

**Quartzite Statue of Senebtyfy, called Ptahemsaf
The British Museum**

From Egypt
Late Middle Kingdom, around 1700 BC

Standing statue with name and titles carved on the upper face of the base



This standing statue shows Senebtyfy, called Ptahemsaf. His titles, inscribed on the statue, are 'Royal Scribe' and 'Chancellor' and he is evidently in the prime of his career. Ptahemsaf is shown as past his youth, with a slightly portly figure. The Egyptians regarded a generous figure as a sign of prosperity, indicating that the person could afford to eat well, and was not required to do strenuous labour. The depiction of a person as overweight was therefore a device to show wealth, rather than a true representation of their physical appearance.

The long kilt fastened high on Ptahemsaf's chest, and the *khat* bag wig are those of a high official. This dress is characteristic of officials and dignitaries of the Middle Kingdom (2040-1750 BC). The horizontal stripes on the kilt indicate that the garment was patterned. Patterns in clothing are seldom shown in statuary, and are rare in wall decoration. Fragments of linen used to wrap mummies show that patterns were incorporated into clothing.

The use of hard stone, such as quartzite, for private statuary was an innovation of the Middle Kingdom. Before this time the hardest stones were reserved for statues of kings and gods. This development coincided with the placing of private statues within temples, where the owner could show his eternal devotion.

T.G.H. James and W.V. Davies, *Egyptian sculpture* (London, The British Museum Press, 1983)

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