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Block Statue of Hky in Imhotep Museum at Saqqara

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Abstract

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This paper is concerned with studying the block statue of Hky. He was the steward of the house of reckoning corn of the divine offerings at Saqqara during the 12th Dynasty, Middle Kingdom. The statue dates back to the Middle Kingdom. It was discovered by the French Archaeological Mission in 1986. It was recovered in Tomb 2149 which is located on the eastern side of the Satellite Pyramid of the Old Kingdom King Pepi I. The statue is currently on display at Imhotep Museum at Saqqara. It is registered under n° SQ. FAMS. 361.

This paper aims to study the statue, its date, and the inscriptions that it carries. It represents translation and transliteration for the text in addition to an analytical study of the statue through the inscriptions and titles of Hky. Finally, it discusses the function of this statue in the funerary practices that took place during the Middle Kingdom.

1. Introduction

The Imhotep Museum at Saqqara houses a block statue of a high official called Hky who lived during the 12th Dynasty, Middle Kingdom. It measures 13.5 × 13 cm in width and 18.5 cm in height. This statue was discovered at Tomb 2149¹ by French Archaeological Mission in 1986. It bears the number SQ. FAMS. 361.²

The statue is in the block/cube form³ that started to occur by the Middle Kingdom, as early as the 12th Dynasty at Saqqara. This type of statue became commonly produced for private individuals⁴ from the Middle Kingdom until the New Kingdom and the Late Period. Its production extended until the Greco-Roman era. During the Middle Kingdom, Block statues

¹ Alexandra Verbovesk mentioned that the statue was found to the southern part of the pillared courtyard of the mortuary temple of Pepi I. according to the excavation report, the statue was found at tomb 2149. A. VERBOVESK, "Als Gunsterweis des Königs in den Tempel Gegeben ..." Private Tempelstatuen des Alten und Mittleren Reiches, (Wiesbaden 2004), 486.

² Thanks are due to Ms. Sahar El-Taweel, Deputy of Imhotep Musuem, for granting the author an endless help to publish this statue. The researcher is grateful for Mr. Sameh for providing professional photography. The researcher would like to express her gratitude towards Dr Mohamed Youssef, Director of Saqqara Antiquities Area for supporting the researcher by the block statue's excavation report.

³ M. LURKER, *The Gods and Symbols of Ancient Egypt: an Illustrated Dictionary* (London, 1980), 48.

⁴ Block statues were restricted on private individuals, but never for kings or deities. R. SCHULZ, "Block Statue", *UCLA 1* (1), (2011), <https://escholarship.org/content/qt3f23c0q9/qt3f23c0q9.pdf>

were found at tombs. From the New Kingdom onwards, it started to come mainly from temples.⁵ It has been referred to these statues by the term *his* and *hst* in the ancient Egyptian language.⁶ Moreover, *smn* is translated as “Kneeling and Squatting statues”.⁷ It has been suggested that block statues were developed from the squatting models, completely enveloped, appeared on model boats depicting the pilgrimage to Abydos.⁸ During the Middle Kingdom, most of block statue owners were coming from middle and lower ranking classes of officials and priests. By the New Kingdom and Third Intermediate Period, more high-ranking officials, viziers, and priests adopted this type of statuary.⁹

Block Statues represent the owner in a squatting posture, enveloped in a cloak, and both knees drawn up in front of the chest and the arms crossed above them. The cloak of the statue was either decorated with Hieroglyphic inscriptions or scenes representing the deceased.¹⁰

2. Description

The statue which is the main concern of this paper shows Hky squatting on the low rectangular element. He is shown completely enveloped by a cloak leaving his head, hands and feet exposed. In the early 12th Dynasty, the arms, hands, and feet of block statues were visible. As time elapsed, even feet were covered.¹¹ The head is completely broken except for the chin which is shown with an attached beard. The statue is free from the back pillar,¹² an element that was occasionally used during the Middle Kingdom. Traces of yellow and green colors are still visible on the statue. The statue is inscribed with an offering formula dedicated to Ptah-Soker, the local deity of Saqqara necropolis.¹³ It mentions the titles of Hky and offerings that appeals to visitors. The inscriptions are incised in Hieroglyphic script.

⁵ B. VON BOTHMER, “Block Statues of the Egyptian Middle Kingdom II. The Sculpture of Teta's Son”, *The Brooklyn Museum Annual* 2/3, (1960-1962), 19-20; SCHULZ, “Block Statue”, 1.

⁶ M. EL-DAMATY, “Squatting Statues in the Cairo Museum”, *MDAIK* 46, (1990), 2.

⁷ A. ERMAN, H. GRAPOW, *Wörterbuch der Ägyptischen Sprache*, vol. 3, (Berlin, 1971), 460 (6).

⁸ These models appeared since the VI Dynasty of the Old Kingdom until the beginning of the Middle Kingdom. R., SCHULZ, *Die Entwicklung und Bedeutung des Kuboiden Statuentypus : Eine Untersuchung zu den Sogenannten “ Würfelbockern.”* Hildesheimer Ägyptologische Beiträge 33/34, (Hildesheim: Gerstenberg, 1992), 755-759

⁹ R., SCHULZ, *Die Entwicklung und Bedeutung des Kuboiden Statuentypus*, 648-664.

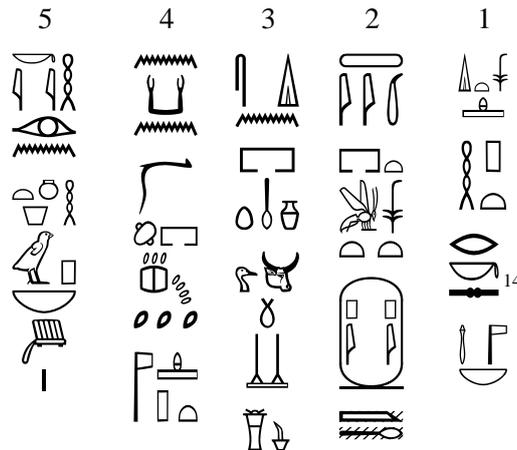
¹⁰ A. RADWAN, “Gedanken zum Würfelhocker”, *GM* 8, (1973), 2-3; for further reading on different types of block statues, see EL-DAMATY, *MDAIK* 46, 3.

¹¹ SCHULZ, *Block Statue*, 3.

¹² A back slab or pillar was used during the Middle Kingdom and Eighteenth Dynasty, New Kingdom. SCHULZ, *Block Statue*, 3.

¹³ Ptah-Soker is a funerary deity who was worshipped in the form of a falcon at Memphis and Saqqara necropolis. He plays an important role in many funerary texts. The association between Ptah and Soker represents the wealth of the soil and its power of growth. J. VAN-DIJK, “Ptah”, in *OE* III, 74.C. GRAINDORGE, “Sokar”, in *OE* III, 305-306.

2.1 Text



2.2 Text

- (1) *ḥtp dj nsw^a Pth-skr ntr ʿz^b nb*
- (2) *štj.t^c15 pr.t nsw bity (Ppi)^dmz^c-ḥrw^e*
- (3) *dj.sn^f pr.t ḥrw t ḥnk.t^g k3.w ʿpd.w šs mnḥ.t^h sntr mrḥ.tⁱ*
- (4) *n k3.n jmj-r¹⁶ pr ḥsb it¹⁷ j n ḥtpw-ntr*
- (5) *ḥk.ū¹⁸ ir.n ḥnwt-j.pw¹⁹(pi) nb imzḥw^k*

“A gift which the King and Ptah-soker have given, the great god, Lord of (sanctuary of) Shetyt (and) King of Upper and Lower Egypt Pepi, the revered one, (that they may) give offerings (consists of) bread ,beer ,oxen ,fowl ,alabaster, clothes, incense and oil to the Ka of the Steward of reckoning divine offerings barley, Heky son of Henwt-pw, master of the honored ones”.

2.3 Textual Comments

(a) The statue is inscribed with the offering formula *hetep di nsw*. It was considered to be one of the methods that will allow the deceased to partake of the offerings presented to major deities in the name of the king since the Fourth Dynasty until the Greco-Roma era.²⁰It is inscribed in the typical form of the offering formula that was common during the Eleventh and Twelfth Dynasties.²¹

¹⁴ Also written; C. LEITZ, C., Lexikon der ägyptischen Götter und Götterbezeichnungen, vol. 3, OLA 110-116, (Leuven 2002-2003), 175-176.

¹⁵ A. ERMAN, H. GRAPOW, WB IV, 556; O. FAULKNER, A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian, (Oxford, 1988), 273.

¹⁶ Also translated as ‘Who is in charge of’, ‘commander’, A. ERMAN, H. GRAPOW, Wörterbuch I, 74, n° 13.

¹⁷ A. ERMAN, H. GRAPOW, WB IV, 510

¹⁸ H. RANKE, Die Ägyptischen Personennamen I, (Heidelberg, 1935), 256, n° 29.

¹⁹ H. RANKE, Personennamen I, n°18.

²⁰ W. BARTA, "Aufbau und Bedeutung der Altägyptischen Opferformel", (Gluckstadt, 1968), 3-221; R. J. LEPROHON, “Offering Formulae and Lists”, in OE II, 569-572.

²¹ Middle Kingdom form was written as follows or while the New Kingdom and Late Period form was as follows or P. C. SMITHER, “The Writing of Htp-d’i-nsw in the Middle and New Kingdoms”, JEA 25 (1), (1939), 34. ; for further reading, see C.J.C.BENNET, “Growth of the Htp-di-nsw Formula in the Middle Kingdom”, in JEA 27 , (1941), 77-82; D. FRANKE, “The Middle Kingdom Offering

- (b) The epithet *ntr* ʕ refers to gods and usually dead kings.²²
- (c) *Shtyt*²³ is the name of the shrine of Ptah-Soker in the Memphite necropolis.²⁴ He is usually addressed by the title “Who Dwells in *Shtyt*” which is commonly given to various deities such as Re-Horakhty, Wsir, Inpu.²⁵ In Demotic is known as *nb-šdzt* and *nb-šty*.²⁶ It is worth mentioning that ‘*shtyt*’ is the name that used to refer to all religious places dedicated to Soker.
- (d) King Pepi I is mentioned here as a defied King. That’s why his name is mentioned after the name of Ptah Soker. Old Kingdom Kings were defied after their death and this would be clear through mentioning their names after the name of a deity in the offering formula. This reflects the deceased’s desire of adoring the King to grant him an offering or life, prosperity, and health.²⁷ It also reflects the fact that the cult of King Pepi I was maintained during the Late Middle Kingdom.
- (e) *mzʕ hrw* ‘Justified’ is usually mentioned after the name of the deceased.²⁸
- (f) The use of *dj.sn prt hrw* instead of *di. f prt hrw* was common during the Middle Kingdom.²⁹
- (g) The writing of the sign ʕ *hnk.t* W23 is attested since the Twelfth Dynasty onwards.³⁰
- (h) $\begin{matrix} \delta \\ \text{II} \end{matrix}$ *šs mnht* was a common form used in the Middle Kingdom offering formulas.³¹
- (i) *sntr mrh.t*: offering formulas usually contains thousands of bread, beer, ox, fowl, alabaster, and linen. Other offerings occurred by Late 12th and 13th Dynasties such as oil, incense and are usually fully written.³²
- (j) The title *jmj-r pr hsb it n htpw-ntr* ‘Steward of reckoning divine offerings barley’ is not attested during the Old Kingdom so far. Moreover, it wasn’t found in Ward’s Index of the Middle Kingdom Titles.³³ There is a similar administrative title from the Middle Kingdom Nubia ‘*imy-r pr hsb it mhṯy*’ Steward of reckoning Lower Egyptian Barley.³⁴ There is another similar administrative title from Abydos, belongs to Renefankh called Amenemhat who lived

Formulas- A Challenge”, in *JEA* 89, (2003), 39-57; A. ILin-Tomich, “Changes in the Htp-di-nsw Formula (2011), 20-34.

²² FAULKNER, *Middle Egyptian*, 142. C. LEITZ, *LGG* IV, 395-398; J. ALLEN, *Middle Egyptian: An Introduction to the Language and Culture of Hieroglyphs*, 2nd Ed., (Cambridge 2010), 365.

²³ A. ERMAN, H. GRAPOW, *WB* IV, 556; FAULKNER, *Middle Egyptian*, 273.

²⁴ It was the name of the tomb or the temple in the underworld. A. ERMAN, H. GRAPOW, *WB* IV, 559.

²⁵ N. HAFEZ, “The Deity *Rʕ-hr-šḥty* at Memphis, *JAAUTH* 22 (2), (2022), 33.

²⁶ C. LEITZ, *LGG* III, 755-756.

²⁷ For further reading on defied Old Kingdom Kings, see, A. GABER, “Aspects of Deification of Some Old Kingdom Kings”, A. K. EYMA, C. J. BENNET, eds., *A Delta-man in Yebu*, (2003), 12-31.

²⁸ FAULKNER, *Middle Egyptian*, 101.

²⁹ H. SELIM, “Three Identical Stelae from the End of the 12th or 13th Dynasty, *SAK* 29, (2001), 326; A. MÜLLER, *Die Totengedenksteine des Mittleren, MDAIK* 4, (1933), 187.

³⁰ A. Y. MOHAMMED, The Stela of ʕ *nḥw* in Sohag Museum Inv. N°. 879, in *JGUAA2* vol.7/2, (2022), 30.

³¹ For further reading on this syntax on Middle Kingdom stelae, see A. ILin-Tomich, “Changes in the Htp-di-nsw Formula in the Late Middle Kingdom and the Second Intermediate Period”, in *ZÄS* 138, (2011), 20-34.

³² MOHAMMED, The Stela of ʕ *nḥw*, 30 ft. 16.

³³ W. A. WARD, *Index of Egyptian Administration and Religious Titles of the Middle Kingdom, With Glossary of Words and Phrases Used*, (Lebanon, 1982).

³⁴ R. J. LEPROHON, ‘Administrative Titles in Nubia in the Middle Kingdom’, in *JAOS* 113.3, (1993), 428.

during the Late Middle Kingdom, end of 12th Dynasty. He carried the titles *imy-r pr ḥsb ḥꜥw* “steward of reckoning ships” and *imy-r pr n ḥtpw-nṯr* “the steward of god’s offerings”.³⁵

(k) *nb imꜣḥw* “Master of the Honored Ones”: This syntax appears frequently after the second name whether it was the name of the father or mother. It started to occur from the Fourth Dynasty onwards from the Mastaba of Rahotep and Nofret at Meidum. It became widely used by the Middle Kingdom.³⁶

Conclusions

The block statue of Heky is an example of these sculptures that appeared starting from the Middle Kingdom onwards. The inscriptions of the statue do not represent a very good quality of sculpture. Unfortunately, the head of the statue is broken except for the beard, the lower part of which widens slightly from the top. However, this statue played an essential role in the funerary practices that took place during the Middle Kingdom at Saqqara. This could be concluded from the title that the statue carries.

During the Late Middle Kingdom, there was a large establishment, to the west of the Pyramid of Senusert II, at El-Lahun concerned with the ritual activities related to defied Kings. According to Hieratic documents found there, there was an institution concerned with the royal cults. It is called *šnwt-nt ḥtpw nṯr*.³⁷ There was another institution concerned with maintaining the cult of Senusert III during the Twelfth and Thirteenth Dynasties. This organization is situated in the South of Abydos, around the funerary complex of Senusert III.³⁸ Accordingly, it could be suggested that there was the same institution at Saqqara to keep and organize the cultic rituals concerned with the Old Kingdom defied Kings.

Thus, this type of block statues was associated with cultic activities for defied kings, rather than being associated with rituals for the tomb owner. This type appeared during the Middle Kingdom. It was intended for taking place at mortuary temples and sanctuaries to maintain the cult of the deceased King.³⁹ Accordingly, the researcher believes that the statue of Heky must have been placed at the funerary Temple of King Pepi I rather than being placed at Heky’s tomb. This assumption depends on the function of the statue. It is associated with rituals for the deification of King Pepi I of the Old Kingdom that took place at his mortuary temple. His cult has been maintained during the Middle Kingdom.

³⁵ J. T. MARTIN, *Stelae from Egypt and Nubia in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge*, c. 3000 B. C-AD 1150, (Cambridge 2005), 26. Worthy of note that there were several administrative titles associated with *ḥtpw nṯr* “god’s offerings”, for instance, sS Htpw nTr was commonly used during the Old and Middle Kingdoms. H. FISCHER, *Egyptian Titles of the Middle Kingdom: A Supplement to Wm Wards Index*, 2nd ed., (New York 1997) 4-5, n°164 a, 174 a, 174 b; D. JONES, *An Index of Ancient Egyptian Titles, Epithets and Phrases of the Old Kingdom*, *BAR International Series* 866, (Oxford 2000), 862, 3153; WARD, *Index of Egyptian Administration and Religious Titles*, 162, 1407. By the New Kingdom, this title started to appear together with the name of deity. R. AL-AYEDI, *Index of Egyptian Administrative, Religious and Military Titles in the New Kingdom*, Ismailia. Cairo 2006), 568, 1902.

³⁶ MOHAMMED, *The Stela of ḥnhw*, 30 ft. 28, 29.

³⁷ D. MAZZONE, “The Dark Side of a Model Community: The ‘Ghetto’ of el-Lahun”, in *JAEA* 2, (2017), 34.

³⁸ J. WEGNER, V. SMITH, AND S. ROSSELL, “The Organization of the Temple of Nfr –Kꜣ of Senusert III at Abydos”, in *Ägypten und Levante / Egypt and the Levant* 10, (2000), 83-125.

³⁹ By the New Kingdom, block statues were associated with venerated deities, SCHULZ, *Block Statue*, 6.



Fig. 1. Block Statue of
Hehy© author

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تمثال كتلة لحكى بمتحف ايمحتب بسقارة (SQ.FAMS.361)

هناء مختار البحيري

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الملخص

تهتم تلك الورقة البحثية بدراسة تمثال كتلة (تمثال قرفصاء) لأحد موظفي الدولة "حكى". كان حكى يشغل وظيفة المسئول عن بيت حساب الشعير للقرابين المقدسة خلال عصر الاسرة الثانية عشر من عصر الدولة الوسطى بمنطقة سقارة. يعود تاريخ التمثال الى عصر الدولة الوسطى. تم اكتشاف التمثال خلال أعمال حفائر البعثة الفرنسية في عام ١٩٨٦. وجد التمثال في المقبرة رقم ٢١٤٩ والتي تقع الى الجهة الشرقية من الهرم الجانبي للمجموعة الجنائزية للملك بيبى الأول. التمثال معروض الآن بمتحف ايمحتب بمنطقة سقارة. تم تسجيل التمثال برقم SQ. FAMS. 361. يهتم البحث بدراسة التمثال و ترجمة و تحليل النص و الالقاب المصاحبة له بالإضافة الى الدور الوظيفي لذلك التمثال فى الطقوس و الشعائر الجنائزية خلال عصر الدولة الوسطى.

معلومات المقالة

الكلمات المفتاحية

تمثال كتلة؛ متحف ايمحتب؛ سقارة؛ حكى؛ الدولة الوسطى؛ الأسرة الثانية عشر.

(JAAUTH)

المجلد ٢٣، العدد ٢،
(٢٠٢٢)،
ص ٢٥-٣٢.