

## Three Funerary Stelae

---

### Three Funerary Stelae from New Kingdom

*Mansour El Noubi* (\*)

Two of the stelae to be discussed in the following pages stand in the Egyptian Museum at Cairo and the Egyptian room at the Louvre Museum. They were discovered (more probably) at Abydos and Thebes. The third stela was a part of a private collection at Luxor and is now preserved in the Supreme Council of Antiquities Magazine at Luxor temple under the registration number n 48. Its provenance is unfortunately unknown

Throughout the New Kingdom the funerary stelae have been broadly divided into two main Categories, The round topped stelae and the rectangular stelae. But whereas the former group is ubiquitous, The later is relatively rare<sup>1</sup>.

In the present paper we give a further example of the rectangular type, with two examples of the common round topped stelae. The first stela belongs to *Sri* probably from the beginning of the eighteenth dynasty (pl.1, fig.1)<sup>2</sup> The second stela belongs to *Hrdw* from the time of Thutmosis I (pl. 2, fig.2)<sup>3</sup> The last stela is kept now in the Luxor temple magazine and the identity of its owner is to be chosen between two officials: Usermonthu (TT 31) and Mahu (TT257) pl.3, fig.3.)<sup>4</sup> Each of them has its particular merits. A part from a briefly description for the first stela by Lacau in (CGC)<sup>5</sup>, the other two stelae have not received any scholarly attention.

#### 1-Stela of *Sri*

This stela made of limestone measures 50 cm high and 32 cm wide. Its original provenance is the north cemetery of Abydos and it is now in Cairo Museum CGC 34173. The stela figures and texts are in excellent state of preservation.

#### Scene and Texts:

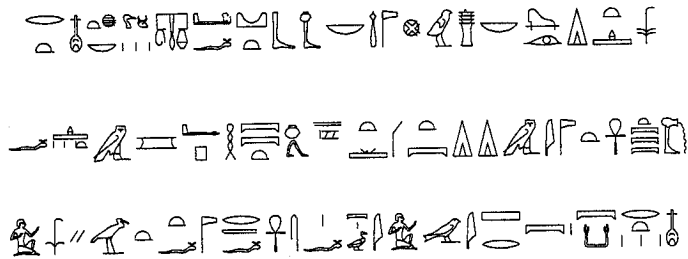
The style and workmanship of the stela are very good, the figures (all in sunk relief) are well drawn and the detail of wigs, etc., has been put in very thoroughly (though no doubt it was, as so often obscured by paint, of which perhaps a few traces remain), the composition of the scenes is pleasing and the hieroglyphs are well made.<sup>6</sup>

The upper part of the stela somewhat irregularly cut, with a *shen* sign flanked by *Udjat* eyes.

The second part of the stela has a representation of the deceased seated on a high-backed chair with lion feet. In his left hand he is holding a lotus blossom and in his right hand is a folded napkin. The deceased is facing a table of offerings heaped with a four jars of beer placed on a stand with three loaves of bread between them.<sup>7</sup>

The deceased is wearing a short apron with a broad necklace around his neck and he has a close fitting wig with curls and a fringe. In front of him and behind the offerings table stands his son who is holding a vessel in his right hand pouring libation on the offerings and he is holding a goose or a duck in his left hand. He is wearing around his waist a short apron over which he has a longer apron, which is opened at the front, tied in a knot at the front waist. This garment falls to below the knee.<sup>8</sup>

In the lower part of the stela are three horizontal lines of the texts with offering- Formula reading from right to left as follows: ←



*htp di nsw(t) n Wsir nb Ddw ntr 3 nb 3bd(t)<sup>sic</sup> di f pr(t)-hrw t hntk k3w  
3pdw ht nb nfrt w'bt nht ntr in ddi tnyt 3 innt h'py m htpwt f nfrwt n. k3  
n Sri in s3 f s'nh rn f it ntr Sn-Dhwty.*<sup>9</sup>

A grant which the king gives to Osiris, lord of Abydos, the great god of everlastingness, that he ( may cause ) an invocation offering to come forth ( consisting of ) bread, beer, cattle, fowl and everything good and pure of ( which ) the god lives so that may be given ( what ) the earth contains ( and ) what the Nile brings consisting in offerings for the Ka of Sri ( it was made ) by his son ( who causes his name to live ) the God's father Sen-Dhwty.<sup>10</sup>

**Commentary:**

## Three Funerary Stelae

---

- In the offering formula of this stela, the word 3bdw wrote by using the sign T<sup>⊖</sup> at its end instead of the sign of the city.<sup>11</sup>
- The first section of this stela shows the well-known scene of pouring libation for the deceased by his son. Although this scene occurs fairly frequently on the walls of the New Kingdom tombs and temples, it is rarely depicted on the stelae of this period.
- Lotus-blossom smelling by the owner of the stela confirm the idea of life after death, in addition to its roles as a protecting amulet that protect him in the afterlife .It is notable also that the lotus -blossom appearance is almost unique in such a context. According to the idea that the deceased identifies himself with every thing which in shrines the principal of the resurrection, such as the morning star, the divine power of gods, as well as the lotus-blossom itself. Then one may assume that it appear here for symbolic reasons <sup>12</sup>.
- In spite of the brevity of the accompanying formula and relatively simplicity of its figure, the stela is a very good example of the funeral stelae of the New Kingdom period.

-It is might be simpler to assume that the stela belonged to the early eighteenth dynasty and having been executed in the Thutmosis I - Amenhotep II reigns according these evidences:

- The hair style of *Sr* the owner of this stela, was one of the most ancient examples of close-cropped head showing the ears in the reigns of Thutmosis I and Thutmosis II.
- The short knee length kilt apron dressed by the owner was familiar on the private funeral stela of Thutmosis I and II reigns. Also quality of the style of its relief are consistent with those current in this time, as illustrated by a considerable number of stelae attributed to their period.<sup>13</sup>

It is quiet sure that this stela belongs to one man had got priestly job depending on his garment and the title it-ntr together with the usual offerings he received.

### II- Stela of Hrdw:

This stela made of limestone measures 49 cm high and 33 cm wide. Its original provenance is not known: Thebes might be probable. It is

divided into two main registers. The lunette is occupied by the winged sun-disc with two pendent uraei. Beneath the winged sun disc are three horizontal lines of texts and one vertical line on the right side of the stela. 14

The first line of the text gives titles of Bhdetite twice as follows:



*Bhdt (j) ntr 3 pt ntr 3 Bhdt(j)*

Behdeti, the great god of the sky, the great god Behdeti. 15  
The second horizontal line contains the royal name of Thutmosis I inside a long cartouche reads as follows:



*3nh ntr nfr nb t3wy 3 hpr k3-R<sup>c</sup> mry Mnw Hr nht di 3nh mi R<sup>c</sup>*

May the good god lives, lord of the two lands { 3-hpr k3 R<sup>c</sup> }  
The beloved of Min, the stronger Horus [may he lives like R<sup>c</sup>].

The third horizontal line contains the offering formula, which read as follows: → ↓



*hpt di nsw(t) [n] Wsir hk3 dt di f pr[t] hrw t hntk k3w 3pdw n k3 n hrdw  
in sn f s'nh rn f Mniw Wsir Dhwtj .*

## Three Funerary Stelae

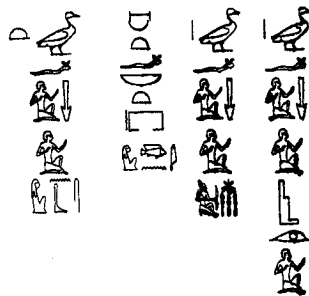
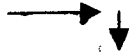
A grant which the king gives to Osiris , lord of everlastingness [ that he cause ] an invocation offering to come forth [ consisting of ] bread, beer , cattle and fowl to the spirit of Hrdw , it is made by his brother who causes his name to lives , protector of Osiris Djhuty .<sup>16</sup>

The first register shows *Hrdw*, the owner of the stela is seated on a high backed chair with a lion feet facing two offering - tables, the big one takes a stand shape with a long lotus -blossom upon it and *Hrdw* 's brother makes libation above it.

The other offering -table is a broad one, heaped with one loaf of bread, ox head and a jar of beer. Below it stands a jug of beer. Beneath the backed chair of Hrdw are a mirror, box of clothes and a jar of beer.<sup>17</sup>

The second register represents a row of *Hrdw* 's family carrying the offerings to be placed upon an offering - table that takes the usual type of the New Kingdom. It is heaped in its upper part with three jars of beer and a bundle of lettuce. In its lower part are two coned loaves of bread, egg and a bundle of leeks [or onion].

Their names depicted in four vertical lines read from right to left as follows:



The first one is his son who bears a goose in his left hand and two coned loaves of bread in his right hand. His name reads:

1- s3 f Sni-rs " His son Sni-rs " 18

The second one is his son who bears a jug of beer in his right hand and a lotus - blossom in his left hand. His name reads:

2- *s3 f Sni-ms* " His son Sni-mes " .19

The third one is his wife, who bears two jug of oil, her name reads:

3- *hmt f nbt- pr In* " His wife , mistress of the house In " 20.

The last one is his daughter, who bears five-coned loaves of bread in her left hand and a slaughtered goose in her right hand. Her name reads:

4- *s3t f Sni-snb* " his daughter Sni-seneb " .21

### Commentary:

-The most characteristic features of this stela is the disposition of the offerings on its offering- table which exhibits a freedom of choice, essentially the same items are arranged in different positions.

-The hieroglyphs in the stela are well made, the horizontal texts at the top are more finally and carefully carved than the hieroglyphs at the lower register which contains the members' names of Hrdw 's family.

-The owner of the stela dressed in a long tight -fitting dress, reaching his ankle, around his midst is a belt of two bands. 22

-The two women (his wife and his sister) who depicted on the second register of the stela wear a long tight-fitting dress, reaching their ankles. And they wear lappet long wig, making invisible ears. 23

-The two son of the owner stela at the same register also they dressed in a long tight -fitting dress, reaching their ankles with a belt around their midst. Each of them wears a curled wig making invisible ears, a style, which is common in the early part of the eighteenth dynasty. 24

-Lotus -blossom is portrayed among the gifts to Hrdw to confirm the idea of resurrection. The motif of a man smelling a lotus flower appears first during the reign of Amenemhat II but attains its greatest popularity during the reign of Amenemhat III, in addition to its role as a protecting amulet that protects the deceased in the after life. 25

## Three Funerary Stelae

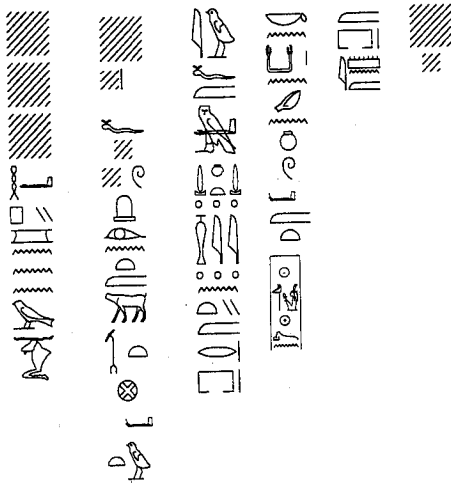
-With regards to the date of this stela, it is undoubtedly of the beginning of the eighteenth dynasty, time of Thutmose I which his name is inscribed in a long cartouche in the second line of its upper part.

### III-Stela of A Deputy in the Mansion of the Ramesseum:

The present fragment of the rectangular stela was part of a private collection at Luxor and is now preserved in the Luxor temple Magazine under the registration number n 48. The stela is generally in good condition especially in its lower part, the surface was carefully prepared and is smooth. The design and the hieroglyphic are done in sunken relief.

It consists in a slab of sandstone 0.32 m high and 0.18 m thick. Of the upper register, just remain the feet of a seated god (→) holding a *w3s* scepter.

At the lower register, the kneeling dedicant (←) was spelling a prayer:



- 1 : *H<sup>c</sup>py wr Šfy*
- 2 : ----- *f wd (?) ir n.t m ḥnw w3st-nhtw*
- 3 : *iw f m m-<sup>c</sup> d3d3 ḥsyw nty(w) m r3-pr*
- 4 : *.k n k3 n idnw m t(3) Hwt- wsr-m3<sup>c</sup>t-R<sup>c</sup>-stp-n-R<sup>c</sup>*
- 5 : *m pr Imn*

6 : *imntt W3st, M<sup>c</sup>hw*

**Translation of the Prayer:**

- 1: (... Hap)y, great of power<sup>26</sup>  
 2: ...made for you (or: that you have made) in the victorious Thebes<sup>27</sup>  
 3 : He is among the magistrates , the praised ones who are in your sanctuary .  
 4 For the Ka of the deservant in the temple of *Oser-maat-ra-setep-en-ra* (Ramses II)  
 5 : in the dominion of Amon in  
 6 : { the west of Thebes (?), *Mahu* (?) }

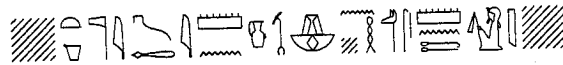
**Commentary :**

The stela is an excellent example of the sort of private funerary stela made during the New Kingdom. The simplicity of its composition brings to mind the monuments of the Old Kingdom rather than the more crowded and elaborate tomb stelae of the Middle Kingdom, although the basic type continues well into that period.

The very concise inscription, which refers only to *H<sup>c</sup>py (wr -šjyt)* in its prayer could also imply an earlier rather than a later date for this stela in the end of the eighteenth dynasty. It is difficult, however, to establish a more specific date for it.

- The most curious features that we encounter with this fragment of the stela are the problem of the identity of its owner. It might be simpler to chosen between two officials:

- Usermonthu (TT31), who seems to have born the titles: <sup>28</sup>



(*id*) *nw m hwt-nswt n(.t) Imntt W3st*  
*it-ntr nw 3 Imn-hnm-W<sup>c</sup>st hrj-hb n (?) h wsrDMntw*

Deputy in the Mansion (Ramessum) in west (of) Thebes.

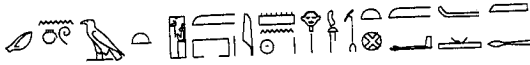


## Three Funerary Stelae

God's father (priest) in the west dominion of Amon (Ramesseum)

And

- Mahu (TT257) who shows the following titularies :<sup>29</sup>



*Idnw t3 Hwt - wsr - m3t - Rc - stp - n - Rc m pr Imn-Rc hr Imntt w3st*  
*Mch m3c-hrw*

Deputy in the mansion of Usimara-setepenre (Ramesseum) in the estate of Amon in western Thebes *Mahu* justified.

### General commentary :

As already shown about the stelae discussed in the foregoing pages and apart from their form all three stelae have other features in common. They all belong to Thebian families, each of whom found employ in mundane aspects of known cults. Appropriately, H3<sup>c</sup>by appears on Two of them (I, III,) and Osiris appears as lord of *Ddw*, *3bdw* and as *hk3 dt* on stelae (I, II).

The three stelae share a New Kingdom date, but they are not contemporaneous. As at present no other and dated monuments of these families have been identified, they cannot be assigned to particular reigns (except *Hrdw* stela II). However, on stylistic grounds, the earliest is that of may be dated to a period of time ranging from early to mid-eighteenth dynasty. Unfortunately, there is nothing in the inscriptions or decorative style of the stela that conclusively place it in the reign of any one king. Since the high quality of the style of relief are more consistent with those current in the time of Thutmose I<sup>st</sup> as illustrated by a considerable numbers of stelae attributed to his period.

Considering the second stela (II) of *Hrdw*, most of the paleographic and epigraphic features of it, also the high quality of the relief in general, the fineness of the modeling, and the exquisite details of the wigs, all with Thutmose I<sup>st</sup> cartouche combine to point to a date in the eighteenth dynasty time of Thutmose I<sup>st</sup>.

As regards the artistic features, of the third stela and the attitude of its owner the stela could be dated and belonged to either Usermonthu (TT 31), who seem to have bore the titles of: "Deputy in the Mansion of Ramessum " and Mahu (TT 257) who shows the titulary " The deservant in the temple of *Oser-maat-ra-setep-en-ra* (Ramses II). This last seems much more likely than Usermonthu as the writing of his titulary is almost identical in his tomb and on our document.

## Three Funerary Stelae

---

### Notes

\* Lecturer at the faculty of Arts, Sohag, Dept. of Egyptology, South Valley University.

\* I would like to express special thanks to the directors of the Egyptian and Louvre Museums, for permission to reproduce the two stelae herein and I am much indebted to my colleague Dr. El Azab Hassan who first suggested to me that I should work on them, for his kindness in helping me with some points in relation to the proper names. I wish also to thank Dr. Mohammed El-Soghier General director of the Egyptian Antiquities who kindly gave me permission to study the stela of Luxor temple magazine.

1- J.Vandier, Manuel II, i, 498, 502-5, 519, About the round topped stelae see: A. N. Dakin, the stela of the sculptor Sire at Oxford in: JEA 24 (1938), pp. 190 ff; see also: G. A. Gaballa, False door stelae of some Memphite personnel in SAK7 (1979), pp. 41-52, idm, Three funerary stela from New kingdom in MDIAK 35, 1979, pp. 189-194, A. Radwan " Six Ramesside Stelae in Popular Pyramidion-form " in: BIFAO 71, 1987, p. 228 f.; Soad Abdel-Aal, A Family Stela from Kafr el-Gabel in: GM 171 (1999), p. 7-11: Amin A. M. A. Amer, A stela from Abydos in Liverpool in: GM 171 (1999), p. 1-7

2-Cairo Museum C G 34173. A. Mariette, Catalogue general des monuments d, Abydos, Paris, 1880, p. 493, n 1301: I E. S. Edwards, Hieroglyphic Texts from Egyptian Stelae, etc., in the British Museum, part 8, London 1939 Passim.

3- Louvre Museum E 13063:E. Legrain, Les monuments Egyptiens de la bibliotheque nationale, Paris, 1879, p.32, Charles Boreux, Departement des Antiquites, Guide-Catalogue Sommaire II.

4-PM I, pp. 48, 341: see also: N. de G. Davies, A.H. Gardiner, Seven Private tombs at Kurnah, pp. 11-30.

5- Lacau, Steles du Novel Empire, CGC, p. 212, pl. 64.

6- About the parallel style of this stela see: H. Stewart, Egyptian Stelae, Reliefs and Paintings from the Petrie collection I, Warminster, 1976, passim. W.K Simpson, Two stelae of the Overseer of Amun, Amunemhab at Yale and the Oriental Institute (pls 2-3) in: Bulletin of the Egyptological Seminar I (1979), pp. 47-54.

7- J. Vandier, Manuel d'archeologie egyptienne, III., 1, Paris, 1958, pp. 493-495.

8- H. Stewart, op.cit. p. 23 f.

9 - W. Barta, Aufbau und Bedeutung der alt gyptischen Opferformel (Af 24), 1968, p.265

10-This name is only attested in the time. of Tuthmosis I see: PM I, 413, Mond and Emery in: Liv. Ann. xiv (1927), pl.xxxiii (called Thot-senb), p. 30, Sethe, Urk. iv. 105-6 (41).

11- This writing appears at Thebes in a stela of a henchman of Intef I and at Gebelein a writing identical to that in the coffin of *Hnwj* occurs in a Dyn.XI stela (CGC 1622) see: Fischer, Kush 9, 45, n.3 [14]. See also the other different way of writing 3bdw in: Brovarski, E., Akhmim in the Old Kingdom and first intermediate period, in: Melanges Gamal EL-Din Mokhtar I, 1985, n.76: wb. 1, 9,

12- The smelling of lotus-blossom appears frequently on stelae since the end of Amenemhet II, s rule, see: Berlin 1190 (Amenemhet II, Jahr 23): BM 829 (BM Stelae IV, pl. 5) (Amnemhat II, Jahr 29): Fischer in: JNES 16, 1957, p. 224 n.6. See also: D. Franke, Die Stele INV. NR. 4403 im Landesmuseum in Oldenburg. In: SAK 10 (1983), p. 158 f, n.3: LA III, P.1091- 95: M. EL-Saghier, The Papyrus and Lotus in Ancient

Egyptian civilization, Cairo 1985, p.81-5. (M.A.D. dissertation University of Cairo, 1985, written in Arabic).

13-The use of these elements and other stylistic criteria clearly date the stela to the early part of dynasty 18, see, Dakin, op. cit., p. 190 and see also: Simpson, op cit., pp. 48 f: W. s. Smith, ESPOK, p. 220 f.: see Vandier, op. cit., p. 481

14-Louvre Museum E 13063: Legrain, op. cit.,p. 23.

15-For the similar arrangement see Fischer, Reversals, 20,fig. 18:21: Gardiner, JEA 30, 1944, 93-100: Gauthier, Dictionnaire III, 60: Zibelius, Aegyptische Siedlungen, 102-105: Kurth, Edfu. Ein aegyptischer Tempel gesehen mit den Augen der alten Aegypter, 68: Kurth, Treffpunkt der Gotter, 302: Vrnus, LA VI, 1986, 323-331: For Another case of elongated cartouche of Tuthmosis I<sup>st</sup> see Urk iv, 135,5...

16- For the epithets of Osiris, see Barta, Opferformel, p.15, 25: Begelsbacher-Fischer, Untersuchungen zur Gotterwelt des Alten Reiches , p.121 ff. .About the vertical arrangement of the *htp di-nsw* see Fischer, Dendera in the Third Millennium B.C., p. 84 (14).

17- About the type of sofas, chairs and vessels in the scenes of this stela are common in other tombs and stelae of this period see, Wrezinski , Atlas , pl.2 58.: On vases see Ali Radwan, Die Kupfer-und Bronzegefasse Aegyptens, ,II, 2, p. 67, pl. 40 (180 A, B )see also du Mesnil du Buisson , Les noms et signes egyptiens designant des vases ou objets similaires, p. 153.

18- Sni-rs: see PN I, 309,12.

19-Sni -ms: PN I, 309,2.

20- In: PN I, 32, 21 (among other name of the nurse of Hatshepsut).

21- Sni-snb: PN I, 309, 19 (among others, name of Thutmose I<sup>st</sup> smother)

22- Houston. M. G., Ancient Egyptian, Mesopotamian and Persian costume and decoration, 2nd ed., London 1954, p.74.

23-Drioton, Le costume feminin dans L'ancienne Egypte, Le Caire, 1949, p.21.

24- Cartland. B.M., , " The dress of ancient Egyptians ", BMMA XI , 1916, p.211.

25- Franke, D., op. cit., p. 158, n.3: R. J. Leprohon , A late middle kingdom stela in a private collection in : Studies in Honour of William Killy Simpson , p. 525 f .

26-The epithet of Wr- *Sfy* is generally given to Amon or main deities (Wb.IV, 458,23, 24,26 and Belegest: Osiris, Khnum, Montu, Amon, Horus, Khonsu-Toth, Min-Amun, and Seth). The fear of the power (*sfyt*) owned by the Nile - god is referred to in: Nile Hymns: (W. Helck, Der Texte des < Nilhymnus >, KAT, 1972, p.82, 85.).

27- For the victorious Thebes, see P. Vernus, ASAE 68, 1982, p.131 et 133,n.g.

28-N. de. G. Davies,A.H. Gardiner, op, cit., p.11 and n.2.

29- LD Text III, 250.

## Three Funerary Stelae



PL. 1  
The Stela of Šri  
Cairo Museum , CGC 34173

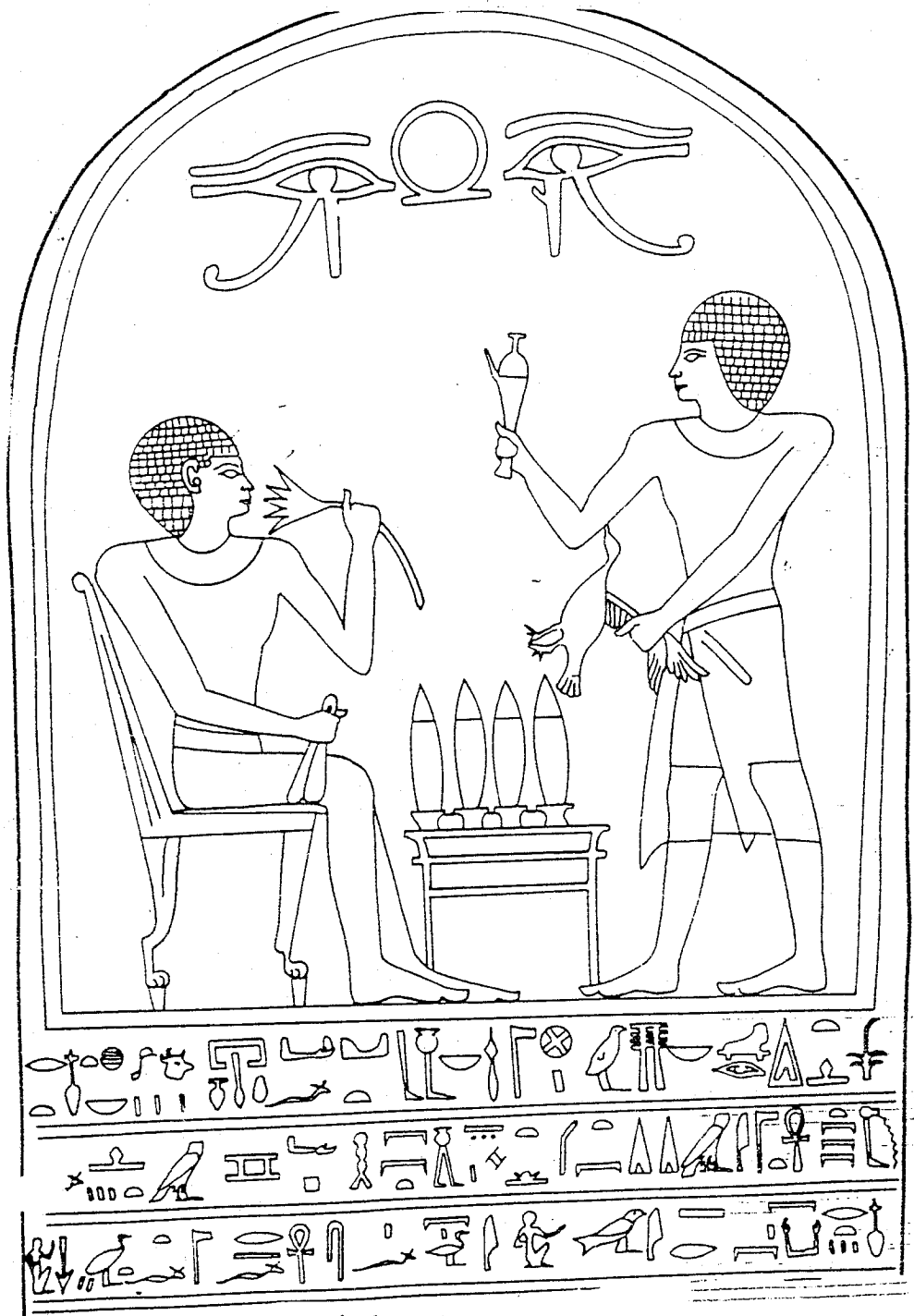
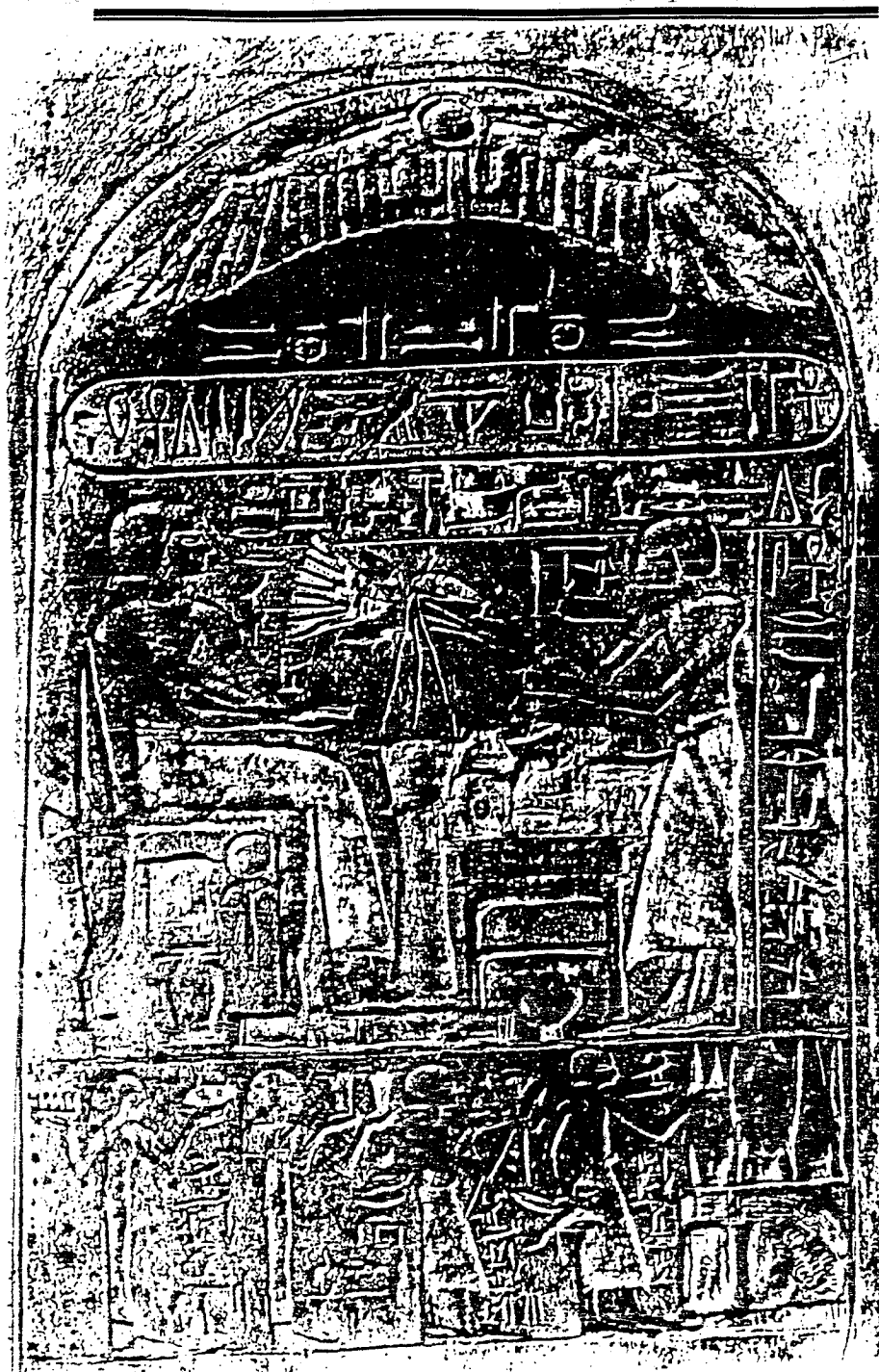


Fig. 1  
The Stela of Šr i, CGC 34173

## Three Funerary Stelae



PL. II.  
The Stela of Hrdw  
Louvre Museum E 13063.

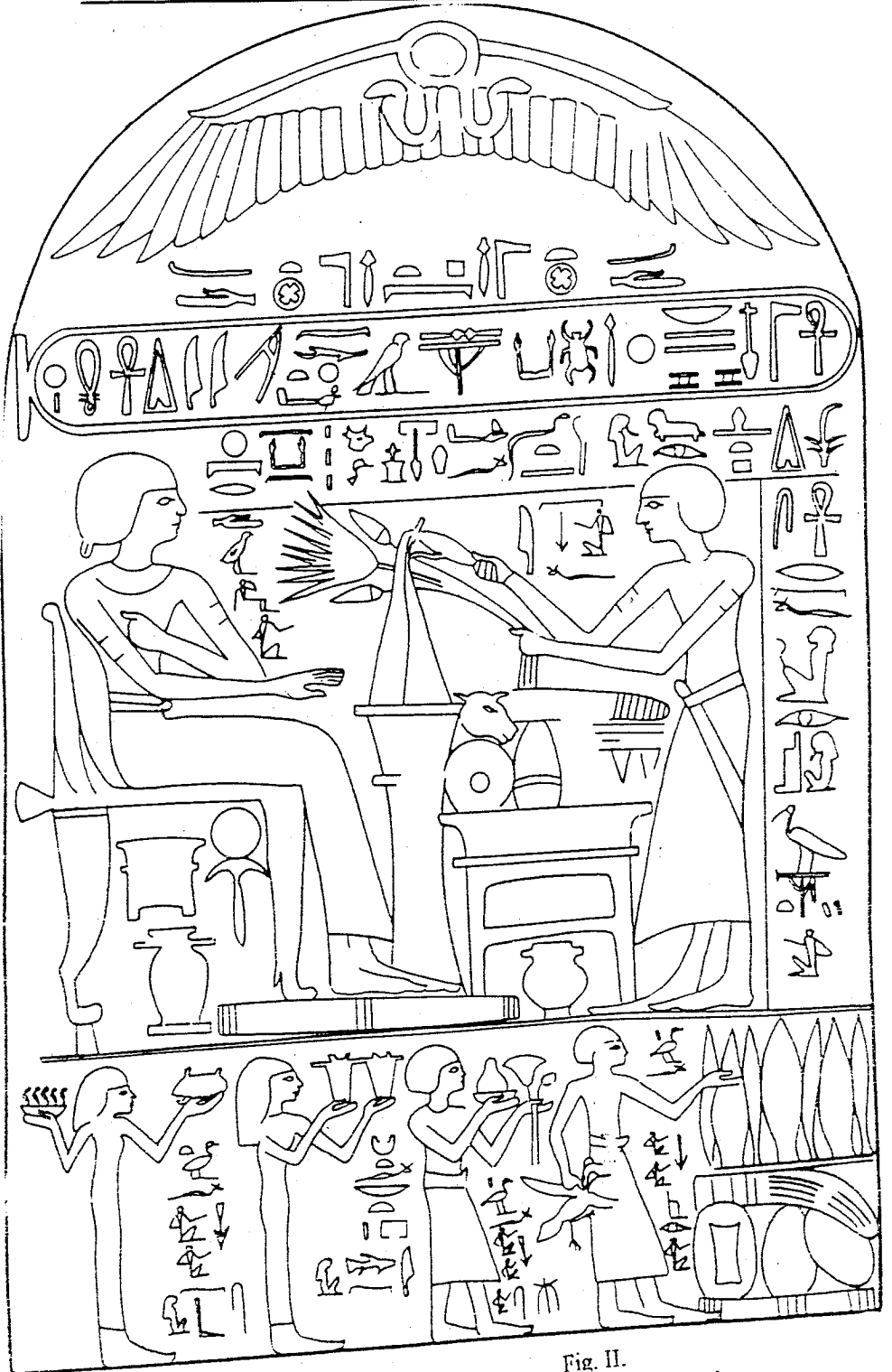


Fig. II.  
The Stela of Hrdw  
Louvre Museum F. 13063



## Three Funerary Stelae

---



PL. III.  
The stela of Luxor Temple Magazine

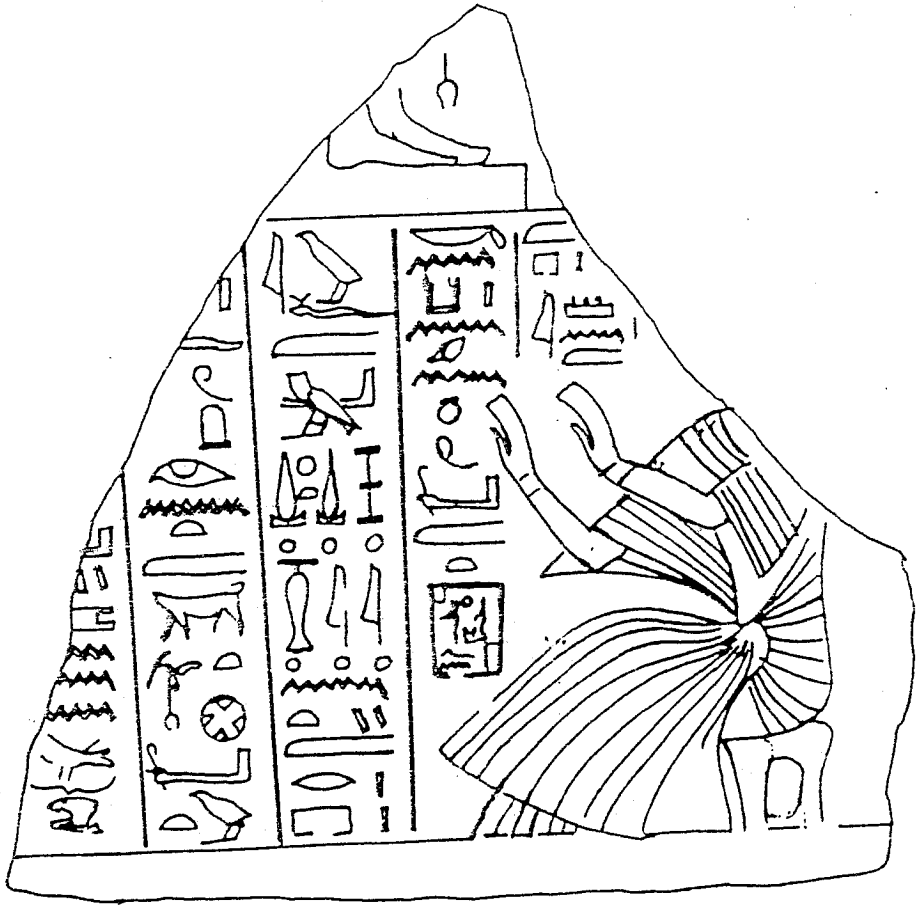


Fig. III  
The Stela of Luxor Temple Magazine