

## **An Unpublished Stela of Kharu and his wife Ty in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo (Temp. No. 11.1.25.7).<sup>(1)</sup>**

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### **Abstract:**

This paper studies the funerary stela of Kharu and his family. The stela, which is currently housed in the basement of the Egyptian Museum in Cairo (Temp. No. 11.1.25.7), dates to the Ramesside Period, while its original provenance is uncertain. The stela includes three registers, depicting the owner of the stela and his family before Osiris, Isis, and a sycamore goddess tree. The study aims to better understand the thematic division of this funeral stela and to determine the owner and his family.

### **Keywords:**

*Ba*; base; Egyptian Museum in Cairo; Kharu; Osiris; Isis; New Kingdom; Nineteenth Dynasty; Ramesside Period; Rekhptah; stela; sycamore goddess-tree; Ty.

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The funerary stela of Kharu (*H3rw*), currently housed in the basement of the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, is round-topped and made out of limestone (**Pl. I-II**). It measures 95 cm in its height and 38 cm in width. Iconographically, the stela dates to the New Kingdom, and more precisely to the Ramesside Period. It is divided into three registers containing different themes, with the owner of the stela, depicted on all of them.

The only reference for the stela of Kharu in the Topographical Bibliography, which describes it as a: ‘round-topped tomb stela, three registers, I, man before seated Osiris, with Isis behind him, II, Kharu *H3rw* and wife Ty *Tjj*, III, tree goddess pouring libation, probably Dyn. XIX-XX, in Cairo, Egyptian Museum, Temp. No. 11.1.25.7’.<sup>(2)</sup>

The name Kharu means “the Syrian”, and since the Nineteenth Dynasty the term (*H3rw*)  refers to Syria, while (*h3rw*) , det.  for Syrians.<sup>(3)</sup> Several individuals called Kharu are attested: the block statue of Saa, called Kharu from the Chapel of Wadjmose (Cairo CG 570), which dates to the Eighteenth Dynasty.<sup>(4)</sup> The stela of so-called Kharu, without titles, who was possibly the servant of Ptah at Kom el Qal’a, and currently on display at the Pennsylvania Museum in Philadelphia (E 13598), dating to the Nineteenth

<sup>(2)</sup> J. Málek, *Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Reliefs, and Paintings VIII: Objects of Provenance Not Known. Part 3. Stelae (Early Dynastic Period to Dynasty XVII)*, Oxford, 1999, p. 16 (803-048-225).

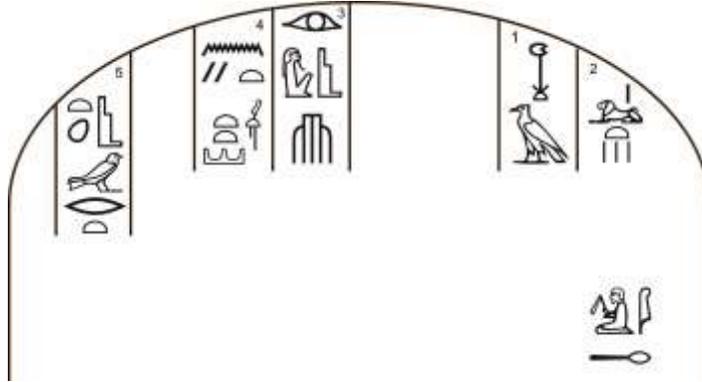
<sup>(3)</sup> On the city named Kharu, see Maciver, D. Randall-Maciver, C.L. Woolley, *Buhen I, Eckley B. Coxe Junior Expedition to Nubia 7*, Philadelphia, 1911, p. 32; A. Spalinger, *War in Ancient Egypt: The New Kingdom*, Malden- Oxford- Carlton, 2005, p. 131, 144; R. Hannig, *Die Sprache der Pharaonen Grosses Handwörterbuch Ägyptisch-Deutsch (2800-950 v. Chr.)*, Marburger Edition. AntWelt 64, Mainz, 2006, p. 448, 627, 661 and 984.

<sup>(4)</sup> L. Borchardt, *Statuen und Statuetten von Königen und Privatleuten im Museum von Kairo*, II, Berlin, 1925, p. 119 (590).

Dynasty.<sup>(5)</sup>

**Texts and Description:**

**First register: (Pl. III)**



(1-2) *H3rw m3<sup>c</sup>-hrw*, Kharu, the justified

(3) *Wsjr hnty*, Osiris, foremost of

(4) *-imntt*, the west

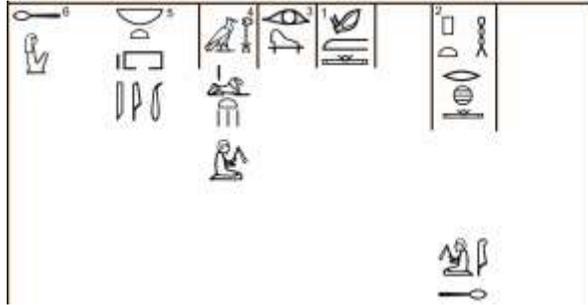
(5) *3st-wrt*, Isis the Great

*Commentary:*

In the first register Kharu is shown on the right side with a shaved head, presenting bouquets of three lotus flowers to Osiris and Isis, while the other hand is raised towards the deities in an act of adoration. The deceased is shown with a heavy belly, which is a common trait of the Nineteenth Dynasty and he wears a starched kilt. An offering table with circular bread loaves is located between the deceased and Osiris. Osiris and Isis are represented on a pedestal with Osiris sitting on a low back throne with all his usual regalia, wearing the *atef* crown and holding the crook and flagellum. Isis is shown behind Osiris with the throne sign adorning her head, her hand raised in protection of her husband.

<sup>(5)</sup>PM III<sup>2</sup>, p. 859. The Museum website:  
<https://www.penn.museum/collections/object/330078> (Accessed October 12, 2017).

**Second register: (Pl. IV)**



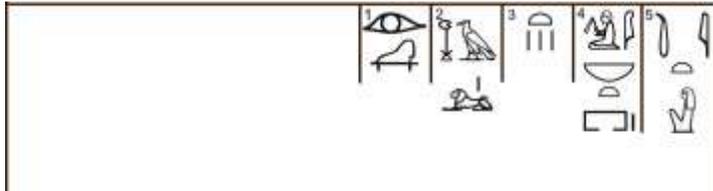
- (1) *Rh-Pth mꜣꜥ-hrw*, Rekhptah, the justified
- (2) *sdmw*, the servant
- (3) *Wsjr*, Osiris
- (4) *Hꜣrw*, Kharu
- (5) *nbt-pr Tjj*, mistress of the house, Ty
- (6) *mꜣꜥ(t)-hrw*, the justified

*Commentary:* Rekhptah (*Rh-Pth*) is likely the son of the deceased and his wife and Ty. He is standing on the right side, shown with a shaved head and wearing a starched kilt. With his left hand, he pours a libation on the *ka*-offering table located before the deceased and his wife, while censuring with the other hand. On the left side, Kharu and Ty are sitting on chairs, with the latter embracing her husband. Kharu is represented with a shaved head and wearing a long garment with two frontal sashes. Ty is shown with a long straight wig and wearing a long garment typical of the Ramesside era. The inscription above seems to identify the title of Rekhptah (*Rh-Pth*)  *sdmw*, which means “servant”, although possible reading of *sdmw-ꜣ* is also possible.<sup>(6)</sup>

<sup>(6)</sup> *WB IV*, 389 [6-7]; A.R. al-Ayedi, *Index of Egyptian Administrative, Religious and Military Titles of the New Kingdom*, Ismailia 2006, p. 590-591 [1375].

There is an obvious connection between the *ka*-sign and the offering tables piled with offerings, as the plural of *k3* (*k3.w*) is defined as food or nourishment, and this table could be classified also as spiritual food on the table.<sup>(7)</sup> The *ka*-offering table is represented in different funeral scenes, such as the tombs of Ramose (TT 56), which dates to the Eighteenth Dynasty<sup>(8)</sup> and Nakhtamun (TT 341), dating to the Nineteenth Dynasty.<sup>(9)</sup>

**Third register: (Pl. V)**



(1) *Wsjr*, Osiris

(2-3) *H3rw*, Kharu

(4) *m3c-hrw nbt-pr*, the justified, mistress of the house

(5) *Tjj*, Ty

*Commentary:*

On the right side, Kharu is represented with his wife kneeling before a goddess who stands in a sycamore. The goddess provides them with nourishment in the form of two streams of water and food provisions on a platter. Kharu has a shaven head

<sup>(7)</sup> N. De Garis Davies, *Seven Private Tombs in Kurnah*, London, 1948, p. 38-9; L. Greven, *Der Ka in Theologie und Königskult der Ägypter des Alten Reiches*, ÄF 17, Glückstadt, 1952, p. 34; U. Schweitzer, *Das Wesen des Ka im Diesseits und Jenseits der Alten Ägypter*. ÄF 19, Glückstadt- New York, 1956, p. 50; M. Lurker, *The Gods and Symbols of Ancient Egypt. An Illustrated Dictionary*, London, 1980, p. 73; A. O'Brien "The Serekh as an Aspect of Iconography of Early Kingship", *JARCE XXXIII*, 1996, p. 126; O. Bolshakov, *Man and his Double in Egyptian Ideology of the Old Kingdom*, ÄAT 37, Wiesbaden-Harrassowitz, 1997, p. 196.

<sup>(8)</sup> N. De Garis Davies, *The Tomb of the Vizier Ramose*, London, 1941, pl. XIX.

<sup>(9)</sup> N. De Garis Davies, *Seven Private Tombs in Kurnah*, London, 1948, pl. XXVIII.

and wears a long garment. He opens his hands widely to receive the libation as if to drink from his hands. Kharu is kneeling with one leg drawn up and leaning forward to catch the water. Ty is shown with a long straight wig and her hands are depicted close to her face, also catching the water the goddess pours out for her. Her knees rest on the floor in a kneeling position while she looks taller than her husband due to the fact that he is leaning forward.<sup>(10)</sup>

The *ba*-bird bends over at a severe angle on long legs to drink from the planter in which the sycamore tree sits.<sup>(11)</sup> Its position behind the tree and not directly associated with the deceased and the libation poured for them is also unusual. The *ba*-bird usually appears under the tree's shadow, or in the front to receive the water, and this is clearly shown on numerous tombs scenes dating to the Nineteenth Dynasty: Nakhtamun (TT 341)<sup>(12)</sup>, Userhat (TT 56)<sup>(13)</sup>, and Panehesy (TT 16).<sup>(14)</sup> The same theme is portrayed also on stelae such as: Ramesesemperre (BM 796)<sup>(15)</sup> and Ptahmekui (CG 34133) now housed in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo<sup>(16)</sup>, and also included on coffins such as that of Cairo CG 6081 from Deir el-Bahri.<sup>(17)</sup> Furthermore, there is only one bird, and not two to represent the couple. The concept of resurrection for the deceased also occurred for their *bas*. The *ba* can rejoin the living world symbolizing the deceased and receive the water

<sup>(10)</sup> On Similar kneeling positions at the tomb reliefs, see Billing, *Nut*, p. 349 and fig. B. 2, 351 and fig. B. 4, 364 and fig. C. 12, 367 and fig. C. 16, 392 and fig. D. 2.

<sup>(11)</sup> This unusual aspect of the *ba*-bird is depicted on different stelae like: Berlin 7322, Hanover 2933 and Munich 298.

<sup>(12)</sup> N. De Garis Davies, *Seven Private Tombs in Kurnah*, London, 1948, pl. XXIX.

<sup>(13)</sup> N. De Garis Davies, *Two Ramesside Tombs at Thebes*, New York, 1927, pl. IX.

<sup>(14)</sup> M. Baud, E. Drioton, "La Tombe de Panehesy", *Tombe Thébaines. Nécropole de Dirâ' Abu'n-Naga*, MIFAO 57, 2 (1932), p. 37 and fig. 19.

<sup>(15)</sup> BM XII, pl. 73.

<sup>(16)</sup> P. Lacau, *Catalogue général des antiquités égyptiennes du Musée du Caire. Nos 34001-34064. Stèles du Nouvel Empire I*, CGG, Cairo, 1909, pl. LV.

<sup>(17)</sup> A. Niwinski, *The Second Find of Deir el-Bahari (Coffins)*, 2, 1, nos CG 6069-6082. IFAO, Cairo, 1999, pl. IV (1).

from the canals in the shade of the sycamore trees.<sup>(18)</sup>

The reasons for these unusual aspects are unknown, but the whole scene still falls into the category of the *ba* and the deceased receiving libations from the tree goddess. The sacred sycamore tree-goddess is associated with Nut, Hathor, and Isis.<sup>(19)</sup> The lack of inscriptions accompanying the goddess makes it hard to positively identify her. However, in Chapter 59 of the *Book of the Dead*, the main role of Nut is with the tree cult, providing the deceased with water and food, as the goddess in this scene does.<sup>(20)</sup> Chapter 68 also deals the role of Hathor as the goddess of the West associated with the sycamore tree, so Hathor cannot be excluded from consideration.<sup>(21)</sup>

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<sup>(18)</sup> M-L. Buhl, “The Goddesses of the Egyptian Tree Cult”, *JNES* 6, (1947), p. 89; L. Žabkar, *A Study of the Ba concept in Ancient Egyptian Texts*, Chicago, 1968, p. 141; E. Teeter, *Religion and Ritual in Ancient Egypt*, Cambridge, 2011, p. 191.

<sup>(19)</sup> G. Jéquier, *Considérations sur les religions égyptiennes*, Neuchâtel, 1946, p. 22; Buhl, *JNES* 6, p. 96-7; H. Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods. A Study of Ancient Near Eastern Religion as the Integration of Society & Nature*, Chicago, 1948, p. 171; P. Koemoth, *Osiris et les arbres: Contribution à l'étude des arbres sacrés de l'Égypte ancienne*, AegLeod 3, Liège, 1994, p. 28.

<sup>(20)</sup> On the spell 59, cf. T.G. Allen, *The Book of the Dead, or Going Forth by Day: Ideas of the Ancient Egyptians concerning the Hereafter as Expressed in Their Own Terms*, SAOC 37, Chicago, 1974, p. 55.

<sup>(21)</sup> Buhl, *JNES* 6, p. 91-3; Frankfort, *Kingship*, p. 171; Allen, *The Book of the Dead*, p. 62.

## Conclusions:

The name Kharu was fairly common in the New Kingdom, thus making it difficult to identify him with other monuments, particularly as he does not have a title on the stela. Based on the style of art, epigraphy and the palaeography of the texts, apparently the stela dates to the Ramesside Period and specifically to the late Nineteenth Dynasty.<sup>(22)</sup>

The manifestations of the sycamore-tree and its goddess on this object are very popular during the Nineteenth Dynasty, although the representation with the *ba* is unusual. The stela includes the two important vital forces in the netherworld, the offering-table adorned with the *ka*-sign and the *ba*-bird participating in the libation and food offerings for the deceased.<sup>(23)</sup>

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<sup>(22)</sup> The stela of Ptahmekui (CG 34133), which dates to the Nineteenth Dynasty, comes from Abydos and its epigraphy is very similar to the stela under discussion here, see Lacau, *Stèles du Nouvel Empire* I, p. 181-2, pl. LV. Another valuable example, also dating to the Nineteenth Dynasty, is the stela of Ramesesemperre (BM 796), *BM XII*, pl. 73.

<sup>(23)</sup> For an example of a relief including the *ba*-bird and the *ka*-standard offering table, cf. Frankfort, *Kingship*, fig. 21; Billing, *Nut*, p. 380 and fig. C. 35.

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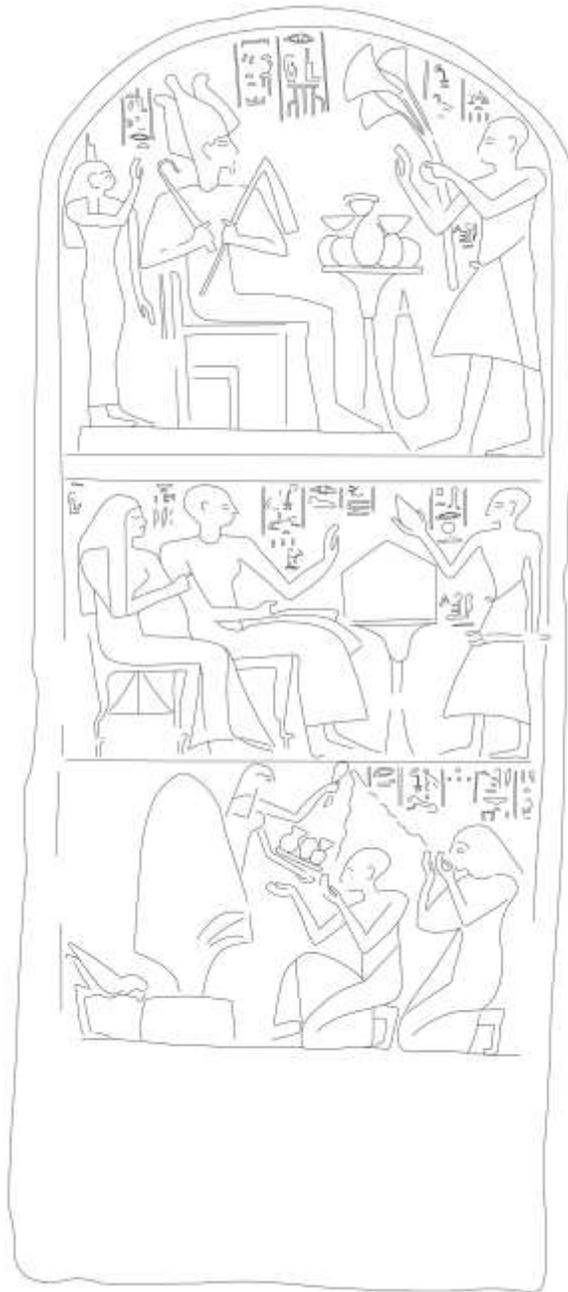
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Pl. I



A facsimile drawing of the stela Tr. 11.1.25.7, © Ahmed Hamden.

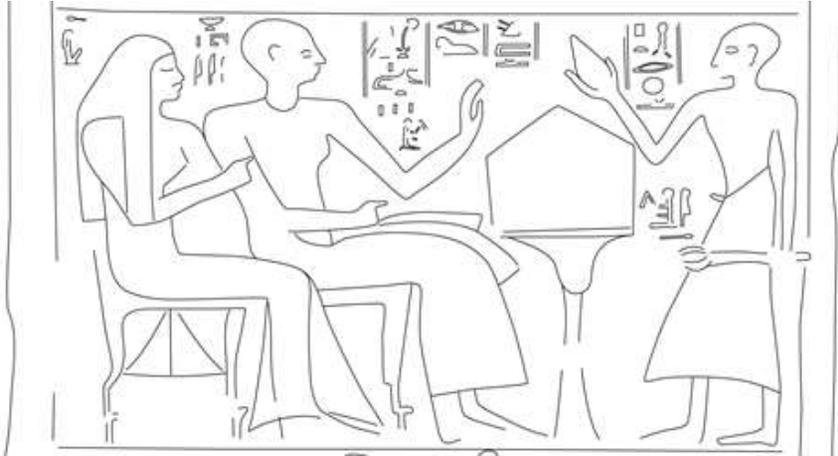


Stela Tr. 11.1.25.7, © Ahmed Amin.



Upper register.

Pl. IV



Middle register.

Pl. V



Lower register.

لوحة غير منشورة للمدعو خارو و زوجته تي  
فى المتحف المصرى بالقاهرة  
(رقم مؤقت ٧, ٢٥, ١, ١١)

أحمد عادل حمدين\*

الملخص:

تتناول هذه الدراسة اللوحة الجنائزية للمدعو خارو و زوجته. اللوحة، التى توجد حالياً فى الطابق السفلى بالمتحف المصرى بالقاهرة (رقم مؤقت ٧, ٢٥, ١, ١١)، تعود إلى عصر الرعامسة، بينما مصدرها الأصلي غير مؤكد. تشتمل اللوحة على ثلاثة أقسام، تصور صاحب اللوحة مع عائلته أمام أوزيريس، وإيزيس، وإلهة شجرة الجميز. وتهدف الدراسة إلى فهم أفضل للتقسيم الموضوعى لهذه اللوحة الجنائزية وتحديد صاحبها وعائلته.

الكلمات الدالة:

باء، قاعدة، المتحف المصرى بالقاهرة، خارو، أوزيريس، إيزيس، الدولة الحديثة، الأسرة التاسعة عشرة، عصر الرعامسة، ريخبتاح، لوحة، إلهة شجرة الجميز، تي.

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