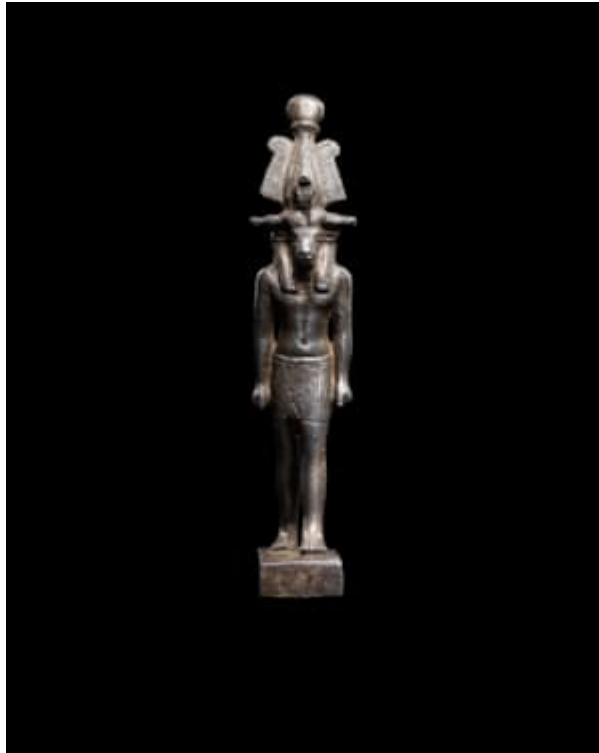


DAVID AARON



Striding Statue of Heryshaf

H: 10 cm

Silver

Egypt

1550-1070 BC, New Kingdom, or 900-700 BC, Late Period

A standing figure of the ram-headed god Heryshaf, in traditional walking pose, with arms held straight by its sides, and the proper left foot in front of the right. The god wears a classic pleated kilt around the waist and a broad ousekh collar around the neck. The long, twisted horns extend outwards from the crown of the head, parallel with the smaller ram's ears below. In the centre of the horns sits the atef crown, with ostrich feathers on either side, a central uraeus and a solar disc above. The god's wig falls forwards onto the chest. The statuette stands on a rectangular base of silver. The figure demonstrates a very high quality of craftsmanship, with the smallest details of texture in the kilt, wig, horns, and feathers elaborated through different patterns of incised lines. The body is softly modelled, with supple muscles in the chest and a gently curved waist. The ram's head is beautifully rendered, projecting a friendly yet otherworldly demeanour. The figure is crafted from silver, a very rare metal in ancient Egypt, which sometimes held a higher value than even gold.

Heryshaf, also known as Hershef, Harsaphes, and Arsaphes, was an ancient Egyptian god of creation and fertility. Born from the primordial waters, his name translates to 'he who is on his lake', and one of his titles was 'Ruler of the Riverbanks'. His cult was centred at Heracleopolis Magna, and, according to the Palermo Stone inscription, dates back to the Early Dynastic or Old Kingdom Period of Egypt. The earliest known temple dedicated to Heryshaf dates to the Middle Kingdom, and he rose to particular prominence during the First Intermediate Period when Heracleopolis Magna was the capital of Lower Egypt. The 12th Dynasty temple was rebuilt in the 18th Dynasty and expanded in the 19th Dynasty under

Ramesses II (r. 1279-1213 BC), who added a pronaos of sixteen large palm columns. It continued to remain in use until well into the Ptolemaic Period. Heryshaf was associated with the gods Ra and Osiris, and sometimes referred to as their ba (loosely translated as 'soul'), and occasionally linked to Atum also. His ties to Osiris are represented through the atef crown, and those with Ra through the solar disc – both of which are shown in this sculpture. The Greeks aligned him with the hero Heracles, perhaps due to translations of the Greek Harsaphes/Arsaphes as 'manliness', or 'He who is over strength'.

Exhibitions

Osiris, Kreuz, Halbmond: 5000 Jahre Kunst in Ägypten, Kunstgebäude am Schloßplatz, Stuttgart, 18 February-23 April 1984, Kestner-Museum, Hannover, 10 May-5 August 1984, no. 27.

Literature:

Emma Brunner-Traut, Die Alten Ägypter: Verborgenes Leben unter Pharaonen (1974, Stuttgart, Berlin, Cologne, Mainz), pl. XVI, p. 240.

Philipp von Zabern, Osiris, Kreuz, Halbmond:

Die drei Religionen Ägyptens, Kunstgebäude am Schloßplatz, Stuttgart, 18 February-23 April 1984, Kestner-Museum, Hannover, 10 May-5 August 1984, no. 27, p. 44, pl. 43.