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AN EGYPTIAN LATE MIDDLE
KINGDOM STELA
IN THE FINNISH NATIONAL MUSEUM
AT HELSINKI

BY
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An Egyptian Late Middle Kingdom stela in the Finnish National Museum at Helsinki

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The oriental collection of the Finnish National Museum at Helsinki (Helsingfors) includes one hitherto unpublished Egyptian stela¹, NM 9176, which was acquired by the museum in April 1930. It has previously been in the possession of Mr. PAVEL SCHOCHIN, a dealer of antiquities in Helsinki. How and where it came into his possession is unfortunately not known.

Dimensions: 480 × 275 × 45 millimetres.

Material: Limestone with traces of yellow and brown paint.

Owner: »Butler with-permission-to-enter Iy».

Provenance: Unknown (possibly Abydos).

Date: Late Middle Kingdom.

Description: The stela NM 9176 (cf. Figs. 1 and 2) is of rather poor workmanship, its figures as well as its hieroglyphs being executed in »reliefs en creux». Stylistically it represents a type common in the Middle Kingdom cemeteries of Egypt,² and is an example of stelae which Hayes³ dates to the period of artistic decadence during the XIII dynasty. Present stela has a rounded top and is divided

¹ Two stelae and a coffin from this collection have previously been published by Prof. I. Lieblein (cf. LIEBLEIN 1873, pp. 71/74, Pls. XVIII: 6 and XXII: 18). The stelae are, however, plaster casts of originals in Tallinn museum (cf. TURAIEV 1899, pp. 117—217), lost during the last war.

² LANGE & SCHÄFER 1902—1928, 1—4, BOESER 1909, SPIEGELBERG & PÖRTNER 1902 and ENGELBACH 1922.

³ HAYES 1953, p. 354, Fig. 227.

into four horizontal rows. It belongs to a rather rare type of stelae where a commoner is represented together with a deity on the »place d'honneur» of the stela¹.

1st row (the rounded top): A šn sign between two »wedjat» eyes.

2nd row: The main text:

1. *hṭp dī nšw Mnw Hr nḥt dī.f prt-hrw (m) t ḥnkt k;w ;pdw šs mnḥt ḥt nb(t)*

2. *nfrt w'bt 'nḥt ntr im n k; n wdpw-'k İy m;'-hrw*

3. *mš n S;t-İy m;'t-hrw ir n imy-r ḥwt-ntr Nḥnw^{sic} m;'-hrw*

Translation:

»A boon which the king gives to Min, Horus the powerful², that he may give an invocation offering of bread, beer, oxen, fowl, alabaster (vessels) and clothing as well as every good and pure thing on which a god lives, to the 'double' of the butler with-permission-to-enter Iy³, justified, born from Sat-Iy⁴, justified, begotten by the overseer of the temple Henu⁵, justified.»

3rd row: The adoration scene: A figure of a man *wdpw-'k İy m;'-hrw* »the butler with-permission-to-enter Iy, justified», standing in front of a table of offerings and burning incense to Min. The god is represented here for some reasons in an unorthodox manner without a beard⁶.

Behind the figure of Min are his attributes — a temple or shrine with a somewhat misshaped *šḥnt* pole⁷ standing in front of it.

¹ Vandier 1954, pp. 97f., with references.

² »Min, Horus the powerful» is the local form of Min from Ipu (Achmîm) as a »Gastgott» in Abydos (cf. KEES 1941, pp. 150/200/335). Several Middle Kingdom stelae from Abydos mention this god e.g. LANGE & SCHÄFER 1902—1928, 4., Pls. XVI: 188, XLVII: 601 and XLVIII: 612, HAYES 1953, p. 345, Fig. 227 upper left.

³ RANKE 1935, p. 8: 11.

⁴ Ibid. p. 285: 14. »Iy's daughter».

⁵ A corrupted form of Hnw (cf. RANKE 1935, p. 242: 2 and 4), cf. Figs. 3 and 4 where the name is spelled correctly.

⁶ For the figure of the god cf. BLEEKER 1956, pp. 45 ff./78 ff.

⁷ GARDINER 1950, p. 467: 44, KLEBS 1922, Fig. 3. and WAINWRIGHT 1935, pp. 165 f.

4th row: The family scene: To the left a man, with no accompanying inscription, probably Iy himself, seated on a chair. In front of him is a woman kneeling and drinking from a beaker. She is *nbt pr Sbk-ḥtp m; t-ḥrw* »the lady of the house Sebek-hetep¹, justified». To the right from her are Iy's parents, *imy-r ḥwt-ntr Nḥnw^{sic} m; t-ḥrw hmt.f² S;t-Iy m; t-ḥrw* »the overseer of the temple Henu (cf. Note 5 p. 4), justified, (and) his wife Sat-Iy, justified».

Dating: As already stated this stela could be dated for stylistical reasons to the XIII dynasty. This hypothesis is also confirmed by the evidence of a god on a private stela as well as by the fact that a commoner is offering to the god in a manner which one would, on the basis of the offering formula, assign to a king. Both cases signify the democratization of the kingship and religion which occurred in the Late Middle Kingdom in Egypt³.

Other monuments: The butler Iy is also known from two other sources. He is the author of another stela, Stuttgart Museum N:o 461⁴ (now in Tübingen⁵), and he is mentioned on the stela of his parents, Stuttgart Museum N:o 465⁶.

The first mentioned stela (cf. Fig. 3) is introduced by a prayer formula addressed to »Osiris, lord of Busiris, the great god, lord of Abydos⁷». Here Iy is represented as the son of Henu, who causes the name of his father to live, presenting offerings to his parents. Besides Iy himself, his parents and his wife Sebek-hetep⁸, this stela also mentions his brother Henu and his sisters Hetep⁹ and

¹ RANKE 1935, p. 305: 6 and Note 8 this page.

² A transposition of signs.

³ MÜLLER 1933, pp. 198 f.

⁴ SPIEGELBERG & PÖRTNER 1902, p. 20, Pl. XI: 19.

⁵ For this information I am indebted to Dr. R. Moss, Oxford.

⁶ SPIEGELBERG & PÖRTNER 1902, pp. 5 f., Pl. IV: 8.

⁷ Despite the fact that the provenance of the Stuttgart stelae is not known, it can be guessed due to the typical abyidian prayer formula.

⁸ The fact that Sebek-hetep occurs on this stela, among Iy's sisters, as well as on the Helsinki stela (cf. Note 11) where the sisters are omitted, indicates that Sebek-hetep must have been Iy's wife.

⁹ Ranke 1935, p. 86.

Iudi¹ as well as their friends »the intendant and chief of the building works² Sehetep-ib³, his(?) wife »the lady of the house Im (?)⁴», »the lady of the house Didit-Anuket⁵» and »the bowman (?) Dy⁶». The last row of this stela mentions a man⁷ Ptah-ankh⁸, his (?) brothers Iy and Henu and »the lady of the house Iu-ef-neferu(?)⁹». These persons are probably the friends or children of the butler Iy or of his brother Henu.

As to its workmanship, this stela resembles that of the Helsinki stela to such an extent that there seems to be no doubt about their being executed by the same artist and thus contemporary.

The stela of Iy's parents (cf. Fig. 4), on the other hand, is stylistically of a much finer workmanship than those of Iy. This difference and the fact that it belongs to Iy's parents make one believe that it is of an earlier date. This suggestion is also supported by the omission of Iy's wife, Sebek-hetep. Besides Iy's father, »Henu,

¹ This name is certainly identical with Iudu (cf. Note 1 p. 7) mentioned in the stela Stuttgart N:o 465 (cf. Fig. 4). Both SPIEGELBERG & PÖRTNER 1902, and RANKE 1935, p. 19: 2, assign this name to a man, but in the original (cf. Fig. 3) it is clearly assigned to a woman although the text is partly obliterated.

² HELCK 1958, p. 86.

³ RANKE 1935, p. 318: 1.

⁴ Reading uncertain. Possibly to be read I: or Ti: (cf. RANKE 1935, p. 389: 22).

⁵ Or »Anuket-didit», cf. RANKE 1935, p. 403: 9.

⁶ No parallels for the name. Instead of *iry pdt* the title *iry t* is expected in this context (cf. HELCK 1958, pp. 252—268) but the traces on the original do not support this suggestion.

⁷ The title is corrupt. It is possibly connected with *im* »Syrian slave» (cf. HAYES 1955, pp. 92 f.), whose functions could be related to those of a butler (cf. Cairo stela 20231). This title occurs on stelae from the northern cemetery of Abydos (cf. Lange & Schäfer 1902—1928, 1—4, Cairo stelae Nos. 20231, 20103, 20392).

⁸ RANKE 1935, p. 138: 20.

⁹ Reading uncertain. The name seems to be of analogous construction as the woman's name *iw.f snb(w)* »he comes healthy» (cf. RANKE 1935, p. 16: 1) and should be read *iw.f nfrw* »she comes beautiful».

born from Iudu¹, justified», and mother »Sat-Iy, born from *Ww*², justified», also the titles of Iy, his brother Henu and his sisters Hetep and Iudu are mentioned. The title of Iy is merely *wdpw* »the butler» and that of his brother is *w'b* »the priest». Their sisters are »ladies of the house». All persons on this stela are indicated as deceased. It is probable that the epithets »justified» were added to the names »in advance» at the time when the persons were still alive.

The epithet *'k*: The *'k* alone used as an epithet mainly occurs in the titles of two localities of Egypt, namely at Abydos and Edfu. At Abydos it is usually connected to *wdpw*³ and at Edfu usually to *w'b*⁴. In one case at Edfu the *'k* is connected to the title *'h'wtj kn*⁵ and translated as a separate title »a valiant warrior, an 'enterer' of Edfu». The same translation is rendered also when *'k* stands together with *w'b*⁶. In this case the rendered translation seems, however, to be insufficient.

As Helck⁷ states *wdpw* was a rather low official of the foodsupplies department of the palace, his activities being probably restricted to certain localities of his department. The activities of a *w'b* were probably also limited to certain localities of the temple. There are indications that the duties of a *w'b* were, at least in later times, partly related with those of a butler⁸. It seems evident that *'k* when standing together with such titles as *wdpw* or *w'b* should not be treated as a separate title »enterer» or »intimate», but as Faulkner⁹

¹ RANKE 1935, p. 19: 3. Iudu, Iy's sister is identical with Iudi, mentioned on the stela, Stuttgart N:o 461 (cf. Note 1 p. 6).

² *Ibid.* p. 77: 5-6, states that this name is a man's name during the Middle Kingdom. In the present case it clearly refers to a woman, *Ww m:t-hrw* »Ww, justified (f.)».

³ LANGE & SCHÄFER 1902-1928, 1, pp. 172 ff., (Cairo stela 20147) and *Ibid.*, 2, p. 345 (Cairo stela 20718).

⁴ ENGELBACH 1922, pp. 132 f.

⁵ GUNN 1929, (Cairo stela 52456).

⁶ ENGELBACH 1921, pp. 65 f.

⁷ HELCK 1958, pp. 255 ff.

⁸ GARDINER 1947, p. 43* and LEFEBURE 1928, p. 43.

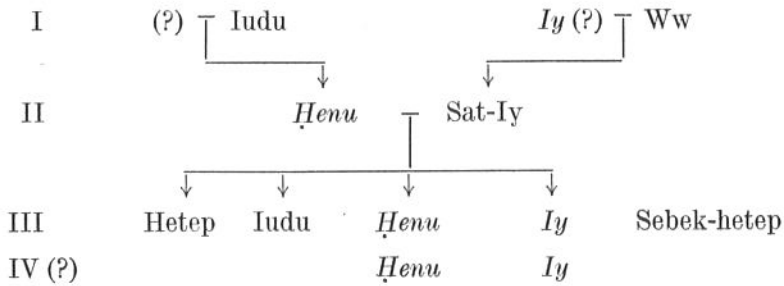
⁹ FAULKNER 1964, p. 50.

correctly assumes, as an epithet signifying a privilege achieved by an official to enter localities not accessible for him earlier.

If the suggestion that the stela Stuttgart N:o 465 (Fig. 4) is older than the stela NM 9176 is correct, it seems evident that 'k has been added to Iy's title later, and that *wdpw* 'k is thus to be considered as a higher rank of *wdpw*.

In this case 'k should be translated as »with-permission-to-enter» or simply »privileged».

The family tree of Iy: (Names in italics refer to men.)



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Figure 1. The stela of Iy (NM 9176).

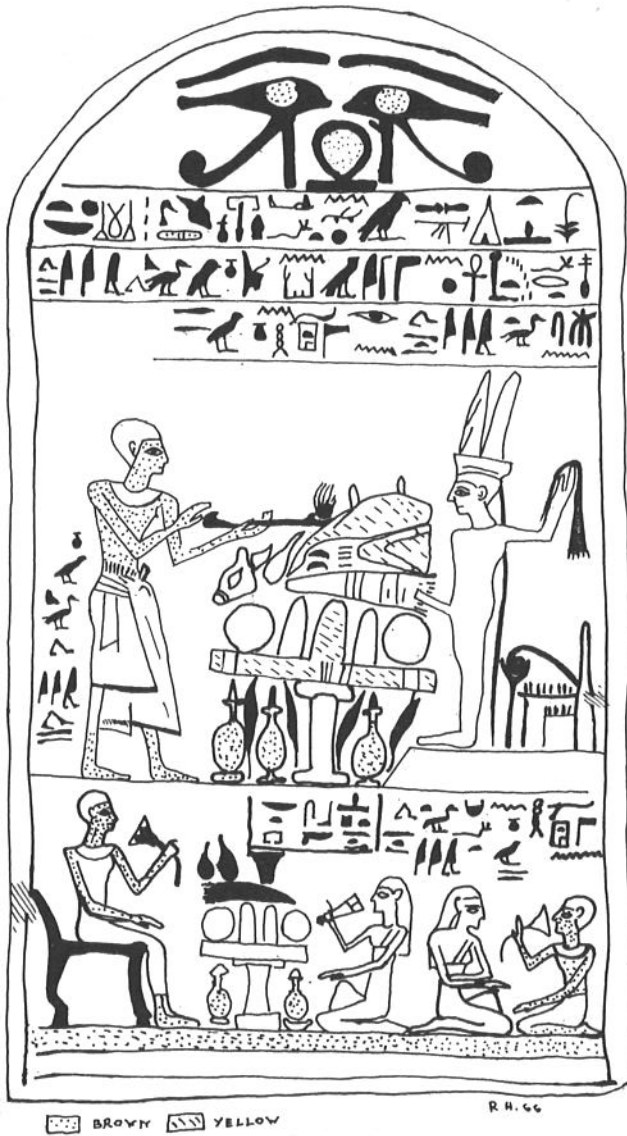


Figure 2. The stela of Iy (NM 9176). Hand copy.

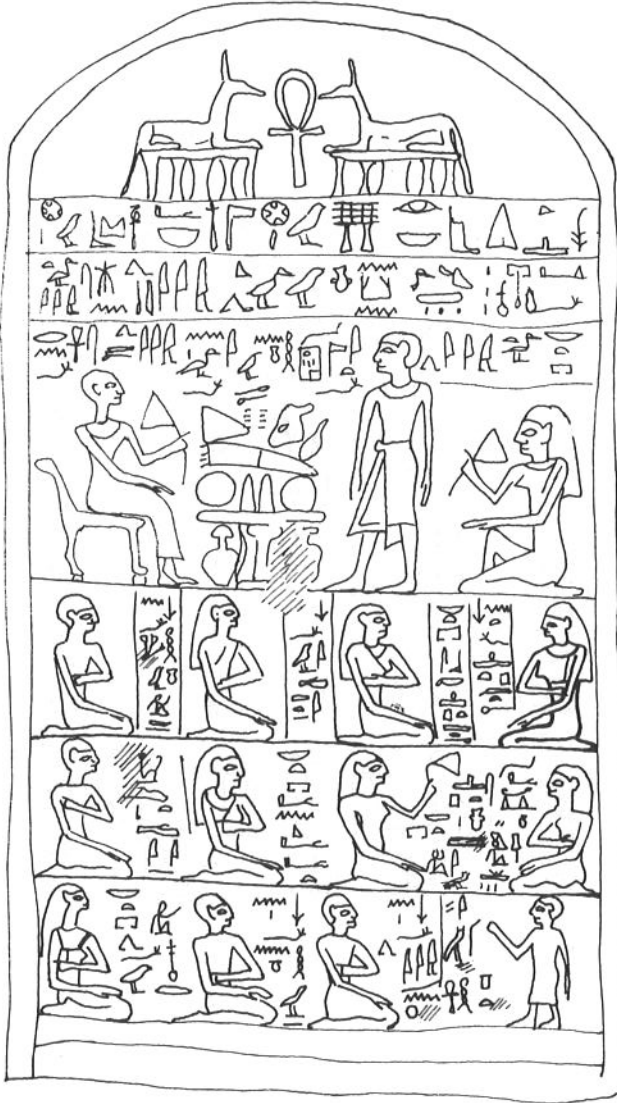


Figure 3. The stela of Iy (Stuttgart N:o 461).



Figure 4. The stela of Khenu, the father of Iy (Stuttgart N:o 465).