

# **Stela of Rekhkemasankh in the Grand Egyptian Museum**

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**Journal of Faculty of Archaeology (Qena)**



## Stela of Rekhkemasankh in the Grand Egyptian Museum

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The main purpose of this paper is the publication and study of a funerary Ptolemaic stela namely inventory number 26942 preserved in the Grand Egyptian Museum<sup>1</sup>. Illustrated drawing is produced for the first time.

This stela is made of a creamy sand stone of good quality. It's height is so taller than it's wide, measuring 91 X 36.5 cm. It is undoubtedly a tomb-stela. Although we do not have any documentary evidence showing the exact area where it has been found, one of its sentences, line 4, provides that the owner erected his tomb in the Necropolis of Heliopolis.

### A. Introduction

In the lunette at the top of it is a scene representing *šn*-sign between two pairs of Horus eyes *wejat*. In the center there are three ripples of water upon simple vessel<sup>2</sup>. Two

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<sup>1</sup> My deepest thanks and gratitude to Dr. T.S Tawfik, former Director of the Grand Egyptian Museum for permission to publish these pieces and for providing me with study facilities in the Museum.

<sup>2</sup> As a certain feature attested in the lunette since the middle Kingdom stela see for example the stela of Rempif the keeper of the seal, Hieroglyphic Texts from Egyptian Stelae in the British Museum, London, 1912, II, PL.39; III, Pls. 28. Hodjash, S.& Berlev, O., Several Middle Kingdom stela of Moscow fine Arts Museum, Berlin Vol. 3, 1975, p.6. See for more parallels Gayet, Musée du Louvre. Steles de la XIIe dynastie, Bibliothèque de l'École des Hautes Etudes; 68e fascicule. Paris, 1889. Müller, H. W, Die Totendenksteine des Mittelern Reiches: ihre Genesis, ihre Darstellungen und ihre Komposition, *MDAIK* 4 (1933), 195-199. As

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recumbent jackals are shown facing each others below. One of them has accompanied title reads as: *Inpw imy wt* “Anubis who is in the wet ( place of embalming)”. Also Short titles are inscribed upon the other one read as: *inpw hnty sh-ntr* “Anubis, foremost of the divine booth”<sup>3</sup>. Below is the owner standing and facing right in a adoration pose burns incense with his right hand while his left is raising up in an adoration scene. He wears along kilt with hairless head as a simple indication referring to his priesthood office. Before him the divine osirian triad. Osiris is seated on his throne, his body is portrayed as a wrapped mummy, his two arms emerge to hold the flail and the crook, the symbols of kingship. Behind him Horus is standing with the *w3s*-scepter in his right hand and the *nh*-sign in his left. He wears the double crowns upon a tripartite wig and a short kilt. Behind him Isis is standing with the usual *wAD*-scepter in her right hand and the *nh*-sign in her left. She wears a long tight-fitting dress. Short titles accompanied her as *3st wrt mwt-ntr* “Isis, the great one, mother of the god”. Under this scene there are thirteen lines of inscriptions occupied the whole of the lower half of the stela.

The texts don't include any of the name of a reigning pharaoh which is one of the most helpful methods to date this kind of finds, therefore they can be dated only by paleography and distinctive orthography. The vocabularies essentially come in

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permanent motifs in the New Kingdome stelae see, Hayes, W., *The Scepter of Egypt*, Cambridge, 1959, II, p.161. Lacau, *Steles du Novel Empire in CGC*, 1909, I, Pls. IV 34004I XIII, 34024.

<sup>3</sup> It important to note that one of them has a rope around his neck while the other one is portrayed without. For the jackal figures see Ischlondsky, N.D., “A Peculiar Representation of the Jackal-God Anubis”, *JARCE* 25 (1966), Pp.17-26. Tawfik, S., *A W<sup>c</sup>b priest Stela from Heliopolis*, *GM* 29 (1978), Pp.133-137

Middle Egyptian mixed with early Ptolemaic Egyptian orthographies. The *kd-* singe of a man with a leg raising upon a wall (A35E) is certainly a Ptolemaic internal criteria<sup>4</sup>. Also *krst*

without *r* is typically of early Ptolemaic orthography<sup>5</sup>. Furthermore the determinative of the owners' mother is a common feature in the personal feminine names of the late and early Ptolemaic Period<sup>6</sup>.

The name of deceased person occurs twice, in lines numbers 3 and 9, as *Rh-km<sup>3</sup>-n-s<sup>3</sup> nh<sup>8</sup>*. Also he is belonged to his mother whose name is provided as *Hryt-nbt-nbw<sup>9</sup>*. Although no official epithets of any type are preserved which might provide an indication to his social position, but his poster comes hairless as one of the main criterions of priests style.

## B. The Hieroglyphic inscription

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<sup>4</sup> See Daumas, F. (ed) ; Valeurs Phonetiques de Signes hieroglyphiques d'Epoque Greeo- Romains, I, Montpellier , 1988, p.54; Lietz, ch., Zeichenlist., p.154.

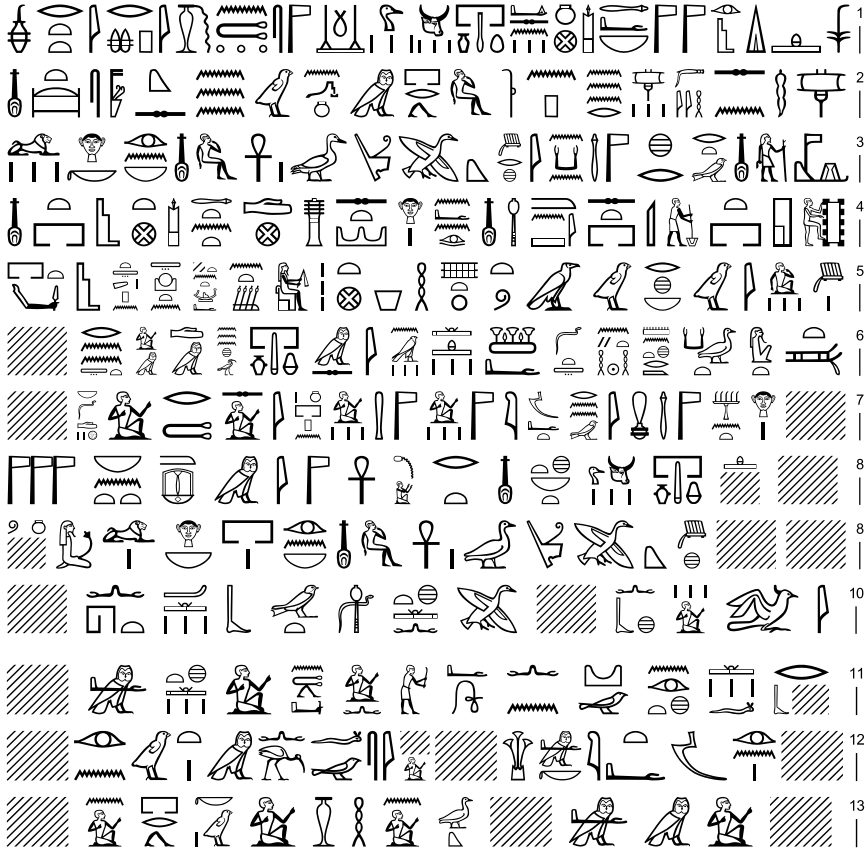
<sup>5</sup> See Wb, V, 64, 8. Wilson, P., A Ptolemaic Lexikon, A Lexicographical study of the Texts in the Temple of Edfu, Leuven,1997, p.1067.

<sup>6</sup> Daumas, F. (ed); Valeurs Phonetiques de Signes hieroglyphiques, I, p.84; Fairman, H., Notes on the Alphabetic Signs employed in the Hieroglyphic Inscriptions of Temple of Edfou, *ASAE*, 43 (1943). P.213.

<sup>7</sup> For this reading see, Fairman, W., An Introduction to the Study of Ptolemaic Signs and their Values, 43 (1945), p. 116.

<sup>8</sup> Not listed in Ranke, Die ägyptischen Personennamen.or *Demotisches Namenbuch*.

<sup>9</sup> Her name means "the head lady of al", A somewhat similar expression is used today in colloquial Arabic as: "ست الكل".



### C. Transliteration

1. *ḥtp di [nswt]<sup>(a)</sup> Wsir<sup>(b)</sup> ntr ʕ3 nb Twnw<sup>(c)</sup> di.sn<sup>(d)</sup> prt-ḥrw t ḥnkt k3w ʕpdw mnḥt sntr mrḥt irp irtt.*
2. *t3w n mḥyt<sup>(e)</sup> mw-rnpypri<sup>(f)</sup> m nww k[r]st nfrt.*
3. *ḥrt-ntr wrt nfrt wrt ḥr ntr ʕ3 n k3 n im3ḥw Rh-ḳm3-n-s3 - ʕnh s3 nfr ir.n nbt pr ḥryt-nbt -nbw<sup>(g)</sup>*
4. *kd ḥwt ḥws<sup>(h)</sup> ist m inr ḥd nfr ḥr smyt ddt ʕ3t nt Twnw<sup>(i)</sup> st nfr.*
5. *[n] im3ḥyw<sup>(i)</sup> iw.i rh.kwi<sup>(k)</sup> ʕty sp3t ḥnʕ niwt šsptyw<sup>(l)</sup> ntyw šspw n msktt di t3 ʕḥt n t3 pn st dsr.*
6. *[n] Itm b3 k3 mnḥt r m3ʕ nt ḥḥ dt š3ʕ ḥtpw n ntrw im.s prt-ḥrw t ḥnkt mw ʕḥ dmi.i rn n t3 [...?].*

7. [...] *hr h3wt<sup>(m)</sup> nt ntr 3 mi rn n wr m3<sup>c</sup>tyw<sup>(n)</sup> hmw-ntrw nw pr pn i s rmt nb dd sp 2<sup>(o)</sup> .*
8. [...] *prr-hrw t hnkt k3w 3pdw ht nbt nfrt w<sup>c</sup>bt 3nh nt im m hb nb nt ntrw.*
9. *im3hw Rh-km3-n-s3 3nh s3 nfr ir n nbt pr hryt nbt nbw nw[...?].*
10. *i rhyt n hb3 ht n hd bhw n th3.*
11. *r bw.f<sup>(p)</sup> n ir ht dw nn 3wi.i nn itt.i ht m-<sup>c</sup>(q) .*
12. *ir n.i m3<sup>c</sup>t mk h3yi<sup>(r)</sup> (m) isft n gm .tw ir.n n.i<sup>(s)</sup> .*
13. *i m-m<sup>(t)</sup> [....?] 3k n.i hsw.k wi pr n.i dsri?.*


#### D. Translation

1. An offering that the king gives (to) Osiris, the great god, lord of Heliopolis, may they give an invocation offering of bread, beer, oxen, fowl, clothes, incense, fat, beer, milke.
2. north wind and fresh water which comes forth from the flood. (this is) a beautiful burial.
3. a great necropolis and a good tomb for the great god for the *ka* of the honored one *Rekhkemasankh*, the good son who is borne from lady of the house *Heretnebetnebw*.
4. He built a mansion and constructed the tomb from white and beautiful stone in the Necropolis of Heliopolis, the beautiful place.
5. [of ] the honored ones. I know the mound, the nome and the city (of) the blessed dead, the divine beings who illuminate in the night bark, who give the land of horizon into this land, the sacred place.
6. [of] Atum, (and) every excellent *ba*, *ka* and right mouth for eternity and everlasting, may the offerings are created for the gods in it. An invocation offering of

bread, beer and beneficent water when I pronounce the name of this land.

7. [...] upon the offering stand of the great god and so as too (into) the name of the great righteous, the priests of this temple. O (every) man and every people speak twice.
8. [...] an invocation offering of bread, beer, oxen, fowl and every thing good and pure on which god lives and of every festivals of the gods.
9. the honored one *Rekhkemasaankh*, the good son who is borne from lady of the house *Heretnebetnebw* of [...?].
10. O people don't destruct (any) thing, don't destroy and don't do wrong into .
11. his place, I have not do the evil, I have not rope and I have not steal anything.
12. I made the right. Behold I have naked from evil, you will never find me did it.
13. [...?] O you who enter into me, praise for me may I come forth as the sacred one.

### E. Textual commentary

(a) The beginning of this line bears some scraping and pitting on the surface which certainly resorted as . The arrangement of this formula was very known and common since the Old Kingdom<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> Wb, III, 186, 6. See for example the lintel of the Ny-ankh-Re Mastaba at Giza, Hassan, S., Excavations at Giza, Cairo, 1943, IV, p. 155.



(b) The name of Osiris has been partially destroyed. The seat singe (Q1) is missing. This orthography is of a date from the 22<sup>nd</sup> dynasty onwards<sup>11</sup>.

(c) In this line Osiris bears epithet of Atum as the chief of Heliopolis. Another stela came from Heliopolis displayed the same formula by mentioning the two deities as: *h̄tp di nswt 'Tm nb 'Twnw Wsir h̄k̄3 dt*<sup>12</sup>. This line refers to the combination of the attributes of Osiris and Atum at Heliopolis during the early Ptolemaic Epoch<sup>13</sup>.

(d) This formula *di.sn prt hrw* instead of *di.f prt-hrww* was very known and common since the Middle Kingdom<sup>14</sup>.

(e) *ḫw mhyt* is the cool wind which blows from the north<sup>15</sup>. One text comes from the Book of Dead asserts that the north wind comes forth from Atum to the nose of the deceased<sup>16</sup>. Another spell mentions that the deceased is given the north

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<sup>11</sup> Wb, 359(5); see for example El-Sayed, R., A propos de l'activité d'un fonctionnaire du temps de Psammétique I à Karnak d'après la stèle du Caire, *BIFAO*, 78(1978), p.461-768; Abdalla, A., Two Wooden Stelae of the Early Saite Epoch in the Cairo Museum *GM* 99 (1987), p.10. Ockinga, A., Statuette of Osiris the Protector of the Majordomo Padihorresnet, *GM* 98 (1987), p.78.

<sup>12</sup> Tawfik, S., *GM*, 29 (1978), p.134.

<sup>13</sup> Some statues preserved in the Asmolean Museum shows basically a combination of the attributes of Osiris and Atum, see Baines, A., Bronze Statuette of Atum, *JEA* 56 (1970), p.136.


<sup>14</sup> Selim. H., Three identical stelae from the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> or 13<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, *SAK*, 29, (2001), p.326. See Also Müller. A., *MDAIK*, 4 (1933), p.187.


<sup>15</sup> Wilson, P., A Ptolemaic Lexikon, p.453.

<sup>16</sup> Allen, T. G., The Book of the Dead or going forth by day, saoc 37, Chicago, 1974, spell 151b. 183a.

wind to his nose since he comes forth from the womb of Nut<sup>17</sup>.

(f) *Mw-rnpy*, Fresh water, a name for the renewing water of the flood<sup>18</sup>. It was most important for physical and moral purification of the deceased so as too the gods<sup>19</sup>.

(g) judging on the line 9 the determinative of the owners' mother can be restored as .

(h) Notice this sign has been mistakenly carved, it can be corrected by the sign (A 34) .

(i) is a name of the Necropolis of Heliopolis, according to Gauthier it's name means literally "the enduring and the great Necropolis", it was the place where the magical papyrus grown<sup>20</sup>. Also the Pyramid Texts shows it as the hopeful place of burial as "you are spiritualized on the horizon, you endures in the Necropolis of Heliopolis"<sup>21</sup>. Also it was the sacred place

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<sup>17</sup> Allen, T. G., *The Book of the Dead*, 182s.


<sup>18</sup> Wilson, P., *A Ptolemaic Lexikon*, p.418.

<sup>19</sup> Bonnet, H., *Die Loibation ein Fruchbarkeitritus*, *MADIK* 14 (1956) p. 16; Lucas, A., *Cosmetics, Perfumes and Incense in Ancient Egypt*, *JEA* 16 (1930), PP, 41-6. For the concept that it comes forth from Osiris see, PT, 848; Griffiths, J. G., *The Origins of Osiris*, *MAS* 9 (1966), p. 100, or from Nun see CT. VI. Spell, 714; McBride, D.R., "Nun" in: *Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt*, II, p.557. or by Isis see Derchain, Ph, *Le Pleurs d' Isis et La Crue du Nile*, *CdE*, XLV (1970) Pp.82-284; Dendera, II, 121, 257 (13-14); Budge W., *From Fetish to God in Ancient Egypt*, Oxford 1934, p. 236; Munster, M., *Munster, M., Untersuchungen zur Gotten Isis von Alten Reich bis zum Ende des Neuen Reihes*, *MÄS* 2 (1968), p.78.

<sup>20</sup> Gauthier, H., *Dictionnaire des noms géographiques contenus dans les textes hiéroglyphiques*, V, 36. *dd Itm* as a variant of it's name see Montet, P., *Géographie de l'Égypte ancienne*, Paris, 1961, II, 157.

<sup>21</sup> PT. 1046b.

[of] Atum, (and) every excellent *ba*, *ka* and right mouth for eternity and everlasting according to the line 6 on our stela.

(j) The beginning of this line bears some scraping on the surface which certainly resorted as:  <sup>22</sup>.

(k) This line shows the whole knowledge of the deceased in his trip within the hereafter. This kind of knowledge enables him to not lost his way. This tradition is well known in the Book of the Dead when one of spells says: “he counts you among the gods in Heliopolis. I know what was done in Rosetau in the Sacred land”<sup>23</sup>; Also as: “I go on a road that I know toward the isle of the Righteous”<sup>24</sup>. In line 6 this sense is asserted when he ask the offering because he knows the name of the Necropolis and he will express it.

(l) *šsptyw*, according to wilson they are divine beings or divine deities who worship the moon. Also she mentioned them as solar beings who greet the rising sun in the morning<sup>25</sup>. The last sense may explain their depicting as: “who give the land of horizon into this land”. In other words these beings are

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<sup>22</sup> Wb, 82(12).

<sup>23</sup> Allen, T. G., The Book of the Dead, 8b

<sup>24</sup> Allen, T. G., The Book of the Dead, 17.

<sup>25</sup> Wilson, P., A Ptolemaic Lexikon, 1030. See Wb. IV 537 (13); Urk, VIII, 56. See for more about this altar: Munro, P., Brothalfthen und Schilf-Blatter, *G.M* , 5 (1973), Pp.13-14.; Nelson, H., Certain Reliefs at Karnak and Medinet Habu and the Ritual of Aminophis I, *JNES*, 8 (1949), PL.V; Junker, H., Giza, VI, Leipzig-Wien, 1951, p.47.; Habachi, L., King Nebhetpre Mentuhotepis Monuments, place in History Deification and unusual Representations in the form of Gods, *MDIAK*, 19 (1963), Pp.16-52.

regarded as divine gods bless or greet the sunrise upon the Necropolis of Heliopolis every morning.

(m) *h3wt* is a specific type of stand-altar comprising a basin or tray upon a stand with flared base<sup>26</sup>.

(n) *M3ctyw* are those people who are men of Maat righteous<sup>27</sup>. The Underworld is usually depicted as: *ꜥnd3 pn n M3ctyw* literally, the land of the righteous<sup>28</sup>.

(o) This formula is very attested on the funeral statues and stelae as the deceased call all people to recite the offering formula for him<sup>29</sup>.

(p) Based on various spells attested in the Book of the Dead these senses are usually followed by a threatening by saying: “who are doing everything evil (against me) their bonds were put on their arms, on their hands, and on their feet because of their having done evil against me”<sup>30</sup>. Also as: “male and female, that are doing evil against me or would do evil against me go fare for me”<sup>31</sup>.

(q) In this portion a late negative confusion is attested. It is known after entering the hereafter the deceased would recite

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<sup>26</sup> Wb. III 226 (11-19); Wilson, P., A Ptolemaic Lexikon, 703.

<sup>27</sup> Wilson, P., A Ptolemaic Lexikon, 399.

<sup>28</sup> See for example P. Der Manuelian and Ch. E. Loeben, “New light on the Recarved Sarcophagus of Hatshepsut and Thutmose in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston”, *JEA* 79 (1993), p.149.

<sup>29</sup> See for example Givon, R., A Late Egyptian Statue from the Eastern Delta, *JARCE*, 12 (1975), 19-21.

<sup>30</sup> Allen, T. G., *The Book of the Dead*, 59, s.

<sup>31</sup> Allen, T. G., *The Book of the Dead*, 92, 3.

the Negative Confessions pleading his innocence of up to 42 sins<sup>32</sup>.

(r) *ḥ3y* is a verb which means literally “to be naked”<sup>33</sup>. It is usually occurs with the determinative of strip of clothes with fringe (S28) to describe baring of clothes. The man who have no clothes is known *ḥ3wy* “the naked man”<sup>34</sup>. The god of weaving, Hedj-hotep, is frequently described as “the weaver, who makes cloth to clothe the naked”<sup>35</sup>. Here the verb is coming in allegorically use to declare the innocence of the deceased. The sense in other words can be said as: his side is devoid of any evil. This sense seems to be idealistic which is confirmed in the following sentence by saying: “you will never find me did it”. In fact we have more confessions referred to the sins which have been done and removed in the afterlife by saying: “My wrong (doing) has been removed, my evil has been done away”<sup>36</sup>. Also as: “the evil that adhered to me has been cast away”<sup>37</sup>.

(s) The end of this line bears some scraping on the surface which make The reading of the signs bears some doubts, but it seems to be resorted as: *n gm .tw ir.n n.i.*

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<sup>32</sup> See about these confusions, Martin, S., Judgment after Death (Negative Confession), *UEE*, 2008; Colleen, M., The judgment hall of Osiris in the Book of Gates. *Revue d'Égyptologie* 57, 2006), pp. 109 – 150; Budge W., The Book of the Dead. Gramercy, 1995-01-23. pp. 576–582; Gibson, C, The Hidden Life of Ancient Egypt (Saraband, 2009). ; Pinch, G, Egyptian Mythology: A Guide to the Gods, Goddesses, and Traditions of Ancient Egypt, Oxford University Press, 2004.

<sup>33</sup> FCD, 161. See also Lesko, LED, I, 295.

<sup>34</sup> Wb, III, 13 (13-18).

<sup>35</sup> See Edfou, II, 163, 15.

<sup>36</sup> Allen, T. G., The Book of the Dead, 17, 7.

<sup>37</sup> Allen, T. G., The Book of the Dead, 17, 8.

(t) The beginning of this line bears a smashed singe and two visible singes of *m-m*, but it is so hard to stop on a clear sense.

### Concluding remarks

Based on the Offering formula, the respective paleography and epigraphy, this stela can be dated to the Ptolemaic Period. The owner is well identified as *Rh-km3-n-s3 ʕnh*. Also his mother name is given as *Hryt-nbt-nbw*. He may occupied the priest office in one of Atum temples at Heliopolis, our evidence only based on his poster which comes hairless style.

the general picture of all subjects of the stela can be mainly categorized as following:

1. The introductory text contains the usual offering formula *htp di nswt*.
2. Below is a definition of the stela owner who built his tomb from the white and beautiful stone in the Necropolis of Atum at Heliopolis. This tomb was contained the stela at one time, then it transferred to the Egyptian Museum at Cairo and then to stay in the Grand Egyptian today with inventory number 26942.
3. Below is an invocation offering of bread, beer and beneficent water upon the offering stand of the great god and so as too (into) the names of the great righteous, and the priests of the temple once the deceased pronounces the name of the Necropolis and the people recite the offering formula twice.
4. Below is a calling into the whole people to not destruct (any) thing belonged to him, to not destroy his tomb and to not do any wrong against his side .

5. Below is a negative confession as he was a pious person never do the evil, never rope and never steal anything.
6. The last section is ended by a call into everyone who will visit his tomb to call praise up may his soul can honestly.

Noetic, the lower part of the stela is very smooth and empty of any type of inscriptions, so it is immediately clear that it was using to erect and confirm the stela in one loci before or within the tomb.

# Figures



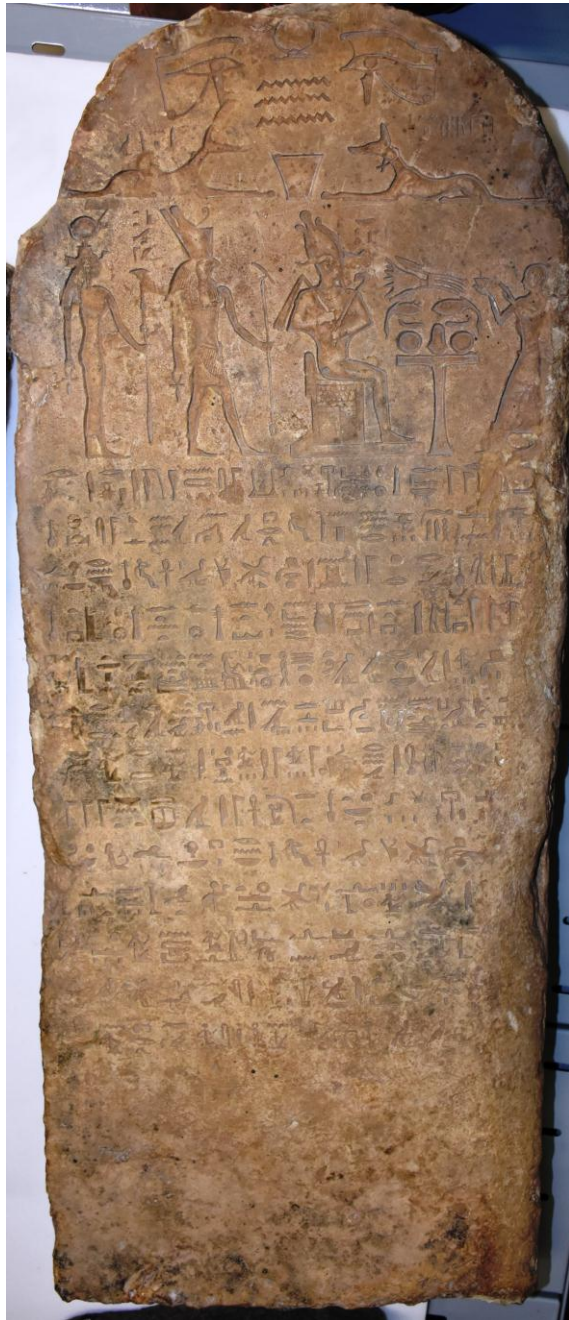


Figure (1) Photograph by the author.

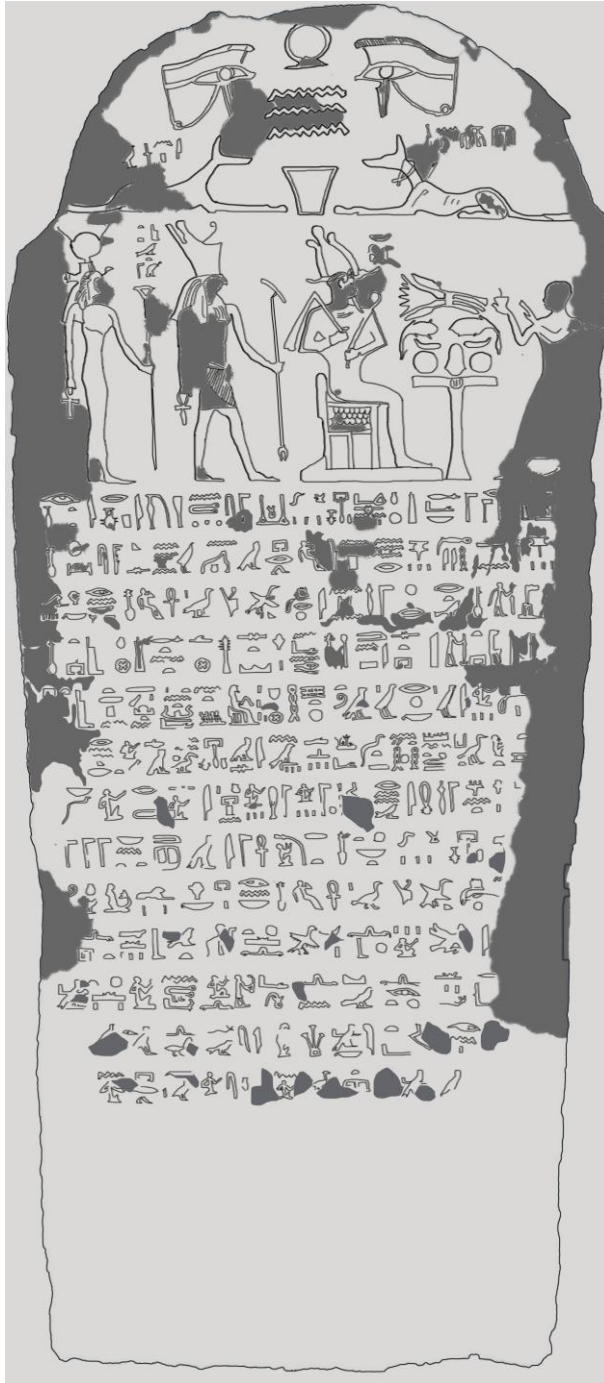


Figure (2) Illustrated drawing of Cairo Stela Sr. 26942