

# STATUES OF DRAPED MALES



A couple of draped figure statues were found during excavations by the European Institute for Underwater Archaeology (IEASM) in Thonis-Heracleion and Canopus. These remarkable pieces made of granodiorite were produced in Egyptian workshops of the Ptolemaic Period by sculptors who remained faithful to Egyptian standards.

The heads of the statues have disappeared. However, there is reason to believe that they were very realistic portraits.

## **Demonstrating power and influence**

These detailed portraits translated positions and conditions that differed radically from idealized rulers.

Physical appearance revealed the social position of these influential people who were perpetuating Egyptian traditions. While the artistic value of these pieces is very real, it does not constitute their primary function, which must be found in the honorific and religious aspect,



which was essential to their owner's survival after death.

Indeed, self-display by means of a statue, sometimes completed with an autobiographical text, seemed to be more than ever the way to leave one's mark after death and to keep one's name alive.

## **Elite appealing to gods**

The statue owners were members of the elite who played an official role in their city. Their images were signs of the decorum to which they had access and marks of their wealth. The wealth of these dignitaries allowed them to take care of those who had nothing. Justice was exercised fairly, according to the principles of Ma'at.

The individual appealed directly to the god he venerated, invoking him as his master. In the end, the god was the only judge able to reward his servant with a longer lifetime, if he was

satisfied. The image – statue and text – became a commemorative monument intended to preserve the mark of a man's life and ensure his survival after death.

## **Erected in temple courtyards**

Such works were erected in temple courtyards. Some were even placed in chapels built in front of the temples in order to connect them with rituals. The cost of possessing and erecting such images must have been significant. These great dignitaries with considerable financial means were probably administrators and builders. A form of personal piety was also expressed in these acts of benefaction.





**Objects:** Granodiorite, Grand Egyptian Museum GEM (SCA 607) and Maritime Museum Alexandria (SCA 460, 455, 452, 1160)

**Sources:**

F. Goddio and D. Fabre (2008): *Egypt's Sunken Treasures*, Munich: 178ff, catalogue of the exhibitions 2006-2009 in Berlin, Paris, Bonn, Madrid, Turin, Yokohama.

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