

British Museum stela BM 360

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The builder of royal tombs Nakhy dedicated limestone stela BM 360 to Prince Ahmose Sapair who seems to have been one of the first "saints" adored in Thebes and Middle Egypt, as were his brother the king Amenhotep I and his mother Ahmose Nefertary. The stela, doubtless from Deir el-Medina is, also, the first known image of Ahmose Sapair made in the artists' village. Other monuments also identify Nakhy, such as one stela in Turin Museum (no. 50010) and a limestone relief in the British Museum (BM 281). The style of BM 360 represents one more evidence of post-Amarna design in Thebes.

El constructor de la tumba real Nakhy dedicó la estela de caliza BM 360 al príncipe Ahmose Sapair que parece haber sido uno de los primeros "santos" venerados en Tebas y el Egipto Medio, como fueron su hermano el rey Amenhotep I y su madre Ahmose Nefertary. La estela, sin duda procedente de Deir el-Medina, presenta también la primera imagen conocida de Ahmose Sapair realizada en la aldea de los artistas. En otros monumentos también se identifica a Nakhy como en la estela 50010 del Museo de Turín y un relieve sobre piedra caliza del Museo Británico (BM 281). El estilo de BM 360 es un ejemplo más del diseño posterior a Amarna en Tebas.

The British Museum is the owner of the round-topped limestone stela BM 360¹, acquired in 1834, belonging to Sams Collection. Its size is 23,7 cm high, by 16 cm wide. Although its provenance is unknown, its features and more likely the donor's profession, denote Deir el-Medina origin.

The stela is carved in sunken relief and two persons are represented: Prince Ahmose Sapair and the builder of royal tombs Nakhy. The Prince is sitting on an animal-legged chair placed upon a pedestal; he is barefooted and rests his feet upon a stool. He is dressed with a middling robe with a long stripe, which hangs over his kilt. He is adorned with a broad necklace and circular earrings. A side lock is tied up to his rounded wig and a cone accomplishes his head adornment. His right hand holds a bunged lotus whose long stem allows him to smell the flower. Nakhy remains standing in front of Sapair, and is offering to him a bouquet with his right hand and a wide-open lotus,

which, oddly, appears behind his right arm. He is also barefooted, dressed only with kilt and covering his head with a short wig. Both individuals on each side flank an offering table placed in the middle.

TEXTS

Upper part texts:




s3t p3 ir m3c hrw

Sat-pa-ir justified






šsp ḥtp s3t-p3-ir ḥsy n r3c w3b w3b

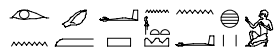
He, who receives the boons Sat-pa-ir, blessed by Ra, purified, purified

In the stela the hieroglyph is , which makes no sense, therefore, it tempts to consi-

1. Bierbrier, Morris. *Hieroglyphic Texts from Egyptian Stelae. Part 9*. London, 1993, p. 10, plate 7.

der the sign as a confusion with a similar one. However, the hieroglyph  is widely used in cult contexts. *Wörterbuch der Ägyptische Sprache* by A. Erman and H. Grapow offers various examples³. So renders this character R. J. Demarée⁴ who, on the other hand, misreads, in my opinion, the name of God Ra in the stela, as he considers the determinative  as the hieroglyph .

Lower part texts:



ir n sdm-š n imnt n'hy

Made by the Servant of Occident Nakhy

PRINCE AHMOSE SAPAIR

The cult object in this stela is the young prince Ahmose Sapair who lived at the beginning of 18th Dynasty. His body was found at the Deir el-Bahari cachette (DB 320) in 1881 in company with those of other royal persons. It is located now in Cairo Museum (CG 61064) together with the small coffin of 18th Dynasty type (CG 61007) in which it was placed by the 21st Dynasty priests.

Ahmose Sapair's mummy, 93 cm high, was unwrapped by G. E. Smith and A. R. Ferguson⁵ in 1905 and not much remained of the original mummy except for a few bones and the deformed skin. The teeth indicated an age of five or six years when death occurred. However, he appeared to have been circumcised, although during 18th Dynasty this procedure was prac-

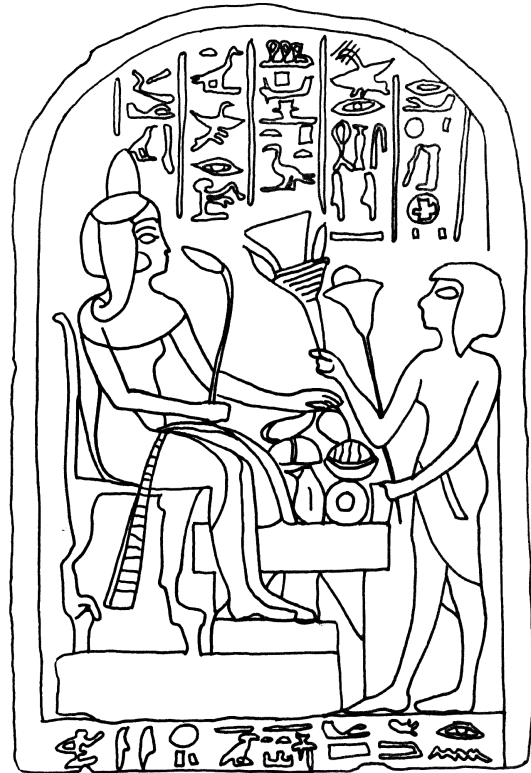


Figure 1

tised at puberty, not at such an early age. Nevertheless, according to Sapair's young man features in all his monuments, the current identification of mummy CG 61064 seems doubtful.

In his monuments, in most cases, Sapair appears as *s3 nsw*, although never as *s3 nsw smsw*. He has been considered to be the son of Sekenenre Taa II⁶, Ahmose I⁷ and Amenhotep I⁸. The second one seems to be the most suitable alternative. As D.B. Redford⁹ appoints, Ahmose Sapair was one of the four

2. Erman, Adolf; Grapow, Hermann. *Wörterbuch der Ägyptische Sprache*. Leipzig, 1926-1931, p. 281, II.
3. Erman, Grapow, 1931, pp. 30-31.
4. Demarée, Robert Johannes. *The 3h ikr n r'-Stelae. On Ancestor Worship in Ancient Egypt*. Leiden, 1983. p. 168.
5. Smith, Grafton Elliot. *The royal mummies*. Le Caire, 1912. Partridge, Robert B. *Faces of Pharaohs. Royal Mummies and Coffins from Ancient Thebes*. London, 1994.
6. Vandersleyen, Claude. "L'identité d'Ahmès Sapaïr". *SAK* 10, 1983, pp. 311-324. Bennett, Chris. "Thutmose I and Ahmes-Sapaïr". *GM* 141, 1994, pp. 35-37.
7. Schmitz, Franz-Jürgen. *Amenophis I. Versuch einer Darstellung der Regierungszeit eines ägyptischen Herrschers der frühen 18. Dynastie*. Hildesheim, 1978, pp. 46-48.
8. Winlock, Herbert. "The tombs of the kings of the seventeenth dynasty at Thebes". *JEA* 10, 1924, pp. 217-277.
9. Redford, Donald B. *History and Chronology of the Eighteenth Dynasty of Egypt. Seven Studies*. Toronto, 1967. p. 72, note 6.

sons of King Ahmose and Queen Ahmose Nefertary, along with Siamun, Ahmose Ankh and Amenhotep, this latest the only one surviving his father.

His second name, which in BM 360 appears in a corrupted form *s3t-p3-ir*, may mean Son of the Eye, referred to Horus. F.J. Schmitz already in 1978¹⁰ refuted W. Helck's opinion about the possible hurrite origin of Sapair from the term "sapari".

This prince was "sanctified" very probably in a time soon after his death, in view of the fact that the earliest cult rendered to him can be noticed at the very beginning of Amenhotep I reign. Vandersleyen¹¹ gives an inventory of all the monuments referred to Ahmose Sapair; however, this stela in British Museum is not recorded. Among those monuments there are three stelae dated in the first times of 18th Dynasty, in which the prince appears as worship object. These are CG 34004 and JE 41773 from Cairo and UC 14233 in Petrie Collection.

Stela CG 34004, dated little after year 10 of Amenhotep I reign¹², is the oldest one. A man called *knrs* offers a lotus to *s3 nsw ḥms dd.f s3 p3 ir*. UC 14233¹³ is an early 18th Dynasty stela in which *imn m ipt* presents an offering to *s3 nsw s3 p3 ir m3c hrw*. In JE 41773¹⁴, one of the two Sapair's monuments not coming from Thebes, the tiny figure of *s3 nsw s3 p3 ir* lies behind Amon adored by *pnḥ3*.

Ahmose Sapair seems to be, therefore, one of the first "saints" adored in Thebes and Middle Egypt. His cult is evidently related to the one much more extensive rendered to other royal persons in his entourage, such as Amenhotep I



Fig. 2. Copyright The Trustees of the British Museum

or his mother Ahmose Nefertary¹⁵. It was still active during 21st Dynasty when Butehamon depicted him, together with many other royal persons, in his coffin¹⁶, the last evidence of Sapair's cult we know.

In BM 360, the prince has a revealing epithet: *ḥsy n r*^c. No other monument dedicated to him contains this expression. The term *ḥsy* etymologically means *the praised one* and it is employed to appoint those deceased who were, as J. Quaegebeur¹⁷ states, "object of special worship". Here it is united to God Ra,

10. Schmitz, 1978, pp. 46-48.

11. Vandersleyen, 1983.

12. Vandersleyen, 1983, note 18.

13. Stewart, Harry M. *Egyptian Stelae, Reliefs and Paintings from the Petrie Collection. Part One: The New Kingdom*. Warminster, 1976. p. 47.

14. Vandersleyen, 1983. p. 320. It comes from Sheikh Said, in Middle Egypt.

15. Cerný, Jaroslav. "Le culte d'Amenophis Ier chez les ouvriers de la nécropole thébaine." *BIFAO* 27, 1927, pp. 159-203. Redford, Donald B. *Pharaonic King-Lists, Annals and Day-Books. A Contribution to the Study of the Egyptian Sense of History*. Mississauga, 1986.

16. Museo Egizio, Turin, 2236.

17. Quaegebeur, Jan, "Les 'Saints' égyptiens préchrétiens", *Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica*, Leuven 8 (1977), 129-143.

making an expression that reminds the one used in Deir el- Medina *3h ikr n r^c* for naming ancestors who had the function of protecting their descendants¹⁸. He is also entitled *w^cb w^cb*, an expression frequently used in the *Opening of the mouth* ritual and in other offering formulae.

However, the commonest epithet referred to Ahmose Sapair in his monuments is *m³c hrw*, as occurs in BM 360¹⁹. In JE 36347, a 19th Dynasty stela found at Karnak, and in TT 359, Inherkau's tomb in Deir el-Medina, he is appointed as *wsir* and as *3h n r^c* in stela H 3198 of Wagner Museum in Würzburg University²⁰. The epithet *im^ch hr wsir* is in JE 45553, a 19th Dynasty stela from Merenptah's palace in Memphis²¹, the only evidence of prince's worship in Lower Egypt.

The name Sapair is misapplied in three stelae. It appears as *s3t p3 ir* in BM 360 and in JE 36347, a 19th Dynasty stela in Cairo Museum found at Karnak. In H 3198, in which *kynbu* is sitting before the Prince and Ahmose Nefertary, the corruption is different: *s3 piry*. The inaccuracy in Sapair's name appears for the first time in our stela, and it has very much to do with the name of one of Nakhy's sons who is called too *s3t p3 ir* in Turin stela 50010²².

BM 360 is not only the first monument using special epithets for Ahmose Sapair, it also seems to be the primary one employing unusual features in the prince's look, except for the lotus which is present in most previous and later cases. Never before, he appears with the youth side lock and the cone upon his head and only in few later occasions, Sapair is adorned with them. However, the earrings are the oddest ornament, being this one the only repre-

sentation of the prince wearing such a jewel. The garment and the long stripe are furthermore peculiar pieces. All together makes this image of Sapair a baroque figure with no equivalent in any other of his representations. The Amarna influence is manifest: the high cone and the earrings like Meryra rewarded by Akhenaton²³ in his tomb decoration, or the flying striped band very similar to the one that embellishes Amarna royal crowns.

This stela is, as well, the first image of Ahmose Sapair made in Deir el -Medina. From now on, there will be a few more coming from the artisans' village: Stelae Turin 1455 and H 3198, Butehamon's coffin (Turin 2236), and two tombs: Khabekhnet (TT 2), now in Berlin (number 1625) and Inherkau (TT 359). However, none of those later representations is alike BM 360 as the prince is always accompanying other royal persons, in particular "sanctified" Amenhotep I and Ahmose Nefertary.

THE SERVANT OF THE OCCIDENT NAKHY

B. Bruyère found Nakhy's burial place in 1928²⁴, a pit numbered 1138. It is situated south of chapel 375 belonging to Semen, an 18th Dynasty artisan, and it contains four halls. B. Bruyère found in it 64 cones, 31 of them belonged to Nakhy, 12 to Nefertary and 28 to Meret-Ra.

In his stela in Turin Museum number 50010, his plentiful family is represented, the wife Nefertary and the sons and daughters Amenwahu, Seth, Satpair, Mehy, Hepety, Thutmose, Pawr, Hori, Meret-Ra and Kai. His father

18. Demarée, 1983.

19. Also in UC 14233 and Turin 1455.

20. Demarée, 1983, pp. 112-114.

21. Schulman, Alan R. "Some Observations on the *3h ikr n R^c*-Stelae". *BiOr* 43, 1986. p. 329.

22. Tosi, Mario; Roccati, Alessandro. *Stele e altre epigrafi di Deir el Medina n. 50001 - n. 50262*. Torino, 1972. p. 43.

23. Davies, Norman de Garis. *The Rock Tombs of El Amarna*. London, 1903-1908. Vol. I, pl. XXX.

24. Bruyère, Bernard. *Rapport sur les fouilles de Deir el Médineh*. 1928. Le Caire, 1929, pp. 12-16.

was Buentuf whose name appears in quite a few documents.

The personages of this stela in Museo Egizio in Turin are comparable to some of those in the tombs of Tutankhamon and Ay. As G. Robins reveals²⁵, in those royal burials, larger head dimension and flattened proportions of the body do not correspond to tradition of Egyptian representations; they are related to 20-square grid of Amarna canon. These same features occur in the Theban tomb of Tutankhamon's Viceroy in Nubia Amenhotep-Huy (TT 40) and in both BM 360 and Turin 50010. G. Robins justifies this utilization through the migration of Deir el-Medina craftsmen to Amarna and their posterior relocation in Thebes.

The British Museum is in possession of another Nakhy's monument, a limestone relief (BM 281)²⁶, probably a lintel from his tomb, the Deir el-Medina pit number 1138. It is a double symmetrical scene arranged around an axis, with Nakhy and his wife adoring Ra Harakhty on the left and Osiris on the right. The characteristics reveal a clear Amarna style.

In these two monuments, Turin 50010 and BM 281, Nakhy is identified as *sdm-ḥꜥ m st mꜣꜥt*, but in stela BM 360 he is branded *sdm-ḥꜥ n imntt*, an abbreviation of *imntt niwt*, "West of the City", the other term used for the Theban necropolis that included the cemeteries and the funerary temples²⁷.

Bierbrier²⁸ considers stela MM 32000 in Medelhavsmuseet in Stockholm²⁹ as belonging to this Nakhy. However, I do not believe they are the same person since this stela is a well ahead 19th Dynasty piece.

THE STELAE OF AHMOSE SAPAIR WITH DONOR

The stelae that present apparent parallel with BM 360 are those in which a donor makes an offer to Ahmose Sapair. All of them are round-topped, but date and origin are different, although they all derive from Thebes.

CG 34004, of Amenhotep I reign, was found in Dra abu el-Naga. The owner is Kenres, whose title is *whm imy-r pr n mwt nsw*. It has a rather long text with an *hꜥp di nsw* formula dedicated to Osiris and Anubis. Here, both the donor and the prince are standing on each side of an offering table. Sapair wears a short wig, skirt, broad necklace and bracelet. He smells a lotus in his right hand and holds a piece of linen in the left one.

In the Petrie Collection in University College, there is a stela, UC 14233, dated in early 18th Dynasty. J. E. Quibell³⁰ recovered it in Ramesseum excavations. The donor is Imenemipet, whose profession is doubtful. Stewart translates "oven-heater" and R.J. Demarée interprets as "brewer"³¹. The name Imenemipet seems to be carved upon another whose end is *ms*. The lower part of the stela is missing, for that reason only the donor's head and offering as well as most of prince's body are visible. Sapair is sitting but his appearance is quite similar to that of CG 34004: short wig, broad necklace, lotus, and piece of linen in his hands. Imenemipet is offering a vase with a ball of incense.

Cairo stela JE 36347³² is the most similar to BM 360. It is a 19th- 20th Dynasty piece found at Pylon 7th in Karnak, offered by Imenemhemut, *bꜣk n imn*. Sapair is sitting on a chair

25. Robins, Gay. "The Proportions of Figures in the Decoration of the Tombs of Tutankhamun (KV 62) and Ay (KV 23)". *GM* 72, 1984, pp 27-32.

26. Bierbrier, 1993. p. 10, pl. 6.

27. Cerný, Jaroslav. *A Community of Workmen at Thebes in the Ramesside Period*. Le Caire, 1973. p. 87.

28. Bierbrier, 1993, p. 10.

29. Wångstedt, Sten. "Vier Stelen und eine Opfertafel aus Deir el-Medineh". *Medelhavsmuseet Bulletin* 4, 1964. p. 11.

30. Quibell, James Edward. *The Ramesseum*. London, 1898.

31. Demarée, 1983. p. 170.

32. Demarée, 1983. p. 168.

alike the one in UC 14233, placed upon a pedestal. He wears side lock, high cone and long garment while holds a lotus in his left hand and a piece of linen in the right one. An offering table and a big vase are situated between the prince and the donor. This one offers a vase with incense. The text is a short *hṯp di nsw* formula.

CONCLUSION

BM 360 is a rather important piece for several reasons. It is the first evidence of worship to Prince Ahmose Sapair in Deir el-Medina,

worship that was stated in Thebes since Amenhotep I reign. It is dated at the end of 18th Dynasty, just after the Amarna period, surely during Tutankhamon time. His owner, Nakhy, may be one of the Deir el-Medina artisans who moved to Akhetaton and came back to Thebes when the heresy ended. The style of British Museum relief, probably from his Theban tomb, reveals a clear inspiration in Amarna types and likewise both stelae, London and Turin, are an apparent evidence of post-Amarna design in Thebes.

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