A Middle Kingdom Stela of the Wab-Priest “Senumret-Ankh” and His Wife “Sat-Hathor” in Giza Pyramid Magazine

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Abstract: This article deals with the study of the rectangular limestone stela of the wab-priest “Senumret-Ankh” and his wife “Sat-Hathor,” which is currently housed in Giza Pyramid Magazine in Giza Plateau under No. 526 (Record of Exhibits) (Case No. 1352 of 2013—Giza Misdemeanour). Unfortunately, there is no information on its dating or provenance. The stela is rectangular in shape and made of limestone, surmounted by the decoration of the cornice. It dates to the Middle Kingdom, specifically from the end of the 12th to the beginning of the 13th Dynasty. It certainly originates from Dahshur because of its style and its paleographic and epigraphic characteristics, which resemble Dahshur stelae.

Keywords: Middle kingdom – stela – false door – cornice – wDAt-eye.
Introduction:

This paper deals with a rectangular limestone stela with a cornice at the top, below which are three registers. The uppermost division contains four lines of text consisting of an offering formula for the deceased and his wife, whose figures appear in the register below. This stela is dedicated to a man named “Senusret-Ankh” and his wife named “Sat-Hathor”. This paper aims to translate and comment on the text, by investigating its style, inscriptions, as well as their iconographical and epigraphical features.

1. Description:

Rectangular limestone stela with a cornice at the top (fig. 1). It is made of limestone, measuring 74 cm in height, 43 cm in width and, 10 cm in thickness. It is in a good state of preservation, except for a small part of its top-right edge, which is broken off. The stela imitates a false door framed by a torus, except at its base, with a curved cavetto cornice. This type appeared for the first time during the reign of King Amenemhat II.

The surface of this funerary stela is divided horizontally into three parts, which are subdivided by bands.

The first register contains the main hieroglyphic inscriptions that consists of two texts of the traditional offering formula: a vertical line separates them and four horizontal rows of each with borderlines. The left one above $Sn-wsr.t-\text{m}h$ is written from right to left, and the right one above $S\text{r}-Hwt-Hr$ is written from left to right.

The second is occupied by the main scene of the stela, which presents “Senusret-Ankh” facing left seated on a chair with a short back and two bovine legs (bis-vessel below), wearing a short-haired wig that reveals his ears, a short kilt up to his knee, and a broad collar. His left hand is extended towards the $h\text{wt-offering table}$, while his right one rests on his thigh. At the right, his wife, “Sat-Hathor”, facing right seated on a chair with a short back and two bovine legs (oil jar below), facing towards her husband. She wears the long tight-fitting tunic that starts below the chest, as well as a long-haired wig that reveals her ears and hangs down to her shoulders. This wig also has a thin lappet hanging down on the chest. She wears a broad collar and bracelets at the wrists and ankles. Her right hand is extended towards the $h\text{wt-offering table}$, while her left one rests on her thigh. The artist was concerned with carving the details of the wigs, ears, broad collar, and garments. Their figures have almond-shaped eyes, a small nose, and a narrow-slit mouth. In front of their faces, there are different types of offerings stacked upon each other: of round and conical bread, a bull's head, lettuce topped with the bull's thigh, and a pair of geese.

The third register shows a pair of wDAt-eye in a big size based on a line.

2. Inscription:

- The left part, text above “Senusret-Ankh”

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1 Kurt Pflüger, “The private funerary stelae of the Middle Kingdom and their importance for the study of ancient Egyptian history.”, *JAOS 67*, no. 2 (1947): 128.
The inscription reads from right to left. It contains an offering formula:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Left Part</th>
<th>Right Part</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[ htp\ (r)dj(.w) n(j)sw.t\ (n) Pth-Skr\ dj.f\ prt-hrw\ t\ hnk.t ]</td>
<td>[ An\ offering\ (boon)\ which\ the\ king\ gives\ (a)\ for\ Ptah-Sokar\ (b)\ May\ he\ give\ an\ invocation\ offering\ (namely)\ bread,\ beer, ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ jhw.w\ 3pd.w\ ss\ mn.\ t\ h.t\ nb.(t)\ nfr.t\ w^b.(t) ]</td>
<td>[ oxen\ and\ fowls(c),\ alabaster,\ clothing(d)\ and\ all\ good\ and\ pure\ things, ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ n\ k3\ n\ w^b\ Sn-wsr.t^5nh ]</td>
<td>[ for\ the\ ka(e)\ of\ wab-priest(f)\ Senusret-Ankh(g), ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ ir\ n\ dįj\ Htp^1 ]</td>
<td>[ dįj-priest(h)\ born\ by\ Hotep(i). ]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- The right part, text above sāt-Hwt-Hr-wr(t)

The inscription reads from left to right. It contains an offering formula:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Left Part</th>
<th>Right Part</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[ htp\ (r)dj(.w) n(j)sw.t\ (n) Pth-Skr\ dj.f\ prt-hrw\ t\ hnk.t ]</td>
<td>[ An\ offering\ (boon)\ which\ the\ king\ gives\ for\ Ptah-Sokar\ May\ he\ give\ an\ invocation\ offering\ (namely)\ bread,\ beer, ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ jhw.w\ 3pd.w\ ss\ mn.\ t\ h.t\ nb.(t)\ nfr.t\ w^b.t ]</td>
<td>[ oxen\ and\ fowls,\ alabaster,\ clothing\ and\ all\ good\ and\ pure\ things, ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ n\ k3\ n\ w^b\ Sn-wsr.t^5nh ]</td>
<td>[ for\ the\ ka(e)\ of\ lady\ of\ the\ house(j)\ Sat-Hathor\ the\ elder(k), ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ (ir.t)\ n\ Hmt\ m^2t-hrw\ nb.(t)-\ jm^3h ]</td>
<td>[ born\ by\ Hemet(l)\ justified,\ possessor\ of\ reverence(m). ]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^1\) it is noteworthy, the absence of \[ m^2t-hrw \] after the name of \[ Htp. \]
3. Commentary:

(a) According to Franke, the offering formula *htp-di-nsw* must be translated as “an offering (boon) which the king gives and the god for the ka of the deceased”, not as usual “an offering (or boon) which the king gives for the god”. This confirms the omission of the preposition (*n*) in dative construction that makes the god and the king are givers of the offerings. The orthography of the offering formula and classical arrangement writing of *htp-di-nsw* signs is most commonly in texts from the 4th dynasty until the end of the 13th dynasty. The sequence of *dl.f* between the formula *htp-di-nsw* and *prt-hrw* indicates the 12th dynasty.

(b) The writing of god’s name, *PtH-%kr*, is typical of the Middle Kingdom, especially in the late Twelfth and Thirteenth dynasty. As well, in the late 12th and 13th dynasties, the name Skr was only written as. It is noted that there is an epigraphic error in the god’s name “Skr” in the text of Sn-wsr.t-“nh.

(c) *JHw Apdw* “oxen and fowl” is one of the most common elements of the offering formula. It was written with various combinations of determinatives. and represent the common orthography that was used at all periods; there are other spellings limited to certain periods, which rarely appeared in the late 12th dynasty and were widespread during 13th dynasty.

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5 Bennett, "Growth of the HTP-D1-NSW Formula": 77-78.


7 stele of Chaneferre Sobekhotep IV. (Cairo JE 51811), stele of Chui (Äg. Slg. Tübingen Inv. Nr. 464); stele of Senebi (Äg. Slg. Tübingen Inv. Nr. 463); Offering table of Senwosretankh, Yamamoto, Kei (2021)."Treasurer Senwosretankh, favored of Amenemhat III". *In Geisen, Christina; Li, Jean; Shubert, Steven; Yamamoto, Kei (eds.). His good name: essays on identity and self-presentation in ancient Egypt in honor of Ronald J. Leprohon* (Atlanta, GA: Lockwood Press, 2021): 252 (A).

8 Ilin-Tomich, "Changes in the htp-di-nsw Formula": 23.

(d) \(\text{Ss mnxt} \) “alabaster and linen”, writes with the \(\text{Ss}-\text{sign} \) between the two poles of \(\text{mnxt} \), which appears during the mid-to-late 12th dynasty and became common from the reign of Senwosret III onwards.

(e) \(\text{n k3 n} \) before the name of the deceased becomes customary in the late 12th Dynasty.

(f) The writing of a \(\text{w'b}-\text{Priest} \) without ripples of water or a seated man determinatives were known during the middle kingdom. As well, it is suggested that \(\text{Sn-wsr.t-\text{n}n}h \) is the priest of Ptah-Sokar, whose name is recorded on the stela.

(g) \(\text{Sn-wsr.t-\text{n}n}h \): It means “Senusret is alive”, It was a common name during the 12th to early 13th dynasties (up to Neferhotep I). This name was written in various forms. It is noted that there is a person who bore the \(\text{w'b}-\text{priest} \) title, his name begins with “\(\text{Sn-wsr.t-} […]\)" in the same orthography as the owner of the stela. His name is recorded in a family stele from Dahshur dated to the late 12th Dynasty, some of its inscriptions are destroyed, on which the first part of the name of a \(\text{w'b}-\text{Priest} \) is recorded, whose name begins with “\(\text{Wsr} \)”, as well as two women named Sat-Hathor, the first was born to Sobek and the second was born to Hotep. So the incomplete name may refer to the name of the owner of the stela \(\text{w'b}-\text{Priest} \) Senusret-Ankh.

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2 Bennett, "Growth of the HTP-D'I-NSW Formula": 79; Pflüger, "The private funerary stelae": 133.


5 PN I, 279.4; TLA no. 851106 https://pnm.uni-mainz.de/3/name/102 (accessed: 1/20/2023).

(h) $d\bar{\eta}j$-priest, it is a noun that means “person working at the funeral”. This title appeared from the Old Kingdom to the 18th Dynasty. It is a category of priests that appeared during the 12th Dynasty in the Kahun Papyrus. Perhaps he is responsible for the funeral ceremonies. Whereas $d\bar{\eta}j$-Priest is depicted in an 18th dynasty burial scene, whose context suggests it was a funerary priest with $szmt$-priest. So, $Sn-wsr.t-nh$ was the $wb$-priest and also worked at the funeral ceremonies.

(i) $Htp$ This name was associated with both men and women. It appeared from the Old Kingdom to the Late Period. It was common during the Middle Kingdom (12-13 dynasties).

(j) $nb.t$ pr “Lady of the house” is one of the most common feminine titles. It indicates the independent position of the woman, which was not preconditioned by marital status. It can be drawn that the $nb$-pr is a grown-up female. It is attested since the Middle Kingdom (11th Dynasty) to the Ptolemaic Period.

(k) $S\tilde{r}-Hwt-Hr$ This name means “daughter of Hathor”, it appeared during the 12th and 13th dynasties. It was written in various forms.

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1 Ward, Index of Egyptian administrative and religious titles of the Middle Kingdom; Dilwyn Jones, An Index of Ancient Egyptian Titles, Epithets and Phrases of the Old Kingdom Volumes I and II: A completely updated and revised edition of Murray’s Index of 1908 including an analysis of all new material published to date (Oxford: BAR Publishing, 2000), 1009, 3740.
2 Wb V, 515, 7.
3 Ward, Index of Egyptian administrative and religious titles of the Middle Kingdom, 1606.
5 LᾹ IV, 1088.
6 LᾹ VI, 389.
8 PN I, 257, 22.
This name appeared from the 12th to early 13th dynasty (up to Neferhotep I). It was written in various forms¹.

“possessor of reverence”, This title refers to the deceased in the 12th dynasty or in the Second Intermediate Period². It was written with the same orthography without the feminine end “t” during the 12th³ and 13th⁴ dynasties.

4- Dating and Provenance:

The general style, iconography, epigraphical, and iconographical features, date the stela from the end of the 12th to the beginning of the 13th Dynasty that belongs to Memphis–Fayum region according to the following criteria:

- The stela is rectangular, framed by a torus with a curved cavetto cornice⁵. According to Freed’s study, the rectangular stela with cornice and wDAt-eyes belongs to workshop no.7, which is characterized by a “silhouette” style; the depiction of a seated couple (a man and usually his wife but occasionally his mother or sister), curls on male wigs and parallel strands on the wigs of women. Tiny almond-shaped eyes devoid of eyebrows or cosmetic lines, a small nose - a narrow slit mouth⁶, which relates to the northern residence⁷. Despite that they were erected in different regions, Its stylistic similarity suggests they were produced at a single workshop⁸.

- The stela is executed in the “silhouette” style, which combines both sunk and raised relief; The inscriptions are in sunken relief, while the depictions are in raised relief, where the entire figure is depressed considerably below the surface

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⁵ (Louvre E 13079, Saint-Omer 6282 Louvre C22, München GL WAF 36), Alexander Ilin-Tomich, "A Twelfth Dynasty stela workshop possibly from Saqqara.", JEA 97, no. 1 (2011): 120; Reginald Engelbach and Battiscombe George Gunn. Harageh. Vol. 28 (Egypt: British School of Archaeology in Egypt, 1923), XVI, XXIV, LXXI, LXXII (1), LXXIII, LXXIV.
⁸ Ilin-Tomich, "A Twelfth Dynasty stela workshop": 121.
of the background. This style is popular during the beginning of the 12th dynasty (First half of the reign of Sesostris I) and the 13th dynasty.

- The depiction of the \( w\ddot{d}lt \)-eye is a distinctive feature of the Twelfth Dynasty false door stelae which come from the northern residence area, whereas the \( w\ddot{d}lt \)-eyes were on the crossbar of a falsedoor, or with \( w\ddot{d}lt \)-eyes in the lower part without a central niche, which tend also to originate from the Memphis–Fayum region (fig.3), especially from Dahshur (figs. 4-5) and Lahun (fig.6).

- The god’s name, \( PtH-Skr \), probably refers to Memphis-Faiyum region.

5- Conclusion:

The stela in question is a rectangular false door-stela, it is dated to the end of the 12th to the beginning of the 13th Dynasty. Undoubtedly, the style, iconographical and epigraphical features of the stela, favor a Middle Kingdom date. This is also proved by the artistic comparison between the stela and the other false door stelae of the 12th Dynasty. The stela is characterized by depicting the \( w\ddot{d}lt \)-eyes in the lower part without a central niche which tends also to originate from Memphis-Faiyum region, especially Dahshur. This supports the possibility that the owner of the stela \( w\ddot{b} \)-priest \( Sn-wsr.t-nh \) is the same \( w\ddot{b} \)-priest whose name was previously mentioned incompletely in the excavations of Fakhry in Dahshur, and he is also responsible for the funeral ceremonies through his title \( d\ddot{b}j \)-priest. It appears likely that it was a votive stele placed around the pyramids of the Middle Kingdom at Dahshur.

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1 Freed, "Stela workshops of early dynasty 12": 317.
2 Louvre C22, München GL WAF 36, Ilin-Tomich, "A Twelfth Dynasty stela workshop": 119 (fig. 4, 5).
3 Ilin-Tomich, "A Twelfth Dynasty stela workshop": 122, the stela of Heni/Khety-ankh at Matariya (Heliopolis); Cairo CG 1409 (Saqqara); Cairo CG 1478 and 1486 (Dahshur); Cairo JE 45086 (Lisht); and UC 14339 (Lahun).
7 CG 20390, PM IV, 112; Petrie, William Matthew Flinders. *Illahun, Kahun and Gurob, 1888-90* (London: D. Nutt, 1891), 13, pl.XI.
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**Figures**

(Fig.1)

The Rectangular Stela of $\text{Sn-wsr.t-nh}$ and his wife $\text{S3t-Hwt-Hr}$ in Giza Pyramid Magazine No.526
(Fig. 2)
Line drawing of the Rectangular Stela of $Sn-wsr.t^{-5}nh$ and his wife $Sjt-Hwt-Hr$
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(Fig. 3)
Stela of hnm.w-htp, CG 1478

Stela of Nnj, CG 1481