From Illahun to Djeme
Papers Presented in Honour of Ulrich Luft

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The domestic servant of the palace *rn-snb*

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**Abstract**

The aim of this article is publication of two late Middle Kingdom stelae: Lacock Abbey 50028 and Marseille, Musée d’Archéologie méditerranéenne 227, as well as an prosopographic analysis of the *hry-pr n pr ḫ nb* who is attested on both objects.

The *hry-pr n pr ḫ nb* is attested on two stelae: Lacock Abbey 50028¹ and Marseille, Musée d’Archéologie méditerranéenne 227.² As the monuments record his family and household members, they were probably part of an Abydene cenotaph (an ‘ANOC’; Simpson 1974, 5): inscriptions of a real tomb do not mention any beneficiaries, apart from the tomb owner and his wife. Both objects are well-executed.

Lacock Abbey 50028 is a rectangular stela of limestone, of the Late Middle Kingdom, measuring 459 x 256 mm, with a *cavetto cornice* and *torus moulding* (PM VIII/3 803-034-350). Within the torus area there are five registers of incised representations and hieroglyphic inscriptions. Two double line bands separate the lower three registers. Traces of green colour are visible on figures and hieroglyphs.

The first register is covered by two lines of inscription, written from right to left, with an offering-formula on behalf of the *hry-pr n pr ḫ nb*, naming the figure seated on the left in the second register.

In the second register, at the left, the *hry-pr n pr ḫ nb* is shown seated on a lion-legged chair before a rich table of offerings. He has close-cropped hair and wears a plain collar; a long kilt with the belt marked, and holds in one hand a kerchief and in the other a fly whisk against the chest. The right part of the register displays the kneeling figure of a woman facing left, with one hand expanded over the leg, the other held to the chest. She wears a long tripartite wig, a close-fitting dress suspended by one shoulder strap, and a broad necklace. Two horizontal lines of incised inscription serve as captions for the women depicted.

An offering which the king has given, and (Satzinger 1997, 177–188; Franke 2003, 45–50) Osiris, lord of Abydos, so that he may give a voice offering of bread, bear, ox, fowl, alabaster, linen, and oil, all good and pure things, to the domestic servant of the palace (Ward 1982, 983; Jones 2000, no. 2222) *rn-snb* (Ranke 1935, 222/26), whom has conceived *sḥ(t)-ḥnmw* (Ranke 1935, 292/24), justified, lord of reverence.


His mother, *sḥ(t)-ḥnmw*, whom has conceived *ḥt* (Ranke 1935, 257/22 including use for females).

The third register shows three squatting figures (two women and a man) in squares separated by the captions. The women wear long wigs, collars, and tight fitting long dresses with one chest strap, the man wears a collar, a simple kilt and a short bag wig which leaves the ear exposed.

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¹ We thank Mr. Roger Watson, curator of the Fox Talbot Museum, Lacock, UK, and Mr. John Falconer from British Library for permission to publish the Lacock Abbey stela and for providing both the photographs and the technical data (courtesy of and © Fox Talbot Museum, Lacock & British Library, London).

² We are very grateful to Dr. Gisèle Pierini for permission to publish the stela and for providing the photograph (courtesy of and © Musée d’Archéologie méditerranéenne, Marseille / David Giancatarina).
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snt.f 'imt-wrt i rt.n s₇₄-h₄m₇w m̀₇₄-h₁₁w s₁₄{s₁₄/q₇₄m₇w
His sister 'imt-wrt, b whom has conceived s₇₄-h₄m₇w, justified, her daughter i₁₄m₇w^a

snt.f 'imt i rt.n s₇₄-h₄m₇w m̀₇₄(t)⁻₄rw
His sister 'imt (Ranke 1935, 59/3), whom has conceived s₇₄-h₄m₇w, justified

it.f ii-d₄f i r.n 'imt
His father ii-d₄f (Ranke 1935, 11/5 for which the only evidence is the Marseille stela), whom has conceived 'imt^b

b. Non attested in Ranke 1935-1952; 'imt the Elder.' The name 'imt, literally 'the (female) Asiatic', is found several times: with rn-s₄b's grandmother (the mother of his father ii-d₄f), and two of his sisters (of whom one is distinguished as 'the Elder'). But note that the use of this name does not by itself prove any foreign origin. It is perhaps more remarkable that rn-s₄b's niece i₁₄m₇w has a name that is obviously non-Egyptian.

c. Non attested in Ranke 1935-1952; obviously a non-Egyptian name, as there is no root i₁₄/h or the like in Egyptian.

The appearance and arrangement of figures incised in the next register is almost identical with the previous one, with slight exceptions: the man is seated between the two women, and he has close-cropped hair.

snt.f ii.t-₄-h₄b i r.t.n s₇₄-h₄m₇w
His sister ii.t-₄-h₄b b whom has conceived s₇₄-h₄m₇w

sn.f sb₄b-tyf y i r.t.n s₇₄-h₄m₇w
His brother sb₄b-tyf y (Ranke 1935, 314/23) whom has conceived s₇₄-h₄m₇w

snt.f s₁₄t-sb₄k i r.t.n s₁₄t-h₄m₇w s₁₄{s₁₄t w₇w
His sister s₁₄t-sb₄k (Ranke 1935, 293/9) whom has conceived s₁₄t-h₄m₇w, her daughter w₇w^c


e. Ranke 1935, 379/15 records a name he reads w₇w, which is, however mostly attested in the ptolemaic period, and spelt differently. The name at hand is rather to be read t₇w, see ʕ Ranke 1935, 385/27 and ʕٍ, etc. Ranke 1935, 386/1, both attested in the Middle Kingdom for females.

Two lines of hieroglyphs are incised in the lowest register.

hsy pw n wsIr nb ḫbdw s_s nb w' b nb ḥdrry f t₇w ndm n 'nb n hry-pr n p₅ r₇₄-sb₄r i r.t.n s₁₄t-h₄m₇w h₄ s₇w nty nb rr₇₄ f hr w₇₄ p₇n
A praised one of Osiris, the Lord of Abydos, is every scribe and every priest who say, Sweet breath of life for the servant of the palace rn-s₄b, whom has conceived s₁₄t-h₄m₇w, together with everyone else whose names are (written) on this stela.


g. This is a highly original variant of the Appeal to the Living. In fact, it is not an appeal but rather a statement which should encourage scribes and priests to pray for the persons mentioned on the stela.

The stela Marseille, Musée d'Archéologie méditerranéenne 227, measuring 385 x 247 mm, is of the same shape and appearance. The lowest part of the object is missing. Traces of green color are visible. The text of the stela, was published without translation and image by G. Maspero (Maspero1890, 116-117).

The upper part of the first register is covered by two lines of inscription with an offering-formula on behalf of hry-pr n p₅ r₇₄-sb₄r. The left half of the register bears his figure, facing right, sitting on a chair with a low back rest and leonine feet on small 'coasters'. r₇₄-sb₄r wears a short wig which leaves the ear exposed, a plain collar and a short kilt with belt and knot marked. He holds one hand on his lap and in the other a fly whisk against the chest. On the right, facing the r₇₄-sb₄r, is the standing figure of mr st wr-n(i)-sb₄k who holds an incense burner.

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An offering which the king has given, and Osiris, lord of Abydos, for the domestic servant of the palace \( rn\text{-}snb \), whom has conceived \( s\text{it}\text{-}hnmw \).

The overseer of the storehouse (Ward 1982, 313) \( wr\text{-}n\text{-i}-sbk \) (Ranke 1935, 81/11; another person with the same name is attested on the scarab seal London, UC 11439: \( t\text{ry}\text{-}t\text{n pr-hd} \) \( wr\text{-}n\text{-i}-sbk \), Martin 1971, 414).

Underneath are seven columns of incised inscription recording names of \( hry\text{-}pr\text{ n pr} \) \( \sim\text{rn snb} \)'s family and household members.

The main person on the both objects is the \( hry\text{-}pr\text{ n pr} \) \( \sim\text{rn snb} \) named \( rn\text{-}snb \). Numerous members of his family and his household are also mentioned. On the stela Lacock Abbey 50028 \( rn\text{-}snb \) is the only person wearing a title.
The ‘domestic servant’ carried out tasks within the living-quarters of the palace or house, and was responsible for the valuables of his master. The title is well attested since the Old Kingdom, though it became much more common in the Middle Kingdom, and also in many other connections besides the palace (Quirke 2004, 46-47; Берлев 1978, 133; Fischer 1996, 214, n. 277). The хр-пр ёрн-снб was engaged in the residential part of the palace (Берлев 1978, 129-161; list of attestations of хр-пр ёрн-снб, 133. Cf. Grajetzki 2001, 48).

On the stela Marseille 227 there is a second person who has a title, besides the хр-пр ёрн-снб, namely the мр ст вг-н.и-снб. The overseer of the storehouse seems to have been the senior official in the sector of the provisioning area, since ст represents a storeroom for a particular commodity in the вр of сн (Quirke 2004, 65-66; Grajetzki 2001, 52-54; Quirke 1990, 96). He may be in charge of the various chambers of the food production. Based on the XII Dynasty attestations it seems possible that some of the title-holders at the palace were directly responsible for the provision of food for the king. The title is well attested during the Middle Kingdom. During the XIII Dynasty, it is often found with an additional expression (Grajetzki 2001, 52-54; Берлев 1978, 325-327).

Since хр-снб and вг-н.и-снб were engaged in different branches of the administration it is more probable that the overseer of the storehouse was the son of the domestic servant of the palace.

Apart from two followers and a sailor, the members of хр-снб’s household that are recorded on the stela Marseille 227 are labelled as Asiatics. A fundamental discussion of the attestation of foreigners on the Middle Kingdom monuments, often neglected, can be found in study of Берлев (1972, 74-95; see also Schneider 2003; Helck 1971). Берлев points out that the court official хр-снб was the owner of the extensive household mirrored in the group of people, many of them being ам, like those recorded on the stela Marseille 227. According to Берлев, it is worth of notice that there are cases of a mother and a
daughter, both being labelled ‘Amw. A ‘daughter of ‘Amw’ is named by rn-snb’s mother, meaning that she was born in his household (Bergvelt 1972, 83; cf. Schneider 2003, 58; Helck 1971, 77 Anm. 2).

The layout, the composition, the manner of fashioning the human figures, the style of the hieroglyphs in the offering-formula, the paleographic similarities, and very arrangement of its elements are almost identical. These two stelae have so much in common that they can be considered as products made by one and the same workshop and perhaps by the same hand.

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