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Review of the dissertation

"New Kingdom Three-dimensional Representations of Non-royal Women",

submitted by Amr Mahmoud Mohamed El Tiebi

for the fulfillment of PhD degree

In "Introduction" (p. 1) the author states two aims of his study. The first aim is to "present a catalogue of the extant pieces". The catalogue encompasses a very large corpus of 232 statues - gathering and processing of this extensive material is a valuable achievement of the author.

The author never states if he attempted to collect all known non-royal statues from the New Kingdom, or just a selection of them. Obviously the latter is the case: for example statues from the Cairo Museum CG 42133, CG 42134 and CG 42135 are not in the catalogue (what is puzzling, as two other statues published in the same volume of *Catalogue General* are included, namely CG 42118 and CG 42126). If selection was made by the author, what were the criteria for including a given object into the corpus to make the catalogue representative?

The author also never explained how he defines the term "non-royal women". King's wives or mothers are obviously "royal", but what about princesses? Several statues from Amarna, which most probably represent princesses (what the author admits) are included in the catalogue.

Author's second aim is to "establish criteria for dating statues, which seem to have no specific dating criteria or provenance." However, in order to achieve such a goal, the author should

first create a corpus of statuary well dated by external criteria (such as well dated context of discovery or prosopographical data) and analyze this material in order to select a set of iconographic criteria useful for dating purposes. This is, however, not the case: the author simply gives a date for each statue without explaining on which basis the dating was made. The author nowhere states that thanks to his analysis a commonly accepted dating of a specific object was changed or made more precise.

The short "Introduction" is followed by "Part I - Features" (p. 3-72). The author presents here the typological criteria, according to which he segregated and analyzed the statues in his catalogue. He takes into consideration: 1) attitude, 2) hairstyles and wigs, 3) costume, 4) accessories.

On p. 3-6 the author describes attitudes: "A. Standing statues", "B. Seated statues", "C. Kneeling statues", "D. Squatting statues", "E. Lying statues". The reader gets an impression that these 5 main categories will cover all the objects in the catalogue. Then, on p. 7-12 the author repeats all these categories, this time listing all statues falling into a given category. But here suddenly, after group "E. Woman lying on the ground", follows a quite unexpected in this classification group: "F. Mirror handles in the form of women", then "G. Upper parts of statues" and "H. Heads of statues". The author makes here a logical mistake: in one classification he applies incoherent criteria. First he applies a formal criterion (attitude), then a functional one (mirrors vs. statues), then the state of preservation. As a result, although all handles of mirrors show standing women, they are not in group "A" but in group "F". One could assume that the author wanted to separate statues "proper" from objects, where a human figure is just a decoration of an object of daily use. But this is not the case: in groups A-E (i.e. those defined by attitudes) beside "independent" tomb or temple statues there are also spoons with decorated handles or anthropomorphic vases.

Also the separation of damaged statues (groups G and H) from all the others is not made in a consistent way. In group ""G. Upper parts of statues" there are some object, in which - in spite of damages - it is possible to identify the attitude (see, for example, statue on p. 297) which surely show a standing woman - thus should fall into category "A"

In the following chapters typology of various iconographic features is explained: "Hairstyle and wigs" (p.14-33), "Costume" (p. 34-48) and "Accessories" (p. 49-60). What could surprise at the first glance is the fact that in these chapter extensively describes various iconographic features not only of female (what is obvious) but also of male representations. This could be

justified - a significant part of the corpus is made by group-statues, where women are accompanied by men. Including iconographic details in representations of men could be useful in finding dating criteria. However, as already stated, the author never presented an analysis, which would identify a set of such chronologically significant features.

There are some minor inconsistence in these chapters. For example, on p. 58-60 "Man's accessories" are listed. Previously, in "women's accessories" there was "Broad collar" - now it is "*Wsḫ* collar". The same type of object is meant (an the author is well aware of that) but using different terms in categories designations can be confusing for the reader.

Also a bit puzzling is the sequence, in which those categories are listed. Eg.: in "Women's accessories" the category "A7. Footwear" is before "A.10. Lotus flower". In "Men's accessories" the category "AM.9 Lotus flower" is before "AM.10. Footwear".

The next part are plates (p. 61-72, pl. I-XII). Here a series of drawings illustrate various types of wigs and costumes. It is a valuable appendix to descriptions of women's hairstyles and women's costumes presented in the previous parts. However: one would expect a similar set of drawings presenting various types of accessories. Furthermore: if author decided to prepare a quite detailed typology of men's hairstyles, costumes and accessories, they should be also presented in a similar set of drawings - or at least it should be explained why they aren't. Unfortunately, it is unclear whether the drawings were prepared by the author, or taken over from some publication(s).

The main part of the dissertation is "Part II - Catalogue" (p. 73-309). The catalogue is divided into sections according to the typology of attitudes, presented on p. 3-13.

A significant flow in this catalogue it the lack of catalogue numbers. The author did not give to each item a unique consecutive number - that's in the first part of his work when he wanted to quote a specific statue, he had to give a full name of the museum + inventory number - instead of a short number of his own catalogue. This solution is very inconvenient for the reader and it makes quite difficult finding in the catalogue of a specific object mentioned in "Part I".

One could wish more precise information about the provenance of objects in catalogue. In most cases the provenance is unknown (which is, of course, not authors fault). But in cases where it is known, more details could be useful - it could be interesting to check, whether

objects used in different contexts (funerary, temple, domestic ones) always show the same, or maybe different iconographic features. For example, on p. 188 it is stated that a statue originates from "Deir el-Medina, Thebes" - it should be added, that it is a tomb statue, from a specific tomb. Or on p. 302-304, where the Amarna portraits made of plaster are presented, it should be clearly described that they were found in sculptor's workshop.

Each object in the catalogues is illustrated, usually with a color photo - which is worth appreciating. However, the photos are in such a small scale that they are barely useful for checking, whether the author's descriptions are correct and precise. Also nowhere the sources of these illustrations are given.

At the end of each catalogue entry there is "Bibliography". It is not quite clear why the publications are listed in a given order: most logical would be to order them alphabetically. Bibliography should be more precise. For example, on p. 202 the author quotes "Borchardt 1930: 184-185" - but this publication has several volumes and it would be much easier for the reader to locate a specific fragment if the volume number was given.

The catalogue part is followed by a short "Conclusion" chapter (p. 310-312). The very opening sentence of this chapter is quite controversial: "Yet it is obvious from studying of three-dimensional representations of non-royal women in the New Kingdom that they enjoyed a wider space of freedom and respect more than their predecessors". Even if it is true, it can barely be presented as a conclusion resulting from what was presented on previous 300 pages, as the author was not analyzing any material from the Old or Middle Kingdom, but only of the New Kingdom. Thus the comparing of status of New Kingdom non-royal women with their predecessors is baseless.
The rest of the conclusion chapter is a brief and useful summary of the most characteristic features of statues originating from four periods, into which the author divides the New Kingdom, designated as "Pre-Amarna, Amarna, Post-Amarna and Ramesside period"

Then (p. 313-332) a large table follows, in which all 232 statues presented in the catalogue are listed again. Using tables or diagrams to present in a more transparent way a large corpus of statuary is surely a good idea. However, this table is not particularly helpful, as it strictly repeats the order already applied in the catalogue. If the table grouped the material according to different criteria (e.g. chronologically, divided into the four periods recognized by the

author in his "Conclusion"), it would give a view on this material from a new perspective. In the present form, it is just repetitive.

A list of abbreviations (p. 333-335) precedes a quite extensive "Bibliography" (p. 336-385). The list of literature is quite impressive, but this literature was apparently used by the author almost exclusively to prepare his catalogue. Barely any position from this list appears in footnotes in "Part I". A critical overview of the state of research on Egyptian New Kingdom statuary would be a valuable addition to this dissertation.

The dissertation is lacking any indices - it would make the dissertation much easier to use, if at least an index of museum collection would be added.

Despite a number of inconsistencies and flows, the present dissertation is a valuable contribution to studies on Egyptian sculpture. An extensive material was gathered here and presented in (more or less) transparent order. If the author plans to publish his dissertation, surely a number of alterations and improvements will be necessary. But even in its present state I find the dissertation fulfilling the requirements for obtaining PhD degree.