

Original article

UNPUBLISHED STELA OF *ii-m-htp* THE KEEPER OF DIADEM AND CLOTHING AT GRAND EGYPTIAN MUSEUM (GEM. 15345)

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Abstract:

This paper aims to examine a distinctive stela from Abydos, currently housed in the Grand Egyptian Museum under the inventory number GEM. 15345. The as yet unpublished stela belongs to *ii-m-htp*, the Keeper of the diadem and clothing, and is characterized by its division into four registers and a rounded top. Its significance lies in the presence of rare titles, a large number of personal names, which may reflect a specific social or administrative framework within the royal palace, as well as a clearly attested genealogy for the stela owner, making it a representative model of middle kingdom stelae. The present study offers a full transcription and translation of the inscriptions, followed by a discussion of the titles and personal names of the individuals represented. A predominance of administrative over religious functions is observed among the individuals recorded on the stela. The study further includes a palaeographic commentary on orthographic forms. An analysis of the stylistic and iconographic characteristics of the stela further contributes to determining its date, which can be assigned to the reign of King Amenemhat III.

1. Introduction

This paper examines a stela discovered by Mariette during his excavations at Abydos, where it was found set into a niche within a small chamber along the northern enclosure wall [1]. The stela was subsequently transferred to the Bulaq museum, then to the Cairo Egyptian museum, and is now housed in the Grand Egyptian museum. Both Lange and Schäfer transcribed the hieroglyphs of this stela and included its illustration [2]. However, they did not translate the inscriptions, describe the scenes, or examine the artistic style or the carving techniques. The present study aims to provide a full translation and commentary of the stela through an analysis of its artistic and decorative style, as well as an examination of its inscriptions, iconographic elements, and epigraphic characteristics. This integrated approach offers broader insight into the administrative and social framework of the late middle kingdom. The author aims to highlight the functional roles of the officials who bore the rare titles mentioned on the stela, such as *iry-ḥt n mdt*, which reflect specific functions within the middle kingdom administrative system. Furthermore, the artistic features and the inscription make this monument a representative example of middle kingdom stelae.

2. Methodological Study “Description”

The stela, fig. (1) is made of limestone and is in a relatively good state of preservation, although several black impurities

observed on the lower part of its surface. In addition, lighter-coloured areas are visible in the central part of the lunette as well as in the second and third registers on the left side; these are likely the result of localized erosion or the action of liquids.

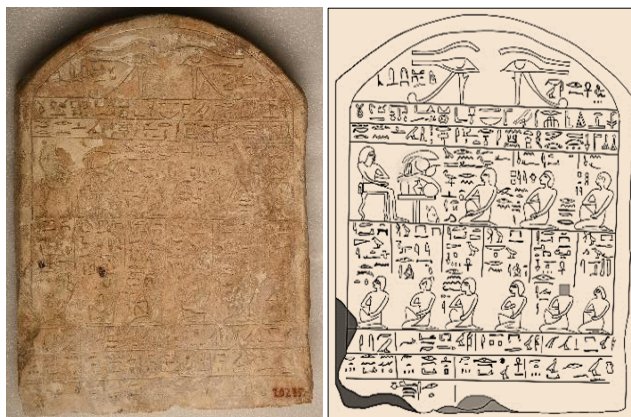


Figure (1) the stela of *ii-m-htp*

The stela measures 38.7 cm in height, 32 cm in width, and 8 cm in thickness. It is registered under the following inventory numbers: CG.20235 - SR3.9243 - GEM. 15345. The stela is unpainted and bears no traces of colour. It is

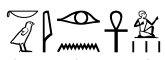
carved on one side only. The hieroglyphic inscriptions are executed in sunk relief, whereas the human figures are rendered in raised relief. Typologically, it belongs to the category of round-topped stelae, in which the lunette is separated from the main body of the monument by a horizontal dividing line. The stela is framed by a single incised border line and is divided into four sections containing scenes and inscriptions.

## 2.1. Scene and text

### 2.1.1. Lunette

In the lunette, two Wedjat eyes are depicted, lacking the central “šn” sign. Flanking the eyes, the names of three individuals are inscribed in two horizontal lines, written from right to left. The limited space available for the onomastic list below the scene likely necessitated the placement of these names within the lunette<sup>(a)</sup>. In total, the stela records twenty-eight personal names. The textual arrangement is as follows:

Right side of the Lunette:

  
*rḥw-ḥnh ir.n ikw*  
*rḥw-ḥnh born of ikw*


Left side of the Lunette:

  
*iry-ḥt n mdt snb*

*Chamber-Keeper of the cattle snb*

### 2.1.2. First register

The second register contains the main inscription, composed of two horizontal lines read from right to left. It preserves the funerary offering formula, listing the provisions required by the deceased to secure his sustenance and eternal life in the afterworld [3] as:

  
*ḥtp di nswt wsir ḥnty-imntyw ntr ʿ3 nb 3bdw di.f prt-ḥrw t  
 ḥnkt iḥw 3pdw šs mnḥt sntr mrḥt n k3 n iry nfr-ḥ3t iry ḥbsw  
 ii-m-ḥtp ir.n skr.*

*An offering which the king gives (to) Osiris, who presides over the westerners, the Great God, Lord of Abydos That he may give an invocation offering (of) bread and beer, Oxen and fowl, alabaster, cloth, incense and oil, for the ka of the Keeper of Diadem and Keeper of Clothing, ii-m-ḥtp born of skr.*

### 2.1.3. Second register

The third register contains the main scene of the stela. The owner, *ii-m-ḥtp*, is depicted at the far left, seated on a chair and facing right. The chair has a short backrest draped with a cloth, and its legs are carved in the form of lion legs resting on a support. He wears a long wig reaching the upper shoulders, a style characteristic of the middle kingdom [4], concealing the ears, and a short kilt tied at the front. His left hand is placed on his chest in a gesture of reverence, while his right hand extends toward the offerings, symbolizing his participation in the funerary provisions. Before him stands an offering table bearing various food items and vegetables, including onions or leeks, as well as loaves of bread in round and conical forms, with a vessel placed on top. Beneath the table, at the far right,

the head of a bull appears among the offerings. The remaining figures in the scene comprise three individuals with similar facial features and a consistent artistic style. They are depicted seated with one knee raised, wearing long wigs comparable to that of the stela owner. Each places his right hand upon his chest in a gesture of reverence, while the left hand extends toward the offerings. Above these three figures, hieroglyphic inscriptions record their respective names and titles, separated by vertical divider lines. In the central part of the scene, the son of the stela owner *dḥwty* is represented. In front of him, a vertical inscription is carved, to be read from left to right.



*m ir. n.f s3.f mry.f dḥwty ir.n ḥtp-  
iity*



*through what was made for him by  
his beloved son, dḥwty born of ḥtp-  
iity.*

On the right side of the third register, the stela owner’s two brothers are depicted seated on the ground. The first, positioned behind the owner’s son, is his half-brother. He is rendered in a manner closely resembling that of the son, with only subtle differences in facial features. A vertical inscription is carved in front of him, to be read from left to right, as follows:



*sn.f iry-ḥt ppy-ḥr-ḥnt ir. n kki.*



*His brother, Chamber-Keeper,  
ppy-ḥr-ḥnt, born of kki.*



At the far right of the scene, the full brother (*pḥ-ii*) is depicted in the same compositional style. Some of his bodily features, however, are faint or indistinct due to surface erosion or damage. A vertical inscription is carved above him, to be read from left to right, recording his name, as follows:



*sn.f pḥ-ii ir.n skr*






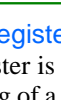


*His brother pḥ-ii born of skr.*

### 2.1.4. Third register

The fourth register is occupied by six figures seated on the ground with the right knee raised, all facing left. They wear

short kilts and long wigs, with the right hand placed on the chest in a gesture of reverence, while the left hand extends to rest upon the foot. Above each figure, a vertical hieroglyphic inscription is carved, separated from the adjacent text by a vertical dividing line. The register is divided into two scenes by a narrow intervening space, each scene comprising three figures arranged from left to right as follows:

<b>The 1<sup>st</sup> figure (male)</b>		$\text{iry-}^{\text{c}}\text{t n strw it-ib ir. n sbkt}$	Hall- keeper of necklace-makers, it-ib, born of sbkt.
<b>The 2<sup>nd</sup> figure (male)</b>		$\text{\$msw pr-}^{\text{c}}\text{ gby ir. n it.}$	Attendant of the great house gby born of it
<b>The 3<sup>rd</sup> figure (male)</b>		$\text{iry-}^{\text{c}}\text{t n strw snw-}^{\text{c}}\text{nh ir. n nhit}$	Hall- keeper of necklace-makers .born of nhit snw- <sup>c</sup> nh
<b>The 4<sup>th</sup> figure (male)</b>		$\text{\$msw pr-}^{\text{c}}\text{ nbw ir. n it}$	Attendant of the Great House nbw born of it
<b>The 5<sup>th</sup> figure (male)</b>		$\text{iry-}^{\text{c}}\text{t n hnkwt snw-}^{\text{c}}\text{nh ir. n ini}$	Chamber- keeper of the Chamber of Linen snw- <sup>c</sup> nh ini born of
<b>The 6<sup>th</sup> figure (male)</b>		$\text{\$msw pr-}^{\text{c}}\text{ iw.f snb m}^{\text{c}}\text{-hrw}$	Attendant of the great house iw.f snb true of voice.

### 2.1.5. Fourth register

The fourth register is occupied by a text written from right to left, consisting of a list of personal names, each separated from the next by a vertical dividing line. Such onomastic lists are attested from the reign of Senusret I onward, but they became particularly widespread during the Thirteenth dynasty [5], as follows:



$\text{\$msw pr-}^{\text{c}}\text{ d}^{\text{c}}\text{ \$/msw pr-}^{\text{c}}\text{ ppi \$/msw pr-}^{\text{c}}\text{ n}^{\text{c}}\text{nkf kmsi hnmw-htp ir. n mkt}^{\text{c}}\text{nhw ir. n mkt htp ir. n mkt nhiti ir. n mkt irt i}^{\text{c}}\text{i-ib}$

Attendant of the great house  $d^{\text{c}}$  Attendant of the great house ppi Attendant of the great house  $n^{\text{c}}nkf kmsi hnmw-htp$  born of mkt  $nhw$  born of mkt htp born of mkt nhiti born of mkt born of  $i^{\text{c}}i-ib$ .

## 3. Results

The stylistic and artistic features, together with the linguistic and palaeographical observations, indicate that the stela may be dated to the late twelfth dynasty, more specifically to the reign of king Amenemhat III. From a stylistic perspective, the vertical organization of the stela, comprising a round-topped lunette, a horizontal text band, and successive registers of scenes, reflects well-established middle kingdom conventions [6]. Elements supporting an end of the twelfth dynasty-date are the decoration of the lunette with paired Wedjat eyes without the  $\text{\$/sn}$  sign [7], the seated posture with one knee raised, and the absence of jewelry and personal adornment. These are characteristic features of representations during the reign of Amenemhat III [8,9]. Orthographic and palaeographical observations further indicate features typical

of the reign of Amenemhat III. These include the arrangement of the sign  $t$  above  $htp$  following  $nsw$ , a practice widely attested during the twelfth dynasty, as well as the specific hieroglyphic sign forms of  $s\text{\$/}^{\text{c}}\text{mnht}$  and  $ihw\text{\$/}^{\text{c}}\text{pdw}$ . The writing of the god Osiris' name together with his epithet  $hnty\text{\$/}^{\text{c}}\text{imnty}$  written without a determinative also became increasingly common during the reign of Amenemhat III. Moreover, the abbreviated offering formula  $n\text{\$/}^{\text{c}}\text{k}^{\text{c}}\text{n}$ , omitting the term  $im\text{\$/}^{\text{c}}\text{hw}$ , is not attested prior to the reign of Senusret I [10]. It, however, became the dominant formulation toward the end of the twelfth dynasty and subsequently emerged as a defining feature of thirteenth dynasty inscriptions [9,11]. Moreover, the onomastic analysis lends further support to this dating. Approx. 64% of the personal names attested on the stela first appear in the middle kingdom, whereas about 36% are already known from the old kingdom. In addition, several names recorded on the stela point more specifically to the reign of Amenemhat III, such as  $nbw$  and  $sbkt$ , both of which are attested on stelae securely dated to this king's reign [12-14]. Several titles are attested here for the first time. Among them is the title  $iry-^{\text{c}}\text{t n mdt}$ , known from this stela and CG 20104, dated to the thirteenth dynasty [15]. The present stela further demonstrates the actual duties of titles that had previously functioned primarily as honorifics, including  $iry\text{\$/}^{\text{c}}\text{nfr h}^{\text{c}}\text{3t}$  and  $iry\text{\$/}^{\text{c}}\text{hbsw}$ , as well as the title  $\text{\$/msw pr}^{\text{c}}\text{\$/}$ . The use of these titles as primary official designations for their holders does not appear before the end of the twelfth dynasty [16,17].

## 4. Discussion

### 4.1. Textual and linguistic analysis

The linguistic analysis is primarily based on the textual evidence of the stela, particularly the first register.  $htp-di-nsw$ : This formula first appears in the old kingdom, particularly in the Pyramid texts [18]:  $\text{\$/htp-di-nsw}$ . Its commonly attested form in the middle kingdom became:  $\text{\$/htp-di-nswt}$  +  $htp$  +  $di$ , with the  $t$  placed above the  $htp$  sign. This orthographic convention remained in use until the end of the thirteenth dynasty and later reappeared during the seventeenth and eighteenth dynasties [19-21]. This formula is attested on the stela under study in its commonly used middle kingdom form.  $di.f$ : According to Bennett [11], the  $p\text{\$/}^{\text{c}}\text{rt-hrw}$  formula was employed in offering formulas as early as the eleventh dynasty, whereas the use of the  $di.f\text{\$/}^{\text{c}}\text{prt-hrw}$  formula became common in offering texts during the twelfth dynasty. This formula is particularly significant as a precise chronological indicator, since it does not appear prior to the twelfth dynasty [22], and it constitutes one of the characteristic linguistic features of Amenemhat III's reign [11,23].  $W\text{\$/}^{\text{c}}\text{str}$ : The name of the god Osiris is commonly written in eleventh dynasty texts with the determinative  $\text{\$/}$  A40. The use of this determinative, however, began to decline during the reign of Senusret I, when its frequency dropped to approx. 44-48%. This decline continued in subsequent periods, reaching about 13% under Senusret III, before the determinative disappeared entirely during the reign of Amenemhat III [11,24-26]. On the present stela, the name of Osiris is written without a god determinative as  $\text{\$/}$ , a feature that strongly supports dating the monument to the reign of Amenemhat III<sup>(b)</sup>

**hnty imnty:** One of the most frequently attested epithets in Osirian offering formulae is *hnty imnty*, “Foremost of the Westerners.” This title is documented from the eleventh dynasty and continues to be attested into the early twelfth dynasty, up to the reign of Senusret I. Its frequency declines under Amenemhat II, but rises again during the reigns of Senusret III and Amenemhat III, and does not exceed 16% in subsequent periods [11,26]. By the late twelfth dynasty, the epithet is commonly written without the divine determinative [11] (𓄠A40)<sup>(c)</sup>, in agreement with the orthography observed on the present stela, as follows, 𓄠𓄠𓄠. In the present example, *hnty* appears without the phonetic complement *t*, a feature of clear linguistic significance. As noted by Ilin-Tomich, sources from the Memphis–Faiyum region typically include the phonetic complement *t*, as, 𓄠𓄠𓄠 or 𓄠𓄠𓄠 whereas texts from other regions may omit it or substitute *t* or *n* [14], as 𓄠𓄠𓄠𓄠. On the present stela, however, the biliteral sign U33 (*ti*) is employed as a phonetic complement, a usage that may reflect a scribal error. This is perhaps supported given that the scribe also employed the sign for “west” R14<sup>†</sup> in its archaic hieroglyphic form R13<sup>‡</sup> [27], which first appeared in the sixth dynasty [28] and later developed into the form commonly used in the middle kingdom. Nevertheless, this unusual orthographic treatment of the divine epithet may point to additional epigraphic significance and could contribute to a discussion of the scribe’s background or the administrative milieu from which the stela originated. **nb 3bdw:** “Lord of Abydos” is one of the epithets of the god Osiris that was widely attested during the eleventh dynasty and the early twelfth dynasty. It became relatively rare under the reigns of Senusret III and Amenemhat III [11]. The most common orthographic form of this epithet is 𓄠𓄠𓄠, which corresponds exactly to the form attested on the stela under discussion and thus provides additional evidence consistent with the established orthographic characteristics of the late middle kingdom<sup>(d)</sup>. **sš mnht:** The items *sš* and *mnht* (alabaster and garments) are attested in several orthographic variants, including: 𓄠, 𓄠, 𓄠𓄠, 𓄠𓄠. On the stela under discussion, they occur in the following orthographic form: 𓄠𓄠 which represents one of the most commonly attested spellings on stelae dating to the late twelfth dynasty [14]. **ihw 3pdw:** The phrase *ihw 3pdw* (“oxen and fowl”) constitutes one of the most frequently attested categories of offerings, immediately following the *prt-hrw* (invocation offering) formula. It typically occurs after *t hnkt* (bread and beer). This phrase is documented in several orthographic variants, the most common being form 𓄠𓄠 without a determinative and form 𓄠𓄠 with a plural marker [29]. On the studied stela, the phrase appears as 𓄠𓄠 supplemented by the food determinative X4. This is the most widespread form on stelae of the late middle kingdom, before gradually disappearing after the end of the twelfth dynasty [14]. **sntṛ mrht:** Offering formulas in the middle kingdom typically included bread, beer, oxen and fowl, linen, and alabaster. During the twelfth dynasty, both oil and incense were added to these offering requests, becoming especially common under the reigns of Senusret III and Amenemhat III [11,30,31]. **n k3 n:** On eleventh dynasty stelae,

offering formulas were typically dedicated to “*n im3hw* (the honoured one) + [Name]. During the twelfth dynasty, the formula shifted to “the ka of the honored one + [Name], *n k3 n im3hw* + [Name]. The abbreviated form, *n k3 n*, without the term *im3hw*, does not appear before the reign of Senusret I [10, 32]. It subsequently became the most widely used formula by the end of the twelfth dynasty and emerged as a characteristic feature of the thirteenth dynasty [9,11,33].

## 4.2. Onomastics

This stela is distinguished by an exceptional onomastic richness, comprising approx. twenty-nine personal names (including several repetitions), a number that clearly exceeds the average generally attested on middle kingdom stelae. Nineteen of these names occur in the lunette and in the first, second, and third registers, while ten names are recorded in the fourth and final register, which consists of onomastic lists. Such name lists are known from the reign of Senusret I onward (cf. CG 20526; CG 20515; CG 20131) [5,34] and occur sporadically in examples from the late middle kingdom, but they became particularly widespread during the thirteenth dynasty. The unusually large number of personal names recorded on this monument may indicate a distinct social or institutional framework. It could reflect the presence of a sizable service unit within the royal palace, a heterogeneous group of officials attached to a single administrative body, or an expanded functional network of a royal character. Onomastic analysis further reveals that the majority of the names attested on the stela approx. 62% first appear in the middle kingdom, whereas names with origins in the old kingdom account for about 38% of the total, tab. (1). This distribution strongly supports this stela’s dating to the late middle kingdom. Moreover, two names recorded on the stela allow for a more precise association with the reign of Amenemhat III, as discussed. **nbw:** According to Ranke [35] the name may be interpreted as meaning “this is my lord,” [14] or alternatively as “the golden one,” possibly alluding to an association with the goddess Hathor. The name is not yet attested in the old kingdom, with its earliest occurrences dating to the middle kingdom and showing a marked concentration toward the end of the twelfth dynasty (cf. CG 20356; CG 20450; CG 20521; CG 20545; CG 20429) [2,34]. On the stela under discussion, the fourth individual in the third register bears the name *nbw*, together with the title *šmsw pr ʿ3*, and is explicitly stated to be born of the lady *it*. Significantly, the same combination of name, title, and mother’s name occurs on stela (BM EA.101) [12,13], which is securely dated to the reign of king Amenemhat III [36-39]. This close correspondence substantially enhances the chronological value of the name and supports its use as a precise indicator for dating the present stela. **sbkt (mshṫ):** This name is not attested in old kingdom sources, and its earliest occurrence appears during the middle kingdom [35]. It may also be read as *mshṫ*, and in the present context it represents the female personal name of the mother of the individual *it-ib*, the first figure in the third register and bears the title *iry-ʿt in strw*. The same woman’s name, together with her son’s name and his title, is attested on stela CG. 20338, which was dated by Danijela to the reigns of kings Senusret III and Amenemhat III [13],

and by Ilin-Tomich specifically to the reign of Amenemhat III [14]. In addition to the names discussed above, the stela includes several distinctive personal names that are only rarely attested on middle kingdom monuments and are entirely absent from the known onomastic corpora of the old kingdom. Among these is the name *ppy-hr-hnt*, for which no other parallels have been identified on middle kingdom stelae. The same applies to the name *gby*, which is likewise rare and is attested once, on stela BM EA 248 [40]. As for the name of the stela owner, *ii-m-htp*, it is recorded by Ranke and interpreted as meaning “he who comes in peace” or “the one who comes in peace” [35]. This personal name is well attested throughout Egyptian history. It first appears in the old kingdom and continues to be used up to the Graeco-Roman era. The textual evidence shows that the name was widely employed in its masculine form across all periods. In contrast, its occurrence in the feminine form (*ii-m-htpt*) is extremely rare and is attested only once, borne by an Asiatic woman. The name is attested in a variety of spellings [35,41]:  $\text{𓂏𓂏𓂏}$ ,  $\text{𓂏𓂏𓂏}$ ,  $\text{𓂏𓂏𓂏}$ . On the examined stela, the name is written as,  $\text{𓂏𓂏𓂏}$ . All personal names recorded on the present stela are documented in Ranke’s corpus. The first exception concerns the name of the stela owner’s wife, *htp-iity*, which is not attested in Ranke’s corpus and for which no securely dated parallels from the middle kingdom are currently known. The second exception relates to the name of the stela owner’s full brother, *ptḥ-ii*. This name appears to be incompletely preserved, with one or more signs missing, rendering its reading uncertain. The following table presents the personal names attested on the stela according to their chronological appearance.



**Table (1)** Chronological classification of personal names attested on the stela

Historical Period	Number of Names	Percentage	Names	References
Old Kingdom	10	38%	<i>ibw, snb, ii-m-htp, kki, nbt, iui, ppi, hnmw-htp, htp, ḫt-ib.</i>	Ranke, H., L48 (10), 312 (15), 298 (8), 349(1), 212(9), 33 (4), 131(12), 276 (6), 257(22), 11(19).
Middle Kingdom	16	62%	<i>ḫbw-ḫh, skr, ḫwt, ppy-hr-hnt, it-ib, sbkt, gby, it, smw-ḫh, nbw, iw-j-snb, ḫt, ḫkt, kmt, mkt, ḫjsw</i>	Ranke, H., I. 225 (19), 298(8), 407 (13), 132(9), 50 (14), 306(5), 350 (15), 49(7), 311 (7), 184(14), 16 (1), 404 (9), 69 (10), 345(17), 166 (19), 68(9)

### 4.3. Title


The stela records seven distinct titles borne by several individuals, with certain titles occurring repeatedly. Notably, the title *šmsw pr*  $\text{𓂏}$  is attested for six individuals, three in the third register and three in the fourth. while the title *iry-ḫt n strw* is held by the first individual, *it-ib*, and the third one, *snw-ḫh*, both appearing in the third register. In addition, the stela is distinguished by the presence of exceptionally rare titles that are otherwise unattested in the middle kingdom beyond this monument, thereby enhancing its administrative and chronological significance. The titles on the stela from top to bottom are presented. ***iry-ḫt n mdt***: This title is among the rarest in the Egyptian administrative record. It is entirely unattested in old kingdom sources and appears only once in the middle kingdom, namely on the present stela. It was borne by an individual named *snb*, whose name and title are recorded in the lunette, on the left side of the Wedjat eyes, in the orthographic form  $\text{𓂏𓂏𓂏}$ . The title reappears during the thirteenth dynasty on stela CG 20104, where it is held by an individual named *k3i-ḫh*, recorded in the fourth register, as  $\text{𓂏𓂏𓂏}$  [17]. Ward translated this title as “hall-keeper of the stable” [42];

However, a functionally more accurate interpretation is “keeper of the cattle yard”. In Egyptian texts, the term *mdt* designates livestock enclosures dedicated to the management of herds, including cattle, sheep, goats [43], and sacrificial animals  $\text{𓂏𓂏}$   $\text{𓂏}$  *ibw* [44]. The holder of this title, *snb*, was most likely an administrative official attached to the royal palace and responsible for one of the royal cattle yards. This interpretation is supported by the fact that most individuals recorded on the stela bear titles associated with royal administration rather than religious institutions. The title appears closely related to *imy-r mdtw*, “Overseer of the Cattle Yards” [17], a well-attested office in Middle Kingdom sources (CG 20032; CG 20112 [2]; CG 20742 [1]; CG 23045 [45]; Louvre C17 [1]). Holders of this office were linked to regional administrative offices in the later middle kingdom [17], reporting to the *imy-r pr*, the supervisor of the royal household [46]. This hierarchical relationship suggests that *iry-ḫt n mdt* functioned as a subordinate or specialized role within the broader administrative framework of livestock management. Such evidence points to a structured administrative hierarchy within the cattle-rearing sector, comprising a general supervisor and lower-ranking officials responsible for individual units or specific herds. The title thus reflects a degree of administrative specialization characteristic of the late middle kingdom, when certain offices became directly integrated into regional administration or the royal institutional apparatus. ***iry nfr- ḫ3t***: This title, “Keeper of the Royal Diadem” is among the well-attested titles from the old kingdom onward [16], occurring in several orthographic variants, including  $\text{𓂏𓂏𓂏}$ ,  $\text{𓂏𓂏𓂏}$  [44]. On this stela, it appears in the form  $\text{𓂏𓂏𓂏}$ , an uncommon writing of this title on stelae from the late Middle Kingdom, (cf. CG 20080 - BM EA101- Berlin ÄM 1189) [2,36,47]. During the old kingdom and the early twelfth dynasty, this title was generally employed as a secondary or auxiliary designation borne by high officials and priests, reflecting its ritual and honorific character within the royal court [16]. In the late middle kingdom, however, its function appears to have shifted, as the title began to be used as a primary and stable office held by its bearer, albeit still in relatively limited instances [17]. Notable examples include the owner of the present stela, *ii-m-htp*, as well as the individuals *shḫp-ib-r-ḫt-sbn* and *sbk-m-ḫ3t* on stela CG 20080 [2], in addition to a single documented case on Berlin ÄM 1189 [47]. Despite the range of interpretations proposed for this title, it generally indicates that its holder was responsible for supervising or safeguarding the components of royal head adornment whether crown, headband, or related regalia [48]. This interpretation is further supported by the additional title borne by the stela owner, *ii-m-htp*, namely *iry ḫbsw* (Keeper of Clothing), suggesting that his duties centred on preparing and adorning king Amenemhat III for official ceremonies and public occasions. Accordingly, *ii-m-htp* thus one of the prominent courtiers within the royal household during this king’s reign. ***iry ḫsbw***: The title means “Keeper of Clothing” [42]. It is not attested in the old kingdom, and its earliest appearance seems to date to the middle kingdom. On the stela under discussion, it occurs in an abbreviated orthographic form, as follows:  $\text{𓂏𓂏}$ . This title became incre-

asingly common on stelae of the late middle kingdom and continued in use during the thirteenth dynasty as a primary title borne by its holders (cf. CG 20549; CG 20431; CG 20144) [34]. Holders of this office appear to belong primarily to the administrative sector concerned with the storage, sealing, and protection of royal property [17], particularly the economic sphere of the palace related to the management of the linen chamber. Within the palace administration, this economic sector was associated with officials bearing titles such as *iry hkw* (Keeper of Linen) and *iry hbsw* (Keeper of Clothing) [49]. ***iry-ʿt***: The title “Chamber-Keeper” is attested from the old kingdom onward. Its most common orthographic form employs the sign A47  [44,48], or closely related signs depicting a seated man. Occasionally, however, the title is written phonetically using the signs *i* and *r*  [50]. On the stela under discussion, the title appears in both forms; nevertheless, the phonetic writing is clearly predominant, as the determinative A47 occurs only once. This preference is significant for dating purposes. Comparative evidence shows that phonetic spellings of this title are characteristic of inscriptions dating from the mid-twelfth dynasty through the end of the twelfth dynasty. Thus, orthographic practice observed on the present stela accords well with the palaeographical and linguistic features typical of monuments from this period [51]. The distribution of this title within offices commonly expressed by the forms *iry* and *s3w* suggests a functional association with the management of high-value commodities stored in magazines, particularly meat products and certain types of oils [17]. Although storage installations are attested from the early middle kingdom, the administrative framework governing these facilities and the personnel operating within them becomes clearly defined only toward the end of the twelfth dynasty [49], as reflected in contemporary stelae and inscriptions. This development underscores the responsibility of the title-holder for the supervision, preservation, and security of stored goods. On the stela under discussion, the title is borne by *ppi*, the second individual in the second register. ***irt ʿt n strw***: This title is not attested in old kingdom sources. Ward translated it as “Keeper of the Chamber of Necklace-Makers” [42], whereas Ilin-Tomich, tentatively suggested “Keeper of the Chamber of strw Plants” [52]. The title appears to have been functionally linked with the title *imy-r pr n strw*, indicating the existence of a specialized administrative unit responsible for particular materials or products within the storage. Quirke has further associated this title with the sphere of food production [17]. The earliest attested occurrence of this title may be represented by the present stela, where it is borne by two individuals: *it-ib* (the first individual in the fourth register) and *snw-ʿnh* (the third individual in the same register). ***šmsw n pr-ʿ3***: This title means “Attendant of the Great House.” It is attested from in the old kingdom [48]; however, the available evidence indicates that the duties associated with attendants of the royal palace became more clearly defined during the late twelfth dynasty. Their responsibilities included the care of clothing, sandals, and other personal items within the royal palace, reflecting a form of direct service closely connected with the king’s daily life. The earliest explicit attestation of

this title is recorded on stela BM EA 101, where it is borne by an individual named *nbw-Snwsrt* [17,16]. On the stela under discussion, the title is attested for six individuals, namely *gby*, *nbw*, and *iw.f snb* (respectively the second, fourth, and sixth individuals in the third register), as well as *d3*, *ppi*, and *ʿnkf* (in the final register). ***iry-ʿt n ʿt hnkwt***: Ward translated this title as “Hall- Keeper of the Kitchen” [48], while Smither rendered it as “Servant of the Offering Chamber” [53]. Quirke, however, proposed interpreting the title *iry hnkwt* as “Keeper of the Linen” [17], a reading that appears more consistent with the context of the present stela. On this basis, the title may best be translated as “Chamber-Keeper of the Linen Chamber”. This interpretation correlates with the other titles attested on the stela, most of which are closely connected with the administration of clothing and personal adornment of the king. It is therefore likely that the individuals recorded on the stela belonged to a single administrative unit, probably responsible for the management, storage, and supervision of textiles and related materials within the royal household.

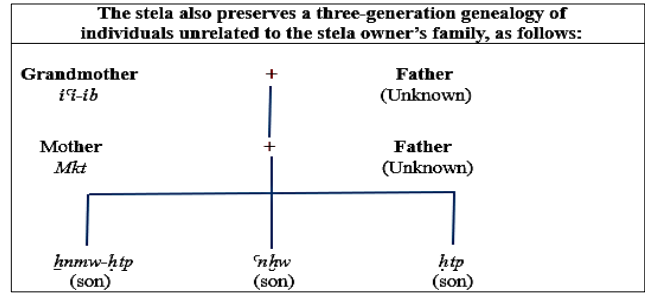
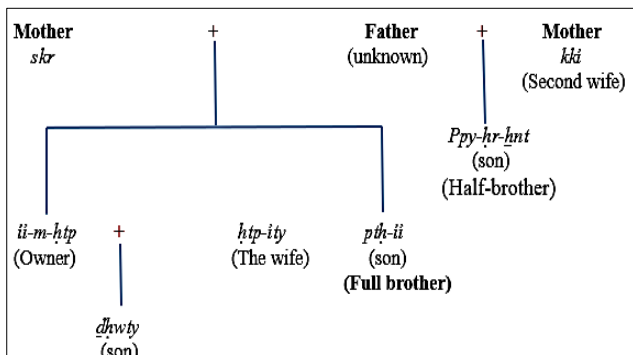
#### 4.4. Analysis of iconographic and stylistic features

\*) The arrangement of the elements’ arrangement the curved upper section, then the horizontal inscription before the scenes correspond to the standard layout of middle kingdom stelae. Stelae of the early twelfth dynasty are characterized by semi-circular topped in which the curve merges with the vertical body of the monument without a clear demarcation [6], a layout that remained widely in use with little modification until the reigns of Senusret III and Amenemhat III. By contrast, half-round topped were more common at the beginning of the twelfth dynasty, before being replaced by arched lunettes with clearly defined “shoulders” formed at the junction of the curve and the sides of the stela [32]. This latter type, represented by the stela under discussion, is generally considered to have emerged during the twelfth and thirteenth dynasties. \*) The lunette of the stela is decorated with a pair of Wedjat eyes without the *šn* sign, an iconographic innovation dated to the end of the twelfth dynasty [7,23], which appears to have become increasingly common in subsequent periods. The present stela is further distinguished by the inclusion of personal names within the upper lunette, a feature that is rarely attested on stelae of this date. In most contemporary examples, this zone is typically occupied by the Wedjat eyes, either with or without the *šn* sign, by divine symbols accompanied by short cultic texts, or occasionally by royal formulas. The presence of personal names in the lunette may therefore indicate that these were added after the original completion of the stela or inserted during a later phase of use. This is supported by the use of hieratic signs in the upper lunette, such as D58, N35, and O1,  [54]. This illustrates the interventions of more than one scribe on this stela; it is not yet possible to state whether these happened at different stages of the stela’s execution, or as a secondary usage of the stela. \*) The stela reveals an unmistakable uniformity among the depicted human figures in terms of gestures and proportions, as well as in the distribution of individuals within each register. This feature is characteristic of the late middle kingdom stelae, during which the traditional differentiation in scale between the stela owner and the other represented figures gradually diminished [9,31,55] \*) The seated posture with one knee

raised is attested for both sexes in tombs dating to the late old kingdom. In the middle kingdom, however, this posture was restricted to male figures from the reign of Senusret I to that of Senusret III. Under king Amenemhat III, it became a convention, reflecting the general tendency of this period toward simplicity. A further characteristic feature is the complete absence of bracelets and jewellery on all figures represented on the stela, a trait that is likewise typical of the reigns of Senusret III and Amenemhat III [9,56].

#### 4.5. Genealogy

Genealogical relationships on the present stela are expressed through the formula *ir(t).n* (“born of + the mother’s name”), which clearly reflects a matrilineal genealogy. The importance of the mother as a genealogical reference increased progressively from the eleventh dynasty through the reign of Amenemhat III, eventually becoming the dominant element in familial identification during this period [22,26]. Although the mother is not visually represented among the figures depicted on the stela, her role remains central to the genealogy, as all individuals recorded are identified through maternal rather than paternal descent, highlighting her pivotal position within the family structure. Through the genealogical sequence recorded on it, this stela also reflects a network of social and personal relationships within ancient Egyptian society. The owner’s half-brother, *ppy-hr-hnt ir.n kki*, is depicted in the main register directly in front of him, following the owner’s son, and is explicitly accompanied by his official title. By contrast, the full brother, *pḥ-ii ir.n skr*, appears behind them without any title. This arrangement suggests two main possibilities. First, the ordering of figures may have been determined by administrative rank or official status, with the absence of titles for both the son and the full brother indicating a relatively modest social standing. Alternatively, the half-brother, whose title is recorded, may have enjoyed a higher status or a closer personal relationship with the stela owner than the full brother. The stela of *ii-m-Htp* is further distinguished by the inclusion of genealogical sequences relating to individuals who do not belong to the stela owner’s immediate family, and whose degree of relationship to him remains unclear. This feature adds an important social dimension to the stela, as these individuals may have been colleagues or associates within a shared professional context. Accordingly, the genealogical sequence of the stela owner, extending across three generations, may be presented in the following matrix:



#### 5. Conclusion

The study demonstrates that the *ii-m-htp* stela preserved at the Grand Egyptian Museum with the registration number GEM. 15345, constitutes a prime example of late middle kingdom stelae. It combines clearly delineated registers with rare titles, socially meaningful genealogical formulas, and a wide array of personal names. The research is based on a comprehensive approach, encompassing text translation, stylistic, iconographic, and palaeographic analyses, as well as a detailed examination of the recorded names and titles. The findings show that the stela’s artistic and linguistic features align closely with those known from the reign of Amenemhat III, as further supported by parallels in nominal and titular evidence on contemporaneous stelae. The significance of this stela lies in its documentation of administrative organization and social structure in the late middle kingdom

#### Endnots

- (a) Compare: (stela No.4403), Franke, D. (1983). Die Stele Inv. Nr. 4403 im Landesmuseum in Oldenburg: Zur Lebensmittelproduktion in der 13. Dynastie. *Studien zur Alt-ägyptischen Kultur*, 10, 157-179.
- (b) Lange & Schäfer 1902: vol. 1, CG. 20126, CG. 20174, CG. 20204, CG. 20233, CG. 20269, CG. 20282, CG. 20326, CG. 20346, CG. 20351.
- (c) Lange & Schäfer 1902: vol. 1, CG.20043, CG. 20088, CG. 200102.
- (d) Compare: CG 20038- CG 20065- CG20140- CG 20310- CG 20536- CG 20691- CG 20723.

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