

## **Granite Head of Amenemhat III The British Museum**

From the Temple of Bastet, Bubastis, Egypt  
12th Dynasty, around 1800 BC

**From a colossal statue in a temple**



The city of Bubastis was well known in Greek times; it is described by the Greek historian Herodotus (about 485-425 BC). The city was the centre of the cult of the cat goddess Bastet, and the residence of the kings of the Twenty-second Dynasty (about 945-715 BC), the so-called 'Libyan' rulers. However, the remains in the British Museum suggest that its history stretches back much farther, although there is a slight possibility that some monuments were moved to Bubastis by later rulers, as happened at Tanis.

This head comes from one of two large seated statues of Amenemhat III (1854-1808 BC) that flanked the entrance to the temple at Bubastis. Fragments of the lower part of this statue are also in the British Museum, while the head of the second statue is now in the Cairo Museum. Temples were often flanked by pairs of colossal statues, the best example being the so-called Colossi of Memnon at the entrance to the Temple of Amenhotep III (1390-1352 BC).

The names of the original owners of the statues have been replaced by others, the last of which was Osorkon II (about 874-850 BC) of the Twenty-second Dynasty.

T.G.H. James and W.V. Davies, *Egyptian sculpture* (London, The British Museum Press, 1983)

E.R. Russmann, *Eternal Egypt: masterworks of* (University of California Press, 2001)

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E. Naville, *Bubastis* (London, Egypt Exploration Fund, 1891)

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