

**A Striding Statue of *Nebsumenu* son of *Reditenseni*
The Egyptian Museum in Cairo (CG 957)¹**

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Abstract:

Cairo CG 957 is a rectangular base made out of black granite currently on housed in the basement of the Egyptian Museum in Cairo. The feet of the owner are partially preserved top the base. The texts inscribed contains the *ḥtp-dj-nsw.t* formula dedicated to Amun-Re, followed by the title and name of the owner. This paper aims to analyze the name of the owner's mother, comparing it to parallel objects in order to distinguish the owner.

Keywords: Striding statue; base; Egyptian Museum in Cairo; CG 957; *Nebsumenu, born of Reditenseni*; tally-man; Thirteenth Dynasty; Middle Kingdom.

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The aim of the paper is to re-examine the base of a striding statue (Cairo CG 957), which was published by Borchardt, in the *Catalogue Général*.² The *Topographical Bibliography* describes it as: ‘A feet and base of *Nekhtenneb*...(?) *Nt-n-nb*...(?), son of *Reditensen Rdjt-n-sn* (mother), and probably dates back to the Middle Kingdom’.³

The base is a rectangular in shape, which is made out of black granite housed in the basement of the Egyptian Museum in Cairo (Fig. I, II). The measurements are: length 19.3 cm; width 10.3 cm; height including the feet 8 cm; and the height, excluding the feet, 4.3 cm. This paper aims to analyze the name of the owner and the owner’s mother, and to suggest an alternative reading of the owner’s name. This new reading will also necessitate an examination of previous suggestions that the owner is connected to other monuments, such as stela Cairo CG 20677.

The feet of the owner comprise the remaining part of the striding statue. The texts consists of four lines inscribed on the base, which contains the *hṭp-dj-nsw.t* formula dedicated to Amun-Re, followed by the title and name of the owner. According to Borchardt’s reading, *Nekhtenneb* was the son of *Reditenseni nḥt-n-nb* [...] *ms.n rdjt.n=s-n=j*.

Various bibliographical sources suggest that the owner of this base is *Nekhtenneb* who dates to the Middle Kingdom. This includes Borchardt, who illustrated the inscribed texts on the base.⁴ This reading was later accepted by the *Topographical Bibliography*.⁵ Borchardt’s reading of the text is as follows:⁶


² L. Borchardt, *Statuen und Statuetten von Konigen und Privatleuten im Museum von Kairo*, IV, Berlin, 1934, p. 4 (957); V, p. 13, 19, 20, 23, 46 and 92.

³ J. Malek, assisted by D. Magee and E. Miles, *Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Statues and Paintings VIII. Objects of Provenance Not Known. Part 1. Royal Statues, Private Statues (Predynastic to Dynasty XVII). and Index*. Oxford, 1999, p. 1057 (801-449-455).

⁴ Borchardt, *Statuen und Statuetten IV*, p. 4 (957).

⁵ PM VIII, p. 1057 (801-449-455).

⁶ Borchardt, *Statuen und Statuetten IV*, p. 4 (957).

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 

Following a re-examination of the statue base, a few remarks on the inscription dealing with the title and the name of the owner are necessary. Firstly, the sign of the striking man in the end of the third line *nht* (Gardiner, A24) is followed by traces by the sign *hrw* (Gardiner, P8) at the beginning of the fourth line. It is notable that the left end of the *hrw* sign is thicker than the right end. The reading of the *hrw* instead of *n* undoubtedly refers to the owner's title as *nht-hrw*, literally the 'strong-voice',⁷ instead of being part of the owner's name, *nht-n-nb*.

The second sign in the fourth line is clearly the *nb*-basket sign, and it should be understood as the beginning of the real name of the owner. Despite the damage of the signs following the *nb*, the traces the signs are *sw* (Gardiner, M23) and *mnw* (Gardiner, T1). These signs are not speculated upon by Borchardt who instead presents it as a lacuna. Taking these traces into account, along with the *nb*-basket sign, the name of the owner following his title can be read as *Nebsumenu*. In this case, the reading of *Nekhtenneb* no longer makes sense.


Based on a re-examination of the object, a new reading of the texts can be suggested for the owner's title and name as follows:

⁷ D. Jones, *An Index of Ancient Titles, Epithets and Phrases of the Old Kingdom I*, BAR International Series 866, Oxford, 2000, p. 486 (1818).

1. 


ḥtp-dī-nsw.t

An offering which the king gives to

2. 

ʾImn-R^c nb-nswt-t3wy

Amun-Ra, Lord of the Thrones of the Two Lands,

3. 

dī=f ḥt-nbt n k3 n nḥt-

in order that he may give everything to the ka of the Strong-

4. 

ḥrw nb-sw-mnw ms.n Rd.t.n=s-n=i

Voice Nebsumenu, born of Reditenseni.

The name *Nebsumenu* was popular during the Middle Kingdom and the epigraphy of the inscription suggests a Thirteenth dynasty date.⁸ Examples of the name include the stela of Leiden 34, dating to the reign of the Thirteenth Dynasty pharaoh *Snbj*, and stela Dublin UC 1360, dating to *Snb-sw-m-(j)*, another

⁸ W. Grajetzki, “Notes on Administration in the Second Intermediate Period” in *The Second Intermediate Period (Thirteenth-Seventeenth Dynasties): Current Research, Future Prospects*, ed. by M. Marée, OLA 192, Leuven; Paris; Walpole, 2010, p. 306 (2) and n. 14-5. For more examples and variants of the name *Nebsumenu*, see G.T. Martin, *Egyptian Administrative and Private-Name Seals Principally of the Middle Kingdom and Second Intermediate Period*, Oxford, 1971, p. 56-7 (672-683). For examples of the name *Nebsumenu* during the New Kingdom, see J. Assmann, “The Ramesside tomb of Nebsumenu (TT 183) and the ritual of Opening the Mouth”. Edited by N. Strudwick and J. H. Taylor, *The Theban Necropolis: Past, present and future*, London, 2003, p. 53–60; Cf. M. Minas-Nerpel, *Der Gott Chepri. Untersuchungen zu Schriftzeugnissen und ikonographischen Quellen vom Alten Reich bis in griechisch-römische Zeit*, OLA 154, Leuven, 2006, p. 270, 274, 283.

ruler of the Thirteenth Dynasty⁹

The title *nht-hrw* is translated Jones as ‘strong-of-voice, crier, inspector of the harvests of grain and fruit, “tally-man”’.¹⁰ It is difficult to understand the main duties of the people who bear the title *nht-hrw*, which literally refers to someone who has a strong and loud voice.¹¹ Refining the understanding of this title requires an investigation into the context in which the title occurs.

Various epithets cited by Jones are associated with this title, such as: *nht-[hrw] ir(yw) ht pr-hd*; *nht-hrw pr-mdzt*; *nht-hrw (n) pr-dt*; *nht-hrw n prw msw-nzwt*; *nht-hrw Mdnit*; *nht-hrw hwt-wrt*; *nht-hrw m zwnw (?)*; *nht-hrw (n) šnwt*; *nht-hrw (n) šnwt nt hnw*.¹² From these examples, it is possible to see that the title is strongly associated with counting or overseeing counting, with particular reference to the use of voice as part of this duty.

The name of the *Nebsumenu*’s mother, *Reditenesni*, may be inscribed on another, a private stela (Cairo CG 20677) from Abydos, probably dating back to the Thirteenth Dynasty and currently displayed in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo.¹³ In this context the name *Reditenesni* refers to the owner’s wife who had three daughters. However, there is no son mentioned on this

⁹ W. Grajetzki, *Two Treasurers of the Late Middle Kingdom*, BAR International series 1007, London, 2001, p. 26, 52.

¹⁰ Jones, *An Index of Ancient Titles*, p. 486 (1818). H.G. Fischer, *Egyptian Studies III. Varia Nova*. MMA, New York, 1996, p.230 and n. 427; H.G. Fischer, “Offerings for an Old Kingdom Granary” in *Bulletin of the Detroit Institute of Arts* 51 (1972), p. 73, 79 and fig. 9. Ward also agreed that the title *nht-hrw* refers to crier, W. Ward, *Index of Egyptian Administrative and Religious Titles of the Middle Kingdom*, Beirut, 1982, p. 100. (837). Quirke notes that Ward missed two unpublished seals bear this title and their important role in the society and expeditions, Cf. S. Quirke, *Titles and bureaux of Egypt 1850-1700 BC.*, London, 2004, p. 96.

¹¹ R. Hannig, *Die Sprache der Pharaonen. Großes Handwörterbuch Ägyptisch-Deutsch: (2800-950 v. Chr.)*, 2nd ed., Mainz am Rhein 1997, p. 300, 453, 713.

¹² Jones, *An Index of Ancient Titles*, p. 486 (1818), for the other epithets, see p. 486-9.

¹³ H.O. Lange, H. Schäfer, *Grab- und Denksteine des Mittleren Reichs*, II (CG 20001-20780), Berlin, 1908, p. 303-5 pl. LI; Grajetzki, *Two Treasurers*, p. 66; A. Illin-Tomich, “Late Middle Kingdom Stelae Workshops at Thebes”, in In: *Göttinger Miscellen. Beiträge zur ägyptologischen Diskussion* 234, (2012), p. 80, 83-4.

stela. The object under consideration for this article, belongs to a man whose mother is called *Reditenesni*. A final example of the name *Reditenesni* during the Thirteenth Dynasty and presumably dating to the second half of the dynasty based on the epigraphy and the title of the owner, is a stela in Berlin (ÄM 7288) of the *ḥtmtj-bjtj*, personal scribe of the king *Jjj-mrw*. In the lowest register of the stela, his sons and daughters are depicted with the third daughter bearing the name *Reditenesni*. The texts can be read as: “*z3t=f nbt-pr-Rdjt-n.s-n.j*”.¹⁴ Subsequently, there is no strong evidence to assume that the three pieces name the same woman. It is more likely that the name is a common one in the Middle Kingdom and more specifically during the Thirteenth Dynasty.

An analysis of the *ḥtp-dī-nsw.t* formula indicates that it fits the type known for the Middle Kingdom: *ḥtp-dī-nsw.t* for the god, in this case *ʾImn-R^c nb-nswt-t3wy*, followed by *dī=f ḥt*, and then introducing the name of person by the speech *n k3 n* followed by his title and name.¹⁵ Since the phrase *n k3 n* is used to introduce a deceased recipient, this statue was likely a mortuary one and may have been placed within his tomb. The statue bears the name and epithets of Amun-Re, which suggests that it came from the Theban region.¹⁶

¹⁴ Grajetzki, *Two Treasurers*, p. 80, pl. 6.

¹⁵ D. Franke, “The Late Middle Kingdom: A Challenge”, *JEA* 89, (2003), p. 39; G. Rosati, “A Rare Formula on a Thirteenth Dynasty Stela” in *The Second Intermediate Period (Thirteenth-Seventeenth Dynasties): Current Research, Future Prospects*, ed. by M. Marée, OLA 192, Leuven; Paris; Walpole, 2010, p. 89.

¹⁶ A statue base of the high steward *Snbj* born of *Jww* currently housed in the Hermitage Museum (5010), which can be considered as a parallel piece to the Cairo CG 957, dates to the reign of king *Snb-sw-m-(j)* of the Thirteenth dynasty. The texts and epigraphy, starting with the *ḥtp-dī-nsw.t* formula dedicated Hathor are similar. Grajetzki, *Two Treasurers*, p. 44, pl. 5.

Conclusions:

The new reading of the owner's name '*Nebsumenu* son of *Reditenseni*' improves on Borchardt's by taking into account the signs ascribed to the lacuna, and suggests a title '*nht-hrw*' for the owner that is consistent with other Middle Kingdom officials. The other textual evidence is also consistent with a Middle Kingdom date, and more specifically, a Thirteenth Dynasty date. The internal evidence of the text places the statue within the Theban context, and a mortuary context. Therefore, the new interpretation of the statue presents a fuller idea of who the statue owner was and what the provenance of the object might be.

Figures



Fig. I. ©Author's photo



Fig. II. © Author's Drawing

تمثال للمدعو نبسمنو ابن رديتسيني بالمتحف المصري بالقاهرة
(CG 957)

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الملخص:

القطعة تحمل رقم CG 957 عبارة عن قاعدة مستطيلة الشكل مصنوعة من الجرانيت الأسود وتوجد حالياً بالطابق السفلي من المتحف المصري بالقاهرة. كما أن أقدام صاحب التمثال محفوظة بشكل جزئي أعلى القاعدة. وتتضمن النصوص المنقوشة على القاعدة صيغة حنن دي نسوت المخصصة لآمون- رع ، مصحوبة بلقب واسم صاحب التمثال. ويهدف هذا البحث إلى تحليل اسم والده صاحب التمثال ومدى مطابقة هذه القطعة مع قطع أخرى متشابهة لكي يتم تمييز صاحبه.