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Some Remarks on the Identity of the Ram-Headed Bronze Statuette from Persepolis

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Abstract

It has been nearly 86 years since the Egyptian bronze ram-headed statuette, known as Harsaphes, was found outside the Treasury in the Garrison Street of Persepolis during the archaeological excavations by the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago. The iconographic features of this little-known statuette is associated it with an Egyptian deity, which makes its genre unique in the heartland of the Persian Empire. It should be noted that the four ram-headed deities: Heryshef, Khnum, Amun, and Banebdjedet, sometimes bear a striking resemblance in the formal Egyptian art. This paper re-opens the discussion on the statuette's identity, and offers a detailed comparison between this statuette and other Egyptian ram-headed deities. The results from a comparative analysis are critical to the supposed attribution of Harsaphes to the statuette, and examine the likelihood of being all four ram-headed gods.

Keywords: Ram-Headed; Bronze Statuette; Egyptian Deities; Persian Period; Persepolis.
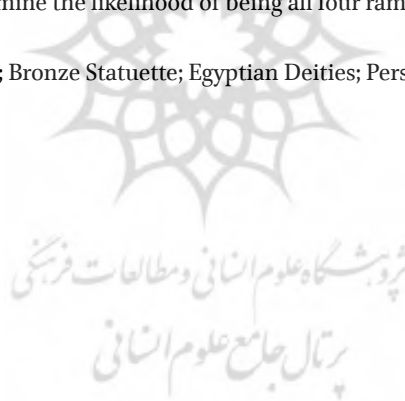
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Introduction

During the winter of 1930-31, the Oriental Institute organized a Persian Expedition to carry out excavations in largely unexplored mountainous regions, east and southeast of the Mesopotamian plain. James Henry Breasted requested, and was granted, a concession to excavate the remains of Persepolis, an Achaemenian royal administrative center in the province of Fars. The archaeological excavations started the same year under the supervision of Ernst Herzfeld. He served as field director of the Persian Expedition until the end of 1934, and succeeded by Erich Schmidt, who continued to excavate the region until 1939 (Breasted, 1933: 89-91; Schmidt, 1939: vii). In 1936, a bronze ram-headed statuette was unearthed in the so-called Garrison Street[1] by Schmidt. It was found just outside the only eastern entrance to the Treasury, about 2 meters north of it, and reported as Harsaphes (Schmidt, 1939: 69; Schmidt, 1953: 170) (Fig. 1).

What makes this study important is the fact that we are encountered with a new Egyptian deity in the Achaemenian Empire for the first time. As is well documented, from the first Persian domination over Egypt, the Persians and Egyptians began gradually to exert their influence over each other's territory.[2]

Studies on the Persepolis Fortification Archive as well as other cultural materials provide useful information for tracking Egyptian deities in the Persian context.[3] Previous research has mostly attempted to identify the Egyptian deity Bes in the Achaemenian Empire (Abdi, 1999; 2002), and no clear indications of the role of other Egyptian deities could be discerned. This paper is a first step toward a more comprehensive study of the ram-headed statuette from Persepolis. It examines the statuette's identity from the iconographical viewpoint, reconsiders Schmidt's suggestion, and discusses two more gods that have not yet been considered in connection with this statuette. Therefore, this research focuses on the Egyptian gods Heryshef, Khnum, Amun, and Banebdjedet due to their resemblance and discusses their probable attribution to the statuette[4]. In order to reveal the statuette's identity, one must also take into account both the contexts in which it was found and iconographic details by comparing reliable archaeological data.

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[1] The street, 5,50 to 6 m wide, was filled with debris of the adjoining Treasury wall and with mud-brick detritus and rubble that had been washed downhill from the fortification. Some of the objects found in the detritus of the street may have been lost or discarded during the looting of the Treasury, whose only eastern entrance is close to the excavated area (Schmidt, 1953: 206).

[2] Persians ruled Egypt during the 27th and 31st Dynasties, known as the First and Second Persian Periods. In 526 BC, Egypt was conquered by Cambyses II. Except for an inter-val from 404 to 336 B.C., it remained as an Achaemenian Satrapy until 332 BC when it was surrendered to Alexander the Great. For further studies about the Persian-Egyptian relations, see Posener, 1936; Kienitz, 1953; Bresciani, 1958; Ray, 1988; Wasmuth, 2017; Colburn, 2020.

[3] For some of these deities' names in the Persepolis Fortification Archive, see Garrison and Ritner, 2010. For the Egyptian personal artifacts, primarily Bes and udjat amulets, from Susa and Persepolis, see Wasmuth, 2009: 137–40; 2017:85-95.

[4] Based on the standardizations of Christian Leitz (2002), the gods' names are written as Ḥry-š.f, Ḫnmw, Bꜣ-nb-Ḏdt, and ʿImn. As there are different English spellings of these Egyptian gods, the authors have followed Wilkinson (2003) in this paper.

Fig. 1. Bronze Statuette of the Egyptian God from Persepolis. Not to Scale
(Oriental Institute Museum of Chicago University)

The Ram-Headed Statuette from Persepolis[1]

This statuette depicts a bearded, ram-headed object, preserved from the crown to about the waist and elbows, while the lower part is missing. It measures 65mm high, 28mm wide, and 19mm thick. The hair (wig?) falls forward over the shoulders as far as behind. His head with projecting ears and curved horns, wearing an Atef crown, is flanked with a uraeus on either side. It is supported by undulating horizontal horns, and fronted by a uraeus. There is also a sun disk at the top of the crown (Fig. 2). The statuette is preserved at the Oriental Institute Museum of Chicago University as Harsaphes under field number PT4 104.[2] How-

[1] Because the authors were unable to study the statuette directly, descriptive data was collected based on the photos, illustrations, and registration cards available on the University of Chicago's Oriental Institute Museum website.

[2] The field number designates the site and the excavation season. PT4 stands for Persepolis Terrace, fourth season corresponding to the
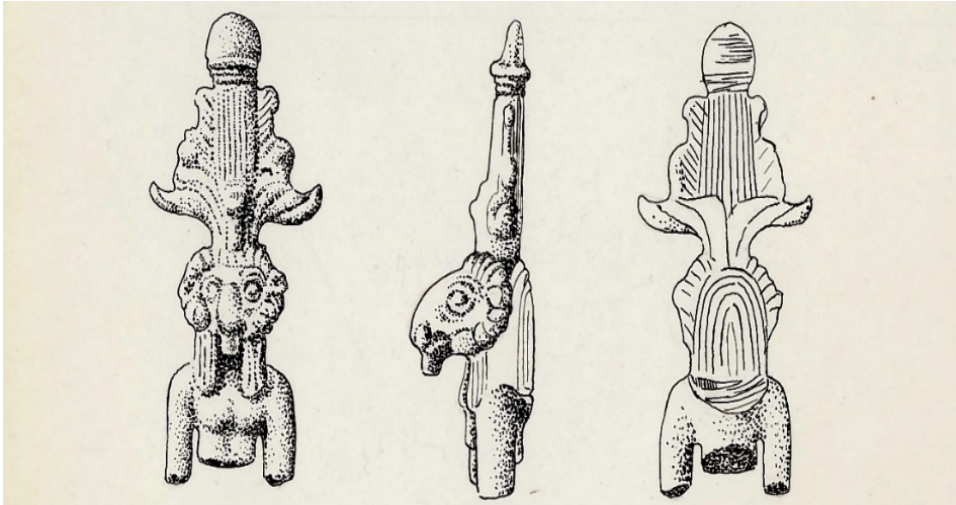
Fig. 2. Drawings of the Bronze Statuette from Persepolis
(Adapted from the Website of the Oriental Institute Museum of Chicago University)

ever, on the museum registration cards, another possibility considered was the Egyptian god Khnemu (Khnum).

Since there is no apparent explanation for the religious significance of the Egyptian ram-headed deities in Iranian contexts, it is difficult to determine what led to the presence of the bronze statuette from Persepolis, and its purpose. Was it locally produced or should one assume that it was imported from Egypt? Generally, many of the objects found in the Treasury were of foreign origin, as Erich Schmidt (1957: 66) described them:

> They are pieces of booty, tribute, or trade. In other instances, we are unable to determine whether objects were made in Persia or some other land. We must bear in mind, furthermore, that the Persepolis Treasury was the depository of many pre-Achaemenian treasures looted from Egypt and Mesopotamia, as indicated by votive objects and vessels inscribed with the names of kings who ruled those countries before

year 1936 followed by the number of the object discovered during the season concerned (Schmidt, 1953: xxix; Schmidt, 1957: 141).

Persepolis was founded. Thus, many objects of our collection probably antedate the site at which they were discovered.

Although the ram-headed statuette was found outside the eastern entrance to the Treasury, it seems it had once been deposited in this building, as were the other objects of foreign provenance (Schmidt, 1957: 68; Cahill, 1985). It may never be known how this statuette first came to Persepolis, but it is still open for discussion. Only more evidence and a better understanding of the evolution of the ram-headed deities in the Late Period[1] can eventually further clarify the role of this bronze statuette. Its presence in the Persepolis site would be the only example of the Egyptian ram-headed deity in the non-Egyptian context of the Achaemenian Empire so far, which leads to many questions from various aspects. In the first step, we will try to get close to its identity by focusing on its iconography

[1] A majority of scholars might define the Late Period as encompassing the years 664 to 343 BC (Dynasties XXVI-XXX), but there are also other different opinions; see Josephson, 1997: 2.

using comparative study. The basis of the research is a collection of archaeological artifacts which can be dated by reliable criteria such as an inscription or geographical context.

The Ram-Headed Deities from Egypt

There are several ovine deities in Egypt, mostly male rams. Some of them have wider responsibilities (Amun and Khnum), while others are somewhat more restricted (Banebdjedet, Heryshef, and Kherty). In some periods, the gods of Amun, Khnum, Heryshef, and Banebdjedet bear a striking resemblance in their appearance. Sometimes, their representations are extremely difficult to distinguish from each other without any inscriptional evidence.

Who is Heryshef?

The deity Heryshef, rendered Arsaphes by the Greeks (Plutarch, 1936: 91) and equated to Herakles, was usually represented as a long-horned ram or mostly as a standing ram-headed man in a royal kilt, wearing the Atef crown and a solar disk.[1] He was the main divinity and tutelary god of the Egyptian city of Nn-nswt[2] and worshiped there from at least as early as the 1st Dynasty, according to the Palermo Stone. Heryshef is known to have risen to considerable importance during the First Intermediate Period when the city served as the capital of northern Egypt, though the earliest temple structures that have been found so far at this cult site date to Middle Kingdom times. The temple of Heryshef was greatly enlarged in New Kingdom times, especially by Ramesses II, and appears to have thrived down to

the end of the pharaonic period. He was associated with many aspects, including fertility, water, and stellar phases. Mythologically, he became associated with both Osiris and Re (Wiliknson, 2003: 193; Gundlach, 2013; Pérez Die, 2016: 146).

The Archaeological Evidence of Heryshef

Heryshef is well-represented in various archaeological records, including architectural elements, statuettes, amulets, stelae, and papyri. In the following, only some of the reliable data and firmly dated evidence will be mentioned.

At the temple of Heryshef in Herakleopolis Magna, the shafts of two out of six red granite columns were covered with a scene of Ramesses II making offerings to the god Heryshef.[3] There is also a gold ram-headed statuette found in the pavement of this temple's hypostyle. Chased into the underside of the base is a hieroglyphic inscription naming the ruler Neferkara, son of the Sun Peftjawybast, along with Heryshef as the king of both plains, which belongs to the Third Intermediate Period (23rd Dynasty).[4] More numerous representations of Heryshef occur on stelae, including stela of Iuuenamun and Ahautinefer from the New Kingdom,[5] stela dedicated to Osiris

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[1] For further depictions of Heryshef, see Leitz, 2002, Bd. V: 381.

[2] The city was renamed Herakleopolis by the Greeks and Ihnasya el-Medina by the Arabs. For more information, see Gomaà, 1986: 359-60.

[3] Naville et al. 1894: 10, Pl. II. They are now kept in the Manchester Museum (No. 1780) and in the South Australian Museum of Adelaide (No. A40015). For the latter, see O'Donoghue, 1999. For further discussion on the chronology of the columns, see Yasuoka, 2011.

[4] Petrie 1905: 18. It is held by the Boston Museum of Fine Arts (No. 06.2408). In this paper, for objects bearing names, the authors use the spellings of the museums.

[5] It is a round-topped, limestone stela, divided into two registers. In the upper scene, Osiris is being worshiped by the scribe Iuuenamun, who kneels on the right. And the lower register depicts the table scribe of the lord of the

and Harsaphes from the Ramesside period,[1] and stela of Somtutefnakht from the Late Period.[2] Furthermore, there is a large vessel of andesite porphyry from Mit-Rahineh. It was originally made in the Early Dynastic Period, but was later repaired and incised with an image of Heryshef seated in front of a table with its Hieroglyphic name.[3] Another example, the so-called magical stela of Horus, found at Mit-Rahineh, depicts Heryshef and other deities.[4] This image is of particular inter-

est, since in all the above examples, Heryshef appears with the horizontal horns of Ovis longipes palaeo-aegyptiacus, while the latest instance illustrates him with additional curved horns of Ovis platyura aegyptiaca. This iconography is also attested from the New Kingdom Period at the temple of Abu Simbel[5] and from the Graeco-Roman periods.[6]

Who is Khnum?

The god Khnum, known in Greek as Khnoumis, is well attested from the earliest period of Egyptian religion to the latest. He was associated with fertility, annual inundation, and vegetation. He appears some half-dozen times in the Pyramid Texts of the Old Kingdom (c. 2400-2200 BC), where he is portrayed primarily as a builder. In the Middle Kingdom Coffin Texts (1991-1786 BC), Khnum is depicted as a creator of men and animals, but not yet as a universal creator, a status that he later achieves. In the New Kingdom reigns of Hatshepsut and Thutmose III, he is demonstrated as a figure of a sitting deity, shaping gods, humankind, and animals on a potter's wheel, a motif that be-

two lands, Ahautinefer, kneeling on the right in adoration of the ram-headed god, Heryshef. It is now preserved in the British Museum as No. EA794 (Bierbrier, 1982: 24, Pl. 56; British Museum, 1909: 203).

[1] This limestone stela has three registers. In the upper part, there is a kneeling figure in front of Osiris seated on a throne. Behind him Heryshef stands with an upraised right arm. There are also short lines of hieroglyphs attesting to the identity of the figures. The chronology of the stela is by the style, dress and personal names almost certainly Ramesside. It is housed in the Leicester City Museum (Kitchen, 1960).

[2] It is not actually a stele but the dorsal pillar of a statue of a priest, which unfortunately has not survived. For comprehensive researches, see Perdu 1985; Pirelli 1998: 635; Verhoeven, 2005: 593. At the top of the stele is a relief frieze consisting of four hieroglyphs and standing figures adoring the ram-headed deity. Somtutefnakht, the owner of the stela, entered into the Persian service and later witnessed the big battles in which Alexander the Great defeated Darius III. Thereafter, inspired by a dream in which Heryshef appeared to him, he returned to Egypt and resumed his priestly office. The stela is now exhibited at the Naples National Archaeological Museum as Inv. 1035 (Tresson, 1930; Lichtheim, 2006: 41-3).

[3] Silverman 1997: 220-21. It is in the Pennsylvania Museum (No. E13682).

[4] It is housed in the Cairo Museum and is dat-

ed to the Ptolemaic period (Lacau, 1921: 195). For further information, see also Daressy, 1903: 3-11, Pls. II-III.

[5] Lepsius 1849-1859a: Pl. 192, e. There is also a statuette of unknown origin that represents Heryshef as an Ovis platyura aegyptiaca wearing Atef crown beside the god Ptah, and it is dated by the inscription to the middle of the New Kingdom. It is now in the Yale University Art Gallery (Darnell and Manassa, 2005).

[6] It is reported from the Ptolemaic temples of Dendara and Edfu (Chassinat 1934a: 152, 19˚, Pl. LXXIX; 1934b: 59, 7˚, Pl. LXXXVII; Chassinat and Daumas 1965: 79, Pl. DXVII; Chassinat and Daumas 1972: 164, Pls. DCLXII, DCLXV; Chassinat 1939: 9, Pl. XIII). This form of Heryshef was also illustrated in the book of Fayum (Beinlich, 1991).

came prevalent in texts and reliefs from the New Kingdom through the Roman times and is associated with the divine birth of the pharaoh. During the Late Period, he was recognized as the creator of all and worshiped throughout Egypt (O'Rourke 2001: 231).

Temples dedicated to Khnum are archaeologically attested in Elephantine, Aswan (Mariette, 1872; Arnold, 1999: 262), Esna (Porter and Moss, 1991: 110-19), Kom el-Deir,[1] Kumma, and Beit el-Wali (Ricke et al., 1967). Many cult centers are known in association with this deity, including Ḥr-wr (Breasted, 1906: 82; Gomaà, 1986: 312), Šis-ḥtp (Gomaà, 1986: 251), Memphis, Tell el-Balamun, etc. (von Pilgrim, 2013). Moreover, Khnum's cult was common in many temples in Nubia (Champollion, 1835-1845; Roeder, 1911; Gauthier, 1911: 50, 110, 160; Blackman, 1915; Priego and Martin Flores, 1992).

The iconography of Khnum has experienced various changes throughout Egyptian history.[2] Since earliest times, he was depicted in the fully zoomorphic form of a walking ram. It is an extinct breed of sheep known as Ovis longipes palaeo-aegyptiacus, which had long and slender legs as well as large, almost horizontal horns that spiral. Since the 5th Dynasty, Khnum has generally been represented in semi-anthropomorphic form as a ram-headed deity. From the middle of the 18th Dynasty the horns were surmounted by additional elements, in particular, the Atef crown. During the reign of Ramesses III the iconography changed further, and the god was depicted with additional curved horns of a different ge-

nus. It is known as Ovis platyura aegyptiaca and appeared in Egypt at the time of the Middle Kingdom (Bickel, 1991; Wilkinson, 2003: 194, 195; von Pilgrim, 2013) (Fig. 3).

The Archaeological Evidence of Khnum

The identity of Khnum is confirmed in numerous archaeological data. From the New Kingdom onward, the two mentioned types of horns, with the Atef crown, were considered to be the stylistic features of his iconography. This appears in the Ptolemaic Temple of Khnum, as well as in the cemetery of the sacred rams at Elephantine[3] (Fig. 4). Most reported representations belong to the Graeco-Roman period,[4] except the reliefs of the Hibis temple in the Kharga Oasis dating to the Late Period (Davies 1953: 14, 32, Pls. 8, 64). There is also a bronze statuette in the Royal Ontario Museum (No. 972.51.54), which has been registered as depicting the god Khnum. It was excavated in the remains of a shrine at Saqqara and found in a cache of a large number of bronze statuettes arranged in an orderly manner (Emery 1970:

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[1] The Temple of Khnum in Kom el-Deir was located northwest of Esna. It was built by Ptolemy III, but has now been completely destroyed (Arnold 1999: 168-70).

[2] For more representations, see Leitz, 2002, Bd. VI: 25.

[3] In the Middle Kingdom at Elephantine, a temple for Khnum was built on the site, where the ruins of his latest temples are still visible. In the New Kingdom, Late Period, and Greco-Roman times, it was reconstructed and enlarged under the reign of various kings (Ricke and Sauneron, 1960). For a more thorough discussion of the ram cemetery in the temple of Khnum at Elephantine, see Kákosy, 1966: 352; Salima, 2013.

[4] Such as the Pharaonic temples of Dendara (Chassinat 1934b: 104, Pl. CXVIII; Chassinat and Daumas 1965: 113, Pl. DXLI.), Esna (Lepsius 1849-1859b: Pl. 90, b), Edfu (Chassinat, 1939: 8, Pl. XIII.), Philae (Lepsius, 1849-1859b: Pls. 18,19; Bénédite 1893), and Aswan (Mariette 1872: 6, Pl. 23). Khnum can be also seen on the Vespasian stele at Elephantine (Bosticco 1972: 66-7; Laskowska-Kusztal, 2015: 83-4).
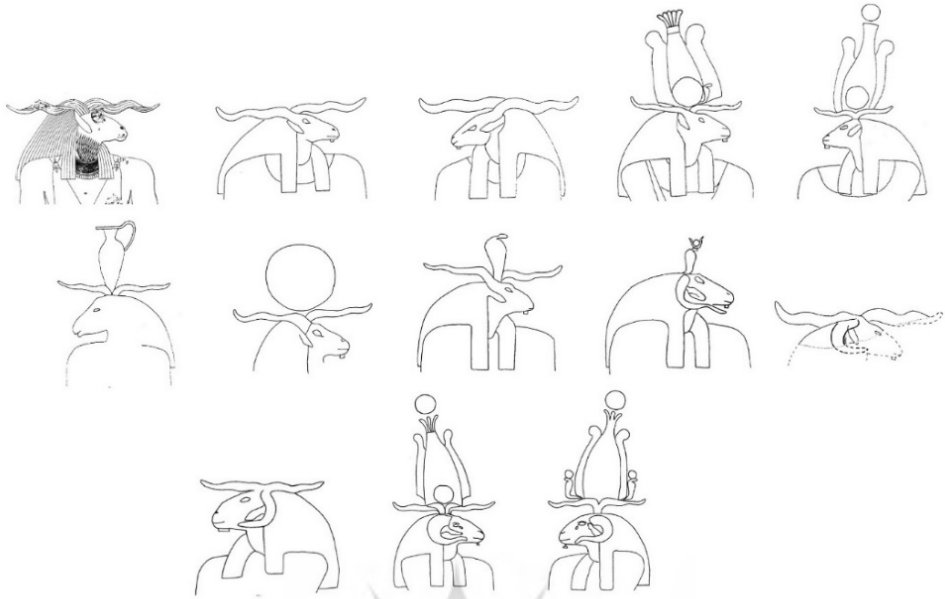
Fig. 3. Various Representations of the Ram-Headed God Khnum from the Old Kingdom to the Roman Times (Adapted from Bickel 1991: Figs. 1-13)

Fig. 4. The Mummy of a Sacred Ram with a Gilded Wooden Atef Crown from Elephantine, Late Ptolemaic Period (Salima and Nicholson 2018: 14)

Fig. 5. Bronze Statuette of seated Khnum from Saqqara (The Royal Ontario Museum, Object No. 972.51.54)

6). The chronology of the statuette is unknown. Although the museum's information on the object belongs to the 30th Dynasty, this dating is only the terminus ante quem and it could be significantly earlier. It presents a close parallel to the Persepolis object, in terms of general appearance (Fig. 5). Although the small base under the feet bears an inscription, there are some ambiguities about its identity and it prevents us from using it as a marker.[1]

Other Ram-Headed Deities

Similar stylistic characteristics can be detected in two more ram-headed deities, Amun and Banebdjedet. Several examples reveal them in the form of anthropomorphic figure wearing the Atef crown with two sets of horns, sometimes with lateral uraei and sun disks.

Amun and Amun-Re

The god Amun, who later became Amun-Re, was a primordial deity of ancient Egypt. The earliest occurrence of him is attested from the Pyramid texts (from the Old Kingdom). He was also known as a member of the Ogdoad, the group of eight primeval deities worshiped in Hermopolis. During the latter decades of the First Intermediate Period, Amun's power developed in Thebes. Amun is symbolized by several sacred animals. One of the major theriomorphic symbols is a ram with curved horns (Tobin 2001:82-4; Sethe 1929). Although the iconography of Amun and Amun-Re is widely documented, only the anthropomorphic ram-headed forms with the above-mentioned features will be studied here.[2]

In several reliefs in the temples of Karnak and Deir el-Bahari, dating back to the New Kingdom, a barge figurehead of Amun-Re, with his double horns and Atef crown, can be discerned.[3] Moreover, Amun can be traced to the temple of Hibis from the Persian Period, where he is demonstrated to be the principal god.[4]

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[1] A revision is recommended to consider various aspects of the statuette such as spelling of inscription, chronology, etc., which needs a separate research.

[2] For distinction between the ram-headed Amun and the other divinities, see Lepsius, 1877.

[3] For Karnak Temple, see Foucart 1924a; 1924b. For studies on Deir el-Bahari, see Pawlicki 2017.

[4] For the Hibis Temple in general, see Davies

Banebdjedet

In a cult center at Djedet in Lower Egypt, known to the Greeks as Mendes, the deity Banebdjedet was worshiped. He is attested to the Middle Kingdom, and gained popularity from the New Kingdom onward. He was still venerated during the Graeco-Roman Period (Leitz, 2002, B. II: 683; Shaikh al Arab, 2013). Among the various iconographies of Banebdjedet, the ram-headed representations were identified on a donation stele belonging to the Third Intermediate Period[1] as well as in the temple of Hibis related to the Persian Period (Davies 1953: 16, 20, 29, Pls. 10, 21 (West Wall), 50 (Right Center)). Those similar stylistic features continued during the Graeco-Roman period, too.[2]

Discussion

When we realize the multiplicity of gods, their roles in human society, and the variety of beliefs in different parts of the ancient Egypt and at different periods of its history, it is not surprising that one can find numerous representations of the Egyptian gods. Having scrutinized all the above examples, there are four ram-headed deities that bear a striking resemblance to each other in some periods. In formal Egyptian art, sometimes different embodiments of a single divinity can be distinguished, whereas at other times identical embodiments of different divinities are observed. It seems that the Egyptian bronze statuette from Persepolis is no exception to this rule. The lack

of inscription is particularly problematic, and it makes it difficult to state which one of the ram-headed deities he might be.

The first point is to determine a relative chronology for the Persepolis statuette. According to its find spot, as argued in the text,[3] the fragment most likely once belonged to the Treasury of Persepolis. A substantial part of the Egyptian artifacts from the treasury do not originate from the Persian period, but from earlier context. Why and how they ended up in the treasury is uncertain. As Cahill (1985) points out, most of the datable objects in the Treasury belong to the fifth century and earlier, such as some of the inscribed vessels which belonged to pre-Achaemenian Egyptian kings. The ram-headed statuette itself is not distinctive enough to provide a specific date. Despite many of the comparanda that date to the Graeco-Roman periods, the statuette should be compared to the samples which date back to earlier times. It covers a long timespan from the Middle Kingdom, when the horns of Ovis platyura aegyptiaca became common in the Egyptian iconography,[4] to the end of the Late Period. Unfortunately, there is limited evidence of such a ram-headed depiction related to the pre-Graeco-Roman times, which might be due to the lack of archaeological data.

The next point is to study the suggested identity for this statuette. It should be noted that in the brief description of the object, Schmidt did not consider the question of its being a form of Amun or Banebdjedet. It was attributed to the god Harsaphes by comparing to a

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1953; also Klotz 2006.

[1] It is preserved in the Brooklyn Museum (No. 67.118).

[2] Banebdjedet was depicted in the Ptolemaic Temples of Dendara (Chassinat, 1934a: 154, 13°, Pl. LXXVII), Edfu (Chassinat 1939: 169, 17°, Pl. XLIV: 2), and Armant (Lepsius, 1849-1859b: Bl. 63, b). He is also discerned in the illustrations of the Book of Fayum (Beinlich, 1991).

[3] For further information on the objects which accompanied this statuette, see Schmidt 1953: 170, 206.

[4] For detailed data about the rams in the ancient Egypt, see Behrens, 1986: 1243-45.

Fig. 6. Heryshef Representation in the Temple of Hibis from the Persian Period (Exterior of Temple, South Wall) (Davies 1953: Pl. 52).

similar bronze example in the Cairo Museum.[1] While this hypothesis may be correct, it is difficult to substantiate, especially without any supporting evidence. The Cairo museum's object of unknown provenance was referred to as Harsaphes despite that lack of inscription or any other reliable evidence. Consequently, to provide a more appropriate analysis, one must look for reliable samples for comparison. For instance, there is a representation of Herishef with inscription in the Hibis temple, which could be a reliable criterion for comparison with the Persepolis statuette, but it seems to be neglected by Schmidt (Fig. 6). As mentioned above, the only archaeological site that testifies to all four ram-headed deities during the Late Period is the Temple of Hibis, where the Persian King (almost always Darius I) often appears in decorative reliefs and is illustrated as the pharaoh presenting offerings to the different Egyptian gods. The Hibis inscriptions represent the gods' identity, so they are clearly recognized from each other. It is, however, noteworthy that some illustrations of Amun, Khnum, and Banebdjedet demonstrate them in identical iconography, and can only be distinguished from each other by the inscriptions (Fig. 7). The ram-headed god Heryshef is also seen, but in relatively different forms. These representations of deities can be confusing when we try to discern the identity of the Persepolis statuette.

Extensive studies of the Egyptian bronze statuettes reveal a great majority of them belong to the Late Period (Roeder, 1956). Many ram-headed deities with the afore-mentioned stylistic features were identified among the Egyptian statuettes and amulets in the museums and galleries. However, there is room for doubt when we want to use them as a marker, since form alone is not usually enough to identify a figure, and the more reliable criteria provided by provenance and inscription.

Among the four ram-headed deities, Amun and Khnum have wider responsibilities and major significance in the entire Late Period, while Banebdjedet or Heryshef are somewhat more restricted.[2] The presence of both, the temples

[1] Schmidt 1939: 69; Daressy, 1905-1906: 135, Pl. XXIX, No. 38.502.

[2] Budge (1904: 58) considered Banebdjedet or Heryshef as two very important forms of Kh-
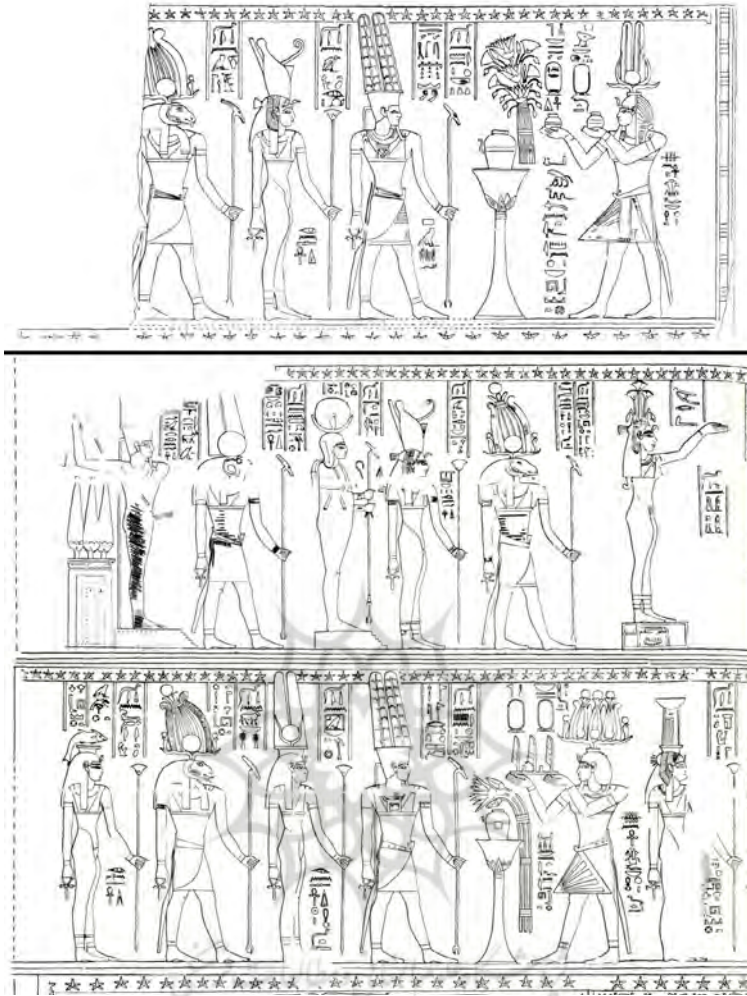
Fig. 7. Ram-headed Deities in the Temple of Hibis from the Persian Period (Hypostyle B, North Wall). From top to bottom: Khnum, Amun, Banebdjedet (adapted from Davies 1953: Pls. 8, 10)

of Amun in Hibis and the Khnum in El-ephantine testifies the importance of the deities during Persian times. Their names can be also discerned in the Ara-maic documents from Elephantine[1] e.g. TAD A4.3:7 (Porten & Yardeni, 1986: 58) TAD B2.8:5 (Porten, 1996: 132). However, it should not be neglected that Herak-leopolis was also a major political center during the Egyptian Third Intermediate Period and the Late Period. In order to identify the Persepolis statuette, we need to know its original context. The next de-sideratum is to know the actual battles' spots and major Persian military engage-ments. In general, in accordance with the available data, we may not be able to choose one of the four gods as a definite identity for the piece in question. Tak-ing into account the great significance of Amun and Khnum in the Late Period,

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nemu. See also Mokhtar, 1991: 253-54.

[1] These papyri were written during the period of Persian domination when Aramaic was the lingua franca of the Empire. For more informa-tion, see Siljanen, 2017: 219; Porten, 1996: 74- 276.

they could be a more appropriate suggestion for the identity of the ram-headed statuette from Persepolis. It is hoped that further studies will provide a more comprehensive understanding of the presence of this Egyptian statuette in the heartland of the Persian Empire.

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