

## First dwarf represented: ancient Egypt 2520 B.C.

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Seneb was a dwarf who served as a high-ranking court official in the Old Kingdom of Ancient Egypt, near 2520 BC. Despite his diminutive size, Seneb was a person of considerable importance and wealth who owned thousands of cattle, held twenty palaces and religious titles and was married to a high-ranking priestess of average size with whom he had three children. His successful career and the lavishness of his burial arrangements are indicative of the acceptance given to dwarfs in ancient Egyptian society, whose texts advocated the acceptance and integration of those with physical and mental disabilities.

The limestone sculpture of Seneb and his family is part of the collection of the Egyptian Museum in Cairo (Fig. 1). It depicts Seneb and his wife sitting next to each other with their children in the lower register. Seneb is depicted sitting cross-legged on a block of stone with his arms folded in a position characteristic of a scribe. His wife, Senet, sits alongside him, wearing a long robe with long sleeves and a wig covering her natural hair, which can be glimpsed on her forehead. She encircles him with her arms in a gesture of affection and support. She is shown with a slight smile on her face to signify her contentment and happiness.



**Fig. 1** Seneb (*left*) with his wife Senet (*right*) and their children (*below*)

### Compliance with ethical standards

**Conflict of interest** No conflict of interest.

**Ethical approval** This article does not contain any studies with human participants or animals performed by any of the authors.

**Informed consent** No informed consent.

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