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لدراسة معابد الكرنك  
الاقصر (مصر)

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# A CONTEMPORARY OF KING AMENHOTEP II AT KARNAK

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When an ancient Egyptian head is found at Karnak, the event seems to be as little newsworthy as when another Old Kingdom mastaba is uncovered at Saqqara. But when the newly discovered head is nearly intact and of unusual quality, it deserves to be promptly made known. The present note, in anticipation of a longer study, is intended merely to introduce the head to those interested in the art of ancient Egypt <sup>(1)</sup>.

The head was found in 1972 in the doorway of the north gate of the First Court at Karnak, about 1.20 m. below ground level (pl. XXXIX-XL, A-C). The sculpture, in crystal-speckled gray granite, represents a man with a wide, striated wig and a fairly long plain beard which is preserved intact for its entire length, including the finished underside. The face is idealizing, ageless, and with its clear and open features represents the best of which is classical in Egyptian art. The face is carved in three planes, a central portion consisting of nose and mouth and part of the eyes, and two sides encompassing most of the cheeks, the outer parts of the eyes and the summarily modeled ears. One is not much aware of this angular arrangement of the features until one studies the eye and realizes that it is really carved in two planes, with the result that the profile view reveals an unusually large portion of the eyeball. This would be natural if the eyeball were formed as a convex globe, but that is not the case in the Karnak head. The eyeball is really not shaped at all; it is a void within the contour of the lids and, unlike the surface of the face, is not well smoothed, but left slightly rough <sup>(2)</sup>.

<sup>(1)</sup> Karnak, Karakol, New Register no. 328. Gray granite spotted with white crystals. Height 25 cm., height of face 13 cm., width 32 cm., depth of break 20.5 cm. *CRAIBL* 1973, p. 313 and fig. 7; also mentioned in *Or.* 42 (1973), p. 408. Only the tip of the nose and the left side of the beard are slightly damaged. I wish to thank M. Serge Sauneron, Co-Director of the Centre Franco-Egyptien at Karnak for inviting me to write this note and to submit it for publication in *Karnak*.

<sup>(2)</sup> This feature is found in hard-stone private heads as early as the beginning of Dynasty XII (e.g. Boston 14.720, the Lady Senenuwy) and more frequently in Dynasty XVIII (Cairo CG 42114 and CG 42116 : Senenmut) until the time of Tuthmosis IV. As Edna Russmann points out to me, it is briefly revived in Dynasty XXV (e.g. in the heads of Taharqa, Cairo CG 560 and Copenhagen NCG 1538). P. Reuterswärd, *Studien zur Polychromie...* (Stockholm, 1958) does not seem to have noticed this feature.

Eyebrows and cosmetic lines are plastic bands in relief, fully drawn out. The nose is strong and straight; the nostrils are not drilled, and neither are the corners of the mouth. The upper lip is straight, the lower dips slightly and in its middle portion gains in fullness. The chin is square, but not prominent; it is vaguely defined by the smooth transition to the beard.

The form of the wig, eyebrows and eyes, nose and mouth, and the timeless beauty of this face indicate the period to which the head is to be attributed : namely, the early part of Dynasty XVIII, some time before the reign of Amenhotep III when a more elegant sophisticated style than that of the head was employed. We therefore have to place the sculpture before his period <sup>(1)</sup>.

Of all the features of this face it is the eye that gives the clue for assigning the head to the reign of one of the four rulers preceding Amenhotep III : Hatshepsut, Tuthmosis III, Amenhotep II or Tuthmosis IV. The arching of the eyebrows in the time of Queen Hatshepsut is too pronounced to relate the new head from Karnak to her period, and in general eyes are more wide open during her reign <sup>(2)</sup>. Although the arching of the eyebrows abates somewhat under Tuthmosis III and the height of the eye openings is reduced, the style of facial features in his reign is still very clearly derived from that of Hatshepsut <sup>(3)</sup>. A real change sets in with Amenhotep II, when the eyes tend to get narrower and the eyebrows lose their arch and are applied as not quite straight bands — at least straighter than they ever were under Tuthmosis III <sup>(4)</sup>. Both near-straight and slightly arched eye-

<sup>(1)</sup> A fleeting suspicion that the head might date from Dynasty XXII or XXIII, when excellent imitations of Eighteenth Dynasty style were carved at Karnak, proved unfounded. Still, if not the complete statues but only the uninscribed heads of Cairo CG 42208, 42225, 24226, 42231 (Legrain, *Statues III* [1914], pls. XV, XXXII, XXXIII, XXXIX) had come down to us, it would be hard for all but experienced specialists to figure out their proper attribution.

<sup>(2)</sup> Typical for Hatshepsut's style are the eyes of New York, MMA 31.3.157 (Vandier, *Manuel III* [1958], pl. XCVIII, 5), for that of her followers those of Brooklyn 67.68 (*BMA VIII* [1966-1967], p. 60, fig. 5).

<sup>(3)</sup> Typical for Tuthmosis III is a fragmentary head of the King, also found at Karnak in recent years (*Kêmi* 19 [1969], figs. on pp. 245-246); and for his contemporaries, Cairo CG 42123 (Legrain, *op. cit.* I [1906], pl. LXXIII).

<sup>(4)</sup> Good examples for the King's eyes are those of Cairo CG 42074 and 42077 (Legrain, *op. cit.*, pls. XLIV and XLVII) and of Boston, MFA 99.733 (*BMFA* 52 [1954], p. 12, figs. 2-3). Of private persons from his reign the best sculptures are by far Cairo CG 42126 (Legrain, *op. cit.*, pl. LXXXV); also Boston 09.526 (Vandier, *op. cit.*, pl. CLXIX, 3; better in Petrie, *Qurneh* [1909], pl. XXXIII) which may, however, be as late as the time of Tuthmosis IV.



Head of a contemporary of King Amenhotep II. Found at Karnak in 1972. Gray granite.



A



B

A-C. - Head found at Karnak in 1972.



C



D. - Head of Ptah-Tenen (Cairo CG 38068, with name of Amenhotep II).

brows prevail under Tuthmosis IV, the former continuing the tradition of Amenhotep II, the latter establishing a new sophistication that finds its climax early in the reign of Amenhotep III<sup>(1)</sup>.

The head therefore seems clearly to be datable to the time of King Amenhotep II (1439-1413 B.C.), although it is impossible to state with certainty to which part of his reign it should be assigned. The fairly large eyes point to the influence of Tuthmosis III's statuary; the straight eyebrows, to the latter part of the reign of Amenhotep II. The fact that the rim of the upper eyelid is not outlined does not matter; both contoured and uncountoured eyelids occur in royal as well as private sculpture throughout this period. With its square chin and long beard the head shows a great similarity to the faces of two statues of King Amenhotep II in Cairo. One has been mentioned above<sup>(2)</sup>. The other, which does not really represent the King but the god Ptah-Tenen (pl. XL, D), is inscribed with the names of Amenhotep II; like the present head, it was found at Karnak<sup>(3)</sup>. With its inlaid eyes it looks « alive » in a manner resembling that of the new Karnak head, with its slightly rough eyeballs. The structure of the face, moreover, is also very like that of the new piece. Together with the bearded Cairo statue of the King from the *Cachette*<sup>(4)</sup>, we may have three sculptures made in the same workshop, and probably within the same brief time span.

In conclusion, it must be asked : Who is represented by the head and what was the attitude of the statue to which it belonged? Neither of these questions can be answered with certainty. We are notably short of statuary of the followers of Amenhotep II, and although a dozen or so pieces of private sculpture bear the King's cartouche, none represents an outstanding personality of his reign, excepting the Cairo group of Sen-nefer<sup>(5)</sup>, which is on a much smaller scale than the present piece. Since the new Karnak head is from

(1) The development of facial features in royal sculpture, from the early part of Dynasty XVIII to the reign of Amenhotep III, has been outlined in a fundamental study by H.W. Müller, in *Münchener Jahrbuch der bildenden Kunst* 3-4 (1952-53), pp. 67 ff.

(2) Cairo CG 42074; Vandier, *op. cit.*, pl. CII, 1.

(3) Cairo CG 38068; Daressy, *Statues de divinités* (1905-06), I, p. 25, II, pl. VI; Vandier, *op. cit.*, p. 382, pl. CXXII, 2.

(4) See Note 2 above.

(5) Cairo CG 42126; see Note 4 p. 116 above. This man, however, was active well into the reign of Tuthmosis IV.

a life-size figure, any one of the great officials of the decades following 1440 B.C. could have been represented.

The attitude in which our man was shown was probably that of a kneeling offerer, because neither striding, seated or block statues in the early part of Dynasty XVIII are ever shown with a beard of such length jutting out freely. If the bottom of the beard had shown a break the head could be assigned to a kneeling statue in which the owner proffers to his god a large emblem, a shrine or another attribute. As it is, the fragment may still have come from a kneeling sculpture such as that of Djehuty<sup>(1)</sup>, who holds before him an offering basin, well below chest level, so that his beard hangs down freely. But the beard of Djehuty is short, in keeping with the style of the beards of other private people in his period. Since in the following generation, under Amenhotep II, a non-royal person could have a beard of regal length, it is quite possible that the man shown in the new Karnak head also was represented as holding a basin, open at the top, which did not permit his beard to rest on the upper side, as in other kneeling statues where the emblem proffered by the donor directly supports his beard.

<sup>(1)</sup> Cairo CG 42123, dated to Tuthmosis III; see Note 3 p. 116 above.