

*A Reassessment of Sebek-Khu Stela*

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**This paper is concerned with one of the officials individuals from outside the royal dynasties which date is back to the twelfth dynasty .To highlight the influential role of these individuals in the construction of ancient Egyptian civilization; besides the kings .whether these individuals are viziers or priests or army leaders or other individuals who have effective contributions .**

**The Present writer deep faith of the ability of these individuals in guiding the movement of human history and in the interaction of the society with these creative individuals resulted in a civilized progress in all fields.**

**The importance of this research that it is concerned with the personal military commander “ sebek-khu” through one of his stela, whose tomb has not been detected till now .**

**This prompted the present writer to attempt to elucidate the basic elements of his biography , as he has been contemporary with more than a king in the twelfth dynasty , which represents the prosperity era for the ancient Egyptian civilization.**

The stela of “ Sebek-Khu “ was found at Abydos in 1901 by professor Garstang , It is now at the Museum of Manchester in England .

The stela is made of limestone of a very mediocre quality , and its measurement is 280×165 mm.<sup>(1)</sup> and published by “ Eric Peet “ in 1914.<sup>(2)</sup>

The stela inscription consists of four horizontal lines ( plate no.1) and its organized as follows :

1-Htp di nsw wsir nb AbDw

2- (di.f pr-xrw) m tA Hnqt kAw Apdw Ss mnxt mrHt xt nbt nfrt

3- wabt n kA n rpat HAty-a Dd (.f) nfrt wHm wrrt

4- m Xrt-hrw nt ra nb wartw aA n niwt sbk -xw rn.f nfr DAA.

“1-An offering that the king gives to osiris lord of Abydos.2- (that) he may gives offering (consists of ) bread, beer, flesh and fowls and all things that are pure and good .3- to the ka of the hereditary prince and count . who said that which was good ,4- who repeated

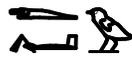
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(1 ) Garstang,J., EL Arábah: A Cemetery Of Middle Kingdom Temenos ; graffiti from The temple of sety , with Notes by Newberry,P.E., Hieroglyphic Inscriptions, London,1901,p.6.

(2) Peet,E., The Stela Of Sebek-khu , Manchester,1914.

that which was desired in the course of everyday, the great official of the city , “ Sebek-Khu “ whose good name is zaa.”

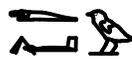
The present writer noted in the previous text that the name of “Sebek-Khu “ has been written in this form

 sbk-xw, then re-written with the nickname

 DAA<sup>(3)</sup>

It is likely that there is a deliberate and clear intention to diversify the name ,sometimes it is written as his name realname, and at other times written as his nickname, especially if recorded on the tools of the otherworld such as coffins and tombs and funeral steales ..... etc ., so a to avoid any possibility of error in reading his name or to get the soul lost its way to his owner which leads to the deprivation from resurrection and immortality. the justification that the name was the proof for the identity of its owner.<sup>(4)</sup>

Below the stela is a scene represting the deceased

 sbk-xw seated on a throne before an offering

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(3) Ibid,PLII.

(4) Zemater,A.,(Asmaa El Tadel)In Arabic:The nickname and metaphors in Ancient Egyptian ,unpolished ph.d, faculty of Archaeology,Cairo1993,p.70.

table full of food and drink .and it was written in front of Sebek-Khu his father's name  it .<sup>(5)</sup>

Eric Peet believes that  it is not the father's name ,and he suggests that father's name may be erased from the stela inadvertently , and that itA is the name of Sebek-khu's mother based on a relief found on the Semneh rocks , and his opinion was based on the existence of the feminine determinative mAat after itA name.<sup>(6)</sup>

The present writer believes that the name of it is the name of the father and not the mother , as there is determinative of the man in the name,In addition to that his brother's name in the stela was accompanied by his mother's name " mr.t itf.s " . For this reason the present writer believes that

" mr.t itf.s" is the name of his mother , and that he wrote her name in this funeral stela to honor her .<sup>(7)</sup>

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(5) PN,BandI,PP48 No29,49 No.3.

(6)Peet,E., op.cit.,P.4.

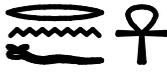
(7) CF.PN,Band I,P.158,No.18.

The present writer sees that mAat who was reported by “ Eric Peet ” was part of a word mAat xrw that means honest sound .

On the opposite side of the offering table are six figures arranged in two rows followed by their names. These names are as follows : His beloved daughter sabu

 sAbw child of.....and he did not mention the name of his wife , His brother didiu  didiw ,child of  mr.t itf.s

And the third person in the first row his name is not clear , and he did not know any thing about him except that he was the overseer of the cabinet ,and he was the child of Syt  .

The second row : there is a woman sitting called  rnf.f described as his beloved nurse, and his sister sitting behind her , known as  iw bw child of  mr.t-itf.s , and the last



Says” I am born in the twenty –Seventh year of the reign of his majesty king of upper and lower Egypt Amenemhat II honest sound .

Sebek-Khu started his functional career immediately upon the accession of king senusret III the reign ( 1872-1853B.C) .

Sebek-Khu was about twenty seven years old .where he began his career in the military as a soldier and then promoted to the commander.

He leaded his military army under the superverison of the king sensuret III to canaan “ Mentu –Palestine” in a place called “ Sekmem” may be Shechem in the Bible .<sup>(10)</sup> and with the fallof sekemem “ Retenu” fell down with it , which indicates that Sekemem was the main city .<sup>(11)</sup>

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(10) shechem: The Hebrew name is probably derives from the word for back or shoulder ,an apt description of its location in the narrow valley between Mt.Gerizim and Mt.Ebal ,approximately 65 k.m north of Jerusalem .for more details see:

Roger,M.,A Century of Biblical Archaeology, Cambridge,1991,p.32.

(11)Hayes,W., CAH,Vol I,P.47;

Kempinski,A.,The Middle Bronze Age , The Archaeology of Ancient Israel, Yale ,1992,P.160.

As a result of Sebek-khu dedication and courage in this battle ,he was rewarded by king senusret III by giving him bow and dagger made of electrum<sup>(12)</sup>

The reason of this campaign was perhaps raid for some Asian tribes , and perhaps the bedouins of the palestine desert tried to make a suddan foray against egypt.

The king senusert III drew them this campaign which eliminated them, than the king Senusert III appointed subordinate officers in canaan ; perhaps this was the first attempt by the king Senusert III for the integration of canaan in the egyptian state. However ,some researchers believes that this step was only support for the mutual trade relations.<sup>(13)</sup>

It highlights once again the role of “ Sebek- Khu ” effective in the army led by the king senusret III in the twelfth year of his reign in order to descipline the Nubians. This campaign known to us through the inscription was found in the rocks of aswan .<sup>(14)</sup>

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(12) Delia,R.D., “ Khakau Re Senwosert III , King and Man” , KMT,6/2/,New York ,P.27.

(13) Kempinski,A., op-cit, P.160.

(14) Breasted,J.H.,BAR , Vol I, Chicago,P.651; PM,Vol,V,P.247.

The king Senusert III returned once again to the Nubians in a new campaign with “ Sebek-Khu ” ,in the year sixteen of his reign , and the king did not returned with his army only after conquering Nubians and forced them to respect the power and the rule of Egypt .<sup>(15)</sup>



HAt-sp 16 Abd 3 prt irt Hm.f tAS rsy rHH

The year sixteen, the third month of the season the king germination the Southern limit until Nubian .<sup>(16)</sup>

As a result of “ Sebek-Khu ” efforts in the military field the king Senusret III granted him sixteenth men to be under his ministry ,and was promoted later to be a warrior of the guard <sup>(17)</sup> and then was promoted out to be the inspector of the attendants  ( whether the attendants was services , campaign fans of ownership or other followers of the king ) .After this upgrade the king

(15) Hayes,W.,The Scepter Of Egypt , Part I,Newyork,1953,P.46;  
Gauthier,H.,LR,Vpl,III,P.305

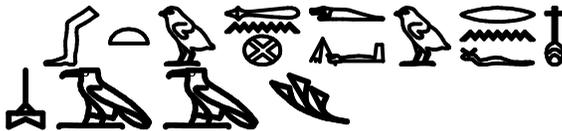
(16) Idem,P.305.

(17) Peet,E., op.cit.,PP5,13,PL II.

had given “ Sebek- Khu ” a hundred men as a reward to be under his service<sup>(18)</sup>

The present writer believes that the king sensuret III wanted from these promotions, the relief of his commander “ Sebek-Khu ” from the fatigue of war after a long series of wars .whether in Asia or in Nubian ,and especially the titles which he carried without any military title, perhaps the most important

titles was  rpat-HAty-a “Hereditary prince, Noble” and also he is carrying the title :



Wart w aA .n niwt sbk –xw rn.f nfr DAA

“ The great ruler of the city Sebek-Khu and his good name is zaa”

“ sebek –Khu” has been still active in his work as a inspector of the attendants who follows the king until the ninth year of the reign of Amenemhat III , where they found a relief in the rocks of smena dating in ninth year of the reign of the king Amenemhat III ,which

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(18) Ibid,P.5.,Line 17.

shows the activity of “ sebek-Khu ” in recording measurements of the increase of the Nile .Sebek-Khu was seventy years old at that time <sup>(19)</sup> and according to this “ Sebek-Khu ” lived at the time of the following kings Amenemhat II, senusret II, sensurt III and Amenemhat III.

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(19) Garstang,J.A.,op.cit ., P.33.

## **Conclusion**

**1- The artist wrote Sebek-khu nick name deliberately on the stela to avoid any possibility of any error in the reading so as not to get the soul lost on its way to the other world of the expedition .which leads to the deprivation from resurrection and immortality .**

**2- The present writer finds that name of the father is it as there is man ś determantive,and the name of the mother is mr.t ift.s.**

**3- The functional hierarchy forSebek-Khu began as a warrior in the army of the king Senusret III in his war to Canaan ,then commander of the army destined forward to Nubian and this was in the twelfth year of king sensuret III reign and then promoted to the post kingś follower ,then became the supervision of the followers .**

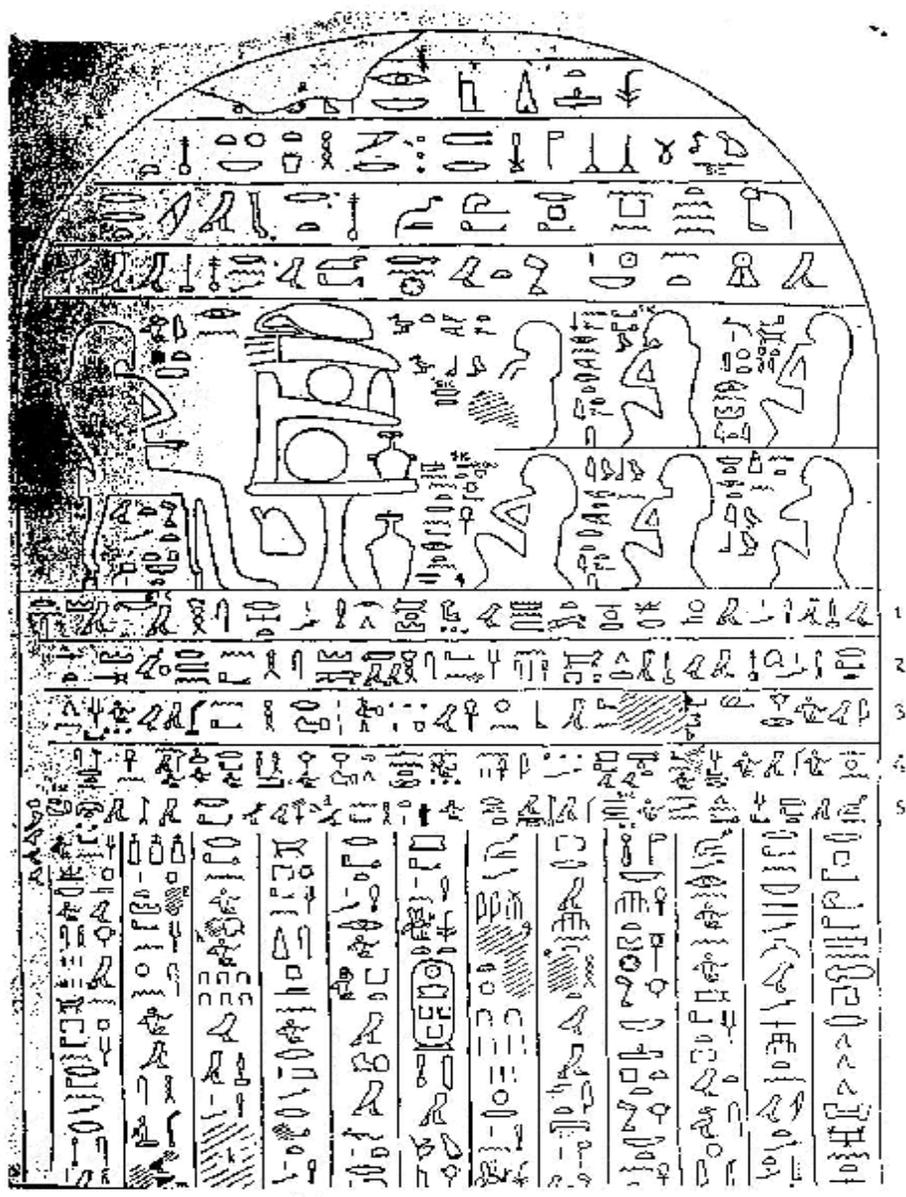
**4- Sebek-Khu took honorary titles such as hierarchy prince, the governor of the city ,where there is no evidence to show his duties in these jobs.**

**5- Sebek-Khu stayed in the post of supervision of the follower till the nineteenth year of Amenemhat III reign.**

## **AKNOWLEDGMENT**

**The Author would like to express his deepest thanks to prof Dr.Hassan Elsaady for his valuable remarks.**

## **PLATES**



PL. I



**The Original stela**

## References

(1) Breasted, J.H., *Ancient Records of Egypt, vol I*, Chicago, 1906.

(2) Delia, R.D., “*Khakau Re Senwosert III, King and Man*”, KMT, 6/2/, New York .

(3) Garstang, J., *EL Arábah: A Cemetery Of Middle Kingdom Temenos ; graffiti from The temple of sety , with Notes by Newberry, P.E., Hieroglyphic Inscriptions, London, 1901.*

(4) Hayes, W., *The Middle Kingdom in Egypt*, CAH, Vol I, Part II, Cambridge, 1971.

(5) Kempinski, A., *The Middle Bronze Age*, The Archaeology of Ancient Israel, Yale, 1992, P.160.

(6) Kitchen, K.A., *The Historical Chronology Of Ancient Egypt*, Copenhagen 1997.

(7) Peet, E., *The Stela Of Sebek-khu*, Manchester, 1914.

(8) Ranke, H., *Die Ägyptischen personennamen*, Band I, New York, Glückstadt, 1935.

(9) Roger, M., *A Century of Biblical Archaeology*, Cambridge, 1991.

**(10) Zemater,A.,(Asmaa El Tadlel)In Arabic:The  
nickname and metaphors in Ancient Egyptian  
,unpolished ph.d, faculty of Archaeology,Cairo1993.**