Selecting a topic to express my admiration and affection for Jack Josephson was a relatively easy task, as we share a common love for the sculpture of the Late Period. Indeed, one of Jack’s greatest scholarly achievements is his co-publication with Mamdouh Eldamaty of a volume of the Egyptian Museum’s venerable Catalogue Général presenting 49 of the museum’s sculptures of 25th and 26th Dynasty date.1 It is my sincere hope that Jack will find these San Antonio sculptures to be of interest, and I am honored to present them to a wider scholarly audience through this tribute to Jack, his record of scholarship, and his remarkable connoisseurship.2

The four sculptures discussed here, two relief fragments and two statue fragments, are all in the permanent collection of the San Antonio Museum of Art in San Antonio, Texas.3 Opened in 1986, the museum has a relatively small but significant collection of ancient Egyptian art and archaeological artifacts. The museum’s Egyptian objects range in date from the Predynastic Period to the Coptic Period, and include a number of objects dating to the Late Period. The four presented here seem to fit comfortably into the 26th Dynasty.

The first San Antonio object to be considered is a relief sculpture depicting the important Mayor of Thebes, Fourth Prophet of Amun, and ancient Egyptian art connoisseur, Mentuemhat (fig. 1).4 This major figure in the history of the Late Period, especially the period that witnessed the transition between the 25th and 26th Dynasties, commissioned an enormous private tomb, No. 34, on the West Bank of the Nile at Luxor, quite close to the famous temple of Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahri.5

Although no specific information is recorded about the object’s provenance, on stylistic grounds it fits well with other certain relief depictions of Mentuemhat that derive from the chapels of the outer court of his tomb. Indeed, it is very nearly a mirror image of a relief fragment at Yale University, and compares favorably with similar depictions still remaining on the walls of the tomb’s outer court.6

The fragment is carved in fine white limestone. It is irregularly broken, but preserves the majority of the head and wig, the upper torso, and most of the far arm of the owner. The remaining portion of Mentuemhat’s long walking stick is grasped in the far hand, with its well-modeled palm, thumb, and fingers, complete to the nails and cuticles. The now-missing near hand held a staff of office, the top of which is preserved, decorated with a detailed, almost architectonic, papyrus umbel. In addition to the full bag-like wig pulled back behind his intricately carved ear, Mentuemhat wears a broad collar, his distinctive amulet, and a cheetah skin, the carefully carved claws of which appear at the far shoulder, just below his knotted epaulet.

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1. J. Josephson and M. Eldamaty, Statues of the XXVth and XXVIth Dynasties, Catalogue général of Egyptian antiquities in the Cairo Museum, nrs. 48601-48649 (Cairo, 1999).
2. I must record my thanks to Rachel Mauldin, Charles Van Siclen, Shari Saunders, and Kathleen Scott for their kind assistance with aspects of this study.
3. I must also express my gratitude to the San Antonio Museum of Art for permission to publish these sculpture fragments, especially to Dr. Jessica Powers, Curator of Ancient Art; Karen Baker, Registrar; and Peggy Tennison, Photographer.
4. Accession number 91.129.1, San Antonio Museum of Art purchase with funds provided by the Lillie and Roy Cullen Endowment Fund. Height: 23.5 cm (approx. 17¼”).
6. For the Yale University relief sculpture of Mentuemhat, see G. Scott, Ancient Egyptian Art at Yale (New Haven, 1986), cat. no. 77, 140-141.
Mentuemhat’s facial features are crisply carved, with great attention to detail. The treatment of the eye and mouth is especially noteworthy, although there has been some slight, modern conservation in the area of the inner canthus of the eye and the bridge of the nose.

All of the details of the carving of the fragment, the sculpting of the facial features, the treatment of the costume, and the proportions of the figure are so close to those of the Yale Mentuemhat fragment that, despite the lack of an inscription, it most likely also comes from his tomb. As with many of the relief sculptures in that tomb, it is reminiscent of the classic elegance and simplicity associated with the finest Old Kingdom and Middle Kingdom relief sculpture, works that were actively studied by Mentuemhat and several of his contemporaries during the 25th and 26th Dynasties, an era of intense artistic antiquarian interest.

The second sculpture presented here represents a figure that was most likely a part of a larger, multi-figural composition (fig. 2). It is probable that it, too, ultimately derives from a Late Period private tomb on the West Bank of the Nile at Luxor, although its facial features perhaps owe

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7 Accession number 2005.1.35, bequest of Gilbert M. Denman, Jr. Height: 23 cm (approx. 9').