

Bronze Statue of Khonsuirdis
The British Museum

From Egypt
26th Dynasty, around 630 BC

An important official of the reign of Psamtek I



Bronze figures are not particularly common before the Late Period (661-332 BC), but in that period and the following Greek epoch, they were a favoured form for the production of small votive figures for dedication in temples. Most were of deities, but some, such as this piece, show private individuals.

The inscription tells us that Khonsuirdis was 'Governor of Upper Egypt', one of the highest officials in the administration. However, here he is shown as a priest with a shaven head and a leopard-skin vestment, holding or presenting a shrine of a god. Only the pedestal of this remains, as it was a separately cast piece and has become detached. The shrine was probably that of Osiris, since a vignette of Khonsuirdis worshipping Osiris is engraved on the front of his kilt and there is a small sketch of the same deity on his shoulder. Although there is relatively little modelling on the statue, there is a wealth of engraved detail. As well as the inscribed text and the images of Osiris, the pleats on Khonsuirdis' kilt and the pattern of his leopard-skin are intricately represented, and on his right shoulder is a cartouche of his king, Psamtek I (664-610 BC).

G. Pinch, *Magic in Ancient Egypt* (London, The British Museum Press, 1994)

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

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H.R. Hall, 'The bronze statuette of Khonserdaisu in the British Museum', *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*-10, 16 (1930), pp. 1-2, plate II

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