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A rediscovered wooden statue of the overseer of the two granaries Ihy – Cairo, Egyptian Museum, JE 100373: An archaeological and conservation study

Philipp Seyr – Abd El Rahman Medhat

ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the wooden statue JE 100373, which was recently re-discovered in the basement of the Egyptian Museum, Cairo. Based on the statue's stylistic analysis and its identification in the unpublished excavation report MSS Gunn XXII, we re-identify it as part of the statue ensemble of the overseer of the two granaries Ihy, found in a cache within a Ptolemaic tomb at Saqqara. As a result, the investigation proves the provenience of the statue from Cyril M. Firth's excavations south of the Step Pyramid complex in 1926. Combining conservation science and traditional Egyptological approaches, the paper finally provides evidence for the continuity of the manufacture of large-sized high-quality wooden statuary by residential workshops until the final years of Pepy II or slightly later.

KEYWORDS

wooden statuary – second style – Saqqara – late Sixth Dynasty – archaeometry

إعادة اكتشاف تمثال خشبي للمشرف على شونتى الغلال إحيى – المتحف المصرى بالقاهرة،
JE 100373: دراسة أثرية وترميمه
فيليب سير – عبد الرحمن مدحت

ملخص

تناقش هذه الورقة التمثال الخشبي الذي يحمل رقم JE 100373، والذي أعيد الكشف عنه مؤخراً ببدروم المتحف المصرى بالقاهرة. واستناداً إلى الدراسة التحليلية للأسلوب الفنى للتمثال، وكذلك تحديد هوية صاحبه من خلال تقرير الحفائر الخاص به غير المنشور MSS Gunn XXII، أعدنا تحديده كجزء من تمثال المشرف على شونتى الغلال المدعو إحيى، والذي عثر عليه بخبينة داخل مقبرة تعود للعصر البطلمي بمنطقة سقارة. نتيجة لذلك، يثبت بحثنا هذا مكان العثور على التمثال من خلال حفائر سيسيل مالابى فيرث التى أجراها إلى الجنوب من المجموعة الهرمية للهرم المدرج فى عام 1926. كما تقدم الورقة من خلال الجمع بين علم الترميم والتناول الأثرى التقليدى دليلاً على استمرارية تصنيع التماثيل الخشبية كبيرة الحجم ذات الجودة الفنية العالية بالورش حتى السنوات الأخيرة من عصر الملك بيبى الثانى أو بعد ذلك بقليل.

الكلمات الدالة

تماثيل خشبية – النمط الثانى – سقارة – أواخر الأسرة السادسة – الدراسات الأركيومترية

The non-royal funerary practices of the Old Kingdom are characterised by the extensive use of statuary, which represents the deceased and his family (Vandier 1958: 3–143; Smith 1946; Shoukry 1951; Fitzenreiter 2001).¹ Ranging from standing, seated, kneeling and squatting figures, the sculpture of this period comprises statues, which depict single persons and, to a lesser degree, different variants of group statues, for example pair statues, family groups or so-called “pseudo-groups”.² From a diachronic perspective, there exist significant differences in the distribution of the materials employed in the production of sculpture during the various sub-phases of the Old Kingdom. While in the Third and early Fourth Dynasty hard stone sculpture seems to be predominant (Eaton-Krauss 1998), the Fifth Dynasty is marked by the preponderance of limestone. Finally, in the Sixth Dynasty wooden sculpture covers *ca.* 56% of the preserved corpus, with limestone statuary amounting to only *ca.* 40%.³

Within the history of ancient Egyptian non-royal sculpture in general, the late Old Kingdom stands out, because some funerary complexes of this period contain ensembles of numerous wooden statues, which count among the largest groups of sculptures belonging to one single official known.⁴ The following study aims to present the statue JE 100373 formerly

- 1 According to their various functions as “recipients of offerings” (Eaton-Krauss 1984: 76) or substitutes for the body of the deceased (Bolshakov 1997), the statues were placed at visible spots and visitable spaces within the tomb, for example in front of the tomb façade and within different parts of the offering chapel, most prominently rock-cut statuary (Rzepka 1996; Bernhauer 2018). Most Old Kingdom non-royal statues were found in non-accessible rooms within tombs. From the Fourth Dynasty onwards, they were predominantly placed in the so-called serdab, a walled up chamber within the tomb complexes (Dreyer 1990: 77–78, fig. 8; Lehmann 2000), and since the Fifth Dynasty in the tomb substructures (e.g. Bárta – Vymazalová 2018: 64, 71, 75; Bárta 2019; Bárta – Jirásková – Krejčí *et al.* 2020). However, the latter is only widely attested in the Sixth Dynasty (cf. Bárta 1998; Arnold 1999; Fitzenreiter 2001; Jánosi 2006: 86–92; Bernhauer 2017: 23–26, 32–35; Bárta – Vymazalová 2018, for general discussions).
- 2 For in-depth surveys on the typological development of Old Kingdom statuary see Fitzenreiter (2001) and Bernhauer (2017); for the typology of attitudes depicted in ancient Egyptian statuary in general, see Bernhauer (2006a). Concerning Old Kingdom sculptures, special studies were conducted for standing (Loeben – Eaton-Krauss 1997) and squatting single statues (Scott 1989; Fitzenreiter 2001: 100–123; Bernhauer 2006b), different types of group statuary (Rzepka 1995; Fitzenreiter 2001: 148–194; Seco Álvarez 2002; Simpson 2002; McCorquodale 2013) and “pseudo-groups” (Eaton-Krauss 1995; Rzepka 1996; Fitzenreiter 2001: 195–210).
- 3 These numbers are the result of an extensive survey of Old Kingdom sculpture, which was conducted by Philipp Seyr. It is based on all statues mentioned in Porter – Moss (1974 and 1981), Málek (1999), Harvey (2001) and several more recent publications, e.g. Vymazalová – Dulíková (2014). However, the numbers given must be used with caution, as the corpus of Old Kingdom statues which is available today might be highly biased by the different degrees of fragility of the materials employed. Nevertheless, the percentage of wooden sculpture observed for the Sixth Dynasty seems to agree with the Eaton-Krauss’ remark that “over half of the undamaged representations depict wooden statues” (Eaton-Krauss 1984: 58). 119 of her 157 catalogued depictions of statues are found in tombs dating to this dynasty. The quantitative comparisons above leave out so-called reserve heads (cf. Eberle 2008) and serving statues (cf. Roth 2002; Eschenbrenner-Diemer 2017b).
- 4 E.g. the 19 statues from the tomb Saqqara 6001 belonging to a certain Tjeteti (Harvey 2001: 74–78; Harvey 2011; Eschenbrenner-Diemer 2017a: 241–244) or the *ca.* 40 still largely unpublished statues from the tomb of Ipy found by the Berlin-Hannover mission near the Unas causeway (Munro 1984 and 1994; the documentation to the statues is available online: <http://www.munro-archive.org/the-archive/?d=&k=&l=ipj-statues-documentation> & c=. Accessed on 9th December 2020.). However, they are outnumbered by the large statue ensemble found in some earlier Old Kingdom tombs,

housed in the Egyptian Museum, Cairo (now in the New Capital Museum), and to identify it as part of such a statue ensemble from this period. According to the museum's register, it came to it in the mid-1920's from Saqqara, however, it arrived without any certainty as to its exact provenience. Since then, the statue has remained in the museum's basement, unpublished, despite its high significance for the history of Old Kingdom wooden sculpture.

Since the early 2000's, the profile of wooden non-royal statuary, the first attestations of which date back to the First Dynasty,⁵ has been raised as a result of significant scholarly attention. The first comprehensive study of Old Kingdom wooden sculpture was conducted by Julia C. Harvey (2001) in her dissertation published under the title *Wooden Statues of the Old Kingdom. A Typological Study*. Her analysis was based on a sample of 240 figures, which she studied from a mainly typological perspective (Harvey 2001).⁶ Recently, this tendency towards typology and style when approaching such material has shifted towards a focus on studying the technical aspects of Old Kingdom woodcraft (Eschenbrenner-Diemer 2017a and 2017b). Moreover, due to the publication of formerly unknown sculptures in private or museum collections (e.g. Ziegler 2010; Harvey 2011), and new excavations in the Memphite necropoleis (e.g. Hawass 2002; Verner – Callender 2002; Myśliwiec 2008; Bárta – Vymazalová 2018; Dulíková *et al.* 2018), the corpus of Old Kingdom non-royal wooden statuary has been quickly expanding over the last 20 years (Harvey 2018). Today, around 350 wooden statues dating from the First to the end of the Sixth Dynasty are known to the authors. That being said, most of the less recent publications lack proper archaeometric investigations.

In view of this, in herewith presenting the statue JE 100373, we pursue the path of combining non-destructive archaeometric examination of wooden sculpture with typological and stylistic analysis, in order to gain new insights into the technology used for the manufacture of wooden sculpture and its connection to the social status of the statue owners within Old Kingdom society. Additionally, we aim to provide a case study for the application of an appropriate conservation method of similarly preserved wooden statues.

CONSERVATION STRATEGY

Although the statue was restored in the late 1990's or early 2000's, its poor state of preservation made a new restoration in 2020 necessary, as the former assemblage of the arms by two short tenons of beech wood and animal glue led to many structural problems.

The conservation process, conducted by Abd El Rahman Medhat, included four steps. At first, the pre-consolidation of the wood was undertaken using Klucel G (hydroxypropyl cellulose) dissolved in ethyl alcohol of a concentration of 0.5%. The modern tenons, added in

for example the 30 to 50 statues of Khnumbaef buried in tomb G 5230 (Smith 1946: 50; <http://giza.fas.harvard.edu/sites/554/full/>. Accessed on 9th December 2020.). A similar number of statues was produced for some officials of later periods, e.g. the over 25 statues of Senenmut (*cf.* Price 2018: footnote 5 with further literature), but they were not exclusively used for the funerary cult. See Bernhauer (2010: 25) for a survey on statue ensembles in ancient Egyptian sculpture.

- 5 The first attestation of wooden statuary in non-royal tombs known so far are the fragments of two standing 2/3 life-size statues, which were found in Tomb S 3505 in the Old Kingdom cemetery of North Saqqara, dated to the late First Dynasty (Emery 1958: 10, 13, Pl. 13; Fitzenreiter 2001: 33–34).
- 6 For a general survey of wooden statuary in ancient Egypt see Harvey (2009) and Wildung (2015).

the previous conservation process were gently removed by mechanical tools and the animal glue was dissolved by the injection of a mix of ethyl alcohol and acetone (1:1) as it destabilized the joint. After determining the position of the individual fragments (which were detached during the extraction of the joints), and the missing parts of the object, Paraloid B-82 (methyl methacrylate) dissolved in ethyl alcohol of a concentration of 15% was used as an adhesive to assemble the separate parts (*cf.* Medhat - Zidan - El Hadidi 2009). Finally, the left arm of the statue was reinforced through strips of plexiglass, which were fixed to the wooden beam supporting the statue's back. After the conservation process, the statue was considered as a masterpiece of Old Kingdom sculpture, assigned its JE number (formerly TR 11/12/6/2) and transferred to the New Capital Museum, where it will be displayed to the public.

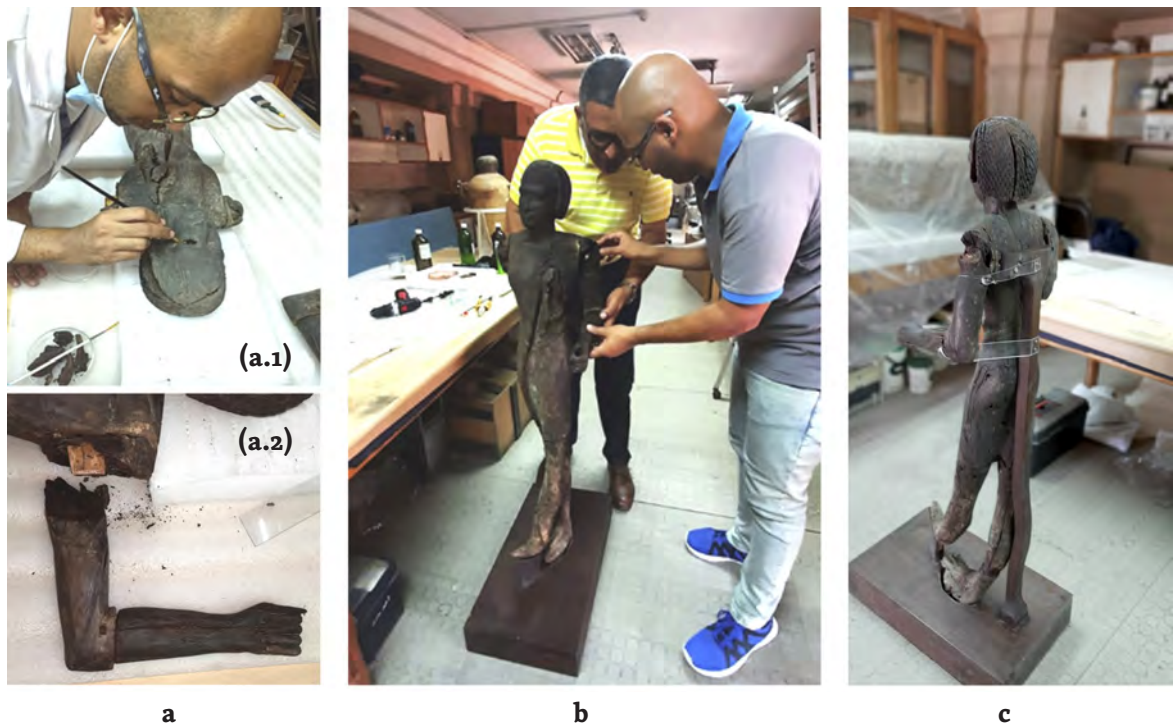


Fig. 1 The main steps of conservation of the statue JE 100373: (a.1) Pre-consolidation process; the small pieces of wood in the Petri dish were detached from the statue while removing the modern tenon and afterwards reintegrated into the statue; (a.2) Left arm with modern shoulder tenon; (b) Final reinforcement of the statue's left arm; (c) Statue after conservation and fixed upon a new base (photos A. Medhat)

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The statue numbered JE 100373 depicts a man in a striding posture, which is the most common type of Old Kingdom wooden statuary (Harvey 2001: 2; Eschenbrenner-Diemer 2017a: 243). During the conservation and consolidation process, it was mounted onto a wooden box, its left foot being held in its position by a metal right-angle hook wrapped in a plastic cylinder. Without measuring the modern base (h.: 11 cm), the statue is 127 cm high and 31 cm deep, its shoulders being 27.5 cm broad.



Fig. 2 General views of the wooden statue JE 100373 after its conservation by Abd El Rahman Medhat and its re-positioning on a modern base (photos A. Medhat)

The statue is made from several differently sized chunks of wood, which were joined together by means of various tenons, dowels and by the use, most probably, of animal glues.⁷ The torso, consisting of several skilfully joined and smoothed pieces of wood, is fractured today by large vertical fissures. Its arms were originally fixed to the shoulders by big rectangular tenons, which were in turn fixed by a small dowel. These were inserted into a hole in the back of the statue.⁸ The original fixtures of the shoulders had completely degraded and were therefore replaced in a former conservation process by modern ones. The left arm is bent forward at the elbow and its hand once probably held a wooden staff, as demonstrated by the large circular vertical hole in its palm. The arm consists of two main parts: 1) the pending upper arm with the elbow, and 2) the forward-bent forearm (made out of two pieces of wood), whose rear end was fashioned as a rectangular tenon and inserted into a mortise in front of the elbow. Subsequently, the latter was fastened by a rectangular dowel piercing the tenon, which was introduced through a perforation on the side of the elbow.⁹ Apart from the upper part of the shoulder, the right arm is now largely lost. However, the presence of one large circular dowel-hole on the right side of the man's torso, positioned at middle height of his skirt, coupled with the general typology established by Harvey, makes it probable that the arm was pendant (Harvey 2001: 32, A.3).

At the height of the knee, the statue's left lower leg was attached to the upper leg, which was sculpted from the same piece of wood as the lower torso. To do this, a big cylindrical dowel was used, and a smaller piece of wood (missing today) was then glued over the junction. Its highly degraded left foot is "advanced, well in front of the right foot" (Harvey 2001: 53, type S.3) and was made out of a smaller piece of wood fixed to the leg through dowels underneath the ankles. The right leg was sculpted out of the same piece as parts of the torso, while its foot, consisting of a front and a rear piece of wood, was joined to it ca. 5 cm above the ankle. Both feet were originally inserted into a wooden base by means of large tenons sculpted underneath their soles, and which were eventually fastened to the base through additional dowels.¹⁰ After composing and smoothing the sculpture, a layer of gesso was applied to its surface covering the wooden patchwork, before it was finally painted in different colours and its skirt's cross-flap was overlaid by gold foil, as it will be shown below.¹¹

DOCUMENTATION AND TECHNOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

The examinations and analyses presented in the following section were conducted by Abd El Rahman Medhat and are mainly based on non-destructive methods. Mr. Ahmed Adel assisted in the documentation of the statue with the USB microscope and under UV light. These meth-

7 For the composition of Old Kingdom wooden sculpture see the case study Luqma (2002) on the statue CG 34 in the Egyptian Museum, Cairo.

8 This technique is described by Luqma (2002: ٧٩).

9 Cf. the illustration in Luqma (2002: ٨٠).

10 As illustrated by Luqma (2002: ٨٠) and – referring to the technique employed for the construction of wooden models – Eschenbrenner-Diemer (2014: 171, fig. 1). The statue JE 100373 corresponds to Eschenbrenner-Diemer's "technique 1 (a)", but the foot consists of two pieces of wood illustrated by her "technique 2 (b)".

11 For other attestations of gold foil applied on a gesso layer see Gale *et al.* (2000: 367).

ods allow for the characterisation of the materials used and the description of the sculptor's/painter's technique and their exact work procedure. Thus, the next paragraphs aim to provide technical data which are fundamental for the interpretation of the work of art as well as for choosing the proper conservation treatment, which could be applied to comparably preserved statues.

PHOTOGRAPHIC AND USB MICROSCOPE DOCUMENTATION

The microscopic examination and photographic documentation of the statue were conducted using a Dino-lite portable 85 USB digital microscope, and it was photographically documented by a Nikon C80 camera equipped with a built-in zoom lens.

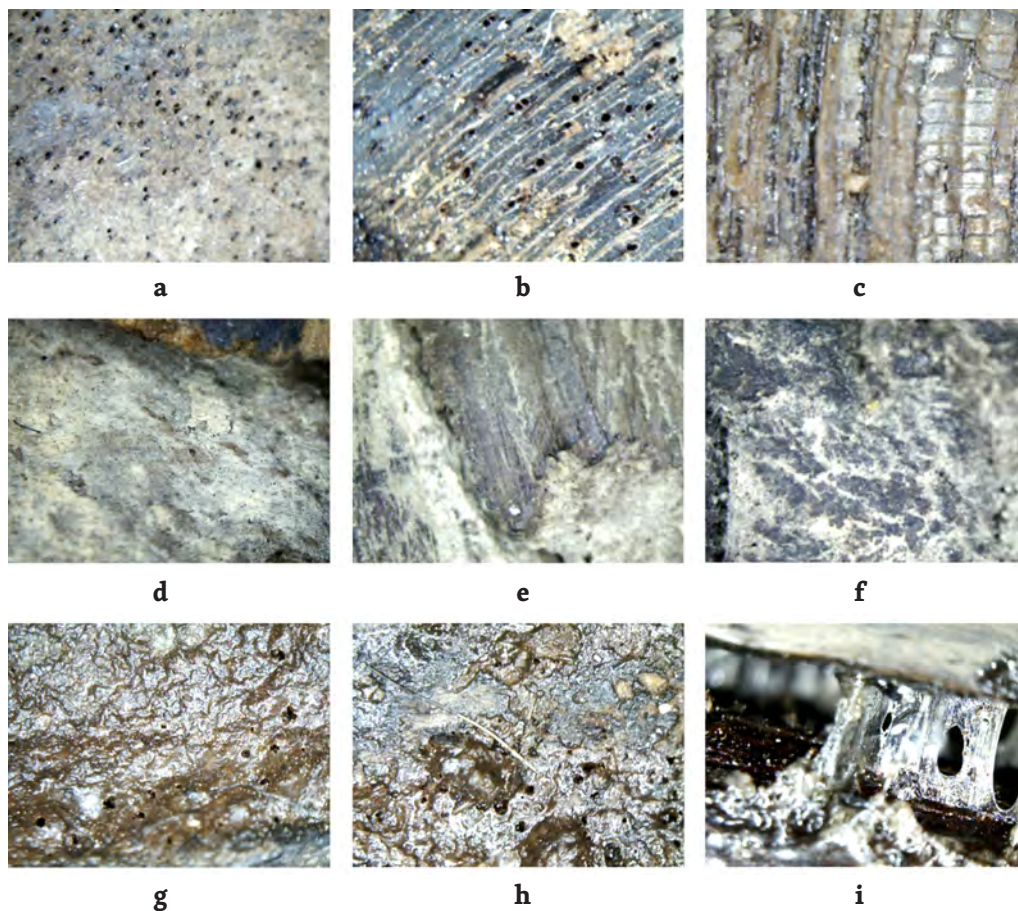


Fig. 3 USB microscope investigation:(a-b) Transverse and longitudinal section of the wood as visible on its surface; (c) Chisel marks on the wooden surface; (d-e) Calcium carbonate layer covering the wood; (f) A small piece of the gold foil on the statue's skirt; (g-h) Glossy layer of Paraloid B-72 as filler from the previous conservation process; (i) The beginning phases of the decomposition of Paraloid B-72 within the fissures and splits (photos A. Medhat)

Due to the advanced decay of the material and its surface, non-destructive examination meant that the precise type of wood could not be determined with full certainty.¹² However, the anatomic structure of the wood shown in figs. 3a–b and the fact that different types of acacia were frequently used for producing wooden sculpture in the Old Kingdom (cf. Harvey 2001: 617–618),¹³ might suggest an identification as *acacia nilotica* (Neumann *et al.* 2000: 300).¹⁴ The study of the statue with the USB digital microscope allowed for tracing the chisel marks, which emerges clearly on the surface of the wood (fig. 3c). Moreover, it showed, that the surface was covered with a preparation layer consisting of calcium carbonate (gesso), remains of which are still clearly visible on parts of the statue's kilt (figs. 3d–e). On the cross-flap of the skirt, a cover of gold foil was applied upon this layer (fig. 3f).

The examination clarified that the previous conservation treatment in the late 1990's was conducted by covering the statue with a film of Paraloid B-72 (figs. 3g–h). Since then, it had begun to disintegrate, becoming brittle, and the natural movement of the wood caused the splits to open once again (fig. 3i). It was during that former restoration that the shoulder tenons were reinforced by modern ones made of beech-wood.

UV-FLUORESCENCE EXAMINATION

The UV-fluorescence examination was carried out using a portable UV-torch (Sylvania, Black-light - blue, F4W/BLB-T5, CH-, MOD 808-M, Vac, 230 [+/- 10%], Hz 50/60, VA40, lamp T52*4w, G5, UV-ABLB), while the digital camera used for recording images was a Sony Alpha 500, E 3. 5. /30 macro. As a non-destructive superficial examination, UV-fluorescence analysis facilitates the identification of previous intervention by optically enhancing them, for example acrylic films. Furthermore, this technique can provide information on the constituents of the object, which are fluorescent under UV-light, for example the consolidants. It thus allows the assessment of the condition of the original paint (cf. Medhat – Ali – Abdel Ghali 2015; Medhat 2016).

The examination under UV-light clarified further details of the previous conservation, the shoulder fixture by modern tenons was, for example, achieved by the use of polyvinyl acetate (PVA), which appears whitish-blue under UV-light (fig. 4a). The animal glue, spatters of which were detected all over the chest, was identified as glue used during the production of the statue, with the help of which the wooden pieces were attached to each other, for example the chunk covering the left knee (fig. 4c). The finishing layer of calcium carbonate on

12 Although the non-destructive methods allowed for examining transversal and longitudinal sections of the wood, it was not possible to obtain any radial section because of the highly decayed state of the wood (cf. Gale *et al.* 2000: 334–335).

13 For statues from acacia wood in later periods see *e.g.* Delange (1987: 151, 156, 200, 206); Perdu (2012: 338).

14 For a survey of the different types of acacia attested in ancient Egypt see de Vartavan *et al.* (2010: 29–37) and Gale *et al.* (2000: 335–336). The other types of wood, which would fit to the examined sections, ebony and date palm wood, are not attested in large-sized wooden sculpture from the Old Kingdom (Harvey 2001: 618). Furthermore, the statue fragment Berkeley, Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology, 6-12840 which was, based on its rare stylistic features, probably produced in the same workshop, was identified as acacia (<https://portal.hearstmuseum.berkeley.edu/catalog/95344cf1-e442-42ca-9be1-475bdo80eb98>. Accessed on 9th December 2020.); see also footnote 17.

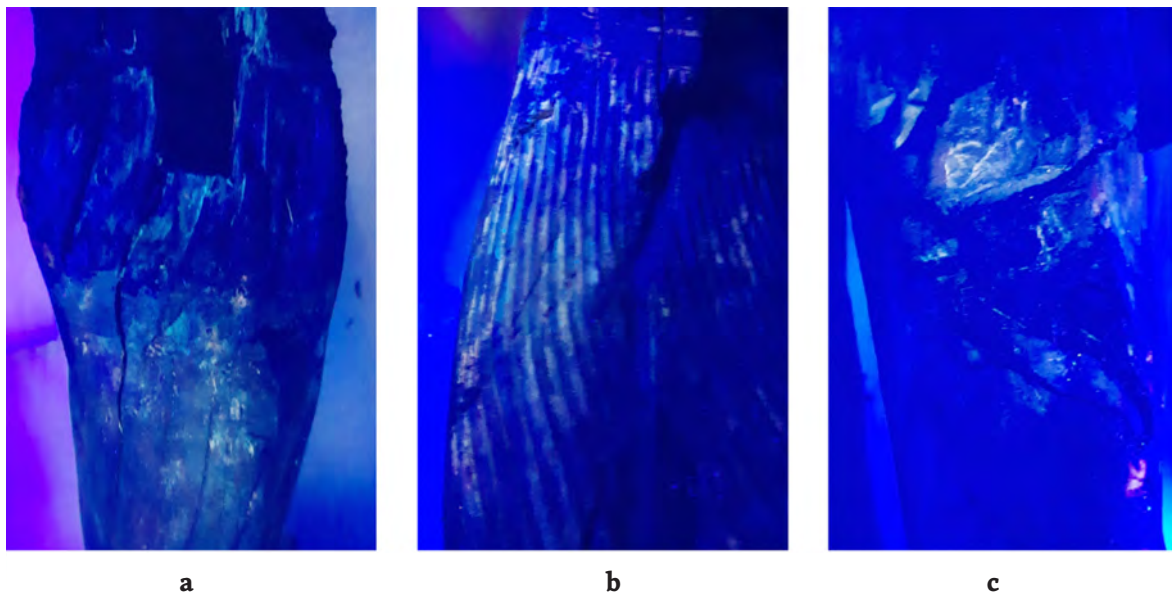


Fig. 4 UV-fluorescence documentation: (a) Polyvinyl acetate used for the modern fixture of the left shoulder joint; (b) Remains of white calcium carbonate on the kilt appearing whitish-blue; (c) The orange hue of animal glues on the joint of the left knee (photos A. Medhat, A. Adel).

the skirt is indicated under UV-light by a shiny whitish-blue colour, and the remains of the gold foil appear as yellowish reflections (fig. 4b).

RAKING LIGHT DOCUMENTATION

For recording the raking-light images a Sony Alpha 500 camera (macro E3. 5. /30) and halogen light were used. This documentation technique is based on the movement of the light source and enhances the microstructure of the statue surface, thus revealing, among others, the tools used in producing the work of art.

The raking-light examination confirmed different aspects of the technology used, the state of deterioration, and the previous conservation described in the preceding sections. It revealed that different types of fine chisels were used for sculpting the wood, as is apparent, for example, in the cutting of the eyes and the details of the wig (fig. 5a). Furthermore, strokes visible on the surface of the statue's kilt and torso indicated, providing they are not due to the former restoration, that a whitewash was applied by a brush (fig. 5b).

TYOLOGICAL AND STYLISTIC ANALYSIS

The statue JE 100373 depicts a striding man wearing an echelon-curl wig and a half-goffered kilt, which is a garment commonly used throughout the whole Old Kingdom. Probably due to the natural distortion of drying wood, its whole body is inclined to the right, much like a large portion of Sixth Dynasty wooden sculpture (Myśliwiec 2008: 174).

The man's head is covered by a vertically layered echelon-curl wig of middle volume which covers all but the lower part of his nearly detached earlobes. Its bottom appears flat and

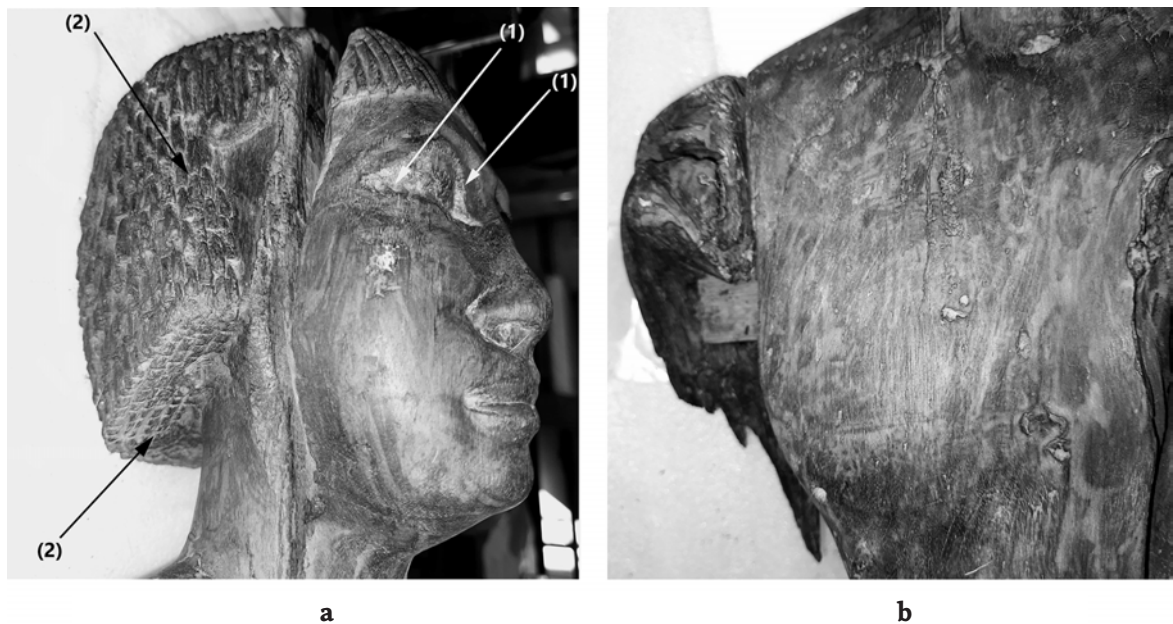


Fig. 5 Raking light examination of the face: (a) The tool marks on (1) the sharply cut eyelids or the untidily smoothed eyeball and (2) the wig or the criss-cross-pattern on its bottom are significantly different. (b) The surface of the torso shows vertical brush strokes under the raking light (photos A. Medhat)

descends slightly towards the man's back, while the ends of the curls, indicated with a criss-cross pattern, were incised by a pointed chisel.¹⁵ In general, vertically layered curl-wigs appear in the Sixth Dynasty, earlier echelon-curl wigs being horizontally layered (Harvey 2001: 15–17, W.6–W.10; Brovarski 2010: 115–116; Brovarski 2018: 152).¹⁶ In the case of JE 100373, however, the standard type is modified, as 36 plain vertical strands are fashioned over the man's forehead (figs. 6a–c). They begin at the centre of the badly worn calotte and end in a straight line over the man's forehead. The wig thus corresponds to Harvey's rarely attested type W.8 (Harvey 2001: 16), the only example of which, dated by its archaeological context, appears on a fragmentary head from late Sixth Dynasty tomb Naga el-Deir N 248.¹⁷ Two other sculptures wearing similar

15 The criss-cross pattern on the wig's bottom is also attested in the statues Boston, MFA 13.3466 (Harvey 2001: 61, 138–139, A 13) from the end of the Fifth Dynasty, and Marseille, Musée d'archéologie méditerranéenne, Inv. No. 217 dated to the Sixth Dynasty. Unfortunately, this feature was not systematically documented in Harvey (2001) and cannot be assessed based on most photographs published alone.

16 A striated wig, whose strands are vertically layered, is already attested on the re-carved limestone statue Cairo, Egyptian Museum, CG 44, which is probably dating to the late Fourth or early Fifth Dynasty (Rzepka 2000).

17 Berkeley, Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology, 6-12840. For lack of comparable wigs on statues from surely dated Old Kingdom contexts, Smith (1946: 90) proposed a Middle Kingdom date for this piece. This was subsequently corrected by the stylistic analysis of Harvey (2001: 366–367, A 127), and the discussion of the tomb N 248 by Brovarski (2018: 152), which makes it likely that the head fragment belonged to the original tomb owner, who dates to the late Sixth Dynasty. The very similar stylistic elaboration of the wigs of Berkeley 6-12840 and the statue JE 100373 is remarkable, as it indicates that the former was probably produced by a residential workshop. This hypothesis is further strengthened by the fact that pendants of the limestone statues of the nomarch Gegi, dating



Fig. 6 (a) Frontal view (photo S. El Abd El Mohsen and A. Medhat); (b) side view and (c) back view of the head of JE 100373, the latter two in raking light (photos A. Medhat); (d) MMA 27.9.5, (e) MMA 27.9.4 (photos The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York); (f) Marseille 217 (photo P. Seyr)

wigs, which fully cover the ears (Harveys type W.8a; Harvey 2001: 16; *cf.* also Harvey 2006a: 159) come from tomb N. IV at South Saqqara, dated to the reign of Pepy II,¹⁸ and the cemetery of el-Hawawish (Cairo, Egyptian Museum, CG 220; Cavezzali 2014: 322–323 with further literature). However, the wigs stylistically most similar to JE 100373 are those belonging to the two statues at The Metropolitan Museum of Art (MMA), New York, 27.9.4 and 27.9.5 (figs. 6d–e); their relation will be discussed below. The volume of their wigs seems to be nearly identical to that of JE 100373 and, moreover, the bottom of MMA 27.9.5’s wig displays the same criss-cross

to the late Sixth Dynasty, were found in both of his tombs at Saqqara and at Naga el-Deir (Brovarski 2018: 83–88, 193–194). Moreover, Eschenbrenner-Diemer convincingly argued for the production of most wooden statuary of the Sixth to Eighth Dynasty by residential workshops (Eschenbrenner-Diemer 2017a: 241–246; Eschenbrenner-Diemer 2017b: 138–147).

¹⁸ Neuchatel, Musée d’ethnographie, Eg. 402 (Harvey 2006a: 276–277, A 82; Eschenbrenner-Diemer 2017a: 246, 257, fig. 7). For the dating of the tomb on the basis of palaeographic criteria see Brovarski (2005).

pattern. Other comparable wigs of smaller size are found on unprovenanced statues in the Egyptian Museum at Cairo (CG 126; Harvey 2001: 496–497, B 63), the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek at Copenhagen (AEIN 3; Jørgensen 1996: 100–101, no. 37; Harvey 2001: 518–519, B 74), and the Musée d'archéologie méditerranéenne at Marseille (Inv. No. 217; Anonymous 1989: 11; Harvey 2001: 520–521, B 75; fig. 6f). Furthermore, type W.8 is also attested, though rarely, in relief from the reign of Pepy II onwards, with its latest example dating to the Tenth or Eleventh Dynasty.¹⁹

The statue's kilt fits tightly to the contours of the man's upper legs; its cross-flap is structured by a row of slightly curved vertical folds and was once gilded. The folds do not continue to the statue's rear but end at the point where the pendant right arm was once pegged to the man's hip.²⁰ The kilt's upper end is comprised of a plain, slim girdle, which bears neither a knot nor a protruding tab,²¹ unlike most Old Kingdom wooden statues, and thus corresponds to Harvey's sporadically attested type D.2c (Harvey 2001: 24). The lowest point of the girdle-band lies beneath the man's belly button. The kilt rises steeply on both sides up to the figure's waist, which is a feature only rarely attested in Old Kingdom wooden sculpture, for example in some late Sixth Dynasty statues from Saqqara (e.g. Cairo, Egyptian Museum, JE 88575–88576; Harvey 2001: 230–233, A 59–60; and Stockholm MM 11412; Harvey 2001: 306–307, A 97), and a few from the cemetery of Akhmim (Cairo, Egyptian Museum, CG 221; Harvey 2001: 434–435, B 32). The only well-dated examples of similarly sculpted kilts that we are currently aware of are attested in two small-sized sculptures, the first of which being Stockholm MM 11411 (Harvey 2001: 310–311, A 99), the second being an example with unknown location (Harvey 2001: 312–313, A 100), both of which originate from the tomb of Tjeteti at North Saqqara (Porter – Moss 1981: 556; Harvey 2001: 74–78). Based on the tomb's location, the typology of its false door (Strudwick 1985: 160, no. 159; Brovarski 2006: 109–110), and its decoration (Harpur 1987: 277, no. 551 and 330), it was dated to the end of the reign of Pepy II.²² Once more, however, the typologically and stylistically most similar statues are MMA 27.9.4, MMA 27.9.5, and Neuchatel Eg. 425 (figs. 7a–c). It has not yet been investigated whether in these cases the skirts were also once partly covered with gold foil; the only other example for this technique from the Old Kingdom, that we are currently aware of, is the projecting-panel skirt statue Cairo, JE 63110, from tomb M. XVI at South Saqqara, dated to the end of the Sixth Dynasty or later (Harvey 2001: 101–102, 526–527, C 2).

The man's oval face, sculpted with different chisels than his wig, is dominated by oversized eyes and a prominent nose. Slightly protruding, the eyebrows arch over the sharply cut eyes (cf. figs. 6a–b). Their line initially follows the curve of the hairline before it descends towards the sides of the face in order to nearly join the outer canthi of the eyes. Near the bridge of the nose, the upper eyelid appears more curved than the lower, while beside the temples their

19 For a survey and discussion of all known attestations see Brovarski (2010: 116).

20 This construction technique is occasionally attested in other large-scale wooden statuary from the Fifth Dynasty onwards, e.g. Cairo, Egyptian Museum, JE 51738 (Harvey 2001: 62–63, 176–177, A 32) and Boston, MFA 47.1455 (Harvey 2001: 65, 192–193, A 40).

21 The protruding tab was most probably painted as it is, which is attested on the statues of Metjtji Boston, MFA 47.1455 (Harvey 2001: 192–193, A 40), Brooklyn 50.77 (Harvey 2001: 196–197, A 42) and Brooklyn 53.222 (Harvey 2001: 194–195, A 41). However, it might also have been inserted into a hole on the left side of the man's abdomen now lost within the large fissures (cf. New York, MMA 27.9.5).

22 Brovarski (2010: 123, n. 141) convincingly argued against a later date as it was proposed by Munro (1994: 263–264).



Fig. 7 The kilt of (a) JE 100373 (photos A. Medhat), (b) MMA 27.9.5 and (c) MMA 27.9.4 (photos The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York)

bend seems to be nearly identical. Although slightly damaged, the eyeballs appear plain and carelessly smoothed, with the chisel marks clearly being visible; the thin layer of gypsum which later covered the eyes overlaid this untidy processing of the wood. Notably, the inner canthi are characterized by a deep incision, which ends sharply at the sides of the delicately cut bridge of the nose. The elongated nose has tiny ovular nostrils, which are naturalistically hollowed out and accentuated by rather discrete nasolabial folds. Under the elegantly protruding philtrum, the small mouth appears to be the most delicately sculpted part of the face. It forms a slight smile, and its lips are clearly emphasized by sharply cut borderlines. Finally, the small chin is roundish in form, and the neck appears elongated and cylindrical.

The body of the statue was sculpted with slightly less attention to detail than its face or its wig, employing coarser chisels. This is made apparent under the raking light. In terms of proportions, the upper half of the torso appears to be more corpulent than its wiry lower part. Although the muscles of the man's arms and legs seem generally less pronounced than in earlier phases of Old Kingdom sculpture, the prominent patellae, which are characteristic for earlier statuary, persist. The fingers on the left hand appear slim and elongated, the nails being especially emphasized, and the thumb is protruding over the clasped fist.

The man's chest is characterized by discretely protruding clavicles and drilled nipples placed on the sides of the breasts which were once filled with wooden dowels.²³ In the middle of the lower part of the pinched waist a circular navel was drilled. Due to their deteriorated state of preservation, the statue's feet allow no detailed stylistic description.

²³ This feature is attested on many other wooden statues from the Old Kingdom (Harvey 2001: 42, Ac. 2).

Like for its wig and its kilt, the closest stylistic parallels for the treatment of its face and its body are the statues MMA 27.9.4, MMA 27.9.5, and Neuchatel Eg. 425 (fig. 6), but also MMA 27.9.3 and Neuchatel Eg. 424.²⁴

In general, the stylistic treatment of the statue's facial features; the slim limbs, which create the impression of an elongated body; and several other details described above, match the so-called "second style" which appears at the end of the Fifth Dynasty and extends into the First Intermediate Period (Russmann 1995; Brovarski 2008).²⁵ As argued by Gersande Eschenbrenner-Diemer (Eschenbrenner-Diemer 2017a: 241–246; Eschenbrenner-Diemer 2017b: 138–147), the stylistic elaboration of the sculpture of this epoch depends largely on different residential workshops rooted in earlier traditions, which had equally evolved new conventions for rendering the human figure.²⁶

JE 100373 AND THE SCULPTURES OF THE OVERSEER OF THE TWO GRANARIES IHY

Throughout the preceding analysis, it was noted, that JE 100373 shares a high number of rarely attested stylistic features with the sculptures from a well-known statue ensemble probably belonging to a certain Ihy. Despite Harvey's scepticism on ascribing statues on account of stylistic arguments (Harvey 1999: 363–364), the abundance of matching characteristics seems to point towards re-locating JE 100373 within this ensemble. This group of statues was found in a statue-cache as part of a Ptolemaic tomb complex, which incorporated chambers of older monuments. It was excavated in 1926, south of the Saqqara Step Pyramid complex, under the direction of Cyril M. Firth (Porter – Moss 1981: 650–651). According to the excavators' report, twelve Old Kingdom statues had been secondarily stored in an Old Kingdom burial chamber, which was reused in Ptolemaic times within that funerary complex (MSS Gunn XXII: 18).²⁷ Originally, they might have come from one or more destroyed older monuments nearby. Unfortunately, the find was never properly published and only the following five of these twelve statues can be located in museums' holdings to date (Harvey 2001: 97–98, 486–495, Cat. B 58–62):²⁸

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- 24 Apart from these, the faces of the statues from Saqqara tomb 6001, dated to the late reign of Pepy II at earliest (Harvey 2001: 74–78, 278–314, A 83–A 102), are also similarly composed and proportioned.
- 25 The tentative case studies by Leo Roeten (2007a, 2007b and 2007c), which are based on a rather small sample of statues examined from photographs only, seemed to confirm the results of Harvey (2001: 5–6, 633–636). He states that the canon of proportions was not changed in this period, although the stylistic treatment of the body and the face underwent significant changes. However, Harvey (2011: 169–170) also noted that some examples of late Sixth Dynasty sculpture are indeed differently proportioned than earlier wooden statues. For more recent contributions to the "second style" in wooden statuary see Myśliwiec (2008) and Ziegler (2010).
- 26 A stylistic sequencing of "second style" statues, which could result in the observation of its diachronic development and its division into sub-phases, has not yet been attempted.
- 27 The excavation is briefly mentioned by Firth (1926), however, without specifically referring to this tomb.
- 28 This fate is shared by other groups of statues found at Saqqara in the early twentieth century. They were subsequently split and sold, or donated to different museums worldwide, e.g. the sculptures from the tomb of Mitri excavated by Firth in 1925/1926 in the same area as the Ptolemaic tomb, from

- New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 27.9.3 (h.: 104 + x cm) (Harvey 2001: 488–489, B 59);
- New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 27.9.4 (h.: 100 + x cm) (Harvey 2001: 494–495, B 62);
- New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 27.9.5 (h.: 91 + x cm) (Harvey 2001: 492–493, B 61);
- Neuchatel, Musée d’ethnographie, Eg. 424 (h.: 58,5 + x cm) (Harvey 2001: 490–491, B 60; Eschenbrenner-Diemer 2017a: 245, 255–256, fig. 4; Eschenbrenner-Diemer, *forthcoming*);
- Neuchatel, Musée d’ethnographie, Eg. 425 (h.: 103,5 cm) (Harvey 2001: 486–487, B 58; Eschenbrenner-Diemer 2017a: 245, 255–256, fig. 5; Eschenbrenner-Diemer, *forthcoming*).

As discussed above, all of them have numerous characteristics in common with JE 100373, and as its height measures 127 cm without its base, even their dimensions are similar. The proposed ascription to this group of statues is strengthened by a comparison of the manufacture techniques of JE 100373 with other examples from this group, more specifically MMA 27.9.4, MMA 27.9.5 and Neuchatel Eg. 425. The location of the tenons and dowels used in the construction process largely correspond between the different statues,²⁹ and moreover the upper part of the body and face of MMA 27.9.4 and Neuchatel Eg. 425 are similarly fractured by deep fissures.

As ultimate proof of this striking re-attribution, the photographic documentation of the 1926 excavation in the unpublished MSS Gunn XXII clearly confirms our suggestion. *In situ* photographs show the statue JE 100373 placed in the northern end of the tomb’s south-eastern rock-cut chamber (MSS Gunn XXII: 18), MMA 27.9.3 standing on its right side, while Neuchatel Eg. 424, MMA 27.9.4, with the left part of its face broken off, and a not yet re-located striding statue with a half-goffered kilt and a similarly structured echelon-curl wig are deposited in front of the wall to the left of JE 100373. Between them lie fragments and limbs of these or other wooden statues (fig. 8) (MSS Gunn XXII: 35 and 91).

Another field photograph shows JE 100373 and all its associated wooden fragments after the clearing of the tomb (fig. 9). In this photograph, its arms, which have since been reattached, lie on the ground on either side of the statue;³⁰ the left nipple has not yet fallen out of its fixture on the statue’s breast; and the sculpture is still mounted on its original base, composed by several wooden planks, which is now sadly lost.

This evidence proves that JE 100373 is one of three statues from the cache, which were still standing on their original bases upon discovery (MSS Gunn XXII: 18). The others are MMA 27.9.5 and Neuchatel Eg. 425 (MSS Gunn XXII: 36), unfortunately with only the base of the latter being preserved until the present day.³¹ According to Gunn all three bases bore the name

which JE 100373 comes (Peterson 1984; Harvey 2001: 62–63), or the statues from Tomb Saqqara tomb 6001 belonging to the overseer of the two granaries Tjeteti (Harvey 2011).

29 The manufacture and composition of Old Kingdom wooden statuary has not yet been thoroughly studied. However, the late Old Kingdom evidence is discussed by Eschenbrenner-Diemer in her still unpublished Ph.D. thesis (Eschenbrenner-Diemer 2013).

30 Moreover, the photo shows other smaller parts of the statue’s right arm, which are lost today. Another photograph of it is found in MSS Gunn XXII: 37A.

31 It is depicted in Harvey (2001: 486–487) and Eschenbrenner-Diemer (2017a: fig. 5).

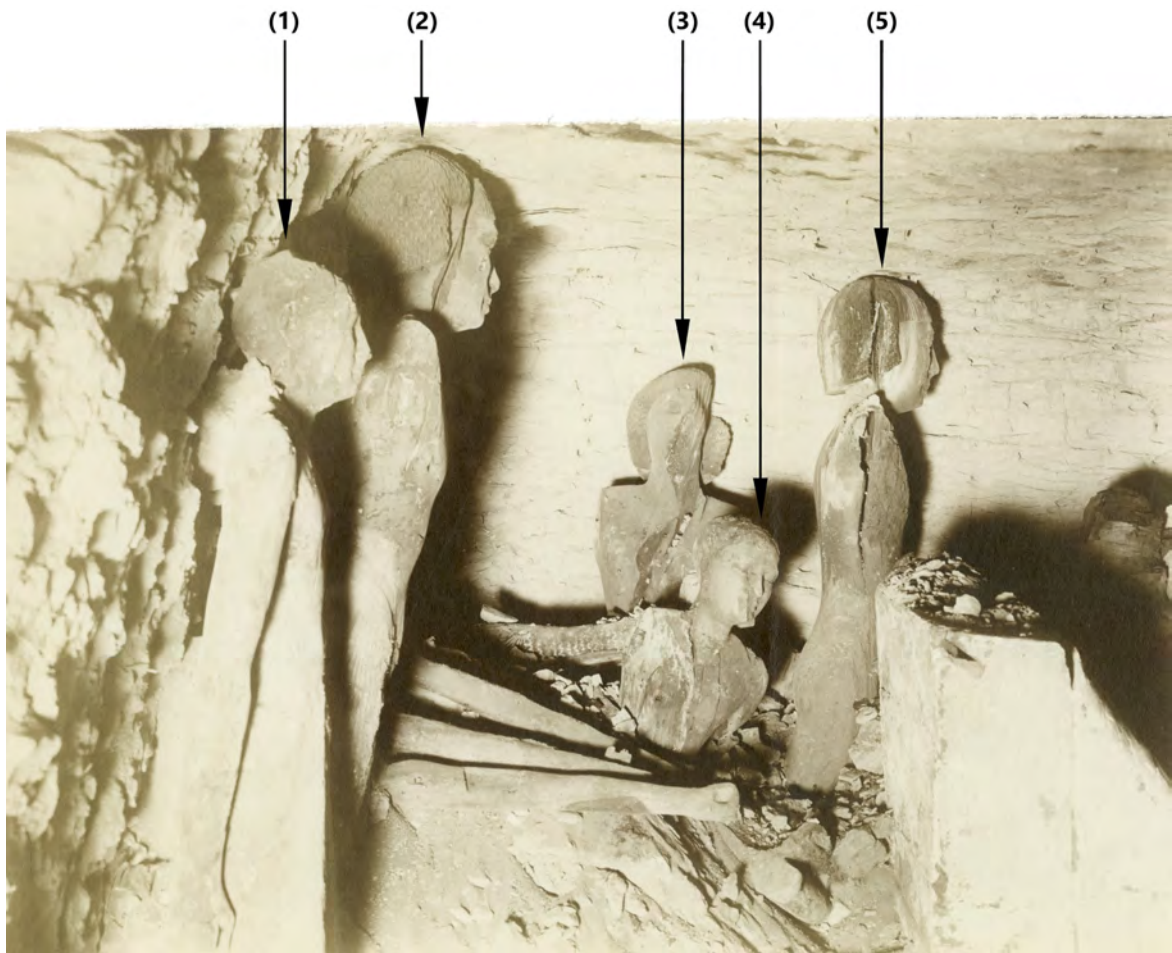


Fig. 8 *In situ* photo with parts of the Old Kingdom statues secondarily stored in a Ptolemaic tomb (MSS Gunn XXII: 35). (1) New York, MMA 27.9.3, (2) JE 100373, (3) New York, MMA 27.9.4, (4) Neuchatel Eg. 424 and (5) a currently not localized statue (© Griffith Institute, University of Oxford; arrows inserted by P. Seyr)

of the official and his titles *ḥtmw-bitī*, *smḥr wꜥti*, *ḥri-ḥb.t* and *imi-r3 šnw.ti* (MSS Gunn XXII: 18), perhaps also with some supplementary titles. For example, the three horizontal lines on the base of Neuchatel Eg. 425 read:

|¹ *ḥtmw-bitī smḥr wꜥti ḥri-ḥb.t*
 |² *imi-r3 šnw.ti imi-r3 [zš.w]*³² *šnw.ti*
 |³ *im3ḥ ḥr pth-zkr Jḥy*

“¹The sealer of the king, sole friend, lector priest,
²overseer of the two granaries, overseer of scribes of the two granaries,
³the revered by Ptah-Sokar, Ihy.”

³² We suspect that the title was not correctly identified by Harvey (2001: 487), who read it as [...] *ḥrp šnw.ti*, “[...] director of the double granary”. Based on the traces visible on the photo in Harvey’s publication, we suggest reading the full second title as *imi-r3 [zš.w] šnw.ti* (Jones 2000: 218, no. 813).

As confirmed by the texts on their bases, at the very least these three inscribed statues belonged to one single individual. Additionally, the stylistic considerations above make it probable that also the other large-sized sculptures found within the cache were originally part of this same statue ensemble, or at a minimum originated from the same workshop. It is not clear whether the gold foil, traces of which can still be found on JE 100373, was peeled off from the skirt's cross-flap during its transfer in later times or whether his damage had already occurred at an earlier stage in history.



Fig. 9 Statue Cairo JE 100373 after its discovery (MSS Gunn XXII: 92) (© Griffith Institute, University of Oxford)

THE DATING AND THE SOCIAL STATUS OF IHY

In her seminal work on Old Kingdom wooden sculpture, Harvey proposed that “[t]he last years of Pepy II is [...] the earliest date possible” (Harvey 2001: 98) for the sculptures of the overseer of the two granaries Ihy. Due to the lack of close and similarly sized parallels from this very period, which have been dated with certainty, it has not been possible to substantially refine this estimate. Based on the rare type of wig (see above), the latest possible date might be set just before the beginning of the Heracleopolitan Period.³³

According to their dimensions (h. > 100 cm), the statues of Ihy represent some of the largest wooden sculptures known to date which were produced in the period from the very late reign of Pepy II to the following two dynasties.³⁴ This indicates that their owner was probably an especially high-ranking personality. This notion is, moreover, emphasized by the rare usage of gold foil for the embellishment of the cross-flap of the kilt.³⁵

Additionally, this postulation is confirmed by Ihy’s so-called “rank titles” *h̄tmw-bitī sm̄hr w̄c̄ti h̄ri-h̄b.t*, “sealer of the king, sole friend, lector priest” (cf. Helck 1954: 111–119; Baer 1960: *passim*; Bárta 2013: 156–157) and his administrative responsibilities as *imi-r3 šnw.ti imi-r3 [zš.w] šnw.ti*, “overseer of the two granaries, overseer of scribes of the two granaries”. These positions were some of the highest within the administrative hierarchy of his time (Strudwick 1985: 251–275; Papazian 2013: 59–70; Florès 2015: 36–43).³⁶ To date, no other monument of Ihy, beside these statues, is known. This may be as a result of the destruction or reuse of his tomb within antiquity.³⁷

It might seem conspicuous, that another high official and nomarch named Ihy, whose tomb was found at Thebes (TT 186), also bears the title *imi-r3 šnw.ti* (Saleh 1977: 23, 25, fig. 60–62, Pl. 18). However, although they could have lived contemporaneously,³⁸ it is not clear whether there exist any relations between the two officials or if they could even be one and the same. On the one hand, during the Sixth Dynasty, there is evidence for officials having two tombs, one in the provinces and another in the Memphite court cemeteries;³⁹ on the other hand, from the end

33 Thus, the proposed dating range corresponds to “phase 1” according to Eschenbrenner-Diemer (2017b: 138–147).

34 Cf. e.g. Harvey (2009: 3) and Harvey (2006a: 157), who noted that the size of wooden sculpture seems to progressively decrease during the Sixth Dynasty in general. Similarly sized statues from the early reign of Pepy II are Cairo, Egyptian Museum, CG 60 (Harvey 2001: 69, 222–223, A 55) and CG 220 (Harvey 2001: 90, 418–419, B 24; Marcello *et al.* 2014: 176–178). However, the currently available corpus of sculpture from this period might be biased by the scarcity of high official’s statues, which could also simply not have been preserved.

35 According to the inscription on the base of the statue Cairo, JE 63110, whose skirt is also covered by a gold foil (cf. above), its owner Anu held the title *h̄3ti-ḥ*.

36 Another Ihy with, among others, the title *imi-r3 šnw.ti*, and whose tomb in the Unas cemetery was reused by a certain Idut, is generally dated to the reign of Unas (Macramallah 1935: 36–37; Strudwick 1985: 63; Kanawati – Abdel Raziq 2013: 33–73, pl. 49–74). As his other titles do not correspond with the titles of the owner of JE 100373 – Ihy from the Unas cemetery even held the vizier’s title – and they date to different periods of the Old Kingdom, they are generally considered not to be identical.

37 In this context, it must be considered that Ihy could himself have usurped an older tomb, as is often attested in the late Sixth Dynasty.

38 For the date of the tomb during the reign of Pepy II at earliest see Fábíán (2011). Cf. also Florès (2015: 473); Martinet (2019: 775–776).

39 Cf. the cases of Weni (Collombert 2015) and Gegi (see footnote 17).

of the Fifth Dynasty and throughout the whole First Intermediate Period a large number of officials bore the name Ihy (Scheele-Schweitzer 2014: 260–261 [454]; Mougénot 2012: 286–288).⁴⁰

Among the other overseers of the two granaries from the late Sixth to Eighth Dynasty, only Tjeteti from tomb Saqqara 6001 is attested by wooden sculpture inscribed by his name.⁴¹ In comparison to the statues of Ihy, they are considerably smaller in size (> 60 cm), of inferior artistic quality and sculpted with less attention to detail. However, as demonstrated in the analysis above, they share some stylistic traits with those of Ihy and might therefore come from a related workshop. Most of the tombs of other overseers of the two granaries from the Sixth Dynasty lie near the contemporaneous royal pyramid complexes at South Saqqara and have not yet yielded any statuary with which the sculptures of Ihy could be compared (Roth 1988: 204).⁴²

CONCLUSION AND FURTHER PERSPECTIVES

Throughout the preceding discussion, the statue JE 100373 was approached from different archaeometrical and Egyptological perspectives. Its typological and stylistic study resulted in its re-identification as part of a group of statues found in 1926 south of the Djoser complex at Saqqara. This was confirmed by the unpublished field photographs of the excavators, which show JE 100373 on its original wooden base and, consequently, allow its re-attribution to the statue ensemble of the overseer of the two granaries Ihy. As indicated by the inscriptions on their bases, their style and their composition, all six statues from the cache located so far seem to belong to this official, and there exists at least one more similar statue which has not yet been re-located. The present locations of six additional wooden statues, which come purportedly from the same Ptolemaic tomb, remain currently unknown.

Dated on the grounds of stylistic considerations to the period from the late reign of Pepy II or slightly later,⁴³ the statue JE 100373 ranks among the largest non-royal sculptures from this period, which are currently known. Its examination by means of USB microscopy, UV-fluorescence and under raking light has provided rare insights into the manufacturing process of high-quality wooden statuary, in particular regarding the use of gold foil for covering the cross-flap of the skirt. The ensemble of the sculptures of the high official Ihy, among them JE 100373, represents a major find complex and renders important information about statuary used within funerary monuments at the very end of the Sixth Dynasty or slightly later. It demonstrates that the Old Kingdom production of large-sized high-quality statuary persisted until this period (*cf.* Eschenbrenner-Diemer 2017a: 245).

40 Among the highest officials of their time called Ihy, there might be cited an overseer of the two granaries from the time of Unas (see footnote 36) and the famous Ihy from the Eleventh Dynasty (Freed 2000).

41 He bears this title on two of his statues, 1) Boston, MFA 24.606, h.: 40 cm (Harvey 2001: 282–283, A 85) and 2) a statue formerly in the collection W. Arnold Meijer, h.: 38.8 cm (Harvey 2001: 304–305, A 96; Harvey 2006b; Harvey 2011). For further literature on this official see footnote 4.

42 *Cf.* Nuzzolo (2017: 280) for the distribution of the tombs, which belong to these officials, during the Fifth Dynasty.

43 Evidence for the continuity of the royal line of the Sixth Dynasty into the Eighth Dynasty was recently put forward by Papazian (2015).

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