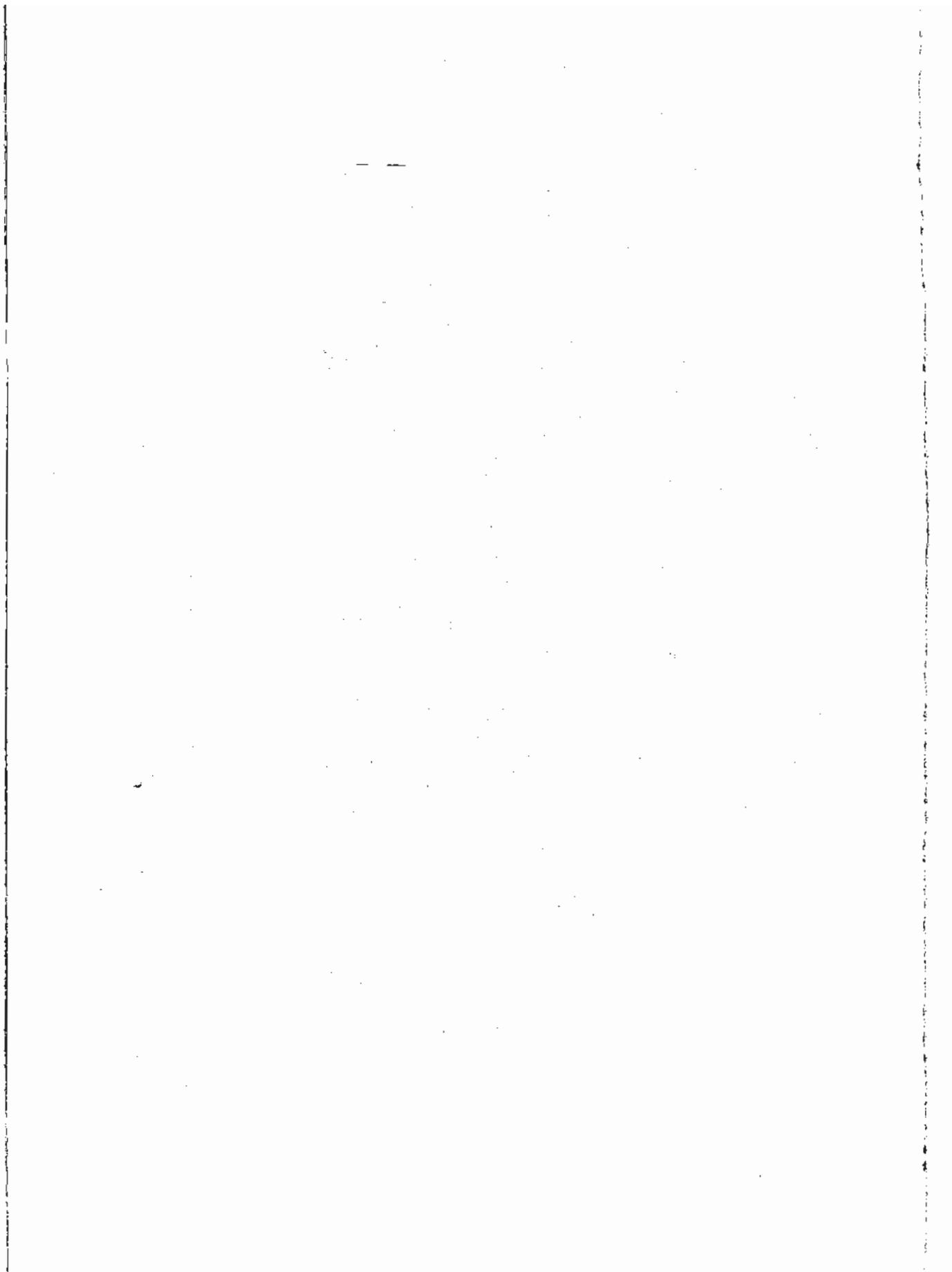


*A Round - Topped Wooden Stela
of
Na - menkh - es - Amon*

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**A Round - Topped Wooden Stela
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A round - topped wooden stela of the lady Na - menkh - es - Amon, measuring 34.0cm high, and 27.5 cm wide. It was originally in the Huber collection, and is now in Cairo museum (JdE 4887, S.R. 9908).

The designs and inscriptions are painted in colours on a thin layer of gesso.

The stela is framed at the top by a curved sign of heaven below which is a winged disk ⁽¹⁾, inscribed:



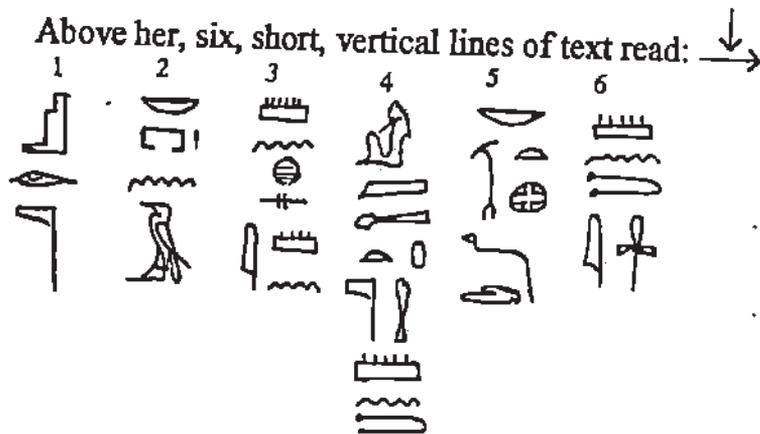
(1) The symbol of Horus of Behdet as a hawk - winged sun disk becomes a ubiquitous motif in temple decoration of ceilings or gate lintels, or the upper frame of wall - reliefs and stelae see: G.Hart., A dictionary of Egyptian gods and goddesses, London, 1987, P. 95.

Bhdty ntr c3 nb pt

"Behdty the great god, lord of heaven"

A horizontal border of coloured rectangles separates the winged disk from a scene, which occupies the greater part of the face of the stela.

At the top of the scene is the sign of heaven, under which stand the owner of the stela, and four deities. The deceased is a lady named Na - menkh - es - Amon who stands at the right, facing ←, with her hands at her sides. She wears the old - fashioned, tight - fitting robe, upheld by braces, and her hair, also dressed in the ancient style, is bound by a ribbon fillet, and surmounted by a perfume cone. She wears a wide collar, bracelets and anklets.

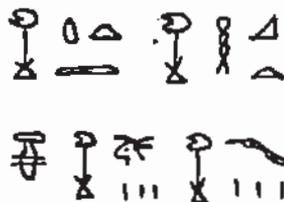


- 1- *W s i r* —
- 2- *n b < t > pr N3 -*
- 3- *mnhs - I mn*
- 4- *m3^ct - hrw s3t hm-ntr Mnt < w >*
- 5- *nb w3st Dd*
- 6- *M n t < w > i - c n h*

"(1) Osiris, (2) the mistress of the house, Na (3) menkh -es
- Amon, (4) justified, the daughter of the priest of Monthu,
(5) lord of Thebes, Djed (6) Monthu - i - c'ankh".

Between the deceased and the gods is a table of offerings, laden with conventionalized slices of bread.

Above it is inscribed: →



"h3 t, h3 hnkt, h3 k 3 w h3 3 pdw"

"A thousand loaves of bread, a thousand jars of
beer, a thousand oxen, a thousand fowl".

Under the table are two lettuces in pots.

The four gods stand, facing →. The first is a hawk-headed, mummiform figure, wearing the crown of Osiris, and carrying the *w3s*-sceptre. In front of his crown is inscribed. ↓



"Sokar"⁽¹⁾

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- (1) Although Sokar is mentioned only by that name, his close identification with Osiris is plain, from his crown, and from the presence of Isis, Nephthys, and *Dwa-mut-ef*.³ The origins of the god Sokar and indeed the very etymology of his name, are obscure; he seems originally to have been a god of the Memphite region, possibly a patron of craftsmen, although he was also venerated as an earth or fertility god (G.A., Gaballa., K.A., Kitchen, "The Festival of Sokar", in *Orientalia*, vol. 38 (1969), P.22 ff. By the Old Kingdom he was identified with the god of the dead, Osiris. (I. shaw., P. Nicholson., *British Museum Dictionary of Ancient Egypt*, London, 1995, P. 273). Perhaps one of the Pyramid texts gives the etymology of the god's name: "Osiris said - as a cry of help - to his wife and sister, "Sy - k - ri" which may mean "hurry to me", becoming the name of the god Sokar. (G. Hart., *op. cit.*, P.202.). The god's name may have also come in a sense: "he who is coffined" (W. Budge., *The Book of Dead*, London, 1969, P.19, no.5). His funerary aspect is of extreme importance as

He is followed by *Isis*, who raises her left hand and holds a narrower strip of linen in her right one. She wears her name - symbol, upon her head, and in front of it is inscribed: 

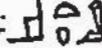


mwt ntr nb <t> pt

"The mother of god, Mistress of heaven"⁽¹⁾

=he is "mouth of the passages" (i.e. into the underworld). This emphasises him, like Orisis, as a resurrected god of the dead. (G.Hart., op, cit., P.203).

It is noticed that the crown worn by the god Sokar touches the line of heaven. This is perhaps an imitation of the funerary stelae which had appeared since the end of the New Kingdom period and the beginning of the Third Intermediate period. It shows the existence of god in heaven and the wish of the person of the stela to accompany god in heaven.

- (1) It is worth noting that the goddess's name is also written in hieroglyphs with the determinative "pt"  like the following:  3st pt (D. Meeks., *Année Lexicographique*, 1, Paris, 1977, P.9 n.77. 0086). It means "Isis of heaven", which indicates Isis' relation to heaven. This supports what Meyer maintained, that the name Isis could be

She is followed by her sister *Nephtys*, who is shown in the same attitude. She is crowned by her name - symbol,  and in front of it is inscribed: 



snt ntr nbt pt

= explained as "abode of the sun" (E. Meyer., *Geschichte des Altertums*, 1, 2, Berlin, 1926, P. 187).

She was also pictured as a cow of heaven or as a big woman who shaded the whole universe, since she was considered the goddess of heaven. Her relation to the goddess Nut who was her mother, had its effect also on her title:  nb < t > pt "Mistress of heaven" This title appears in many texts since the 18th Dynasty.

"The god's sister, Mistress of heaven"⁽¹⁾

—

'Behind Nephthys stands *Dwa - mut - ef*, one of the Four Sons of Horus. He is represented as a hawk-headed, mummiform figure, wearing a perfume cone (?) on his head. A narrow linen band is tied round his body, the ends of which hang down in front of him. Above his head is inscribed his name: ← ↓

(1) Her name "nbt - hyt" means "lady of the mansion", the hieroglyphs for which she wears as a symbol on her head. In later tradition she was regarded as the mother of the god Anubis  *Inpw*, canine god of the dead, closely associated with embalming and mummification. Since the Era of the New Kingdom she was represented, together with Isis on the sides of coffins to protect the dead. She was depicted on royal sarcophagi on the external northern wall, next to the head of the deceased, while Isis was depicted at the southern end. But there are a few private coffins on which Nephthys and Isis were both portrayed at the head.

(L.A. IV, (1982), PP. 457 - 460).

Since the eighteenth dynasty, she had the title  *npt pt* "Mistress of heaven". She was called so, perhaps, because of her connection with the Heliopolitan Ennead, in which she was regarded as the daughter of Nut the goddess of heaven, and the sister of the goddess Isis, who was also connected with heaven, and had the same title "Mistress of heaven"

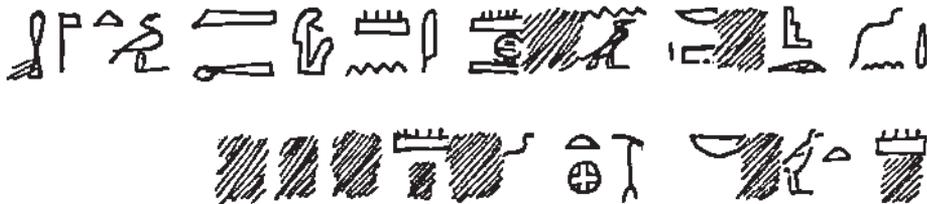


Dw3 - mwt .f

"Dwa - Mut - ef"⁽¹⁾

Under the scene are two horizontal lines of inscriptions, the lower one of which is badly damaged.

They are read: ←



(1) *dd māv < i > n Wsir nb < t > pt N3 - mnhs - Imn
m3c < t > - hrw s3t hm - ntr (2) Mntw nb w3st
D < d > Mn [t w - i - cnh].....*

(1) His name means literally "he who praises his mother". He was one of four deities sons of Horus: (Dwa mutef, Qebhsenuf, Imsety, and Hapy). They were responsible for protecting the internal organs of the deceased. Each of the four gods was associated with a particular Canopic vessel and its contents. Their connection with the god Horus dated to the Old Kingdom. The pyramid texts describe them as the "friends of the kings", assisting him in his ascension to the heavens.

(I. shaw., P. Nicholson, P., op. cit., P. 275.)

"(1) Words spoken by the Mistress of the House, Na.- menkh - es - Amon, justified, the daughter of the Priest (2) of Monthu lord of Thebes, Djed - Monthu [i - ankh]..."

The costume of the lady, and the archaic offering - table suggest that this stela dates to the xxvi dynasty.

The studying of the stela shows the relation of the pictured gods to heaven. On the upper part there is the god Horus, shown as a falcon with stretched wings. Underneath we have his title which relates him to heaven. The relation of the god Horus to heaven is well - known, since he is considered to represent heaven. His two eyes are the sun and the moon, and his wings ends touch the farthest edge of the earth. Both goddesses, Isis and Nephthys have the title "Mistress of heaven", the other two gods were also connected with heaven and protecting the dead.