

An unpublished block from the Tomb of Huynefer at Saqqara

*Dr. Mona Abou El Maati **

Introduction:

Among a series of New kingdom tombs excavated at Saqqara, the tomb of the royal scribe Huynefer. It was first excavated by Prof. Dr.Saied Tawfik during the Cairo University excavations. Excavations were resumed in 2005 by an expedition headed by Prof. Dr.Ola El Aguizy¹.

This block (pl.1,2) is now preserved in the storehouse of the site. It bears the temporary number 150/2004.

The tomb of Huynefer is situated to the south of the causeway of king Unas's mortuary complex. It is one among a group of tombs made for the elites and for the high officials from the Ramesside period in Saqqara².

Huynefer was the royal scribe and the holder of the royal seal in the reign of Ramesses II as the king's name was found written on a piece of stone from the tomb.

Huynefer's mother was the Smajt "the singer of *Amon-Re*" and that refer to the high rank of his family.³

The block which I study here is bearing a very distinctive scene of offerings, as we can notice a huge amount of offerings and their varieties.

*lecturer in the Faculty of Archaeology, Cairo University.

¹ I am indebted for the opportunity dr.Ola gave me to study and publish this block from the tomb.

A special thanks and gratitude to Dr.Heba Kamal for giving me the opportunity to work on this block.

² S.Tawfik,Recently Excavated Ramesside Tombs at Saqqara, in *MDAIK* 47,1991,p.408.

³ هبة مصطفى،منظر دينى من مقبرة الكاتب الملكى حوى نفر بسقارة، مجلة كلية الآثار ٢٠٠٥-٢٠٠٦، ص٢٧٥ وما بعدها

Description of the block:

The scene on the block shows Huynefer standing on the left, unfortunately his upper part is missing, he is wearing a long pleated dress and sandals⁴.

He is holding an incense burner in his left hand. The censer has a long hand to fumigate the offerings placed on three tables of offerings in front of him⁵.

These offerings are presented to a god standing on the right, he is probably the god Ptah who was the supreme god of Memphis. Ptah appears standing on the pedestal *Maat*, in his usual mummy like form, his name is missing here, but he was mentioned on another block from the tomb as the god "Ptah –Tatenen"⁶.

Traces of colors are found on the block. Two bunches of Papyrus and Lotus flowers separate the first offering table from the other two.

A vertical line of text lies between the offerings and the god, and another two horizontal lines of texts in the lower part of the scene.

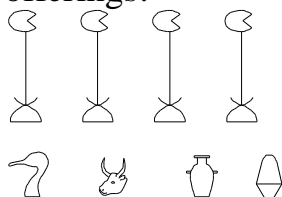
⁴ A.Erman, Aus dem grabe des Hohenpriesters von Memphis, in ZÄS 33, 1859, pl.IIb; A.Hermann, Eine un gewöhnliche gesichtsdarstellung des Neun Reiches, in ZÄS 75, 1939, pl.8a; G.A.Gaballa, The Memphis tomb chapel of Mose, Warminster 1977, pl.46; S.Gohary, The tomb chapel of the royal scribe Amenemone at Saqqara, in BIFAO 91, 1991, pl.57.

⁵ H.Beinlich, "Räucherarm" in LÄ V, 83; M.A.Blackman, Remarks on an Incense-Brazier depicted in Thuthotep's tomb at El-Bersheh, in ZÄS 50, 1912, pp.66-68; H.Beinlich, Ein Altägyptischer Raucherarm, in MDAIK 34, 1987, pp.24-25; G.Roeder, Ägyptische Bronzewerke, 1937, 67ff.

⁶ هبة مصطفى ، المرجع السابق ، ص ٢٧٧

For more informations on Ptah-Tatenen see:
Ch.Leitz, LÄGG III ,p.178.

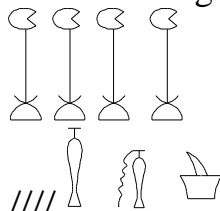
In front of Huynefer's chest there is a calculation of the offerings:



xA Apd xA kA xA Hnot xA tA

“Thousand of birds, oxen, beer, bread”.

The lower register:



xAIIIII xA Hs xA obH xA snTr

“Thousand of (...), of vases, of libation, of incense”

At the top above the three offering tables, we can see the lower parts of some offerings such as:

The Seven unguent jars, an ox and a goose:

These sacred seven jars are well known, they were used in the mummification rites and in the rite of opening the mouth, they were also used in the daily services in temples to anoint and perfuming the statue of the god⁷.

The first offering table in front of the deceased is full of different kinds of bread, two geese, a vase and there is a lotus flower on the top of these offerings in order to make some refreshment to the offerings⁸.

⁷ W.Barta, Die altägyptische offerliste von der frühzeit, bis zur griechisch-Römischen epoche, in *MÄS* 3, 1963, p.12-14; K.Koschel, Königliche miniature salbgefäße eines undokumentierten fund complexes, in *SAK* 29, 2001, p.235; S.Ikram, The mummy in Ancient Egypt, Cairo 1998, p.104.

⁸ A.Radwan, Ramses II und seine mutter, in *SAK* 6, 1978, p.158.

Under the table there are two vases with narrow tops placed on a holder, these vases were used as beer offering vases⁹.

The second offering table is holding bread, two vases and flowers. Under the table we can see two vases with plants rising from them¹⁰.

The Third offering table is holding twelve loaves of bread, under the table there are two vases “Hs”.

The **vertical texts** of texts on the right:



///n nfr (m ?) n nTr aA (i)n imy-r xtm Hwv nfr mAa
xrw

“... to the great god (by) the lord of seal Huynefer, the blessed”

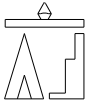
⁹ A.Radwan, Die kupfer-und Bronzegefäße Ägyptens vom den Anfängen bis zum begin der spätzeit, 1980; H.Balcz, Die Gefäß darstellungen des Alten Reiches, in *MDAIK* 4,1933, p.71; Du Mensil du Buisson, Les noms et signes designant des vases ou objets similaires, Paris 1935, p.114-115; A.Radwan, The Ankh Vessel and its ritual function, Extrait des Mélanges Gamal Eddin Mokhtar, in *BdE* XCVII/2, 1985, p.211.

¹⁰ J.Vandier, Manuel D'Archéologie Égyptienne, Tome IV, Paris 1964, p.148-149,fig.49,38.

The **horizontal texts** in the bottom:



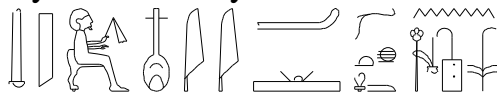
///Spsw xtyw Smsw Hr wn.k sStA Hr wnn nfr aq.k r Styx n kA n///
“...the nobles, who are behind the followers of Horus (may) you clear the mystery for (i.e vision) wnn nfr (when) you enter the Styx (tomb) for the soul of...”



Htp di (wsir)

This three signs in the lower part complete the vertical column, they may explain to me the beginning of the vertical column.

The signs of the second horizontal register is unclear, and the writer was not as perfect as in the rest of the texts, there is a change in some signs and there is a change in the colour of the block so it is difficult to read except that they are offerings to the benefit of the royal scribe Huynifer.



//////n sS nsw imy-r xtm Hwy nfr mAa xrw

“(Offerings) for the royal scribe Huynifer the blessed”

Commentary:




-The block is incomplete either the scene or the texts, but we can observe some points as the following:



a-This block contains three lines of reliefs, the upper part we can see the relief of some offerings, the middle part is the main scene as we see the deceased offers to the god, there is also traces of the lower part which obviously were also some offerings.



b-The beginning of the text in front of the god is missing, it begins with: n nfr makes me guess the beginning of it was either the name

of the god Ptah as(pth) (w)n nfr or it is the remains of the Htp di wsir spell which begins with

“ Htp di wsir wn nfr” just as seen in the lower part of the column.

c-The word  is not clear to me , but I tried to read it by many ways: it may refer with the missing signs from the beginning of the text to the pyramid of Memphis “mn nfr” but this always take the determinative  and the determinative of a city  not the stepped pyramid.It may be read as “m ar” -which I prefer-that gives the meaning “the god in his elevation”, or finally it is a mistake in writing by the writer.


d-The word xtm which means “seal” in the title of Huynefer imy-r xtm“lord of the seal” is written twice, once with  in the vertical line and with the sign  in the horizontal line.

e -The name of Huynefer is written once with the determinative  and another with the sign of a man sitting on a chair  holding the flail in both cases.

f-Smsw Hr in the horizontal line means “The followers of Horus”, it refers to the creatures who supposedly followed the god Horus in his predynastic battles at Edfou and in the Delta.They were honored in all Horus temples. The followers of Horus deemed both mythical companions and predynastic rulers of legend, may have been the confederation of nome warriors who followed the Thinite ruler Narmer north in his quest to overcome the Delta and unify Egypt.These followers of Horus were portrayed as bearing clubs and other weapons.in the mortuary texts, the followers assume even more dramatic roles they purify the deceased on their journeys and

are described in some documents as predynastic rulers who welcome the dead into their domains of eternal bliss¹¹.

g-Styt denotes the sanctuary of a god, especially Soker¹², and it can also be used to mean “tomb” so it is sepulchral in implication. Originally it was the name of the sanctuary of Soker at Memphis and it became a general term for the whole necropolis or a sanctuary in one of the main temples¹³.

h- The vase under the second offering table  is a kind of vases represented in Karnak among the annals of Thutmosis III. It is related to the goddess Hathor who is represented in the form of a cow in the middle of the vase with papyrus plants



as if she is in the Delta marshes. The vase is known as the didi or ddt vase which was filled with wine¹⁴, and was offered to Hathor to calm her down in the Myth of “Destruction of mankind”¹⁵.

Conclusion:

As we have seen, the monument under study is a typical New Kingdom with a unique scene of offerings. It is relatively well preserved: the reliefs are beautifully carved and the writing completely accomplished in sunken relief.

¹¹ Friedman, Renée Frances The Followers of Horus: Studies dedicated to Michael Allen Hoffman, 1944-1990, Egyptian Studies Association Publications 2, 1992; Jürgen von Beckerath, Horusgeleit in *LÄ III*, 51-52; M. Bunson, Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt, 1991, p.139.

¹² P. Vernus, Athribis: textes et documents relatifs à la géographie, aux cultes et à l'histoire d'une ville du Delta égyptien à l'époque pharaonique, in *BdE 74*, 1978, p.425 n.6.

¹³ Wilson, *PTL*, p.1038.

¹⁴ S. Cauville, L'Offrande aux dieux dans le temple égyptien, 2011, p.50f; Du Mensil, Les Noms et signes, p.54.

¹⁵ H. Brunner, “Die theologische Bedeutung der Trunkenheit”, *ZÄS 79*, 1954, 82; C. Meyer, “Wein”, *LÄ VI*, 1175-76; M. Poo, “Weinopfer”, *LÄ VI*, 1189.

It is well observed that there are some mistakes in writing, and omissions are made on purpose in the lower part of the scene.

From the huge amount of offerings with their varieties we deduce how wealthy that person was.

Pl.1



Huynefer making offering to the god Ptah-Tatenen-Saqqara

Pl.2



Details of Huynefer making offering to Ptah-Tatenen-Saqqara