



## The False Door of *HZ.J* at The Imhotep Museum, Saqqara

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### ABSTRACT

This paper is a study of the false door of *hz.j*, discovered in 2003 during the excavations of the Gisir el-Mudir cemetery at Saqqara. Published for the first time, this false door comprehensively describes, the texts transcribed and translated, and the meaning of Khesi's name and titles is discussed. The paleographical, orthographical, and artistic characteristics suggest that the false door dates it dates to the end of the Old Kingdom. The false door with registration number SQ.SCA.19408 is currently on display at the Imhotep Museum in Saqqara.


### INTRODUCTION

The False Door of Khesi was discovered in 2003 by Khaled Mahmoud for the Supreme Council of Antiquities (SCA). It was found in the shaft tomb of Khesi located in the Gisir el-Mudir cemetery in Saqqara, which is west of the Unas Pyramid and approximately 400 meters southwest of Djoser's Pyramid (Soleiman 2018, 818) (Abd el-Sattar 2024, 1). Khesi's tomb is near the tomb of Nyankhnesut, which was discovered by the Egyptian SCA excavations led by Khaled Mahmoud in 2000. Nyankhnesut's tomb dates to the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> Dynasty and the beginning of the 6<sup>th</sup> Dynasty (Leahy & Mathieson 2016, 33) (Mahmoud 2002, 75) (Daoud 2007, 23). Following the excavation of Khesi's tomb the false door was kept in the Imhotep museum storeroom in Saqqara with number 2/2003. The false door is currently on display at the Imhotep Museum in Saqqara with number SQ.SCA.19408.

### DESCRIPTION OF THE FALSE DOOR OF KHESI

The false door of *HZ.j* is made from limestone and is in a good state of preservation. It measures 88 cm in height and 49 cm in width (Pl. I and Fig. I). It bears traces of colors limited to a few parts and on the cornice.

The false door does not have an architrave, but a cavetto cornice surrounded by torus moulding on three edges; the upper edge and two sides (Vandier 1954, II, fig. 276) (Wiebach 2001, 499) (Abd el-Sattar, Boraik, & Fayez 2015, 321). It has upper and lower lintels, a panel, two outer jambs, two inner jambs, and a central niche that imitates a closed double-leaf door with two bolts, and at its top is the drum. The upper lintel is inscribed with two horizontal lines of hieroglyphic inscriptions with the traditional offering formula *hṯp dj nsw.t* and the titles of Khesi.

In the middle of the false door, is a T-shaped panel surrounded by two narrow apertures on either side. The scene on the panel shows *H.z.j* on the left sitting on a chair of medium height, and facing right. The seat has a low back with bull's legs resting on supports resembling inverted truncated cones or pyramids (Fischer 1976, 4) (Cherpion 1989, 29, fig. 7a). *H.z.j*, is seated on a cushion that doesn't cover the whole chair, and is wearing a shoulder-length wig (Swinton 2014, 83, 16, 17, figs. 16- 17) with his ear exposed, a broad collar around his neck, and a knee-length tight kilt (Staehein 1966, XXI, fig. 10) held at the waist with a belt. His left arm is across his chest with a closed hand, while his right arm is extended towards an offering table. On the offering table are seven tall loaves of bread that resemble the hieroglyphic sign , which is associated with the sustenance of the deceased and refers to the "Field of offerings" or "Field of Reeds" in the afterlife (Daoud 2018, 108). Above the bread lies a piece of meat and the leg of an ox. Above the offerings on the table is an ideographic offering list, directed towards *H.z.j*.

The lower lintel is inscribed with a horizontal line of text, while the inner jambs have a short column of text mentioning the name of *H.z.j* and some of his titles. Each of the outer jambs bears a hieroglyphic column with a representation of *H.z.j* at the end, standing and facing inwards.

On the left outer jamb *H.z.j* is depicted as an old man with a large stomach, flabby breasts, short hair, and wearing a long pointed kilt with a triangular apron. He holds in his left hand a long staff, while his right arm is extended by his side. On the right outer jamb *H.z.j* is represented as a young man with a slim body. He wears a shoulder-length wig with ears exposed, a short beard, a broad collar, and a short pointed knee-length kilt. He holds in his right hand a long staff, while his left arm is extended by his side, with the left hand holding a *sekhem*-scepter, which is partially obscured by his body.

## FALSE DOOR TEXT AND TRANSLATION

### THE PANEL



*h3 t h3 hnkt h3 k3.w) h3 3pd(.w) šs mnht n H.z.j*

One thousand loaves of bread, one thousand beers, one thousand oxen, one thousand fowl, alabaster vessels, and clothing to *H.z.j*.

### UPPER LINTEL



*hpt dj nsw.t Inpw tp(y)-dw.f prt-hrw t hnkt nt jm3h.w hr ntr 3 nb pt*

An offering which the king gives, and Anubis, who is upon his mountain. An invocation offering (consisting of) bread and beer for the revered before the great god, lord of the heaven.

**LOWER LINTEL**

*špsy nswt jmy-r hnww Hz.j*

Noble of the king, the overseer of the rowers *Hz.j*.

**LEFT INNER JAMB**

*jm3h(.w) hr Inpw tp(y)-dw.f Hz.j*







The revered before Anubis, who is upon his mountain, *Hz.j*.


**Right inner jamb**

*jm3h(.w) hr Inpw tp(y)-dw.f Hz.j*

The revered before Anubis, who is upon his mountain, *Hz.j*.



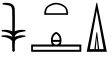





oar found in all writings, the term “rowers” is more accurate. The title *jmy-r hmw* appeared during the Old Kingdom and was written  (Jones 2000, I, 197 [739]). In the Middle Kingdom, it continued in use and was written as  (Ward 1982, 41 [310]). It has been noted that the artist inaccurately used the sign of the oar  [P10]. On the false door of Khesi, it was written as  perhaps due to space restrictions, instead of using the signs  [D33], and  [D33C].

- 2- *špsy nswt*: Nobleman of the king (Murray 1908, pl. XLV) (Alliot 1937, 95, 154 [15]) (Ward 1982, 174 [1510]) (Jones 2000 II, 988 [3648]). The first appearance of this title was in the Sixth Dynasty (Galvin 1981, 246, 251) and it was common until the Eleventh Dynasty (Ward 1989, 19, 22). This title was used more often for men than women until the end of the Old Kingdom, when the feminine form continued in the Heracleopolitan Period (Fischer 2000, 30) (El-Kashef 2022, 132).
- 3- *jm3h.w*: The Revered, or The Honored (Erman & Grapow 1971, I, 82) (Jones 2000, I, 11 [42]) (Kuraszkiewicz 2009, 117). This is one of the common non-royal titles in ancient Egypt, which was usually followed by the names and titles of the deceased (Clark 1959, 231, 234). This title appeared in the Fourth Dynasty onwards (Fischer 1996, 194).
- 4- *jm3h.w hr ntr ʕ nb pt*: The revered before the great god, the lord of heaven (Daressy 1916, 201, 204) (Kanawati 1982, III, 42) (Kanawati 1986, VI, 12, 2,11,16) (Jones 2000, I, 31 [146]). This title dates back to late in the reign of Pepi II (Sixth Dynasty) (Jéquier 1940, 64). Although the epithet *ntr ʕ* appears in the Fourth Dynasty (Barta 2000, 40), it was a common epithet given to several ancient Egyptian gods, including, Ptah, Osiris, Horus, and Ra (Fischer 1992, 72–75) (Leitz 2000, IV,395). While the epithet *nb pt* means “Lord of heaven” (Erman & Grapow 1971, II, 227 [9]). This epithet appeared from the Old Kingdom until the Greek-Roman Period. It was associated with several gods, such as Osiris, Ra, Atum, Ptah, and Amun-Ra (Leitz 2002, III, 624). It is noted that the determinative of the sky in the word “*pt*” was written in a vertical form as , perhaps again due to a lack of space.
- 5- *jm3h(w) hr Inpw tp(y)-dwf*: The revered before Anubis, who is upon his mountain (Jones 2000, I, 16 [72]). Some individuals of the Old Kingdom carry this title, and they all lived during the Sixth Dynasty (Mariette 1885, 412, E.12) (Barsanti 1900, I, fig. 9) (Daressy 1917, 134) (Hassan 1950, VI<sup>3</sup>, 11 [18], fig. 9) (Hassan 1953, VII, 57 [11], fig. 49) (Ziegler 1990, 230 [41]).

## DATING AND CONCLUSION

As for the dating of this false door, it bears several features that appeared frequently on false doors dated to the end of the Old Kingdom and Heracleopolitan Period.

- The small size of the false door, a cavetto cornice, and torus moulding were common stylistic elements for false doors that appeared at the end of the Sixth Dynasty (Strudwick 1985, 17) (Brovarski 2006, 71) until the end of the Heracleopolitan period (Brovarski 2009, 372, 373).
- This false door features narrow jambs with a single column of inscriptions on each jamb. Additionally, the combination of figures on the outer jambs and texts on the inner

- jambes are features not found before the reign of Pepy II (Strudwick 1985, 36, 75 [30], 115 [93]) (Mariette 1885, 367) (Firth & Gunn 1926, I, 179) (Abdelmoniem 2022, 11).
- The lower lintel contains a short line of hieroglyphs, a common feature of the Sixth Dynasty, especially towards the end of the Dynasty (Daoud 2018, 116).
  - The false door has a T-shaped panel with narrow apertures, which appeared at the end of the Sixth Dynasty (Strudwick 1985, 22) (Brovarski 2006, 112).
  - The cushion covering the back of the chair Khesi is seated on is a style documented from the Old Kingdom, beginning with the reign of Unas and extending through the Sixth Dynasty (Bolshakov 2001, 72,74), as well as into the Heracleopolitan Period (Firth & Gunn 1926, II, 67 [2], 73 [1]) and the Middle Kingdom (Pérez Die 2010, 364).
  - The *htp dj nsw.t* formula is written on the false door as  which was the common arrangement from the Old Kingdom until the end of the Middle Kingdom (Barta 1968, 21,36) (Smither 1939, 34,35).
  - The name of the god Anubis is written on a stand  began in the early Sixth Dynasty (James 1953, fig. VII, XIII) (Abd el-Sattar, Boraik, & Fayez 2015, 328), becoming more common during the reign of Pepy II at the end of the Sixth Dynasty (Boraik, Abd el Sattar, & Fayez 2016, 8).
  - The arrangement of the epithet *tp(y)-dw.f* is written as . This form dates to the end of the Fifth Dynasty and continues until the beginning of the Middle Kingdom (El-Gazzar 2024, 143).
  - The formula *Prt-hrw nt* was common from the end of the Sixth Dynasty onwards (Brovarski 2006, 111).
  - The full writing of the title *jm3h.w* in the form  was a common epigraphical feature in the Old Kingdom and continued until the First Intermediate Period (Abd el-Sattar, Boraik, & Fayez 2015, 329) (Boraik, Abd el Sattar, & Fayez 2016, 8).
  - The epithet *ntr-ꜥ3* was written without a determinative of the god  [A40] during the reign of Pepi II (Azzam 2016, 164).
  - The determinative for a nobleman  [A50] is common in the Old Kingdom (Simpson 1976, pl. XVII) (Boraik, Abd el Sattar, & Fayez 2016, 9).
  - In conclusion, based on the stylistic style, paleographic, and orthographic features discussed, it is suggested that the approximate date of the false door of Khesi dates back to the end of the Sixth Dynasty and the end of the Old Kingdom, specifically from the second half of the reign of Pepi II.

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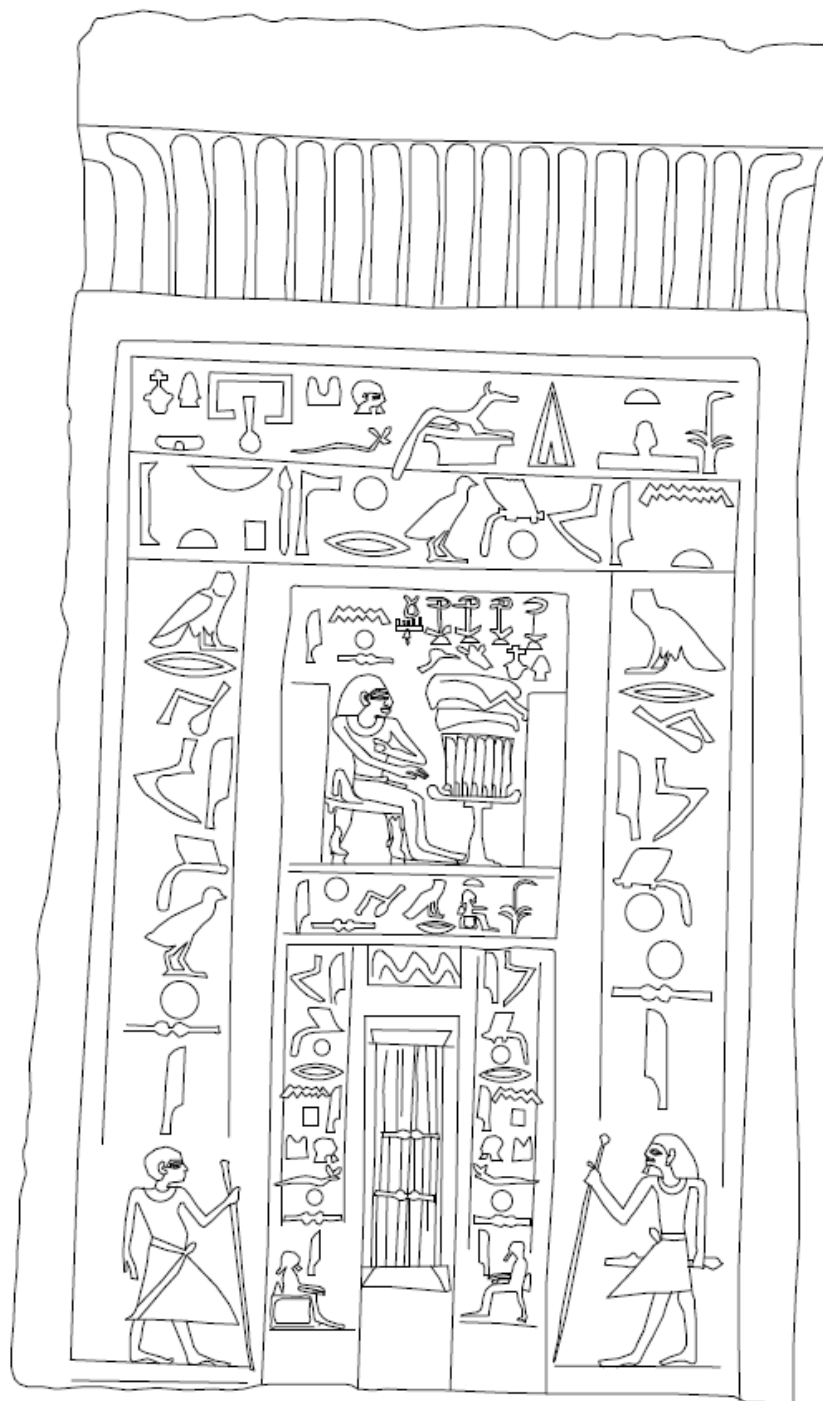
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**(Pl. I) The false door of *Hz.j***  
**(Photograph: Sameh Abd el-Rahman)**



(Fig. I) A Facsimile of the false door of *H.z.j*

(by Rasha Abdel Hafez)

## الباب الوهمي للمدعو Hz.j بمتحف إيمحتب، سقارة

### الملخص

هذا البحث هو عبارة عن دراسة للباب الوهمي للمدعو "خسي" الذي تم اكتشافه عام ٢٠٠٣ خلال حفائر جبانة جسر المدير بسقارة. يُنشر هذا الباب للمرة الأولى، ويصف بشكل شامل حيث يتم نسخ النصوص وترجمتها، ومناقشة اسم "خسي" وألقابه والتعليق عليهما. وتشير السمات الكتابية والهجائية والفنية إلي أن يعود تأريخ هذا الباب الوهمي إلي نهاية عصر الدولة القديمة. والباب الوهمي معروض حالياً بمتحف إيمحتب في سقارة تحت رقم SQ.SCA.19408 .

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### بيانات المقال

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تم قبول البحث في ١ ديسمبر ٢٠٢٤  
متاح على الإنترنت في ٢ فبراير ٢٠٢٥

### الكلمات الدالة

باب وهمي؛ خسي؛ متحف إيمحتب؛  
عصر الدولة القديمة؛ سقارة.