The Stela of $\text{W3h-hrt-nht} \ (\text{J.E.57112})$

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ABSTRACT:

The article deals with the study of the stela no. JE 57112 (fig 1), is currently housed in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo. The stela is from Abydos. The article is showing the typical provincial art of the First Intermediate Period. The scene and inscriptions of the stela are to be published studied and compared with other parallel stele.

General Description (Pl.1):

The stela under discussion is a round topped limestone stela\(^1\) in shape measuring 84 cm. in height and 81 cm. in width. It is in poor state of preservation. The inscription and scene are surrounded by the typical painted board that characterized of the First Intermediate Period (a). There are traces of various pigments that were used in the decoration of the stela: blue, red, yellow and black. There is also another property which is the use of colored dough to cover the deep marks after carved. In addition, it’s noted the use of colors on a thin layer of mortar, because the limestone absorbs colors. The stela is divided into two sections, the upper part is occupied with a horizontal text and the lower part is depicts the owner and his wife.

I. The scene of the owner:

The scene occupies the left side of the stela; it depicts the owner and his wife standing facing right. The deceased wears a shoulder-length wig and a broad collar, knee-length

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\(^1\) For more details about round topped stelae see: R. Hölzl, ‘Round-Topped Stelae from the Middle Kingdom to the Late Period. Some Remarks on the Decoration of the Lunettes’, SCIE 1, (Wien, 1992), 285-289.
kilt². He holds a long staff in his left hand,³ and maybe he grasps a scepter in his right hand. An elongated eye, which is one of the most attributes in the First Intermediate period. There are also remains of colors on his body. In front of him one vertical line:

| im3hw hr nfr 3 nb pt |

| The one honored (b) by the great god, lord of heaven⁴. |

Behind him stands his wife shown almost on the same scale (c), with her left hand on his left shoulder usually the other arm hanging free. She wears a long wig without lappet⁵, a broad collar and her dress is not appearing. Above her one horizontal line reads as follows:

| hmt.f mryt.f hkrt nsw šdt it.s |

I. The main text:

A. The main text consists of four horizontal lines from right to left. Each column being divided from the next one by broad line that is characteristic of the period. The inscription reads as follows:

1. htp di nsw Wsir nb ḏdw
2. ḫnt(y) imntiw
3. nb 3bdw m swt f nb (t)
4. prt-ḥrw t ḫnt bšt n ḫty-  Wḥḥ-ḥrt-ḥḥ

“1 An offering which the king gives (e) (and) Osiris (f), lord of Busiris (Abydos) (g), 2 Khentiamentiu (Foremost of the Westerners)(h), lord of Abydos, 3 in all his places (give) 4 invocation offering (consisting of) bread, beer(i), to the count j Wḥḥ-ḥrt-ḥḥ”.

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7 PN I, 331, [N°. 24].
8 For more examples see: R. Leprohon, Stelae I: The Early Dynastic Period to the Late Middle Kingdom, Boston MFA 2, (Mainz, 1985), 40-42, no. 98.1050, Stela of sn.t-tḥḥ, 54-56, no. 04.1851, Stela of itti, 69:71, no. 12.1477, Stela of ṣd-ḥḥ, 75-78, no. 12.1479, Stela of wḥδ-stḥḥ, 97-99, no.25.625, Stela of ḫnnl, 125:127, no.25.674, Stela of ḫrrl. H.G. Fischer, ‘Three Stelae from Naga ed-Deir’, in Studies in Ancient Egypt, The Aegean, and the Sudan, Essays in honor of Dows Dunham on the occasion of his 90th birthday, (Boston, 1981), 58: Stela of ṣmḥl: Fig. 1-2, 64; Stela of ḫdw: Fig.5-6.
9 WB, IV, 6, 3-4.
10 S. Quirke, Titles and Bureaux of Egypt 1850-1700 BC, (London, 2004), 111.
II. General Comments:

a- The frame around the stela is one of the famous elements in the First Intermediate period\textsuperscript{11}.

b- \begin{itemize} \item \textit{im\textbar{h}w}: “for the honored”\textsuperscript{12}. This epithet was first attested at the beginning of the Fourth Dynasty\textsuperscript{13}. The epithet \textit{im\textbar{h}w} is commonly \begin{itemize} \item \textit{im\textbar{h}w} \end{itemize} in this period\textsuperscript{14}. Word appears in this written form in red, blue and green groups from Naga-ed-Dēr\textsuperscript{15}. The detachment of the pendant end in the sign \begin{itemize} \item \textit{im\textbar{h}w} \end{itemize} is one of the elements of this period\textsuperscript{16} at Naqada, Dendera\textsuperscript{17} and Coptite Nome in the Ninth Dynasty in false door of \textit{Wsr}\textsuperscript{18} and Naga-ed-Dēr\textsuperscript{19}. The sign \begin{itemize} \item \textit{im\textbar{h}w} \end{itemize} appears with only two cross-hatched, it commonly used during the late First Intermediate Period\textsuperscript{20}. The phonetics changed from \textit{im\textbar{h}w} to \textit{im\textbar{h}y} during the time of King Merikare at Asyut and at Thebes in the year 14 of \textit{Nb-hpt-R}\textsuperscript{21}. So, the stela maybe before the time of King Merikare in the Herakleopolitan Period.

\item The scenes which depict a standing couple on the same scale with the woman put her hand on the man’s shoulder, while the other arm hangs by

\end{itemize}

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\textsuperscript{11} Compare: Leprohon, Boston MFA 2, 75-77 12.1479; Stela of \textit{w\textbar{h}-s\textbar{t}i}. Boston MFA 2, 79-81, 12.1480, Stela of \textit{mnj\textbar{w}}. Boston MFA 2, 100-102, 25.626, Stela of \textit{jm\textbar{h}}, Boston MFA 2, 139-141, 25.679; Stela of \textit{jnhr-hk\textbar{k}}; D. Dunham, Naga-ed-Dēr Stelae of the First Intermediate Period. (Oxford, 1937), 12-13, M.F.A 12.1475, pl. II, Stela of \textit{Nfr-ht-ntr}, 15-16, M.F.A. 12.1477, pl. III: 1, Stela of \textit{sd-\textbar{t}f}, 17-18, M.F.A. 12.1479, pl. IV: 1, Stela of \textit{W\textbar{d}-(\textbar{t}\textbar{t}-\textbar{h}b)}.
\textsuperscript{12} D. Jones, An Index of Ancient Egyptian Titles, Epithets and Phrases of the Old Kingdom, I, (Oxford, 2000), 11.
\textsuperscript{14} Brovarski, Naga ed-Dēr, 179, 213; H. Stewart, Egyptian Stelae, Reliefs and Paintings: II Archaic Period to Second Intermediate Period, (Warminster, 1979), 13, Stela of \textit{M\textbar{n\textbar{w}}}, pl. 11:3; Leprohon, Boston MFA 2, 18:20, 98.1034, Stela of \textit{mnj\textbar{w}}.
\textsuperscript{16} Fischer, Coptite Nome, 84-85, Stela of \textit{htpw}, Florance 6374, pl.XXVII.
\textsuperscript{17} H.G. Fischer, Denderah in the Old Kingdom and its Aftermath, (New York, 1968), 89.
\textsuperscript{18} Fischer, Coptite Nome, 39-43, no. 13-15.
\textsuperscript{19} Brovarski, Naga ed-Dēr, 214.
\textsuperscript{20} Brovarski, Naga ed-Dēr, 835.
\textsuperscript{21} W. Schenkel, Frühmittelägyptische Studien, Bonner Orientalistische Studien, (Bonn, 1962), 51, 59; Brovarski, Naga ed-Dēr, 231.
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her side had been known from Fifth Dynasty\textsuperscript{22}, and became common in the First Intermediate period\textsuperscript{23}.

\textbf{d-} \textit{hkrt- nsw}: “Lady- in- waiting”: This title appeared since Fourth Dynasty, many women took this title in the First Intermediate Period like \textit{Mr- irr.f}\textsuperscript{24}, \textit{Ty}\textsuperscript{25}, \textit{nh -n.s-ppy}\textsuperscript{26}. \textit{hmt.f mryt.f hkrt nsw} is usual form in the First Intermediate Period\textsuperscript{27}. Lady-in-waiting is the proper sense of the \textit{hkrt-nsw}\textsuperscript{28}.

\textbf{e-} $\frac{1}{2}$ \textit{htp di nsw}\textsuperscript{29}: (an offering that the king gives). The Old kingdom formula until First Intermediate Period “An offering that the king gives, and the offering that Osiris gives”. By the Middle Kingdom, the god had been introduced by a preposition usually (\textit{n}) and (\textit{hr}) also usually unwritten\textsuperscript{30}. Offering formula is a wish for the different kinds of everything that could be brought to the deceased person to keep his vital power in the otherworld\textsuperscript{31}. The arrangement of the signs refers that the stela from First Intermediate Period\textsuperscript{32} and was known during the Sixth to Eleventh Dynasties\textsuperscript{33} and is

\textsuperscript{22} N. Kanawati, & A. Mcfarlane, \textit{Akhmim in the Old Kingdom, I: Chronology and Administration}, ACE: Studies 2, (1992), 43-45.

\textsuperscript{23} For more examples dating to the First Intermediate Period, see, Dunham, \textit{Naga-ed-Dér Stelae of the First Intermediate Period}, 52-53 (no.39), Fischer, \textit{Coptite Nome}, 75-77 (no. 25) stela of \textit{Hkr}, 87-89 (no.32 ) stela of \textit{Thy}, pls. XXII, XXIX; L. Azzam, “Stela of Tim-Pphi”, in: \textit{Echoes of Eternity” Studies presented to Gaballa Aly Gaballa}, (Wiesbaden, 2010), Fig: 1, pl.1; Gardiner, \textit{JEA} 8,191-192; Leprohon, Boston MFA 2, 116 (no. 25.671), Stela of \textit{In-hr.t-nht}.

\textsuperscript{24} Dunham, \textit{Naga ed-Dér}, 17, pl.4.

\textsuperscript{25} Dunham, \textit{Naga ed-Dér}, 23, pl.6.

\textsuperscript{26} Dunham, \textit{Naga ed-Dér}, 37, pl.12.

\textsuperscript{27} Leprohon, Boston MFA 2, 15-17, 98.1031, Stela of \textit{bb.l}.


\textsuperscript{29} For the \textit{htp di nsw} formula in general, see W. Barta, \textit{Aufbau und Bedeutung der altägyptischen Opferformel}, Ág 24, (Glückstadt, 1968); T.G.H. James, “Egyptian Funerary Stelae of the First Intermediate Period” in: The British Museum Quarteley, V.20, N.4, 1956, 87-89. pl.XXX, a. Stela of Khenty.


\textsuperscript{31} D. Franke, “The Middle Kingdom Offering Formula – A Challenge”, \textit{JEA} 89, (2003), 39.

found in most of the late First Intermediate Stelae from Naga ed-Dêr. This written form appeared from Fourth Dynasty and its most common in the stelae, but uncommon from the Fourteenth Dynasty to the Twentieth Dynasty. The arrangement of htp di nsw is characteristic of the Naga-ed-Deir stelae from the early Heracleopolitan Period.

**f- Wsir:** The name of the god Wsir is attested under several orthographies. The one that attested under the stela under discussion. The writing of the god Osiris by this way is usually used in the First Intermediate Period. Osiris appears for the first time in private funerary inscription at the Memphite cemeteries in the reign of Neuserre. At Naga-ed-Der in the late Old Kingdom, Osiris was the great god, lord of the Thinite nome.

**g- nb ddw:** Lord of Busiris, indicative of an Eleventh Dynasty. The writing of ddw, as represented on the stela, characterizes the First Intermediate Period. The sign come before the sign in the stela of Hathor priests Mrit from Naga ed-Dêr. The writing of ddw by this way prove a Herakleopolitan date for this stela.

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34 Dunham, *Naga ed-Dêr*, no. 15, 40, 63.
35 Barta, *Opferformel*, 4, 12, 21, 24, 36, 43, 45, 53, 72, 81, 85, 107.
36 Barta, *Opferformel*, 72, 85, 107, 162.
40 Bear, *Rank and Title*, 297.
42 For the spelling of ddw as a part of the Osiris epithet nb ddw see: C.J.C. Benneth, ‘Growth of the htp-di- nsw formula in the Middle Kingdom’, JEA 27, (1941), 78-80.
43 Lutz, *Egyptian Tomb Steles and Offering stones of the Museum of Anthropology Ethnology of the University of California*, pl. 11 (no.20), stela of sole royal favorite and Hathor priests Mrit.
44 D. Spanel, *Beni Hasan in the Heracleopolitan Period*, (Ph. D., University of Toronto, 1984), 91.
The title appeared since the Old Kingdom\(^{45}\) and continued to use until the New Kingdom. In the Old Kingdom $hnty$ was written $\text{pery}$, but in the Middle Kingdom was written $\text{tiby}$, and the mark $\text{t}$ which is first exemplified above ground in the Sixth Dynasty in the terrace of $hnty$-$k$\(^3\)\(^{46}\). The end piece of $\text{tiby}$ are joined by a band through the neck of the vessels; the end pieces then become consistently shorter. A few examples of the short end pieces are to be found at Dendera and other places, most of them Dyn. XI or a little earlier\(^{47}\). The Upper Egyptian “white crown” is not usual in the determinative of Osiris until Dyn. XI\(^{48}\), but it exists in Abydos and Sheikh Said\(^{49}\) and became common during the First Intermediate Period\(^{50}\). The west sign as it appears in $imnty$ characteristic of the late Sixth Dynasty and the First Intermediate Period\(^{51}\). Since the region of $snt$-$srt$ III all titles are disappeared after the name of $Wsir$ except $hnty$ $imnty$\(^5\). Back to the sign for $imnty$, it is notable that it is written by $\text{hnt}$\(^5\)\(^2\). It seems that the colored layer used here to cover the inscriptions was over written by $\text{hnt}$\(^5\)\(^2\).

\textbf{i-} $\text{prt-\text{-hrw}}$: “Invocation-offering”. The arrangement of signs of $\text{prt-\text{-hrw}}$ $\text{n}$ is attest in most stelae in Heracleopolitan Period\(^53\), Naga-ed-$\text{D\text{-d}}$\(^54\) stela, Dendera\(^55\), in the Coptite nome\(^56\), and at Thebes in the Heracleopolitan period\(^57\). The expression

\begin{itemize}
  \item Leprohon, Boston, MFA 2, 59:62, 06.1894, offering stela of $s3t$-$shntw$.
  \item Fischer, Dendera, 83; Dunham, Naga-$\text{ed}$-$\text{D\text{-d}}$ $\text{Stelae}$ of the First Intermediate Period, Stelae. 67, 80.
  \item E., Brovarski, ‘Akhmim in the Old Kingdom and First Intermediate Period’ in: Mélanges Gamal eddin Mokhtar I, (Cairo, 1985), 128.
  \item Fischer, Dendera, 199.
  \item Brovarski, “Akhmim in the Old Kingdom and First Intermediate Period”, 128.
  \item Brovarski, Naga ed-$\text{D\text{-d}}$, 587.
  \item C.J.C. Bennett, «Growth of the $Ht$ di $nsw$ Formula in the Middle Kingdom», JEA 27, (1941), 78.
  \item Brovarski, Naga ed-$\text{D\text{-d}}$, 211; Fischer, Dendera, 118-119, Stela of $Nfr$-$s$-$m$-$Ppy$, pl. XVI a; Fischer, Coptite Nome, 87, Stela of $Ihy$, pl. XXIX.
  \item Brovarski, Naga ed-$\text{D\text{-d}}$, 211.
  \item Fischer, Dendera, 118-119, Stela of $Nfr$-$s$-$m$-$Ppy$, pl. XVI a; Leprohon, Boston MFA 2, 24-26, 98.1039, upper left corner of a stela.
  \item Fischer, Coptite Nome, 87, Stela of $Ihy$, pl. XXIX.
  \item Leprohon, Boston MFA 2, 79-81, 12.1480, Stela of $mniw$.
\end{itemize}
*pr*-hrw means “the voice goes forth” and came to mean “invocation offering”. The construction was usually *pr* *hrw* *n* before the Eleventh Dynasty\(^{58}\). So, this stela before Eleventh Dynasty in Herakleopolitan Period.

### III. Dating:

To sum up, as already shown in the foregoing pages, general style of the text, figures and the outline board, most of the paleographic and epigraphic features date this stela to the First Intermediate Period especially Herakleopolitan Period, also according to the following criteria:

1. The frame around the stela.
2. The writing of *htp*-di-*nsw*.
3. The long wig without lappet was worn in Upper Egypt during Tenth Dynasty.
4. Standing couple on the same scale and the woman put her hand on the man’s shoulder.
5. Writing of the name of god Osiris indicates to the First Intermediate Period “see above”.
6. Writing of *dw*.
7. The construction *pr* *hrw* *n* was usual before Eleventh Dynasty.
8. Furthermore, the word *im*ḥrw replaced *im*ḥhy during the time of king Merikare so, the stela might be before the region of Merikare, in the Herakleopoliten period.  

In conclusion, taking into consideration the results of the paleographic and epigraphic study on the one hand, and the study of the artistic features on the other, the stela is dated to the First Intermediate Period especially Herakleopolitan Period.

Fig. I

The Stela of \textit{W3h-hrt-nht}
Plate I

The Stela of W3h-hrt-nht