

# A Panel from the Tomb of MAHU in Saqqara North

## A Panel from the Tomb of MAHU in Saqqara North

"لوحة جدارية من مقبرة ماحو في سقارة الشمالية"

**Mona Abou El Maati**

Associate Professor-Faculty of Archaeology-Cairo University

e-mail:dr.monaelnadi@gmail.com

### Abstract

The paper publishes the scenes and hieroglyphic inscriptions of the relief-decorated panel JE 33260 - SR 4/ 11980, dating to the New Kingdom. The panel was found by V. Loret in the tomb of *Mahu* in the area of king Teti Pyramid Cemetery in Saqqara North in 1898. It is currently exhibited in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo. The panel is made of limestone, with much damage to the scenes.

The remaining part of the panel is divided into two registers. The upper register shows the owner of the tomb standing with his wife behind him, accepting offerings while being libated by one of their sons (worn out). The second register illustrates four people, a man and three women, all standing with an offering table before them. The study of the panel and the analysis of the scenes contradict what was written in the database of the Egyptian Museum.

**Keywords:** Cairo Museum- Funerary stelae - *Mahu* - New Kingdom – Panel- Saqqara

### الملخص العربي

يتناول هذه البحث دراسة ونشر وتحليل أحد الأجزاء من جدار الجانب الشمالي من مقبرة ماحو، التي تقع في جبانة هرم الملك تتي في سقارة الشمالية. عثر الأثري لورييه على مقبرة ماحو، ووجد بداخلها: عتب باب رقم (القاهرة JE 33259)، ولوحة رقم (القاهرة JE 33256)، ومائدة قربان رقم (القاهرة JE 33257). وعلى هذا الجزء المنقوش من الجدار (القاهرة JE 33260)، والمعروض حالياً في المتحف المصري بالقاهرة، ومصنوع من الحجر الجيري. وتتكون هذه القطعة من صفتين من النقوش الغائرة، يفصل بينهما خط، ويتضمن الجزء العلوي منظراً لصاحب المقبرة ماحو وخلفه زوجته يتقبلان الزهور من ابنتهما، بينما يقوم أحد الأشخاص (غير واضح) بالتنظيف بالماء للزوجين، ويأخذ الماء شكل موجتين متعرجتين بشكل قوس، يعطيان للقطعة شكل اللوحة ذات القمة المقبية، وذلك مما جعلها تسجل في سجل المتحف المصري على أنها لوحة. ويحمل ماحو لقب "القائم علي كنوز منف" مما يشير إلى وضعه وكونه من كبار رجال الدولة. وفي الصف السفلي توجد مائدة قربان وعليها أرغفة خبز، يقدمها ابناً آخر لماحو وتتبعه ثلاث سيدات، والسيدة التي تأتي خلف الابن مباشرة هي بلا شك زوجته، حيث تحمل لقب "سيدة الدار"، بينما السيدتان الأخريان هما ابنتا ماحو. من خلال موقع المقبرة والسمات العامة للنقش وللنصوص يبدو أنها تعود إلى أواخر الأسرة 18 وهذا ما يخالف سجل المتحف المصري الذي يؤرخها بعصر الأسرات 19-20.

### الكلمات الدالة:

ماحو، سقارة، المتحف المصري، الدولة الحديثة، جدار، لوحة جنازية

## 1. Introduction

The tomb of *Mahu* was discovered by Victor Loret in 1898–1899 in the area of King Teti Cemetery in northern Saqqara<sup>1</sup>. Loret, who was working on behalf of the

<sup>1</sup> PM III/2, 556.

Egyptian Service of Antiquities, described this tomb as "*la plus élégante de toutes*" (*The most elegant of all tombs*); however, he devoted a few words to this discovery in his report<sup>2</sup>. Although not detailed enough, the plan of the tomb published by Loret indicates that the chapel area was divided into two parts, forming an inner chapel and a wider antechapel fronted by two columns<sup>3</sup>. The tomb of *Mahu* (218/TPC) provides the oldest physical evidence of a Memphite tomb structure with mudbrick walls bearing a relief-decorated limestone barrier, a characteristic of the Late 18<sup>th</sup> Dyn. and early 19<sup>th</sup> Dyn. tomb design in Saqqara. *Mahu* shared the tomb with his father *Nb-nfr*, it seems that he completed it<sup>4</sup>. In this tomb, Loret found a number of limestone elements: A stela (Cairo JE 33256), An offering table (Cairo JE 33257), A doorjamb (Cairo JE 33259), and our relief-decorated panel (Cairo JE 33260). This panel was documented as a funerary stela in the Egyptian Museum's database, which is the focus of the article. *Mahu* was a high official who held significant titles referring to his rank<sup>5</sup>, as was registered on the walls of his tomb, such as: "*The Guardian of the treasury of Memphis*", "*The miller of incense of the god Amun-Re, of all the Gods of white walls (i.e., Memphis), of the Ennead, and of the Palace*"<sup>6</sup>.

## **2. General Description:**

- **Discovery:** Memphite region – Saqqara North in 1898
- **Date:** New Kingdom<sup>7</sup> – 1295-1070 BC
- **Dynasty:** 19-20 (as dated in the database of the Egyptian Museum)
- **Owner:** *Mahu*
- **Material:** Limestone
- **Dimensions:** **H:** 121 cm, **W:** 45 cm, **D:** 20 cm

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<sup>2</sup> Loret, V., "*Fouilles de la Nécropole Memphite (1897 - 1899)*", *BIE série 3*, (1899), Cairo, 85-100.

<sup>3</sup> Staring, N., *The Saqqara Necropolis Through the New Kingdom: Biography of an Ancient Egyptian Cultural Landscape*, (2022), Brill, Leiden, Boston, 201-249; Gessler-Löhr, B., "*Pre-Amarna Tomb Chapels in the Teti Cemetery North at Saqqara*", *BACE 18*, Macquarie University, Sydney, (2007), 76–81.

<sup>4</sup> Gohary, S., *The Twin Tomb Chapel of Nb-nfr and His Son MHW, at Sakkara*, SCA Publications, Cairo 2009, 13.

<sup>5</sup> *PNI*, 163.24-25

<sup>6</sup> Staring, *Saqqara Necropolis*, 213; Gohary, S., *The Twin Tomb Chapel of Nb-nfr and His Son MHW at Sakkara*, 13-18.

<sup>7</sup> Although the database of the Egyptian Museum, Cairo dates the tomb of *Mahu* to the 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> Dyn., it is situated in an archaeological area that contains tombs dated to the mid-18<sup>th</sup> Dyn. (The earliest evidence for building superstructures marking a burial in the Teti Pyramid Cemetery dates to the reign of Amenhotep III). These tomb chapels are all made of mud bricks and display some variation in their architectural layout.

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- **Condition:** Medium, with lost and smashed parts, slight cracks, and traces of colors

### 3. Description of the Panel (pl. 1, 2)

A painted rectangular stone slab panel is divided into two registers, and a thick horizontal line separates them. All figures and hieroglyphic inscriptions are executed in shallow sunken relief, featuring inner details.

The panel probably decorated the chapel's north wall. Its pendant from the opposite south wall is missing. The scenes in the upper and lower registers are not fully preserved on the left side, suggesting the north wall contained two limestone barrier blocks placed side by side<sup>8</sup>. Its surface suffers from weakness and loss of inscriptions, especially in the upper part, probably due to its submersion in silt or stagnant water; this is confirmed by the presence of a salt layer covering the upper part of the panel, including its owner's head, with a dark mark left on the upper scene. The remaining lower part of the panel is too long and bears no inscriptions.

Finally, the chisel marks on the right side indicate that the panel has been cut from the wall of the chapel.

#### 3.1. The Upper Register

The tomb owner and his wife enter the tomb and are offered flowers.

The owner of the tomb, *Mahu*, is shown with a shaved head, barefoot, standing facing the viewer's left, steps with his right leg instead of his left one, contrary to what was usual, wearing a transparent, tight-fitting, short-sleeved shirt and a loose long pleated kilt tied to the waist and extends to the mid-calf, it is also transparent showing the legs, with a wide lotus necklace and an aromatic cone (a perfume cone) on his head. *Mahu* holds a type of long staff in the right hand and a folded cloth and lettuce in the left hand.

Behind *Mahu* stands his wife (Tiyi), who is shorter than him. She wears a long double tight-fitting dress, a wide lotus necklace, and a long heavy wig tied with a wide strip of fabric. She also has an aromatic cone on her head, just like her husband, with a small lotus flower adorning it.

Facing *Mahu* stands a young man, most likely his son, who wears a simple short kilt and offers him a lotus bud. On the far-left side of the panel, a crushed hand appears, offering the couple a blooming lotus flower. The entire scene is surrounded by two

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<sup>8</sup> Staring, *Saqqara Necropolis*, 217.

water waves emerging from the top left of the panel, giving the panel the shape of a rounded topped stela.

### **3.2. The Lower Register**

A thick horizontal line separates the upper and the lower registers of the panel. This register shows the family members of *Mahu*, the owner of the tomb. Before a small, simple offering table surmounted by tall loaves of bread stands a young man followed by three women.

The young man, probably his son, is depicted with a shaved head, standing barefoot, facing the viewer's left. He steps with his right leg instead of his left one, like his father, wearing a short, pleated kilt. Moreover, he raises his hands to make an offering. There are traces of red color in his upper body.

The three women appear the same as *Mahu's* wife in the upper register, except for the dress, which appears to be knitted rather than a double robe. They are clearly different in height that reveals the difference in age between them.

Finally, the three women's faces, arms, and feet bear traces of red, while their wigs bear traces of black.

## **4. Remarks on the Scenes and Style:**

### **4.1 Clothing:**

During the New Kingdom, clothing witnessed a remarkable technical development for both men and women; men's robes consisted of two pieces, one of which covered the lower part of the body starting from the waist to the ankles, and the other covered the shoulders, and was tied around the waist with a belt. The double kilt also continued to be worn during this period, but its shape began to change from one period to another. The outer kilt began to be short from the front and long from the back<sup>9</sup>.

Women's clothing was simple and very similar, as they wore a simple, tight robe that clearly defined the body and extended to the ankles. They might wear a loose outer garment over it<sup>10</sup>.

### **4.2 Aromatic cones:**

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<sup>9</sup> Cordin, A., "*Fashion and Clothing*", *Egyptian Art Principles, and Themes in Wall Scenes*", ed. By Donovan, L.& McCorquodale, K., Prism Archaeological Series 6, Cairo 2000, 78.

<sup>10</sup> Cordin, A. "*Fashion and Clothing*", 170.

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Cones of fat vary in size, color, and shape. They were made from a mixture of animal fat and ointments that have been cooked<sup>11</sup>. They were placed on heads and, for the most part, in ceremonies, where they slowly melt and give the wearer a good smell and coolness<sup>12</sup>. They appeared since the reign of King Amenhotep III in the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty on the heads of women and men and continued till the Graeco- Roman Period<sup>13</sup>. They released a sweet aroma during feasts and celebrations or even cleanse and ointment the body<sup>14</sup>. This fragrant smell also plays a vital role in protecting the person from evil forces and helps in rebirth<sup>15</sup>.

### 4.3 The long staff:

It was held by officials as a symbol of power and status<sup>16</sup>. It is generally called *mdw*<sup>17</sup>. The majority of scenes show the tomb owner holding the long staff from the middle or from the top, usually in the right hand, as is the case here, while holding another symbol in the other hand<sup>18</sup>.

Senior officials were traditionally depicted with the long staff and the *kheryp* scepter since the panels of *Hesira* from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Dyn.<sup>19</sup>. However, there have been a few changes in the scenes. Instead of the *Kheryp* scepter in the same position, *Mahu* holds a folded cloth and a lettuce plant in place of the *kheryp* scepter in the same pose.

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<sup>11</sup> Lucas, A., "Cosmetics, Perfumes and Incense in Ancient Egypt", *JEA* 16, 1930, 44-45; Vernus, P., *Chants d'amour de l'Égypte Antique*, Paris, 1992; Padgham, J., *A New Interpretation of the Cone on the Head in the New Kingdom Tombs Scene*, Oxford, 2012.

<sup>12</sup> Brown, Sh., "Hair Style and Ornaments", in: *Egyptian Art, Principles and Themes in Wall Scenes*, ed. By L., Donovan & K., McCorquodale, Prism Archaeological Series 6, Cairo 2000, 187.

<sup>13</sup> Mannich, L., "*Ancient Scent – An Evaluation of the Sources*", *Memnonia Cahier Supplémentaire N.1*, Le Caire, 2003, 83-84.

<sup>14</sup> Blakemore, E., *Ancient Egyptian Head Cone Mystery Solved by Archaeologists*, National Geographic, 2019, Retrieved from

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/history/2019/12/Ancient-egyptian-head-cone-mystery-solved/>

<sup>15</sup>Cherpion, N., "*Le Cône d'Onguent, Gage de Survie*", *BIFAO* 94, IFAO, 1994, 85.

<sup>16</sup> For the staff see: Olivier, A., "Social Status of Elite Women of the New Kingdom of Ancient Egypt: A comparison of Artistic Features", Master of Arts Thesis, University of South Africa, 2008; Hassaan, G. A., "Mechanical Engineering in ancient Egypt, Part 87: Scepters Industry International Journal of Advanced Research in Management, Architecture, Technology and Engineering (IJARMATE) Vol. 5, Issue 9, September 2019, 1-12.

<sup>17</sup> WB II, 178.

<sup>18</sup> Harpur, Y., *Decoration in Egyptian Tombs of the Old Kingdom*, Studies in Orientation and Scene Content, London-New York 1987, 128-129; Loebel, W.Y & Nunn, J.F., *Staffs as Walking Aids in Ancient Egypt and Palestine*, *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*, Vol. 90, 1997, 450-454; Fischer, HG., *Notes on Sticks and Staves in Ancient Egypt*, *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 13, 1979, 5-32.

<sup>19</sup> Altenmüller, H., *Das Ölmagazin im Grab des Hesire in Saqqara (QS 2405)*, *SAK* 4, 1-29.

Lettuce was depicted on offering tables in many scenes, possibly due to the symbolism of the lettuce, which was associated with the fertility god *Min*.

#### **4.4 The Folded Cloth:**

A handkerchief appears to have been a very popular item in the hands of high-ranking officials, either alone or with other objects, since the Old Kingdom<sup>20</sup>. It began at that time as a short ribbon that resembled a knot, giving the shape of a rope. Since the reign of Amenhotep III, the rope became longer and was sometimes folded or fringed at one end<sup>21</sup>. The traditional form of the folded cloth appeared on wall scenes of the New Kingdom tombs in Saqqara<sup>22</sup>.

Gardiner believes that it is a long, folded piece of linen cloth, which is an abbreviation of the word "snb" in the form "anx wDA snb": "*I wish he could live, prosper and healthy*"<sup>23</sup>.

In the New Kingdom, in Saqqara tombs, the folded cloth appeared either alone or with other objects, such as the scenes of *Maya*<sup>24</sup>, *Hormoheb*<sup>25</sup>, and *Ptahmose*<sup>26</sup>, and others.

#### **4.5 Lotus:**

Offering big Lotus flowers and Lotus buds has been popular since the Old Kingdom<sup>27</sup>. Their rise continued until the Greco-Roman in different ways: sniffed by the deceased,

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<sup>20</sup> Allam, H.R., Mahran, I., Zaki, F. E., Scenes of the Folded Cloth in the New Kingdom Private Tombs in Saqqara and Thebes, *Minia Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Research Vol. (15), No. (1)*, June 2023, 131-155.

<sup>21</sup> Pasquali, S., Gessler-Löhr, B., *Un Nouveau Relief du Grand Intendant de Memphis, Ipy, et le temple de Ptah du Terrain-b 'h*, *BIFAO 111*, IFAO, 2011, 293.

<sup>22</sup> Davies N.D.G., *The tomb of the Vizier Ramose*. London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1941; Allam, H.R., Mahran, H., Zaki, E.F., Scenes of Folded Cloth, 149.

<sup>23</sup> Gardiner, A., *Egyptian Grammar*, Oxford, 1957, 507(S29).

<sup>24</sup> Raven M.J., *The Tomb of Pay and Raia at Saqqara*, Egypt Exploration Society, Leiden, 2005.

<sup>25</sup> Martin, G.T., *Excavations at the Memphite Tomb of Hormoheb 1976: Preliminary Report*, *JEA 63(1)*, 1977, 5–13; Martin, G.T., *The Hidden Tombs of Memphis: New Discoveries from the Time of Tutankhamun and Ramses the Great*, London, Thames and Hudson, 1991.

<sup>26</sup> Staring, N., *The Tomb of Ptahmose, Mayor of Memphis Analysis of an Early 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty Funerary Monument at Saqqara*, *BIFAO 114*, 2014, 447-454.

<sup>27</sup> Lubczyńska, A.S., *Offering Scenes in the Chapel of Hatshepsut, Deir El-Bahari VII*, Warsaw 2016, 181.

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held by both men and women, and as offerings, decorating the heads of tomb owners and their family members<sup>28</sup>.

The Lotus flower was first associated with women only (as the oldest scenes of smelling the flower showed Queen *Meres-ankh III* raising the lotus flower to her nose). The scenes of men smelling the scent of the lotus appeared for the first time during the reign of King *Pepi II* as an alternative to the ointment jar. It was then associated with both men and women during the reign of *Amenemhat II*<sup>29</sup>.

The flower was depicted in almost all offerings and most banquet scenes in the New Kingdom. The Book of the Dead contains spells (Chapter 81) for transforming into a lotus flower, aiming for resurrection<sup>30</sup>. Inhaling the scent of lotus was thought to motivate the respiratory cycle and help in revival<sup>31</sup>.

### 4.6 Water Waves:

Water was one of the essential elements for the deceased in ancient Egypt<sup>32</sup>. It was a representation of the universe in its initial form from which life emerged; when water was poured in rituals, it was filled with the power of the spells accompanying the scene to achieve its purpose<sup>33</sup>.

The Nile water was used in libation and sacrificial ceremonies. It could both purify and revive the body of the deities and the body of the deceased by replacing the vital fluids that were lost upon death<sup>34</sup>.

Every religious ceremony was preceded by purification rites, which were performed before meeting a deity or entering a sacred place<sup>35</sup>. In addition, the idea of cleansing

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<sup>28</sup> Harpur, Y., *Decoration in Egyptian Tombs of the Old Kingdom*, London-New York: Kegan Paul, 1987.

<sup>29</sup> Pflüger, K., "The Private Funerary Stelae of the Middle Kingdom and Their Importance for the Study of Ancient Egyptian History", *JAOS* 67, 1947,130; Dunham, D., The Mastaba of Queen Mersyankh III, G. 7530- 7540, in *Giza Mastabas 1*, 1974, pl. II [c]; Selim, H., "Three Identical Stelae from the End of the Twelfth Dynasty", *SAK* 29, 2001, 329.

<sup>30</sup> El-Weshahy, M., Views of Chapter 81 of the Book of the Dead on the Coffins of the Second Cache of Deir El-Bahari, the Era of the Twenty-First Dynasty, *Journal of the Association of Arab Universities for Tourism and Hotels* 23, 2016, 23-31.

<sup>31</sup> Harer, W.B., "Lotus", in D.B. Redford (ed.), *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt*, Vol. II, AUC Press, Cairo, 2001, 305.

<sup>32</sup> Hölzl, R., "Giebelfelddekoration von Stelen des Mittleren Reiches", in *Beiträge Zur Ägyptologie* 10, Wien, 1990, 55.

<sup>33</sup> Blackman, A.M., "The Significance and Libation in Funerary and Temple Ritual", *ZÄS* 35, 1897, 119-130.; Shaw, I., & Nicholson P., *British Museum Dictionary of Ancient Egypt*, London, 1995, 304.

<sup>34</sup> El-Shaieb, M., *Cold Water*, *ASAE Arabic* 7, Cairo, 2013, 32-44.

the deceased to become physically clean, getting rid of sins and transgressions, and becoming morally pure. Purity eliminates negative qualities and wrongdoings and seeks forgiveness from the gods<sup>36</sup>.

The funerary purification ceremony was essential to the deceased's afterlife journey. It appeared in tombs from at least the Fourth Dynasty onwards and was related to *Re-Atum*<sup>37</sup>, *Horus*, and *Thoth*. *Thoth* was considered to be the master of purity<sup>38</sup>, whom the deceased purified in the same water in which he has purified<sup>39</sup>.

In Chapter 125 of the Book of the Dead, when the deceased passes through the court of judgment, he is pure and free of all sins<sup>40</sup>. This shows that the deceased supposedly passes the underworld mounds in the great bark of *Re* and together with *Re*, enters the horizon after completing the nightly journey<sup>41</sup>.

The water waves on this panel are unique; the two water waves emerge from the top left of the panel, which indicates the presence of a third personality, who may be one of his sons, doing the libation from a nemset-jar as seen in parallel scenes<sup>42</sup>. The same scene appears on a stela of Qen and his wife Nefertari in Copenhagen National Museum B3-AA.d.11<sup>43</sup>.

**4.7 Offering tables:** Beginning in the 1<sup>st</sup> Dynasty, the function of the offering table was limited<sup>44</sup>. It was used exclusively to hold loaves of bread. From the 5<sup>th</sup> Dynasty onwards, offering tables contained all kinds of food and offerings. The offering tables were simple in structure; they consisted of a vertical stand topped with a horizontal

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<sup>35</sup> Meeks, D., 'Pureté et purification en Égypte', *Dictionnaire de la Bible*, Supplément IX, Paris : Centre d'étude des Religions du Livre, 1979, 430-452.

<sup>36</sup> Bonnet, H., *Sünde*, In: *Reallexikon der Ägyptischen Religionsgeschichte*, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1952, 761.

<sup>37</sup> CT 527: Buck, A. de, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts, VI, Texts of Spells 472-786*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1956, §119.

<sup>38</sup> BD., vol. III, ch. 182, 101; Faulkner, R.O., *The Egyptian Book of the Dead, The Book of Going Forth by Day*, San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1998, 181.

<sup>39</sup> Faulkner, R.O., *The Egyptian Book of the Dead the Book of Going Forth by Day*, San, ch. 145, 228.

<sup>40</sup> Grieshammer, R., "Reinheit, kultische", in: *LÄ V*, 213.

<sup>41</sup> Staring, N., The Late Dynasty Tomb of Ry at Saqqara (Reign of Tutankhamun), Horemheb's Chief of Bowmen and Overseer of Horses Contextualised, *Rivista del Museo Egizio* 4, 2020, 40.

<sup>42</sup> Staring, N., The Late Dynasty Tomb of Ry at Saqqara, fig.18.

<sup>43</sup> Kitchen, K., *Rameside Inscriptions, Translated and Annotated Translations: Ramesses II, His Contemporaries*, Vol. III, Wiley-Blackwell 2001, 461.

<sup>44</sup> Kamal, A., *Tables d'Offrandes*, CG.N.23001-23256, Le Caire 1909, 130-148.



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board on which two or three loaves were placed. However, in the Old Kingdom, loaves of bread were placed vertically, and their size and quantity increased. This depiction of vertical bread continued until the Middle Kingdom, when offering tables contained different shapes of loaves of bread, such as vertical, circular, and conical shapes<sup>45</sup>.

**4.8 Bread:** For centuries, bread was the most important food item in ancient Egyptian nutrition. Our knowledge of bread-making in Egypt dates back to around 5,800 years, as evidenced in the Pre-dynastic archaeological sites. It was made from wheat grains and emmer<sup>46</sup>. From the Old Kingdom, scenes on the walls of tomb *Ti* at Saqqara, dating back to the 5<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, show the process of baking bread in detail<sup>47</sup>. Some types of bread had an important ritual role in resurrecting the deceased. The deceased feared most of not finding the bread offering in the realm of the dead, forcing him to eat his own filth, which was the worst fate facing the deceased "*I won't eat dirt; as I'll have the white Inpw crown, with its shine bread*"<sup>48</sup>. As stated in this paragraph from the coffin texts, it seems that the purpose of depicting bread on the offering tables was to guarantee the deceased the continuation of life in the afterlife<sup>49</sup>.

### 5. Inscriptions:

At the top of the lower register, a text in eight vertical columns of hieroglyphic texts, filled with black, with vertical lines separating them, is to be read from left to right:

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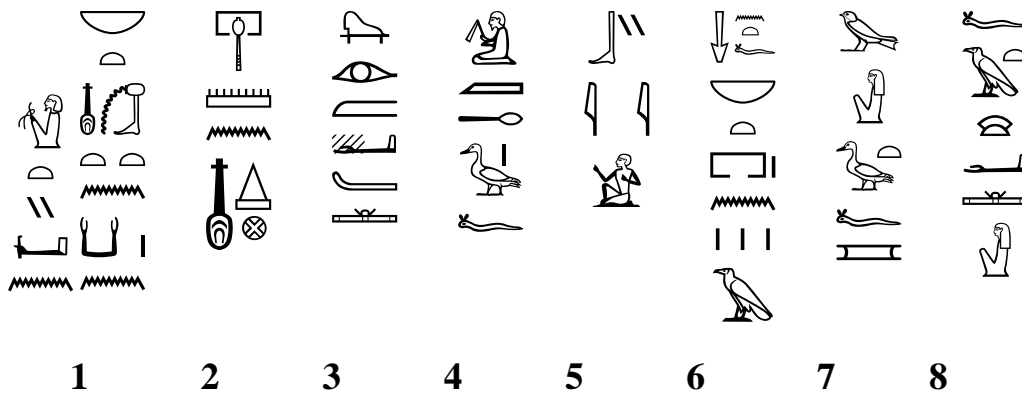
<sup>45</sup> El Sharnouby, R., "*Unpublished Votive Stela from The Egyptian Museum in Cairo (CG34058)*", *International Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Management II*, 2019, 27-49.

<sup>46</sup> Attia, V.I., *Bread in Ancient Egypt*, 2017, 1-5; Howard, J., *Bread in Ancient Egypt "Ancient Grains"*, 1972, 199-204.

<sup>47</sup> Porter & Moss, *Malek Jaromir: Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Reliefs and Paintings, III part 2, Memphis: Saqqâra to Dahshûr*, Griffith institute, Oxford, 2003; Barakat, H., *Giving Life – A History of Bread in Ancient Egypt*, in RAWI's ISSUE 10, 2019, <https://rawi-publishing.com/articles/bread-in-egypt/>

<sup>48</sup> CT III, Spell 187, 88.

<sup>49</sup> Hassan, S., *Excavations at Giza. The Offering-List in the Old Kingdom*, Vol. VI/II, Cairo, 1948, 205.



**From left to right:**

(1) Nbt nfrt wabt n kA n<sup>(a)</sup>

*“All good purified (things) to the ka of”*

sAw.ty n (2) pr-ḥd (n.y) Mn-nfr<sup>(b)</sup>

*“The Guardian of the Treasury of Memphis”*

(3) Wsir Maḥw<sup>(c)</sup> (4) mAa- xrw sA.f (5) By<sup>(d)</sup>

*“The deceased Mahu true of voice, his son Bi”*

(6) snt.f nbt pr.nAy<sup>(e)</sup>

*“His wife, the lady of the house, Nay”*

(7) sAt.f mri.f (8) &A xa<sup>(f)</sup>

*“His daughter, his beloved, TakhA”*

## 6. Notes on the Texts

- a. The usual offering formula which begins the offerings (Htp di nsw...), *“A boon that the king gives ...”*, is lost and the rest that usually follows this formula begins with *“nbt nfrt wabt n kA.n...”* *“Every good and purified things to the ka of...”*<sup>50</sup>. It represents the end of the list of offerings and gives a general list of offerings, including all requirements for the deceased. However, the offering formula is sometimes written without the usual Htp di nsw. Still, it is written



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<sup>50</sup> The usual offering formula from the Ramesside period, see for example: A Stela CGC 34.85 (Cairo Museum); Stela No. 1363 from Heliopolis in (Giza main magazine); Base of statue of Pached E 12682 (Louvre museum).

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with the general offering formula *m xt nbt nfrt wabt...*, such as a stela in Cairo museum, numbered SR 4/11736.

- b. The title “sAw.ty n pr HD n.y Mn-nfr” has been known since the early Fourth dynasty, but most examples are from the Fifth Dynasty. It means “*Treasury-guardian of Memphis*”<sup>51</sup>. It was one of the most important offices in the Old Kingdom. The writing of the pr-HD varies and it is useful in dating. The mace inside the house may be written as  or . The latter goes back to the early Sixth Dynasty<sup>52</sup>. There is also the title *imy-r pr HD* or *imy-r prwy-HD*, translated by Jones as “*Overseer of the Two Treasuries*”<sup>53</sup>. Most of these jobs were scribal concerning the calculation of the state revenues as well as that revenues from temples and private lands<sup>54</sup>. The treasury was responsible for providing the deceased with his needs from offerings and funerary equipment, beside supervising some kinds of goods as linen, wine and oils, etc.<sup>55</sup>. This title *imy-r prwy-HD* was known since the middle of the fourth dynasty, king Khafre or later, then it existed in the late of the fourth dynasty or the beginning of the fifth dynasty<sup>56</sup>. The title disappeared during the first half of the fifth dynasty until it appeared in the titularies of two viziers<sup>57</sup>. The holders of *imy-r prwy HD* were responsible for the whole dominance of the treasury while those who bore the singular form of the title as *Mahu* here *imy-r pr HD* were in charge of real treasuries and daily matters of the treasuries<sup>58</sup>. The title *imy-r pr-HD* almost disappeared with the beginning of the six dynasty, probably the holders of *imy-r prwy-HD* held part of their duties<sup>59</sup>.

- c. The name of *Mahu* is written as . It is preceded by the title for a deceased *wsir*, which is written by the portable chair <sup>60</sup>, as in the name of

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<sup>51</sup> Al-Ayedi, A.R., *Index of Egyptian Administrative, Religious and Military Titles of the New Kingdom*, 2006, 485.

<sup>52</sup> Strudwick, N., *The Administration of the Old Kingdom, The Highest Titles and Their Holders*, London, The Gresham Press, 1985, 276-279.

<sup>53</sup> Jones, D., *An Index of Ancient Egyptian Titles I*, 133:524.

<sup>54</sup> Strudwick, N., *The Administration of Egypt in the Old Kingdom*, 299.

<sup>55</sup> Helck, W., *Untersuchungen zu den Beamtentiteln des ägyptischen Alten Reiches*, 59.


<sup>56</sup> Strudwick, N., *The Administration of Egypt in the Old Kingdom*, 55 (1); 109-110 (84), 290.

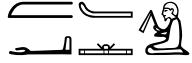
<sup>57</sup> *kAi* and *pH-n-wi-kAi* dated to the reign of *Ne-User-Re*, see: Strudwick, N., *The Administration of Egypt in the Old Kingdom*, 142-144 (136), 84-85 (45).


<sup>58</sup> Helck, W., *Untersuchungen zu den Beamtentiteln des ägyptischen Alten Reiches*, 58, 61.

<sup>59</sup> Strudwick, N., *The Administration of Egypt in the Old Kingdom*, 78-79 (35), 156 (153), 291.


<sup>60</sup> Gardiner, A. *Egyptian Grammar*, 550 (Q2).

the god Osiris, but not the usual chair of Isis  and not followed by the determinative of the god sign. It refers to the deceased *Mahu*. The chair is followed by the eye sign that was known in the Middle Kingdom in the name of Osiris<sup>61</sup>. The name of Osiris was written by the portable chair and followed by the eye sign, as can be noticed on other parallel stelae from the New Kingdom, e.g., a stela at Cairo Museum (CGC 34.24) a stela at Chicago (N.31663) in the Field Museum of Natural History<sup>62</sup>, the stela Ramesside N. 235 in Matariya magazine “Arab el-Hisn”. As for the name of *Mahu*, it is

written as , the name was written also on a statue from Karnak Cachette no. 42112, dated to the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, with only the determinative used

for a man  <sup>63</sup>. The name *Mahu* was held by other personalities, as there was a man called *Mahu* in the 18<sup>th</sup> Dyn., who was the “*The Chief Police in Akhetaten*” and dates back to the time of Akhenaton<sup>64</sup>. There was also a close

name to *Mahu*, that of *Mahuy* as , <sup>65</sup>, who held the title of “*The first prophet of Amon*”<sup>66</sup>.

d- The name of the son, *Bii*, is not followed by mAa xrw as usual. It is not preceded by any titles to show his position; it is written as  <sup>67</sup>.

e- The title of the first lady is “nbt- pr”, which follows her title “snt.f”. It is a feminine title referring to the first lady behind the son of *Mahu*, who has these titles that refer to her as being the wife of the son of *Mahu*. She wasn’t the daughter of *Mahu*. The title “nbt-pr” appeared in the Late Middle Kingdom, especially in the reign of King Amenemhat III and continued on most funerary stelae in the following periods and was held specifically by the married women<sup>68</sup>.

f- The epithet “mAa xrw” means “*justified*”. It didn’t appear after the names of the second and the third ladies in the lower register, perhaps for being young

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<sup>61</sup> Wb I, 359, 5.

<sup>62</sup> Allen, T.G., *Egyptian Stelae in Field Museum of Natural History*, Chicago 1936, 34.

<sup>63</sup> Legrain, G., *Statues et Statuettes de Rois et de Particuliers*, T.I, Le Caire 1906, 61.

<sup>64</sup> De Garis Davis, *The Rock Tombs of El Amarna*, 6 vols, 1903-8.

<sup>65</sup> Ranke, H., *Die Ägyptischen Personennamen I*, Glückstadt 1935, 105, 25.

<sup>66</sup> Legrain, G., *Sur Mahouhi, Premier Prophét d’Amon*, ASAE 5, Le Caire 1914, 137.

<sup>67</sup> Ranke, H., *Personennamen I*, 150.

<sup>68</sup> Smither, P.C. & Dakin, A.N., “*Stelae in the Queen’s College*”, *JEA* 25, 1939,160; Freed, R., “*Stela Workshops of Early Dynasty 12*”, in *Studies in Honor of William Kelly Simpson*, Vol.1, Boston, 1996, 331.

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when the tomb was constructed. The third lady is unknown, as her name is not registered in the text.

### 1. Genealogy of the Family of Mahu

In a study on a family stela from Saqqara, Gohary referred to MaHu as the son of Nb-nfr. They shared the same tomb; perhaps *Mahu* completed the construction of the tomb after his father<sup>69</sup>.

Nb-nfr (Father)



*Hwi-nfr(Brother)+MaHu+(wife Tiyi)*



Son *Bii*+Daughter (1) &A xa+Daughter (2) Name unknown

### 8. Discussion and Dating

- The panel reveals some features that could be dated to the late 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty and the early 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. The main scene on the panel is that of a purification. It is an excerpt from BD spell 149, and there are no parallels for BD 149 spells or their accompanying vignettes in the iconographic programs of the New Kingdom's tombs in Saqqara. The spell has not been widely observed outside the Memphite necropolis either. Only four Theban tombs are known to have included text excerpts or vignettes illustrating BD 149. Interestingly, in the late Eighteenth Dynasty, BD manuscripts were often concluded with this chapter. The same dates to the late 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty (Stela CG 34182); (Stela Copenhagen National Museum B3-AA.d.11); (Block Berlin Ägyptisches Museum ÄM 7278).

- The style of figures and the characteristic types of clothes and wigs indicate the dating of the late Eighteenth Dynasty. Long wigs with massive side braids, topped by fillets and cones of fat, were common during the Eighteenth Dynasty, like in the tomb of *Nakht* and his wife *Tawy* (TT 52)<sup>70</sup> and *Djeser-ka-re-seneb* (TT 38)<sup>71</sup>.

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<sup>69</sup> Gohary, S., The Twin Tomb Chapel of Nb-nfr and His Son Mhw, at Sakkara, SCA Publications, Cairo 2009; see also: Ola El-Aguizy, Une Stèle de Famille à Saqqara. Reconsidération, *Nova Studia Aegyptiaca IX*, 2015, 1-16.

<sup>70</sup> Davies, N. de G., The Tomb of Nakht at Thebes, *PMMA Egyptian Expedition I*, New York 1917, pls 8,12, 16-18. (reign of Thutmose IV and Amenhotep III)

- Contrary to what is usual in Egyptian art, coloring the hair of the young man in the upper and lower registers in red and coloring the woman's body in red may indicate the artist's lack of skill. The artist also made a mistake when he colored the young man's hair red instead of black in the upper and lower registers.
- Stepping with the right leg instead of the left one in the figures of *Mahu* and the young man in the lower register was dictated to the artist by the direction of the inscriptions into the tomb.
- All women wear the same costume: long, tight-fitting garments and long wigs tied with wide strips of fabric, except for *Mahu's* wife, who wears a long, double tight-fitting garment, a wide lotus necklace, and an aromatic cone and a small lotus flower adorn her head.

### **9. Conclusion:**

- This painted rectangular panel JE 33260 - SR 4/ 11980 at Cairo Museum is a panel found by V. Loret in the tomb of *Mahu* in the Teti Pyramid Cemetery at Saqqara North, is not a funerary stela as was registered in the Egyptian Museum's Database.
- The tomb is characteristic of the late Eighteenth Dyn. and the early nineteenth, not to the 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> Dyns., as registered in the Egyptian Museum's Database in Cairo.
- Individuals on the panel: The owner *Mahu*, his wife, two sons and three women, the wife of the son of *Mahu*, and two daughters of *Mahu*

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<sup>71</sup> Davies, N.M., *Scenes from Some Theban Tombs (Nos 38, 66, 162, with Excerpts from 81)*, *PTT IV*, Oxford 1963, pls.1, 6-7 (reign of Thutmosis IV and Amenhotep III).

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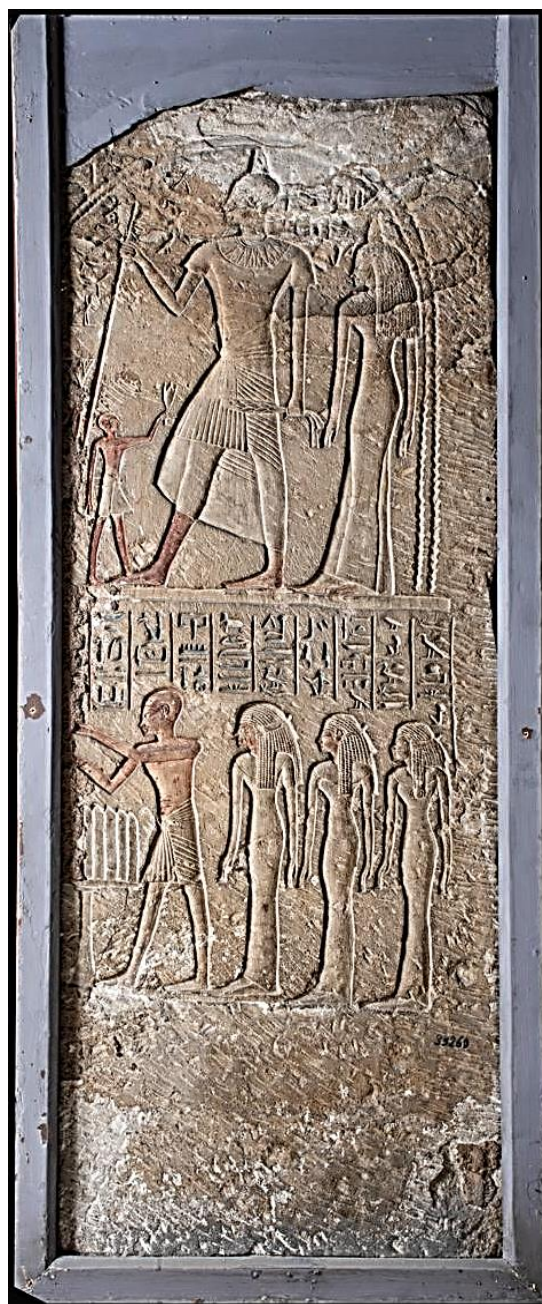
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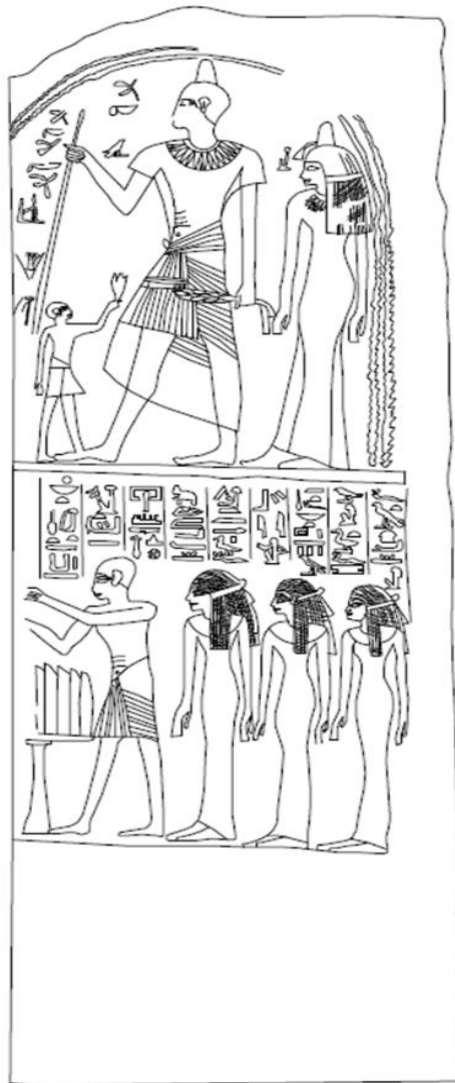
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### Plates of the Panel



(Plate 1)

The Panel of *Mahu* JE 33260 - SR 4/ 11980, ©Cairo Museum



(Plate 2)

Facsimile of the Panel (done by Rasha Abd El Hafez)