

## **The different presentation types of relief sculpture and its effect on formation style and topics in The Ancient Egyptian Culture**

**Prof. Mohammad AlSayed Alalawy**

Sculpture Dep. –faculty of fine arts – Helwan university

[mohalawy4737@gmail.com](mailto:mohalawy4737@gmail.com)

**Dr. Ranwa Ahmed Assem**

Sculpture Dep.- faculty of fine arts – Helwan university

[ranwaassem@gmail.com](mailto:ranwaassem@gmail.com)

**Researcher. Sally El Sayed Rageh**

Sculpture Dep. – Faculty of fine arts – Helwan University

[Sally.elsayed.rageh@gmail.com](mailto:Sally.elsayed.rageh@gmail.com)

### **Abstract:**

When talking about the arts in the ancient Egyptian civilization, the first thing that comes to mind is the art of sculpture, which comes in the first place as it is the greatest element of this civilization; We find the ancient Egyptian to be the first who mastered the art of sculpture and excelled in it and presented to us a solid and mature art in an era that is almost the era of the beginning of civilizations.

Sculpture is one of the arts that is characterized by belonging to the heritage. It was used by the ancient civilizations to express their skill and they used relief sculpture to record their history. This is what the ancient Egyptians excelled in, as they presented the relief sculpture in a very precise way in order to immortalize their history and they practiced it on all the walls of their temples to tell us their history and the secret behind the greatness of that ancient civilization.

The themes dealt with through relief sculpture varied between religious and secular ones, as they diversified between the expression of religious beliefs, myths of the gods, battles and wars or trade and social events ... etc. The presence of relief sculpture was not limited to religious temples only, as we find, for example, that there is hardly a tomb of the ancient Egyptians that does not contain works of relief sculpture that convey to us the life of the deceased and all the details around him, even the coffins themselves are decorated with relief sculpture in a way that is more liberating than being just a panel on the wall confined within a specific frame, as these coffins served as a new exhibition ground for relief sculpture.

Therefore, the relief sculpture of the ancient Egyptian was not just an art he mastered, but rather was the main means of communication between the ancient Egyptian civilization and the future as a whole. However, the ancient Egyptian excelled in the art of sculpture and varied between high relief and bas-relief. He was interested in the accuracy of the details and studied the anatomy of humans and animals and laid down his relevant own rules, showing nature from his own perspective.

### **Keywords:**

(relief sculpture - Display methods - The Ancient Egyptian - Sculpture - Distinctive features of relief sculpture)

**Introduction:**

Relief sculpture in the ancient Egyptian civilization was one of the influential arts in that civilization, which has maintained its monuments to this day, where we find the relief sculpture appears in different aspects, starting from the language used and up to the temples and tombs, etc.

Also, he varied in the ways he presented these works, as the places in which we find relief sculpture varied between the walls of temples and tombs, or on columns, sarcophaguses, and others. We find that these works vary in terms of formation, in conformity with the surface available for display.

**Research Problem:**

- What are the different ways of displaying relief sculpture in the ancient Egyptian civilization?
- What influence did the different ways of presentation have on the formation of bas-relief sculpture in the ancient Egyptian civilization?
- What impact did the different ways of presentation have on the subjects of bas-relief sculpture in the ancient Egyptian civilization?

**Research Objectives:**

- Clarifying the different ways of displaying and implementing the works of outstanding sculpture in the ancient Egyptian civilization.
- Finding the impact of the difference in the way of presentation on the design and execution of prominent sculpture works in the ancient Egyptian civilization.
- Linking the different ways of displaying the works of outstanding sculpture and the topics covered by paintings in the ancient Egyptian civilization.

**Research Methodology:**

The research follows the historical/analytical/descriptive method

**Research limitations:**

Time Limitations: From the era of the Old Kingdom to the New Kingdom.

Spatial Limitations: Arab Republic of Egypt.

**Preamble:**

The ways of displaying the relief sculpture of the ancient Egyptian differed among several ways; where we find the difference is clear between the internal paintings of the temple and the external paintings of the same temple in terms of the way of presentation and their impact on both the style of eating or the topics they address, as well as the external and internal panels in the circular view is on the column.

As for the coffins, the way of displaying the relief sculpture on them was completely different, as the bas-relief panel was not attached to a wall, but it was attached to a free body that provides it with suitable surfaces for display; the style of eating was influenced and became different between relief and bas-relief in line with The Shape of the coffin and the appropriate

presentation method; and being relief panels displayed on the coffins, their themes revolved around the deceased and the details of his life .

We also find the ways of displaying the relief sculpture on the tools used and furniture are completely different from what came before, with the difference of everything from them and the difference in its details and what it provides from the arenas for viewing it.

### The different ways of relief sculpture presentation in the ancient Egyptian civilization:

#### - External and internal panels:

The ancient Egyptian ways of displaying external bas-relief paintings differed from the internal ones; this had a clear impact on the style of his sculpture and the subjects he dealt with.

Due to the wide areas, which are one of the reasons for the small number of internal lighting holes in the facades of these buildings, these facades have become large surfaces suitable for carrying out works of outstanding sculpture of all kinds.

He executed his elements in very large sizes so that passers-by could see them from long distances; he also dealt externally with the strong sunlight by executing his paintings inside a bas-relief frame, but the sculpture itself is more anthropomorphic than the internal works to show his works from a distance with amazing high accuracy and make the viewer see them as an integral part of the facade of the building itself; he carved them directly into the walls of those buildings Figure (3); when sculpting on the facades, he strengthened the curvature of his sculpture near the external lines surrounding the figure and deepened his sculpture slightly (compared to what he carved inside the temple), so that the light draws on his forms lines of shadow that interact with others that reflect the glare of the sun, forming a vision Clear for this delicate sculpture protrusion, even from afar it does not seem faded or blurred.



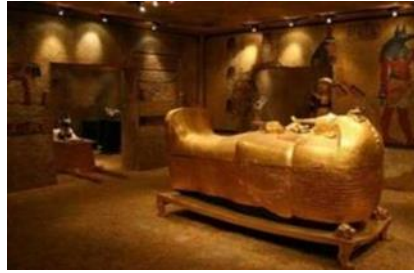
**(Fig. 3): A snapshot of the facade of the Philae Temple shows the ways of displaying the bas-relief sculpture in the external paintings.**

These external panels in temples often revolve around the themes of reverence for the king and the God he believes in. the painting contains the form of the king and some examples of making offerings to his deity. sometimes it contains sacred historical writings and phrases and in cemeteries, the external paintings of the building often revolve around daily life and life events, whether from agriculture or animal husbandry and other life themes.

This is in contrast to the interior panels of temples and Tombs, whose display methods were completely different, as the spaces displayed in them differed, so they are in specific paintings, and the artist divides the wall into several paintings, whether horizontally or vertically; the style of formation differs here, as we find it deals with the nature of the place in terms of available space and light in the place, and we see that the ancient Egyptian was able to use a little light to serve and show his sculptural works inside temples and tombs, by dimming the lighting by narrowing the light openings and placing them on top of the walls or ceilings, from which the

light falls inward; thus, the amounts of light present in the the interior with the significance of religious works of bas-relief; in Interior works the light is inversely proportional to the importance and sacredness of the painting , the less the amount of light falling on the painting , the more important its subject is, the dim light is useful in the sense of awe required in temples and tombs from a religious point of view(Figure 4); and equates this degree of illumination with the depth of the sculpture on the wall.

This had an impact on the style of forming the bas-relief sculpture in the interior paintings, where we notice the bas-relief on the interior walls and the shadow areas were slightly prominent or deep carving to create the desired contrast with the deep shadows on the walls exposed to the strong sun.



**(Fig. 5): The Tomb of Tutankhamun, which shows the lack of natural light sources inside the tomb, which gives a sense of awe.**

We see him in his interaction with light expressing his extreme intelligence, linking his sculptures with the movement of the sun so that it shows the beauty of the design and the splendor of his sculpture. To achieve the desired psychological effect and ensure the best degree of illumination for his outstanding sculptural works.

In temples, the interior walls were divided into several paintings of different themes; they included the life themes of Agriculture and others, wars and battles, or tales of some gods; but in cemeteries, the interior paintings were funerary themes illustrating the other life of the deceased and some burial rituals.

#### Columns:

The bas-relief sculpture on the columns was characterized by a completely different display method, where the artist dealt with the nature of the surface available to him in terms of the rotation of the column, which affected the way of formation, he executed the elements in small sizes so that the viewer could see the entire element from one angle; he also placed the sculptures in the form of it also contained, after the columns, a portrait of Adam in the crown area, such as the columns containing the head of Hathor, which was sculpted by the artist In such a way that the viewer can see the entire portrait from every angle with the utmost accuracy.



**Figure (10):Columns of the Karnak Temple  
The presentation method shows For the relief sculpture on the column.**

- Coffins:

The way of displaying the bas-relief sculpture on the coffins was completely different from the traditional one, as it began since the late Ancient state by decorating the outer sides of the coffin with carving hieroglyphs, he also carved the eye of Horus and in the inner sides of the coffin some sacrificial offerings were engraved, he made each face of the coffin an independent painting.

The way of displaying bas-relief sculpture on coffins evolved with the development of The Shape of the coffin itself, where it began to carve prominent paintings on the sides only, and the coffins of nobles and kings such as "Menkaure" contained an external sculpture representing the facade of the palace.

As for the era of the Middle Kingdom, it was characterized by the spread of wooden coffins decorated with many geometric carvings and hieroglyphs, "which are basically bas-relief"; and in the eleventh dynasty coffins made of snow-white limestone slabs carved with views of everyday life appeared (figure 11) (figure 12); until it reached the last state, in which the coffin took the human form of the deceased in full, but it was executed in the manner of bas-relief, but displayed in a horizontal way; where coffins have become an intermediate state between bas-relief and field sculpture, they can be moved and they are fully rotated, but the ancient Egyptian excelled in executing bas-relief on them 13) , and with the development of the cult of Osiris, Osiris began to appear on the sarcophagus; these coffins were also decorated with a simple sculpture at first until the coffins began to appear rich in prominent and sunken sculptures that represent scenes and views from the book of the dead, and for nobles and Kings a huge sarcophagus of stone or wood was used to place sometimes the human-shaped coffin was made of stone in the form of cartouches and carried the image of the deceased carved in bas-relief.



**Figure (11):Coffin of Queen Kawit, wife of King**

Mentuhotep II –For the eleventh dynasty-  
about 2055-2004 BC.M –Made of limestone –  
Deir el Bahari-On the outside of the coffin were  
engraved views of everyday life



**Figure (13):**  
**The coffin of King Ramses IV \_**  
**The Twentieth Dynasty-**  
**the modern state**

- Tools and furniture:

Furniture and tools in ancient Egypt were not without bas-relief sculpture, which was displayed in many ways, depending on the nature of each piece, where we find the way of displaying the bas-relief on some beds is specified in the back of the bed, and we also find other species that have legs carved for some animals in the form of(14); and we find Salaya nerner is a clear example to see a different way of displaying the bas-relief on tools, where it was basically a tool for grinding colors, but we see the distribution of the sculpture on it commensurate with the view and the nature of the tool, which is a surface that can be moved and carried, and is not connected to a wall except it has the appearance of bas-relief in the form of(15)we also see different ways to display relief sculpture on some personal tools and decorative tools in the as well as some weapons .



**Figure (14):**  
**One of the beds shows the way to display**  
**the relief sculpture on the furniture**



**figure (15):**  
**Early era, first dynasty,**  
**reign of Narmer (about 3100 BC.M.)**  
**Green schist**

## Results:

- - Clarifying the different ways of displaying the bas-relief sculpture in the ancient Egyptian civilization.
- - Clarifying the impact of different ways of presentation on the formation of prominent sculpture in the ancient Egyptian civilization.
- - Clarifying the impact of different ways of presentation on the themes of bas-relief sculpture in the ancient Egyptian civilization.
- - Studying the impact of presentation methods on the ancient Egyptian treatment of the human body in bas-relief paintings.

## Recommendations:

The researcher recommends the following actions:

- Freedom from the teaching of prominent sculpture on the usual wall surface and giving the possibility of sculpting on different and changing surfaces, even partially.
- Encouraging students and artists to develop the methods of displaying outstanding sculpture, which renews the vitality of this ancient art and allows it to have more uses than the typical use.
- Teaching the different ways of presenting bas-relief sculpture as an independent subject for students and not just the types of bas-relief sculpture.
- Highlighting the relevance of the artwork to the presentation method.
- Taking into account that the way the artwork is displayed should help to show the aesthetic values that the artwork carries.
- Choosing the appropriate method of artwork that helps to show the purpose of the artwork

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