Publishing a funerary Stela in the Egyptian Museum in Tokyo

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Abstract

The paper publishes a funerary stela which is now exhibited in the Shibuya Egyptian Museum at Tokyo and registered with the inv. no. AEM1043. It is made of limestone and measure about H. 28.4 cm W. 18.0 cm H. Its provenance is the Serapium of Saqqara with unknown dating. It is a flat top stela and divided into two registers. It shows the Apis bull in the recess at the top standing in a small naos. The first register shows a kingly figure presents offerings before the enthroned Osiris, and Isis stands behind, while the second one portrays an interesting depiction of a female maid is taking care of the dead's feet. Unfortunately, the stela lacks an inscription text to facilitate recognizing for the identity, character and give a precise dating. The paper investigates its funerary scenes and figure out a precise dating through its funeral art. The paper concludes that the stela is most often relates to the deceased woman, as one of the Greek elites in Memphis during the 4th century BC.

I. Introduction

The stela is now exhibited in the Shibuya Egyptian Museum at Tokyo and registered with the inv. no. AEM1043. It is made of limestone, and measure about H. 28.4 cm W. 18.0 cm, its provenance is the Serapium of Saqqara with unknown dating.

Saqqara has a long history stretches as far back as the start of the pharaonic period until the Roman period, and the site is considered the most important link in the chain of cemeteries belonging to the ancient city of Memphis. It covers an area over 6 km length, and about m 1.5 km width. Saqqara contains both royal and non-royal tombs. In the Late Period non royal tombs of high status especially from the Saite period are also recorded, furthermore, smith documented poor burials of the lower levels of the local community on the necropolis, and indicated that a large number of them appear to be flanking the Serapium and explains this seems to evidence ‘the desire to be near to the path of the god Osiris-Apis on his final journey to the Sarapieion’. And as a result of this and the importance of Memphis the cults of Pth, the principal god of the city, and his emanation, the Apis bull, received royal attention. The Saite and the Ptolemaic kings paid great attention to Saqqara, Pathak I (664-610 BC) constructed a court in the Pth’s valley, where the Apis would reside during its life. It is also evident from the Serapium, that the great vaults for the mummified Apis began during the same reign.

Many funerary stelae were found in the Serapium. Labudek categorized them into five categories; the 26th stelae are divided into the first two categories. Category one- 26th
Dynasty: consists of those that were found in the lesser vaults and that date to year twenty/twenty-one of Psamthek. Category B- 26th Dynasty: They were found in the greater vaults that date to the rest of the 26th Dynasty. The reason for the division of the 26th Dynasty into two categories is due to the fact they are found in different areas from within the Serapium, as well as the large numbers and the considerable incongruity in the number of stelae in each specific period of the 26th Dynasty. Category C- 27th Dynasty, they also came from the greater vaults. Category D: their date are obscure, and their specific provenance are also unknown, they are either known to be from the Serapium but are not attributed to a particular Apis bull, or are technically from an unknown provenance but due to their iconography and content are highly unlikely to be from any other site. The first four categories are considered ‘unofficial’ private stelae, about a hundred and fifty-six stelae in the non-royal corpus are recorded by Labudek. Category E: they are labelled as ‘royal’ and they are the surviving official stelae from the Serapium dated to the Late Period.

Table 1
Summary of the main Serapium stelae categories, Labudek, J, Late Period Stelae from Saqqara, 13, fig. 4.

| Category | Date | Provenance |
|----------|------|------------|
| A | Dynasty 26- year 20/21 of Psamthek I | Lesser Vaults |
| B | Dynasty 26, after year 20/21 of Psamthek I. | Greater Vaults |
| C | Dynasty 27 | Greater Vaults |
| D | Unknown | Either known to be from the Serapium or unlikely from elsewhere |
| E | Late Period | Greater Vaults |

II. Description
It is a flat top stela divided into two registers (Figures 2, 3). The first one shows a small figure of the Apis bull in the recess at the top standing in a small naos, the bull is speckled in black and white, while a sun disc in reddish is before the bull. The Apis bull is the living image of Osiris. Below, a human figure in the custom of a pharaoh is paying homage to an enthroned image of Osiris accompanied by Isis standing behind him. The pharaoh wears the white crown ‘hedjet’ and along royal kilt ‘shendite’. He is burning incense with his right hand, present the sntrt bowl of incense, and venerates Osiris with his raised left hand. His body and arms are painted in reddish. In between of the kingly figure and Osiris, there is a partially damaged offering table; a vase and two bread loaves which are heaped upon it.

Osiris sits upon a low back throne painted in reddish. He is depicted in his traditional costume with both arms across the chest and holds his divine insignia, composing of the crook hk3- heqa and the nḫḫ -nekhakh a flail scepter, symbols of sovereign and authority. He wears his traditional 3tf-atef crown. Goddess Isis stands behind Osiris playing her traditional role as his counterpart; she is protecting Osiris with her raised right hand and stretching her left hand towards an altar. She is crowned with the sun disc between of the two horns, while her traditional emblem surmounts the sun disc.

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Before Isis, is an engraved rectangular shape, probably supposed to contain her name? A base or a pedestal is carrying the whole scene of the first register and acting as a border line of the second register.

The lower register depicts an anonymous aristocratic woman, enthroned and attended by a young maid shown in smaller scale as well as Anubis stands before the female. The female sits up on a high stool with a cushion, its base imitates the Greek *Kline*⁷, she wears the Greek dress ἐξωμίς/ *exomis* ‘outside shoulder’⁸ as a fitted garment with folds painted in reddish, her fashionable dress extends on her left shoulder cover her right breast while her left one is still bare. She also wears the Greek hat πῖλος/ *pileus* Pilos wig⁹, and holds a Greek bowl in her right hand and puts her feet on a low pedestal. The jackal-headed Anubis wears a short kilt, and stretches his right hand grasping the stretched left hand of the female, while he is touching the head of the young girl with his left hand. The young maid is seated on the ground without a stool or a cushion. She is making foot massage and reflexology by her both hands for the left foot of the female, while her right foot rests behind the low pedestal waiting its turn for massage. The upper part of the body of the young servant girl is naked. She wears a short-tight sash skirt which covers the lower part of her body; furthermore, she wears also the same Greek style Pilos wig which is worn by the female deceased.

![Fig.2. The Shibuya Museum Stela AEM1043 © W. Omran](https://jaauth.journals.ekb.eg/)
III. Commentary
This is a votive stela which shows the piety of the owners to Osiris Apis. The steal is quite unique, that it is a flat one which is unusual in Memphis, that they were normally curved stelae. Moreover, it shows both funerary and secular iconography, portraying the deceased in his relationship with the Egyptian deities, as well as practicing foot care in a scarce depiction of this custom during that period.

The Apis bull was the single living embodiment of the deity Ptah, becoming Osiris in death, being the son of Isis due to his divinity, and strongly linked with kingship due to his physical characteristics of strength and fertility. Apis related to the myth of Osiris, he accompanied Horus in his searching for the scattered parts of the body of Osiris and carried these parts on his back to be buried at Memphis. Therefore, he was inscribed as the "companion of the kings", and "the helper god". As Apis was the carrier of the mummy of Osiris, the deceased as Osiris, hope that Apis could carry him to his tomb in
a "hurried run" to secure a blessed journey to his afterlife. In the funerary iconography, Apis was widely depicted transporting the deceased to his tomb. Apis is a prominent figure in 90.1% of the Serapium stelae, most often as a fully bull form.

At Memphis, the reason for the location of these burials on the Saqqara necropolis was due to the theological understanding that the Apis bull was the emanation of the Memphite creator god Ptah. The location used to denote the dead figure of the Apis bull is composed of two elements, Wsir and Hp, while Osiris-Apis was another form of the god Osiris, whose name composed of the same two elements. He was the main god of the Memphite necropolis, particularly in the area contains the catacomb of mummified Apis bulls, which was known as the Domain of Osiris-Apis (Pr-Wsir-Hp). King Nectanebo II erected a temple dedicated to Osiris-Apis and Isis the mother of Apis.

Devauchelle argued that the syncretistic deity Osiris-Apis is normally depicted in a form like that of Osiris himself rather than in the form of a bull, thus, Osiris-Apis is another deity is completely different from the Apis bull. Osiris-Apis was worshipped in the whole Egypt and his name is attested in texts from a range of places throughout Egypt, while the deceased Apis is mainly local, therefore, its text and findings are scarcely found outside Memphis. In the lunette Steal Cairo CG 31147, Osiris-Apis is enthroned flanked by Isis and Nephthys, wearing the atef-crown and holding the crook and flail, the signs of sovereignty, while the demotic texts above and below identify him as ‘Osiris-Apis, the great god’. Osiris-Apis (later Serapis) is the spouse of Isis, while the Apis bull is her son, therefore, in the Memphite necropolis, in the catacomb, the cows that bore the bulls could be called Isis after their death.

During the Greco-Roman period, the Osiris-Apis, with whom Serapis is identified not the mummified Apis bull. The identification of Serapis with Osiris-Apis was more familiar among Greeks than among Egyptians. The Greek papyrus of Artemis from Saqqara (4th century BC) is the oldest document which record the assimilation between Oserapis and Serapis, and it could be before the Ptolemaic rule of Egypt. Serapis was a fusion of the dead Apis with Osiris in the form of Osiris-Apis. Serapis was the consort of Isis and the main deity of Alexandria, has royal connection since the pharaoh is often assimilated to the Apis. On the other side, the Apis bull is depicted in Alexandria tombs of Kom el-Schukafa and Tigrain, whereas he connected with royalty and carry signs that originate within the ancient Egyptian realm. The association between Apis and Osiris provides a reason for the bull’s depiction on this stela. The Apis depiction is mainly related to the stela’s provenance, the Serapium of Saqqara, where Apis had a main cult center at Memphis associated with kingship and ruling power. The mummified Apis bull had a long history of burials extended until the first half of the 3rd century AD at the latest; though the last known Apis burial dates to 170 AD, all the mummified Apis burials have not yet been discovered.

As, Osiris-Apis is the Egyptian equivalent of the Greek Serapis, and regarding to the fact that Serapis and Isis were divine couple, therefore, I speculate that this stela shows the divine triad of Memphis consisting of Osiris-Apis, the enthroned human holding the crook and flail, and Isis, his spouse, stands behind him, while Apis bull, the son of Isis in Memphis, is standing above. It is noteworthy that in the Late funerary stelae from
Saqqara, Osiris, Most of the owners’ names of the late period funerary stelae from Memphis are related to Osiris-Apis, noteworthy is the appearance of Osiris, who as god of the dead was rarely adopted in names, and the individuals directly connected with the cult of Osiris Apis\textsuperscript{32}.

The male pharaoh figure who venerates Osiris, most often resembles the deceased himself in the form of a king. Images of deities and kings in private tombs are meant to help the deceased in the afterlife. The kingly image acts as intercessor between the gods and his people to facilitate the deceased’s journey into his hereafter\textsuperscript{33}. In the Roman Egypt, the so-called ‘democratization of the afterlife’ guaranteed association between Osiris and the kingly costume of the deceased, while presenting offerings are related to the concept of Maat, guaranteeing the order of the universe\textsuperscript{34}. The deceased always seek to become Osiris NN\textsuperscript{35}, and his mummy imitates the appearance of Osiris to gain eternity\textsuperscript{36}. In this stela, the deceased depicts himself as Osiris in one of his main attributes and functions as a king to facilitate his justification.

In the Ptolemaic- Roman Egypt, the funerary texts and iconography still address the deceased male as ‘Osiris’\textsuperscript{37}. The mummy shroud of Budapest 51211 shows the deceased as a king (Figure 4), and he wears the atef crown of Osiris. His name is supposed to be written in a rectangular shape like a cartouche\textsuperscript{38}. Also, in the non-royal tomb of Kom El-Schukafa, the Roman emperor as a pharaoh paying homage to the Apis bull. The pharaohs’ figure presents offerings for the benefit of the deceased\textsuperscript{39}. On the other side, wearing the crown by the deceased has its special funerary context which confirms more association with Osiris, and plays a role in the rites symbolizing ascent to the sky and rebirth\textsuperscript{40}, helping the deceased to be transformed into an inhabitant of the sky. The literary meaning hieroglyphic $h\text{w}$-crown means like ‘arising’ and crowns as well\textsuperscript{41}.

![Fig.4. The deceased as a pharaoh before Osiris, The mummy shroud of Budapest 51211](https://jaauth.journals.ekb.eg/)

Kurth, D, Der Sarg der Teüris, Aeg Trev 6, (Mainz am Rhein, 1990), 62, abb.20

The lower scene has its secular characteristic than its funerary context. The appearance of Anubis is mainly related to his role as the god of the Saqqara necropolis, who would have assisted the Apis in his journey to the beautiful west. Anubis is a major distinctive figure in the Ptolemaic- Roman stelae\textsuperscript{42}. Anubis- Hermes is the more customary choice for leading the souls of the dead into the afterlife, acting as a psych pomp for the
The key is mainly attributed to Anubis to open the gates of the underworld for the deceased, and to open the ‘door’ between life and death. Therefore, in this stela, he is acting his traditional role to be beside the deceased, embrace and lead him to his permanent and eternal afterlife.

In the Greek methodology, the Greek Pilos cap is often identifying the mythical Dioscuri twins, Castor and Pollux, their caps were supposedly the remnants of the egg from which they hatched. It is also appeared on the votive figurines of boys at the sanctuary of the Cabeiri ‘Cabeirion’ at Thebes. In Ancient Greece, the Pilos was famous as the main countrymen’s cap, this rustic cap presumably made of wool, fur, or animal skin. It was familiar among the poor workmen especially the metalworkers and farmers to protect them from harsh weather conditions. Therefore, the workers and farmers in the tomb of Pet Osiris wear this distinguished cap, while in the offering sequence in the naos, people are shown wearing Greek style of wreaths of blossoms, acting some figures depicted on as crowns of justification for religious festivities and general celebrations. It is also worn by the mummy portraits to justify the victory of the deceased over death.

On the other side, Pipili assumed that there is another type of the Pilos, it is softer, fine and taller which is completely different from this rustic one. The latter is worn as an alternative to the broad-brimmed including horsemen, hunters, travelers (who are upper-class citizens), gods or heroes, since the early classical period. It was also worn by some hoplites instead of a helmet. Therefore, the Pilos was not eliminated for rude, coarse and undignified characters in the Greek society, but also for the handsome ones favored by the gods like the ferryman Phaon who wears the Pilos in the white ground Lekythos in the National Archaeological Athens Museum 17916. He is transporting the deceased across the Styx to the Underworld with Hermes. Pipili concluded that in the Greek art, the workman wears the Pilos, but he is often shown nude, while if he is dressed, he often wear the exomis, the short chiton which leaves one shoulder bare to facilitate movement, or a loincloth, and significantly, they may wear the Pilos cap as well.

In this stela, the foot washing, massage and reflexology for the deceased woman is exceptional; it was more familiar in the ancient Egyptian tombs and temples. The most common implements and materials used by the servants for foot washing are the ewer with spout, which is like the merge vessel, basin, curious spoon shaped can, water and natron. In Ancient Egypt, foot care and wash was mainly connected to the king in the Heb sed Festival, a foot-washing ritual for the dead king by the gods as in the Book of the Dead “He might washed with the sun God in the pool of Earu and then be rubbed dry by Horus and Thoth, or wash his feet in the sun-gods own silver basin which has been fashioned by Sokar.” Some officials of the Old Kingdom were titled ‘the washer or purifier of the Legs of the king of Upper Egypt’ and ‘the washer or purifier of the legs of the king of Lower Egypt’. On the other side, there are no tools used in foot massage or reflexology but certain oils and ointments may be used as it was depicted in the other scene of massage for the other parts of the body, oblong object, special knives, meant skin scraping knives, and nail clippers. As there are no washings’ materials in.

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the scene, it is more likely that the young a maid is making a massage for the female.

In the Greek mythology, there is no interaction with foot care for the deceased. There is however interaction with the whole dead body during various stages of the funeral; in the house "prosthesis", the dead body is anointed with oil and incenses, it is dressed in a shroud and then it is laid upon a bier in the house for lamentation and mourning. Therefore, this stela documents the first pictorial of the foot massage for a deceased dressed in a Greek costume in the ancient Egyptian funerary art, which highly suppose the great influence of the Egyptian funerary beliefs on the Greek community at Memphis.

IV. Dating
It is difficult to give a precise date for the stela, the absence of a text is a big obstacle to give a date as well as to figure out the name and identity of the deceased. Who is the deceased? If the pharaoh-male figure who venerates Osiris in the upper register, or the female who receives the massage in the lower register?

The upper register of the stela carries a pure funerary Egyptian context, while the lower one shows Egyptian-Greek syntax of art. A big Greek community lived in Memphis since the 6th century BC. According to Herodotus, Pharaoh Amasis (r. ca. 570–527 BC) relocated the Greek and Carian mercenaries based in the Nile Delta to Memphis. A special Greek quarter in the city was attested in ancient Memphis, with its own temple (the Hellenian), intermarriage between Greek and Egyptian integrated the so-called “Hellenomemphites”, a kind of population. Numbers of Carian stelae with Carian inscriptions are found in the Serapium of Saqqara, and date from the Late Period. The Carians involved in Egyptian culture and funerary practices.

The double style and hybridization in funerary art during the Greco-Roman period was common. There was no contradiction between being Hellenistic in dress and Egyptian in religion. In Memphis, the combination of portraits, stelae and mummies indicates that those patrons experienced a culture in which Hellenistic and Egyptian cultural traditions were closely integrated. Hybrid identities emerge when two different cultures encountering each other are juxtaposed and transformed into a new third identity that represents neither the one nor the other. The co-existence of Egyptian and Hellenistic funerary architectural and artistic features and iconography either in the tombs or mummy cases cannot be understood to visualize the patrons’ ethnics. The shared multicultural milieu and cultural makers were not determining a particularly ethnic significance. The biculturalism in funerary iconography was familiar in funerary materials in Greco-Roman period, therefore, it was common to show the deceased in classical dress, while the iconographical vocabulary relies upon Egyptian traditional themes related to Osiris and Re. Being Hellenistic in dress, and Egyptian in religion, presented a mixture of cultural traditions for a shared cultural heritage. It was common that the deceased being classical in dress and Egyptian in iconography, it could be creating a new form of bicultural context during that period. Inhabitant in Greco-Roman period exploited Egyptian traditional iconography, which highly assimilated with Osiris. The people in poleis and metropolis shared multicultural milieus, where classical and Egyptian cultural traditions were equally apparent.
Lembke suggested that in early Ptolemaic period in Tuna El-Gebel, there was a school of artists who followed the ancient Egyptian traditional system in funerary art, but also influenced by the Greek imagery. It is quite like that existed in the cosmopolitan city of Memphis; similar works were documented as being in the ‘neo-Memphite’ style.

As, this stela is one of the one hundred and fifty-six stelae in the non-royal corpus which were recorded by Labudek, about one hundred and fourteen stelae show human figures; most of them portray only one male, while the rest present two figures; only the stela of Hor ‘C30’ shows both a male and female figures.

According to the female elongated body which is imitating the late 4th century BC Greek sculptor style of Lysippus. Moreover, her costume in the Greek exomis chiton and the Pilos wig style, the latter which is widely depicted among the secular scenes of laborers and craftsmen in the pronaos of the tomb of Pet Osiris at Tuna El-Gebel, farm workers, including cowherds, laboring in the field of Pet Osiris wear the Greek Pilos. Therefore, I suggest that this stela is most probably dates to the early Ptolemaic period from the 4th century BC. The Greek dress influence is limited to the pronaos of Pet Osiris Tomb, while the relief decoration of the naos is confined to Egyptian style.

In general, the exomis was a Greek tunic mainly used by hoplites (light infantry) and workers. The tunic largely replaced the older chitoniskos (or short chiton) as the main tunic of the hoplites during the later 5th century BC. On the other side, the Pilos on the figure’s head possibly favors his interpretation as male: the hut was often worn by adult men as well as by boys/ephebes.

Most of the people listed on the Late Period stelae were individuals with a religious role and background. Most of the titles seem to indicate at least a reasonable high religious or official status figure. Therefore, I highly recommend that the deceased is the aristocratic female, who is receiving her massage by her a maid. She is wearing the Pilos Greek wig which is also worn by the elite in the Greek community, moreover, according to the Greek methodology, in some cases, it secures a kind for greatness, heroism and in some cases divinity for the one who wears. According to the Egyptian funerary iconography, the Pilos wig most probably acts as ‘a crown of justification’ derives from chapter 19 of BD as a physical manifestation of the wearer’s transfiguration and justification. The crown is a physical manifestation of the wearer’s jubilance, ‘justified’ state.

A Carian’s stela from Saqqara shows its owner as a lector priest. Therefore, it is most often that the deceased woman had a Carian ethnic, and portrayed herself in a kingly gesture in the upper register, and she most probably was one of the Greek elites in Memphis during the 4th century BC ‘a Carian identity’. She portrayed herself in the form of a kingly male figure to secure a blessed transfiguration in the Osiris afterlife. The stela shows its female owner in the adoption of Egyptian religion and the maintenance of her own ethnic dress. As the Carian stelae in Saqqara, are divided into two groups; the first one depicts a figure in adoration of Osiris and Isis, while the second group shows the same in the top register and additionally the Apis bull with other deities/individuals in adoration in a separate register. I highly argue that this stela is one of the second group of the Carians’ stelae in Saqqara.
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نشر لوحة جنائزية في المتحف المصري بطوكبو

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المنص

تناقش الورقة البحثية نشر لوحة جنائزية موجودة حاليا في المتحف المصري بشبوبا بطوكبو برقم تسجيلي AEM1043. بلغ أبعاد اللوحة 18:04 سم عرض و18:0 سم طول، ترجع اللوحة إلى سيراليون سراية دون تحديد تاريخ محدد لها تتفسر اللوحة إلى مستويين علمي وسافي، يظهر العجل آبى في الجزء العلوي لللوحة واقفا داخل ناوس صغير. يظهر في المستوى العلوي المتوازي في هيئة ملكية يقدم قربين إلى الإله أوزيريس الجانس على عرشه بينما يبهر عقله. بينما يظهر الجزء السفلي لل لوحة منظرا فردا لأحد الحكم يقوم بالتعليم بقدم المتوازي. لسوء الحظ نظير للوحة إلى وجود نسج مكتوب يمكن من خلاله التعرف على شخصية المتوازي والتاريخ اللوحة. يتداول البحث تحديد تلك المتواتر ومحاولة تحديد تاريخ محدد لتلك اللوحة. توصل البحث إلى أنه من المحتمل بشكل كبير أن تلك اللوحة ترجع إلى السيده الملونة المصرية في الأزهر السفلي للوحة، والتي من المحتمل أنها أحد أفراد الطبقة الأرستقراطية في مجتمع منف خلال القرن الرابع ق.م.

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