

King Amenhotep III



Granodiorite statue, Egypt, c1350BCE, c2.5m high, British Museum.

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This is a very imposing statue of an Egyptian ruler posing seated with his hands on his knees. The photograph is a good representation of the statue but does not do justice to the scale of it. At around 2.5m high, visitors standing next to the figure have to look up to the face, of itself giving a superior sense to the person depicted by the statue.

The features of the face are delicately carved, especially the eyes, nose and lips, but the facial expression is impassive. The figure is seated on a stool which has patterns carved into the side of it. The surfaces of the sculpture are very smooth.

The hands and body seem out of proportion to the length of the thighs, which are comparatively short. This gives the impression of greater height to a seated figure. Despite being a sculpture of a seated figure, the work is very tall relative to its depth. The medium used, granodiorite, is very dark which adds to the very imposing first impression the viewer gains.

Overall my first thoughts on viewing this statue were that it conveyed the following feelings:

- Regal – from the pose and headdress
- Firm – from the facial expression
- Beautiful – from the delicate nature of the facial features
- Imposing – from the scale and verticality of the work

Part 1: Images of works before 1000BCE

According to the British Museum website¹ the statue is from Thebes, Egypt. It states that Amenhotep III “commissioned hundreds of sculptures for his mortuary temple on the west bank of the Nile at Thebes”. It also states that “Statues representing the seated ruler were probably intended to function as the recipients of offerings and prayers.” It would, therefore, be viewed from the front with devotees, making offerings or prayers, looking up to the ruler.

There are carvings on the side of the stool on which the King is seated. The Museum website describes these as “intertwined symbols of the plants of Upper and Lower Egypt, representing the union of the two lands of Egypt, and illustrating the fact that it is the king who keeps them together.”

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http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight_objects/aes/g/granodiorite_seated_statue_of.aspx