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Iconography and style in the statuary of Ramesses II

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Summary

In conclusion, this thesis concentrates on the iconography and style in the statuary of Ramesses II. The present work has achieved three goals:

First, studying Schools (Centers) of sculpture in the statuary of Ramesses II.

Second, identifying the sculptures of earlier times usurped by the King.

Third, preparing a catalogue containing the statues of the Pharaoh.

The present study of Schools (Centers) related to the statuary of Ramesses II, revealed the occurrence of a specific number of workshops in Delta, Luxor and Nubia; these Centers show a large variety of attitudes, styles, dimensions and materials.

As a result, the thesis managed to frame a comprehensive and integrated analysis of the repertoire of Ramesses II. Summarizing, the iconographic, anatomic and stylistic features in the statuary of Ramesses II:

1)The bodies of the statues

The relatively short torsos of Ramesses II show a schematic treatment: the arms, although well carved, are rather vertical, the shoulders often marked by a now-simplified pattern which looks like an engraved *ms* sign. The muscle of the forearm (brachio-radialis) is generally shallow; the wrist, in most cases adorned by a bracelet, is either cylindrical or has the styloid of the ulna barely suggested. It protrudes only on some examples in Upper Egypt, like the red granite fallen colossus in the Ramesseum Temple.

2)The back slab “ back pillar”

The back slab is never found on the colossi of Ramesses II; the later statues in his reign are usually provided with narrow back pillars, round-topped or in some cases, ending in the form of an obelisk.

3)The Ramesside statues’ shape of the legs

They are extremely massive. The knee-caps are round or have rounded corners; they are surmounted by a shallow reversed V-shaped muscle, sometimes only engraved. The articulations of the femur are executed in lower relief, and the condyles are placed horizontally; the calves hardly project, if at all. Knees and ankles are extremely broad. The

malleoli are schematized, the fibula is rendered by two parallel lines engraved along the side of the leg or suggested by thin and slight depressions.

4)The shape of the faces in the sculptures of Ramesses II

They are triangular on most of the colossal statues, or else they have a rather compact, round shape, particularly on the statues wearing the round *ibes* wig; they are never long and rectangular.

5)Headdresses

On the majority of the statues of Ramesses II, the king wears the *nemes* – headdress combined with the double crown, the round *ibes* wig with double or composite crown, or the double crown without additional coiffures and sometimes the blue crown. On the very few examples where the king wears the white crown, the *uraeus* is present as is generally the case on New Kingdom royal statues with the white crown.

6)Collars and the Bracelets

Collars and the bracelets are usually rendered in relief on Ramesside colossi.

7)The Kilts

The type of royal kilt favored since the end of 18th Dynasty was the longer ceremonial pleated kilt with an elaborated sporran.

Sndyt, still widely in use, is rather densely pleated on statues of Ramesses II; it is long and its central tab is rather wide.

8)The objects in hands of the statues representing the King

The front projections of the handkerchief and its etui are either flat or concave, but never rounded or convex. Furthermore, on most of the colossal statues of Ramesses II this surface was used to display the royal names engraved in ring.

9)The eyes

They are almost almond-shaped, with softer inner canthi which dip downwards slightly; the upper eyelids are lowered as if the king looks downward (not only for the colossal statues), a practice in use since Amenophis III and the Amarna Period.

10)The mouth

On the Ramesses colossi the mouth is usually curved, the corners often drawn upwards in a faint smile. Even on portraits of Ramesses II with accentuated lower lids, drilled mouth corners, and a chin marked by side furrows, the general expression is serene and lacks the sternness of the Memphis colossus (cat.n^{os}38, 39). Furthermore, even if the drilled mouth corners are original.

11)The ears

The ears of Ramesses' statues are small and in most cases in the statuary originally made for him are pierced.

With respect to the usurpations, the study allowed to identify three types of usurpation in the sculptures attributed to Ramesses II:

- a) The names and epithets of Ramesses II are simply added without erasing the original name of the sovereign or changing the appearance of the statue.
- b) Removing the titles and names of the original owner of the statue and replacing them with names and epithets of Ramesses II.
- c) A more or less profound reworking of the statue's facial features, in addition to changing the style and royal insignia; the original texts being always replaced with new ones (second degree of usurpation).

The reasons leading to the choice of one or another of these processes still remain obscure. In many cases, the discussion is still open.

In spite of the existence of many schools in the statuary of Ramesses II, there are still several sculptures characterizing all of them.