

## A Ramesside Stela of *R3m* from Deir El-Madina in the Egyptian Museum of Cairo

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**Abstract:** This paper deals with studying and republishing a painted limestone stela from Deir el Madina under the number (JE 43567). It is now on display at the Egyptian Museum of Cairo. It was discovered inside the Ptolemaic Temple enclosure by Baraize in 1912 at Deir-el-Madina. It belongs to one of Deir el-Madina's workmen, *R3m*. The stela is divided into two registers. The upper register bears a depiction of the lower part of a seated baboon shown squatting over a shrine. The lower register carries a scene of *R3m* in an adoration gesture in front of four vertical lines of Hieroglyphic inscriptions. The inscriptions refer to the *sn-t3* rite which was commonly mentioned on Deir el Madina stelae. This paper aims to study the texts and scenes appeared on the stela. Moreover, it aims to present an analysis of the '*sn-t3*' phrase which is preceded by the adoration formula and its connection with 'Lord of Hermopolis', Thoth.

**Keywords:** Stela, Deir el-madina, *R3m*, Kissing the ground ritual, *sn-t3*, Ramesside Period.

### إحدى لوحات "عصر الرعامسة" لرا-مع الموجودة بالمتحف المصري بالقاهرة

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**الملخص:** يتناول ذلك البحث دراسة وإعادة نشر لوحة من الحجر الجيري الملون من دير المدينة مسجلة تحت الرقم (JE 43567). وهي معروضة الآن في المتحف المصري بالقاهرة. تم اكتشافها داخل سور المعبد البطلمي بواسطة Baraize عام ١٩١٢، وهي تنتمي لأحد عمال دير المدينة *R3m*. تنقسم اللوحة إلى صفيين؛ يحمل الصف العلوي تمثيلاً للجزء الأسفل من قرد البابون الذي يظهر جالساً فوق مقصورة. ويحمل الصف السفلي مشهداً لـ *R3m* في وضع التعبد أمام أربعة سطور رأسية من النقوش الهيروغليفية، تشير النقوش إلى عبارة *sn-t3* التي شاع ذكرها على العديد من لوحات دير المدينة. يهدف هذا البحث إلى دراسة النصوص والمناظر التي ظهرت على تلك اللوحة. علاوة على ذلك، يهدف إلى تقديم تحليل لعبارة: *sn-t3* المسبوقة بصيغة التعبد، وارتباطها بسيد الأشمونين، جوتي.

**الكلمات الدالة:** لوحة - دير المدينة - *R3m* - طقسة تقبيل الأرض - *sn-t3* - عصر الرعامسة.

## Introduction

This paper deals with a stela from Deir el-Madina which is not fully published<sup>1</sup>. It is on display at the Cairo Egyptian Museum<sup>2</sup>. Deir el-Madina stelae are very important because they shed light on the life of private individuals and the phenomenon of personal piety within the community of workmen. The stela belongs to *Rꜣmꜥ*, a servant who lived at Deir el-Madina probably during the 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. It was found by Baraize in 1912 at the north eastern side of the village, inside the Ptolemaic Temple enclosure<sup>3</sup>. This paper will present translation and transliteration of the inscriptions, besides analyzing the *sn-tꜣ* phrase that is mentioned on the stela of *Rꜣmꜥ*.

## Description

*Rꜣmꜥ* stela is incised and colored. Its dimensions are 18.7×18×3.9 cm. The upper part that probably carried inscriptions is broken and lost. The stela is divided into two registers by a broad blue line in an imitation of a mat. The upper register only preserves the lower part of a squatted baboon seated on a shrine to the left side. The right side is occupied by the lower part of three offering tables. The upper part of offering tables probably carried different offerings which are missing due to the condition of the stela.

According to the lower part of the squatting baboon, it could suggest that Thoth is shown with both hands on his knees. It could also reveal that Thoth's image resembles his representation on stela CG 35011 (fig. 3). It is worth mentioning that the god's representation in a zoomorphic form associates him with the title the 'Lord of Hermopolis'.

The lower register shows only one scene for *Rꜣmꜥ* to the right hand corner of the stela. He appears in a kneeling position with both hands raised up in an adoration attitude. He is represented in profile, wearing a curly hair wig. His eye is outlined with black color and his skin is reddish brown. Around his neck, a blue wide collar is shown without any details. He is wearing a white short pleated kilt. *Rꜣmꜥ* recites the words written in front of him in four vertical columns. The inscriptions are addressed to Thoth, the 'Lord of Hermopolis' as follows:





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<sup>1</sup> The stela of *Rꜣmꜥ* has been noted by: Émile Baraize, "Compte rendu des travaux exécutés à Déir el-Médineh", *ASAE* 13 (1914): 39; Bernard Bruyère, *Rapport sur les fouilles de Deir el Médineh (1923 – 1924, FIFAO 2: 2* (Cairo: Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 1925), 90, pl. 2 (4); Paul Posener-Kriéger, et al. *Deir el-Medineh. Un village antique en Haute Egypte* (Paris: M. L. Bouquin / Banque Nationale De Paris, 1984), 135; *PM* I, 699; José M. Galán and Gema Menéndez, *CG 35001 – 35066: Deir El-Medina Stelae and Other Inscribed Objects* (Cairo: The Supreme Council of Antiquities Press, 2018), 34-35.



<sup>2</sup> The researcher is grateful for the curators of the Egyptian Museum at Cairo for the permission to publish this stela. Thanks owe to Mr. Sameh Abd el-Rahman for guaranteeing perfect photographs.



<sup>3</sup> This temple belongs to goddess Hathor and it was started by Ptolemy IV until reign of Ptolemy VIII. Several parts of older structures lie beneath this temple. See: Jaana Toivari-Viitala, *Deir El-Medina (development)*, in ed. Willeke Wendrich, *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology*, (Los Angeles: UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology 2011), 7-10; Galán and Menéndez, *Deir El –Medina Stelae*, 34 -35.



Dynasty.<sup>1</sup> It appeared in different forms on Deir el-Madina stelae: <sup>2</sup>, <sup>3</sup>, <sup>4</sup>, <sup>5</sup>.

1-b: *rdj(t) j3w(t)*<sup>6</sup>: This is the commonly used formula referring to the attitude of adoration on non-royal stelae<sup>7</sup>. However, the term *dw3*  was commonly used in royal adoration formulae.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, it is essential to point out that the formula *rdj(t) j3w(t)* was used by King Siptah which is entirely unusual<sup>9</sup>.

1-c: The orthography (Z3)  became commonly used since the 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty onwards, while the original form is (Z3A) <sup>10</sup>.

1-d: *dhwtj*: was variously written as  or <sup>11</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Alan Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar: Being an Introduction to the Study of Hieroglyphs* (London: Oxford University Press, 1949), 454.

<sup>2</sup> CG 35001.

<sup>3</sup> CG 35004.

<sup>4</sup> CG 35006.

<sup>5</sup> CG 35023.

<sup>6</sup> Rainer Hannig, *Die Sprache der pharaonen Großes Hand Wörterbuch Ägyptisch Deutsch* (Mainz, Philipp von Zabern, 1995), 22. It is worth mentioning that the first attested example of *j3w* posture dates back to the Old Kingdom, on the temple walls of King Sahura at Abusir. It was shown on both squatting and standing figures. Ludwig Borchardt, *Das Grabdenkmal des Königs Sahure II* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1913), 12, pls 1-5-7-12. As for private tombs, the first attested example belongs to 'Ij-mrj mastaba at Giza, Karl R. Lepsius, *Denkmäler aus Ägypten und Äthiopien II* (Berlin: Nicolaische Buchhandlung, 1849-1859), pl. 4 (c); Yvonne Harpur, *Decoration on Egyptian Tombs of the Old Kingdom* (London-New York: Kegan Paul International, 1987), 265 (14).







<sup>7</sup> Wb V, 426; Dimitri Meeks, *La prière en Égypte. Entre textualité et oralité*, edit. Gilles Dorival and Didier Pralon, *Prières méditerranéennes hier et aujourd'hui. Actes du colloque organisé par le Centre Paul-Albert Février (Université de Provence-C.N.R.S.) à Aix-en-Provence les 2 et 3 avril 1998, Aix-en-Provence* (Provence: Aix-en-Provence, 2000) 9–23; For further reading on adoration of private individuals see, John Baines, “Practical Religion and Piety”, *JEA* 73, 1987, 79–98; Battiscombe Gunn, “The Religion of the Poor in Ancient Egypt”, *JEA* 3, N°. 2/3, (1916): 81–94.




<sup>8</sup> For further reading on the development of the royal adoration formulae, see Rabee E. Mohamed, “The Worshipping Formulae of Royal Adoration Scenes in Ancient Egyptian Temples from the Old Kingdom till the End of the Late Period”, *JAGUAA* 2 8/19 (2023): 64–91.



<sup>9</sup> ‘*rdj(t) j3w.t n jmn-R<sup>c</sup> sn.t t3 n k3.f*’ granting praise to Amon-Ra, kissing the ground to his ka. *LD* (1900–1913): vol 6, ABTH III, 202a.


<sup>10</sup> Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar*, 536.


<sup>11</sup> Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar*, 470.

1-e: *sn.k t3 n*:  *sn* is a verb means to smell or to kiss<sup>1</sup>; *sn t3* kiss the ground *n* before (god or king)<sup>2</sup>. The first attestation of this expression occurred in the Pyramid texts as *snsn<sup>3</sup> t3*. It was an Old Kingdom funerary rite that continued until the Greco-Roman era. By the New Kingdom, the *sn-t3* formula started to be written in the infinitive form. Worthy of note that *t3* usually ends by the determinative  (N23) that tends to be replaced by (N21) . During the Eighteenth Dynasty, the determinative  became commonly used and often taking the place of earlier <sup>4</sup>. (A15)  became used as a determinative for the *sn-t3* expression by the Late and Ptolemaic Periods<sup>5</sup>.

2-a: *nb hmnw*: The epithet “The Lord of the City of the Eight/ Hermopolis/ El-Ashmunein” became the most widely used of all epithets of god Thoth from the Middle Kingdom onwards<sup>6</sup>. It is to be noted that ‘*jmy hmnw*’    “who is that in the *hmnw*” is an equivalent epithet to ‘*nb hmnw*’<sup>7</sup>.

2-b: The orthography (Z7) , in the word *hmnw*, is used as a substitute for (G43)  starting from the 9<sup>th</sup> Dynasty and it became common by the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, reign of King Akhenaton<sup>8</sup>.

2-c: *hmnw*: El Ashmunein also written as <sup>9</sup>.

3-a: The orthography  with ring shaped hands became common since the 13<sup>th</sup> Dynasty onwards<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> ‘to smell’, ‘to sniff’, ‘to breathe’, ‘to unite’. Alan Gardiner, *The Chester Beatty Papyrus no 1* (1931): C4, V4; Alan Gardiner, *Late Egyptian Stories* (Bruxelles: Brussels Edition de la Fondation Egyptologique, 1932), 5, 13; Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar*, 590; Jean-Claude Goyon, *Confirmation du pouvoir royal au nouvel an: Brooklyn Museum Papyrus 47.218.50* (Cairo, Brooklyn Museum, 1974), 114, 278.

<sup>2</sup> *Wb* IV, 175.3; Wilson, *Ptolemaic Lexikon*, 871. It is a funerary ritual that was mentioned for the first time in the Pyramid texts. *Pyr* 755b (422); Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar*, 590; James P. Allen, *Middle Egyptian* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 156; for a comprehensive study of the adoration gesture, see: Mahmoud El Khadragy “The Adoration Gesture in Private Tombs up to the Early Middle Kingdom”, *SAK* 29 (2001): 187-201.

<sup>3</sup> Literally translated as ‘kissing the ground’ or ‘to bow’, Wilson, *Ptolemaic Lexikon*, 853-854; ‘to kneel’ Alan R. Schulman, “Two Unrecognized Monuments of Shedsunefertem”, *JNES* 39 (1980): 305 a.

<sup>4</sup> Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar*, 488.

<sup>5</sup> Schulman, *Two Unrecognized Monuments*, 305 a; *Wb* IV, 154.

<sup>6</sup> Patrick Boylan, *Thoth, the Hermes of Egypt* (Oxford: H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1922): 151.

<sup>7</sup> *LGG* III, 716-718; Book of Dead, C 17, 5.

<sup>8</sup> Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar*, 537.

<sup>9</sup> Faulkner, *Middle Egyptian*, 191.

<sup>10</sup> Alexander Ilin-Tomich, “Late Middle Kingdom Stelae Workshops at Thebes”, *GM* 234 (2012): 80; Ahmed M. Ouda, “Egyptian Middle Kingdom Oyster Shells with Royal Names Function, Chronology and Gender Issues”, *BIFAO* 119 (2019): 267.

3-b: *jr.(j) n* ‘made by’<sup>1</sup>: a dedicatory phrase usually preceded the name of the one who dedicated the stela. It became a common phrase by the New Kingdom that precedes the name of donor. It became commonly used on Ramesside stelae<sup>2</sup> to indicate the action of donating or offering.

3-c: *st m3ʿt* “Place of Truth”: *st m3ʿt* “Place of Truth” and *p3 hr* (The Necropolis) were the most common designation for Deir el-Madina royal necropolis and the village settlement. It was called *p3 dmj* (The City) by the workmen of Deir el-Madina<sup>3</sup>.

### The *sn-t3* formula and the Cult of Thoth at Deir el-Madina

The Old Kingdom Pyramid texts (PT 755 b-c) carry the first attestation of the expression *sn-t3*.<sup>4</sup> As time elapsed, this formula turned into an essential funerary rite that continued until the Ptolemaic era.<sup>5</sup> It was practiced for several purposes, for instance: satisfying the god<sup>6</sup>, to recognize his beauty<sup>7</sup>, fearing him<sup>1</sup>, and finally to fulfill the desire of the deceased deceased to join the funerary deities and partake in food with them in the afterlife<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Wb I, 111 (7)

<sup>2</sup> For instance, see Harry M. Stewart, *Egyptian Stelae, Reliefs and Paintings from the Petrie Collection I: The New Kingdom* (Warminster: Aris & Phillips 1976), pl. 33 (3), pl. 37, (3), pl. 38, (2); Svetlana Hodjash and Oleg Berlev, *The Egyptian Reliefs and Stelae in the Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts* (Moscow: Aurora Art Publishers, 1982), 141 (82), 142 (84).

<sup>3</sup> Jaroslav Černý, *A community of workmen at Thebes in the Ramesside Period* (Cairo: Institut Français d'archéologie orientale, 2001), 6 - 67; Raphael Ventura, *Living in a city of the dead: A selection of topographical and administrative terms in the documents of the Theban necropolis, Orbis biblicus et orientalis* 69 (Chicago: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986), 1 – 63. Thutmosis I is the founder of the settlement of Deir el-Madina which flourished during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Dynasties and declined during the reign of Ramses XI. Lynn Meskell, An Archaeology of Social Relations in an Egyptian Village, *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 5 (3) (1998) 212-213; Sofia Haggman, *Directing Deir el-Medina. The External Administration of the Necropolis* (Uppsala: Department of Archaeology and Ancient History, Uppsala University, 2002), 57-59; 319-325

<sup>4</sup> Samuel Mercer, *The Pyramid Texts* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1952), 225; Raymond Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts* (Oxford: the clarendon press 1969), 139; William Simpson, *The Literature of Ancient Egypt* (London: Yale University Press 2003), 255.

<sup>5</sup> As for the earliest evidence for this ritual, it dates back to the Middle Kingdom. It was mentioned in the ‘Story of Sinuhe’ that Sinuhe was laid on his belly and prostrated on the ground when he saw the King sitting in his golden kiosk. Sayed Tawfik, “Aton Studies”, *MDAIK* 29 (1973): 77–86, 77-80; Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: A Book of Readings I: The Old and Middle Kingdoms* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1973), 231; Vincent A. Tobin, “The Secret of Sinuhe”, *JARCE* 32 (1995): 161–178, 175, N° 59. The tomb of Pashedu at Deir el-Madina is famous for the scene of this rite ‘*sn-t3*’ Nina M. Davies and Alan Gardiner, *Ancient Egyptian painting II* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1936), pl. 102; Alain-Pierre Zivie, La tombe de Pached à Deir El-Médineh, N(3), *IFAO* 99, (Cairo: Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale 1979) 7.

<sup>6</sup> CG 35007.

<sup>7</sup> For Middle Kingdom example of kissing the ground before Wepwawet to recognize his beauty, “*Kissing the earth to the Foremost of the Westerners, seeing the beauty of Wepwawet*”, see: Richard Parkinson, *Voices from Ancient Egypt: An Anthology of Middle Kingdom writings* (London: British Museum Press, 1991), 61-

Nevertheless, it is essential to point out that the expression *sn-t3* appears frequently on Deir el-Madina stelae<sup>3</sup>. Stelae of similar contexts at Deir el-Madina have either a representation of a deity in front of the adoring figure or an inscription related to the gesture written directly in front of the adoring figure<sup>4</sup>. The inscriptions frequently start with the non-royal adoration formula *rdj j3(w)*. Sometimes the text found above the adoring figure shown inscribed in front of a deity<sup>5</sup>. The gesture represents the deceased adoring a certain deity whose name and titles are mentioned in the texts.

It has been observed that the expression *sn-t3* is associated with several deities venerated at the village of Deir el-Madina such as: Amon-Ra, Rahorakhty, Merseger, Iah-Thoth, Shed, Hathor, and Seth. The cult of these deities was widely spread among the workmen at Deir el-Madina in a private context. It is to be noted that this formula is also associated with defied Kings which reflects the veneration of ancestors<sup>6</sup>.

The *sn-t3* formula is directed to Thoth, the Lord of Hermopolis. He was one of the important deities in ancient Egyptian Pantheon whose cult was attested as early as the First Dynasty. By the New Kingdom, Thoth played an essential role in the last judgment of the dead which refers to his funerary role. Accordingly, he carried the epithet “the Lord of the West” who filled the office of the Judge of the Dead<sup>7</sup>.

The worship of Thoth became popular during the New Kingdom. He became widely famous as a protector of the dead. As a result, he enjoyed a great favor by the ancient Egyptians, at Thebes in particular. This is clear through the several statues, statuettes, stelae, and shrines dedicated to him<sup>8</sup>.

According to Bleeker<sup>9</sup>, there is a variety of data about the private worship of god Thoth. The several hymns and prayers praising Thoth on Deir el-Madina stelae reflect personal

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62; CT V, 333 k-l (460); Raymond Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts* (Warminster: Aris and Philipps, 1973), 88.

<sup>1</sup> MMA 21.2.6 in David Klotz, “Between Heaven and Earth in Deir el-Medina: Stelae MMA 21.2.6”, *SAK* 34(2006): 272-273.

<sup>2</sup> CT V, 333 k-l (460); Faulkner, *Coffin Texts*, 88.

<sup>3</sup> CG 35023; CG 35027; CG 35031; CG 35033 ; CG 35001 ; MMA 21.2.6.

<sup>4</sup> CG 35031.

<sup>5</sup> CG 35001.

<sup>6</sup> The workmen of Deir el-Madina venerated King Ahmose I and Queen Ahmos-Nefertari as patrons of their necropolis. For instance, see JE 41469; SR 3/10353, Galán and Menéndez, *Deir El –Medina Stelae*, 23.

<sup>7</sup> Jouco Bleeker, Hathor and Thoth, *Two key figures of the Ancient Egyptian Religion* (Leiden: Brill, 1973), 107.

<sup>8</sup> Boylan, *Hermes of Egypt*, 141.

<sup>9</sup> Bleeker, *Hathor and Thot*, 152-153.

reverence of him among the workmen. The god was widely worshiped in domestic chapels and private homes<sup>1</sup>.



Thoth appears in different forms on Deir el-Madina stelae. For instance, in the form of lunar disk and the crescent inside a barque<sup>2</sup>; a baboon either holding scribal tools or shown with both hands on his knees; or ibis headed human body and sometimes is shown holding *wdjat* eyes.

As for the zoomorphic form of Thoth, Sadek states that it was the common representation for him among humble individuals<sup>3</sup>. The ibis-headed man and the baboon forms illustrate the scribal role of Thoth. Scribes usually represent themselves as being under the protection of the deity in the form of a baboon<sup>4</sup>. This probably reflects the humble status of *R3-m*.

As for the interpretation of kissing the ground before Thoth, it could be assumed that the ancient Egyptians believed in the ability of the 'words of power' of Thoth. Those powerful words would open the earth for the deceased to start his journey in the underworld<sup>5</sup>. Accordingly, it could be assumed that kissing the ground in front of Thoth is to get united with the ground. This reflects the desire of the deceased to start his journey in the afterlife. This wish would be fulfilled through the powers of the words of god Thoth who will open the gates of earth for the dead<sup>6</sup>.

Another assumption is that *R3-m* as a Servant at the Place of Truth probably has had some knowledge of writing. Accordingly, he had his devotion towards Thoth.

## The name

Worthy of note, the name of *R3-m* is noted by Ranke<sup>7</sup> as *rm* <sup>1</sup> without the determinative . Bruyère<sup>2</sup> suggests that *R3-m* who is mentioned on this stela is the same

<sup>1</sup> Ashraf I. Sadek, *Popular Religion in Egypt during the New Kingdom*, (Hildesheim: Gerstenberg, 1987), 162.

<sup>2</sup> Stela of Huy at Turin Museum, Cat. 1608 see: [https://collezioni.museoegizio.it/en-GB/material/Cat\\_1608](https://collezioni.museoegizio.it/en-GB/material/Cat_1608) (accessed on 4/12/2024); Benedict G. Davies, *Ramesside inscriptions, translated and annotated: notes and comments, volume III. Ramesses II, his contemporaries* (Malden-Oxford: Blackwell, 2013), 491, 501, 581; Suys Emile, "Un pénitent du dieu Iâh-Thot (stèle no. 4 du Musée de Turin)", *Orientalia* 2 (1933): 180–183; Tosi-Mario Roccati, Alessandro, *Stele e altre epigrafi di Deir el Medina: n. 50001 - n. 50262*, *Catalogo del Museo Eg. di Torino - Serie II. - Collezioni I* (Torino: Redizioni d Arte Fratelli Pozzo, 1972), 279.

<sup>3</sup> Sadek, *Popular Religion*, 133.



<sup>4</sup> Martin A. Stadler, *Thoth*, in eds., Jacco Dieleman, Willeke Wendrich, *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology* (Los Angeles: UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology, 2012), 3; Denise Doxey, "Thoth", ed. Donald Redford, *The Oxford Essential Guide to Egyptian Mythology* (New York: Berkley Books, 2002), 353.

<sup>5</sup> Boylan, *Hermes of Egypt*, 140.

<sup>6</sup> And the doors of heaven *kbhw* will open to the dead by Thoth, for further reading, see: Boylan, *The Hermes of Egypt*, 140-141.

<sup>7</sup> PN I, 222 for other persons carry the same name, see: Benedict Davies, *Who's Who at Deir El-Medina: A Prosopographic Study of the Royal Workmen's Community* (Leiden: Netherlands Institute for the Near East,





*R3m*<sup>c</sup> who is mentioned on CG 35015. His name is written in the same way as  while the determinative  is absent probably due to the bad condition of the stela. Accordingly, *R3m*<sup>c</sup> would be the son of Ipyu and his wife Pastjay. If we took this opinion into consideration, the stela of *R3m*<sup>c</sup> could be dated back to the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty.

### Conclusions

There is no indication of the profession of *R3m*<sup>c</sup> recorded on his stela. If *R3m*<sup>c</sup> on this stela JE 43567 is the same workman mentioned on CG 35015, it could be suggested that our stela dates back to the beginning of 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty.

*R3m*<sup>c</sup> is shown in adoration position while reciting the four vertical lines in front of him. Those words reflect his desire to acquire benefits from Thoth. His wish would be fulfilled thorough kissing the ground and satisfying Thot's *k3* who in return would open the gates of earth to *R3m*<sup>c</sup> by the power of his words. Accordingly, he will be able to start his journey in the afterlife.

The determinatives A4  and A30  suggest that the written word here can replace the original speech act. Those stelae were not only intended for illustrating the personal piety, but also to illustrate its sustaining performance of a certain rite<sup>3</sup>.

The *sn-t3* expression appears frequently on Deir el-Madina stelae which reflects social practices taking the form of divine access and the interaction between individuals with a certain deity among the community of workmen. It clarifies the aspects of personal piety<sup>4</sup> in the village of workmen. The stela reflects the desire of the owner, by showing him, trying to reach the divine being through praising and performing the ritual act of 'kissing the ground'.

The act of prostration and kissing the ground in front of several deities in the pictorial and textual material of Deir el-Madina, reflects the desire of these individuals of being under the protection of a certain divine being. Moreover, it sheds light on their loyalty and subordination in front of the representative of power.

The abbreviated text without mentioning the profession of *R3m*<sup>c</sup> and the execution of the stela and its details shows the humble status of its owner.

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1999), 247; Rob Demaree, *The sh n jkr-R<sup>c</sup> Stelae: On Ancestor Worship in Ancient Egypt* (Leiden: Netherlands Institute for the Near East, 1983), 81; Jaroslav Černý, et al. *Repertoire onomastique de Deir el-Medineh* (Cairo: Institut français d'archéologie orientale du Caire, 1949), 7.

<sup>1</sup> Var.  

<sup>2</sup> *PN I*, 35.

<sup>3</sup> Lara Weiss, *Religious Practice at Deir El-Medina* (Leiden-Leuven: Netherlands Institute for the Near East, 2015), 155.










<sup>4</sup> For further reading, see: Sadek, *Popular Religion*, 293; Gunn, *The Religion of the Poor*, 81-94.








The similarity between the stela of the scribe Nebnefer (fig. 3) and the stela of *R3-m* suggests that both of them probably belong to the same workshop and the same religious background even though one stela is in a good condition (fig. 3) while the other one is partly broken (fig. 1).

The large number of stelae that carry representations of Thoth in different forms indicate that his cult was one of the major private cults among the workmen of Deir el-Madina. Furthermore, there might be a construction of a local religious sect within the community of workmen.

This stela shows a humble individual in front of a deity, hoping for mercy from him. It is unlike common stelae that show high officials getting closer to gods as creditors who have fulfilled their side. It shows religious emotions of humble individuals.

**Table 1: A number of Deir el-Madina stelae at the Cairo Egyptian Museum inscribed with the *rdj j3w* ‘praising formula’ and the *sn-t3* phrase**

Number	owner	date	king	deity	Giving Praise	<i>sn-t3</i>
CG 35001	Pashed	19 <sup>th</sup> dyn	Ramses II	Amon		
CG 35004	Penamun	Late 19th – early 20th Dynasty	Amenmo se-Ramses III	Amon		X
CG 35006	Bay	20 <sup>th</sup> Dynasty	Ramesses III	Amun-Ra		X
CG 35023	Qenro	20th Dynasty	Ramesses III – Ramesses V	Hathor/ Merseger		
CG 35026	Penamun	19th Dynasty	?	Seth		X
CG 35027	paser	19th Dynasty	?	Hathor		

Number	owner	date	king	deity	Giving Praise	<i>sn-t3</i>
CG 35030	Ramose	19th Dynasty	Ramesses II	Shed		X
CG 35031	Penamun	19th Dynasty	Ramesses II	jaH-Thoth		
CG 35032	unknown	19th – 20th Dynasty	?	Defied King		X
CG 35033	unknown	19th Dynasty	Ramesses II ?	Merseger		
CG 35037	Neferhotep	19th Dynasty	?	Rahorakhty		X

## Figures



Fig.1. Stela of *R3m*<sup>c</sup>

After: Sameh Abd el-Rahman



Fig. 2. Facsimile of the Stela of *R3m*<sup>c</sup>

After: Mena Zaghloul



Fig. 3. Stela of scribe Nebnefer from Deir el-Madina

After: José M. Galán and Gema Menéndez, *CG 35001 – 35066: Deir El-Medina Stelae and Other Inscribed Objects*, (Cairo: The Supreme Council of Antiquities Press, 2018), pl. XI.

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