



# BULLETIN DE L'INSTITUT FRANÇAIS D'ARCHÉOLOGIE ORIENTALE

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BIFAO 81.1 (1981), p. 29-39

Labib Habachi

New Light on the Vizier Iymeru, Son of the Controller of the Hall, Iymeru [avec 7 planches].

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# NEW LIGHT ON THE VIZIER IYMERU, SON OF THE CONTROLLER OF THE HALL, IYMERU

Labib HABACHI

Of this vizier we know of one statue, which was found in Karnak, and that is now kept in the Institute of Egyptology, Heidelberg; and a second one, also discovered in the same temple, which is now exhibited in the Louvre. A third statue and a stela, both found in Karnak, and hitherto unknown, show even more clearly the interest of the vizier Iymeru in that temple.

We are here publishing these four objects, together with another statue discovered in the Heqaib Sanctuary, a graffito mentioning his name, and a clay seal, which most probably belonged to him. From all these objects <sup>(1)</sup>, it is possible to know his mother's name and to show how distinguished a role he played in the administration of the country during the unsettled period of the XIIIth Dynasty.

## STATUE OF HEIDELBERG (274), ORIGINALLY FROM KARNAK.

Grey granite, headless; the surviving part is 46 cm. high, it shows the vizier as a scribe, represented, as usual, with legs crossed and stretching a roll of papyrus on his lap, with the right hand he writes, and with the left he unfolds what has been inscribed; on his shoulder the scribe's palette is hung, and on his lap are the two colour pots. He is dressed in a thick skirt with fringes held by two ribbons; apparently peculiar to the viziers. Above the skirt the chest is shown with two furrows, one of the characteristics of the statues of the Middle Kingdom, as can be seen in the views kindly sent to me by Dr. R. Griesheimer, who also gave me the permission to publish them <sup>(2)</sup> (Pl. III, A-B).

<sup>(1)</sup> These were referred to by J. von Beckerath in speaking of the viziers of the XIIIth Dynasty. To those already published, he enumerated the statue of the Heqaib Sanctuary and the statue and the stela, still in Karnak, which I pointed out to him, see *Untersuchungen zur politischen Geschichte der zweiten Zwischenzeit in Ägypten*, 1965, p. 98, N<sup>os</sup> 3, 4, 6-10.

<sup>(2)</sup> H. Ranke spoke of this statue « Ein Wesir der 13. Dynastie », in *Mélanges Maspero, I, Orient ancien*, 1934, pp. 361 ff. There he gives a detailed study of this statue and its inscription, for which he gave two scenes. He spoke also of viziers having the same name; for the inscription and its translation, see p. 362 f.

The inscription on the roll of papyrus <sup>(1)</sup> reads (Fig. 1) :

« The prince and governor, the one who is in privacy in the Palace of the king (2), who is over the secrets (?) <sup>(2)</sup> in the House of Life, to whom are reported the affairs (3) of the Two Lands, the chief of the town and vizier, the overseer of the Six Great Mansions, the judge

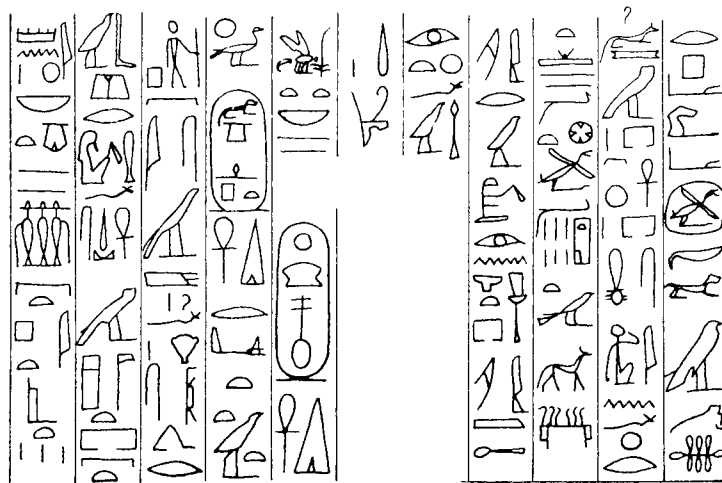


Fig. 1. — Inscription on the Statue of Heidelberg.

and the one of the curtain, (4) Iymeru, begotten of the controller of the hall, Iymer(u), justified. (5) Made according to (6) the command of (7) the king of Upper and Lower Egypt, lord of the Two Lands' Kha'neferre', given life, (8) son of Re 'Sobekhotep', given life, to give (9) this statue as he recognises <sup>(3)</sup> (?) (him) while following to (10) the place where his Majesty <sup>(4)</sup> l.p.h. is in the temple of (11) Amenre, lord of the Throne-of-the-two-Lands » i.e. Karnak (Pl. IV, A-B).

<sup>(1)</sup> W. Helck gives a better copy of the inscription of this statue in his *Historische-Bibliographische Texte der 2. Zwischenzeit und neue Texte der 18. Dynastie*, 1975, p. 37 f. (48).

<sup>(2)</sup> This sign is almost effaced, only traces of it are noted by Ranke, but these were taken for *hr:ssi3* by Helck which is not quite sure.

<sup>(3)</sup> This is the most obscure part of the whole

text; it was copied as *s m rh n* by Ranke, and *si n* by Helck. Here the signs reading *si3* are quite clear, but what follow are not. For *si3*, see *Wb.* IV, p. 30 : 6.

<sup>(4)</sup> Copied as *nsu* by both Ranke and Helck, but this sign looks rather like *hm*, the viper follows, assuring the reading as *hm.f*.

The importance of this statue lies in the fact that it shows the reign in which the vizier lived; this being that of the king 'Kha'neferre' Sobekhotep, the fourth of the kings to bear that name. It also shows how he was favoured by this sovereign who commanded the statue to be given to him, and that the vizier was allowed in the privacy of the Palace of the king.

As we have seen, the statue came from Karnak. Ranke, who devoted a full study for this statue, states that it was unearthed in the famous Cour de la Cachette in 1902, and it was offered for auction sale. The Institute of Egyptology acquired it through Alb. Ismailum, who paid for it just 1642 Egyptian piastres <sup>(1)</sup>.

STATUE OF THE LOUVRE (A. 125), ORIGINALLY FROM KARNAK (Pl. V, A-B).

This statue is in sandstone, complete, except for a part from the bottom; it measures 150 cm. in height.

It shows the vizier standing with arms stretching down the sides, close to the body, and the left foot advanced, as usual. He is shown dressed in a long pleated wig reaching to the shoulders, but revealing the ears. A long tunic surrounds his body, hung by two ribbons on the shoulders at the waist. The top is decorated with fringes (Pl. VI, A). Here we are publishing some views of the statue kindly sent to me by M<sup>rs</sup> Desroches-Noblecourt with the permission to publish them <sup>(2)</sup>.

Two horizontal lines are engraved on the front; these read (Fig. 2 a) :

« *The chief of the town and vizier, the overseer of the Six Great Mansions, (2) Iymer(u)-neferkare* ».

On the dorsal pillar there are two more lines, engraved vertically; these read (Fig. 2 b) :

« *Given as a favour from the king to the prince and governor, the chief of the town and vizier, the overseer of the Six Great Mansions, Iymeruneferkare, possessor of honour . . . (2) after the great opening of the canal, (making the ceremony of) giving the house to his lord <sup>(3)</sup> in the Temple-Million-of-Years, (called) 'May-the-ka-of-Sobekhotep-be-Pacified' . . .* ».

<sup>(1)</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 362 footnote 1.

<sup>(2)</sup> This statue was found in the Central Court of the Great Temple of Amenre at Karnak, see Mariette, *Karnak*, pl. 8 : and spoken of in numerous

publications, see PM. II<sup>2</sup>, p. 109.

<sup>(3)</sup> Here we have the expression « giving the house to his lord », showing the consecration of a temple, *Wb.* I, 513 : 8.

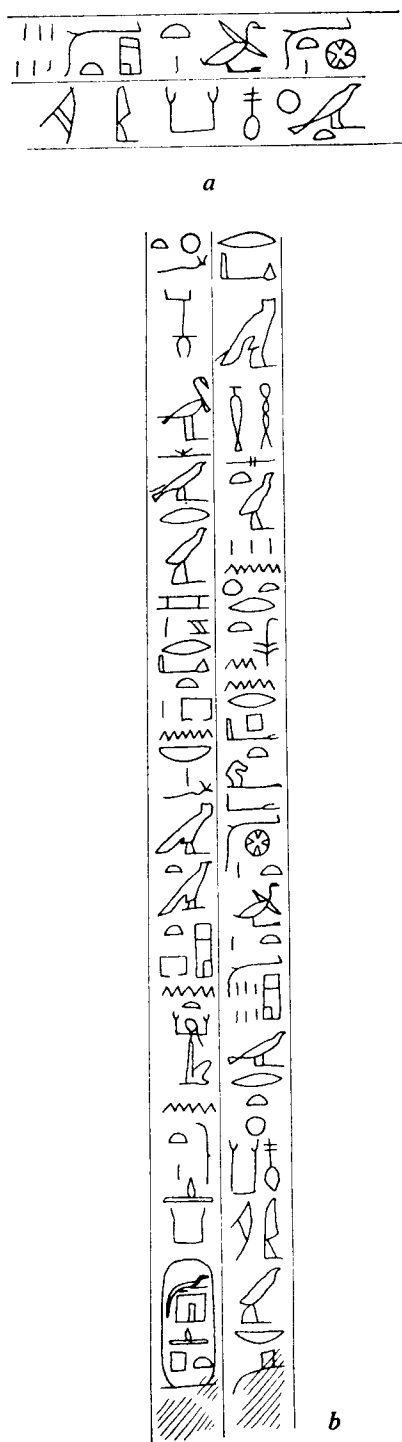


Fig. 2 a-b. — Inscriptions on the front and the back of the Louvre Statue.

This statue shows even more clearly the favour of the king towards his vizier. It was given to him after the ceremony of consecrating a certain kind of temple here attested for the first time, though given as the name of many temples in the New Kingdom. Such temples were sometimes erected celebrating the mortuary ceremonies of the reigning king, and sometimes dedicated to a certain divinity, perhaps to be adored by the king<sup>(1)</sup>.

Paul Pierret attributes this statue to Sobekhotep III, and takes it to be erected on the first year of his reign. He states that it was once appropriated by M. Munier of Luxor, and was later sent to Paris. He adds that he tried to add it to the collection of the Louvre<sup>(2)</sup>, but it is clear that this was possible later, since it is now one of the beautiful pieces of the Museum.

Was the proprietor of this statue the same as the vizier Iymeru, son of the controller of the Hall, Iymeru? Unfortunately the words following the name of the vizier in the first column of inscription on the dorsal pillar, where the name of the father would be expected, are missing. This may be the reason why early scholars hesitated to identify the owner with that of the statue of Heidelberg, living under Sobekhotep IV.

<sup>(1)</sup> The great opening of the canal, perhaps to connect the Temple with the Nile, may have been the last ceremony to be celebrated for the inauguration of such temple. Many temples were given the name of « Million-of-Years », but our temple may have been the first. Gauthier mentioned many temples of that name, DG IV, pp. 89 ff. all of the New Kingdom; ours is only mentioned by Helck, *Materialen zur Wirtschaftsgeschichte des neuen Reiches*, Teil I, 1961, p. 864. Usually such temples were erected for mortuary ceremonies celebrated for the kings.

<sup>(2)</sup> *Mélanges d'archéologie égypt. et assyr.*, 1976, p. 63.

In the Bibliography, it is dated to year I of Sobekhotep (Sekhemre Sewadjtaui) <sup>(1)</sup>. We shall see in speaking of the statue of the same vizier unearthed in the Heqaib Sanctuary, that it definitely belongs to our Iymeru. We can say, therefore, that Sobekhotep IV and not III, was responsible for erecting the Temple of Million-of-Years called ‘May-the-ka-of-Sobekhotep-be-satisfied’. Iymeru was granted that statue by his sovereign on the occasion of opening the Great Canal, perhaps connecting that temple with the Nile. As the vizier of the king, he might have been the person who was delegated to erect the Temple.

#### STATUE OF THE HEQAIB SANCTUARY ON ELEPHANTINE ISLAND.

Grey granite, the upper part missing, and the surviving part is 32 cm. high.

This is the only statue of a vizier unearthed in the Sanctuary of Heqaib, where more than 50 statues or parts of statues were discovered <sup>(2)</sup>. The statue shows the vizier in a squatting position with a papyrus-roll on the lap. As on the statue of Heidelberg, he writes with the right hand and unfolds what is written with the left, but there is no trace either of the palette or the colour pots. The upper part, as well as a fragment of his left-hand side, are missing. He was dressed in a garment reaching his ankles, and tied at the waist (Pl. VII, A-B).

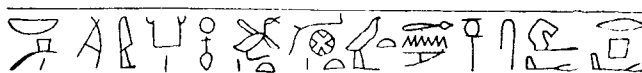
Two inscriptions are carved on the statue : *a*) on the top of the pedestal in front of the crossed legs and *b*) on the papyrus-roll.

*a*) « Prince and governor, the greatly beloved companion, the chief of the town and vizier, Iymer(u)neferkare, possessor of honour » (Fig. 3 a).

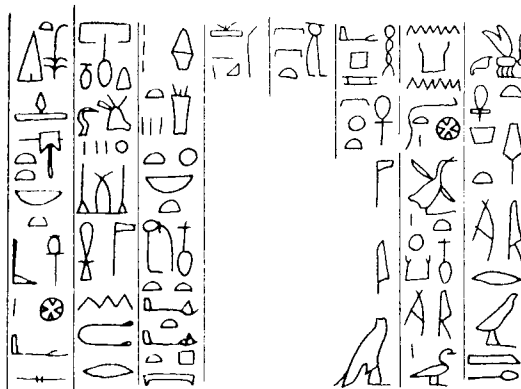
*b*) « An offering which the king gives (to) Satis, mistress of Elephantine, that she may give (2) an invocation offering formed of bread and beer, oxen and fowl, alabaster (vases) and clothing, incense (3) and ointment and all things good and pure, which heaven gives, (4) which earth creates (5), and which Hapi brings, (6) whereon a god lives (7) to the ka of the chief of the town and vizier, Iymer(u)neferkare, son of (8) the chancellor of the king of Lower Egypt and controller of the hall, Iymeru, justified » (Fig. 3 b).

<sup>(1)</sup> PM. II<sup>2</sup>, p. 109 following Pierret, *ibid.*, the word « year » was taken to refer to year I of the king, but it undoubtedly forms as an element in the name of the temple, in the same way as it does in the names of the other similar temples.

<sup>(2)</sup> For the Sanctuary of Heqaib, see our article « Hekaib, the Deified Governor of Elephantine », in *Archaeology*, 9, 1956, pp. 8 ff. and « Heqaib » in *Lexikon der Ägyptologie*, vol. 2, 1119 ff.



a



b

Fig. 3 a-b. — Inscriptions on the front side of the statue of the Heqaib Sanctuary.

It is clear that the vizier Iymeruneferkare is the same as the one given the short name of Iymeru. The father is known in both cases as ‘the controller of the hall, Iymeru’. Egyptians usually had more than one name; apart from the birth name, they sometimes had a nickname, or a name compounded with that of the reigning king as an element. Here we have our vizier given a name with Neferkare as element. J. von Beckerath enumerates it as the throne name of several kings of the XIIIth Dynasty. The one known as : . . .kare Anyotef IV, given by him No. 19 in the order of the kings of that dynasty, may be the one meant here <sup>(1)</sup>. If indeed our vizier was born under that king, he would have been about 50 years old, when he became the vizier of Sobekhotep IV.

<sup>(1)</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 52 f. and 239. Von Beckerath says that this king may be either Nerkare or Hetepkare; the beginning of the name is missing in the Canon Papyrus of Tutin. But seeing that the vizier was given Neferkare as an element in his

name, he quite probably took the name from one of the kings under whose reign he was born, and Neferkare Antef, being the nearest to the period in which he lived, may be the one.

## STATUE NOW IN KARNAK.

Grey granite, the upper part and the pedestal are missing; the surviving part is 43 cm. It has a projection on the left side, on which, carved in high relief, is the figure of a child having his finger in his mouth and wearing the usual side-lock. Unfortunately there is no inscription on the surviving part of the statue to give us the identity of such a child <sup>(1)</sup> (Pl. VIII).

The surviving part of the statue was found in two fragments, which fit exactly, with only a small part of the surface in the middle destroyed. On the dress, there are two inscriptions, beginning in the middle and running in opposite directions. Each is formed of two columns of inscription, the first beginning on the lap; this is continued by a second which starts from the front of the dress only (Pl. IX, A-B).

The inscription to the left reads (Fig. 4) : « *May the king give offerings (to) Amenre, lord of (heaven) for the ka of the prince and governor, the chieftain of the entire land, the one to whom the affairs of the Two Lands are reported, (2) the chief of the town and vizier, the overseer of the Six Great Mansions, Iymeru, justified, begotten of the controller of the hall, Iymeru, justified* ».

That to the right reads : « *May the king gives offerings to Amenre, lord of heaven to the ka of the prince and governor, the one who fills the heart of Ma'et in restraining the patricians and in humiliating the rebels (2) (namely) the chief of the town and vizier, the overseer of the Six Great Mansions, Iymeru, justified, born of Satamen, (justified)* ».



Fig. 4. — Inscription on the statue now in Karnak.

<sup>(1)</sup> This statue is now kept in the magazine of Karnak, known as that of « Sheikh Labib » and lying to the west of the Temple of Ramesses III opening in the First Court of the Great Temple

of Amenre, Karnak. For the figure of the child shown on that statue, it is unknown whether it represents the son of Iymeru, or the son of the reigning king, the future Sobekhotep Vth.



Here the vizier is given certain epithets showing his importance in the administration of the country, but first we shall describe the objects he erected and those on which he is mentioned.

#### STELA OF THE VIZIER IN KARNAK.

Quartzite, the upper part, as well as the right-hand side, are missing. The surviving part, formed of two fragments, which fit exactly, is 37 cm. high and 30 cm. broad <sup>(1)</sup>.

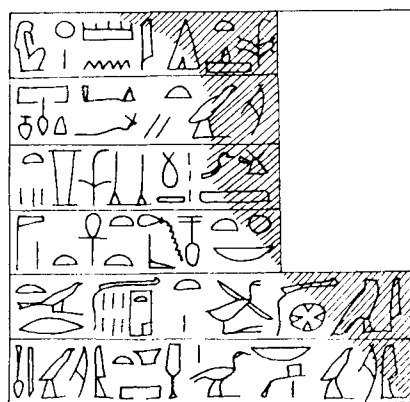


Fig. 5. — Inscription on the stela now in Karnak.

It is not known how the upper part was decorated, but it may be assumed that the inscription below was begun with a prayer addressed to Amenre to give offerings to the vizier (Pl. VI, B). From the second line, it is clear that this was the only god invoked; here it is said 'that he may give'. In the third and fourth lines, it looks as if nothing is missing, and we can therefore assume that the beginning of these four lines was occupied by the figure of the owner <sup>(2)</sup>. Here is the translation of what is left of its inscription (Fig. 5) :

« (May the king give offerings (to) Amenre, (2) the well-beloved, that he may give invocation offering, formed of bread and beer, (3) (oxen) and fowl, alabaster (vases) and clothing, incense and ointment (4) and everything good and pure, whereon a god lives (5) (to) the chief of the town and vizier, the overseer of the Great Six Mansions, (6) Iymeru, possessor of honour, son of the controller of the hall, Iymeru, justified ».

#### A CLAY SEAL FROM ABYDOS AND A GRAFFITO IN WADI HAMMAMAT.

In his 'Nouvelles inscriptions rupestres du Wadi Hammamat', G. Goyon speaks briefly of a graffito of two columns, mentioning three persons, one of them is 'the vizier Iymeru' <sup>(3)</sup> (Fig. 6).

<sup>(1)</sup> This stela is kept in the magazine lying to the south of Khonsu Temple in Karnak.

<sup>(2)</sup> Usually the owner is shown either at the top of the stela or at the bottom, sometimes with a table laden with various kinds of offerings, but

the case may have been different in our case.

<sup>(3)</sup> 1957, p. 101 : 87, pl. XXVIII. A few signs of this inscription are recorded by Couyat-Montet, *Les inscriptions hiéroglyphiques et hiératiques du Ouadi Hammamat*, 1912, p. 114 : 242.

In our article 'A Score of Important Officials Serving the Neferhotep I Family, as Revealed from Three Objects in the Heqaib Sanctuary and Elsewhere', we made many improvements in the reading of this graffito, stating that it reads <sup>(1)</sup> : « *The chamberlain and controller of the fan (?)* <sup>(2)</sup>, *Siremeni, justified, begotten of Senebtifi, the vizier Iymeru and the chief steward, Nebonkh* » <sup>(3)</sup>.

We proved that Siremeni was the person responsible for carving the stela of Neferhotep I and Sobekhotep IV studied by W. K. Simpson <sup>(4)</sup>, though at a different stage of his life, when he had a different title. For Nebonkh, who carved our graffito, it was shown that he was the same person responsible for carving the many graffiti in the Cataract area showing members of the Neferhotep I family; also how he was promoted from the post of king's acquaintance to the important position of high steward, when he moved to Abydos during the reign of Sobekhotep IV. Iymeru, in this graffito, is undoubtedly our vizier, he served Sobekhotep IV, during whose reign Siremeni and Nebonkh lived.

A clay seal impression was found in Abydos bearing the following inscription : « *The chief of the town and vizier, the overseer of the Great Six Mansions, Iymeru* » <sup>(5)</sup>. Von Beckerath, in speaking of the viziers of the XIIIth Dynasty, said that this seal may have been carved for one of the three viziers of that name <sup>(6)</sup>. Most probably, however, our vizier is the one meant. He was more important than his namesakes, having left numerous monuments, while the others are either known



Fig. 6. — Rock-inscription in Wadi Hammamat.

<sup>(1)</sup> This article is to be published in a special monograph in honour of Charles Fr. Nims on his 74th anniversary.

<sup>(2)</sup> This title was taken by Goyon (*ibid.*, p. 102) as reading 'Ibny and standing for the name of the first of the three persons mentioned in this graffito. As a title, it usually follows that of « chamberlain », as we have it in this inscription.

<sup>(3)</sup> Goyon considers the name of Nebonkh as doubtful, p. 174 and his title as *imi-r pr*, or « steward », p. 176.

<sup>(4)</sup> « The Dynasty XIII Stela from the Wadi Hammamat », in *MDAIK*, 25, 1969, pp. 154 ff. Simpson takes the name of that man as doubtful,

p. 158, but the signs standing for his name are quite clear.

<sup>(5)</sup> Ayerton-Currelly-Weigall, *Abydos*, 111, p. 18. In the Bibliography, it is dated to Sobekhotep III (?), PM. V, p. 91. It is referred to by Newberry, to have been found by Petrie, *Scarabs*, p. 125. Recently it is mentioned by G.T. Martin, *Egyptian Administrative and Private-Name Seals*, 1971, p. 10 : 49, where all references to the seal are recorded.

<sup>(6)</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 98 : 6. He said the same for the statue in Karnak and the graffito, both now proved to be of our vizier.

from one monument, or just mentioned on one. Again, his name is mentioned in the graffito of Wadi Hammamat, just described; this graffito was made by the high steward, Nebonkh, who lived in Abydos, where the seal was discovered.

Apart from this seal, our vizier left three statues and a stela in Karnak, a fourth statue in the Heqaib Sanctuary, while his name is also mentioned in a graffito in Wadi Hammamat. Such a large number of monuments, not attested to the other viziers of the Dynasty, shows his importance and devotion to the deities of Southern Upper Egypt. Noteworthy is the fact that two of his statues : the one of the Heqaib Sanctuary, and the second found in Karnak, and now in Heidelberg, were carved in the form of a scribe; on the latter statue, he is shown to have some relation with *Pr-nḥ*, The House of Life <sup>(1)</sup>.

In addition to the usual titles born by viziers, such as : ‘ prince and governor, chief of the town and vizier ’, he was also styled ‘ overseer of the Great Six Mansions and chieftain of the entire land ’. More important are the epithets given to him. That of ‘ the one to whom the affairs of the Two Lands are reported ’, which figures on the statue of Heidelberg, and on that which is still in Karnak, may have been mentioned on monuments of other viziers, but those on the latter statue that he was ‘ the one who is confident of Ma’et in restraining the patricians and in humiliating the rebels ’ seem to be unusual. For an official to boast of being confident of the king is usual, but here we have Iymeru claiming to be confident of Ma’et, goddess of justice, which seems to be unusual, if not unique <sup>(2)</sup>. With such confidence in the goddess of justice which it represents, our vizier aimed to justify this claim by dealing with the patricians and rebels.

Gardiner, in speaking of *p’t*, compared with *rmt*, *rhyt* and *hmmt*, took them as meaning ‘ mankind ’, though with some difference in meaning <sup>(3)</sup>. There he defined *p’t* as ‘ the autochthonous inhabitants of Egypt from the time when earth was first separated from sky and when Geb became the earliest terrestrial ruler ’ <sup>(4)</sup>.

It is strange that here the word *rth*, which is usually used for restraining the enemies, is used with the word *p’t*, perhaps referring to a certain class of Egyptians who revolted

<sup>(1)</sup> A.H. Gardiner, « The Mansion of Life and Master of the King’s Largess », *JEA* 24, 1937, pp. 83 ff. and « The House of Life », *ibid.*, p. 157.

<sup>(2)</sup> Helck, speaking of « Wesen, Entstehung und Entwicklung altaegyptischen ‘Rechts’ », states about « Diktatur und Buerokratie im ‘Mittleren Reich’ » : « Zwischen Ma’at und den Menschen selbst muss also eine tiefe Kluft bestanden haben, sicher weil die Ma’at im Mittleren Reich als

Ideologie verstanden worden ist, die nur einem einzigen Ziel dienen sollte, naemlich den Funktionieren Staates. Der Staat war das Endziel, nicht die Menschen und ihr Wohlergehen ». See *Entstehung und Wandel rechtlicher Traditionen*, pp. 303 ff., cf. p. 317.

<sup>(3)</sup> *Ancient Egyptian Onomastica*, A. 230-233.

<sup>(4)</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. I, pp. 108 ff., cf. 110.

against the king in the unsettled period of the XIIIth Dynasty <sup>(1)</sup>. With the rebels in the second epithet, the word *sid* is used, meaning ‘humiliating’ or ‘bringing peace and order’, which is normal in this context <sup>(2)</sup>.

In our previous study casting ‘New Light on the Neferhotep I Family, as Revealed by their Inscriptions in the Cataract Area’, we showed that this king, together with Sihathor and Sobekhotep, his two brothers, reigned successively; sometimes shared the throne with each other, and that they were followed by Sobekhotep V, who might have been the son of the last of these kings <sup>(3)</sup>. This fact brought to mind the strange suggestion of Junker, who pointed to an elective kingship and taken as possible by W. Hayes. On this subject the latter scholar says : ‘Though anything like a popular election seems politically a little advanced for the eighteenth century B.C., it is, I think, not impossible that the kings of this period were appointed to the throne for limited periods of time, perhaps by the viziers or by councils presided over by the viziers’ <sup>(4)</sup>.

Such a hypothesis is difficult to believe, it can only be said that some of the numerous kings of this Dynasty controlled only a part of the country, while others shared the throne with others. Naturally some of them were in need of the support of some strong families, and those of the viziers were the most liable to do such a job.

We now know, not only the father of the vizier, but also his mother’s name. Thanks to the statue still in Karnak. But nothing is known of any other of his relatives, and consequently we do not know if he was related to any vizier of the dynasty. Of the other viziers of the same dynasty, such as Khenemes, Ibi<sup>c</sup>, not much is known. Only the vizier Onkhu’s family is well known; he had two of his sons known as viziers.

<sup>(1)</sup> *Wb.* II, p. 460 : 1-5, to be noted that *P<sup>3</sup> rthw p’t* is the name of a book, *ibid.* N° 6.

<sup>(2)</sup> For *sid*, see *Wb.* IV, 41 : 8, used also for enemies.

<sup>(3)</sup> This study is appearing in the volume which

is published in honour of Doves Dunham on his 90th Anniversary, 1981, pp. 77 ff., cf. p. 80.

<sup>(4)</sup> *A Late Middle Egyptian Papyrus in the Brooklyn Museum*, 1955, p. 148.



B. — Back view of Heidelberg Statue.



A. — Front view of Heidelberg Statue.



A. — Detail of inscription  
of Heidelberg Statue.



B. — View of inscription  
of Heidelberg Statue.



A. — Front view of the Louvre Statue.



B. — Back view of the Louvre Statue.

A. — Detail of the front of the Louvre Statue.



B. — Stela now in Karnak.





A. — Inscription on the Statue of Heqaib Sanctuary.



B. — Detail of inscription on the Statue of Heqaib Sanctuary.



Statue now in Karnak.



A. — Upper part of the statue in Karnak.



B. — Lower part of the statue in Karnak.