

FIRST INTERMEDIATE PERIOD FUNERARY STELA IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM (EA1783)

Ahmed, B.

Egyptology dept., Faculty of Archaeology, Ain Shams Univ., Cairo, Egypt  
E-mail address: [bassemyossef65@gmail.com](mailto:bassemyossef65@gmail.com)

**Article info.**

**Article history:**

Received: 3-11-2021

Accepted: 13-12-2022

Doi: 10.21608/ejars.2022.276169

**Keywords:**

First intermediate period

Naga-ed-Dêr stela

*In-ḥrt-nḥt*

funerary

EJARS – Vol. 12 (2) – Dec. 2022: 227-231

**Abstract:**

This paper deals with the stela of *In-ḥeret-N<sup>c</sup>kht* and his wife, now preserved in the British Museum London. This stela was found in Naga-ed-Dêr, Sohag, Upper Egypt and dated depending on the typological study of (Brovarski, E. The inscribed material of the first intermediate period from Naga-ed-Dêr) and other studies. The artistic features, such as the style of the pose of the deceased with his wife, the clothes, the ornaments, the shape of the offering table and the offerings on it and its arrangement, as well as the distinctive features of the hieroglyphic writing illustrated a scene such as the formula of *ḥtp di nsw* and its difference from the end of old kingdom and the first intermediate period to the middle kingdom. It was also dated from the titles of the deceased and his wife. Moreover, the present research paper provides a stylistic study of this stela of *In-ḥeret-N<sup>c</sup>kht* and paleographical and philological comments on its texts.

**1. Introduction**

The stela understudy belongs to *In-ḥrt-nḥt* and his wife. It is now exhibited in the British Museum. Its date given by the archives of the British Museum is from the first intermediate period. Several examples of stelae will be used for approximation through the details of clothes, hieroglyphic signs, and offering the *ḥtp-di-nsw* formula, which indicates to Naga-ed-Der [1] in Sohag, Upper Egypt.

**2. Description**

The stela of *in ḥrt nḥt*, fig. (1), it measured 66.5×53.5 cm. It is in a good state of preservation. It has scenes and hieroglyphic inscriptions surrounded by a frame divided into sections colored black, brown, and white. There are remnants of the same color on the text and representations of the owner and his wife, both scenes and hieroglyphics are in sunken relief. The

upper section consists of five horizontal lines of hieroglyphs. Below this, the owner is represented standing in a formal form, wearing a short kilt, a hair wig, a five-layer necklace on the neck, and two wide bracelets around his wrists. He holds a long stick in his left hand and a *ḥk3* scepter in his right hand and is barefoot. Before his face, a servant holds a vessel with one hand and gives him to drink with his other hand. Under him, there is a large vessel of perfume. Behind this servant, another carries a gazelle on his shoulders. Before him, there is an ox head, and behind him, there is a basket with three vessels on it. Under this, there is a small square offering table with many layers of offerings on it, beginning with five small vessels, a goose, a kind of fruit, a bouquet, a goat head, a thigh, and lamb ribs. Under the table, there are three sealed vessels.

This is followed by a list of the number of offerings and their kinds. The deceased's wife is behind him, and her left arm wraps around his right arm. She wears a long robe and a wig, and a necklace of seven layers. Around her wrists are two bracelets that look like her husband's bracelets, and she is barefoot. Upon her, there is a line of hieroglyphs containing her name and titles. Moreover, there is a small representation of his younger son *nn.wy* before his left leg wearing a triangular kilt, with his right hand folded to his chest and the left extended beside him without any details. Behind the owner's leg, between him and his wife, there is the name of his older son, *dbi*. There is also a fracture in the two lower corners of the plate.





Figure (1) Shows **a.** (EA1783) limestone stela, **b.** line drawings to the stela of *In-heret* (© British Museum), *Nakht* (© Iman Elsaid)

## 2.1. Text


1.  [2]

*h̄tp-di-nsw Inpw tp.y-dw.f im.y-wt nb t3-dsr pr.t-h̄rw n h̄3.ty -<sup>c</sup> h̄tm.w bi.ty* [3].


*Offering given by the king, and Anubis who-is on his hill, who-is in the-place-of-embalming, lord of the necropolis (lit. sacred land) (as) an invocation offering to the sealer of the king of lower Egypt.*

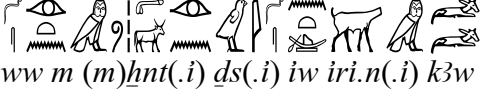
2.  *smr-w<sup>c</sup>.ty h̄ry-h̄b.t* [4]. *im3h.w hr ntr*  *nb pt* [5]. *In-h̄r.t-nht (hr) dd ink mry.*

*The sole friend (of the king), lector priest, the revered by the great god the lord of the sky, In-heret-nakht [6,7], says: I am (the one) whom beloved*

3.  *.n it .f h̄sy* [8]. *n mwt.f mrrw* [9] *n sn.wt.f* *i3m n 3bt.f* [10]

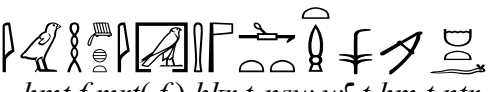
*of his father and his mother praised, who was-amiable to his brethren and kind to his household.*

4.  *iw rdi.n(.i) t n h̄kr h̄bsw n h̄3y iw d3.n(.i)* *I gave bread to the hungry, clothes to the naked, and I ferried*

5.  *iww m (m)hnt(.i) ds(.i) iw iri.n(.i) k3w* [11] *100 m irt.n(.i) ds(.i)*

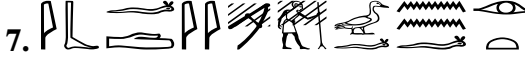
*the boatless in my own ferry, and I acquired 100 bulls being what I made myself.*

The line before his wife:

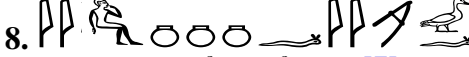
6.  *h̄mt.f mrt(.f) h̄kr.t-nsw w<sup>c</sup>.t hm.t ntr* *Hw.t-Hr.w im3h.t Hwi*

*His beloved wife, the sole ornament of the king, priestess of Hathor, the revered Houi.*

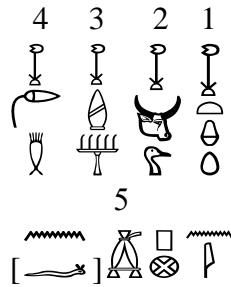
The line behind his legs:

7.    
*irt.n n.f s3.f smsw [mr]y.f Dbi*  
 (This is) what his eldest son made for  
 him, his beloved-one, 'ebi [12]

The Line before his legs:

8.    
*s3.f mry.f nnwy [7]*  
 His beloved son Nenwy.

9. Numbers under the offering table:



9.1. *h3 t*

thousands of bread loaves

9.2. *h3 ihw 3bdw*

thousands of bulls and birds

9.3. *h3 hkrw h3wt*

thousands of perfume oils and alters

9.4. *h3 nhbwt rdw*

thousands of buds of lotus and roots

9.5. *N ipw db3 [8] (n.f)*

Garments of Akhmim to him

### 3. Results

This study shows that this stela was found in Nag El-Deir, Sohag, Upper Egypt during the First Intermediate Period. Perhaps, one of the unknown tombs in this area is the tomb of 'In-*hert N<sup>c</sup>kht* and his family. His tomb may not have been found yet.

### 4. Discussion

#### 4.1. Stylistic notes on the persons and the offering table


a) The owner of the stela had a high position as "The sole friend (of the king), lector priest, the revered by the great god the lord of the sky", which means that he had a priesthood position and was very close to the king. He had a high-position wife, "the sole ornament

of the king, priestess of Hathor", which also had a priesthood position and was very close to the king. Therefore, the stela was inscribed and written with great perfection, indicating the distinguished level of the artist who executed the stela, who was often a royal artist.





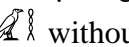




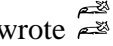

b) The relief of the stela is generally well-incised, showing details in all of its elements, where details appear of the deceased and his wife regarding the features of the face, head, the short kilt of the man, and the long dress of the woman, and the jewelry of both.



c) From Naga-ed-Deir: Although stelae of the ninth dynasty varied greatly in quality, style, and method of production, they all displayed the simplicity of the offering table scene commonly found on stelae of the old kingdom, the size of the offering table decreased, the half-loaves were replaced by other offerings, and the owner and his wife frequently stood not sat before the table rather. Critically, the appearance of the "standing couple before offerings" pose in Naga-ed-Deir in the ninth dynasty coincided with a political break with Memphis. During this period, local workshops were forced to develop innovative ways to deal with the reduced circumstances of their patrons.

#### 4.2. Paleographical and philological comments

a) At line 1: the sign *tp*  was written in the opposite direction of the writing in the line; it was an uncommon condition in the paintings of this period [10].

b) The *htp di nsw* formula construction changed between the old and middle kingdoms. The old kingdom formula: 'An offering that the king gives, (and) an offering that Anubis (gives)...', using a parallel construction to introduce the king and the god(s) as donors of the offerings. By the middle kingdom, the formula was reinterpreted, with the god introduced by a preposition, usually *n* or *hr*, 'An offering that the king gives

- (to) Anubis/Osiris, that he [i.e., the god] may (in turn) give invocation-offerings to ...'. Thus, the offerings were given by the king to the god, who passed these on to the deceased. Also, the paleographic in the name 'Anubis'. These changes from the old kingdom form of Anubis with the *h<sub>tp</sub>*-sign below it to the tall stand under 'Anubis', writing that appeared in the late old kingdom was common thereafter [11].
- c) The determinative of *t3* two grains of sands  not three: This pattern was common on the Naga-ed-Der stelae [12].
- d) At line 2: *in- h<sub>rt</sub>* was a local deity in the eighth district of Upper Egypt. He was an idol who was specialized in war and hunting, as his origin and the emergence of his worship dated to the era of the beginning of the dynasties in Abydos. The oldest known evidence of its existence dates to the end of the old kingdom, through the title of one of the priestesses, referring to the one who was buried in the cemetery "Nag al-Deir" and "Abydos" [13].
- e) At line 2 & 3: The titles which appear on this stela were common on the stelae of this period and this area (Nag al-Deir).
- f) At line 4:  *h<sub>3y</sub>* written in unusual form without  *h<sub>3</sub>* sign, it was usually  or  without the  determinative.
- g) At line 4: we can recognize the determinative in both *h<sub>kr</sub>*  *h<sub>3y</sub>* . The sitting man lost part of his left arm, although there was enough space to draw it. By reviewing the similar stelae of Nag Al-Deir, I did not find a similar case, so I do not know if it was on purpose or if it was just a mistake.
- h) At line 5: *win*  wrote  with doubling the sign  and without the determinative.

- i) At line 6: the titles of the wife were *h<sub>kr</sub>t nsw w<sup>c</sup>.tt* and *h<sub>m</sub>.t n<sub>tr</sub> H<sub>w</sub>.t-H<sub>r</sub>* that were common at the end of the old kingdom and the middle kingdom.
- j) At line 8: *nnwy* wrote with the sign  instead of .
- k) At line 9.5: *N ipw db<sub>3</sub> n.f* garments of Akhmim to him. Akhmim was a well-known production center of linen fabrics in Ancient Egyptian times, but the reference to Akhmim linen was not common in the offering scenes.

## 5. Conclusion

*The importance of studying this rectangular limestone stela of In-her<sub>t</sub> N<sup>c</sup>kht, which dates back to the first intermediate period in Naga-ed-Der, Sohag, pper Egypt, is that it represents an important stage extending from the end of the old kingdom to the beginning of the middle kingdom when this kind of stelae spread. This stela can be dated depending on:*

*\*) The artistic features, such as the style of the pose of the deceased with his wife, such as they were represented standing before the offering table, not seated as was common in the old kingdom. \*) The position of the wife putting her left arm around her husband's right arm. \*) The style of the clothes and their ornaments that matched other stelae from the same period and where the painting was found. \*) The shape of the offering table that became smaller and simpler than it was in the old kingdom. \*) The offerings on the offering table and their arrangement. \*) The distinctive features of the hieroglyphic writing accompanying the illustrated scene, such as in this stela, the formula of *h<sub>tp</sub> di nsw* and its difference between the end of the old kingdom and the first intermediate period to the middle kingdom. \*) The titles of the owner of the stela and his wife. Thus, it can be said that one of the unknown tombs in Nag El-Deir was perhaps the tomb of In-her<sub>t</sub> N<sup>c</sup>kht and his family.*

## References

- [1] Podzorski, P. (1999). Naga ed-Deir, in: Kathryn A. (ed.) *Encyclopedia of the Archeology of Ancient Egypt*, Routledge, London, pp. 551-55

- [2] Jones, D. (2000). *An index of ancient Egyptian titles, epithets and phrases of the old kingdom*, British Archaeological Reports, no. 2453, Oxford.
- [3] Ward, W. (1982). *Index of Egyptian administrative and religious titles of the middle kingdom*, American Univ. of Beirut Press, Beirut.
- [4] Hassan, S. (1945). *Excavations at Giza*, Vol. V, The Faculty of Arts, Fouad I Univ, Cairo.
- [5] Ranke, H. (1935). *Die Ägyptischen personennamen*, Bd .I, Druck von.J.J. Augastin, Glückstadt.
- [6] Dunham, D. (1937). *Naga-ed-Der stelae of the first intermediate period*, Oxford Univ. Press Oxford.
- [7] Kroenke, K. (2010). *The provincial cemeteries of Naga ed-Deir: A comprehensive study of tomb models dating from the late old kingdom to the late middle kingdom*, Univ. of California Press, Berkeley.
- [8] Brovarski, E. (1985). The inscribed material of the first intermediate period from Naga-ed-Dêr, *AJA*, Vol. 89 (4), pp. 581-584.
- [9] Lutz, H. (1927). *Egyptian tomb steles and offering stones*, J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, Leipzig.
- [10] Leprohon, R. (1990). The offering formula in the first intermediate period, *JEA*, Vol. 76. pp. 163-164.
- [11] Fleming, F. & Lothian, A. (1997). *The way to eternity: Egyptian myth*, Barnes & Noble Books, London.
- [12] Wilkinson, R. (2003). *The complete gods and goddesses of ancient Egypt*, Thames & Hudson, London
- [13] Du Mars, Ch. (2009). *The first intermediate period stela of Iku and Mer-imat*. The Univ. of Memphis Library, USA.