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WERNER KAISER



Werner Kaiser
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The Statue of the Dwarf *Pr-n(j)-'nh(w)* Recently Discovered at Giza¹⁾

By ZAHY HAWASS

(Tafeln 12-14)

The statue of the dwarf *Pr-n(j)-'nh(w)* was discovered on January 11th 1990 inside a serdab attached to a tomb at the southern end of the western field of the Great Pyramid of Khufu²⁾. The statue and its tomb were discovered during the clearance around the tomb of *Nswt-nfr* (G 1457) found by REISNER³⁾. This took place during the development of the investigation of an architectural plan for *Nswt-nfr*, who was the overseer of the pyramid city of Khufu⁴⁾.

The tomb of the dwarf *Pr-n(j)-'nh(w)* is located to the west of tomb G 1457 and to the north of the tomb of the famous dwarf *Snb*⁵⁾. The area had been used both by REISNER and JUNKER as a place for disposing their excavation debris. The newly found tomb is of rectangular shape and built of limestone. It contains two false doors located on the east side of the tomb. On their drums the name of the dwarf is written in hieroglyphs: *Pr-n(j)-'nh(w)*. On the top of the mastaba were found three shafts. Inside one of them was the skeleton of the dwarf, in the other two there were scattered artefacts and the remains of two female skeletons⁶⁾. Statues of the two females were found in two niches beside the false doors. In front of the eastern face of the tomb there are six limestone stands inscribed with the names of these females and *Pr-n(j)-'nh(w)* in hieroglyphs (pl. 12 a).

¹⁾ WERNER KAISER contributed valuable articles and books to the field of Egyptology. His articles dealing with pre-dynastic times and the Old Kingdom were very useful and valuable for my own research. He made great efforts in the field of cultural and archaeological relations between Egypt and West Germany. WERNER KAISER was very endeavoured to help many Egyptian scholars during his stay in Egypt. It is to him that I dedicate this article.

²⁾ This is a preliminary article on the statue of the dwarf *Pr-n(j)-'nh(w)* and a quick note on his tomb. A full report on the architecture of the tomb G 1700, the attached serdab, other statues and inscriptions of the dwarf's wives, the pottery and the analysis of the skeletons found in the burial shafts, false doors, limestone offering stands and other tombs and shafts found in the site will be published in a separate volume.

The excavations have been assisted by MAHMOUD AFIFI, a senior archaeologist, and a number of assistant archaeologists: WAZIR ABDOU EL-WAHAB, JIHAN ABDOU EL-RAHIEM, MANAL EL-SAYAD, JOUSIEF NABIEH and KHALID DARWISH. ZAGHLOUL IBRAHIM did the architectural plan of the tomb.

I would like to give very special thanks to Dr. NATHALIE BEAUX from the University of Lyon and D. JOHANNES from the German Institute in Cairo for taking excellent photos of the statue.

³⁾ PM III². 1, 64; REISNER, *Giza I*, 210, fig. 12; REISNER and SMITH, *Giza II*, 50-51.

⁴⁾ See titles of *Nswt-nfr*, in: HAWASS, *The funerary establishment of Khufu, Khafra and Menkaura during the Old Kingdom*, Ann-Arbor (Mich.) 1987.

⁵⁾ PM III². 1, 101; JUNKER, *Giza V*, 3-124.

⁶⁾ Dr. FAWZYA HUSSEIN and her assistants from the National Institute for Research are preparing the analysis of the human remains found in the excavation site.

Attached to the tomb on its northern side was a serdab with a ceiling made of one large limestone slab⁷⁾. A niche was located on the western side of the serdab under the overhang of the limestone ceiling (pl. 12b). On the end of the slab a hieroglyphic inscription was found:

nh-nswt (engraving of a dancing dwarf) (*nmjw?*) *pr-?* *Pr-n(j)-nh(w)*,

"The King's Acquaintance, (the dwarf) of the Great Palace, *Pr-n(j)-nh(w)*" (pl. 12c).

The seated statue of the dwarf was looking east through the niche. In front of the serdab a shaft has been cut 3,35 m deep into the rock. In the shaft the remains of a human skeleton were found. Two limestone stands with the same hieroglyphic inscriptions found on the slab of the serdab – with the engraved dancing dwarf – were located in front of the serdab⁸⁾. To the north of the serdab several other tombs were discovered, of which the most interesting one is the tomb of *nh-jb* on which was found the name *Sn.t-jtj.s* beside the drum of the deceased. It may be the name of *Snb*'s wife who may also be related to *nh-jb*⁹⁾. No other titles have been found here to show a relationship with *Pr-n(j)-nh(w)*. However, the location of his tomb should indicate a relationship between the families of *Snb*, *nh-jb* and *Pr-n(j)-nh(w)*.

Description of the statue (pls. 13–14)

The statue of the dwarf *Pr-n(j)-nh(w)* is made of black basalt. He is seated on a chair and wears a traditional curled wig with traces of brown colour. The neck is short and thick. The face has a strong impression and is perfectly formed (pl. 14c): The eyes are framed in black colour, the iris is painted white and the pupils are in black colour. The eyebrows are also well defined in black. The forehead has a brown colour similar to that of the wig. The nose and the mouth have been carved very accurately. All these features show the delicate outline of the face and the careful representation of the eyes. This indicates that the artist carefully chose these three colours and a fine bas-relief in order to give a very realistic impression of the dwarf's face.

Pr-n(j)-nh(w) has his right hand flat on his thigh and holds with his fingers a *shm*-scepter (pl. 14b), while the left hand, placed on his breast, is holding a long staff. The staff reaches from the wig over his left shoulder to the right side of the chair, just above the hieroglyphic inscription (pl. 14d).

The pectoral muscles, the shoulders and the arms show a strong man. All three features are in good proportion and have appropriate dimensions. He wears a short kilt, painted with bright white colour, and a black coloured belt. The legs are short and slightly bowed outwards clearly showing that they are deformed. The left leg, especially the knee, differs from the right one and shows clear deformities on the upper part of the leg, as if the dwarf had suffered from previous injuries. Contrary to the right one, the lower part of the left leg appears to be swollen or inflamed. This could have been a result of the supposed knee injury. Alternatively the swollen leg resembles a moderately advanced case of human *bancrafran filariasis*, better known as *elephantiasis*. If this is *elephantiasis*, the statue would be the earliest record of this disease. The feet are flat.

The dwarf is seated on a low chair without a back. It is broken on its left side and the break runs from the back of the chair to the right side of the base. It was probably restored by the same

⁷⁾ It is strange to find a serdab outside a private tomb. Until now serdabs were found only inside officials' tombs as in the one of Ti in Sakkara, while the serdab of a royal tomb is located outside as in Zoser's pyramid complex.

⁸⁾ The translation of the inscriptions on the offering stands will be discussed in a future publication.

⁹⁾ PM III². 1, 101; she was a priestess of Hathor and Neith. One of the two statues of women found to represent *Pr-n(j)-nh(w)*'s wife bears the same title.

artist who made the statue. On both sides at the front of the chair are two vertical lines of hieroglyphs in bas-relief bearing the name and titles of *Pr-n(j)-'nh(w)*.

Seen from the back of the statue the following items are of interest (pl. 13c):

1. The right shoulder is higher than the left one. There is a slight curvature of the spine to the left that appears to be a deformity effected by his attitude of sitting.
2. The wig, with its typical curled strains, has been crafted very carefully and detailed.
3. The colour of the belt and the kilt is not as brightly painted as in the front view of the statue.
4. There is an irregular crack on the back of the seat declining from left to right, indicating the restoration of the chair.
5. The top of the shaft can be seen over the left shoulder.

Measurements of the Statue

Maximum height:	48 cm
Height of the chair:	18 cm
Width of the chair:	14 cm
Width of the shoulders:	22 cm
Length of the legs from the base to the knees:	13 cm

Remarks on the Statue

The statue of the dwarf *Pr-n(j)-'nh(w)* is an example of superb craftsmanship in basalt. The sculptor developed in this statue an attractive consistence with the sculpture of the Old Kingdom. It is more carefully carved than any other known private statue of this time. The fine outline of every single part of the face, the heavy muscular chest and arms and especially the remarkable details of the dwarf's deformities and injuries prove that *Pr-n(j)-'nh(w)* was represented by a talented sculptor, who was acquainted with human anatomy and its proportions. The sculptor devoted his efforts to execute a living example of the canonical rules of design combined with a richness of details.

The sculpture is simple and clean. The dwarf is handsome with a look of quietness and serenity. Yet in this simple elegance is strength and power: a young face, yet wise. Even though deformed and injured, to the viewer the statue conveys the impression of a healthy man. The brilliance of the white kilt increases the freshness of the statue's appeal and was an insightful choice of color by the artist.

The position of the staff in his left hand and the baton of authority in his right has not been seen previously in the Old Kingdom statues. The sculptor was forced to place the staff and the *shm*-scepter in a unique position. Short of figure and even in a sitting position, the dwarf could not hold these objects in a traditional manner. The result, however, adds to the fine symmetry of the statue.

The text is not well written and curiously divided from left to right. It cannot be compared with the bas-relief of the fine artistic style of the statue. The badly written letters may be due to the stone of the chair, which was broken and then restored, or perhaps the hieroglyphs were added later by another artist.

The statue is a rare example of private statues carved in basalt with such care and skill and must be regarded as a masterpiece of Old Kingdom sculpture.

The Inscription

Left: *šhmḥ-jb nb.f(r) nb nmjw¹⁰ nswt Pr-n(j)-ḥ(w)*
 Right: *n* (determinative) *n pr[-ʿ ...]*
 Translation: One who delights his lord every day, the king's dwarf
Pr-n(j)-ḥ(w) of the Great Palace

The title of *Pr-n(j)-ḥ(w)* indicates that he pleased the king every day in the palace. Therefore the king gave him authority to hold the staff and the baton of power. To rejoice the heart of the king and perform dancing in front of him was the duty of pygmies (*dšng*), but when there isn't one, a dwarf substitutes for this duty¹¹.

There are two dwarves dated to the Old Kingdom previously known: *Snb*, who was the "prophet of Khufu and Radjedef", "tutor of the king's son" and "director of dwarves in charge of dressing"¹². The mastaba of *Pr-n(j)-ḥ(w)* is very near to the one of *Snb*, and the name of *Snb*'s wife is located north of the recently discovered tomb of *Pr-n(j)-ḥ(w)*. One of *Snb*'s titles is the "director of dwarves in charge of dressing". It seems that *Snb* was of more importance than *Pr-n(j)-ḥ(w)* because of the titles and from the scenes in his tomb. The second one, *Hnmw-ḥtp*, dated to the 6th Dynasty, bears the titles *hm-kʿ* and *jmj-r hm.w-kʿ*, which indicates a rank minor to that of *Snb*¹³. Now there are three dwarves including *Pr-n(j)-ḥ(w)*.

One can see a certain ranking of the three persons as: *Snb*, *Pr-n(j)-ḥ(w)* and *Hnmw-ḥtp*. I put *Pr-n(j)-ḥ(w)* before *Hnmw-ḥtp* because of the objects of power that he is holding and the material of his statue as well as the size of his tomb.

Dwarves played a certain role during funerals and performed the *hbj*-dance, as EL-AGUIZY had shown¹⁴. From the New Kingdom we have evidence for the connection between dwarves and the sun-god which dates back to the Old Kingdom¹⁵. The location of the niche of the serdab of *Pr-n(j)-ḥ(w)* and his statue facing east as well as the drawing of the dancing dwarf above the niche confirm the relation between the dwarf and the sun-god. If we know that dwarves danced in front of the king as in the case of *Pr-n(j)-ḥ(w)*, so the king and the dwarf both danced in front of the god¹⁶. Dwarves were native Egyptians¹⁷, physically deformed and distinct from pygmies who came from Yam in Central Africa¹⁸. The location of the mastabas of *Snb* and *Pr-n(j)-ḥ(w)* at the far southern end of the western field may suggest that this area was a cemetery of dwarves and that they were isolated from the other tombs of the officials and courtiers of the western field of the Great Pyramid of Khufu.

The *Sjmʿ-ntr*-stela shows a dwarf bearing a title similar to that of *Pr-n(j)-ḥ(w)*: "He who gladdens the heart of the god."¹⁹ This stela confirms that dwarves could substitute for pygmies

¹⁰ I would like to thank a number of scholars who saw the statue and helped me on the reading of the word *nmjw* because of the badly written letters: K. SIMPSON, J. ALLEN, F. HEIKAL and D. SILVERMAN. For the different writing of *nmjw* see: *Wb* II, 266-267; *LÄ* VI, 1432-1435; for the determinative see FISCHER, in: *ZÄS* 105 (1978), 47-56.

¹¹ SILVERMAN, in: *Serapis* 1 (1969), 53-54; GOEDICKE, *Die Stellung des Königs im Alten Reich*, Wiesbaden 1960, 9-10; BRUNNER-TRAUT, *Der Tanz im Alten Ägypten*, Glückstadt 1938, 82.

¹² PM III², 1, 101; see EL-AGUIZY, in: *ASAE* 71 (1987), 55; v. DASEN, in: *Medical History* 32 (1988), 263.

¹³ EL-AGUIZY, *op. cit.*, 56.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 58.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 59.

¹⁶ SILVERMAN, *op. cit.*, 53.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 55.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*; see also DAWSON, in: *JEA* 24 (1938), 185-189; D. O'CONNOR, *The locations of of Yam and Kush and their historical implications*, in: *JARCE* 23, 1986, pp. 27-50.

¹⁹ SILVERMAN, *op. cit.*, 56; KAPLONY, *Inschriften* I, 374-375.

dancing in front of the king and the god. It is interesting to look at the staff that *Pr-n(j)-'nh(w)* is holding. At its lower end the staff is less rounded than at the top. It is thickened into an oval shape and resembles the blade of an oar. Apparently, it was broken when the statue was put into position in the serdab. It is possible that the staff originally represented an oar. This suggests that *Pr-n(j)-'nh(w)* was a leader of ships. JUNKER has stated that one of the roles for dwarves was to serve as officers of ships²⁰).

Dating

There are two points that should be stated here before discussing the dating of the statue of *Pr-n(j)-'nh(w)*:

1. On discovery, before examining it, the statue from the serdab gave the impression of royalty.
2. The strong look, the perfect proportions and the technical achievement of the sculpture are typical for a statue of the 4th Dynasty, especially of the time of Khafra when the greatness of the Old Kingdom sculpture reached its peak.

JUNKER dated the statue of *Snb* to Dyn. 6, other Egyptologists followed him and some dated it to the end of Dyn. 5²¹). However CHERPION dated the *Snb*-statue to the time of Djedefre of Dyn. 4. Her argument is very convincing: The location of the recently found mastaba is just north of the tomb of *Snb*. The position of the two tombs in the cemetery seems to indicate that the tomb of *Pr-n(j)-'nh(w)* should be dated after *Snb*.

The general description of dwarves in Ancient Egypt agree with the statue of *Pr-n(j)-'nh(w)*. The statue appears to be deformed, its head seems to be of normal size, but the extremities are shorter than normal. The style of art of the muscles and the chest as well as of the whole body is similar to that of the royal statue of Khafra, so both statues could be the work of the same artist. This is one of the reasons for dating the statue to the period of Khafra. It seems that the king ordered the "master of all works" to make this statue because of a special kind of relation between him and the dwarf. However, objectively seen the statue fits within the art of Dyn. 4. The neck of the statue is typical of the time from the 3rd through to the 4th Dynasty²²). The style of the dwarf's wig also starts in Dyn. 3, as in the famous red granite statue of *Htp-dj.f*. If the fingers of the statue were long, it would be dated to the late Old Kingdom, but *Pr-n(j)-'nh(w)*'s fingers are short: again typical for the 4th Dynasty²³).

The *sh̄m*-scepter *Pr-n(j)-'nh(w)* is holding represents the shape of the earlier forms; by the end of the Old Kingdom it changed to that of papyrus²⁴). There is rare evidence of Old Kingdom stone-statues holding the *sh̄m* and the staff, but it is frequently seen on wooden statues²⁵). A fragment of a granite statue holding a *sh̄m* to his chest came from REISNER's excavations²⁶), and there are the statues of *Spj* in the Louvre which show the deceased standing and holding a staff in his left hand and a *sh̄m* in his right²⁷). The similarity of the chair to that of *Snb* also supports dating the statue to the 4th Dynasty²⁸).

²⁰) JUNKER, *Giza V*, Abb. I, no. 13.

²¹) *Ibid.*, 3-124; RUSSMANN, *Egyptian Sculpture - Cairo and Luxor*, Austin 1989, 39-41.

²²) RUSSMANN, *op. cit.*, 12.

²³) *Ibid.*, 18.

²⁴) CHERPION, in: *BIFAO* 84 (1984), 38; ID., *Mastabas et hypogées dans l'Ancien Empire: Le problème de la datation*, Bruxelles 1989, 26.

²⁵) RUSSMANN, *op. cit.*, 2-9.

²⁶) *BMFA* 33/2, 154 (G 2347x).

²⁷) See FISCHER, in: *MMJ* 13 (1978), 5-7, for the *Jmjt-r*-staves, the *mdw*-staff, the *'b*'-scepter and the *'wt*-staff.

²⁸) CHERPION, *op. cit.*, 39.

The mastabas of the 4th Dynasty at Giza with their large structure, the shafts above the tomb, the false doors outside and the serdab, such as G 2000 and G 4000, are similar to the one of *Pr-n(j)-'nh(w)*²⁹). Also the tomb of *Nfr-nswt* which is located just east of the tomb of *Pr-n(j)-'nh(w)* is dated to the Dyn. 4³⁰). One would expect his tomb to have a well decorated burial chamber, equivalent to the fine work of the statue, but all known tombs of the 4th Dynasty show a lack of quality of structure and decoration³¹).

The most important four points for dating the statue of *Pr-n(j)-'nh(w)* to Dyn. 4 are:

1. The similarity of the upper part of the body of king Khafra to that of the dwarf *Pr-n(j)-'nh(w)*,
2. the poor quality of the dwarf's tomb and the small size of the stones used,
3. the strong features, the superb technical achievement and the delicate work done on the statue, and
4. the serdab of the tomb, located outside, is similar to that of King Zoser of the 3rd Dynasty and is not found in any tomb that is dated to Dyn. 5 and 6.
5. Following the extensive use of basalt in the funerary complex of Khufu useful 'off-cuts' of this stone were probably available for important statues in the sculptor's workshops at Giza.

Finally, three high ranking dwarves are known now from the Old Kingdom. Their statues – far the best among them *Pr-n(j)-'nh(w)*'s – are impressive examples of the corresponding high ranking of the contemporary style of art and support the authority and dignity of their owners. No wonder that the ancient Egyptians followed Amenemope's advice³²):

“Do not laugh at a blind man, nor tease a dwarf!”

²⁹) REISNER, *Giza I*, 132–162; 414.

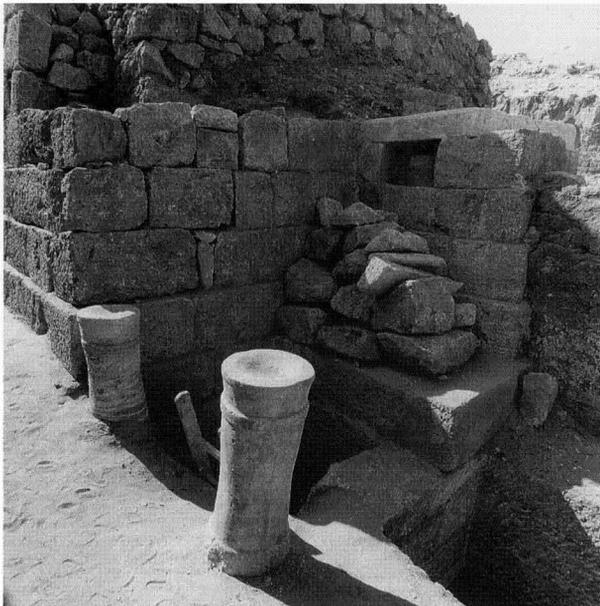
³⁰) CHERPION, *op. cit.*, 26; compare REISNER, *Giza I*, 64; REISNER and SMITH, *Giza II*, 50–51.

³¹) CHERPION, *op. cit.*, 42.

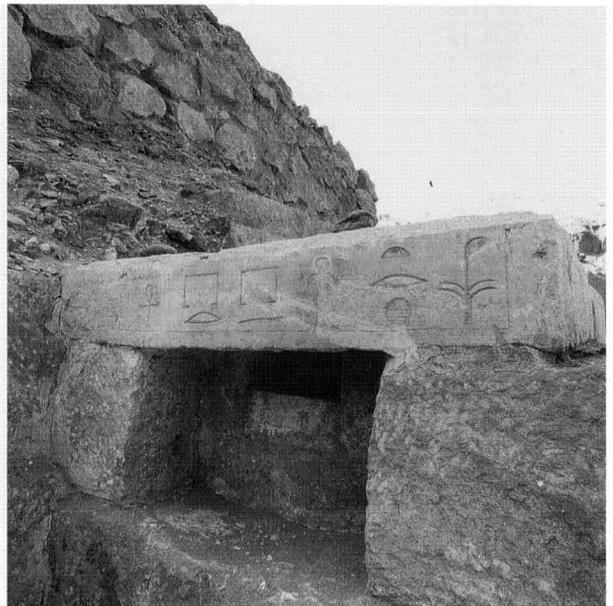
³²) *Anet 2*, 424.



a) Giza, tomb G 1700



b) Serdab of G 1700



c) Limestone slab covering the Serdab



a



b



c

a-c) Statue of *Pr-n(j)-nb(w)*



a



c



d



b

a-d) Statue of *Pr-n(j)-nb(w)*, details