

# **Statue of Nedjem-ib**

**CG 219**

**Khaled Gharib**

**Faculty of Archaeology**

## **Introduction**

During his excavations at Abydos, Auguste Mariette found this statue<sup>1</sup> of *Ndm-ib* in the central cemetery of the ancient city. It is now in Cairo museum under CG 219 and dates back to the 6<sup>th</sup> dynasty of the Old Kingdom.

The name *Ndm-ib* according to Ranke<sup>2</sup> means "joyful" which is the same translation of Faulkner.<sup>3</sup>

Both of Murray<sup>4</sup> and Ranke<sup>5</sup> refer that this name had been carried by eight people during both of the old and the Middle Kingdom. A closer study of this name reveals that two of these people were female; one of them was from the Old Kingdom<sup>6</sup> while the other was from the Middle Kingdom<sup>7</sup>.

Five out of the six men who carried this name was from the Old Kingdom<sup>8</sup> while the last one was from the Middle Kingdom<sup>9</sup>. Four of these people came from Abydos, two from Sakkara, one from Meidum while the last one was from Deir-Elgabrawi. The few number of the people who carried this name during both the Old and Middle Kingdom indicate that the name was familiar to the ancient Egyptians but not quite common; at the same time it is obvious that this name was more popular in Abydos region.

### Description of the statue

The dual statue of *Ndm-ib* measures 34cm H., made out of white limestone and shows two similar statues of *Nedjem-ib* sitting on a seat in the form of a block or a cube. The width of back pillar of this cubic seat gets narrower in its upper part just behind the heads of the two statues. In both statues, *Nedjem-ib* is wearing a curled wig hanging down to the shoulders level and a short kilt with a knotted belt. *Nedjem-ib* is putting his arms on the thighs. There is a shallow hole in each arm fist. The feet of the statue is placed on a base coming out of the cubic seat. The statue is painted in three colors: the complexion is reddish brown, the hair; the eyelids, the eyebrows and the pupil are black while the kilt, the cubic seat and the back pillar are painted white.<sup>10</sup>

Technique of the statue reveals that the surface is smooth. The arms and legs are not free. The fingers are not clear or lost. The first hole is shallow. The navel is round. In general, the statue is disproportioned and reveals a rough art work which does not match the social status of its owner. This social status is reflected in the titles written on the seat and the base of the statue from which we can understand that this *Ndm-ib* was one of the royal palace officials, consequently one can say that the statue had been made by local hands from Abydos where the statue was found and not by the experienced hands of the royal capital sculptors which was Memphis at that time. Most likely, the two statues represent *Ndm-ib* in two different phases of his life which is a common feature in the old kingdom art, this is indicating by the space between the two statues.

## The texts

All the hieroglyphic texts written on the seat and base of the statue are in deep relief and painted in black.

The cubic seat:

Left of the well preserved statue



*shd hm ntr smr w<sup>c</sup>t hry-tp nswt ndm-ib*

Inspector of *hm(w)-ntr* priests, the sole companion, the king's liegeman  
*Ndm-ib*

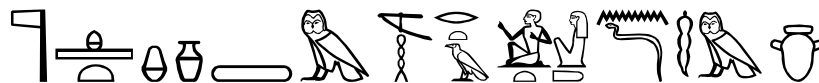
Between the statues



*shd hm ntr smr w<sup>c</sup>t hry-tp nswt imy-r wp(w)t*

Inspector of *hm(w)-ntr* priests, the sole companion, the king's liegeman,  
the overseer of the missions.

Right of the damaged statue



*h<sup>c</sup>tp-ntr t hnkt mrht rmt ndm-ib*

offerings (from) bread, beer, unguent and people (to) *Ndm-ib*

**The base:**

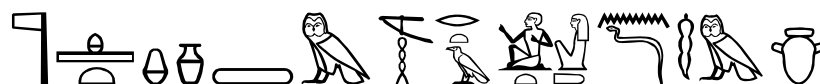
Left of the well preserved statue



*shd hm ntr smr wct hry-tp nswt imy-r wp(w)t htp ntr t hnkt mrht rmt ndm-ib*

Inspector of *hm(w) ntr* priests, the sole companion, the king`s liegeman, the overseer of missions, offerings (from) bread, beer, unguent and people, (to) *Ndm-ib*.

Between the two legs.



*htp ntr t hnkt mrht rmt ndm-ib*

Offerings (from) bread, beer, unguent and people (to) *Ndm-ib*

Right of the damaged statue .



*htp di nswt pr-hrw t hnkt n*

Offerings consists of bread and beer to -----

## Comments:

As it is recorded on the seat and base of the statue, *Ndm-ib* had carried four titles none of which was a priestly title. These four titles can be divided into two groups each of two titles of similar character.

The first group: the titles of this group refer to the actual profession of *ndm-ib* which was a supervisor of workmen and chief of missions. These kinds of titles are recorded in the inscriptions of the mining places such as El-Kab and Elhamamat for example.



*shd hm-ntr*

Dilywn Jones translates this title as "inspector of *hm-ntr* priests"<sup>11</sup> and in his opinion, the official who had this title was responsible of a section or two sections of work gang. Baud translates the same title as "inspecteur des serviteurs du dieu".<sup>12</sup>

According to Murray<sup>13</sup> several officials carried this title during the Old Kingdom such as *KAi*<sup>14</sup> from Sakkara, *sftk*<sup>15</sup> and *anxw*<sup>16</sup> from El-Kab and *Idi*<sup>17</sup> from Elhamamat.



*Imy-r wp(w)t*

This title has been translated by Jones<sup>18</sup> Gauthier<sup>19</sup> Fischer<sup>20</sup> and Assmann<sup>21</sup> as "Overseer of the commissions". A different translation has been given by Maspero<sup>22</sup> as "Directeur de l'administration locale". Goedicke<sup>23</sup> translates it "Vorseher der Teilung". This title occurred among the titles of several officials during the Old Kingdom such as *tnti*<sup>24</sup> from Sakkara *K3i-sd3*<sup>25</sup> *Iri-n-3ht* and *Ni...R*<sup>26</sup> from Giza. The second group: the two titles of this group reveal that *ndm-ib* was one of the people of the royal court. Some of such kinds of titles were nothing but honorable titles refer to a high social status of its holder and do not refer to a real profession. The evidence to support my opinion comes from the claim of 122 people in the Old Kingdom that they were "Sole companion" of some of the Old Kingdom kings.



*smr w<sup>c</sup>ty*

This title was one of the most common titles in the Old Kingdom. According to the names index of Murray<sup>27</sup> the number of its holder in the Old Kingdom was 122 people. Jones<sup>28</sup> translates the title "sole companion". The same meaning has been given by De Wit<sup>29</sup> "ami unique".



*hry-tp nswt*

According to Murray<sup>30</sup> the number of the people in the Old Kingdom who carried this title was 81. Jones<sup>31</sup> in his index translates this title "The royal chamberlain" or "the King's liegeman" which means literally "He who is under the head of the king". There are some other translations for this title such as "premier après le roi" by Pirenne<sup>32</sup> "der unter dem kopf des konigs" by Helck<sup>33</sup> "Serviteur" by Strudwicke<sup>34</sup> and "Kammerer des konigs" by Altenmuller<sup>35</sup>

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