

GOD HAPY COLOSSAL STATUE OF A DEITY



This is the largest Egyptian statue (H. 540 cm) so far known of a god. It was found by the IEASM in Thonis-Heracleion and displays all the characteristics regularly found in the **Hapy fecundity figures**. He holds an offering table with the upper surfaces sculpted in relief into four loaves of bread on the left side of the table. His

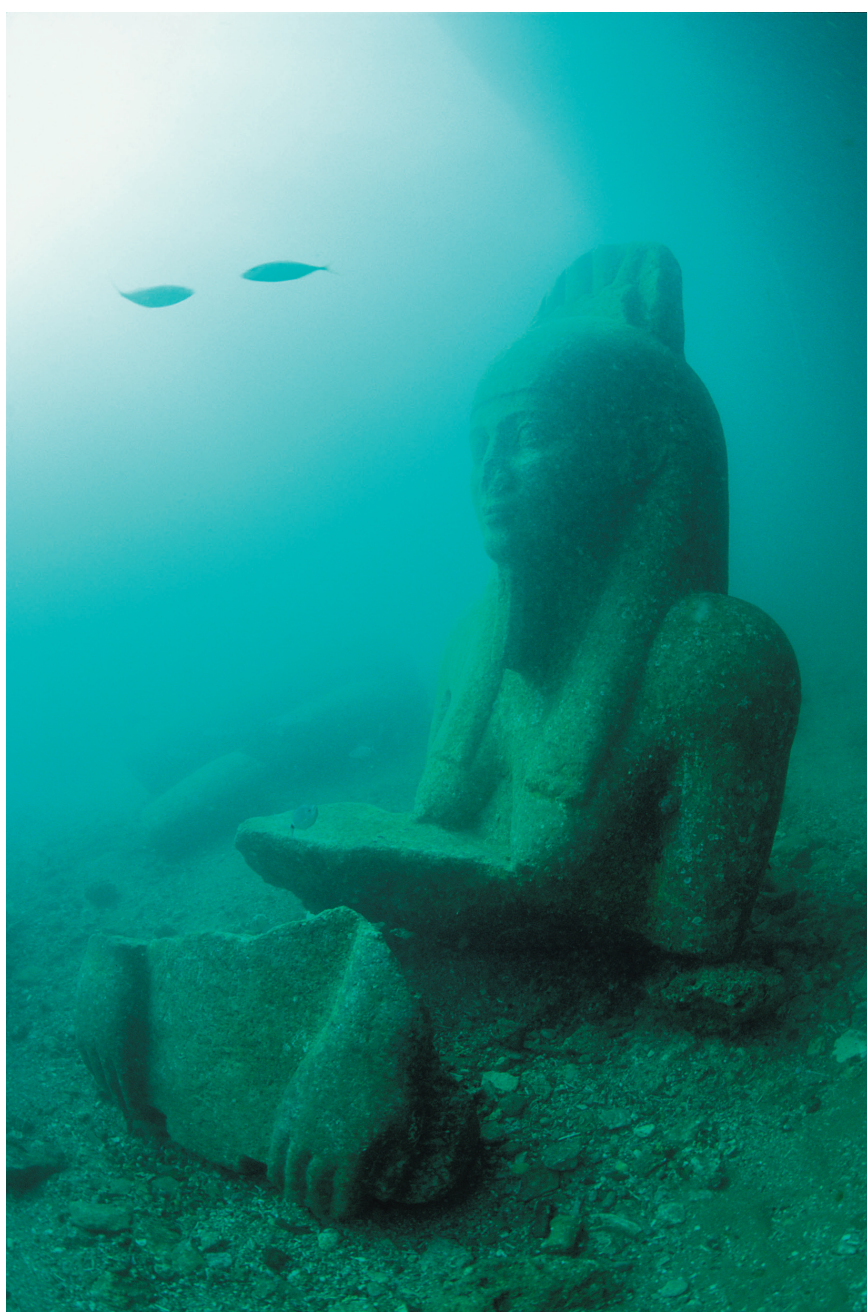
striding pose expresses the function of this fecundity figure: to provide the temple with offerings which the king then transmits to the deities who, in return, guarantee the well-being of all Egypt.

Hapy related to the Osirian celebrations

Hapy was called „Father of the gods“ because the flood was to the Egyptians the manifestation of the resurgence of the primordial waters from whence came the world, the gods and men. The presence of this great statue in Thonis-Heracleion was also possibly

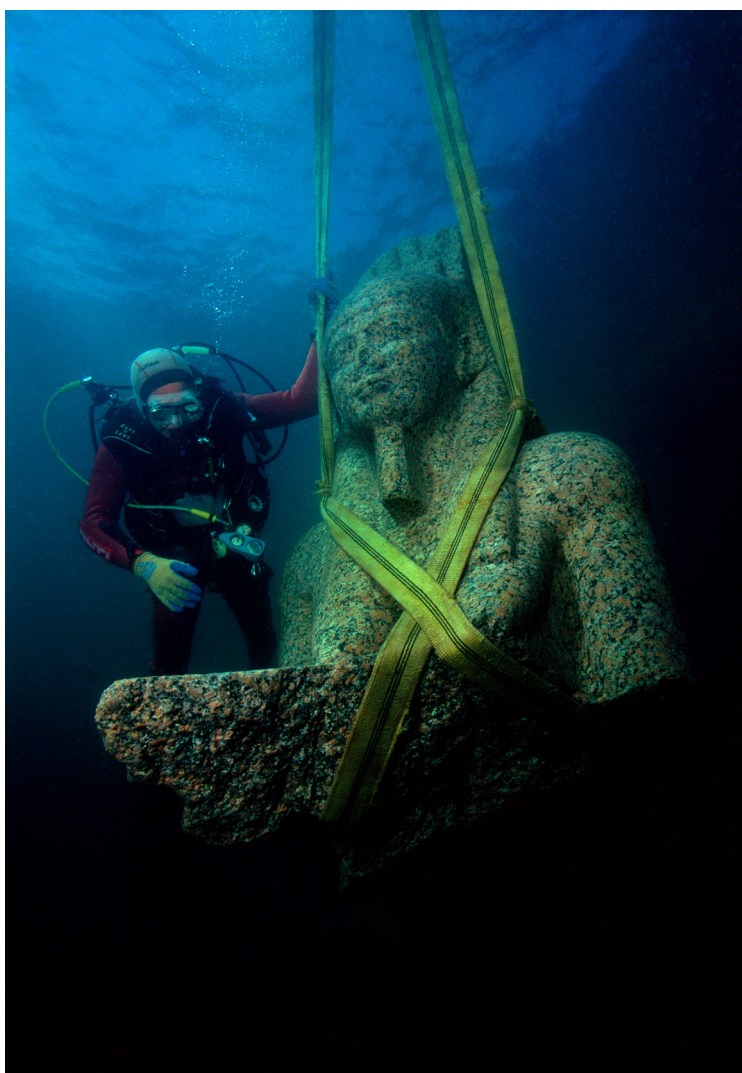


related to the worship of the renewed waters, on the occasion of the rebirth of Osiris. The city of Thonis-Heracleion was connected to the city of Canopus by a canal where, as mentioned in the Decree of Canopus, a fluvial procession would take place during the Osirian festivals. Hapy as god of the inundation of the Nile was implemented in the Osirian celebrations. By analogy, the body of Osiris was merged with all of Egypt, where he, as the Nile flood provoked by his humours, fertilizes the entire country.



Statue damaged by earthquake?

The statue bears many marks of damage and of alteration between its original creation and its final abandonment. The statue was found broken in seven pieces. It had been repaired in antiquity, and some surfaces had been smoothed into unusual and evidently improvised shapes. As most of the damage seems to concentrate in the statue's right side, it is possible that the colossus collapsed on this side, maybe because of an earthquake or ground subsidence, and had both broken in pieces and suffered surface damage.



Rare kind of cult of Hapy

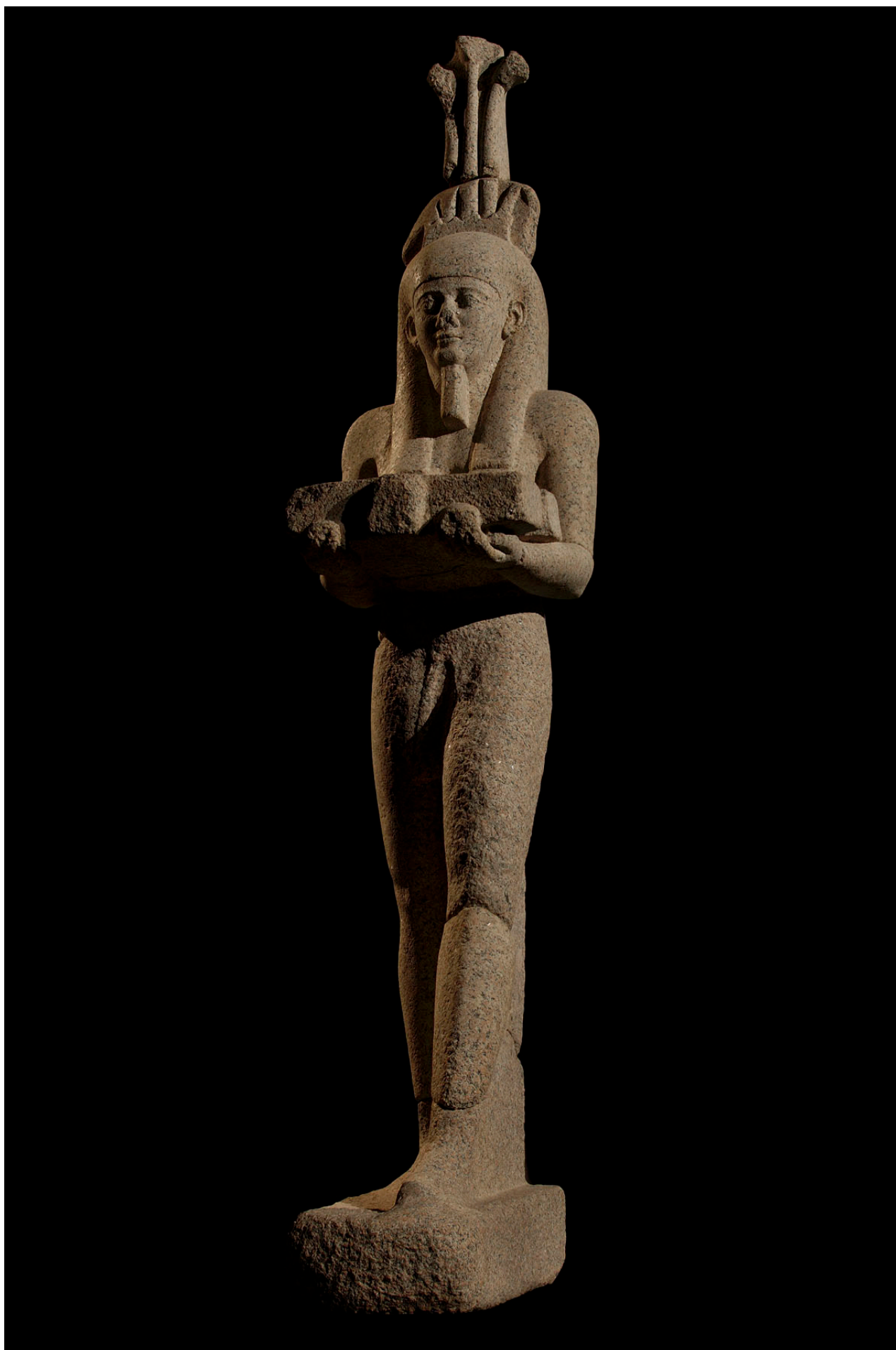
The only other known colossal statues of deities are the three late Predynastic figures of Min from Koptos, now in the Egyptian Museum, Cairo, and the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, which are around 3000 years older than the statue from Thonis-Heracleion.

Hapy was almost the only being depicted as a fecundity figure who received any kind of cult. The colossus may depict him, perhaps in his Lower Egyptian form. Typically, fecundity figures were grouped in pairs, but in this case no trace of a companion has been found. Since the statue was set up at Thonis-Heracleion, at one of the mouths of the Nile, its identification with Hapy is particularly plausible.

Hapy and the statues of a royal couple

This statue is almost identical in scale to the colossal statues of a king and queen near which it was found in Thonis-Heracleion (see also text on Ptolemaic ruling couple). Hapy seems more eroded than the royal couple, although their pieces were found together in a jumble, and therefore exposed to the same conditions for centuries. Beyond stylistic considerations, these findings question the co-existence of these three colossi and when exactly they were gathered to embellish the entrance of Amun-Gereb's sanctuary.





Object: Pink granite. H. 540 cm. IVth century BC,
Maritime Museum Alexandria (SCA 281)

Source: Original description by John Baines in exhibition catalogue Egypt's Sunken Treasures, Berlin, 2006, exh. Egypt's Sunken Treasures, Martin-Gropius-Bau, Berlin, May - September 2006

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