



3.25 Miniature block statue of Pa-iu-Hor

Hard grey stone.

Dynasty 26, 664–525 BC.

H. 6.2 cm, W. 3.5 cm, D. 5.0 cm.

The development of block or cubic statues began in the Middle Kingdom. This sculptural form stresses the divine nature of the person depicted: his bodily forms are not yet articulated, he is like the primeval creator god at the beginning of time. The earliest cubic statues come from tombs and it has been suggested that they depict the deceased at the moment of resurrection, which to the Egyptians was the same as the moment of creation.¹ In the Late Period the block statue became the most widely used sculptural form to represent private persons in a temple context.

Cubic statues come in a variety of sizes: the smallest measure only 2 cm while the largest recorded complete example is about 1.45 m high. The object presented here belongs to the rare category of miniature block statues, most examples of which date to the Middle Kingdom and the second half of the 18th Dynasty.² On stylistic grounds and on account of its inscriptions, the present statuette belongs to the Late Period, however. It is certainly one of the most detailed and best preserved examples in this category known to have survived.³



The owner is seated on the ground with his knees pulled up and wrapped almost entirely in a tight-fitting cloak from which only his head and hands emerge. The man is wearing a plain bagwig which leaves the ears uncovered and his short beard rests on the horizontal plane between his head and his knees. The arms are held crossed over the knees; the right hand holds a lettuce, a plant which appears to have been associated with fertility and hence with rebirth.

The statuette may have been dedicated by its owner or his relatives at a temple or shrine of Osiris, the god of the dead, most probably in Karnak, where the owner worked, or possibly in Abydos. Alternatively, it may have stood in the funerary chapel associated with the owner's tomb.

Seated figures of Osiris with his usual attributes, the *atef*-crown and the *was*-sceptre, appear on both sides of the statuette. In front of both Osiris figures is a short inscription giving the title and name of the owner: "the god's father Pa-iy-Hor, justified".⁴ The title god's father was originally reserved for a special priest associated with certain royal rituals, but in the Late Period the title had become a common designation of priests of the lower orders. The same text also appears on the back pillar of the statuette, but here the writing of the name differs slightly, revealing its true reading: Pa-iu-Hor, "the dog of Horus", meaning the devoted servant of Horus, a name which was fairly common in the Late Period.⁵

Four lines of text on the front of the figure provide more information about the owner. He was god's father of Amun in Ipet-sut – i.e. Karnak – and the son of Padiamen-neb-nesuttawy, born of Tasherit-ashakhet. The base is inscribed on all four sides with a standard offering formula reading “An offering-which-the-King-gives to Osiris, foremost of the West, the great god, lord of Abydos, that he may give invocation offerings consisting of bread and beer, beef and poultry for the *ka* of the god's father of Amun Pa-iu-Hor, justified”.

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- ¹ A. Eggebrecht, “Zur Bedeutung des Würfelhockers”, in S. Lauffer (ed.), *Festgabe für Dr. Walter Will* (Cologne etc. 1966), 143–163. For this and other interpretations of this type of statue see R. Schulz, *Die Entwicklung und Bedeutung des kuboiden Statuentypus II* (Hildesheim 1992), 690–785.
- ² Schulz, II, 556–557.
- ³ See for a similar miniature block statue of the same period J.M.A. Janssen, *Egyptische Oudheden verzameld door W.A. van Leer* (Leiden 1957), 34–35, Pl. XV (No. 51; H. 6.5 cm).
- ⁴ For the inscriptions see Appendix E.
- ⁵ The proper form is Pa-iu-en-Hor, but the shorter form is also attested; cf. H. Ranke, *Die ägyptischen Personennamen I* (Glückstadt 1935), 100: 9.