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A MASTERPIECE FROM THE MUSEO EGIZIO IN TURIN
RECOUNTED BY THE VATICAN MUSEUMS

STATUE OF KING AMENHOTEP II
PINK GRANITE, H. 152 CM
NEW KINGDOM, EIGHTEENTH DYNASTY, REIGN OF AMENHOTEP II (1425–1400 B.C.)
KARNAK, TEMPLE OF AMUN
DROVETTI COLLECTION

King Amenhotep II is depicted kneeling as he offers two globular vases to a deity. He is performing his function as a priest who grants the people the benevolence of the divine world through offerings. Only he can interact directly with the gods and thus preserve the created world in its perfection.

The king wears a loincloth (*shendyt*) and the typical royal headcloth (*nemes*) with a cobra on the forehead, a manifestation of his power. His particularly accentuated musculature seems to allude to his physical prowess, celebrated in a number of stelae and temple reliefs, where we read, among other things, that “there wasn’t a single man in his army...who could draw his bow” and that the king, shooting from his racing chariot, drove his arrow through “four targets of Asiatic copper” with such power that “it came out on the other side and dropped to the ground”.

The attribution of the statue to Amenhotep II is ensured by the writing of his name on the belt, as well as by the style of the sculpture. The work certainly comes from the great temple of Karnak in Thebes. It was brought from there by Jean-Jacques Rifaud, agent for the Consul-General of France in Egypt, Bernardino Drovetti, who was active there in the first half of the nineteenth century.