



A Funerary Late Period Stela of the Divine Father Psmatik from the Imhotep Museum at Saqqara

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Stela; Late Period; Psmatik; funerary; Divine Father; Imhotep Museum.

(IJTHS), O6U

Vol. 3, No. 2, October
2022,
pp. 118- 130

Abstract

This paper aims at publishing a private round-topped limestone stela of Psmatik. It is currently on display at Imhotep Museum, Saqqara. It is registered under n° SQ. CU. 149. It was discovered by the excavation team of Cairo University at Saqqara. Fortunately, the stela is in a very good state of preservation. It measures 33.5 cm in height and 23.5 in width. It belongs to the god father Psmatik who was probably a priest lived during the reign of King Necho II during the 26th Dynasty, Saite Period. The stela is divided into two parts; the upper part is inscribed with the *htp dj nsw* formula. It shows Psmatik sitting in front of an offering table together with two servants. As for the lower part, it carries Hieroglyphic inscriptions written in eight horizontal lines reading from right to left. It carries the name of King Necho II written within a cartouche. This research deals with publishing the stela, in addition to providing dates and textual analysis.

General Description

Date: reign of *Whm-ib-Rc*, 26th Dynasty, Saite Period, Late Period.

Measurements: 33.5 *23.5

Provenance: Saqqara

It is limestone round-topped funerary stela.¹ There is another funerary stela of Psmatik in Berlin Musuem.²

The representations and inscriptions over it are incised. It bears no traces of colors. It is divided into two parts; the upper part is the lunette which is inscribed with the *htp dj nsw* formula. It carries a representation of Psmatik sitting in front of an offering table together with two servants. The lower part bears eight lines of inscriptions written in hieroglyphic script. The inscriptions are concerned with the death of Psmatik and his burial.

Scenes and Inscriptions

The stela is decorated with scenes and inscriptions which are in a very good state of preservation.

Lunette

The lunette is decorated with a scene of the deceased in the middle while the left and right sides are occupied by representations of servants presenting offering.

On the middle, Psmatik is shown in profile while sitting. He shown sitting on a stool, the legs of which take the shape of animal legs. He is wearing a hair-wig covering his ear. He is shown wearing a short kilt. The hair wig and his kilt were common during the Saite Period. He is depicted wearing a wide collar around his neck. It is the so called *wesekh*³ collar that was usually worn by both gods and mummies for protection purposes. He is depicted

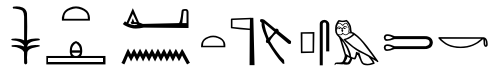
¹ This type of stela is attested since the First Dynasty and it was restricted on Kings. As for round-topped stelae that belongs to private individuals appeared by the Eleventh Dynasty, Middle Kingdom and it became common until the Greco-Roman era. HÖLZ. R., "Round-Topped Stelae from the Middle Kingdom to the Late Period. Some Remarks on Decoration of the Lunettes", Sesto Congresso Internazionale de Egittologia, Atti, vol. I, Torino, 1992, p. 285; HÖLZ. R., "Stelae", in REDFORD, D. B., (Ed.), *OE III*, Cairo, 2001, 319-320. Later on, it started to be divided into two parts by means of a horizontal line. MÜLLER, H. W., "Die Totensteine des Mittleren Reiches, ihre Genesis, ihre Darstellungen und ihre Komposition », *MDAIK* 4, 1933, SS 188-190 ; VANDIER, J., *Manuel d'Archéologie égyptienne*, vol. II, Paris 1956, 475.

² BREASTED, J. H., *Ancient Records of Egypt – IV*, Chicago, 1906, p.518 -520

³ The *wsh* collar is attested since the 3rd Dynasty and continued until the Greco-Roman Period. It is a broad collar of several rows of beads. *wsh* collars were made out of different materials and they varied in shape. It frequently ends in falcon head terminals. for further reading, see: HANDOUSSA, T., "Le Collier Ousekh", in *SAK* 9, 1981, 143-150; For the representation of *wesekh*-collars in burials and Egyptian funerary art during the late Ptolemaic and Roman Periods, see RIGGS, CH., "Forms of the *Wesekh*-collar in funerary art of the Graeco-Roman Period", *CdE* 76 fasc 151-152, 2001, 57-68.

extending the right hand towards an offering table while the left hand is shown over his chest. The left hand is holding a folded piece of cloth.

The Inscriptions in front of him reads as follows:



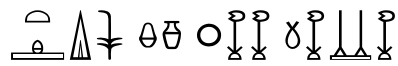
ḥtp di nsw n it ntr⁴ mr Psmtik⁵

“An offering which the King gives to the Divine Father, the beloved (one) Psmtik”

On the left side, there is an individual- who is considered to be ‘Inspector *k3* Priest’ according to the inscriptions. He is represented standing, wearing short kilt, wide collar, and short hair wig. This style of hair wigs was common during the Saite Period. He is shown in profile, smaller in scale than the stela owner while holding two pieces of linen.



shd ḥm k3 “Inspector⁶ of *k3* Priest⁷”



ḥtp di nsw ḥ3.wy t ḥ3 ḥnkt ḥ3 šs ḥ3 mnht “an offering which the king gives, two thousands (of) bread, two thousands (of) beer, a thousand of alabaster, a thousand of linen”.

The offering table is shown topped with reed-shaped bread loaves. To the right side, there is a representation of a servant. He is shown wearing a short kilt and a short curly hair wig. He is kneeling and holding two *nw* jars with raised hands in an offering position.

Commentary

- The representation of the deceased sitting in front of an offering table reflects archaism in art. This motif was very common during the Old Kingdom.⁸ It became widely common during the New Kingdom and Late Period.⁹ The facial features of Psmtik such as the almond eyes, the slight smile over his face, narrow chin which reflects his youth, fleshy nose, are adopted from the Old Kingdom Memphite art.¹⁰

⁴ Various written as ; ; FAULKNER, O., *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*, Oxford, 1988, 32.

⁵ PN 136 (8)



⁶ WB IV, 227.8-15; JONES, D., *An Index of Ancient Egyptian Titles, Epithets and Phrases of the Old Kingdom*, vol. I, in *BAR International Series* 866 (1), 2000, no. 3336; FAULKNER, O., *Middle Egyptian*, Oxford, 1988, 239.

⁷ WB III, 90, 18-19; FAULKNER, *Middle Egyptian*, 169.

⁸ MARTIN, K., “Stele”, in *LÄ VI*, col. 3

⁹ Spiegel, J., *Die Entwicklung der Opfersequenzen in den Thebanischen Gräbern*, *MDAIK* 14, 1956, S 191.

¹⁰ IRMGARD, W., *The Art of Egypt in the time of the pharaohs*, Germany, 1963, 219; BOTHMER, B., “The Philadelphia-Cairo Statue”, in *JEA* 46, 5.

- There were different terms used to refer to offering tables in ancient Egypt.¹¹ The one is shown on the stela of Psmatik is called $h\bar{z}wt$ . This term appeared for the first time in the Fourth Dynasty tomb of Prince R^c $h\bar{t}p$ at Meidum.¹² The offering table is surmounted by loaves of bread resembling the field of reeds, a mythical place of the nether world.¹³
- The offering of two strips of cloth: offering linen appeared starting from the 2nd Dynasty onwards. The offering of two strips of linen $wnh.wy$ ¹⁴ is attested since the Old Kingdom and adopted during the Late Period which reflects archaism in art. Linen was one of the essentials that the deceased will need in the afterlife. The offering of two piece of linen is probably related to linen lists which were essential for mummification.¹⁵
- Psmatik is shown holding a folded piece of linen which reflects his high status. There is an opinion that it represents an end of a rope. Another suggestion that it represents a folded piece of cloth.¹⁶
- The arrangement of the offering formula here was common since the Eighteenth Dynasty, New Kingdom¹⁷ until the Late Period. Worthy of note, that *Hetep* 

¹¹ The most common term used to refer to ancient Egyptian offering tables is $h\bar{t}p$. This term appeared for the first time in the Old Kingdom Texts. Wb III, 183; HANNIG, S., *Die Sprache der Pharaonen: Großes Handwörterbuch Ägyptisch-Deutsch*, Mainz, 1995, 567.

¹² Wb III, 226; HANNIG, *Großes Handwörterbuch Ägyptisch*, 580; for further reading, see MOSTAFA, M. M. F., *Untersuchungen zu Opfertafeln im Alten Reich*, Hildsheim, 1982; HÖLZL, R., *Ägyptische Opfertafeln und Kultbecken, eine Form- und Funktionsanalyse für das Alte, Mittlere und Neue Reich*, Hildsheimer Ägyptologische Beiträge, Hildesheim, 2002 EL-KHOULI, A., *Egyptian stonevessels: Predynastic Period to Dynasty III*, 3 Bände, Mainz, 1978.


¹³ For further reading, see SNAPE, S., *Ancient Egyptian Tombs: The Culture of Life and Death*, Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011, 197; LESKO, L., Ancient Egyptian Cosmogonies and Cosmology, in SHAFER, B., BAINES, J., LESKO, L., and SILVERMANN, D., (eds.), *Religion in Ancient Egypt: Gods, Myths and Personal Practice*, Ithaca: Cornell University press 1991, 120.

¹⁴ WB I, 324.

¹⁵ LAPP, G., *Die Opferformel des Alten Reiche*, Mains, 1986, 170-172 ;STAEHELIN, E., "Tracht", in *LÄ VI*, Wiesbaden, 1986, 726-727.

¹⁶ JACOBY, A., Überbein Herrschaftssymbol, *Rec. de Trav.* 21, 1899, 24-26; GARDINER, A., *Egyptian Grammar*, Oxford, 1957, 507, n. 529; FISCHER, H. G., "An Elusive Shape within a Fisted Hands of Egyptian Statue", *MMJ* 10, 1975, 14; MOUSSA, A. M., AND ALTENMÜLLER, H., *Das Grab de Nianchchnum und Chnumhotep*, AV 21, Mainz am Rhein, 1977.

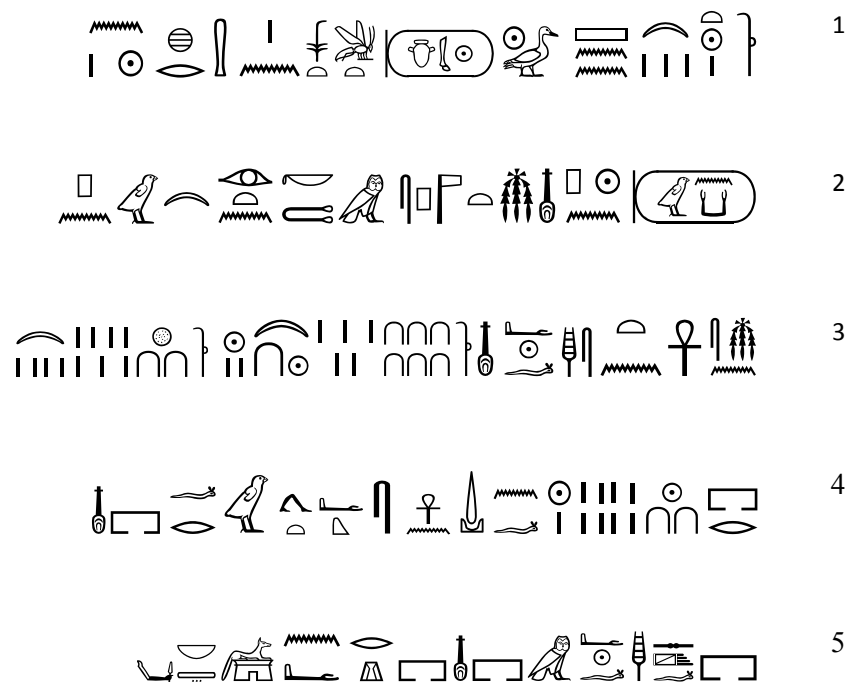
¹⁷ WB III, 186; SMITHER, P. C., "The Writing of Htp-d'i-nsw in the Middle and New Kingdoms", in *JEA* 25 (1), (1939), 34; TAWFIK, S., "A WAb Priest Stela from Heliopolis", *GM* 29, 1978, 134; ELEITHY, H., "Five XXVIth Dynasty Wooden Funerary Stelae from Thebes", *Memnonia* 24, 2013, 107-108; BARTA, W., "Aufbau und Bedeutung der ägyptischen Opferformel", *Äf* 24, Glüestadt, 1968, 25.

occurred here on its abbreviated form,¹⁸ while it was commonly written as  during the Late Period.¹⁹

- *hm Kz*: this title is associated with funerary priests. It is attested since the early Dynastic Period and continued until the Late Period.²⁰
- *ntr it*: ‘Divine Father’ is a title borne by consecrated priests. It is attested since the New Kingdom onwards.²¹

Lower part

It bears eight lines inscriptions written in hieroglyphic script. The inscriptions are concerned with the death of Psmatik and his burial. It reads from right to left as follows



¹⁸ For instance, see Cairo JE 40783

¹⁹ LEAHY, A., “Abydos in the Late Period: An Epigraphic and Prosopographic Study”, PhD Thesis, Cambridge University, 1977, 51; for instance, see: Cairo JE 21970, Cairo JE 20240, Cairo JE 18520, Cairo JE 12634.

²⁰ KAPLONY, P., “Die Inschriften der ägyptischen Frühzeit”, in *ÄA* 8, Wiesbaden, 1963, no. 391; EL-SAYED, R., *Documents relatifs à Saïs et ses divinités*, Cairo, 1975, 77; RAÚL SÁNCHEZ CASADO, Changes and Developments in the Title in the Title *hm-kz* from the Old Kingdom to the Middle Kingdom, in Kahlbacher, A., PIRGLINGER, E., (EDS.), *Tradition and Transformation in Ancient Egypt*, Vienna, 2015, 137-148.

²¹ GARDINER, A., *Ancient Egyptian Onomastica*, Oxford, 1947, 48; PIEHL, K., *Inscriptions Hiéroglyphiques recueillies en Égypte*, Leipzig, 1890, 20-21.

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(1) *rnp.t*²²-*sp* 1 *zbd*²³ 3 *šmw*²⁴ *n sw* 1 *hr hm*²⁵ *n nswbity* (*Whmw-ib-Rc*)²⁶ *s3-Rc*

(2) (*Ni-k3w*)²⁷ *hrw pn nfr ms it-ntr Psmatik irt-n Tch-wbn(w.)*²⁸

(3) *ms (w.).n nhtj.sj*²⁹ *hcw.f nfr rnpwt 65 zbd 10 sw 2 h3t-sp 27 zbd 4*

(4) *prt sw 28 sw.f n dci n nh sk tw.f r pr-nfr*

(5) *pr sj3t.f hcw.f hr.f m pr-nfr pr-hr c.n Inpw nb t3 dsr*

(6) *st3 m htp r imntt nfrt m hct-sp 27 zbd-tpy smw*

(7) *sw 29 hcw.f m jmntt-hrt nh3 dt pr.f šnwt.f*

(8) *hr-srw*³⁰ *prt-hrw*³¹ *t hnkt n.f m hb-skr rc-nb*

(1) Year 1, third month of the third season (shemu) , day 1, under the majesty of the King of Upper and Lower Egypt Wehem-ib-Ra, son of Ra

(2) (Necho) Ni-Kaw. On this good day was born the Divine Father Psmatik begotten of Ahu –wbn

²²²² *WB* II, 429-432.5

²³ *WB* I, 8.22; 65.5-9

²⁴ *WB* IV, 480.5-14

²⁵ *WB* III, 316, (I).

²⁶ ‘Who has renewed the will of Ra’ , CHASSINAT, P., *Textes Provenant du Sérapéum du Memphis, RecTrav* 22, 1900, 21 ; BECKERATH, *Handbuch der ägyptischen Königsnamen*, 1999, 214-215, 2 :T2.

²⁷ ‘Who belongs to the Kas’ , BECKERATH, *Handbuch der ägyptischen Königsnamen*, 1999, 214-215, 2:E3

²⁸ *PN* I, 12, (16)

²⁹ *PN* I, 68, (23),(24)

³⁰ *WB* IV, 194.7-23’ FAULKNER O., *Middle Egyptian*, 239.

³¹ *WB* I, 529.

(3) born of Ankhetes. His good life was 65 years, 10 months, 2 days, year 27, fourth month

(4) of the second season (prt), day 28, was his day of departure from life. He was introduced into the Good House,





(5) His House of Siat (fringed cloth)³², his life in the Good House under the arm of Anubis, Lord of the Sacred Land.

(6) He was conducted in peace to the Beautiful West in the year 27, first month of the third season (shemu)

(7) day 29, his life in the necropolis is forever and ever, his house and his entourage³³?

(8) maintained offerings (consists of) bread (and) beer at the Feast of Soker every-day

Commentary

- *ntr it* ‘Divine Father’: a title which was given to all consecrated priests during the Late Period.³⁴
- The dot within the sun sign ☉ is omitted.
- *irt-n*: born of in a reference to a male. There is an addition of t  instead of  on to verbal forms that date back to the Saite Period.³⁵
- *rnp.t*³⁶: cardinal numbers often take ‘t’ endings.³⁷
-  t ‘father’,  *nfr*: words employing single sign were common during the Saite Period.³⁸
- *Pr nfr*³⁹ ‘House of Perfection’/ ‘Good House’: It refers to the place used for mummification by the end of the Old Kingdom.⁴⁰
- *sjꜣt* ‘fringed cloth’: it is a type of cloth/bandage with fringe that was associated with embalming rituals.⁴¹

³² FAULKNER O., *Middle Egyptian*, 212

³³ FAULKNER O., *Middle Egyptian*, 268

³⁴ See ft. 13; for further reading, see: HABACHI, L., “Gottesvater”, in *LÄ II*, 825-826.

³⁵ DER MANUELIAN, P., Living in the Past: Studies in Archaism of the Egyptian Twenty-Sixth Dynasty, in LLOYD, A. B., (ED.) *Studies in Egyptology*, 1994, 75

³⁶ *WB II*, 429-432.5

³⁷ DER MANUELIAN, P., *Studies in Archaism*, 75

³⁸ DER MANUELIAN, P., *Studies in Archaism*, 79

³⁹ This term appeared by the Middle Kingdom, *WB I*, 517.

⁴⁰ DONOHUE, V. A., “pr-nfr,” in *JEA* 64, 1978, p. 145 f; GRIFFITH, J. G., *The Origins of Osiris. Berlin and his Cult*, Hessling, 1966.

⁴¹ ‘He brings you the Menechet cloth from the house of Hapi (and) the fine siat bandage from the house of the noble ones.’ *Thesaurus Linguae Aegyptiae*, Papyrus Boulaq 3 (Thebes West), embalming ritual (linex+8,1)

- Festival of Soker: at the end of the month of Khoiak, there were several festivals celebrated at Thebes associated with god Sokar.⁴²

Importance of the stela

The stela is dated to the reign of King Necho II, the third King of the 26th Dynasty.⁴³ The wide wig of Psmatik, and the absence of the cosmetic line of kohl at the corners of the narrow eyes are an indication to the Saite Period. This was common under reign of Psmatik II and Apries.⁴⁴ The stela also reflects the deceased's desire to benefit from all the offerings presented during the feast of Sokar.

The scene shown on the lunette of the stela shows archaizing that was prevalent during the Late Period, 25th and 26th Dynasties in particular. It took its inspiration from the Old Kingdom scenes. The representation of the deceased sitting and an offering table⁴⁵ shown in front of him is a common motif that appeared by the Old Kingdom onwards. This shows continuation through Egyptian culture.⁴⁶ This is how the past could be reconstructed and preserved through memory.⁴⁷

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Accessed on 10/3/2022

⁴² For further reading, see GRAINDORGE-HEREIL, C., "Le dieu Sokaer", *RDE* 43, 1992, 87-105.; K. J. EATON, "The Festivals of Osiris and Sokar in the Month of Khoiak: The Evidence from Nineteenth Dynasty Royal Monuments at Abydos", *SAK* 35, 2006, 75-101.

⁴³ This stela of Psmatik together with the other stela belongs to him is valuable due to the chronological data it supports concerning the length of the Twenty Sixth Dynasty. It also supports information concerning the reign of King Apries For further reading, BREASTED, J. H., *Ancient Records*, p.518 -520

⁴⁴ BOTHMER, B. V., *Egyptian Sculpture of the Late Period*, 1960, 53.

⁴⁵ The earliest offering table scenes appeared on stone cylinder seals dated to the First Dynasty. BÁRTA, M., Archaeology and Iconography: *bDA* and *apr.t* Bread Moulds and the Speizsetischszene Development in the Old Kingdom, *SAK* 22, 1995, 26; KAPLONY, P., *Die Inschriften der ägyptischen Frühzeit I-III, Ägyptologische, Abhandlungen* 8, Wiesbaden, 1963, 1-3; FRIEDMAN, R., On the Meaning of some Anthropoid Busts from Deir el-Medîna, *JEA* 71 1985, 86; SHAW, I., "Chronology", in SHAW, I., (Ed.), *OE I*, 2000, 482.

⁴⁶ KAHL, J., Archaism, in Frood, E. and Wendrich, W., (Eds.), *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology*, Los Angeles, 2010, 5

⁴⁷ ASMANN, J., *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization, Writing Remembrance and Political Imagination*, Cambridge, 2011, 17.

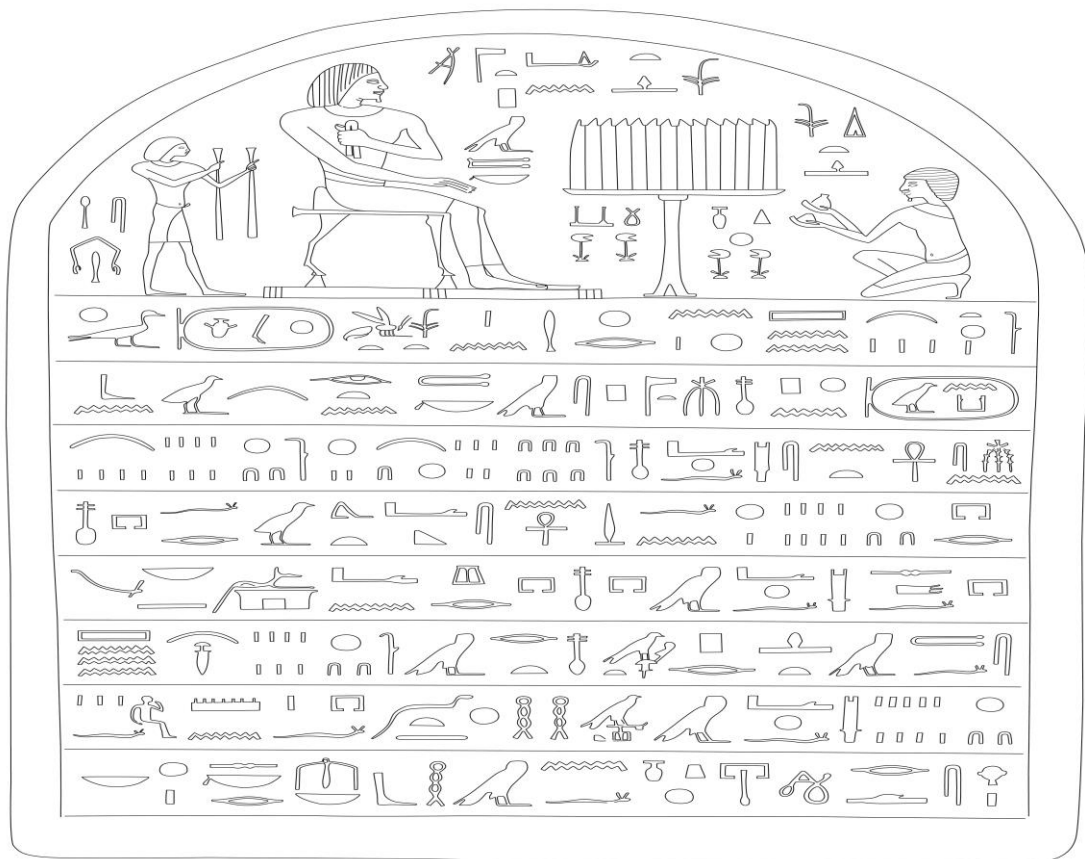
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Stela of Divine Father Psmatik

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Facsimile of the Stela of the divine father Psmatik

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لوحة جنازية من العصر المتأخر للأب الالهى بسماتيك بمتحف ايمحتب بسقارة

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الملخص العربى

تهدف تلك الورقة البحثية إلى دراسة و نشر لوحة خاصة مستديرة من الحجر الجيري لبسماتيك. و هى معروضة الآن في متحف ايمحتب بسقارة. تم تسجيل اللوحة تحت رقم SQ. CU. 149. تعود اللوحة الى عصر الأسرة السادسة و العشرين (العصر الصاوى) و قد عثر عليها بمنطقة سقارة.اللوحة اكتشفت بواسطة حفائر جامعة القاهرة بسقارة. وفقاً للنص المسجل على اللوحة ، فهي تنتمي إلى أحد الأفراد و يدعى بسماتيك و قد حمل لقب الأب الالهى . و ربما كان بسماتيك كاهناً عاش في عهد الملك نكاو الثاني خلال الأسرة السادسة والعشرين كما هو مستخلص من النص المكتوب على اللوحة. و اللوحة ذات قمة مستديرة و تنقسم الى قسمين: جزء علوى و يحتوى على صيغة القرابين بالاضافة الى تصوير المتوفى "بسماتيك" جالسا أمام مائدة قرابين بالاضافة الى كاهنا يقدم أوانى "تو" و آخر ممثل ممسكا بقطعتى قماش خلف بسماتيك. أما عن الجزء السفلى فيحتوى على نص مكون من ثمانية أسطر من الكتابة الهيروغليفية بشكل أفقى و تقرأ من اليسار لليمين. جدير بالذكر أن اللوحة فى حالة جيدة من الحفظ. يهتم البحث بنشر و دراسة تلك اللوحة و تحليل ما جاء عليها من نصوص و مناظر .