

INSTITUT DES CULTURES MÉDITERRANÉENNES ET ORIENTALES
DE L'ACADÉMIE POLONAISE DES SCIENCES

ÉTUDES et TRAVAUX

XXVI

2013

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*A Statuette of Isis Nursing Horus the Child
from the Turn of the Twenty-fifth and Twenty-sixth Dynasties
in the Collection of the National Museum in Warsaw*

A stone statuette of Isis seated hieratically on a throne and holding the Horus child in her lap, now in the collection of the National Museum in Warsaw, represents the *Isis lactans* iconographic type,¹ which figures the goddess in the role of a mother personifying the ideal virtues of wife and mother. In the first millennium BC the worship that was given this feature of the personality of the multi-aspect goddess raised her above all other goddesses with maternal attributes.² Isis became the object of faith for countless believers in Egypt and beyond, turning into an universal goddess for the living as well as for the dead.

The type is an iconographic record of the idea of maternity rather than a representation of the emotional bond between mother and child. The gesture symbolizing the importance of nourishment as a source of life is present in Egyptian iconography of the Old Kingdom and is closely related to the theology of royal power.³ Representations of the mother goddess, occurring in all periods of ancient Egyptian history, depicted her as the celestial cow nursing a child pharaoh or as a woman nursing a boy standing next to her. They belonged to a repertoire of scenes used commonly on the walls of tombs and temples. The Pyramid Texts contain references to the regenerative powers of the life-giving milk of the mother goddess identified with Isis and Hathor, giving the king the capacity for cyclical rebirth.⁴

A initial analysis of the style of the presented statuette indicates its standing among the sculpture of the Late Period,⁵ a time which witnessed an unprecedented development of small votive art.⁶ This branch of the arts was represented foremost by bronze figurines

¹ V. TRAN TAM TINH, Y. LABREQUE, *Isis Lactans: Corpus des Monuments Gréco-Romains d'Isis Allaitant Harpokrate*, Leiden 1973 [= *Isis Lactans*]. The notion *Isis lactans* refers also to representations of Isis nursing Horus and Isis suckling Horus from Dynastic Egypt.

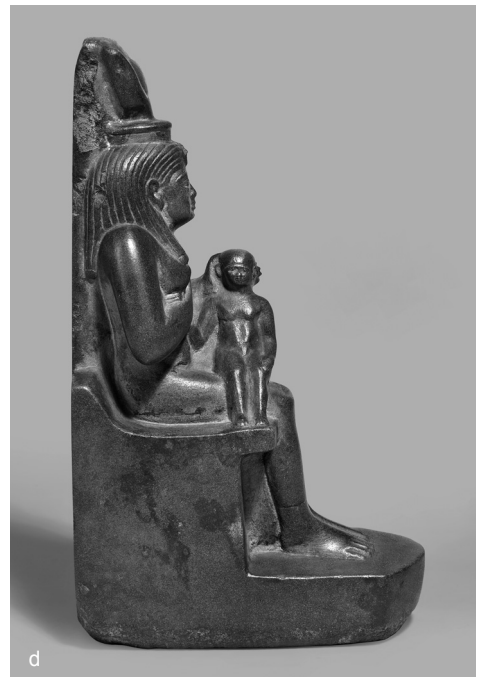
² J. BERGMAN, *Ich bin Isis*, Uppsala 1968; J. BERGMAN, s.v. *Isis*, *LÄ* III, 186–199; G. ROEDER, *Bronzefiguren*, Berlin 1956, § 733–768; H.W. MÜLLER, *Isis mit dem Horuskinde*, *Ein Beitrag zur Ikonographie der stillende Gottesmutter im hellenistischen und römischen Ägypten*, *Münchner Jahrbuch der Bildern Kunst* XIV, 1963, pp. 7–38.

³ J. LÉCLANT, *The suckling of the pharaoh as a part of the coronation rites in Ancient Egypt*, [*in*:] *Proceedings of the IXth International Congress for the History of Religion*, Tokyo 1960, pp. 135–145. In the sculpture in the round the iconographical type of mother suckling the child was introduced already in the art of the Old Kingdom in the form of a sculptural composition group depicting the mother holding a small boy in her lap. The sole surviving example is a statuette of Queen Ankhesmeryre II with a miniature figure of Pepi II. The most persuasive theory of the ideological meaning of this sculpture refers to the role of the queen-mother as a regent for the underage Pepi II. One should also take into consideration the theological aspect of this representation, referring to the exceptional role of the queen mother with regard to the heir to the throne, who, as a ruler, embodied the god on earth. Cf. *L'art égyptien au temps des pyramides*, catalogue of the exhibition in Paris-New York-Toronto 1999–2000, New York 1999 [= *L'art égyptien au temps des pyramides*, catalogue], pp. 347f., cat. No. 173, Brooklyn Museum of Art, inv. 39.119.

⁴ TRAN TAM TINH, LABREQUE, *Isis lactans*, pp. 2–4 mentions other mother goddesses nursing Horus the child, among them: Haset, Sekhat-Hor, Anukis, Mut, Nekhbet, Nephtys, Renenutet; B.S. LESKO, *The Great Goddesses of Egypt*, Norman, Okla. 1999, pp. 51, 76, 82, 185, 199.

⁵ Pioneer studies by B.V. Bothmer, H.W. Müller and H. de Meulenaere on the sculptural art of the Late Period established archaeological, artistic and philological criteria for all further work. Cf. *IDD., Egyptian Sculpture of the Late Period 700 B.C.–A.D. 100*, Brooklyn Mus., NY 1960 [= *ESLP*].

⁶ Individual piety flourished from the Third Intermediate Period on, coexisting more and more distinctly with the official state cult. Private individuals started to furnish temples not only in material goods, but also liturgical furnishings and numerous votive offerings, also in the form of images of the deities that were being thanked or invoked. Cf. M. HILL, D. SCHORSCH (Eds), *Offrandes aux dieux d'Égypte*, Martigny 2008, pp. 125–126.



1a-d. Statuette of Isis nursing Horus the child, National Museum in Warsaw, inv. No. 139020 MNW (Phot. Zbigniew Doliński).

of gods, which were much superior in numbers to stone statuettes. The ancient Egyptian collection of the National Museum in Warsaw bears out these proportions, having much less stone than bronze figurines. The appeal of bronze representations, economic as well as aesthetic and artistic, not to mention practical, evidently stood at the root of this disproportion.⁷ Small stone statuary, like the large-size forms, represented a grand tradition of works formed of stone, remaining a sphere of art connected with the royal court and the sphere of high officials.⁸ Our statuette of Isis, modeled with considerable fluency in hard granodiorite porphyry of a brown color with reddish hue,⁹ exemplifies the high level of stone technical process that is characteristic of the sculptural heritage of the Late Period.¹⁰

The statuette is a group composition representing Isis in hieratic pose seated on a throne and holding Horus the child in her lap (**Fig 1**).¹¹ The goddess with her full and stocky figure is shown reaching with her right hand to her left breast in order to nurse the child, whose head she supports with her other hand. The child sits motionless, distant from the mother and leaning back a little. His left arm rests by the body, whereas the right hand holds the mother's hand.¹² The mutual mother and child gestures have been shown discreetly without disturbing the hieratic composition of the sculpture. The naked body of the child is plump, the face round with evidently Negroid features despite the small scale of the representation. The head is covered with a close-fitting cap bearing an uraeus shallowly contoured in the surface. The sidelock of youth is attached to the cap just above the right ear. The child's feet are placed on a small footrest. The goddess wears a long tight dress with the lower hem distinct above the ankles, but no shoulder straps to be seen. A tripartite wig, the strands of hair clearly worked with engraved lines, is pulled low on her forehead. The fairly large ears have been rendered with realistic precision. The face is full with fleshy cheeks. Plastic brows are raised high above the almond-shaped wide-open eyes. The arches of the brows,

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 3–5. Rapid technological advances in metalworking in Egypt of the New Kingdom resulted in the highest quality bronze artworks executed in the Third Intermediate Period. The rising popularity of bronze items in the Late, as well as Ptolemaic and Graeco-Roman periods led to the appearance of middle and low quality products intended for the masses.

⁸ J. BAINS, *Visual and written culture in ancient Egypt*, Oxford 2007 [= *Visual and written culture*], pp. 265–280.

⁹ Granodiorite porphyry was seldom used. Quarries of this particular kind of stone are situated to the south of Aswan, in Gebel Ibrahim Pasha and Gebel Togok. They were exploited from the Predynastic period through Graeco-Roman times. Cf. P.T. NICHOLSON, I. SHAW (Eds), *Ancient Egyptian Materials and Technology*, Cambridge 2000, p. 37.

¹⁰ ESLP, pp. XXXII–XXXIX.

¹¹ Inv. No. 139020 MNW, dimensions: H. 20.5cm, W. 5.9cm, Th. 11.5cm. State of preservation: good, minor chips of the right corner of the lower edge of the throne and in the middle of the front edge, as well as on the back pillar. The object was transferred to the National Museum in Warsaw in 1948 by the Revindication Department of the Main Office of Museums and Monument Protection as an equivalent for war losses. The statuette had been purchased at one of the Berlin antiquaries. One label on the figure said: Berlin 69, and the other: No. 647.

¹² This detail appears sometimes on figurines of Isis suckling the Horus-child, executed in stone, cf. G. DARESSY, *Statues de Divinités*, CGC, Le Caire 1905–1906 [= *Statues de Divinités*], No. 39292, Pl. LXI, but it is not present in bronze figurines.

thicker at the base of the nose and raised a little above the eyeballs, run onto the temples as dropping cosmetic lines. The upper lid is completely flat and devoid of any convexity. The nose is regular. A small and prominent mouth has the upper lip raised slightly toward the nostrils. A rounded chin passes easily into a short cylindrical neck. A small uraeus head in shallow relief appears on the wig above the forehead. The crown of Hathor on top of the head is placed on a modius with plastic upper edge. The solar disc and bovine horns around it, carved in relief, are supported against the top of the back pillar. The back pillar rests on the low backrest of the throne and reaches to the top of the crown. The base of the throne, which supports the goddess's bare and massive feet, is lightly undercut at the bottom edge and unpolished unlike the carefully worked and shiny surface of the rest of the figure. The statuette had a marked compositional integrity emphasizing the hieratic aspects of the representation. The same purpose was achieved by desisting from carving any additional ornaments, like a necklace or bracelets. A sparing use of means of expression reinforced the effect, that is, a personification of the idea of divine maternity in the form of the goddess Isis. The artistic value of the statuette can be seen also in the seeking of pure form and precise rendering of features of the face, as well as the engraved strands of hair on the wig. There is no inscription on the figurine.

The flourishing of the *Isis lactans* iconographic type in Kushite times grew from the evolution of certain religious concepts, which played an important role in the Third Intermediate Period. Syncretism of solar and osirian eschatology was among these ideas,¹³ bringing to the fore the worship of divine family triads and in particular of the Osiris-Isis-Horus triad. A strong emphasis was placed also on the concept of the sun god being rebirth in the form of a child. This trend was reflected prolifically in religious iconography already under the Twenty-second Dynasty when mythological themes referring to the child-god appeared. They told the story of, among others, the son of Osiris and Isis, Horus the child and his childhood in the marshes of Chemmis in the Delta under the watchful eye of his mother protecting her son from danger with her magical powers.¹⁴ In the stone sculpture in the round the oldest representations of *Isis lactans* come from the reign of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty, but as R.A. Fazzini pointed out, it hardly precludes their existence at an even earlier date.¹⁵ According to E.R. Russmann, the developing cult of Isis, worshipped at this time as the mother of Horus the child personifying the future king of Egypt, had a purely

¹³ Cf. A. NIWIŃSKI, The Solar-Osirian Unity as the Principle of the Theology of the "State of Amun" in Thebes in the 21st Dynasty, *JEOL* 30, 1987–1988, pp. 89–106.

¹⁴ R.A. FAZZINI, Egypt Dynasty XXII–XXV, Leiden-New York-København-Köln 1988 [= Egypt Dynasty XXII–XXV], pp. 8–9, quotes D. Redford in stating that the issue took on significance in the Nineteenth Dynasty along with the growing importance of the Delta and centers like Buto. The subject of Isis protecting Horus in the marshes of Chemmis became especially important under the Twenty-first and Twenty-second Dynasties, as confirmed by numerous representations on objects of the decorative arts, as well as *cippi* steles, the early examples of which were executed at this time, *ibid.*, p. 10, Pl. XXXI, 1. The next stage in the evolution of the idea of divine family triads were beliefs expressed in the popularity of the *mammisi* cult.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 11–12 referring to M. Müller, R.A. Fazzini accepted the view that images of *Isis lactans* appeared among minor representations already in the Third Intermediate Period. This was connected with the worship of Isis in the royal courts of the Twenty-second and Twenty-third Dynasties, cf. also *supra*, n. 3.

political background. The cult of the Osirian triad, which embodied the royal family, was supported by the Kushite rulers as a way of legitimizing their right to the throne.¹⁶

The stylistic features of the statuette from the National Museum in Warsaw, including the full feminine shapes and the facial features of Isis and of Horus, both echoing Negroid characteristics, link it with the artistic production of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty. This period, which abounded in high class statuary, also witnessed a relatively large number of stone statuettes of a nursing Isis and other goddesses perceived as nurses of divine children.¹⁷ The dating of these figurines is based on style analysis alone as they are usually devoid of any inscription containing the name of a ruler or a filiation. They share a stout figure and physiognomies akin to Negroid faces, but they all retain the traditional idealizing countenance of a deity. The heavy body proportions evident in the Warsaw figurine has nothing in common with the slender feminine figures of the New Kingdom and the Third Intermediate Period. It may derive from an archaic trend existing in the Twenty-fifth Dynasty, which drew on the artistic heritage of past ages for inspiration.¹⁸ Like many other models adapted from the Old Kingdom, also the massive female figure could have shaped form in Kushite art. Sparing use of decorative elements and primarily the shape of the small uraeus on the forehead of Isis could have had stylistic connections with the heritage of this classical age.¹⁹

Statuettes following a set composition model depicted Isis in a Hathoric crown resting on a modius and with an uraeus on the forehead. These principal elements of the headgear of the goddess were often accompanied by two additional insignia: a vulture's cap (attribute connected with the maternal aspect of the goddess Nekhbet) and a circlet of uraei decorating the modius. The Warsaw statuette has a Hathoric crown on a plain modius. Cow's horns surrounding a solar disc were symbols distinguishing Hathor in her initial function as celestial mother of Horus-king, daughter and consort of Re, playing a key role in the theological concept of kingship.²⁰ In the New Kingdom, the growing role of Isis as a model consort and mother led to the Hathoric crown becoming her other emblema beside the throne,²¹ symbolizing the maternal aspects of both goddesses.

¹⁶ E.R. RUSSMANN, *The Representation of the King in the XXVth Dynasty*, *MRE* 3, Bruxelles-Brooklyn 1974 [= Representation], p. 42.

¹⁷ DARESSY, *Statues de Divinités*, Pl. LXI, Nos 39279, 39282, 39283, 39292, Ch.R. CLARK, *The Egyptian Mother Goddess*, *BMMA* IV/9, May 1946, pp. 240–243; G. STEINDORFF, *Catalogue of Egyptian Sculpture in the Walters Art Gallery*, Baltimore 1946, pp. 107–111, Pls LXIX–LXXII; W. SEIPEL, *Ägypten, Götter, Graber und Kunst I*, Lintz 1989, p. 154, No. 120; H. SCHLÖGL, *Le don du Nil. Art Égyptien dans les collections suisses*, Bâle 1978, pp. 79–80, ill. 278a, b; S. SCHOSKE, D. WILDUNG, *Gott und Götter im alten Ägypten*, Mainz a/Rhein 1992, p. 58, No. 38, the goddess Hedetet; FAZZINI, *Egypt Dynasty XXII–XXV*, p. 11, Pl. XXII, Isis-Scorpion.

¹⁸ G. ROBINS, *The Art of Ancient Egypt*, London 2000 [= *The Art of Ancient Egypt*], pp. 210–213, 229; BAINS, *Visual and written culture*, pp. 332f.

¹⁹ *L'art égyptien au temps des pyramides*, catalogue, pp. 217f., cat. Nos 59–61.

²⁰ L. TROY, *Patterns of Queenship in ancient Egyptian myth and history*, Uppsala 1986, pp. 53–55. Hathor in anthropomorphic form, crowned with the solar disc and bovine horns, one of a series of triads from the valley temple of Mykerinos, cf. *L'art égyptien au temps des pyramides*, catalogue, p. 225, cat. No. 70.

²¹ Hathor and Isis were identified at the turn of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Dynasties. The identification took on importance in the Late Period and in Ptolemaic and Graeco-Roman times, as exemplified by Hathor's role as a divine consort and mother depicted in the *mammisi* in Dendera. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 69f.

The flat cylindrical modius on which Hathor's crown is set requires broader comment. In representations of *Isis lactans* it can be smooth – as in the case of the Warsaw statuette – or it can be decorated with a circlet of uraei although since the two forms are in parallel, it cannot be considered a chronological criterion. What then was the role of the modius? L. Troy in her publication devoted to the religious aspects of queenship in ancient Egypt, addressed this issue as part of the discussion of the iconography of royal women's headgear.²² According to Troy, the crown worn by royal women during the New Kingdom was formed of the following elements: crown of *šwty* feathers (among others, symbol of the horizon). Vulture's cap (symbol *pf* the maternal aspect of Nekhbet) and solar disc between feathers (symbol of the solar principle in the process of regeneration). The *šwty* feathers crown was placed on top of a platform crown. Troy presented examples of images of a platform crown, which bore evident characteristics of the drawing indicating its manufacturing from papyrus reeds, in similarity to the cap, of the White crown of Lower Egypt. In keeping with this interpretation, the platform crown symbolized Wadjet and her association with Hathor. Hence, Troy's argument that a circlet of uraei on the papyrus element of a crown reinforced the connection with Wadjet is plausible. In queenship iconography of the Nineteenth Dynasty both Isis and Hathor were represented as nursing goddesses wearing headgear assigned to royal women.²³ The earliest known representation of Isis in the crown worn by royal women, which placed the goddess on a par with Hathor as 'Queen of Egypt', comes from the temple of Seti I in Abydos.²⁴ It can thus be assumed that the platform crown, which appeared in representations of Isis together with other elements of royal women's crowns from the beginning of the Nineteenth Dynasty, underwent an evolution of form, taking on eventually the form of a disk which acted as the modius supporting the Hathoric crown. This element, copied extensively from the Late Period in countless figures of *Isis lactans*, including the Warsaw statuette, was treated presumably by successive generations of craftsmen as nothing more than the base of a Hathoric crown, occasionally taking on a decorative form with the circlet of uraei on it.

The aesthetic model deriving from the ethnicity of members of the royal family, emphasizing to a greater or lesser extent Negroid features, determined the distinctiveness of art of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty. It must have liberated a realistic trend in representing the human figure, characteristic not only of the official Kushite court, but also of private people. Seeking new forms of artistic expression led to the development of a formula of style merging the traditional idealistic ruler portrait with a Negroid physical type.²⁵ No Kushite queen's statue from Egypt have survived, hence the Divine Wives of Amun are

²² L. Troy discussed the issue of royal women in the light of concept of world duality. Feminine duality was analyzed from the viewpoint of mother and daughter. She believes that the duality was expressed by the Two Ladies Nekhbet and Wadjet symbolizing the Two Lands and that it was these two goddesses which were a source for the iconography of royal women. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 115–119, 121–122, 127.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 69f.

²⁵ K. MYŚLIWIEC, *Royal Portraiture Dynasties XXI–XXX*, Mainz a/Rhein 1988 [= *Royal Portraiture*], pp. 44–45.

the sole representations of females from the royal family.²⁶ Their Theban statues and reliefs are marked by a similar manner of treatment of the facial features and are therefore excellent comparative material for the carving of the face of the Warsaw statuette. Two statues of Amenirdis I, daughter of King Kashta, from the Egyptian Museum in Cairo,²⁷ have features harmoniously uniting a traditional Egyptian style with subtle tracing of a Negroid physiognomy with the slight fold of skin running from the nostrils to the cheek and the lesser distance between the upper lip and the nostrils, and the small chin rounding off to a short neck. Similar treatment of the features can be observed on a statue of Amenirdis I from the British Museum.²⁸ The face of a figure of Shepenupet II, daughter of King Piankh and next after Amenirdis I, from the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, also balances the Egyptian and Ethiopic elements of the appearance.²⁹ On the other hand, the severe face of Shepenupet II, represented as a sphinx from the Ägyptisches Museum in Berlin,³⁰ bears distinctly Negroid features. A large-scale statue of a nursing Isis with Horus from the Louvre furnished with the features of Shepenupet II and inscribed with her name is of particular significance.³¹ The statue was discovered in one of the funerary chapels in Medinet Habu and is considered a masterpiece of art, not obliterated even by the damage to a part of the face and the middle section of the sculpture along with the figure of the child. This unique representation of Schepenupet II as Isis, mother of the small Horus, future king of Egypt, bears a religious and political message that shows the full interdependence of these two aspects. Foremost, it shows the position of the Divine Consort of Amun which matched the king's prerogatives in the sphere of cult and royal power. It also attests the importance of the cult of Isis – 'Lady of Kush' among her many epithets – for the Kushite rulers.³²

The features of style of the statuette from the National Museum in Warsaw, found in the sculpture in the round, can be observed also on relief representations of the Divine Consorts of Amun discussed by K. Myśliwiec.³³ In his classification, the images of Amenirdis I and Shepenupet II show certain mutual similarities, which derive from the Theban portraits of Shabako, Shebitku and Taharka.³⁴ A comparative analysis of the treatment of the faces

²⁶ M. GITTON, J. LECLANT, s.v. Gottesgemahlin, *LÄ* II, 792–805; G. ROBINS, *Women in Ancient Egypt*, London 1993 [= *Woman*], pp. 149–155.

²⁷ J. LECLANT, *Recherches sur les monuments thébains de la XXV^e dynastie dite éthiopienne*, Le Caire 1965, vol. I, p. 96; vol. II, Pls LXI, LXXXI, Cairo CG 565, JE 67871; L. BORCHARDT, *Statuen und Statuetten von Königen und Privatleuten im Museum von Kairo*. Nr. 1–1294II, *CGC*, Le Caire 1925, pp. 114–115, Pl. 95, CG 565.

²⁸ ROBINS, *Women*, p. 114, Fig. 43, BM EA46699.

²⁹ C. VANDERSLEYEN, *Das Alte Ägypten*, Berlin 1975, Pl. 210.

³⁰ D. WILDUNG, *Sudan: Ancient Kingdoms of the Nile*, Paris-New York 1977, p. 175.

³¹ Louvre Museum. Inv. No. E 7826: G. ROEDER, *Eine Statue der säugenden Isis von Schepenupet im Louvre*, [in:] *Mélanges Maspero*, fasc. 2, Le Caire 1935–1938, pp. 433–442, Pl. I; J. VANDIER, *Trois statues égyptiennes*, Musée du Louvre, *RevLouvre* 11, 1961, pp. 243–259, Fig. 7; MÜLLER, *Isis mit dem Horuskinde*, *MJBK* XIV, 1963, pp. 10–11.

³² J. LECLANT, *Fouilles et travaux au Soudan et en Égypte Mérimdé*, *Or* 47, 1978, pp. 269–270.

³³ MYŚLIWIEC, *Royal Portraiture*, pp. 34–45.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 34, Pls XXXIV, XXXV, XXXVIb, XXXVIIIa, d, XXXIX. The author cites reliefs of Shepenupet I and Amenirdis I from the chapel of Osiris Hekadjet in Karnak and reliefs with images of Amenirdis I and Shepenupet II in the 'Saite' chapel B in Medinet Habu. Shabako's, Shebitku's and Taharka's portraits display a stylistic diversity due largely to their provenience. Both the full and the relief portraits from Kawa, Napata and

of successive generations of the royal family illustrate the process of the emergence of the Kushite portrait type, which had considerable impact on developments in the Theban artistic milieu. Just as the Isis statue from the Louvre bears a facial resemblance to Shepenupet II, so the face of Mut from the shrine of Osiris-Hekadjet in Karnak is similar to Amenirdis I and Nekhbet from the 'Saite' chapel in Medinet Habu resembles Shepenupet II.³⁵ In the case of the Warsaw statuette, the resemblance is not distinct enough for comparison with any of the Divine Adoratrices. Even though the so-called 'Kushite fold' has not been marked in the face of this figure, and the nose does not have the characteristically broad nostrils, the roundness of the cheeks allow it to be compared to the face of Taharka on some of his bronze figures,³⁶ while the short and shapely nose to some portraits of the last ruler of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty Tanutamani where the features are so subtle that Negroid characteristics are practically indistinguishable.³⁷ It can be assumed therefore that the Warsaw statuette of Isis dates to the terminal phase of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty, which does not exclude its slightly later dating in view of a natural continuation of artistic achievements of a past age. With the rise of the Twenty-sixth Dynasty and the adoption by Amenirdis II³⁸ of Nitokris, daughter of Psammetichus I, the political situation changed, but the effect of this on the art produced in the Theban workshops was not immediate. Kushite face models continued in use there, harmoniously merging ethnic features with a classic ideal royal face type. An excellent example of this trend is given by representations of Psammetichus I and Nitokris from the tombs of Montuemhet and Pabasa.³⁹ Despite the fact that reminiscences of the Kushite tradition in the portraiture type continued in Upper Egypt through the end of the Twenty-sixth Dynasty, as attested by images of the last Divine Consort of Amun Ankhnesneferibre, daughter of Psammetichus II,⁴⁰ the Warsaw statuette cannot be attributed to any later than the beginning of the Twenty-sixth Dynasty because it fails to show the new proportions of the human body in statuary that were adopted at this time.⁴¹ From this point on figures became more slender, contrasting clearly with the stoutness of the Kushite silhouette that is characteristic of the Warsaw statuette of Isis.

To exhaust the comparative material one should note a figure of an anonymous Kushite princess from the collections of the Royal Scottish Museum in Edinburgh.⁴² The rounded cheeks are very much the same, as is the small chin connected in a gentle curve with

Gebel Barkal exhibit evidently Negroid features, whereas the portraits from Thebes can be less explicit in depicting ethnic otherness.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, Pl. XXVIIb,c,d, XXXVIc,d. The Divine Wives of Amun raised funerary chapels for themselves in Medinet Habu. Figurines of Osiris being nursed by Isis as votive offerings were also found there. Cf. FAZZINI, Egypt Dynasty XXII–XXV, p. 11.

³⁶ RUSSMANN, Representation, pp. 19–20, Figs 15, 16, 20.

³⁷ MYŚLIWIEC, Royal Portraiture, p. 43.

³⁸ J. LECLANT, s.v. Amenirdas II., *LÄ* I, 199–201. No statues of Taharka's daughter Amenirdis II, who was persuaded fairly quickly following Psammetichus's ascension to the throne to adopt his daughter Nitokris, have been preserved.

³⁹ MYŚLIWIEC, Royal Portraiture, pp. 45, 51–53, Pls LIa,b,c, LIIa,b,c.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 66, Pl. LXVIa-d.

⁴¹ ROBINS, The Art of Ancient Egypt, pp. 210–212.

⁴² ESLP, pp. 13–14, No. 12, Pl. 11, Figs 27–28; Royal Scottish Museum, Edinburgh, No. 1954.40.

a relatively short neck. The prominent lips resemble the shape of the lips on our statuette and the upper edge is close to the nose. The eyes are wide open, almond-shaped in outline, the upper eyelid flat and unhollowed, the eyebrows plastic and made longer by cosmetic lines. A full figure is emphasized by tight dress, belted and knotted under the right breast. According to B.V. Bothmer, this detail of the dress constitutes a chronological criterion dating the figure to the middle of the seventh century BC, as it also appears on female representations from the tomb of Montuemhet.⁴³ It can be presumed that the dress of the Warsaw statuette without marked shoulder straps, which is partly hidden by the figure of the child, may have been similarly belted and knotted.

Based on the comparative analysis of features of the style and iconographic characteristics, once can conclude that the nursing Isis statuette from the National Museum in Warsaw was carved at the close of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty at the earliest and no later than in the beginning of the rule of the Twenty-sixth Dynasty, that is, around the middle of the seventh century BC.

The unfinished bottom part of the base and the absence of an inscription indicates that the Warsaw statuette was originally furnished with an additional element, possibly a bigger base with an opening into which the figure would have been fitted. A figure of *Isis lactans* from the Israel Museum in Jerusalem has just such a base.⁴⁴ A hole was drilled in it to mount the figure and the inscription was placed around it, selecting sections of a text that usually appeared on the magic *cippi* steles. The text, which is dedicated to Isis, referred to her magic powers designed to secure protection against all kinds of threat. The combination of a magic text from the *cippi* steles with a statuette of *Isis lactans* emphasizes the intention of the individual who commissioned this piece of statuary, who appears to have had equal faith in the magic image of Isis as in the *cippi* steles which depicted the child Horus as the conqueror of dangerous creatures.⁴⁵ This example leads one to think that the Warsaw statuette was also mounted on a bigger base, which bore a text, either of a magic nature calling upon Isis and her magic powers, or else a dedication with an invocation to Isis and the name of the individual making the offering. Inscribing the figure with such texts, whether on an additional base, or on the back pillar and sides of the throne, met the requirement of equipping the image with the magic power of the words inscribed on it.

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⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 12, No. 11, Pl. 11, Figs 26, 27; E.R. RUSSMANN, Mentuemhat's Kushite Wife, *JARCE* 34, 1997, pp. 21–39.

⁴⁴ D. BEN-TOR, The immortals of Ancient Egypt from the Abraham Guterman Collection, Jerusalem 1997, pp. 34–35, No. 20. This kind of separate base was applied also in a statuary group showing a kneeling Horemheb before Atum, found in the Luxor temple cachette. Both the statues were set in hollows carved in a big common base, cf. A. EL-SHAHAWY, Luxor Museum. The glory of Ancient Egypt, Cairo 2007, p. 46.

⁴⁵ FAZZINI, Egypt dynasty XXII–XXV, pp. 106f., Pl. XXXI.1.