

*Original article*

**AN UNPUBLISHED FUNERARY STELA OF *Hr-s3-3st* FROM QUBBET EL-HAWA**

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**Abstract:**

*This paper presents an arch-topped funerary stela preserved in the Grand Egyptian Museum (GEM: 14431), (CG. 22081) and (SR10009). It was found in Qubbet El-Hawa in Aswan. It belongs to a person called *Hr-s3-3st*, dated according to Kamal (CG) to the Ptolemaic period. The study is a publication of the stela to give a detailed description of its scene and to analyze the hieroglyphic inscriptions to re-date the stelae to the end of the Late period and the beginning of the Ptolemaic period. The stela is in a good state of preservation. The whole stela is engraved in sunk relief, with no traces of color. It is single-faced with two registers; the lunette is connected to the upper register, and it is decorated by the winged sun-disc, with pendant two uraei, while the main scene in the upper register contains a solar bark, standing in front of it is the owner of the stela, giving a prayer to the sun god inside the bark in his different forms. The lower register contains five horizontal lines of inscriptions with the usual offering formula and the names of the owner and his parents.*

**1. Introduction**

Funerary stelae were placed within tombs or funerary complexes to honor and perpetuate the memory of the individuals they represented [1,2]. They acted as main points for rituals and offerings, ensuring the continued existence and sustenance of the deceased in the afterlife [3]. Funerary stelae are commemorative monuments that provide valuable insights into the religious, social, and artistic aspects of ancient Egypt. Symbolism played a significant role in the Late Period and the Ptolemaic funerary stelae, as they were adorned with complex carvings and inscriptions essential to the funerary practices and beliefs [4]. They depicted scenes from Egyptian mythology and religious rituals, often featuring the deceased interacting with gods and goddesses associated with the afterlife. These representations aimed to ensure the deceased's successful journey through the Netherworld and their wish for eternal life [5].

**2. Methodological Study**

**2.1. General data**

The stela understudy is a round top with carved decoration and inscriptions. It belongs to a man called "*Hr-s3-3st*". It was found in Qubbet El-Hawa in Aswan [6].

➤ **Inventory number:** CG. 22081, JE 27143, SR 10009

➤ **Estimated Date:** Ptolemaic Period (According to Kamal, CG 22081) [36].

➤ **Provenance:** Qubbet El-Hawa (Aswan)

➤ **Material:** Sandstone

➤ **Dimensions:** H.36 cm, W.23.2 cm

➤ **Status:** Good condition

➤ **Owner of the Stela:** *Hr-s3-3st*

➤ **Present Location:** GEM: 14431

**2.2. Description**

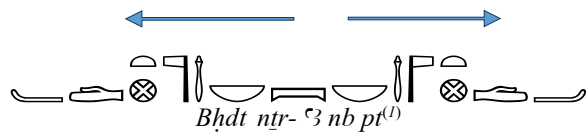
It is a round-topped rectangular funerary stela, fig. (1-a & b). The lunette has a winged sun disc [7,8] with some hieroglyphic signs under it. Below the lunette, there are two registers. The main scene in the upper register shows the owner of the stela standing on the right, facing left with his two arms raised in adoration gesture, praying to the sun god in his solar bark on the left side. The representation of a solar bark on stelae was known during the New Kingdom [9] and continued in the Ptolemaic Period. The sun god is represented in different common forms, such as *R<sup>c</sup>-Hr-3hti*, *Hpri*, *Tmw*, and then the falcon-headed god *Horus*. At the prow of the solar bark is the usual representation of the sun god in the form of a seated child, with his finger in his mouth, wearing the sun-disc on his head. The child symbolizes the sun god in the early morning [10,11]. The hieroglyphic text of the stela is executed in sunken relief and begins directly below the scene of the solar bark. The texts are composed of five horizontal lines starting from right to left.



**Figure (1)** **a.** stela of *Hr-s3-3st*, **b.** A facsimile of the stela of *Hr s3 3st* by Dr. Mostafa Nagdy

### 2.3. Upper section (Lunette)

The lunette is decorated with the winged sun-disc, with the two *uraei* coming down from it. Under the winged sun-disc, a hieroglyphic line reads: The main sign in the center is the sign of the sky *pt* . The text could be read from right to left or vice versa, with the same meaning.

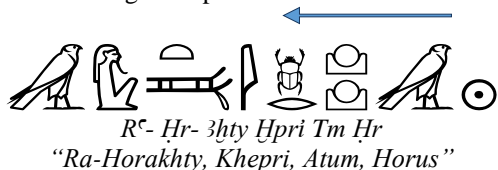


“Behdite, the great god, lord of the sky”

Under the above line, the names of the sun god with all his forms are inscribed from right to left: Re-Harakhty, Khepri, Atum, and Horus.

### 2.4. The middle

The names of the gods represented inside the solar bark:



### 2.5. Upper section (Register)

On the upper register, a scene of the solar bark with the different forms of the sun god is as follows:

- **Re-Harakhty** is shown seated inside the solar bark, with the sun disk on his head and an *uraei*. He holds the feather of justice (*Maat*) in his hands [12].
- **Khepri** is shown as a seated man with a scarab on his head, as he was associated with the scarab, or the dung beetle (*Scarabaeus sacer*), making him one of the most famous insect gods [12].
- **Atum** is shown as an old seated man, wearing the double crown and holding the scepter *w3s* [12].
- **Horus** is shown standing in the solar bark as a falcon-headed deity, wearing the double crown and an uraeus [12]. Horus is generally thought to be the pilot of the solar bark. He often holds the rudder of the stern to direct the

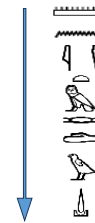
journey of the sun. Here, he seems to hold the rope of the rudder of the stern [12]. Examples are shown in stelae from the late period, such as CG 22052, 22057, 22070, 22102, 22146, and 22148. The owner of the stela stands on the right with his hands raised in adoration to the solar bark and the sun god. He is a tall bald man, wearing a long garment with his name written above him in four vertical columns, as follows:



dw3<sup>(2)</sup> in Wsir Hr s3 3st m3<sup>c</sup> hrw pn

“Adoration by Osiris Horus son of Isis, this justified of voice”

### 2.6. On the left, A vertical line says



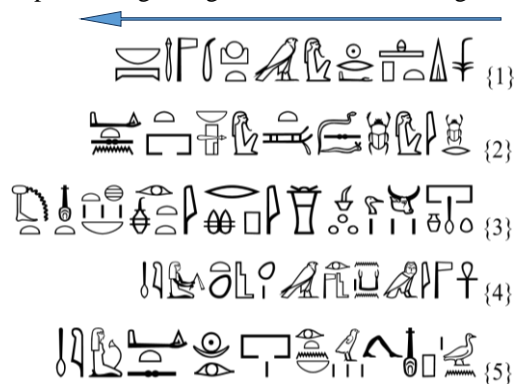
mnit m<sup>c</sup>nd[t]

“The morning bark lands”.

## 3. Sections of the Main Text

### 3.1. The lower section

Below the main scene of the stela are five horizontal lines of inscriptions, beginning with the usual offering formula:



#### 3.1.1. Transliteration

{1} htp di nsw<sup>(3)</sup> R<sup>c</sup>-Hr-3hty ntr 3 nb pt, {2} Hpri hpr ds.f Tm nb hwt 3t<sup>(4)</sup> dit.sn, {3} prt hrw<sup>(5)</sup> t hnkt k3w 3pdw<sup>(6)</sup> sntr mrht irp irtt ht nbw nfrt w<sup>c</sup>bt, {4} nh ntr im n k3 n Wsir<sup>(7)</sup> Hr s3 3st<sup>(8)</sup> m3<sup>c</sup> hrw<sup>(9)</sup>, {5} s3 n p3 nfr iw<sup>(10)</sup> irt n nb[t]<sup>(11)</sup> pr i<sup>c</sup>h-iir-di-s[t]<sup>(12)</sup> m3<sup>c</sup>(t) hrw

#### 3.1.2. Translation

“{1} An offering that the king gives (to) Ra Horakhty, the great god, lord of the heaven, {2} Khepri who created himself, Atum the lord of the great temple may they (are) given, {3} invocation offering (consisting of) bread, beer, oxen, birds, incense, oil, wine, milk, and from every good and pure thing, {4} on which a god lives, to the spirit of Osiris Horus son of Isis justified, {5} son of p3- nfr iw born of lady of the house i<sup>c</sup>h-iir-di-s(t) justified”.

### 3.1.3. Comments

- The decoration of the lunette



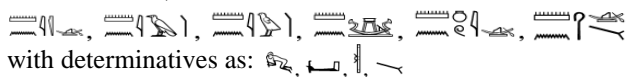
The winged sun-disc with two *Uraei*

The sun disc with wings was a religious and decorative element in ancient Egypt. The two wings only appeared early on a stela from the 1<sup>st</sup> dynasty [13]. During the 11<sup>th</sup> dynasty, the winged sun disc appeared on the round-topped stelae for kings [14-15]. It became a popular element for individuals from the late 12<sup>th</sup> dynasty to the Greco-Roman period [16]. It symbolized protection and blessing for the deceased and dispels all kinds of evil [13]. The outstretched wings represented the wings of the celestial falcon, symbolizing the vault of heaven. They were the symbols of Horus of Behdet (Edfou) [12], who was sent by the god *Re* to defeat his enemies. Horus turned himself into a winged sun disc and defeated the enemies of *Re*; hence, this symbol became popular. In the New Kingdom, it was often depicted on the ceilings of temples and ceremonial gateways [17]. They were considered symbols of Upper and Lower Egypt, while the two *uraei* represented the two goddesses, Nekhbet and Wadjet [7]. The early forms of the sun disc did not bear the name of any god; but in the 6<sup>th</sup> dynasty, under the reign of King Pepi 1<sup>st</sup>, the name of ‘Bḥdty’ appeared in Egyptian art before it was directly associated with ‘Horus the Behdetite’ [7].

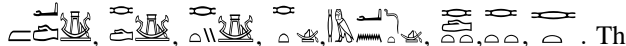
### 3.2. The upper register

- The solar bark

On the left side of the stela, behind the solar bark, a text reads *mnit m'ndt*, which means “*The morning bark lands*”. The word *mnit* is derived from the verb “*mni*”, which means “*to land*”. It is written with different forms and determinatives, such as:



It is followed by the word *m'ndt*. It is the morning bark of the sun god [18]. Here, the word is written with a determinative *ndt*, which is considered a strange sign for the word as the usual determinative of the word is the bark, as follows: *ndt*, *ndt*, *ndt*, *ndt*, *ndt*. The word is written as follows:



The scribe possibly chose a sign *ndt* instead of the many determinatives to write the name of *m'ndt* with a meaning due to the small space remaining in the stela [19,20]. The pun *ndt* is first attested in Pyramid Texts (§ 496 a); here, *ndt* is the bark in which the sun god sails from east to west during the day. It may be etymologically linked with *ndt* “safe” and is used in wordplay with it. The original form *ndt* was lost, and its origin was forgotten early [21]. The same text is written on stela CG 22102 from Aswan, dated to the Late Period. It was read by Munro as *mnit m'ndt wd3* means “*landed in peace and stability*” [22]. The offering of the morning bark became very common in the Greco-Roman period, but it referred to the evening bark, while the *mskt* boat became the morning bark. The letter *m* may disappear and the name was written only *sktt*. This offering was repeated in temples dated to this period. We read a text from Esna that records the offering of the morning bark to the god Khnum that says [23]:



(*m*)*sktt wrt hwn.k im.s pr m hrt n'k r 3ht.k im.s di.s.tw m b3hw r m3nw*

“*The great morning bark, your son is in it, when you go out from the sky and sail in it, it comes from east to west.*”

### 3.3. Notes and paleographical comments on the texts

- *Bḥdt ntr 3 nb pt: Bḥdt* is the name of Edfou. Its main god was *Hr-Bḥdty*, which means “Horus the Behdetite” [24] was always written with the winged sun disc as a symbol of the god Horus.

#### 3.3.1. In the right

*dw3 in wsir Hr s3 3st*: Several words were used to express the adoration to the gods, such as *nis*, *3*, *dwi*, *rmi*, etc. Here, *dw3* is written only with the star sign *3* without a determinative. The word was usually expressed by a man raising his hands in adoration [19]. The term *dw3* originally designated the “morning greeting” as a hand gesture, with the palm turned towards the god. In the Old Kingdom, the king alone had the privilege of greeting the god this way, with a gesture accompanied by ritual words; if the king wanted to do a man a notable favor, he would “salute the god with his hands”. At the end of the Memphite era, religious privileges were gradually extended to all. Any individual could manifest their piety personally and salute the god through gestures and words. Hence, the *dw3* hymn appeared on the funeral stela. Osiris was among the first gods to worship this way [25]. Here, the name of *Hr-s3-3st* was preceded by the name “Osiris” because, since the First Intermediate Period, every deceased person had the title of “Osiris,” which became equivalent to “the late” or “the deceased”. After death, human souls live according to how much Osiris lived in them [26]. It is common to find abbreviations when writing words in the Late Period, as the word *dw3* was written only by the star. The style of writing the name of the god Osiris was typical of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Dynasty onwards. Actually, this was due to the characteristics used frequently in the Late period, but it was dominant in the Ptolemaic period [26].

#### 3.3.2. The lower section

*htp di nsw* [27]: The offering formula was known from the Fourth Dynasty to the Greco-Roman period [28]. The purpose of this formula was to afford the deceased different kinds of offerings presented either to him in his tomb or to the deities in their temples in the name of the king on different occasions. The translation of this formula is “An offering which the king gives to...”. The gods commonly mentioned in the formula were Osiris and Anubis as funerary and afterlife deities, and some others (Ptah, Soker, Geb, Four sons of Horus, Isis, Nephtys, etc.) [29]. The formula was written with three standard signs: *htp*, *di*, and *nsw*. The arrangement of the signs differed from time to time as it appeared as *htp di nsw* in the Old Kingdom to the late 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty or as *htp di nsw* in the Middle Kingdom. In the New Kingdom, it was written as *htp di nsw* [30]. The formula



was sometimes followed by the preposition *n* 𓂏 to be translated as “An offering that the king gives to the god...”. Here, the king was the mediator between the god and the deceased. 𓂏 𓂏 𓂏 𓂏 *Tm nb hwt ʿ3t* “Atum the lord of the great temple”: This title of the god Atum was known from the Middle Kingdom to the 21-24<sup>th</sup> dynasties and the Late Period [12]. It referred mainly to the temple dedicated to Atum by King Sesostris I in Heliopolis [31]. 𓂏 *pṛt hrw* “Invocation-offering” means “The voice goes forth” and came to mean “invocation offering”. The structure was usually *pṛt hrw n* before the 11<sup>th</sup> dynasty [18]. This formula *pṛt hrw* came after the actual formula that indicated wish *di.f* to mean “he gives offerings”. It was most common during the New Kingdom and beyond. It was also mentioned in some paintings from the late First Intermediate Period. Then, it became popular during the New Kingdom and continued in the Late Period. The inclusion of *di.f* or here on this stela it is *di.sn* is commonly used in the association with the gods in the invocation offering formula (They may grant) from the Middle Kingdom onwards [32]. The expression was used to guarantee that the offerings were given by the king to God, who, in turn, gave them to the deceased [30]. The invocation offering formulas were followed by *pṛt-hrw*, which means “The voice goes forth”; i.e., “invocation”, followed by the preposition *n*, then the suffix pronoun 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular masculine or feminine instead of writing the name of the owner. The formula *rdit pṛt hrw* was first attested from about the 5<sup>th</sup> dynasty and appeared in the reigns of Kings Teti and Pepi I [28]. The list of offerings contained the usual substances that had a symbolic function of affording the deceased his needs in the afterlife. The offerings consisted of 𓂏 bread, 𓂏 beer, 𓂏 the head of an ox, and the head of the pintail duck 𓂏. In the offering formula, it is common to use abbreviations such as “*k3w*” “oxen” and “*3pdw*” “fowl” as a characteristic style from earlier times to the Late period. 𓂏 𓂏 *n k3 n wsir*: The expression “*n k3 n ...*” means “for the soul of...”. Here, it is followed by the name of the deceased preceded by *wsir* [33]. In the Middle Kingdom, the expression *n k3 n...* was followed by the word *im3hy* “The revered one” in the *hṛp di nsw* formula. After that, this word totally disappeared due to the change in the religious belief, where the name of *wsir* preceded the name of the deceased from the Middle Kingdom as an individual hoped to resurrect like Osiris. It was popular on stelae from the New Kingdom onwards [34]. 𓂏 𓂏 𓂏 𓂏 *Hr-s3-3st* [35]: The name of the owner is written on the stela without any title to show his rank and position. The name seems to have been confined to the Late Period. It is written twice in the register above him referring to him as the deceased one when using Osiris before the name. The determinative used in the name of the owner is the seated woman who holds the flail in her hands instead of the sign of a man. The writer used two signs to express the word for “son”, either by the egg sign 𓂏 in the name of the owner or by the duck sign 𓂏 at the beginning of the last line (line 5). 𓂏 *m3ʿ hrw* “The justified of voice” is a traditional title that follows the names

of the deceased ones. It is written by the pedestal sign 𓂏 and the oar sign 𓂏 together after the name of the owner in the upper register, while written by the feather of truth 𓂏 and the oar sign 𓂏 after the name of the owner and the name of his mother (line 4 and 5). *p3-nfr-iw* is the name of the owner’s father, written in the last line (line 5). When Kamal read the stela, he incorrectly put the sign 𓂏 Q (N29) as 𓂏 instead of the two legs 𓂏 [36], as the name is read by Ranke as *p3-nfr-iw* [35]. The name of the father is written without any titles and isn’t followed by the word *m3ʿ hrw* “justified” as his son and wife. 𓂏 *nbt-pr* the title precedes the name of the mother of the owner. It is commonly used to refer to a married woman not belonging to a royal or monarch family [37]. This title occurred from the late Middle Kingdom to the Ptolemaic period [38]. 𓂏 *iʿh-iir-di-s(.t)* The name of the owner’s mother: “It is the moon that gave them” [35]. She is the mother of the owner, and the only monument known of her is an offering table (CG. 23,039), fig. (2), with her name preceded by the name of the goddess Hathor. Unfortunately, the title is omitted; it is suggested that she was a priestess of the goddess Hathor. According to Kamal, it came from Giza [39].



Figure (2) CG. 23.039

### 3.4. Genealogy

The genealogical matrix of the family of *Hr-s3-3st* shows:

**The 1<sup>st</sup> generation** *nsw htpw* (father) *t3- (nt-) bw (?)* (mother)

**The 2<sup>nd</sup> generation** *p3-nfr-iw* (father) *iʿh-iir-di-s(.t)* (mother)

**The 3<sup>rd</sup> generation** *Hr-s3-3st* (son)

The stela owner's lineage goes back to his maternal grandfather and grandmother, as they were mentioned on the offering table (CG. 23,039) of the stela owner's mother, preserved in the Egyptian museum.

## 4. Results

This article presented a stela dated to the early Ptolemaic Period. It was found in Quebbet El Hawa, Aswan. It belongs to a man, perhaps a priest, as concluded from his form. The names of the owner's parents are registered on the stela, which shows a family of priesthood characters.

## 5. Discussion

The stelae of *Hr-s3-3st* is unique in its execution. Although it bears no royal name to determine the exact date, the characteristics of the stela relate it to the end of the Late Period and the beginning of the Ptolemaic period. In contrast, Kamal related it to the Ptolemaic Period. According to the

features and some characteristics, the authors thought it could be dated to the Late Period and the Ptolemaic period. In the Old and Middle Kingdoms, the deceased was represented sitting behind the offering table with a list of offerings. From the New Kingdom to the Ptolemaic periods, the great approach of the deceased with divinities guaranteed survival in the afterlife. So, the representation of the sun bark, which the deceased adored in the upper register, became a famous scene on stelae beginning from the late period, compared with similar examples shown in stelae from the Late Period, such as CG 22052, 22057, 22070, 22102, 22146, and 22148. In addition, the name of the owner could be dated to the Late Period and he was represented with a long skirt, the kind of which was quite common in the Ptolemaic stelae, (e.g., Kamal, A., *Catalogue général des antiquités égyptiennes du Musée du Caire N° 22001-22208 Stèles ptolémaïques et romaines*, T. II, IFAO, 1904, CG, 22074, Pl. XXIV, CG.22077, Pl. XXV; CG.22122, Pl. XXXV). So, since the features of the stela have the characteristics of the Late and the Ptolemaic Periods, the stela probably goes back to the end of the Late Period and the beginning of the Ptolemaic period. The inscriptions on the stela bear some hieroglyphic words that were dominant in the Ptolemaic period, such as the name of the god Osiris, and the cursive written signs, such as the word *dw3*. The authors also suggest that the family of *Hr-s3-3st* was originally from Giza, as the position of the mother written on her offering table came from Giza. Probably, the family were priests, and the owner himself was a priest of the sun god *Ra*, as the invocation spell was directed to the sun god and Atum. He was seemingly represented as a bald man, the character of the priests in ancient Egypt, and the stela was transferred from Giza to Aswan for an unknown reason.

## 6. Conclusion

-After studying the stela, it is remarkable that although the owner has a very popular name, no title is registered to indicate his rank and position. The accurate date of the stela is difficult due to the lack of any royal name on the stela to determine the exact date of it. Still, from the paleographical and epigraphical characters of the stela, as well as the artistic features, and by comparing it with others, it is to be suggested that the stela is dated to the end of the Late Period and the early Ptolemaic period. The depiction of the body of the owner as an elongated and thin man, the bald head asserts his priestly job. Some features and hieroglyphic signs were known from the Old Kingdom to the Ptolemaic period. Moreover, the stela gives information about the genealogy of the owner from his mother's part. The family of *Hr-s3-3st* came originally from the district of Giza and moved to Aswan.

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