

Middle Kingdom Stela of Seneb (CG 20296/ GEM 14689)

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines in detail the stela of *Snb*, which is currently preserved in the storerooms of the Grand Egyptian Museum, bearing number CG 20296/GEM 14689. The stela was discovered by Mariette's workers in the north cemetery at Abydos. It belongs to the *imy-r hntyw-š* "the overseer of attendants," *Snb* and it was produced by his son *S-n-wsrt Tw-nfr*. The stela alludes to some intriguing titles which are *imy-r hntyw-š*, *sš hsb*, *fty*, *iry-ṯ n pr-hd*, *wb3*, *imy-r rwyt*, *imy-r šn^c*, along with the word *hnms* meaning "friend." The stela also refers to an Asiatic person, whose name is of Semitic origin. CG 20296 significantly complements Rio Inv. 627 stela (belonging to *S-n-wsrt Tw-nfr*) by providing deeper insight into the family's genealogy (including family members and acquaintances) without repeating the same individuals' names. CG 20296 most probably dates back to the reign of Senwosret III of the 12th Dynasty, based on its stylistic and iconographic features along with the presence of King Senwosret III's cartouche on the Rio stela. The article describes the stela, provides commentary on its inscriptions, and examines the titles and genealogy of the owner's family.

KEYWORDS: Abydos; CG 20296; 12th Dynasty; *imy-r hntyw-š*; *Snb/Seneb*; *S-n-wsrt Tw-nfr*/ Sesostris-Iunefer; stela.

INTRODUCTION

CG 20296 was previously housed in the Cairo Egyptian Museum, then transferred to the Grand Egyptian Museum. Mariette briefly mentioned some of the inscriptions, including the names and titles of the individuals portrayed. According to Mariette, the stela originates from the northern necropolis of Abydos.¹ Later, Lange and Schäfer provided the drawings of the hieroglyphs in the *Catalogue Général* without including a photo of the stela, whereas Kitchen provided the English translations for CG 20296. Afterwards, Nelson-Hurst discussed the genealogy of both CG 20296 along with the Rio 627 stela in her thesis.² Then, Millard very briefly mentioned the lineage of some individuals on the stela. Finally, Ilin-Tomich significantly assigned Middle Kingdom stelae (including CG 20296) into various

¹ The authors are indebted to Prof. Al-Tayeb Abbas for giving us permission to examine and photograph the stela. Special thanks are also extended to Mr. Walid El-Sayed for the facsimile illustrations and to Mr. Sameh Abdel Mohsen for the photographs. All the abbreviations cited in this paper follow those mentioned in MATHIEU 2019. See MARIETTE 1880: no. 825; LANGE & SCHÄFER 1902: 309-310; KITCHEN 1990: I, 17-22.

² NELSON-HURST 2011: 283-287; MILLARD 2015: 82-83.

workshops according to their orthographical and iconographical characteristics.³ Despite all of this earlier research, this is the first time in which CG 20296 is photographed and published as a whole with its texts and titles. The authors' objective is to conduct a thorough examination of the stela, offering a commentary on the texts and the layout, providing relevant familial monuments, and investigating the different titles and lineage of the owner's family.

DESCRIPTION

[FIG. 1-2]

CG 20296 is a limestone stela measuring 44.5 cm in height, 28.5 cm in length and 9 cm in depth. The stela is broken diagonally into two unequal pieces; however, it is otherwise in a good state of preservation. The upper part is composed of the lunette, which is only decorated with the *wḏ3t*-eyes. Below the lunette, the stela is divided into four registers.

The first register, immediately below the lunette, consists of three lines of hieroglyphic inscriptions executed in sunken relief. Below the inscriptions, in the second register to the left-hand side, the owner of the stela is sitting on a lion-legged chair in front of an offering table. He is wearing a large wig covering his ears, a necklace, and a tight knee kilt. His face and the upper part of his body are painted red as accustomed for male depictions in ancient Egyptian art. His left arm is clenched on his chest, whereas the right is stretched out towards the table. The offering table is loaded with an ox foreleg, three types of bread, two pieces of fish, and onions. Underneath the table, there is an ox head and a red vessel. On the other side of the register, a man is depicted seated in a kneeling position with his left leg raised. One hand is placed on his chest, whereas the other is not visible, although it should be stretched out. He wears the same wig as the owner of the stela. Behind the latter man, a woman is shown in the same position, wearing a tripartite wig and a necklace. There are captions above both the man and woman with their names, as well as the woman's title only.

The third register contains two women and three men, all of whom are facing left. They are all depicted in the same positions as the man and the woman in the preceding register; however, the first three persons on the left are slightly differentiated by the visible traces of their extended hands. Red color traces are still preserved on the men's bodies. The figures' names are written above them, with the captions including also the titles for the men. The fourth register is composed of four lines of hieroglyphic inscriptions on a yellow background. Each part of the inscription is separated from the other by short vertical lines. This register provides information (i.e., names and titles) about ten people in the owner's circle of family, friends, and acquaintances.

³ ILIN-TOMICH 2017: 73,75,77, 80-81.

INSCRIPTIONS

[FIG. 1-2]

First Register



h̄tp-di-nswt Wsir h̄ntyw imntyw n̄tr 3 di.f prt-hrw t h̄nkt k3w 3pdw šs mnht sn̄tr mr̄ht n k3 n imy-r h̄ntyw-š Snb⁴ iri.n H̄pw m ir n.f s3.f mri.f S-n-wsrt Tw-nfr⁵ iri. n S3t-Wsr⁶ m3^c-hrw h̄n^c snw.f snwt.f

An offering which the king gives ^(A) (to) Osiris,^(B) the chief of the westerners, the great god ^(C) so that he may give ^(D) an invocation offering (consisting of) bread and beer, oxen and fowl, alabaster and clothing,^(E) incense and unguent for the Ka of the overseer of attendants, *Snb*, born of *Hpw*, as what was made for him (by) his son, his beloved, *S-n-wsrt Tw-nfr*,^(F) born of *S3t-Wsr*, the justified together with his brothers and his sisters.

Second Register



h̄mt.f S3(t)-šmi (?) irt.n Tti^(G)

His wife, *S3(t)-šmi*,⁷ born of *Tti*⁸



H̄ftn⁹ ir. n mwt.f

H̄ftn, born of his mother ^(H)



nbt-pr H̄pw s3.s D33y¹⁰

The lady of the house, *Hpw*,^(I) her son *D33y*

⁴ PN 1935: 312, no. 15. The name *Snb* means “health, or healthy.”

⁵ PN 1935: 279, no. 3; FRANKE 1984: 305, Dossier Nr. 498. The name *S-n-wsrt Tw-nfr* means “the man belonging to (the goddess) *Wosret*, the beautiful one comes.”

⁶ PN 1935: 288, no. 4, fn. 1 or *Wsr-3st* (?) according to Ranke.

⁷ PN 1935: 294, no. 3.

⁸ PN 1935: 385, no. 16.

⁹ PN 1935: 239, no. 15.

¹⁰ ILIN-TOMICH reads it as *D33y*, whereas Ranke reads it as *D3wy*. PN 1935: 404, no. 25. The name no. 16 in Ranke is most probably the one that matches our stela in its writing. See: <https://pnm.uni-mainz.de/5/name/656#780>

Third Register



*Sty-r3*¹¹ *irt. n K3(i) m m3ct*¹²
Sty-r3, born of *K3(i) m m3ct*



K3(i) m m3ct irt. n Hp w
K3(i) m m3ct, born of *Hp w*



sš nḥw ir. n K3(i) m m3ct
The scribe, *nḥw*, born of *K3(i) m m3ct*



sš ḥsb Snb K3(i) m m3ct
The scribe of accounts, *Snb*,^(J) *K3(i) m m3ct*



*imy-r pr Sbk-nḥt*¹³ *ḥnms ir. n Hp w*
The overseer of the house/steward, *Sbk-nḥt*, the friend,^(K) born of^(L) *Hp w*

Fourth Register



fty 3m ir. n Ḥtpt
The brewer, *3m*,¹⁴ born of *Ḥtpt*¹⁵



*sn.f Sbk-nḥt*¹⁶

¹¹ *PN* 1935: 322, no. 20.

¹² *PN* 1935: 339, no. 19.

¹³ FRANKE 1984: 340, Dossier Nr. 566 b.

¹⁴ MOURAD 2015: 141.

¹⁵ MOURAD 2015: 147.

¹⁶ *PN* 1935: 304, no 15 (or *nḥt-sbk*). The name *Sbk-nḥt* “Sobek is strong” is well-documented in private monuments. Ilin-Tomich mentions 327 examples of the name, most of which date to the 12th and 13th Dynasties. The use of *Sbk-nḥt* may allude to the family’s perception of the significance of the crocodile god Sobek, who was revered mostly in

His brother, *Sbk-nḥt*



sn.f imy-r šn^c(w) Sbk-nḥt

His brother, the overseer of the storehouse, *Sbk-nḥt*



iry-ḥt n pr-ḥd Mmw¹⁷

The hall-keeper of the treasury, *Mmw*



imy-r rwyt Nḥty¹⁸

The overseer of the gateway, *Nḥty*



wb3^(M) Imny¹⁹

The butler/cupbearer, *Imny*



wb3 Rn.f ḥnh²⁰

The butler/cupbearer, *Rn.f ḥnh^(N)*



imy-r šn^c(w) Skr ir. n Sbk

The overseer of the storehouse, *Skr*, born of *Sbk*



the Faiyum region. Sobek's worship was most likely motivated by fear of the crocodile and its association with the Nile. Sobek's significance throughout the Middle Kingdom might be attributed to the growing importance of the Faiyum in Egyptian political and economic life starting from Senwosret I's reign (when El-Lisht was the capital), and the god's prominence expanded particularly around the end of the 12th Dynasty. For more information, see BROVARSKI 1984: cols. 995-1000; EL-WESHAHY & EL-ELIMI 2019: 2-12; <https://pnm.uni-mainz.de/5/name/347#353>.

¹⁷ PN 1935: 149, no. 27; MOURAD 2015: 27.

¹⁸ PN 1935: 212, no. 1.

¹⁹ PN 1935: 31, no. 13; FRANKE 1984: 91, Dossier Nr. 93 b; MOURAD 2015: 143.

²⁰ PN 1935: 223, no. 6; FRANKE 1984: 244, Dossier Nr. 379 b. *Rn.f ḥnh* means "his name is alive."

*iry-ᵗ Imny ir. n ʕm ʕi*²¹




The hall-keeper, *Imny*, born of *ʕm ʕi*.^(O)



*sꜥ Iii*²² *ir Hbt*²³ *hnmsw*

The scribe *Iii*, born (of) *Hbt*,^(P) friends.

COMMENTARY ON THE INSCRIPTIONS

- A. The phrase *ḥtp-di-nswt* was typically written in the sequence *nswt + ḥtp + di* between the Old Kingdom and the end of the 13th Dynasty, thus throughout the entire duration of the Middle Kingdom.²⁴
- B. The first recorded attestation of the symbol Q2  (rather than Q1 ) dates back to the reign of Amenemhat IV.²⁵ All further instances are believed to have occurred after the 12th Dynasty, as the symbol Q1 was commonly used prior.
- C. Osiris' epithets are noteworthy mostly because they evolved with each era. In the 11th Dynasty, the commonly used epithets were *nb ddw*, *ḥnty-imntyw* and *nb ʕbdw*. Under Senwosret I's rule (12th Dynasty), the epithet *ntr-ʕ*, which is included on CG 20296, was added. All titles, except for *ḥnty-imntyw*, were frequently dropped under Senwosret III's reign.²⁶
- D. The appearance of the prospective *di.f* "may he give" prior to the *prt-ḥrw* was another dating criterion that pointed to the 12th Dynasty or later. During the 11th Dynasty, *prt-ḥrw* "an invocation offering" was used alone.²⁷
- E. According to Ilin-Tomich, the spelling of the terms  "alabaster and garments" as two distinct "semi-ligatured signs" without extra vertical lines first appeared under the reign of Senwosret III. Thus, such spelling can be used as a strong criterion to place CG 20296 in the 12th Dynasty.²⁸
- F. The son of the stela's owner is called *S-n-wsrt Iw-nfr*.²⁹ This practice of using a second name or surname was common in the Middle Kingdom.³⁰ According to Vernus, denominations composed of two juxtaposed proper names appear in the Middle Kingdom, specifically during the second half of the 12th Dynasty.³¹

²¹ *PN* 1935: 59, no. 12 the name can be read as either only *ʕi* or as *ʕm-ʕi* together.

²² *PN* 1935: 8, no. 8.

²³ *PN* 1935: 268, no. 17.

²⁴ ILIN-TOMICH 2017: 14; FRANKE 2003: 54; VERNUS 1991: 141-152.

²⁵ ILIN-TOMICH 2017: 8.

²⁶ BENNETT 1941: 78, 80; OBSOMER 1993: 186.




²⁷ OBSOMER 1993: 169.

²⁸ ILIN-TOMICH 2017: 21-22. He specifies a total of 28 attestations of "alabaster and garments" in the 12th Dynasty.

²⁹ VERNUS 1986: 47, no 207.

³⁰ VERNUS 1972: 193.

³¹ VERNUS 1972: 193.

- G. The spelling order of the name *Tti* in CG 20296 is problematic. The authors agree with Lange and Schäfer that the proper order of writing the name is .³² However, it seems that the scribe switched the first two letters on the stela, as the *t* is supposed to be the first letter rather than the second. The third letter of the name (Gardiner, sign list U33) is unclear on the stela or written incorrectly. In addition, the (*n*) *in* (*ir.n*), which directly precedes the name, is written in a strange way, different from other writings of *n* throughout the stela.
- H. The use of the filiation formula *ir.n mwt.f* without mentioning the name of the mother was documented on a group of private monuments in the Middle Kingdom. Ilin-Tomich cites and assigns 16 cases to the Memphis-Faiyum region, among which is CG 20296. Based on his analysis, only four examples date to the 13th Dynasty, while all the rest date to the late 12th Dynasty. Thus, this formula can be used as a strong dating criterion when grouped with other evidence.³³
- I. The scribe wrote the name *Hpw* in four different ways across the stela. The correct writing is that on the second register within the caption above the seated woman on the far right . The second spelling, in which the sign is slightly rotated towards the right, is found on the left side of the third line of the first register. The third spelling, with a slight rotation in the left direction, is above the second woman on the third register. The final spelling is on the right of the third register, in which *Hpw* is only written as .
- J. The scribe was supposed to write *ir.n* after *Snb* to ensure parallelism with the other inscriptions throughout the stela.
- K. In their detailed discussion of the term *hnms*, Satzinger and Stefanović explain that it can symbolically carry a variety of interpretations, such as companion, coworker, confident, and possibly even lover.³⁴ The original meaning of the root *hnm* is “to treat with affection and love.”³⁵ According to Kasparian, the term *hnms* which clearly takes on the meaning of “friend, companion” on the funerary stelae of the Middle Kingdom, was also attested in textual compositions, whether epistolary documentation, literary texts or those of a funerary nature.³⁶ Based on their titles, it may be assumed that some of the *hnmsw* were colleagues of the monument’s benefactor.³⁷
- L. The *Catalogue Général* cites the writing *ir.n*, despite the visibility of traces of the preposition *n* due to the damage of the stela.³⁸ However, it is logical to assume that the full term is *ir.n*, given its precedence to the mother’s name.

³² LANGE & SCHÄFER 1902: 309.

³³ ILIN-TOMIC 2017: 74-75, table 35.




³⁴ SATZINGER & STEFANOVIĆ 2012: 346.

³⁵ SATZINGER & STEFANOVIĆ 2012: 346.

³⁶ KASPARIAN 2003: 469-470.

³⁷ FRANKE 1983: 355-357, 360.

³⁸ LANGE & SCHÄFER 1902: 309.

- M. The word *wb3* that the scribe uses here is usually written with the drill sign  (Gardiner, sign list U26). However, the sign used here is not the drill but instead the sign , denoting *wb3* “to open,” which is written  (Gardiner, sign list N46).
- N. According to Ilin-Tomich, the names *Rn.f ʿnh* and *Htpt* potentially suggest a northern Upper Egyptian or Lower Egyptian origin of the individuals mentioned on the stela.³⁹
- O. Usually, the primary way to identify Asiatics in Egyptian documents was to write the word *3m* before the individual’s name. According to Posener, it is impossible to distinguish between Asiatics who have Egyptian names and Egyptians if the terms *3m* or *3mt* are removed.⁴⁰ The late 12th and 13th Dynasties are when the majority of people identified as *3m* are documented. According to Mourad, only 10 names out of more than 80 examples of Asiatic people may be Semitic in origin.⁴¹ She places the name *ʿi* among these ten examples. The remaining names were either Egyptian or simply *3m*.⁴² The *3mw* were part of the common Egyptian household, who could work as hall-keepers or brewers as mentioned in CG 20296.⁴³ The strongest proof that Asiatics were not seen negatively by Egyptians, but rather as members of the Egyptian community is the fact that they were listed among the households.⁴⁴
- P. According to Ilin-Tomich, this name can be read as *Nhbt*. Based on the stela’s state of preservation, there is seemingly an *r* rather than an *n* after *ir*. This is most likely a scribal error as the *r* does not fit in the translation. Thus, the authors agree with Ilin-Tomich’s suggestion that after the eyes sign, we are supposed to find an *n* not *r*. However, it is possible that the *n* would be placed here to create a parallel with the other examples on the stela, such as *ir.n* or *irt.n*. In such case, the name in question would be *Hbt* as mentioned by Ranke and not *Nhbt* as proposed.⁴⁵

COMMENTARY ON THE LAYOUT

- The *wḏ3t*-eyes are thought to have first appeared on the round top of private stelae during the reign of Senwosret III.⁴⁶ In most instances, stelae from the 12th Dynasty with the *wḏ3t*-eyes had no other additional symbols in the lunette.⁴⁷ The eyes portrayed here are the classic form of the *wḏ3t*, which were the only ones utilized

³⁹ ILIN-TOMICH 2017: 65, 73, 81.

⁴⁰ POSENER 1957: 151, 155-156.

⁴¹ MOURAD 2015: I, 168, fn. 1168, 169; II, 27-28, CG 20296 and Rio de Janeiro 627 (table 14).

⁴² MOURAD 2015: I, 168, fn. 1168.

⁴³ MOURAD 2015: I, 169.



⁴⁴ MOURAD 2013: 41-42, 48, no. 3.

⁴⁵ PN 1935: 268, no. 17. For the name, see <https://pnm.uni-mainz.de/5/name/4704#10808>.

⁴⁶ ILIN-TOMICH 2011: 21.

⁴⁷ HÖLZL 1992: 285-287.

during that period. CG 20296 is one of nine examples cited by Ilin-Tomich with the eyes as the only decoration used.⁴⁸

- Based on his thorough research, Ilin-Tomich assigns 23 stelae to the 12th Dynasty MFR (Memphis-Faiyum region) workshop 1, including CG 20296. Some distinctive characteristics of this workshop that are present on our stela include: a rectangle-topped table; an ox head below the table; *šs mnht*⁴⁹ possessing the form ; supplementary female figures kneeling with one raised knee; the lack of flywhisks or lotus-blossoms carried by the owner; long male wigs totally enclosing the ears; and Osiris's name written in horizontal line as ⁵⁰.
- As for the inscriptions on CG 20296, it is clear that the *wḏ3t*-eyes and the three lines below the lunette are better in quality than the rest of the stela. As previously mentioned, the name *Hpw* along with the letters *w* and *n* are written differently throughout the stela. There could potentially have been two scribes working on this piece, one of whom is more talented than the other.
- The positioning of the three lines of hieroglyphs in the first register is a little bit unusual, given their start in the middle of the line, rather than the right or left sides as usual. The scribe finished the three halves on the left side then continued to the right without drawing a separating line, which is not a common arrangement. Typically, inscriptions on an upper register can be divided into two parts if there is some kind of symmetry between the hieroglyphs or if each side designates the person depicted below it.⁵¹
- Another abnormal feature on CG 20296 is the inclusion of his wife's name and affiliation in the inscriptions beside Seneb's head.⁵² Typically, one would expect to find the wife depicted, with such a caption placed next to her head rather than that of Seneb. This could have been a scribal error or driven by a hurry to finish the stela.
- The person facing Seneb in the first register is portrayed without any indication of the relationship between them. According to Kasparian, the woman in the right of the upper register with a name above her, entitled *nbt pr Hpw*, is Seneb's mother.⁵³ This woman is preceded by a man who also faces Seneb and is called *Hftn*. According to Kasparian, *Hftn* is Seneb's brother whose portrayal is uncommon but not exceptional.⁵⁴ The authors agree with Kasparian that this figure is most likely his brother, but it is curious that no affiliation like brother or son were used.

⁴⁸ ILIN-TOMICH 2017: 5, 32.

⁴⁹ Workshop 1 uses a form, which has *šs* partially positioned between the two poles of *mnht*, that only emerges in the middle to late 12th Dynasty. See ILIN-TOMICH 2017: 80-81.

⁵⁰ ILIN-TOMICH 2017: 80-81; ILIN-TOMICH 2015: 148-149, 160, 162, tables 5-6 and 9.

⁵¹ For comparable examples, see FRANKE 2013: pl. 8 (EA 209); KITCHEN 1990: II, 45, no. 21 Karu Inv. 680; SIMPSON 1974: 17 (pl. 16, ANOC 7.2: Leiden V, 108), 21 (pl. 84, ANOC 63.1-Oxford Q. C. 1111).

⁵² For a discussion of the wife's position in the 11th and 12th Dynasties, see PFLÜGER 1947: 128-129.

⁵³ KASPARIAN 2003: 87.

⁵⁴ KASPARIAN 2003: 87.

COMMENTS ON THE TITLES

imy-r hntyw-š “overseer of the attendants”

Even though the *hntyw-š* was among the social category that received particular attention by several scholars, there is an ongoing debate around its translations and interpretations. The title appears from the Old Kingdom up to the 18th Dynasty.⁵⁵ It consists of the *nisba*-adjective from the preposition *hnt*, which means “at the head of,”⁵⁶ and the word *š*; the combined title *hntyw-š* means “foremost one of an *š*.” The core issue with the title revolves around the understanding and translation of the term *š*.

The *hntyw-š* have long been considered as simple peasants or royal sharecroppers endowed with some privileges. Baud proposes the translation of “un lieu où s’exerçait une activité” or “un lieu de production” for any industry involved, which does not rule out agriculture.⁵⁷ According to Adams, the conventional meaning of the sign *š* is probably “some type of bounded area.” As a result, we are compelled to translate the entire title literally as “foremost one of a bounded area.” Posener-Kriéger translates it as “employé du temple,” and she rejected the reading of *hntyw-š* as a sharecropper of the king’s property, finding it impossible to employ the word “gardener” before the New Kingdom.⁵⁸ For Andrassy, the holders of the title were among the basic categories of the temple staff. She adds that it makes sense to use the sacred “grove” instead of “garden” and to translate *hntyw-š* as “responsible for the (temple) grove.”⁵⁹

Stadelmann used a slightly different interpretation, claiming that in the Old Kingdom, the *hntyw-š* signified a class of people, namely the inhabitants of pyramid towns, rather than an occupation.⁶⁰ Roth identifies two main variants of the title: *hntyw-š* of the palace and *hntyw-š* of the mortuary temple.⁶¹ She suggests that the *hntyw-š* is translated as “attendant” of the king, whether during life as a *hnty-š pr-3* or in death as a *hnty-š* of a pyramid complex.⁶² The authors find the translation to “attendant” compelling, thus aligning with the full title interpretation “the overseer of the attendants.”⁶³

⁵⁵ ADAMS 2003: 1, 3-15. For more information, see KÜLLMER 2007: 36-39.

⁵⁶ ADAMS 2003: 79-83.

⁵⁷ BAUD 1996: 14.

⁵⁸ ADAMS 2003: 85; POSENER-KRIÉGER 1976: 577-581; BOGDANOV 2019: 135.

⁵⁹ SCHNEIDER 2003: 274; WARD 1982: 40, no. 304; HANNIG 2006a: II, 1913. According to Schneider, the title could be translated as “Vorsteher der für den (Tempel) Hain Zustandigen zu übersetzen.” Helck translates it as “Vorsteher der Gärten,” whereas Ward reads it as “overseer of tenant farmers.”

⁶⁰ STADELMANN 1981: 153-154; ADAMS 2003: 7-8.

⁶¹ ROTH 1991b: 177-178; ADAMS 2003: 63-70; BAUD 1996: 13-16.

⁶² ADAMS 2003: 10-11; BOGDANOV 2019: 133.



⁶³ ROTH 1991a: 81. According to Roth, the *hntyw-š* probably started as low-level officials in both the royal palace and the royal funerary temples. In certain cases, they were responsible for farming the land that provided their income. The prestige associated with working in the royal funerary cult was significant and thus the *hntyw-š* who served in these temples were presumably elevated in status.

šḥ ḥsb “scribe of accounts”

Ward translates the title as “scribe of reckoning,” whereas Hannig translates it as “Schreiber der Zählung.”⁶⁴ The Arabic verb *حسب* which means to “count, reckon” is derived from the Egyptian verb *ḥsb*, which provides a clear indication of the numerical nature of the holder’s occupation. Loffet discusses in detail the two verbs *ḥsb* and *ip*, claiming that *ip* was used in accounting contexts such as counting vessels, unguents, cereal, whereas *ḥsb* was directly related to the agricultural sector, particularly with regard to the breeders of cattle and shepherds.⁶⁵ In the Old Kingdom, the term *ip*, rather than *ḥsb*, was used as a noun to denote the function of accountant or scribe-accountant. The root *ḥsb* became more linguistically significant during the Middle Kingdom and was used frequently in a large number of contexts later in the New Kingdom.⁶⁶

ḥty “brewer”

According to Hannig, *ḥty* means “Braucher,” and Ward also translates it as “brewer.”⁶⁷ There is a variation in the term used for brewers: *ḥtw* was typically used in both the Old and New Kingdoms, whereas *ḥty* is typically found in the Middle Kingdom writings.⁶⁸

As a determinative, the kneading brewer seen from the side is usually found in older inscriptions . Since the Middle Kingdom, however, the hieroglyph has also appeared  (the same sign used in CG 20296 to indicate the job), which was probably intended to characterize the brewer crushing the brewing bread with his feet in the vat.⁶⁹ This crushing was newly introduced during this period, at least in depictions of brewers on monuments. According to Schneider, we encounter several Asiatics who worked as brewers. He alludes to many examples, among which is the Asiatic brewer *ḥty ʿm*, son of *Htpt* in CG 20296.⁷⁰

imy-r šn^c(w) “overseer of the storehouse”

Hannig translates the title as “Vorsteher des Lagerhauses,” which was the same as Ward’s translation “overseer of a storehouse.”⁷¹ Andrassy conducted the most detailed study on the *šn^c* in the Old Kingdom, indicating that it was “an organization linked with the processing of agricultural goods (storage, processing and distribution)” during this period.⁷² Quirke states that during the Middle Kingdom, “the *šn^c* is a location where food supplies are stored and prepared” before being transported to the palace or to other areas

⁶⁴ WARD 1982: 162, no. 1405; HANNIG 2006a: I, 233.

⁶⁵ LOFFET 2000: 580-581.

⁶⁶ LOFFET 2000: 581.

⁶⁷ HANNIG 2006a: I, 501 and he mentions CG 20296; WARD 1982: 73, no. 595.

⁶⁸ HANNIG 2006b: 151, 177; FRANKE 2013: 109.

⁶⁹ HELCK 1971: 95, 97-98.

⁷⁰ SCHNEIDER 2003: 262.

⁷¹ HANNIG 2006a: I, 233; WARD 1982: 49, no. 381.

⁷² SMITH 2010: 67; ANDRÁSSY 1993: 22.

and recipients.⁷³ According to Bardoňová, the crucial research on the Middle Kingdom emphasizes the facility's potential for production, as opposed to the studies on Old Kingdom *šn^c* that emphasize their dual role of production and storage.⁷⁴

The overseer of the *šn^c* served as the head of the “general administration” that managed the entity's daily operations, with the help of the scribe of the *šn^c* who would be directly beneath him in hierarchy.⁷⁵ A *šn^c* was typically divided into a number of departments associated with different activities (such as making beer or bread, managing livestock, etc.). Each of these departments was led by an *iry-^ct*, who oversaw the laborers, resources, and materials. The cupbearers (*wdpw*), who delivered the finished goods to the temple's storehouses for distribution, worked beneath the department heads. At the bottom of the organizational hierarchy of the *šn^c* were the assistants and lastly the laborers, who were the real producers of the goods.⁷⁶

imy-r rwyt “overseer of the gateway”

Quirke translates the title as “overseer of the portal,” whereas Grajetzki reads it as “overseer of the gateway.”⁷⁷ Ward prefers “overseer of a law-court (hall),” and Hannig also translates it as “Vorsteher des Halle.”⁷⁸ Thill highlights the rarity of the title and the variation in its translations, with notions of justice, law, mediation and guard, and sentinel.⁷⁹

The title “*is therefore one of the titles which entered the royal court in the Middle Kingdom via the provincial administration of the First Intermediate Period.*”⁸⁰ Grajetzki records the title's earlier appearance on the estates of provincial governors in the late Old and early Middle Kingdoms, as well as its use at the king's court between the late 11th and mid-12th Dynasties.⁸¹

It is possible that ranking titles were not always associated with the office of *imy-r rwyt*, as some holders were extremely powerful officials with the highest-ranking titles, while other holders lacked any ranking titles.⁸² Additionally, it is difficult to assemble even the haziest image of these officials' role. According to Grajetzki, Dagi from the 11th Dynasty (reign of Mentuhotep II) was an overseer of the gateway before being promoted to a vizier. There is also evidence suggesting that the office had ties with the palace's economic management.⁸³ However, the Middle Kingdom accounts indicate that the overseer of the gateway was more

⁷³ QUIRKE 2004: 65.

⁷⁴ BARDOŇOVÁ 2019: 335.

⁷⁵ SMITH 2010: 364-365; BARDOŇOVÁ 2019: 336, 343.

⁷⁶ SMITH 2010: 364-365, fig. 173, 403-404.

⁷⁷ For more information, see QUIRKE 2004: 31; GRAJETZKI 2009: 94.

⁷⁸ WARD 1982: 33, no. 236; HANNIG 2006b: 492.

⁷⁹ THILL 2016: 290-291.

⁸⁰ GRAJETZKI 2009: 94.

⁸¹ GRAJETZKI 2013: 253-254; GRAJETZKI 2009: 94.

⁸² GRAJETZKI 2013: 253.

⁸³ GRAJETZKI 2013: 253.

active in building projects and expeditions. Grajetzki cites 6 holders of the title from the Middle Kingdom, and he indicates that the position had become quite influential in the royal court during the mid-12th Dynasty.⁸⁴

iry-ꜥt n pr-ḥd “hall-keeper of the treasury”

The full title can be divided into two parts: *iry-ꜥt* and *pr-ḥd*. The first part consists of *iry* and the noun ꜥt, meaning “chamber” or “department.” The literary translation is “the one which is related to the department.”⁸⁵ The two terms of the title *iry-ꜥt* and *pr-ḥd* form a direct genitive that means “the hall-keeper of the treasury.” The title *iry-ꜥt* dates back to Amenemhat II and appear to have become widely used throughout Egypt onwards.⁸⁶ The attestations are multiplied during the second half of the 12th Dynasty.⁸⁷

The exact functions of the title’s holder are unclear. One existing example implies that those who hold the title might be related to clothing, but the exact job cannot be determined. The *iry-ꜥt n pr-ḥd* took part in expeditions particularly in Sinai. Other texts mention that these officers were occasionally in charge of transporting the minerals to the palace from the desert mines.⁸⁸ The hall-keeper oversaw the production and storage units for commodities. This title is rarely found in inscriptions originating outside of Egypt, with domestic examples in Sinai and Wadi El-Hudi and one documentation found in Nubia.⁸⁹

wb3 “butler, cupbearer”

Ward translates the title as “butler,” whereas Hannig interprets it as “Mundschenk, Aufwärter, Truchsess.”⁹⁰ Traditionally, Egyptologists who have studied various periods have rendered the two terms *wdpw* and *wb3* as “butler,” “cupbearer,” “l’échanson,” and “Truchsess.”⁹¹ It is evident from numerous sources that the primary roles of *wdpw* and *wb3* are offering and serving.⁹² The two titles’ writing forms can be differentiated mainly by their determinatives and complements.⁹³ Most of the time, at least one sign—such as the drill, the phonetic complement b, or the linen band—indicates the reading for the word *wb3* rather than that of *wdpw*.

Despite their similar meaning and usage, the words “*wb3*” and “*wdpw*” have distinct meanings and are not interchangeable.⁹⁴ *wdpw* emerged first, with its presence detected as early as the Old Kingdom meaning “(domestic) servant, cellarman, cook, sewer,

⁸⁴ GRAJETZKI 2000: 142.

⁸⁵ QUIRKE 1986: 112; MAHFOUZ 2008: 270.

⁸⁶ GRAJETZKI 2001: 55-56.

⁸⁷ MAHFOUZ 2008: 270.

⁸⁸ DIEGO ESPINEL 2005: 62-64.

⁸⁹ DIEGO ESPINEL 2005: 64.

⁹⁰ WARD 1982: 84-85, no. 702; HANNIG 2006a: I, 647.

⁹¹ GREGERSEN 2007: 839.

⁹² GREGERSEN 2007: 842-843, table 3.

⁹³ BARTOS 2023: 21; GREGERSEN 2007: 839-842.

⁹⁴ BARTOS 2023: 21.

cupbearer.”⁹⁵ During this time, the title *wb3* existed as either the verb “to open” or the feminine noun *wb3t* (*wb3yt*) meaning “maidservant.”⁹⁶ Even though *wdpw* remained more common in the Middle Kingdom, *wb3* was also present with an evolved definition. According to Gregersen, the functions of *wb3* in the Middle Kingdom include offering-bearing, serving and brewing.⁹⁷ Quirke defines the *wb3* as a “food bearer,” possibly of a lower status than *wdpw*, whereas Grajetzki and Quirke claim that the original purpose of the *wdpw* “cupbearer” was to transport food from the various preparation rooms to the dining area.⁹⁸ Helck, conversely implies that the hierarchy was reversed, with the *wdpw* performing the labor in the food chambers under the direction of the *wb3*.⁹⁹

Ninety funerary stelae, mostly originating from Abydos, provide the core writings of *wb3* and *wdpw*.¹⁰⁰ *wdpw* appeared more frequently than *wb3* (120 and 44 occurrences respectively), yet *wb3* had more significantly wide variations in writing than *wdpw* (20 and 15 variations respectively).¹⁰¹ On the stelae, the titles “*wb3*” and “*wdpw*” are seldom used with an affiliation to an individual or to the epithet “justified” (*m3c-hrw*).¹⁰² Similarly, in CG 20296, the two individuals entitled *wb3* have unclear relationships to Seneb and his family.

RELEVANT FAMILIAL MONUMENTS

The Middle Kingdom magnificent stela Rio Inv. 627 is owned by Seneb’s son, Sesostris-Iunefer, who also dedicated stela CG 20296 to his father. Both stelae were found by Mariette’s workers in the northern cemetery at Abydos, likely within a votive chapel close to the god Osiris’ processional route.¹⁰³ According to Kitchen, this chapel would have been built for its owners to symbolically benefit from the large festival procession that passed in front of them on its path to Osiris’ tomb. Kitchen also indicates that this chapel might have housed a third stela, which is now missing.¹⁰⁴

On the Rio stela, the royal prenomen of King Senwosret III (*h^ci k3w R^c*) was inscribed at the top of the lunette.¹⁰⁵ The names of Sesostris-Iunefer’s family members and friends, including his father Seneb, are provided across both CG 20296 and the Rio Stela; however, no information is repeated across the two monuments. Instead, they complement each other to provide a full picture of the family.

⁹⁵ BARTOS 2023: 22.

⁹⁶ BARTOS 2017: 263.

⁹⁷ GREGERSEN 2007: 842-844.

⁹⁸ QUIRKE 2004: 66; GRAJETZKI 2013: 245; BARTOS 2023: 38.

⁹⁹ HELCK 1958: 257.

¹⁰⁰ BARTOS 2017: 268-269; BARTOS 2023: 35-36.

¹⁰¹ BARTOS 2023: 36, table 5 for the most distinct variations in writing.

¹⁰² BARTOS 2017: 270; BARTOS 2023: 37.

¹⁰³ KITCHEN 1990: I, 7, 17, 19.

¹⁰⁴ KITCHEN 1990: I, 19.

¹⁰⁵ KITCHEN 1990: I, 15, II, pls. 1-2.

Other monuments that are attributed to Sesostris-Iunefer include two limestone canopic jars that have lids with human heads: one preserved in the Petrie Museum in London (UC 16027)¹⁰⁶ and the second in Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek Art Museum in Copenhagen (Inv. ÆIN 1385).¹⁰⁷ On both jars, the name and title *imy-r st Tw-nfr* is engraved. Both of them were discovered in his tomb no. 57 at Hawara in an old cemetery close to Amenemhat III's pyramid. It is evident that Sesostris-Iunefer worked under the two kings, Senwosret III and Amenemhat III. Additionally, an elegant limestone *shabti* was also discovered at Hawara.¹⁰⁸

GENEALOGY

[FIG. 3]

Nelson-Hurst briefly discussed in her thesis the genealogy of CG 20296 and Rio Inv. 627. While these two stelae feature Seneb's extensive and intricate family, friends, and servants, there are multiple individuals with unclear relationships to the owners, such as *Skr*, *Sbk*, *Mmw*, *Rn.f^cnh*, *Imny*, and *Nhty*.¹⁰⁹

The titles on the stela display an intriguing difference in degree of precision. For instance, some individuals were only described with the title overseer of the house (*imy-r pr*) without additional details, while others had more specific titles such as hall-keeper of the treasury (*iry-^ct n pr-hd*). This difference is potentially indicative of the broader shift from less particular titles in the early Middle Kingdom to more specific titles in the late Middle Kingdom.¹¹⁰

According to their titles and those of their colleagues, the family of Seneb and Sesostris-Iunefer seemingly held numerous roles in the field of food storage and accounting, most likely in a temple environment. Given the number of involved individuals, the family's scope of influence within the field was seemingly substantial.

Seneb had two brothers who held the titles *imy-r pr* and *imy-r sn^c*. While their children occupied slightly lower-level jobs within the same industry, Seneb and his siblings held the family's higher-level positions. It is possible that the positions held by their older relatives enabled the younger generation's start in the administration.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁶ For the two canopic jars, see PETRIE, WAINWRIGHT & MACKAY 1912: 36, pl. XXXI; BAGH 2011: 112, figs. 3.30 and 3.31; BOURRIAU 1988: 95-96, no. 77; SCHNEIDER 1977: 178-179; KITCHEN 1990: II, pl. 108 A. https://www.ucl.ac.uk/museums-static/digitalegypt/hawara1/archive/uc16027_1.jpg

¹⁰⁷ MOGENSEN 1930: 73 (A 569), pl. LXXIII.

<https://gulbenkian.pt/museu/en/agenda/exhibition-visiting-artwork-canopic-jar-of-iunefer/>

¹⁰⁸ For the inscription of the figure, see KITCHEN 1990: I, 19.

<https://pnm.uni-mainz.de/5/inscription/8190>

¹⁰⁹ NELSON-HURST 2011: 283-287, figs. 58-59; KITCHEN 1990: I, 19-20; MILLARD 2015: 82-83.

¹¹⁰ NELSON-HURST 2011: 283-285.

¹¹¹ NELSON-HURST 2011: 285.

CONCLUSIONS

Despite previously scholarly discussions on CG 20296's inscriptions and genealogy, this paper provides the first photo and detailed commentary on the stela. CG 20296 is one of the few stelae that records names of Semitic origin, and it also contains some interesting titles such as *imy-r hntyw-š, sš hsb, fty, iry-ṯ n pr-ḥd, wb3, imy-r rwyṯ, imy-r šnṯ* along with the term *hnms* meaning "friend."

The epigraphical, grammatical and iconographical characteristics of the stela, such as the order of the *ḥtp-di-nswt* formula, the use of the *w3dt*-eyes only with no other symbol, the use of Q1, *mnḥt* term with specific writing, the use of the prospective *di.f*, along with the filiation formula *ir.n mwt.f* all allude to the 12th Dynasty. Based on the presence of Senwosret III's cartouche on the Rio de Janeiro stela 627 (belonging to Seneb's son), it is likely that CG 20296 also dates to this specific reign in the 12th Dynasty.

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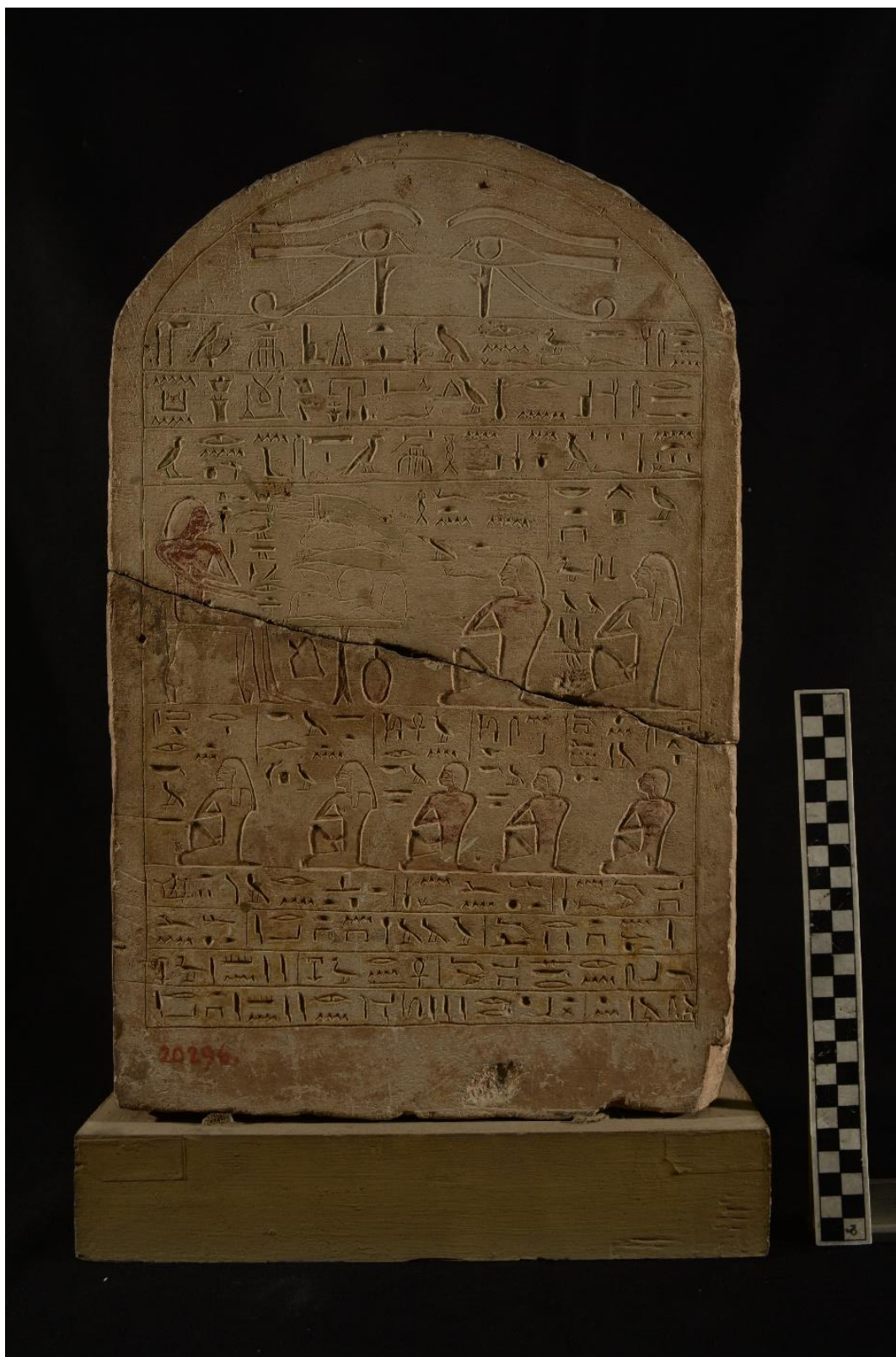


Fig. 1: Stela CG 20296 © the Grand Egyptian Museum in Cairo.

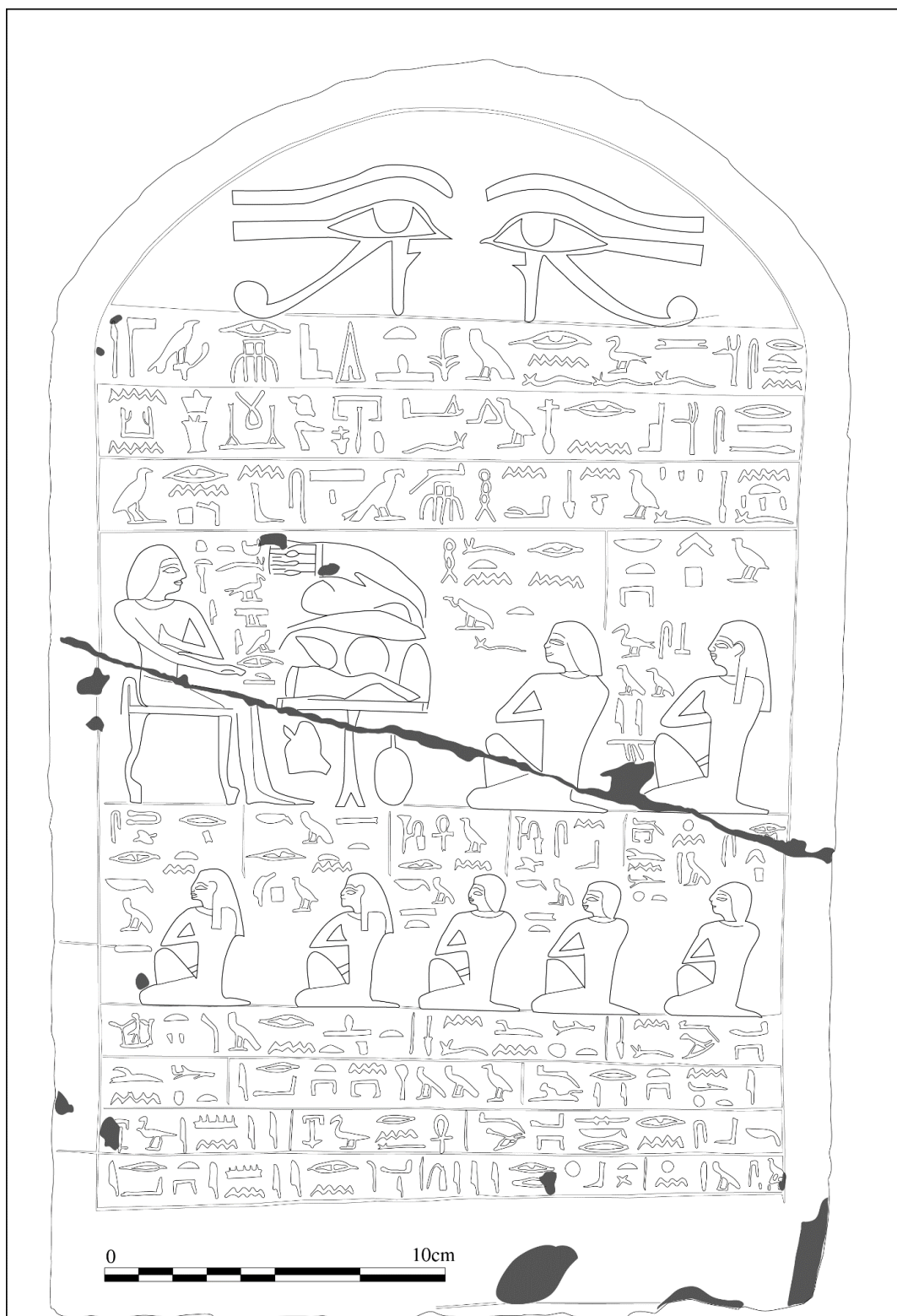


Fig. 2: Facsimile of the stela CG 20296. Drawing by WALID EL-SAYED.

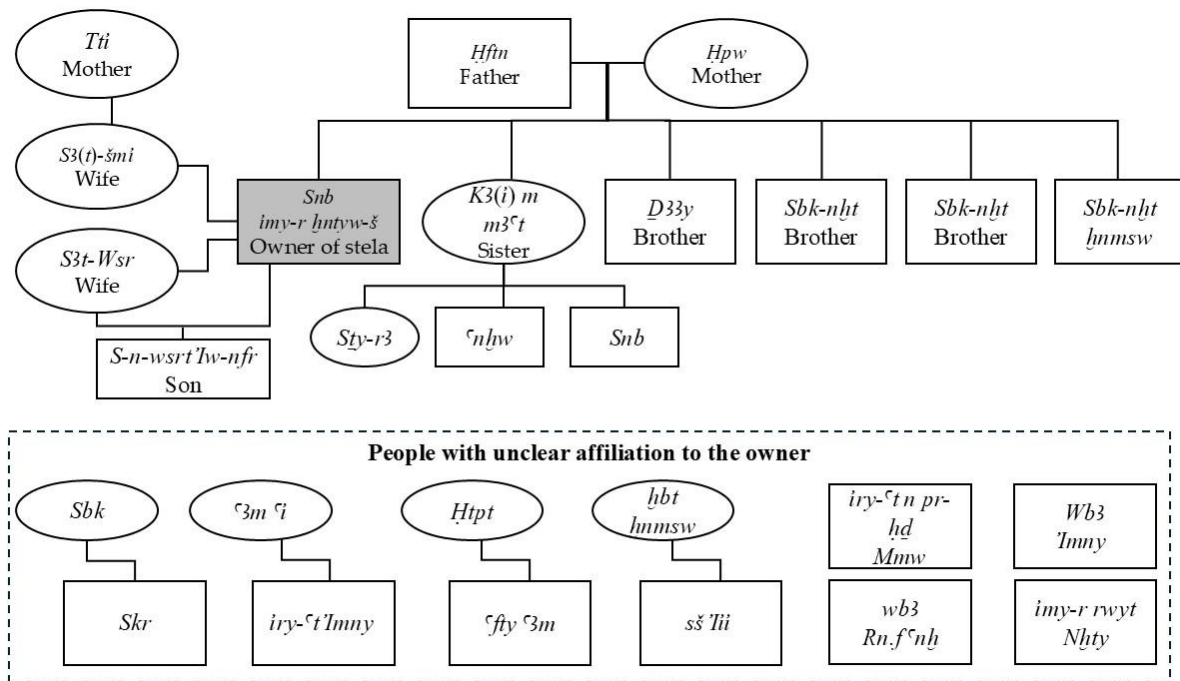


Fig. 3: Genealogy of CG 20296.

لوحة من الدولة الوسطى لسنب (CG 20296/GEM 14689)

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الملخص العربي

تتناول هذه المقالة بالتفصيل لوحة سنب، المحفوظة حاليًا في مخازن المتحف المصري الكبير، والتي تحمل رقم CG 20296/GEM 14689. تم اكتشاف اللوحة من قبل عمال ماريبت في المقبرة الشمالية في أبيدوس. وهي تنتمي إلى *imy-r hntyw-š* وقد صنعها ابنه سنوسرت إيونفر. تناقش اللوحة بعض الألقاب المهمة وهي *imy-r hntyw-š*، *š* تشير اللوحة أيضًا إلى شخص آسيوي يحمل اسمًا من أصل سامي. وتعتبر لوحة CG 20296 استكمالًا للوحة ريو 627 (التي يمتلكها ابنه سنوسرت إيونفر) بشكل كبير حيث أنها تمنح صورة أكثر كمالاً على سلسلة نسب العائلة (التي تتضمن الأقارب والمعارف) دون تكرار أسماء الأفراد أنفسهم. من الممكن تأريخ اللوحة CG 20296 إلى الأسرة الثانية عشرة وتحديدًا إلى عهد سنوسرت الثالث، بناءً على سمات اللوحة من حيث الشكل العام والنصوص إلى جانب وجود خرطوش الملك سنوسرت الثالث على لوحة ريو. يصف البحث اللوحة ويقدم تعليقًا على نقوشها ويفحص ألقاب وأنساب عائلة سنب.

الكلمات الدالة: ابيدوس - CG 20296 - الأسرة الثانية عشرة - *imy-r hntyw-š* - سنب - سنوسرت إيونفر - لوحة.