

JERZY ZELAZOWSKI – ALFRED TWARDECKI

A NEW FUNERARY STELA IN THE COLLECTION OF THE NATIONAL
MUSEUM IN WARSAW

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The ancient art collections of the National Museum in Warsaw obtained a new monument in February 1992. It is a relief funerary stela with a Greek inscription (inv.no. 237185), previously belonging to a diplomat of Polish origin who emigrated to Iran after the fall of the January Uprising in 1863; the stela was brought back to Poland by his descendants who returned in 1924. In February 1992 Insurence and Reinsurence Limited Company WARTA sponsored transaction between the National Museum and the descendants of the diplomat mentioned above.

Shown in low relief on a limestone slab (0.342 x 0.256 x 0.57m) there is a bearded male, lying with (probably) crossed legs on a couch and holding a kantharos in his extended right hand which is slightly bent at the elbow. Accompanying him is a male without beard, standing en face with his right hand stretched out over a horned altar,¹ holding the edge of his robe with his left. The heads of both figures are inclined slightly to the left. The inscription in Greek is in two columns below the relief (letter height 0.013-0.017m).

Tafel Ib.

a	b
1 Μέλας L O	Ἡρακλά
2 εὐψυχί.	μων L KB
3	εὐψυχί.

1.1 and 1.2 L = ἐτῶν

1.2 Should be Ἡρακλάμ(μ)ων.

1.3 εὐψυχί written differently than in 1.2.

Translation:

Melas, seventy years old, farewell. Heraklammon, twenty two years old, farewell.

The epitafium suggests Egypt as the source of the stela for two reasons. Firstly, the theophoric name of Heraklammon appears almost exclusively in papyri and Egyptian inscriptions.² The earliest known document is from Philadelphia, dated to A.D. 40-68.,³

¹ See G.Soukiassian, Les autels "à cornes" ou "à acrotères" en Égypte, BIFAO 83,1983,317-333.

² I found only four literary attestations of Heraklammons: HA, v. Aur. 22-24. A Heraklammon acting in Tyana and a traitor to his city is referred to here, but taking into consideration the author's unreliability, one could suppose that even of there is something to the story of Tyana's siege, the person and name of Heraklammon were quite certainly invented. AP 16.36. This epigram of Agathias was dedicated to Heraklammon - rhetor, lawyer and praeses of Thebais - together with a monument founded for Heraklammon in Pergamon. About this Heraklammon cf. RE s.v.; Leipoldt, Schenute von Atripe, Texte und

while its latest occurrence is in a document (on parchment) of unknown provenance from the 8th century.⁴ Francois Dunand's conclusions concerning the occurrence of this name have been confirmed by material discovered in the last thirty years.⁵ Melas, the name of the other deceased, was extremely popular in the Graeco-Roman world and so cannot provide any clue to the origins of the stela.⁶ The other element of the stela which would point to Egypt is the abbreviation L used to denote the year. It appears only in Egyptian documents or ones connected with Egypt.⁷ Taking into consideration both these factors, we can state with a great measure of certainty that the stela comes from Egypt. It has so far proved impossible to establish an exact provenience.

It is difficult to consider as Egyptian relief representation which lacks any specifically Egyptian features. The sculptor's intent was to show deceased as the content and inscriptions both demonstrate. For this purpose the sculptor employed motifs that were highly popular in Egyptian sepulchral art: the banquets scene and a scene of sacrifice.⁸ The two were juxtaposed on our stela to the detriment of symmetry and the proportions of the figures, undoubtedly for reasons other than just composition. It was certainly not arbitrary, for the

Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur 25,1; pp.163, 165 n. 6. Athenaios, *Apologia contra Arianos* 49,3,200; 78,7,8. In this case both Heraklammon's are bishops from Egypt.

³ P.Harris 72. With corrections (dating and provenience) - L.C.Youtie, *ZPE* 10,1973,187 note 5. Heraklammon is the father of 41-year-old Papon and husband of Tamacha.

⁴ Pap. Ross-Georg V 46. Heraklammon pays rent to the deacon Καλομη. He is undoubtedly a Christian. Indeed, there is even a bishop Heraklammon mentioned in a document of unknown provenience dated to the 6th century - P.Lond. V 1803 p.258. There are 64 papyri, ostraca and parchments in which one mentioned a Heraklammon. Three times there are two Heraklammons mentioned in one document. I found also one inscription with a Heraklammon: Lefevbre, *Inscr.Christ.Aeg.* No 70, p.16 = Milne, *Gr.Inscr. (Cat.Gen. des Ant.Eg. du Musée du Cairo 1)* No 9282 p.77. Finally I could find 67 Heraklammons in documentary texts plus 1 in inscription, plus 4 attestations in literary sources, thus giving 72 examples at all.

⁵ F.Dunand, *Les noms théophoriques en - ammon. A propos d'un papyrus de Strasbourg du III siècle p.C., Chr. d'Egypte* 38,1963,134-146. Today the number of occurrences of the name has grown significantly. In chronological terms, the most, i.e. 20, occur in the 4th century, 14 in the 3rd century, 10 in the 5th century, 6 in the 6th century, the 2nd and 7th centuries are represented by 4 examples each, the 8th by 2 and the 1st by one. There are 2 examples without date.

⁶ See for example: Preisigke, *Namenbuch*, s.v.; RE, s.v.; Index du Bulletin Epigraphique, vv. I, IV, V.

⁷ See: RE II A 2286-2287, s.v. Sigla (F.Bilabel), Larfeld, *Griechische Epigraphik*, München 1914,301. The known cases of the use of this abbreviation outside Egypt are: IG XII 2, 393 (an Alexandrian); IG XII 3, 327 (Thera, a letter from Ptolemy to Apollonius with a list of the Ptolemaic garrison); IG XIV 1940 (Rome, the name of Petisios Stefanos points to some Egyptian connections); IG XIV 701 (Pompeii, a dating using the Egyptian name of a month points to Egyptian connections); IG XIV 767 (Neapolis). Only in one case (the last) it is impossible to discover an Egyptian link. One may assume then that this abbreviation was used by Egyptians exclusively and mainly in Egypt.

⁸ See: E.Pfuhl, *Alexandrinische Grabreliefs*, MDAI (AA) 26,1901,258-304; F.A.Hooper, *Funerary Stelae from Kom Abou Billou*, Ann Arbor 1961; Abd el-Hafeez Abd el-Al, H.-J.Grenier, G.Wagner, *Stèles funéraires de Kom Abou Bellou*, Paris 1985; J.Bingen, *La serie kappa des steles de Terenouthis*, *Studia Varia Bruxellensia*, Leuven 1987,3-14; I.Vitali, *Un contributo per l'interpretazione delle stele di Kom Abou Billou*, *Rivista degli Studi Orientali*, 58, X, 1984, 245-265 and also the funerary stelae from Egypt in Polish collections - *Corpus Signorum Imperii Romani*. Pologne, Warszawa 1990, v. II 1 nos 58-73.

age of the deceased was taken into account, the bearded elderly man being shown banqueting, the younger beardless one standing and offering on an altar.⁹

The interpretation of this object remains necessarily connected with the discussion on the importance of the banquet scene in the sepulchral art of the Graeco-Roman world, including Egypt. In F.A.Hooper's opinion, banquet scenes on funerary stelae depict libations to the gods made by the deceased himself.¹⁰ Nevertheless, K.Parlasca and J.M.Dentzer believe that the banquet scene was closely connected with the funerary ritual and that the hand raising a cup is a kind of warning for the living not to forget to offer libations to the dead.¹¹ The magical protection of the dead person, treating the stela as an equivalent of an offering made at the tomb may be easily explained by traditional Egyptian beliefs.¹²

The stela from the National Museum in Warsaw is a "classicising" example of the sepulchral art of Egypt of the Roman period.¹³ The sculptor attempted to show both figures frontally: he also tried to mark the contrapost of the standing figure and depicted the male lying on the couch with the (probably) crossed legs. The absence of a frame and of the usual decorative elements, the relief deepened in places as well as the characteristic turn of the head to the left and the carving of the dress to suggest the form of the body underneath - point to a break with the Egyptian tradition of funerary representations reaching back to the Ptolemaic period and suggests a dating in the second half of the 2nd and first half of the 3rd century A.D. A more exact determination of date on the grounds of stylistic elements alone is extremely difficult owing to the debatable material from Egypt. The stelae from Terenuthis and Alexandria should permit a tracing of the evolution of a provincial style of art in Egypt, although it is difficult to say to what extent these objects are representative.¹⁴

Warsaw
Warsaw/Cologne

Jerzy Zelazowski
Alfred Twardecki

⁹ See L.Castiglione, *Stele eines Kupferschmiedes. Zur Deutung der römerzeitlichen ägyptischen Grabsteine*, MDAI (AK) 24,1969,78-86; K.Makowski, *Motyw uczty w sztuce sepulkralnej Syrii i Egiptu w okresie Cesarstwa Rzymskiego (The Banquet Scene in the Sepulchral Art of Syria and Egypt under the Roman Empire)*, Warszawa 1982,247-258 (esp. p.248 and 249).

¹⁰ F.A.Hooper, *op.cit.* 19-26.

¹¹ K.Parlasca, *Zur Stellung der Terenuthis-Stelen. Eine Gruppe römischer Grabreliefs aus Ägypten* in Berlin, MDAI (AK) 26,1970,173-198 (esp. p.176, note 26); J.M.Dentzer, *Reliefs au banquet dans le moitié orientale de l'Empire Romain: iconographie hellénistique et tradition locales*, RA 1978,65-69; see idem, *Le motif du banquet couché dans le Proche-Orient et le monde grec du VII^e au IV^e siècle avant J.-C.*, Paris 1982,1-20.

¹² See K.Makowski, *op.cit.* 260-281.

¹³ See K.Parlasca, *op.cit.* 185-198, idem, *Hellenistische Grabreliefs aus Ägypten*, MDAI (AK) 31,1975,303-314.

¹⁴ See F.A.Hooper, *op.cit.* no 180.



Griechische Grabstele (Warschau, National Museum, Inv.No. 237185)