



GROUPE STATUE

Egypt

Middle Kingdom, 2040-1782 BC

Limestone with engraved inscription

Height 15 cm Width 10 cm

Group statue depicting a couple standing side by side. The woman, dressed in a long, form-fitting sheath dress, stands with her arms at her sides. To her right, the man, is shown stepping forward with his left foot. He wears a long kilt featuring a folded-over pleat in the front, a style characteristic of the Middle Kingdom. His open hands rest on his thighs. Both figures stand on a rectangular base supported by a back pillar. The front face of the pillar is engraved with two lines of hieroglyphic text, while the dorsal pillar bears eight lines of text referencing the couple's family.

The man, positioned on the right, has a broad face with high cheekbones, a large nose and a wide mouth. His shoulder-length bag-wig leaves his ears uncovered. He wears a long kilt, knotted above his flat stomach, which extends to his ankles. His almost rectangular feet are visible beneath the kilt, with each toe and toenail meticulously carved.

The woman's facial features mirror the man's but are more delicate. Her elongated almond-shaped eyes and her round face convey grace and femininity. She wears a tripartite wig that falls over her shoulders and curl upwards on her chest, leaving her ears uncovered. Her garment, a long, sheer gown clinging closely to her body, emphasizes her youthful and idealized form, with details such as a pronounced navel, the median line of the torso, and her breasts. Compared to the male figure, the woman's representation more clearly embodies the Egyptian ideal of eternal youth and vitality.

Miniature family portraits like this one gained popularity in Egyptian art towards the end of the Middle Kingdom. These statuettes, initially exclusive to royalty, were increasingly included in the tombs of other social groups. Furthermore, such statues were often dedicated to the sanctuaries of gods or deified ancestors, serving as stand-ins for their owners in religious rituals and cult practices.

PROVENANCE

Former private collection Ayoub Rabenou (1902-1984), hence by descent to his grandchildren

LITERATURE

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