







# REMAINS OF A FUNERARY STELA FROM EL-MATAREA ANTIQUITIES STORE NO. 187.

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# **ABSTRACT**

This research is concerned with studying the upper left section of the remains of a limestone funerary stela preserved in El-Matareya Antiquities Store No. 187, which was discovered west of the "Ra" temple complex in Heliopolis, as above the lines appears a small part of the tip of the winged sun, and behind the lines, on the far left, are the two feathers of "Amun". After extensive study of this stela and the inscriptions that remain on it, we find that it follows the stelae of the New Kingdom, and its writing follows the late linguistic stage.

#### **KEYWORDS**

Funerary stela, winged sun disk, clutching the crown of the south, the New Kingdom, the god "Amun-Ra", the late linguistic period, limestone.

# INTRODUCTION

This stela is registered with Accession No. 187 and is stored amongst the non-studied artefacts preserved in the Antiquities Inspection Store of El-Matareya and Ain-Shams. Due to the crush, cracking and shattering damage from all sides and directions in most of the remaining parts, including the incompleteness of its recorded texts, the stela has remained in the Antiques Inspection Store. All of this clearly impacted the difficulty of reading and translating the recorded texts. One of the issues in the study was the difficulty of determining the period to which the stela belonged and during which era of kings it was carved due to the lack of evidence on the remaining part of the recorded hieroglyphic texts. However, after a thorough study of the stela, analyzing its recorded texts and studying the rest of its decoration, the researcher reached some significant results that will reveal much about the stela and its era. This was achieved by studying examples of similar stelae dating back to the New Kingdom and Late Period.

# STELA DESCRIPTION

In 1992, the stela was unearthed (pl.1, Fig.1) during the archaeological surveys conducted in the course of the sewage project for Greater Cairo, decade 7, which extended from El-Matareya, passing through Al-Khusus area to the Yellow Mountain, specifically in the area west of the "Ra" temple complex in Heliopolis, and west of the Awqaf farm, at a depth of approximately four meters. Following its finding, the stela underwent conservation procedures and was subsequently stored in the Inspection Store of El-Matareya and Ain-Shams Antiquities and designated No. 187.

Туре	Remains of the upper left portion of a funerary stela.		
Material	Limestone.		
Publishing	Unpublished.		
Era/Period	Perhaps it can be traced back to the era of the New Kingdom.		
Writing Style	This stela is a continuation of the writing style of the stelas of the New Kingdom, and its inscriptions follow the linguistic style of the later stage.		
Stela Owner	Anonymous?		
Dimensions	Max length 38cm, max width 36cm, max thickness 9cm.		
Discovery Site	Prison Farms.		
Save Location	El-Matareya and Ain-Shams Antiquities Inspection Store.		
Record No.	Prison Farms Record No. 187.		
Description	An irregularly shaped funerary stela with six vertical lines of hieroglyphs on limestone.		

**Table 1.** Stela Description and Details.

The general shape of the piece under study is irregularly shaped limestone, originally the upper left part of a funerary stela broken from all directions with a lot of smashing and six vertical lines of hieroglyphic writing that appear above the lines; a small part of the tip of the winged sun, and behind the lines far to the left are two feathers of "Amun". Due to the incompleteness of the stela, it was difficult to determine its specific period. Still, after studying the form and nature of its recorded texts, artistic style, spelling features, patterns and forms of signs, it was found that the stela follows the stela design of the New Kingdom, and its writing follows the late linguistic stage.

## Remnants of the Winged Sun Disk

Only a small fragment of the left wing and the stela's edge, which probably had a curved apex, remained of the winged sun disk are the representation of the sun disk with expansive wings is a prevalent motif in ancient Egyptian culture. The Egyptians' longstanding belief about the cosmos posits that the firmament comprises the wings of a grand falcon. In contrast, while the eye represents the sun and moon, the dots at the base signify the starry sky. The sun disk, a renowned Egyptian emblem, embodies "Ra", one of the well-known preeminent Egyptian deities (Jordan, 2004, 264-265). The employment of the winged sun disk dates back to the Nineteenth Dynasty, symbolizing the ruler of Upper and Lower Egypt (Erman & Grapow, 1928, 13-15, 331). In the Late Period, the image of the winged sun disk appeared cosmically as a protective symbol above the entrances to the doors of temples and on the interior rooms, as well as on the stelae with arched tops from the El-Sawy era of the Twenty-sixth Dynasty (Wilkinson, 1992, 101).

The use of the sun disk is as a religious symbol of a united Egypt. The disk represents the sun, and the wings are the wings of the falcon, the main deity of the Egyptian ruling dynasties, and the two goddesses surrounding the sun disk are, "Nekhbet" 1000 nhbt and "Wadjet" 1000 w3dyt, the two deities of the two divisions of Egypt, and therefore they are sometimes crowned with the northern and southern crowns (Mackenzie, 2003, 61, 63). What is meant by the winged sun disk here is that the disk represents the god that gives the king life and power, so the winged disk includes the idea of sunlight surrounding the deceased for protection and providing him with life and stability (Sugi, 2003, 514). Therefore, this stela is considered one of the funerary stelae.

## Remains of the Two Feathers of the God "Amun"

On the far left of the stela, we find the remains of the two feathers of the god "Amun" (Lee & Bonomi, 1858, 26, n.204). One of the forms of the god "Amun" Imm is that he is depicted in the form of a man wearing a crown topped with two feathers. He was also known to take the form of the god "Min" mnw or be shown in the image of a ram or a goose, and he was also known as the hidden god. The god "Amun" merged with the god "Ra", and they became one god, known as the god "Amun-Ra" Imm-Rc (Remler, 2010, 13-14). The god "Amun-Ra" married the goddess "Mut" mwt, the cow of heaven (Bolton, 2019, 248). Together, they gave birth to the god "Khonsu" mwt, the god of the moon (Pinch, 2002, 155f). The family of "Amun-Ra", "Mut", and "Khonsu" were worshipped together as the Theban Triad. "Amun" was the official symbol of the New Kingdom and was called the King of the Gods (Wilkinson, 2003, 92-93).

#### HIEROGLYPHIC TEXT

(line 6)	(line 5)	(line 4)	(line 3)	(line 2)	(line 1)

**Table 2.** Stela's Hieroglyphic Recorded Lines.

# 1. The first line reads from left to right:



ntr-nfr nb 3wt-ib nb h w iti nfr-hdt

The perfect god (the good god), Lord (master/owner) of Happiness, Lord of Crown (Appearance in glory), who takes possession of the crown of Upper Egypt.

# 2. The second line reads from right to left:

di.f <sup>c</sup>nh w3s nb ddt nb snb nb

He gives all life and dominion/power, all Stability/duration, and all health.

## 3. The third line reads from right to left:



3wt-ib nb hr.f irt hhw

All happiness (joy) for him to give millions of years.

## 4. The fourth line reads from right to left:



M hbw-sd

In jubilee Festivals/Sed festivals (Murnane, 1981, 369-376).

# 5. The fifth line reads from right to left:



°š3(t) wrt r mi R° ₫t

From the many and great Sed festivals, like "Ra", eternity forever.

### 6. The sixth line reads from right to left:



*Imn-R<sup>c</sup>*, *nb nswt-t3wy nswt-ntrw* 

"Amun-Ra", Lord (master/owner) of the Thrones (royal seat) of the Two Lands, King of the deities .....

# **COMMENTARY**

#### 1. First Line

This particular line is situated subsequent to the initial damaged segment of the stela. It deviates from the customary right-to-left direction of the remaining lines, initiated with the phrase ntr-nfr, which translates to "the good god" or "the perfect god" (Collier & Manley, 1999, 21), a particular title noted to have been included among the royal designations during the Old Kingdom's ancient reign (Goedicke, 1960, 40-41).

This title is one of the titles of the monarchy, which usually does not refer to the person of the ruling pharaoh. Still, instead, here it means the deceased ruler, which may, in fact, mean the god "Horus", who was then incarnated in the person of the king. This then became a royal title, which can also replace the title, "King of Upper and Lower Egypt", especially in the Middle Kingdom (Beckerath, 1999, 29-30). And as for the word nb 3wt-ib, it can be translated as Lord of Happiness or Lord of Joy. The word nb h'w can also be translated as The Master of the Crowns or The Master of Radiance. The word high (Wb, I, 149-150) (Lesko, 2002, 52) (Faulkner, 2017, 40-41) (Dickson, 2006, 251), which is translated to mean, the dominant or the holder of the white crown high nfr-hdt means that the king seizes and extends his authority and influence over the white crown, which is the crown of the south (Watts, 1998, 29, 32, 132). This suggests the king's control over the Northern and Southern of Egypt.

Meanwhile, the red crown is emblematic of the incarnation of the terrestrial ruler. In contrast, the white crown symbolizes the perpetual celestial facet of the Egyptian monarchy (Dodson & Hilton, 2004, 28). Through the title,  $\sqrt[5]{a}$  it infr-hdt, the king's control over the white crown is clear, which is the crown of the South (Hocart, 2004, 209), and this title appeared in the Eighteenth Dynasty. According to *Erman*, this title continued after that (Wb, II, 262), and therefore, we find that there are several kings' titles of the New Kingdom whose names contained the word  $\sqrt[4]{hdt}$  (Lesko, 2002, I, 342) as follows:

## **Eighteenth Dynasty Kings**

- King "*Tuthmosis*" III (Gabriel, 2009, 1 ff), among his titles that he assumed after the 21<sup>st</sup> year of the reign, we read: beloved of "*Ra*", high white crown in the property of the reign, we read: beloved of "*Ra*"  $\sqrt{2}$   $\sqrt{2}$

# **Nineteenth Dynasty Kings**

- King "Seti" I (Nielsen, 2018, 1ff), Among his titles, we read: strong bull the bright with the white crown Beloved of "Ra" A Range of Ra" A Range of Ra" Range of R
- King "*Ramesses*" II, among his titles, we read: strong bull high white crown \*\*\*\* \$\langle \langle \langle

# **Middle Kingdom Queens and Princesses**

#### 2. Second Line

This line follows the second part of the stela, which is read from right to left and begins with the form  $\stackrel{\leftarrow}{=} di.f$ , which is to give him all life, stability and health. This formula is one of the distinctive patterns of the late linguistic period writings that appeared abundantly after that (Franke, 2003, 48).

#### 3. Third Line

This line is considered complementary to the line that precedes it in giving him all happiness 3wt-ib nb and also giving him millions of years |h|w. The appearance of the sign of the god Heh here indicates abundance (Vartavan, 2016, 93) and also means millions of years, and its presence is symbolic of giving the king millions of years of Sed festivals/jubilee and meaning long life and immortality.

#### 4. Fourth Line.

The king was given millions of years of Sed festivals hb-sd and Sed festivals are meant to celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of the king, as the likely purpose of the festival seems to have been to renew the physical and supernatural energies of the king (Gohary, 1992, 1-9). This festival was celebrated after the ruler assumed the throne for thirty years and then repeated the celebration every three or four years after that.

It is originally a symbolic celebration associated from the very beginning with the renewal of royal power and its ability as the sacred mediator between the world of gods and the world of humans. It can deal and communicate with hidden forces that control the manifestations of the universe and nature. This is where royal power is renewed after thinking it has weakened, as the deities provide its owner with the elements of goodness and guarantee their legitimacy of governance and stability of matters in the country. In return, the king proves to the gods their worthiness through their actions during this festival, performing the rituals and offering as the gods bestow on them some of their characteristics. There is clear evidence that the early kings were celebrating this festival, such as King "Den" of the First Dynasty (Wilkinson, 2005, 63).

There is evidence confirming that kings celebrated this festival thirty years before their rule (Murnane, 1981, 369f), and the best example of this is Queen "Hatshepsut", who celebrated this festival in the sixteenth year of her reign, and King "Akhenaten" (Amenhotep IV), who celebrated this festival shortly after ascending the throne (Breasted, 1907, 116–117). The two kings, "Amenhotep" III and "Ramesses" II, celebrated their first Sed festivals in the year 30-31 of their reign, and after the celebration became every three years (O'Connor & Cline, 2001, 16-18).

The word *hb-sd* appears in multiple written forms (Wb, I, 59) (Faulkner, 2017, 206) (Dickson, 2006, 164), and the repetition of the triple sign or the placing of three plural conditions are among the distinguishing features of the late linguistic era writings. The word *hb-sd* appeared in the late linguistic era writings in several forms, including:

## 5. Fifth Line

The formula, like "Ra" eternity forever  $R^c dt$ , is found in this line, which is one of the most detailed and linking formulas between the king and the god "Ra", wishing him an eternal life like the god "Ra".

#### 6. Sixth Line

Through this line, it is clear that the offerings in this stela are directed to the god "Amun-Ra"  $[Imn-R]^c$ , the Lord (master/owner) of the Thrones of the Two Lands  $[Imn-R]^c$ , the king of the gods  $[Imn]^c$   $[Imn-R]^c$ , the king of the gods  $[Imn]^c$   $[Imn]^c$ 

## **STELA HISTORY**

Due to the imperfection of the stela, the loss of the largest fragment of it, and the absence of any of the royal cartouches that show the stela's period, it was difficult to date precisely. However, after an extensive study of the recorded texts on the stela, it became clear that the nature of the texts and forms of signs belonged to the late linguistic period, indicating that it belonged to the stelae of the New Kingdom. This was based on the repetition of the triple sign in the word "Sed Festivals" hb-sd. The emergence of the title of "The Dominant" on the beautiful white crown hb-sd, where the word hdt has appeared in a number of the royal titles of the kings of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Dynasties. It became clear that the word white crown hofficial deity of the New Kingdom, according to Adolf Erman and Hermann Grapow (Wb, II, 262),

# SIMILAR MODELS OF THE STELA STYLE UNDER STUDY

# 1. Fragment of a Stela in the Petri Museum UC.14475

3 It is the upper left part of the Votive stela with a round top of limestone (pl.2), showing the god "Amun" crowned on the throne wearing the two-feathered crown, and the goddess Mut is shown standing in the background donning the double crown accompanying her husband. Below this view is a text showing the name of King "Ramesses" I, founder of the Nineteenth Dynasty. He is probably making offerings to them. The stela presently resides in the esteemed Petrie Museum of Egyptian Antiquities in London, identified as UC.14475 (Stewart, 1976, 51, pl. 40.1).

## 2. Stela of "Hatshepsut" and "Thutmose" III in the Vatican Museum MV.22780

It is a yellow sandstone stela in the Vatican Museum MV.22780 (pl.3, Fig.2), at the orders of Queen "Hatshepsut", a commemorative piece was crafted to signify the restoration and enhancement efforts undertaken in the region of West Thebes. The depicted scene exhibits the Queen adorning the blue crown, known hprš, and on the top of her head, we read her name, "Maatkare" m3°t-k3-R°. She offers two spherical vases to the deity of "Amun-Ra", who stands in front of her and wears the two-feathered crown. At the top of the head of "Amun", we read, "Amun-Ra" Lord (master/owner) of the Thrones of the Two Lands her nephew, the prince "Thutmose" III. Adorned with the white crown (Hedjet) hdt of Upper Egypt, and above his head, we read his name "Menkheperre" hmn-hpr-R°. It is worth noting that the writing style of this particular stela is virtually identical to that of the stela under study (Iwaszczuk, 2017, 190-193, Fig. 123).

# 3. This is in addition to a number of other stelae, including:

- Round-topped limestone stela of "Kha" f' from the Eighteenth Dynasty, Reign of "Thutmose" IV, was found in Deir el-Medina and is currently preserved in the British Museum EA.1515, divided into two registers: "Thutmose" IV, holding in his right hand a cluster of papyrus and lotus flowers and in his left, a censer represented standing before "Amun-Ra" and "Ahmose-Nefertari" (Edwards, 1939, 53-54, No.1515, pl.XLV).
- Limestone Stela of "Seti-er-neheh" from the Nineteenth Dynasty, Reign of "Ramesses" II, found in Qantir and currently preserved in Pelizaeus Museum, Hildesheim No.0397. In the upper scene, we see the god "Amun-Ra" standing in front of a naos containing the statues of the mummiform creator god of Memphis "Ptah" and of the king, deified in his image. The latter is identified as "Ramesses" II by his formal name and an additional name of "Montu of the Two Lands" (Habachi, 1954, 536, pl. 34 B) (Wilkinson, 2003, 59).
- Part of a limestone stela in the Egyptian Museum RC.1654, which is a donation from the priest "Men-Heper-Ra", who makes offerings of incense to the god "*Amun-Ra*", the Lord (master/owner) of the Thrones of the Two Lands. from the late period (Shirriff, 2004, 76).

#### CONCLUSION

Unfortunately, the stela did not give us much due to losing the bulk of it. Still, after a thorough study, we were able to classify it among the stelae of the New Kingdom, and its writings follow the late linguistic stage due to the following:

- Studying the titles of the kings of ancient Egypt, we find several kings titles of the New Kingdom whose names contained the word Indt. Among the kings of the Eighteenth Dynasty, King "Thutmose" I, King "Thutmose" III, King "Amenhotep" III, and the kings of the Nineteenth Dynasty, we find King "Seti" I and King "Ramesses" II.
- Through the form of offering sacrifices, the artistic stylistics, the features of spelling, and the pattern and shapes of the signs, this stela can be traced back to the era of the New Kingdom, and its writings follow the late linguistic stage.
- Plural spelling in the repetition of triple signs hbw is one of the distinguishing features of the writings of the late linguistic stage.
- The appearance of the two feathers of "Amun" and the name of "Amun-Ra" is clear evidence that it is dedicated to the god "Amun-Ra", the master of Thebes and the official god of the New Kingdom. This is likely to classify the stela among those of the New Kingdom. The winged sun disk represents the absolute power of the sun god.

With the title The Good God ntr-nfr, it is clear that this stela follows the funerary stela dedicated to the king after his death, as this title is given to the king after his death and not during his accession to the throne.

By studying the title, "Dominator of the Crown of Upper Egypt"  $\sqrt[5]{n}$   $\sqrt[6]{n}$   $\sqrt[6]{n}$  it is clear that the king seizes and extends his authority and influence on the white crown, which is the crown of the south, and this suggests the king's control over the southern regions of Egypt.

One of the most likely opinions is that this stela is from the reign of King "Thutmose" III,

according to the painting of the Vatican Museum MV.22780, which dates back to the period of joint guardianship of Queen "Hatshepsut" over her nephew, King "Thutmose" III and this is due to several reasons:

- The remains of the winged sun disk on the stela under study are quite similar to that of the stela in the Vatican Museum.
- The appearance of King "*Thutmose*" III (*Menkheperre*) with the white crown on the Vatican Museum's stela during his co-rule with Queen "*Hatshepsut*".
- King "*Thutmose*" III (*Menkheperre*) took the title of controlling the White Crown after year 21 of the rule.

There is another possibility that this stela is from the era of King "Amenhotep" III, and this is for two reasons:

- The first is that it was discovered in the Heliopolis area (Ain Shams).
- The second is that one of the titles of King "Amenhotep" III was One Who Wears the White Crown, beloved Heliopolis Was-hat mri Twnw. Therefore, this title is considered to be the closest title found on the stela under study.

To conclude, the significance of the study of this stela is not in the stela itself but rather in the richness it brings to understand the history and era in which it was produced, no matter how little information it enlightens us with. The more studies we have about these artefacts, the more we could put the puzzle together and go back in time to live their periods and dive into the wealth of Egyptology. Therefore, it is recommended that more of these studies be conducted in the future.

#### ABBREVIATIONS

ASAE	Annales du Service des Antiquités de L'Égypte.			
BAR	Breasted (J.H.), Ancient Records of Egypt, 5 vol., 1906-1907 (Chicago, Ill.). Cf.			
	ARE.			
JEA	Journal of Egyptian Archaeology, (Londres).			
MÄS	Münchner ägyptologische Studien (Berlin, Munich).			
MDAIK	Mitteilungen des deutschen archäologischen Instituts, Abt. Kairo (Wiesbaden,			
	Mayence).			
Wb	Erman (A.), Grapow (H.), Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache, 1926-1963			
	(Leipzig, Berlin).			

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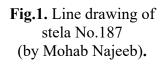
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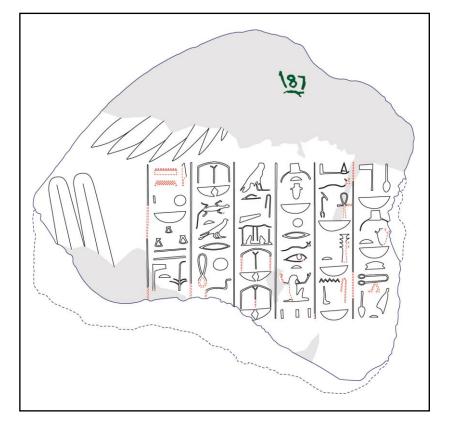
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Pl. 1. Part of Stela No. 187 in the El-Matareya Antiquities Store.

(Photograph by the author)







Pl.2. Fragment of Votive Stela in the Petri Museum UC.14475.

Stewart, H.M., Egyptian stelae, reliefs, pl. 40.1.



Pl.3. Dedication Stela of "Hatshepsut" and "Thutmose" III, in Vatican Museum MV.22780 https://2h.ae/vOxg

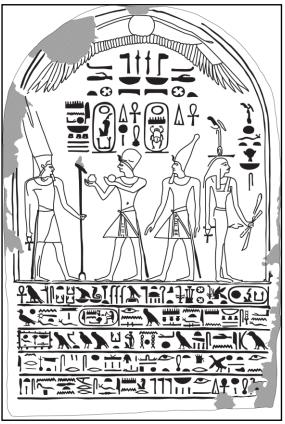


Fig.2. Line drawing of Dedication Stela of "Hatshepsut" and "Thutmose" III, in Vatican Museum MV.22780 Iwaszczuk, J., Sacred Landscape, Vol.1, Fig. 123.

# بقايا لوحة جنائزية من مخزن آثار المطرية رقم ١٨٧.

# الملخص

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# بيانات المقال

# تاريخ المقال

تم الاستلام في ٦ أبريل ٢٠٢٢ تم استلام النسخة المنقحة في ٦ أبريل تم قبول البحث في ١ أبريل ٢٠٢٤ متاح على الإنترنت في ١٠ يونيه ٢٠٢٤

## الكلمات الدالة

لوحة جنائز ية، قرص الشمس المجنح، القابض علي تاج الجنوب، الدولة الحديثة، الإله "آمون-رع"، الفُترة اللغوية المتأخرة، حجر جيري.

يختص هذا البحث بدر اسة الجزء العلوى الأيسر من بقايا لوحة جنائزية من الحجر الجيرى، محفوظة بمخزن أثار المطرية رقم ١٨٧، والتي تم الكشف عنها غرب مجمع معابد "رع" بهليوبوليس، ونتيجة لتكسير وفقدان الجزء الأكبر منها فلم يتبقي عليها سوي ستة أسطر رأسية من الكتابة الهيروغليفية، كما يظهر أعلى السطور جزء صغير من طرف جناح الشمس المجنحة وخلف السطور أقصى جهة اليسار ريشتا أمون، وبعد عمل دراسة مستفيضة لهذه اللوحة وما تبقى عليها من نقوش تبين لنا أنها تتبع لوحات الدولة الحديثة وكتابتها تتبع المرحلة اللغوبة المتأخرة.