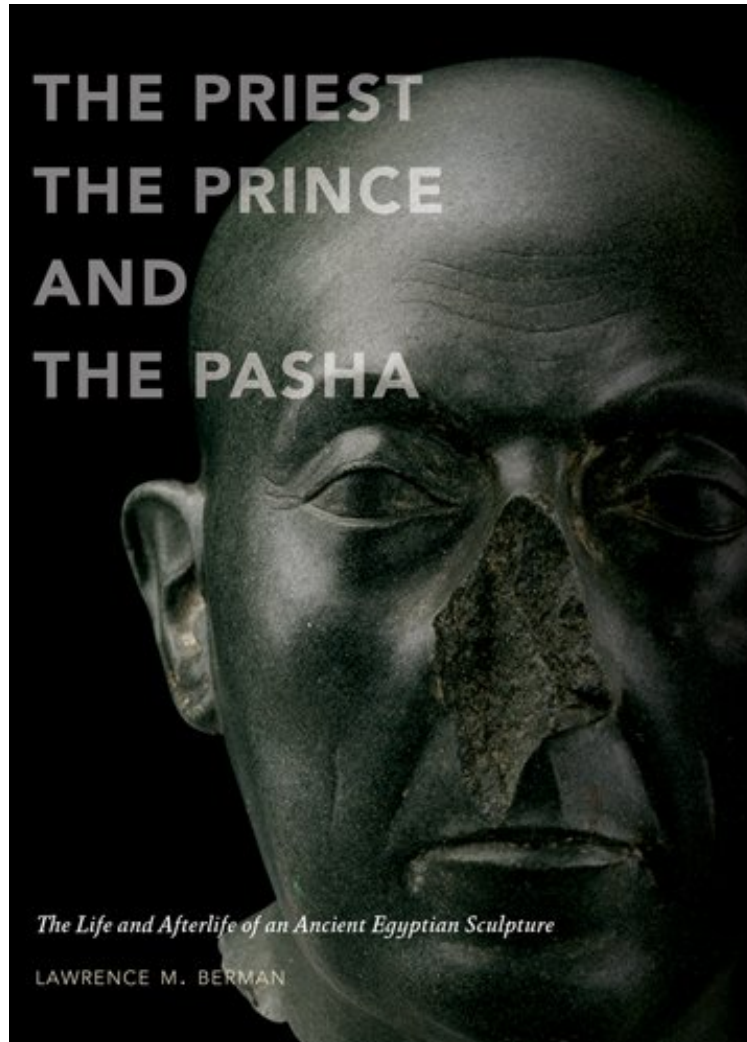


(Ebook pdf) The Priest, the Price, and the Pasha (KINDLE EDITION)

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Lawrence Berman

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Lawrence Berman : The Priest, the Price, and the Pasha (KINDLE EDITION) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Priest, the Price, and the Pasha (KINDLE EDITION):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A Biography of an Important Egyptian Sculpture By Rob Hardy Think about the art of ancient Egypt. What your mind's eye might see are flat figures in strict profile or eyes forward, or gigantic statues, or humans with the heads of jackals or birds. These formulaic representations are the rule, but there are exceptions that show real likenesses. The sculpture known as the Boston Green Head is one of the exceptions, and it has a pride of place within the Egyptian holdings of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. Now in a beautiful book issued by the museum itself, the sculpture gets a full biography. *The Priest, the Prince, and the Pasha: The Life and Afterlife of an Ancient Egyptian Sculpture* (MFA Publications) is written by the curator of such

Egyptian treasures at the museum, Lawrence M. Berman, and it is beautifully illustrated with pictures of the sculpture itself, similar sculptures, other art from Ancient Egypt, the consecutive owners of the sculpture and their friends, and the places it has been housed. It is a delightful and surprising in-depth look at an important work of art. The sculpture is small, a little more than four inches tall. It depicts the head of a bald man with thin lips and sad eyes. He has wrinkles on his brow, and crow's feet. He has a shaved head, which is a giveaway to his identity: "Handed down through the centuries," writes Berman, "from Roman wall paintings and statues of priests of Isis to Hollywood movies, the white-robed shaven-headed Egyptian priest is a familiar character." The nose is broken, but all the rest of the details of the head are present and are striking. The sculpture was discovered by the French Egyptologist Auguste Ferdinand Mariette, who was sent to Egypt in 1850 to visit Coptic monasteries to inventory and record their manuscripts. This was not what he really wanted to do, as he was more interested in ancient Egypt, and so he was easily distracted from his ostensible assignment to go on real digs. By the time Mariette left for France, he had sent some 6,000 objects to the Louvre. One of Mariette's tasks was to prepare for the visit to Egypt of Prince Napoleon Joseph Charles Paul Bonaparte, Napoleon's nephew; the visit never got made, but the prince did receive some of the finds shipped back to Paris, including the Green Head. He eventually sold it, but no one knows what happened to it until it came into the hands of the eccentric American collector Edward Perry Warren, who had set up a monastic, all-male enclosure, Lewes House in East Sussex, England. He donated the Green Head, and many other artworks, to the Museum of Fine Arts. It now resides in the Late Period Gallery of the museum, and it stands out among the other exhibits: "Even today, most viewers' first reaction to the Green Head is that it does not look Egyptian." Berman's book is not of expansive size, but is full of beautiful photographs of people, places, and artwork. It is a wide-ranging story of passionate explorers and collectors. It is a full appreciation of the beauty and history of the one sculpture, with interesting light shed on the "true art" versus the "prescribed art" of Egypt, and how the two were regarded by moderns as the digging continued. As an example of "true art," the Green Head allows us to see a neglected sophistication of an ancient culture more famous for conventional and repetitious displays.

Sometime in the early fourth century BC, an unknown Egyptian master carved an exquisite portrait in dark-green stone. The statue that included this head of a priest, likely a citizen of ancient Memphis, may have been damaged when the Persians conquered Egypt in 343 BC, before it was buried in a temple complex. Its adventures were not over: after almost two millennia, the head was excavated by Auguste Mariette, a founding figure in French archaeology. Sent to France as part of a collection assembled for the inimitable Bonaparte prince known as Plon-Plon, it found a home in his faux Pompeian palace. After disappearing again, it resurfaced in the collection of American aesthete Edward Perry Warren, who donated it to the MFA, Boston. Along the way, this compelling, mysterious sculpture has reflected the evolving understanding of Egyptian art.

Berman's book is to be highly recommended for the different (often very colourful) stories behind this incredible face that it throws into relief. (Egyptian Archaeology: The Bulletin of the Egypt Exploration Society) A feat of storytelling that makes "Raiders of the Lost Ark" look like kid stuff. (Ann Landi The Wall Street Journal) About the Author: Lawrence M. Berman is the Assistant Curator of Ancient Art at the Cleveland Museum of Art and the author of Amenhotep III: Art Historical Analysis and Egypt's Dazzling Sun: Amenhotep III and His World. Bernadette Letellier is the Senior Curator in the Department of Egyptian Antiquities at the Musée du Louvre, and was a member of the French archaeological expedition at Tod, 1984-87.