twenty-sixth dynasty, Osiris, Saite dynasty, Late Period, Bronze.

### Research methodology

In this research, many approaches and sources are applied as:

- The historical approach to refer to the history of the twenty-sixth dynasty.
- The descriptive approach to representing the artistic features of the two divine statuettes during that dynasty.
- The analytical approach will be applied to emphasis the main findings of the research.

### Archeological background

"The Late Period in Egypt is no Dark Age".

It shows all the signs of flourish appropriate to the ancient world: temple building, superlative sculpture, the raising of armies, and the administration of land" (Kemp, 2005).

The re-unification of the two lands under one pharaoh is always the end of an Intermediate Period. In this case, it happened by psmtk I, the establisher of the twenty-six around 656 BCE. It should be noted, however, that the rule of the Kushite (Twenty-fifth Dynasty) that preceded the Saite dynasty re-unification of the country, was far from a foreign rule that decayed the land's cultural identity. Counteractive, during their rule one can observe signs of economic prosperity and continuation; these are reflected on copying religious texts and the extensive building programs on which these kings embarked (Atta Allah, 2015).

The kings of the twenty-six dynasty succeeded in building great and powerful country politically and militarily, but the Persian invasion has ended this dynasty, then the country fell under the control of foreign rule (Mamw, 2002).

### Osiris

Osiris is the Egyptian Lord of the Underworld and Judge of the Dead, brother-husband to Isis, and one of the most important gods of ancient Egypt. The name 'Osiris' is the Latinized form of the Egyptian wsir which is interpreted as 'powerful' or 'mighty', he is the first-born of the gods Geb (earth) and Nut (sky). Shortly after the creation of the world, was murdered by his younger brother Set, and brought back to life by his sister-wife Isis. This myth, and the gods involved became central to Egyptian culture and religious life (Bunson, 1991).

Osiris was originally a fertility god, possibly from Syria who became so popular he absorbed the function of earlier gods such as Andjeti and Khentamenti, the two gods of fertility and agriculture worshipped at Abydos, he is associated with the djed symbol and is often depicted with black or green skin symbolizing the fertile mud of the Nile and

regenerateness, also frequently shown as a mummy or in partially mummified form in his role as Judge of the Dead (Bunson, 1991).

Images of Osiris as a living god depict him as a comely man in a royal dress wearing the crown of Upper Egypt as a plumed headdress known as the *Atf* and carrying the crook and flail, symbols of kingliness. He is associated with the mythical Bennu bird that rises to life from the ashes. Osiris was known by many names but chiefly as *Wnn nfr*, "The Beautiful One" and, in his role as Judge of the Dead, *Khentiamenti*, "The Foremost of the Westerners". The west was associated with death and 'westerners' became synonymous with those who had passed on to the afterlife (pinch, 2004).

Osiris was also known as The Lord of Love, King of the Living, and Eternal Lord. After Isis, Osiris was the most popular and enduring of all the Egyptian gods. His worship spanned thousands of years from shortly before the Early Dynastic Period (c. 3150-2613 BCE) to the Ptolemaic Dynasty (323-30 BCE), the last dynasty to rule Egypt before the coming of Rome. It is also possible that Osiris was worshiped in some forms in the Predynastic Period of Egypt (c. 6000-3150 BCE) and probable that he originated at that time (Joshua, 2016).

Osiris was considered not only a merciful judge of the dead in the afterlife but also the underworld agency that granted all life, including sprouting vegetation and the fertile flooding of the Nile River. He was described as the "Lord of love" (Budge, 1969).

The Kings of Egypt were associated with Osiris in death – as Osiris rose from his death they would, in union with him, inherit eternal life through a process of imitative magic. By the New Kingdom all people, not just pharaohs, were believed to be associated with Osiris at death if they incurred the costs of the assimilation rituals (Man, 1971).

Osiris is represented in his most developed form of iconography wearing the *Atf* crown, which is similar to the White crown of Upper Egypt, but with the addition of two curling ostrich feathers at each side. He also carries the crook and flail. The crook is thought to represent Osiris as a shepherd god. The symbolism of the flail is more uncertain with shepherds whip, fly-whisk, or association with the god *Andjety* of the ninth nome of Lower Egypt proposed (The Oxford Guide, 2003)

Osiris was commonly depicted as a pharaoh with a complexion of either green (the color of rebirth) or black (alluding to the fertility of the Nile floodplain) in mummiform wearing the trappings of mummification from chest downward (Collier and Bill, 1998).

### **The Sculpture during the Late Period**

The development of sculpture is not as arbitrary as for consecutive dynasties, wars, and occupation had little effects on native culture life, after the 18th and 19th dynasties came the disruptiveness and invasion periods, then the revival of sculpture held by the kushite kings who made the likeness of the sculpture of the middle kingdom, so the statuettes which made during the twenty-fifth dynasty in the beginning reflect the best of the sculpture of earlier periods and from that time the Kushite sculpture became dominant in the Egyptian art and only discontinuous: sculpture continued and developed at the end of the ancient civilization, and the function of statuary became more sharply defined, as in the late period all sculptures were put in the temples to be seen by the people who came for worship, so that many attempts were made to add something cute to the face of the statuette to give it the features of the definite person to reflect the character and inner life of the subject (Bothmer, 1960).

### Materials and methods of the two Statuettes

One of the most metals that used during the Late Period especially during the twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth dynasties is white copper (bronze), also found utensils for melting and casting molds for copper during the ancient times (Morris, 2008).

Bronze was the most important copper crudes, which is a mixture of copper and tin as it also contains an amount of lead, the date of appearance of bronze mineral in Egypt is ambiguous, as it was not discovered in ancient times as well as the lack of knowledge of its raw materials, in contrast, it was used in Asia before it was known in Egypt long before, also we do not know when it began to be used as a substitute for copper, some researchers believe that it was not discovered in Egypt before the twelfth-dynasty (1993، الخطيب).

Also, "Wenright" mentioned that the bronze industry in Egypt dating back to the year 1500 BC (Lucas, 1991).

Bronze was used in the new kingdom, although the examples of bronze sculpture from the Eighteenth Dynasty are rare (A Symposium, 1990) but it was found that it was more solid than copper as well as ease of susceptibility in casting into molds even taking solves replace the copper in bronze statuettes industry (Stocks, 2003).

It is an alloy of copper and of about 4% tin. It is harder than pure copper, melts at a lower temperature and is easier to cast. But when the amount of tin is 5% or higher the alloy becomes brittle when hammered and has to be annealed frequently (Lucas, 1989).

In the Late Period small bronze statuettes which were donations of private persons to temples were produced in very high numbers, most such bronzes in museums are without provenance; some were found in deposits like the 600 figures found in a wooden box at Abydos, and the thousands retrieved from the Karnak Cachette, in the open court south of the great Amun temple), The bronzes seem to have been produced at a number of local centers and then taken to different temples; this, at least, would explain why the bronzes at one site may display a wide range of styles distinguished Upper, Middle and Lower Egyptian styles especially of Osiris figures, but this hypothesis has yet to be securely established (Roeder, 1956).

Most of the bronzes are cast, as different deities may be depicted with the same attributes, and the same deity may be depicted in more than one form, to show different aspects. Often a form is specific in the Late Period to a particular local deity. Therefore, form alone is not usually enough to identify a figure in ancient Egyptian formal art: geographical context (provenance) and/or inscription are the more reliable criteria for identification of the name intended by the ancient artist (Roeder, 1956).

### Description

1- Statuette of wsir 

#### Identification:-

**Museum numbers:** - CG 38241 – SR 3.8148 (b).

**Place of Discovery:** - Central of Delta, at Sa El-Hagar.

**Date of Discovery:-** Unknown.

**Excavator:-** Unknown.

**Dynasty:-** 26<sup>th</sup> dynasty.

**Measurements:-** H: 63 cm.

**Material:-** Bronze.

**Facial Features:-** Osiris is characterized by small round face, high cheek bones, eyebrows, almond hollowed eyes with extended cosmetic eye lines, the eyes were inlaid but now they

are missing, fleshy nose, small mouth and exposed detailed ears composed of a pinna, ear lobes and cartilage showing the ultimate skill and accuracy of the sculptor (Daressy, 1906). Wsir is wearing an aquiline long false beard attached to his lower chin and its plaiting is indicated by incised lines, with two straps around his face.

**Statuette Position:** - Standing on a thin bronze base.

**Upper Part of the Body:** - The body is wrapped in a shroud, which is considered the typical mummified shape, but in a new shape: feet together and the appearance of being tightly bound in linen wrappings as the mummified, resurrected king of the underworld.

Osiris puts his right arm on his chest, while his left arm on his belly.

He is represented with closed hands holding his insignias as a sign of power and to show his control over life and afterlife worlds (Ghoniem, 2014).

The hand slots are represented in anew shape.

Also, the muscles of his forearm, elbow, and thumb are slightly shown from the shroud, also the details of hand fingers.

**Lower Part of the Body:** - Both legs are combined close together side by side on the bronze base.

The muscles of his knees and calves are slightly shown from the shroud, also the details of hand fingers.

**Head Dress:** - Osiris wears the Atf crown, composed of the white crown of Upper Egypt flanked by two ostrich feathers, but now the feathers are missing, only the white crown is still existed only little traces of the feathers are still shown (Daressy, 1906).

The crown is adorned with a uraeus, to the left and right of the shield of the uraeus are two windings, indicating a tail which is coiled stretches upward on the white crown, and protruding front part.

**Cloth:** - The statuette represents wsir in his most common form, but in this statuette, he is represented with a new shape of garments which represents him as a mummified god enveloped in a close-fitting shroud involves all body leaving his hands free and reached to the top of his shoulders.

**Jewelry:** - Osiris wears a five-row necklace of cylindrical beads and a pear-shaped pearls around his neck.

**Insignias:** - Osiris holds in his left hand the HqA scepter while In the right hand the nxx flail These are considered the two major insignias of wsir in ancient Egypt, but here they are missing only pieces of them still exists in his hand fists.



## 2- Statuette of Wsir

**Identification:-**

**Museum numbers:** - CG 38256 – SR 3.8153 (a)

**Place of Discovery:** - Central of Delta, at Sa El-Hagar.

**Date of Discovery:** - Unknown

**Excavator:** - Unknown

**Dynasty:** - 26<sup>th</sup> Dynasty

**Measurements:** - H: 30.3 cm.

**Material:** - Bronze.

**Facial Features:** - Osiris represents with a small rounded face high cheek bones, eyebrows in black color, almond inlaid eyes with extended cosmetic eye line but the inlaid of the eyes, does not exist up till now; They may have fallen or stolen, small mouth and exposed detailed ears composed of a pinna, ear lobes and cartilage showing the ultimate skill and accuracy of the sculptor.

Wsir wears an aquiline long false beard attached to his lower chin which turned forward at the end and its plaiting is indicated by incised lines, with two straps around his face (Daressy, 1906).

**Statuette Position:** - Standing on a bronze base.

**Upper Part of the Body:** - The body is wrapped in a shroud, which is considered the typical mummified shape: feet together and the appearance of being tightly bound in linen wrappings as the mummified, resurrected king of the underworld.

He is represented with closed hands while holding the insignias as a sign of power and to show the control over life and afterlife worlds (Ghoniem, 2014).

Osiris puts his right arm on his chest, while his left one is on his belly.

The hand slots are decorated and clearly shown.

The muscles of his forearm, elbow, and thumb are slightly shown from the shroud, also the details of hand fingers.

**Lower Part of the Body:** - Both legs and feet are combined close together side by side on the bronze base.

The muscles of his knees and calves are slightly shown from the shroud.

**Head Dress:** - Osiris wears the Atf crown, composed of two large folded ram's horns, the white crown of Upper Egypt flanked by two stripped ostrich feathers. The crown is adorned with a uraeus; to the left and right of the shield of the uraeus are two windings, indicating a tail which is coiled stretches upward on the white crown, and protruding front part.

**Cloth:** - The statuette represented wsir in his most common form: a mummified god enveloped in a close-fitting shroud involves all body leaving his hands free and reached for the upper part of the shoulders.

**Jewelry:** - Osiris wears a four-row necklace of cylindrical beads and a pear-shaped pearls around his neck.

**Insignias:** - Osiris holds in his left hand a stripped HkA scepter whose upper bend of which is turned toward the neck. This insignia is also turned vertically downward below the hand. In the right hand, the nxx flail has three thongs; the thongs on the upper half, have horizontal line incisions. These are considered the two major insignias of wsir in ancient Egypt.

If we look closely we will see wsir holding a short nxx flail and very long HqA scepter in the shape of God anDty.

**Statuettes Analysis**

Table 1:- Osiris Statuettes

Fig No:	Position	Material	Types of deities				Head dress	Cloth	Jewelry	Insignias						Dynasty		
			Human	Animal	Hybrid	Bird				anx	wAs	HqA	nxx	Long stick	other	25th	26th	25th - 26th
1	Standing	Bronze	*				Atf crown	Shroud	Necklace			*	*					
2																	*	

### We Conclude from the Previous Table that

God wsir appears in the two Statuettes in a standing position

The bronze is the same material for both statuettes; Also, we can make a connection between the material and the dynasties which these statuettes date back.

Bronze appears in the two statuettes; both of them date back to the 26<sup>th</sup> dynasty.

God wsir appears in the two Statuettes in a standing position; Also both of them are represented in the human shape with the same head dress as he is represented wearing his common Atf crown, that both of them date back to the 26<sup>th</sup> dynasty.

It's worthy to mention that, the earliest type of Atf crown consists of a conical cap that was made out of plant stems tied together and flanked by two curved feathers. In the old kingdom, the Atf crown had no sun disk and worn with ram horns and cow horns on top of a wig. From the new kingdom, it appears with the sun disk between the cow horns (Noha, 2003; Collier, 1996).

Both statuettes represent Osiris in his usual clothes wearing his shroud, necklace around his neck, and holding the HqA and nxx flail in both statues.

Both statuettes date back to the 26<sup>th</sup> dynasty.

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## **Figures**

Figure 1: Statuette of Osiris, Bronze, Central of Delta



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Figure 2: Statuette of Osiris, Bronze, Central of delta



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