

A Ptolemaic Offering Table of Wedjatshu: British Museum EA1364

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Abstract: The subject of this paper is the publication and analytical study of a limestone offering table¹, presently in the possession of the British Museum under the inventory number EA1364.² It belonged to Wedjatshu who bore a priestly title *Thyt* “sistrum player”. Wedjatshu seems to have been a member of one of the most influential families in Akhmim during the Ptolemaic Period, more specifically in relation to the temple. This paper sheds light on her family members and their social backgrounds. Based on the main inscriptional sources of her identity and her family, found to date, she married a high dignitary priest, Djehuty-mes, who inherited the priestly positions and benefices from three of his forefathers and handed over these to his elder son Irethoreru (Inaroy III). Also, her daughter, Tasheretenmin, retained the traditional titles of her mother and also had privileged access to the singing and playing in music troupes. The related mortuary material of the priestly family from which Wedjatshu’s husband descends declaring that their career was exclusively in carrying boxes of clothes and adornments for the god’s statue during the annual festivals.

Keywords: Wedjatshu, Sistrum player, Offering table, Akhmim, The British Museum.

مائدة قربان وجات شو من العصر البطلمي: المتحف البريطاني EA1364

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المخلص: يتناول موضوع هذا البحث نشر وتحليل مائدة قربان مصنوعة من الحجر الجيري ومحفوظة حاليًا بالمتحف البريطاني تحت رقم EA1364، وتعود هذه المائدة لوجات شو التي حملت لقب عازفة السيستروم، هذا وتنتمي وجات شو لأحد العائلات صاحبة النفوذ الاجتماعي والديني في إخميم خلال الفترة البطلمية لاسيما داخل المعبد الرئيسي للمدينة، هذا وتسلط الدراسة الضوء على أفراد عائلتها وخلفياتهم الاجتماعية، فمن خلال المصادر النصية المرتبطة بشخصها وبأفراد عائلتها التي وجدت حتى الآن تبين أنها تزوجت من أحد كبار الكهنة وهو جحوتي مس الذي ورث المكانة الاجتماعية والنفوذ الكهنوتي من ثلاثة من أسلافه كما ورثها من بعده ابنه الأكبر إيرت حور إير رو، هذا واحتفظت إبنتها تاشيرت مين بالألقاب الكهنوتية لتنضم إلى فرق العازفات والمغنيات بمعبد مين مثل أمها، من خلال الألقاب الكهنوتية والشرفية التي تم تسجيلها على المتعلقات الجنائزية التي ينحدر منها زوج وجات شو تبين أن المهام الوظيفية التي مارستها هذه العائلة تمحورت حول حمل صناديق القماش والحلي من أجل تمثال المعبود خلال احتفالات المعبد السنوية.

الكلمات الدالة: وجات شو، عازفة السيستروم، مائدة قربانين، أخميم، المتحف البريطاني.

¹ My gratitude is to the British Museum authorities for the permission to publish this object.

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Introduction:

This offering table was purchased by the British Museum from Mohammed Mohasib and Rev Chauncey Murch in 1902. The inventory register lacks information on the exact provenance and date of discovery. This makes studying many museum objects problematic because the archaeological context and links between individuals and their mortuary objects are often unavailable. Based mainly on a general appearance, shared features and orthographical details, the offering table can be dated to the Ptolemaic period and most probably produced in one of the Akhmimic workshops. The acquisition date suggests that it was acquired after the excavation of 1938 in the el-Hawawish Cemetery A Which is near the village Naga'el-Diabat, lies 2 kilometers to the south of el-Hawawish.¹ This suggested provenance is based upon Akhmimic mortuary material came to Europe and now in the British Museum in the last two decades of the nineteenth century. They were probably discovered and purchased a short time from one another.² W. Budge, in a brief publication, was the first to make some preliminary observations in 1909. He recorded its dimensions (Length 1 ft. 5 in., breadth 1 ft. 4 in.), a partial reading of the names and a short description of its scenes.³ This offering table has never been completely discussed, so much work and research remains to be done, not only by giving a translation and a commentary on the context but also by identifying its owner, her family affiliation and their social background which is poorly understood and has received little scholarly attention. This entails accessing other related funerary material dispersed throughout private collections and major museums around the world.

General Description (Fig. 1):

A rectangular offering table cut from a block of crystalline limestone; it is well preserved and was produced at a skilled public workshop. The overall dimensions are 40 cm in width, 40 cm in height and a maximum thickness of 8 cm. It takes the large standard shape of the  *htp*-sign. The face is covered with hieroglyphic inscriptions and scenes executed in sunken relief. A large depiction of a *nh*-sign, a reference to the water's dynamic life force,⁴ is in the center. It is flanked by two symmetrical large *hs*-vessels with water⁵ flowing through the spout across the table for the deceased's *ba*. Six round loaves of bread⁶, a life providing entity, upon small vessels are depicted under

¹ Yahia, El-Masry, "The Ptolemaic cemetery of Akhmim", OLA 194 (2010): 173-84.

² See for example, the offering tables BM EA1058, EA1137, EA1227, EA1253, EA1364, EA1688, EA1689.

³ Wallis, Budge, *A Guide to the Egyptian Galleries (Sculpture)*, (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1909), 278, no 1037.

⁴ Three different shapes of *nh*-sign are noted on the offering tables of Akhmim. The first is without any additions, see Ahmed, Kamal, *Tables d'offrandes, CGC C nos. 23001-23256*, II, (Le Caire, Imprimerie de Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 1906-1909), CGC 23162, 23130, 2312. The second is with water flowing from it and runs to the spout, CGC 23167, 23170. Sometimes water is depicted emerging into two *bas* drinking from it, CGC 23165. The last has decorative elements of lotus flowers upon *nh*-sign, CGC 23128.

⁵ Water flows from the top of the vessels across the table and beyond; this is the usual depiction on Akhmim's offering tables but on some water flows from the spouts into an offering table with loaves of bread and vessels in the center, CGC 23164, 23181, 23185, or into a tall slender offering table CGC 23184, or into the ground flanking the offerings by two streams of water CGC 23187.

⁶ Bread is represented on Akhmim's offering tables by the loaves of several shapes: round, oval flat, and semi-circular loaves.

and beneath the vessels on a reed-mat, details of the offerings.¹ To the right Wedjatshu stands barefoot and facing left. She is dressed in a long sheath dress and wears a tripartite full wig. Both of her hands are raised and holding two *hs*-vessels from which she pours water. On the left side, two hands emerge from the sacred sycamore tree, a personified of the tree-goddess.² She pours water from a *hs*-vessel with her left hand and offers food with the right; these are indispensable requirements for the deceased life. This vignette represents spell 59 of the Book of the Dead which has a certain priority and an important innovation on the offering tables of Akhmim during the Ptolemaic Period.³ Hieroglyphic inscriptions are framed by double lines around the borders of the table, the base, and the spout. These lines have been drawn with little precision and are not always very straight. The texts surround the scene and the spout are clearly decipherable.

Hieroglyphic Inscriptions:



[1] *dd mdw in wsir Wd3t-Šw m3^ct-hrw s3t sš nswt Hr m3^c-hrw irt n nbt-pr ʿnh.s m3^ct-hrw m33.k m3^ct m33.k mswt.k m3^c* [2] *dd mdw in wsir ihyt Wd3t-Šw m3^ct-hrw s3t n sš nswt Hr m3^c-hrw irt n nbt-pr ʿnh.s m3^ct-hrw dt sp 2* [3] *mn.ti m-b3h wsir nb (r3)-st3w nfr nfr nb dsrt hk3 dt nhh sp 2.*

[1] Recitation by Osiris Wedjatshu⁴, true of voice, daughter of the royal scribe Hor, true of voice, born of the lady of the house Anekh-es, true of voice, may you⁵ see the truth, may you see your children⁶ truly. [2] Recitation by Osiris, sistrum player⁷, Wedjatshu, true of voice,

¹ The majority of the offering tables published by Kamal in his General Catalogue have simple offering details.

² Nut is most frequently represented as the goddess of the tree, see Baum, Nathalie, "Arbres et arbustes de l'Égypte ancienne. La liste de la tombe thébaine d'Ineni" (*no 81*), OLA 31 (1988); Othmar, Keel, *Das Recht der Bilder gesehen zu werden: Drei Fallstudien zur Methode der Interpretation altorientalischer Bilder*, OBO 122, (Freiburg - Göttingen: Universitätsverlag Freiburg - Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992), 61-138; Nils, Billing, *Nut: The goddess of life in text and iconography*, Uppsala Studies in Egyptology 5, (Uppsala: Uppsala University, 2002).

³ Compare BM EA1215, EA1227; Kamal, *Tables d'offrandes*, CGC 23160, 23161, 23162, 23163, 23165, 23166, 23167, 23169, 23170, 23171, 23172, 23202, 23219. For a list of Late Period Offering Tables from Akhmim see Marion et al, "La table d'offrande Louvre D 69. Un monument pour « faire venir le ba au corps", BIFAO 118 (2019): 70- 74.

⁴ Writing signs in an opposite direction of the text occurred three times; L.1 , L.3 , .

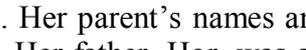
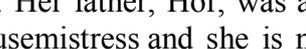
⁵ Using the suffix pronoun *k* instead of *t* twice points out that the name of Wedjatshu and her family affiliation are a later addition.

⁶ This sign is badly incised. It seems to be *mswt*. A similar phrase referring to the family meeting in the Netherworld comes as *nfr tw m33.k wtt.k* "You are beautiful as you see your progeny" see, Stephen, Quirke, *Going out in Daylight – prt m hrw: The Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead-translation, sources, meanings*, (London: Golden House Publications, 2013), 570.

⁷ A misleading sign (A25a) for (B47) . Another writing of this sign comes on the stela of Metropolitan Museum of Art L. 6 as . Wb, I, 121-122. For more on this title see Lana, Troy, *Patterns of queenship in ancient Egyptian myth and history*. Boreas 14. Uppsala and Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, (Uppsala: Universitatis Upsaliensis, 1986), 83-88; Saphinaz-Amal, Naguib, "Le clergé féminin d'Amon Thébain à la 21e dynastie", OLA 38, (1990); Karl, Jansen-Winkeln, *Drei Statueninschriften einer Familie aus Frühptolemäischer Zeit*, SÄK 36 (2007), 59- 61.

daughter of the royal scribe Hor, true of voice, born of the lady of the house Anekh-es¹, true of voice eternally twice. [3] May you endure before Osiris, lord of Rastu, the beautiful god, Lord of the Necropolis, Ruler of the eternity and forever twice.

Identity of the owner, family affiliation and the social background of the family

According to Ranke, the name of *Wd3t-Šw* is attested twice in the Late Period and in the Greco-Roman era.² It seems not to be found in the demotic documents.³ The spelling of this name occurred four times; , , , .⁴ It means literally “the eye of the god Shu”. Her parent’s names and their titles follow her name twice on both proscynemes (1-2). Her father, Hor, was an Egyptian royal scribe while her mother, Anekh-es, was a housemistress and she is not given any title. Wedjatshu held the usual title of the most elite musician priestesses who shake the *sistra* to entertain the god in the temple. Although her career is now well known, her identity and her genealogies are poorly understood as well as the social background of her family is still to be fully addressed. Clarifying Wedjatshu’s identity and the blood relation between her family members with certainly is not easy because the prevalence of the *papponymy* phenomenon⁵ as well as the use of common titles by contemporaries during the first millennium BC in Akhmim. Consequently, it is possible that more than one person had the same name and similar titles. The name of parents, the husband, wife and the sacerdotal titles are the decisive criteria to ascertain person’s and the family’s affiliation. They help to differentiate between individuals who bore similar names and to identify links between individuals and their mortuary objects. Fortunately, although Wedjatshu’s title is most common on different offering tables of musician priestesses⁶ and on different stelae found at Akhmim⁷, her name was not very common between contemporaries more specifically in Akhmim during the Ptolemaic Period. My endeavor relies on analysis of the sum of data inscribed on the mortuary material of the priests and priestesses, which originate from Akhmim.⁸ The main inscriptional sources of her identity and her family, found to date, can be compiled from five commemorative

¹ Another writing of Wedjatshu mother’s name is attested on the stela of Metropolitan Museum of Art, L.7, as  see, Robert, Bianchi, *Varia Metropolitana*, GM 22 (1976), 21.

² PN, I, 89.3-4; CGC 47307; Michelle, Thirion, "Notes d'onomastique: contribution à une révision de Ranke", PN, RdE 36 (1985): 127; Holger, Kockelmann, *Untersuchungen zu den späten Totenbuch-Handschriften* auf Mumienbinden, (Harrassowitz Verlag; 1., edition (1 Aug. 2008), 253 no. 60, 248 no. 27, 265 no. 14.

³ Vincent, Razanajao, "La stèle de Gemenehorbak (Caire je 85932). Dieux, fêtes et rites osiriens à Imet", BIFAO 106 (2006), 225.

⁴ The first two orthographies occur on the offering table while the other two are attested on the stela of Metropolitan Museum of Art, acc.no. 68.17.

⁵ That is, the son is given his grandfather’s name; this applies especially to the firstborn, Rowlandson and others, *Family and Life Cycle Transitions*. In K. Vandorpe (ed.) *A Companion to Greco-Roman and Late Antique Egypt*: 327–46 (Hoboken (NJ): Wiley Blackwell, 2019), 332–335.

⁶ Kamal, *Tables d’offrandes*, CGC 23117, 23121, 23166, 23170, 23171, 23171.

⁷ See Kamal, *Stèles ptolémaïques et romaines*, 253- 254.

⁸ The most noteworthy previous studies on the mortuary material of Akhmim are: on the stelae, Peter, Munro, *Die spätägyptischen Totenstelen I–II*, Ägyptologische Forschungen 25, (Glückstadt: Verlag J.J. Augustin, 1973); Thomas George, Allen, *Egyptian Stelae in the Field Museum of Natural History*, (Chicago: with papyrus McGregor, *Late Period tradition at Akhmim, Catalogue of the Books of the Dead in the British Museum 2*, (London: British Museum Press, 2001); On the coffins, Ruth, Brech, *Spätägyptische Särge aus Achmim: Eine typologische und chronologische Studie*, (Gladbeck: Pewe-Verlag, 2008)

objects. They complement one another and each of their owners were related in one family circle. These objects have never been studied together in research.

No.	source	Museum	Provenance	The owner's name	TM	Affiliation
1	Stela ¹	Metropolitan Museum of Art, acc.no. 68.17	Akhmim	Wedjatshu	7433	Mother
2	Stela ²	Egyptian Museum, Cairo, CGC 22174	Akhmim	Inaroyo III	5807	Wedjatshu's son, 5 th generation
3	Stela ³	British Museum, BM EA1139	Akhmim	Tasheretenmin (Senminis)	13411	Wedjatshu's daughter, 5 th generation
4	Stela ⁴	Egyptian Museum, Cairo, CGC 22152	Akhmim	Horimhotep	5632	Tasheretenmin's son, 6 th generation
5	Stela ⁵	British Museum, BM EA1730	Akhmim	Inaroyo II	5807	Forefather of her son, 2 nd generation

1- The Stela of Wedjatshu in the Metropolitan Museum of Art acc.no. 68.17 ⁶ (Fig. 2):

This round-topped limestone stela is almost intact and in a good state of preservation, with scenes and inscriptions in sunken relief. Its height is 59 cm and its width is 36 cm. It is divided into three registers: A) the round-topped section (lunette) is decorated with the winged sun-disk above a depiction of the sun god as a child ⁷ facing right and seated on a pillar. The child has his finger to his mouth. The sun god is flanked with two solar boats. The right with a scarab within a sun's disk while the left has a ram within the disk. B) In the second register is a scene of the stela's owner, Wedjatshu, facing left and dressed in a long wrap-around ankle garment over a sheath dress. She raises her two hands in an adoration pose. She faces five standing deities, Osiris, Harendotes, Anubis, Isis and Nephthys. All deities are captioned with their names and titles. C) The lowest register contains a text of the offering formula in seven horizontal lines running from right to left.⁸ Although the offering formula is quite common it preserves three important indices pointing to the provenance of this stela as Akhmim where Wedjatshu and her family lived and most probably buried.

¹ Munro, *Die Spätägyptischen Totenstelen*, II, 323, pl.189; Bianchi, *Spätägyptische Särge aus Achmim*, 21-22 no. 2.

² Kamal, *Stèles ptolémaïques et romaines*, I, 135.

³ Budge, *A guide to the Egyptian galleries*, 1001.

⁴ Kamal, *Stèles ptolémaïques et romaines*, I, 140. II, pl. XLII.

⁵ Munro, *Die Spätägyptischen Totenstelen*, II, 315, pl. 49. See the stelae BM EA 1139, 1155, 1158, CG 22017, 22032, 22095, 22122, 22141.

⁶ It belongs to Georges Michaelides Collection, Cairo. No 1.

⁷ Munro called this Akhmimic regionalism style as "solar form".

⁸ This stela has the general appearance and shared feature of the Stela of Tasheretenmin, her daughter, in the British Museum, BM EA1139, as both of them were made in a single workshop at Akhmim. See Budge, *guide to the Egyptian galleries*, 1001.

1- In line 2, Horus is accompanied by the main title *ndty n it.f ntr 3 hry-ib Ipw* “the protector of his father, the great god who resides in Akhmim”.¹

2- In line 3, Isis is described as *3st wrt mwt-ntr hryt-ib Ipw* “Isis, the great one, mother of the god who resides in Akhmim”.²

3- In line 3, the deities invoked in the offering formula are the pantheon of Akhmim necropolis as *ntrw ntrwt im Ipw* “the gods and goddess who are in Akhmim”.³

Wedjatshu with her priestly title, her parent’s names and titles are well attested in lines 6-7 on this stela.



*Wsir ihyt*⁴ *Wd3t-Šw m3ct-hrw s3t n sš nswt* [7] *Hr m3ct-hrw irt n nbt pr ʿnh.s m3ct-hrw*.

Osiris, sistrum player, Wedjatshu, true of voice, daughter of the royal scribe [7] Hor, true of voice, born of the lady of the house Anekh-es, true of voice.

2- The Stela of Irethoreru (Inaroys III) Cairo CGC 22174⁵:

This limestone stela was made to commemorate the elder son of Wedjatshu. It was discovered in the cemetery of Al-Hawawish by Gaston Maspero. The top is lost. Its extant height is 0.40 cm and its width is 0.43 cm. The lower register contains 19 horizontal lines of inscriptions running from right to left.⁶ It is the most important and reliable source for Wedjatshu’s family because it preserves the long pedigree and the sacerdotal titles of her son Irethoreru (Ἰναροῦς, Inaroys III)⁷ and were inherited within his family for five generations.⁸ Unfortunately, the text excludes any mention of wives and mothers, except for Wedjatshu who was explicitly named as the mother of the stela’s owner. The titles represent the sum of their career as follows:

¹ Also, he is usually depicted as “Horus the eldest in Akhmim” see Ali, Abdelhalim, *Lunette Stela of Pasenedjemibnash in Cairo Museum CG 22151*, BIFAO 114 (2015): 7.

² See, Maria, Münster, "Untersuchungen zur Göttin Isis vom Alten Reich bis zum Ende des Neuen Reiches", *MÄS* 11 (1968), 129-134, 162-163.

³ Compare, BM EA1141, line 6.

⁴ For more orthographies about this title see Penelope, Wilson, "A Ptolemaic Lexikon, a lexicographical study of the texts in the temple of Edfou", *OLA* 78 (Leuven, 1997), 104; CGC 22001, 22025, 22032, 22039, 22057.

⁵ Unfortunately, no photograph of this stela is listed by Kamal in his General Catalogue.

⁶ Kamal, *Stèles ptolémaïques et romaines*, 153-155, no. 22174.

⁷ According to Ranke, this name is attested in the Late Period and in the Greco-Roman Period, PN I, 42, 11. It means literally “The eye of Horus is against them”. In the Late Period, this name is attested on three coffins BM EA20745, EA57271 and FAMSF 42895, on Canopic chest BM EA8535, on shabtis BM EA9026, EA9027, EA9028, EA9030, EA9031, EA9032, EA9141, EA9143, EA15169, EA15171, EA15172, EA15191, EA15192, EA15194, on stelae, Munro, *Die spätägyptischen Totenstelen*, II, 368. Also it frequently occurs on the funeral material of the Ptolemaic Period, Kamal, *Stèles ptolémaïques et romaines*, 222-223; Louvre E 7851, L. 12, Koenraad, Donker van Heel, *Papyrus Louvre E 7851 recto and verso: two more land leases from the reign of Taharka*, RdÉ 50 (Cairo and Paris: 1999), 135-147.

⁸ The average generation span is 30 years see, Frédéric, Payraudeau, "Administration, société et pouvoir à Thèbes sous la XXIIe dynastie bubastite", *BdE* 160, (2014).



sm3ty ^{h3} *Hr* [7] *ib3 dhwtj hm-ntr n n3 twtw hry sst3 n mwt-ntr ...? rh nswt* ^c *k bs dsr m*
Ipw ^{c3} *irt m swt dsrwt nbwt wn hr* [8] *m st wrt sni m mdw-ntr db3 mnht (m) hwt-mnht m*
ts r rwd m swt st3w w^cb ^{c3} rh irt.f smn nt hr tpy n nb.f [9] *irt-Hr-r-rw m3^c-hrw s3 mi nn*
dhwtj-ms m3^c-hrw s3 mi nn *irt-Hr-r-rw m3^c-hrw s3 mi nn* *Hr-s3-3st m3^c-hrw s3 n mi nn*
irt-Hr-r-rw [10] *m3^c-hrw ir n nbt-pr ihyt n Mnw sm^cyt n k3 mwt.f Wd3t-Sw m3^c-hrw.*

“*Stolist*,¹ warrior of Hours, [7] dancer of Thoth, priest of the images, master of secrets of the god’s mother², ...? acquaintance of the king³, who enters and leads the sacred one⁴ in Akhmim, one who has great office in all divine places, who reveals the face [8] in the great place⁵, who goes with divine words⁶, who adorns with clothes in the Mansion of the clothes⁷ (when) he raises up to the staircase into the sacred places, the great waab-priest, the one who knows his office⁸, who fastens the red crown upon the head of his lord, [9] Irethoreru, true of

¹ This title is more common in Akhmim stelae see David, Klotz, *Regionally Specific Sacerdotal Titles in Late Period Egypt: Soubassements vs Private Monuments* in A. Rickert, B. Ventker (éd.), *Altägyptische Enzyklopädien: Die Soubassements in den Tempeln der griechisch-römischen Zeit, Soubassementstudien I, Studien zur spätägyptischen Religion 7/2*, (Wiesbaden: 2014), 717-792; Henri, Gauthier, *Le personnel du dieu Min*, (Le Caire: Institut Français d’Archéologie, 1931), 39-51; A. McFarlane, *Titles of sm3 + god and ht god: Dynasties 2 to 10*, GM 121 (1991), 77-100.

² This title occurs with Inaroy’s son of Esuris as , CGC 22025, 5. The god’s mother is Aperet-Isis, LGG II, 105, Erika, Feucht, *Aperetiset*, LÄ I, 1975, col. 335-336. She has the same title on stelae of Akhmim, CGC 22007, 22053, 22070.

³ For this title see Gilles, Gorre, “*Rh-nswt*: titre aulique ou titre sacerdotal «spécifique?»”, ZÄS 136 (2009): 8-18.

⁴ Compare ,  Gorre, *Rh-nswt*: titre aulique ou titre sacerdotal «spécifique»? 15.

⁵ This comes as  CGC 22025, 5. Also this title points out to a highest-ranking priest as he had the right to reveal the face of the god’s statue in hermetic isolation, see Christiane, Zivie-Coche, *Tanis : travaux récents sur le Tell Sâh El-Hagar. Statues et autobiographies de dignitaires: Tanis à l’ époque ptolémaïque* (Paris: Editions Cybèle, 2004), 123.

⁶ Another parallel can be cited  CGC 22025, 6.

⁷ This word may be read also “the Mansion of the moon” which is already attested at Akhmim see, Klaus, Kuhlmann, “Der Felstempel des Eje bei Achmim”, MDAIK 35 (1979): 187. For the association between the moon and Min see, Victoria, Altmann-Wendling, “Of Min and moon— cosmological concepts in the Temple of Athribis (Upper Egypt)”, Proceedings of the XI Congress of Egyptologists, Florence Egyptian Museum, Florence, 23-30 August 2015, *Archaeopress Egyptology 19* (Oxuniprint: Oxford 2017): 8-13.

⁸ For close parallels: ,  see, Gorre, *Rh-nswt*: titre aulique ou titre sacerdotal «spécifique»? 15.; Ramadan, El-Sayed, *Documents relatifs a Sais et ses divinites* (Le Caire: Institut français d’ archéologie orientale, 1975), 157.

voice, son of the like-titled¹, Djehuty-mes, true of voice, son of the like-titled Irethoreru, true of voice, son of the like-titled, Horsaast true of voice, son of the like-titled, Irethoreru, [10] true of voice, born of the lady of the house, sistrum player of Min, chantress² of the Bull of his mother³, Wedjatshu true of voice”.

The former text confirms that Wedjatshu’s family was bestowed highest sacerdotal positions in Akhmim. She married a high dignitary priest, Djehuty-mes, who inherited the priestly positions and benefices from three of his forefathers and handed over these to his elder son Inaroys III. Interestingly, three members of the family were called Irethoreru (Inaroys I-II-III). Inaroys III was the son of Wedjatshu and the others were ancestors from his father branch. This confirms a continuous use of the same personal names and inherited priestly titles to the fifth generation. It is very likely that the religious and honorific titles are recorded only for Inaroys III, the owner of this stela, as an identification of his family’s career over such a long time, while the text uses the expression “*son of the like-titled*” for his forefathers. It is a common practice to abbreviate the official titles of ancestors on their offspring’s funerary monuments when the long paternal pedigree is listed. As one of their sacerdotal titles is “*dancer of Thoth*”, It is clear that they were involved in the cultic organization of Thoth in Akhmim for generations especially since all sons bore the same titles. Also, the name of Djehuty-mes refers to the relationship between this family and the god Thoth in Akhmim. Another occupational title held by Wedjatshu has been revealed by this stela, *chantress of the Bull of his mother*. It is not attested on the former offering table nor the stela of the Metropolitan Museum. Stephen Quirk suggests that the titles relate to two duties performed by one woman in rituals as she was able to shake the sistrum and sing at the same time.⁴ Accordingly, Wedjatshu served within the temple in a professional capacity singing and playing music troupes.

The titles held by Inaroys III and his forefathers provides much valuable data which need to be stressed. These titles suggest its holder was not an ordinary priest, but one of the elite subset of the clergy in the temple hierarchy and consequently from one of the most prominent families in Akhmim. This suggestion is drawn mainly from specific title formed with the adjective ʕ as ʕ *irt m swt dsrwt* “*one who has great office in all divine places*”. Also, the titles “*who reveals the face⁵ in the great place*” and “*who adorns with clothes in the Mansion of the clothes*” are only associated with the highest priest who had the right to perform these rituals for the god’s statue in hermetic isolation. One might even consider that he may have acted as substitute for the king or the high priest in some rituals.

¹ For this expression since the 22nd Dynasty onwards see, Wb II, 37, (10-11); Khaled, El-Enany, "Fragment d'une stèle d'Apis mentionnant le roi Têti (Caire JE 40044)", RdE 61 (2010): 79-82; Jürgen, Osing, *Hieratische Papyri I*, (University of Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 1998), 244, pl. 25A; Klotz, *Regionally Specific Sacerdotal Titles*, 741.

² For this title see, Suzanne Lynn, Onstine, *The role of the chantress (šm'ayt) in ancient Egypt*, (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2005).

³ A title of Min-Re, Henri, Gauthier, *Les fêtes du dieu Min* (Le Caire: Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 1931), 135-138, 140-141.

⁴ Stephen, Quirke, *Women in ancient Egypt: temple title sand funerary papyri*, In Studies on ancient Egypt in honour of H.S. Smith, ed. A. Leahy and J. Tait, (London: 1999), 229.

⁵ For this ritual see Angelika, Lohwasser, *Die Formel "Öffnen des Gesichts"*, Beiträge zur Ägyptologie 11, (Wien: 1991).

A further indication is noted in the most important title *hry sšt3 n mwt-ntr* “*Master of secrets*¹ of the god’s mother”. It is regularly mentioned with the king when he offers different kinds of coloured *mnḥ.t*—cloths to the deities as attested in Edfu temple “*he stands in his form of master of the secrets to give the dignity of his father and mother*”.² Also, the festive procession of the priests both in ascending and descending the two staircases of the temple are depicted “*excellent masters of secrets*”.³ One of the Edfu’ texts describes them during the celebration of the New Year’s Day “*the masters of secrets wear clothes of the god and necklaces*”.⁴ Examining the textual sources from Edfu and Dendera reveals that the ritual activities performed by the priests who hold this priestly title is exclusively in carrying boxes of clothes and adornments for the god’s statue during ascending and descending the staircases or inside the places that witnessed the celebration of the New Year’s Day.⁵ Consequently, one might suppose that their priestly shifts were determined on an annual basis. At Edfu, two priests are shown carrying divine adornments and four boxes of clothes on the left side of the eastern staircase and are called “*master of secrets, who is before Edfu*” and “*the excellent master of secrets in Edfu*”.⁶ They are depicted again on the western staircase carrying boxes of clothes holding the titles “*master of secrets who is in Edfu, who gives the noble clothes*”⁷ and “*excellent master of secrets in Edfu*”.⁸ These fit perfectly with the main titles attested on the stela. The last recorded title on the stela, “*who fastens the red crown upon the head of his lord*” is also one of the duties delegated to the master of secrets priest. This is confirmed in a section from an inscription in the complex of wabet at Edfu as “*establishing the headband and counterpoise and repeating the libation by the master of secret*”.⁹

A reference to the temple staircase in the title “*he raises up to the staircase into the sacred places*” suggests that priestly rituals performed within small sanctuaries such as those upon the roof of the temple for an annual rededication of the main god through *hnm-itn* rituals, were reached by staircases.¹⁰ The western column of the complex of wabet at Edfu has a detailed description of the ritual roles carried out by master of secrets priest as: “*Ascending the staircase, revealing the face of god, offering wedja-pectoral*

¹ For this title see, William, Ward, *Index of Egyptian Administrative and Religious Titles of the Middle Kingdom: With a Glossary of Words and Phrases Used* (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1982), 119; Kjell, Rydstrom, *hry-sšt3 “in Charge of Secrets”: The 3000-Year Evolution of a Title* Discussions in Egyptology 28 (1994): 55; Aylward Manley, Blackman, “The House of the Morning”, JEA 5 (London: 1918): 148-165. John, Baines, “Restricted Knowledge, Hierarchy, and Decorum: Modern Perceptions and Ancient Institutions”, JARCE 27 (1990): 9-10.

² Edfou, IV 122,11; Mohiy El-Din Ibrahim, *Aspects of Egyptian Kingship According to the Inscriptions of the Temple of Edfu*, PhD Thesis (Cairo: The General Organization for Government Printing Offices, 1966), 186-7.

³ Edfou, I 558,6; IV 356,12.

⁴ Edfou, I 558,8.

⁵ Edfou, I, 413, 13-14.

⁶ Edfou, I, 558, 5-9; pl XXXVIII d.

⁷ Edfou, I, 540, 1; pl. XXXVIIIb. For more details about these titles see, Ahmed, Safina, “Processions of the Priests of the Eastern Staircase at Edfu Temple”, *Shedet*, 9 (2020): 24-30.

⁸ Edfou, I, 544, 7; pl. XXXVIIe.

⁹ Edfou, I, 413, 13-14.

¹⁰ See for this annual festival, Maurice, Alliot, *Le culte d’Horus à Edfou au temps des Ptolémées*, (Le Caire: Imprimerie de l’Institut français d’Archéologie orientale, 1954), 303-433; Sylvie, “Cauville, Dendara [V]: Les fêtes d’Hathor, Composition hiéroglyphique”, *OLA* 105, (2002): 35-49.

and the collar, giving the white linen, the blue linen¹, dark red linen to wrap Horus with the god's shrine (box) of cloth [...] adornment, establishing the headband and counterpoise and repeating the libation by the master of secret priest".² The same is attested with a priest on the western wall of the eastern staircase at Dendera as "who raises up the shrine (box) which carries the clothes of Tayet to hide her statue with them, who ties the wedja-pectoral to the strong one, who gives the amulet of god on her breast".³

Returning to stela CGC 22174, it is remarkable that the text contains also a honorary title "acquaintance of the king" which was held by most of local clergies in the temple. In summary, this stela has added to our knowledge more information about the long paternal pedigree of five generations of the priestly family from which Wedjatshu's husband descends. Also, it provides us with significance data about their priestly status within the cultic organization of Min of Akhmim. According to the following source, Wedjatshu had one daughter beside Inaroys III. It cannot be determined who is older but they are contemporary. The daughter was likely to have had privileged access to the singing troupes as her mother.

3- Stela of Tasheretenmin in British Museum, BM EA1139 (Fig. 3):

This round-topped limestone stela was made to commemorate Tasheretenmin (Senminis),⁴ Wedjatshu's daughter. Its height is 54 cm and its width is 40 cm. It is divided into three registers: A) the lunette is decorated with a winged solar disc and two pendent uraei. A small title *Bḥdty ntr ʿ3* "Behdite, the great God" is between the uraei. Below the winged sun-disk are two solar boats; that on the right carries a scarab within a sun disk and that on the left carries a ram. B) In the second register are two symmetrical scenes of Tasheretenmin depicting the deceased stands barefoot wearing a long wrap-around ankle garment over a sheath dress. She raises her two hands in an adoration pose before four deities captioned with their name and titles above them. On the right side are Osiris, Anubis, Horus, and Isis. On the left side are Min, Horus, Nephthys and Repit. C) The lower register contains a text in ten horizontal lines running from right to left. The lines 7-8 read:



¹ See Arno, Egberts, *In Quest of Meaning. A Study of the Ancient Egyptian Rites of Consecrating the Meret-chests and Driving the Calves*, Egyptologische Uitgaven VIII/1-2, (Leiden: Peeters, 1995), 139-142.

² Edfou I, 413, 12-16.

³ Dendara, VII, 197, 10-14.

⁴ It is a common personal name during the Ptolemaic Period, PN, II, 393.3. W. Budge Some account of the collection of Egyptian antiquities in the possession of Lady Meux, of Theobald's Park, London, 1896, 123 ff, pl. XI.; P. Munro, *Die Spätägyptischen Totenstelen*, II, 315, 242; G. Daressy, "Description des monuments épigraphiques trouvés à Karnak en 1921-1922", *ASAE* 22 (1922): 265; CGC, 22009. There are two statues of women bearing the name of Tasheretenmin. The first is in the Petrie Museum, London (LDUCE-UC60160), S. Quirke & I. Ibrahim, *Women in the Temple: An Appeal to the Living by a Woman*, on a Statue Fragment of the Late 1st Millennium BC in the Petrie Museum, London, *International Journal of Heritage, Tourism and Hospitality* vol. 15, issue 2 (2021), 49-62. The second is in the Louvre Museum N2540, <https://collections.louvre.fr/ark:/53355/cl010017975> ; Funerary Wooden statue bears Tasheretenmin's name represented in Ptah-Sokar-Osiris shape in Kallos Gallery in London. The father name on this statue is Osiriswer see, <https://kallogallery.com/artworks/categories/1/541-egyptian-an-egyptian-wood-ptah-sokar-osiris-for-the-akhmim-ptolemaic-period-circa-200-bc/>.

Wsir [7] *iht* n *Mnw* *hnmt* n *k3* *mwt.f* *T3-šrt-Mnw* *m3^ct-hrw* *s3t* n *sm3ty* [8] *hry-sšt3* n *mwt-ntr* *dhwtj-ms* *m3^c-hrw* *irt* n *nbt* *pr iht* n *Mnw* *Wd3t-Šw*.

Osiris, [7] *sistrum* player of *Min*, *chantress* of the *Bull* of his mother, *Tasheretenmin*, true of voice, daughter of *stolist*, [8] *master* of secrets of the god's mother, *Djehutymes*, true of voice, born of the lady of the house, *sistrum* player of *Min* *Wedjatshu*.

This stela has expanded our knowledge of *Wedjatshu*'s family by preserving her daughter name, *Tasheretenmin*. She retained the traditional titles of her mother and also had privileged access to the singing and playing in music troupes. One has to note that her father, *Djehutymes*, held part of the same titles, as attested on his son's stela CGC 22144. It seems very plausible that the high social status and the principal official career of *Wedjatshu*'s husband were transmitted from his ancestors and thereafter to his son. All the family served within the cultic organization in carrying the coloured linens and divine adornments of the god's statue at the annual festivals of the temple. It is worth noting that *Wedjatshu*'s name is not followed by the mortuary formula *m3^ct-hrw* "true of voice", which may indicate that she was still alive when her daughter and husband passed away.

4- The stela of *Horimhotep* Egyptian Museum, Cairo CGC 22152 (Fig. 4):

This round-topped limestone stela was made to commemorate *Horimhotep*¹ (*Ἀριμουθης*), son of *Tasheretenmin*. Its height is 59 cm and its width is 47 cm. It is divided into three registers: A) the round-topped lunette is decorated with a winged solar disc and two pendent uraei. Between the uraei is a small title *Bhdy ntr* ʕ "Behdite, the great God". B) Below the lunette are two symmetrical scenes of *Horimhotep*. Both depict the deceased standing barefoot and raising his two hands in an adoration pose before three deities. On the right side are *Min*, *Horus* and *Nephthys*. On the left side are *Osiris*, *Anubis* and *Isis*. C) The lowest register contains a text in eleven horizontal lines running from right to left. The lines 8-9 can be read as follows:



Wsir hm-ntr sš Hr-ii-m-htp m3^c-hrw s3 n hm-ntr sš Hr-ḥnh m3^c-hrw [9] *ir* n *nbt-pr iht* *nfrt* *T3-šrt Mnw m3^ct-hrw*.

Osiris, priest, scribe, *Horimhotep*, true of voice, son of priest, scribe, *Horankh*, true of voice, [9] born of the lady of the house, *sistrum* player, beautiful one, *Tasheretenmin*, true of voice.

The former text records the names and the titles of *Tasheretenmin*'s husband, *Horankh*, and her son, *Horimhotep*, who functioned as priests within *Akhmim* temple. Their official career indicates that they must have belonged to the scribe's echelons. This may reflect the marriage relationship between the scribe's echelons who functioned inside

¹ It is a common personal name during the Late and Ptolemaic Periods, PN, II, 145.22; Louvre C 120; A Faience shabti in the National Museum of Archaeology, Portugal, E 118 (n. cat. 137) bears the name *Horimhotep*. The name *Horimhotep* on this shabti is very clear while his mother's name, *Tasherientihet*, which given in the inventory register is uncertain. The sign which read *iht* is not visible see <https://www.trismegistos.org/name/265>.

the royal palace and those who worked within the temple, the grandfather of Tasheretenmin from her mother branch, Hor, was a royal scribe as attested on the offering table BM EA1364 and on the stela of the Metropolitan Museum of Art acc.no. 68.17.

5- Stela of Inaroys II in the British Museum, BM EA1730 (Fig.5):

This round-topped limestone stela was made to commemorate Inaroys II, son of Horsaisis son of Inaroys I who is attested on the stela CGC 22174. It is divided into five registers: 1) Winged sun-disk with pendant uraei is in the lunette. Below it is a solar boat in which the deceased kneels and raises his two hands in an adoration pose before three seated deities; reclining jackals are on either side of the solar boat. 2) Central sun-disk with six radiating rays, is flanked by two kneeling female mourners; two standing figures of Re wrapped in a tight-fitting garment, face offering tables at the outer edges of the stela. 3) Two symmetrical scenes of the deceased, two ba-birds and four monkeys raising their hands in adoration pose for the sun-god. 4) The stela's owner, Inaroys II, and his wife seated on lion-footed chairs before an offering-table and facing one priest, who may be Djehutymes, carrying an incense-burner and a libation-vase. 5) The lowest register contains five rows of hieroglyphic text.



Wsr sm3ty Ipw hm-Hr hry sst3 mwt-ntr Irt-Hr-r-rw m3^c-hrw s3 mi nn Hr-s3-3st m3^c-hrw ms nbt pr 3b3 m3^ct-hrw.

Osirs, stolist (in/of) Akhmim, priest of Horus, master of secrets of the god's mother, Irethoreru, son of the like-titled Horsaisis, true of voice, born of the lady of the house Aba, true of voice.

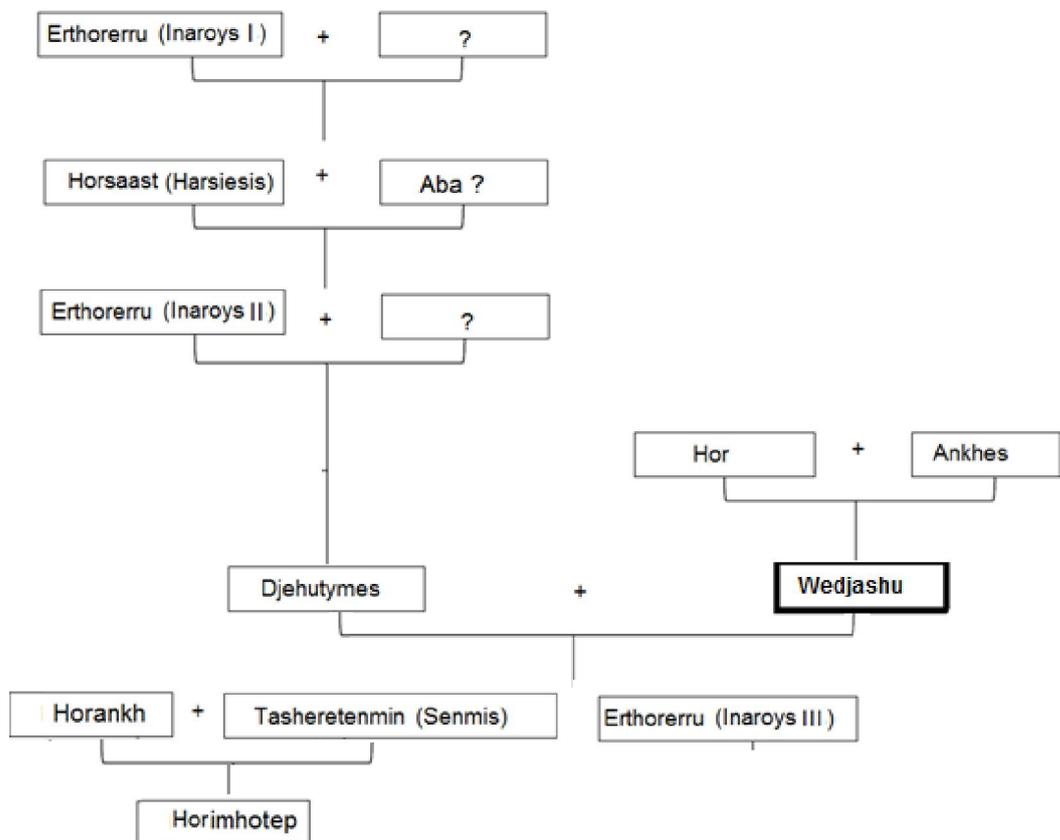
The text preserves important indicators about the ancestors of Wedjatshu's husband. Inaroys II held the sacerdotal titles attested on the stela CGC 22174. These priestly titles were transmitted to him from his father, Horsaisis, who also served in the same temple institution at Akhmim. His mother, Aba, was a housemistress and is not given any title. It is also worth mentioning that this stela dates to the third generation of the ancestor of Inaroys III. This fits perfectly with the date given by Peter Munro 550-520 B.C¹ and the inventory register date of the British Museum.²

¹ Munro, *Die Spätägyptischen Totenstelen*, II, p.315.

² https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/Y_EA1730.

Conclusion:

Wedjatshu descended from one of the most important families which had occupied high position at Akhmim during the Ptolemaic Period. Her father, Hor, was an Egyptian royal scribe, and she married a high dignitary priest, Djehuty-mes, who together with his family were active in the clergy of the god Min Temple for five generations. From the religious and honorific titles attested on the related mortuary material of this family, it becomes clear that the career of the family's men is exclusively carrying boxes of clothes and adornments for the god's statue during ascending and descending the staircases or within the places that witnessed the celebrations, while women served within the temple in a professional capacity as a part of the singing and playing music troupes. On the basis of the above information, it is possible to reconstruct the following family tree as follows:



Figures:

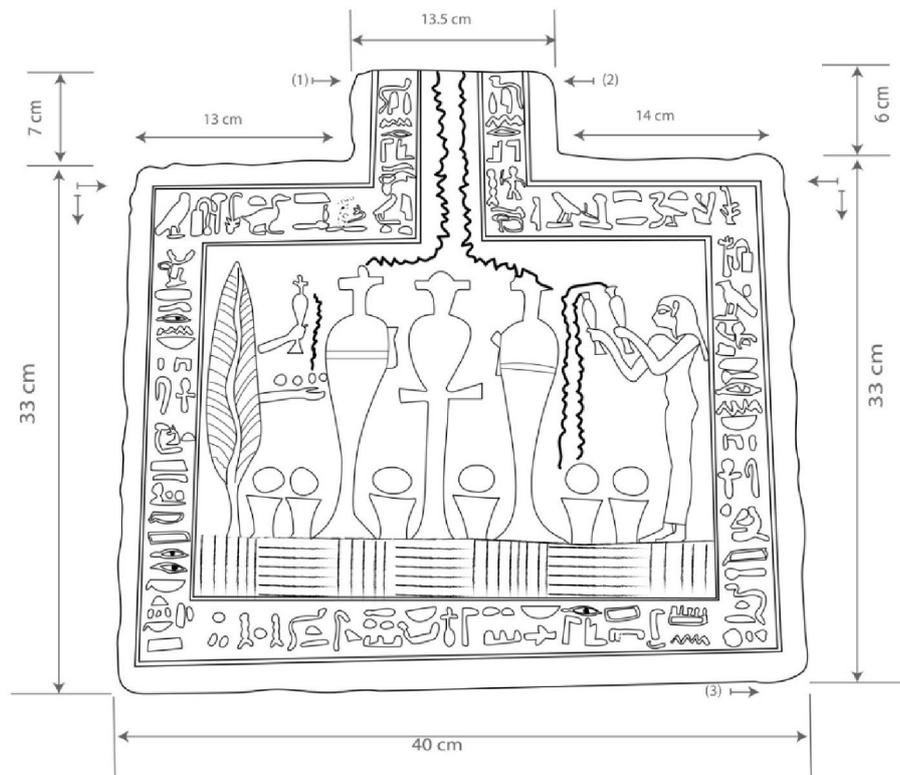


Fig. 1 The offering table of Wedjatshu in the British Museum, BM EA1364 © the British Museum (drawing by Samir Gaber).

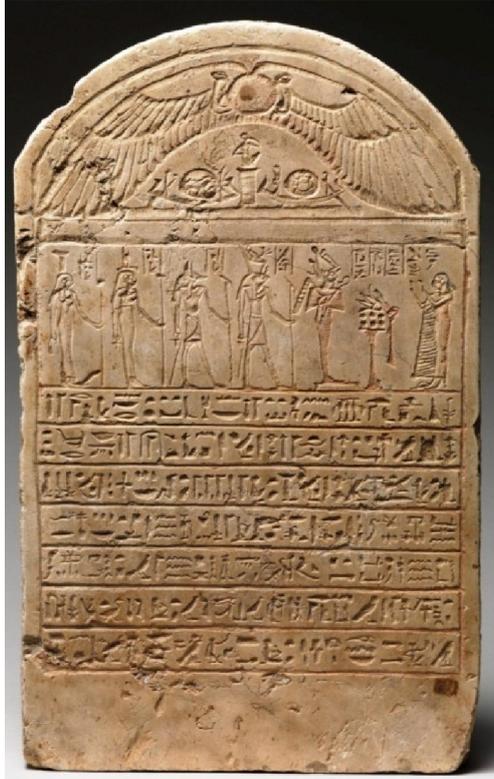


Fig. 2 Stela of Wedjatshu in the Metropolitan Museum of Art acc.no. 68.17 ©
Metropolitan Museum of Art.

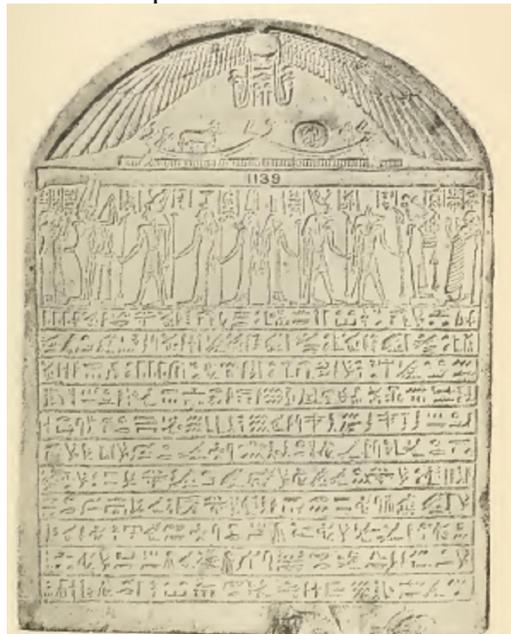


Fig. 3 Stela of Tasheretenmin in the British Museum, BM EA1139, Budge, British
Museum. A guide to the Egyptian galleries, 1901.



Fig. 4 Stela of Horimhotep in Egyptian Museum, Cairo CGC 22152, Kamal, Stèles I, p. 140, II, pl. XLVII.



Fig. 5 Stela of Inaroy II in the British Museum, BM EA1730 © the British Museum.

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Links

- <https://collections.louvre.fr/ark:/53355/cl010017975>
- <https://kallogallery.com/artworks/categories/1/541-egyptian-an-egyptian-wood-ptah-sokar-osiris-for-the-akhmim-ptolemaic-period-circa-200-bc/>
- <https://www.trismegistos.org/name/265>.
- https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/Y_EA1730.