

The Prisoner Statue « Fragments » in Milano *

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(PLATES I–III)

During her research in Milan, Tara Prakash was able to peruse the numerous archives preserved in the Egyptological Library and Archives of the University of Milano. The archive of Alexandre Varille proved especially useful in providing photographic documentation of the otherwise inaccessible Prisoner Statues found in the Djedkara-Isesi pyramid. A comparative study with other images pertaining the tombs of Neuserre, Unas, Tèti, Pepi I and Pepi II whom also employed this kind of representation ensued. This lead to a description of the changes the Prisoner Statues had undergone in time and a review of the classical theories regarding their form and function. The unpublished material in the archive of Bernard Bothmer completed the photographic documentation accompanying the Egyptologist's publications on the subject of Prisoner Statues and reinforced the theses Prakash had previously discussed.

During the late Old Kingdom, six different kings erected limestone statues of kneeling, bound foreigners within their pyramid complexes. These statues, which are commonly known as prisoner statues, served as three-dimensional confirmations of the king's absolute power and ability to destroy all potential threats to Egypt and the cosmos. Though the statue type itself is well known to Egyptologists, numerous questions and uncertainties still surround the prisoner statues. For example, none of the known fragments were discovered *in situ*, and their original placement in each pyramid complex remains unclear. Moreover, a complete statue has never been excavated. This, along with the fragments' poorly preserved condition, has led some scholars to suggest that the statues might have been intentionally damaged, possibly in some type of destruction

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