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Egyptian, Late Dynastic Period, Saite
Period, 26th Dynasty, ca. 664 – 525 B.C.,
Bust of Djed-Hor-luf-Ankh

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EGYPTIAN LATE DYNASTIC PERIOD, SAITE PERIOD, 26TH DYNASTY,
ca. 664 – 525 B.C.

BUST OF DJED-HOR-LUF-ANKH

Basalt
27 cm; 10 1/2 in.

Provenance

The Brummer Gallery Records, 1916-1947, *Album of mounted photographs of African, Egyptian, Asian Sculpture*, p.3, photograph donated to The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, in 1980, through Ella Blanché Brummer, wife of Ernest Brummer;
Kunsthhaus Lempertz, Cologne, Germany, *Auktion 555*, 24th-27th November 1976;
Private Collection, Germany;
Christie's, New York, *Antiquities*, 5th of June 2014.

Publications

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Carved from dark basalt, this finely worked fragment preserves the head and upper torso of a private male statue belonging to the artistic tradition of Egypt's Twenty-Sixth, or Saite, Dynasty. The surviving form indicates that Djed-Hor-luf-Ankh was originally represented kneeling, with his hands resting upon his thighs: the upper edge and belt of his kilt remain visible, while the position of the bent elbows and a subtle fold in the garment preserve evidence of the statue's original pose. Kneeling figures of this kind formed an important category of Late Period private sculpture, presenting their owners in a permanent attitude of reverence before the gods.

Djed-Hor-luf-Ankh is represented bare-chested, his torso carefully articulated by pronounced clavicles and raised nipples. His head is framed by a smooth, rounded, shoulder-length "bag wig", drawn tightly across the forehead. This distinctive form of wig became particularly characteristic of Saite private sculpture and appears on numerous representations of elite officials. A closely comparable kneeling figure of Hor-wedja, dating to circa 640–620 B.C. and now in the Walters Art Museum, similarly combines the broad bag wig, belted kilt and hands placed upon the thighs. The comparison cited by Mogens Jørgensen in the *Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek: Catalogue Egypt IV: Late Egyptian Sculpture 1080 BC–AD 400*, likewise situates the present work within the established corpus of Late Period statuary.

The face is strikingly composed. Its strong oval structure is balanced by long eyebrows, narrow eyes extended by cosmetic lines, prominent ears and a small, carefully pursed mouth that produces the suggestion of a restrained smile. Rather than constituting portraiture in the modern sense, the features combine individualising elements with the controlled idealisation characteristic of Egyptian elite representation. The subtlety of such modelling is particularly associated with Saite sculpture, in which finely delineated brows, eyes and facial contours could be juxtaposed with more strongly articulated anatomical forms. Comparable qualities are evident in basalt and greywacke heads of the period. Indeed, the facial type of Djed-Hor-luf-Ankh has previously been compared with royal portraiture associated with Psammetichus II, who reigned from 595 to 589 B.C., although such a stylistic resemblance cannot in itself provide a precise date for the statue.

The work belongs to a period of significant artistic renewal. Under the rulers of the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty, whose capital was established at Sais in the western Nile Delta, sculptors engaged intensively with the visual traditions of Egypt's earlier past. The resulting art was not merely retrospective: inherited forms were selectively reinterpreted within contemporary religious and political contexts. The reference to the goddess Neith in Djed-Hor-luf-Ankh's inscription is especially noteworthy in this respect. Neith was the principal deity of Sais and acquired renewed national prominence during the Saite Dynasty. Two columns of hieroglyphs survive on the back pillar. Although damaged and consequently uncertain in places, the text contains a royal offering formula invoking Osiris, "Foremost of the West" and "Lord of Abydos", followed by references to invocation offerings and milk, and apparently also to Anubis, Lord of the Sacred Land—that is, the necropolis. It concludes by naming Djed-Hor-luf-Ankh and appears to identify his father as a *wab*-priest of Neith. The *wab*, or "pure", priest belonged to

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the Egyptian priestly hierarchy and participated in temple service under conditions of ritual purity. The possible association of Djed-Hor-luf-Ankh's family with the cult of Neith is therefore particularly resonant within the religious environment of Saite Egypt, although it does not by itself establish the statue's original place of dedication.

The invocation of Osiris and Anubis further articulates the statue's concern with commemoration and continued existence after death. Osiris, as lord of the dead and ruler of the necropolis, was closely associated with Abydos, one of the principal centres of his cult; offering formulae invoking him sought the perpetual provision of sustenance for the deceased. In this context, Djed-Hor-luf-Ankh's kneeling attitude assumes particular significance. The pose simultaneously expresses humility, devotion and privileged proximity to the divine, transforming the statue into an enduring surrogate through which its owner might participate perpetually in sacred ritual. The sculpture survives without modern restoration. Losses include a break along the outer edge of the left arm and pitting to the right, while a conspicuous conical depression cut into the crown of the head belongs to a later phase of reuse.

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