A Late Period Wooden Stela in the Cairo Museum (TN27/1/25/16)

Author/s: Dr. Mohamed Abdelrahiem
A Late Period Wooden Stela in the Cairo Museum (TN 27/1/25/16)*

Mohamed Abdelrahim

Abstract
There are a number of very interesting wooden stelae among the objects in the magnificent collection of antiquities in the Cairo Museum. It is noteworthy that they all seem to originate from Thebes and its neighborhood and that their owners are mostly persons attached to the cults of Month and Amun. The stela of T3-irj, the daughter of the priest of Amun Jmn-htp, which is published here may be dated to the Dynasty XXVI. and records the hymn of adoring Re when he rises in the eastern horizon of the sky and when he sets in the west.

The stela, which is the subject of this paper is in the Cairo Museum (TN 27/1/25/16) and was found in El-Qurna. It measures 45.5 cm in height and 0.23 cm in width. The surface is generally well preserved, except in certain damaged areas. Traces of color are still visible.

Representation and Text
The stela (fig. 1, pl. 1) is divided into three registers: the upper one, which is surmounted by a frieze of stars representing the sky, is occupied by a winged sun disk with two pendants Uraei. Below this, a line of hieroglyphs, repeated twice, reads: Bḥd.t nṯr 3 nb pt “The Behdty, the great god. Lord of the sky”.

* I would like to express my deep gratitude to Prof. Dr. A. Zayed for providing me with the photo of this stela.
1 Some of this stelae are published by A. Zayed, in: RdE 20, 1968, 149-170; A. Abdalla, in VA 4, 1988, 5-16.
2 Many scholars have referred to this stela, but it has never been fully published, see: K. Piehl, Inscr. Hiero. III, 54, pl. LXXXV (X); J. Lieblein, Wb, no. 2281; PMT, 802; De Meulenaere, in: CdE 44, 1969, 268; P. Munro, Totenstelen, 202; M. Bierbier, Late New Kingdom, 92ff; Vittmann, in: Or 47, 1978, 4; G. Vittmann, Priester und Beamte, 25ff.
At the upper part of the second register, which is completely framed by borders of colored rectangles, is a frieze of likr ornaments framed by a block border. Below this are two main scenes. The scene to the right shows the deceased lady stands facing left, and wears a long, loose-fitting robe. She raises both arms in adoration towards Atum, who stands in front of her, wears the double crown, a corselet and a short kilt and tunic. The god carries the w3s- scepter and the 'nh-sign. Between the lady and the god is a libation stand with a jar and a very large lotus flower. Above the figures are four columns of text, which read: $\text{qd mdw jn Jn} [\text{w}j] \text{Jwn.wj nb hw.t qd mdw jn Ws}jr [\text{n}][\text{t}]-pr T3-jrj 3t Jmn-htp “Words spoken by Atum, Lord of the Land[s], The Heliopolitan, Lord of the temple”. “Words spoken by T3-jrj, Mistress of the house, daughter of Jmn-htp”.

The scene to the left is similar to the above mentioned one, but the god Rahorakhty, who replaced Atum, is shown as a hawk-headed man, crowned with a large solar disk. The inscriptions referring to this scene read: $\text{qd mdw jn Rc-Hr3h.tj ntr ‘3 nb pt ‘3 b.wj qd mdw jn Ws}jr [\text{n}][\text{t}]-pr T3-jrj m3-f-hrw “Words spoken by Rahorakhty, The great god, Lord of the sky. Great of the two Lands”, “Words spoken by Osiris, Mistress of the house, T3-jrj”, justified”.

The third register is occupied by the main texts of the stela, recording two hymns of adoring Re. Each consists of nine horizontal lines of inscriptions, and are divided from each other by a vertical black line. It is worth mentioning that the two hymns are derived from chapter 15 of the BD, which was divided by Lepsius into individual hymns, called (15 a-i). Naville had added other hymn groups, which he called (15A I-IV) and (15B I-III).

T. G. Allen completed the hymn groups by adding (15A5, 15B 4-5 and 15h)\(^3\). According to his classification our hymns belong to 15A5 and 15B4 group, addressed to the rising and to the setting

---

\(^3\) To his sources can be added the stela of $\text{N3.w-mnh.t-Jmn}$, the daughter of $\text{Bs-n-Mw.t}$, see below.
(Fig. 1) The stela of Ti-irj, (Cairo Mus. TN 27/1/25/16).
sun respectively\textsuperscript{4}. Below is the list of the Late Period stelae, recorded 15A5 paired with 15B4 as shown on our stela (\textsuperscript{a}): 

I. Stela of $N3.w-nnh.t-Jmn$ (Thebes/ Cairo Mus. S.R. 9418\textsuperscript{5}).

II. Stela of $Wn-nfr$ (Thebes/ Cairo Mus. S.R. 9419\textsuperscript{6}).

III. Stela of $Jrt-Hr-r.w-gd-[n]=f$ (Paris, Musée. Guimet C47\textsuperscript{7}).

IV. Stela of $\textquoteright nh=f [-n] Hnsw$ (London BM 22914\textsuperscript{8}).

V. Stela of $Rwrw$ (Abydos D 11/ Chicago OIM 6898\textsuperscript{9}).

VI. Stela of $T(3)-dj-Jmn-nb-Nst$ (Copenhagen A.A.d. 3\textsuperscript{10}).

The left-hand hymn (15A5) reads:

\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{hymn_image.png}

\textsuperscript{4} T. G. Allen, in: \textit{JNES} 8, 1949, 349.

\textsuperscript{5} A. Zayed, in: \textit{RdE} 20, 1968, 164-165, Pl. 14 B.

\textsuperscript{6} A. Abdalla, in \textit{VA} 4, 1988, 7,12, fig. 5.

\textsuperscript{7} T. G. Allen, in: \textit{JNES} 8, 1949, 350-351.

\textsuperscript{8} G. Legran, in: \textit{RT} 14, 1893, 58 f.

\textsuperscript{9} T. G. Allen, in: \textit{JNES} 8, 1949, 350-351, Pl. XXV.

\textsuperscript{10} K. Piehl, \textit{Inscr. Hiero.} I, Pl. XC (A).
Adoring Re when he rises in the eastern horizon of the sky.

by T3-jrjr, justified, the daughter of the priest of Amun, Lord of the gods, Jmn-htp, justified, whose mother is h3r5 ws-n-Js.t, justified, she says (b).

Hail to you, who rises from his sacred domain, the daylight appears in the east of the heaven (c), the great of esteem in the secret shrine (d).

Oh Re, may you hear; Oh Re, may you circle about. [for] I have read the 77 rolls concerning the place of slaughter of Apophis every day (e).

His soul is given to (f) the enemy with the fire (g), his corpse to the flame, his flesh <body> (h) to the eye of Hours, so that he ceases to exit (i) and is not to remembered.

What is due Apophis is <regularly> accomplished in the [daily] conflict.

The hymn on the right-hand side (15B4) reads as follows:
Adoring Re when he sets in the West.

by T3-jrj, justified, the daughter of the priest of Amun-Re, Lord of the Gods, Jmn-htp, justified, being the daughter of h35ws-n-Js.t (k), justified, she says:

Hail to you, Re-Atum, Khepri Horakhty!
The divine soul, who illuminates the netherworld with the rays of his
A Late Period Wooden Stela in the Cairo Museum

\[ stj \ [m] \ hrw \ nb \ n.t \ grh \ \ \text{bright divine eye,} \]
\[ s\text{h}b \ k\text{rtj} \ \ \text{who shines [by] day, lord of night,} \]
\[ nb \ n\text{mu.t} \ m \ h\text{pt} \ hh \ ph\text{rr} \ \ \text{making festive the twin caverns,} \]
\[ Nnw[.t] \ njr \ \ \text{who strides according to his will} \]
\[ \text{in a circuit of millions [of leegues], who courses the nether} \]
\[ \text{sky without limit.} \]

\[ d\text{w}3[=f] \ njr.w=k \ r\text{hk.wj} \ \text{Praise your beauty, for I know} \]
\[ s\text{h}m \ [=k] \ \text{[your] image.} \]

(i) Our parallels are also stelae of wood and one of limestone. They seem to be of a single basic type, rounded at top, where a winged sun disk hovers. Then come balanced scenes of worship of Re or Rahorakhty at one side, of Atum at the other, and below these the paired hymns, each reading outward from the center. Some sources agree with our stela in placing Atum and a hymn to the setting sun at our right, others place these at our left\(^{11}\).

(ii) The arrangement of the transliteration and translation suggested that this hymn is truly poetic in both form and imagery.

(iii) A. Abdalla\(^{12}\) translated \( s\text{s}p \ h^c \ m \ j\text{b.t.t} \ n.t \ pt \ \text{“who receives the crown in the east of the heaven”, but s}\text{s}p\(^{13}\) or \( s\text{s}s\text{p}\(^{14}\) means here “daylight” and \( h^f.w \) means “appear” (Old Perfective), and not \( h^w.w \) “crown”. Thus the sentence should be “the daylight appears in the east of heaven”.

(iv) Some other parallel stelae recorded variants as: \( h\text{mn} \ R^c \ m \ k\text{kr} \ \text{“enter, Re, into the secret shrine” or h}\text{mn} \ m \ k\text{kr} \ \text{“enter, into the secret shrine”}\(^{15}\).

(v) Some other parallels stelae record

\(^{12}\) A. Abdalla, in VA 4, 1988, 12, see: J.C. Darnell, in: SAK 31, 77.
\(^{13}\) WJ. IV, 212-213.
\(^{14}\) Faulkner, CD, 248.
\(^{15}\) T.G Allen, in: JNES 8, 1949, 352 (f).
(vi) ed (69, 70 and 73) as numbers of rolls. The daily slaughter of Apophis, the evil serpent deity of cloud and storm, is a common theme in the Egyptian literature.

(vii) This sign would look much like $\text{rc nb}$.

(viii) Also $dj .tw b3=f n sd.t$ “His soul is given to the fire” is recorded on other parallels.

(ix) $hk3=f$ “his magic” instead of $hrw=f$ “his body” is also recorded on other parallels stelae.

(x) Other parallels recorded $tm .tw$ and $tnw$, each probably meant for $tnjt$, which would then apply to the eye of Hours instead of to Apophis and would need a different determinative and meaning.

(xi) T.G Allen translated $\text{nh.t}$ “the region of life” and added that “it is the west, where interments were made”.

It could probably be $jmn.t.t$, since $\hat{a}$ instead of $\hat{t}$ is a mistake. For $\text{nh.t} “\text{West}”, see: WB. I, 205:16.

(xii) Cf. PN, 262:19.

**Conclusion**

Here the purpose and date of our stela must be considered:

In his discussion of the purpose of the painted wooden stelae, Dr. Zayed suggested that they were placed before the entrance of the tombs while the rites of “opening the mouth” were performed upon the mummy, and were then placed in the offering-chapel.

In attempting to establish the date of our stela, we must point out that the owner of our stela is a member of the $Bs-n-Mwt$ family,

---

17 *WB*. III, 212.
20 *Leo. Cit.*
who is the most complex and confusing of the many official families that are known to have flourished at the time of the Dynasty XXII\textsuperscript{23}. The lady T3-\textit{irj} lived probably in the Dynasty XXVI\textsuperscript{24} and to her can be attributed the sarcophagus (Liebleiein, \textit{Dict. Supp.}, 360, No. 1100) and probably CG 41011\textsuperscript{25}.

It is interesting to notice that\textit{N3.w-mnh-Jmn} and \textit{Wn-nfr}, the owners of the stelae (Cairo Museum S.R. nos. 9418 and 9419) are also members of \textit{Bs-n-Mwt} family\textsuperscript{26}. This could explain the similarity of the artistic style of the three stelae, which made their texts seem to be copies\textsuperscript{27} and are made by the same hand.

\textsuperscript{23} For the complete genealogy of the \textit{Bs-n-Mwt} family, see: M. Bierbrier, \textit{The Late New Kingdom in Egypt}, 92ff, cf. A. Baillot, in: \textit{RT} 18, 1896, 187-196; G. Wittmann, \textit{Priester und Beamte}, 34.

\textsuperscript{24} Cf. M. Bierbrier, \textit{op. cit.} 93.

\textsuperscript{25} PM I\textsuperscript{2}, 643; Moret, \textit{Sarcophages}, 139-150. Contrary to H. De Meulenaere, in: \textit{CdE} 44, 1969, 268 (No. 4735), G. Vittmann, in: \textit{OrNs} 47, 1978, 4 (No. 202) refused the attributing of this coffin to the owner of our stela.

\textsuperscript{26} Cf. A. Abdalla, in \textit{VA} 4, 1988, 12; G. Vittmann, in: \textit{OrNs} 47, 1978, 4 (Nos. 200-201)

\textsuperscript{27} The text of our stela is distinguished from the other two by adding six more lines of inscriptions to the hymns.
(Pl. 1) The stela of T3-jrj, (Cairo Mus. TN 27/1/25/16).