

An Unfinished Late Middle Kingdom Stela From Abydos

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This article presents a detailed examination of an interesting Middle Kingdom stela in the reserve collection of the *Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire*, Brussels (Pl. 8).¹ Although in poor condition, having been broken in two and intentionally defaced in antiquity, the stela is nonetheless deserving attention. It belongs to a small group of unusual late Middle Kingdom stone monuments distinguished by having one or more niches incorporating single or multiple mummiform statuettes carved in half-round relief.² Few examples of this type have been studied in any detail and the majority are known only from brief catalogue entries, as is indeed the case with the Brussels stela. The lack of attention afforded the latter is no doubt due to its ruined condition as well as the absence of any genealogical or prosopographical data in its incomplete inscriptions. However, as this study will show, other criteria are apparent which, although less conclusive, suggest the stela is one of the earliest examples of this uncommon class of object. Furthermore, closer inspection of the various decorative elements reveals something about the use-life of the object and the commercial activities of an artisan or workshop producing cult objects at Abydos in the Middle Kingdom.

Description

The stela entered the museum collection in 1913 and bears the registration number E.4860. In 1923 Louis Speleers published an inaccurate sketch of the object which shows the layout of its inscriptions, but not the distinctively shaped base, fracture, or damaged mummiform figure.³ These and other details, most of which are clearly visible in the photograph and line drawing of the stela, are hereby described (Pl. 8 and Fig. 1).

Brussels E.4860 is an arch-topped stela carved from a single limestone slab measuring 46.9 cm high, 26.5 cm wide, 8 cm deep. The decorated front surface is dominated by a central arch-topped niche, 31 cm high, 17 cm wide, 3.7 cm deep, which accommodates the damaged and intentionally defaced remains of a mummiform statuette carved in half-round relief. The edges of this niche have a pronounced batter, which slopes inwards towards the back, of between 0.5-0.6 cm around the sides and base (approx. 9°), and by 1.3 cm around the arch (approx. 19°). These edges, together with the back of the niche, have been carefully smoothed and bear no trace of additional decoration. Two bands of symmetrically reversed hieroglyphs carved in sunk relief and framed within lightly incised border lines begin at the centre of the arch and run down the sides of the niche. The signs are shallow cut with

¹ I am indebted to Luc Limme in the *Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire*, Brussels for his help during my research and for permission to publish the photograph of the object. I would like also to thank Pat Winker in the School of Archaeology, Classics and Egyptology, University of Liverpool for access to archive material relating to Garstang's excavations at Abydos, and to Wolfram Grajetzki for his comments on an early draft of this article.

² To avoid over cluttering the article, I have included a catalogue of the objects belonging to this category at the end of the article, to which the capital letters A-O used throughout refer. A separate study exploring the purpose of these objects in the context of Abydos is in preparation by the present writer.

³ L. SPELEERS, *Recueil des Egyptiennes des Musées Royaux du Cinquantenaire à Bruxelles*, Brussels 1923, 33 no. 107, 129; B. PORTER/R. MOSS, *Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Reliefs, and Paintings V Upper Egypt: Sites*, Oxford 1937, 99. Speleers's brief written entry for the figure is thus: "Dans cette cavité est sculptée une statuette du mort, enveloppé dans un manteau, et croisant les mains (abîmée)".

no internal detail and are coloured with green pigment; black draft lines are still visible around the edges of several signs. The inner incised border line terminates roughly at the same point as the inscriptions while the outer border line continues down for approximately 4 cm below where the formulae end. The carefully smoothed lower part of the stela immediately below the niche is undecorated except for traces of a rectangular frame drawn in black pigment,⁴ the horizontal lines of which are spaced 3.5 cm apart which exactly matches the distance between the two incised border lines around the niche.

Two notches carved from either side of the stela's base together with a rebate running across its width creates a projection 19 cm wide, 2.5 cm high, 4.9 cm deep, which was probably intended to act as a tenon enabling the stela to be securely fixed into a separately fashioned offering table or pedestal. The tenon appears to be contemporary with the manufacture of the object, although there is no obvious wear, abrasion marks or discolouration of the stone to indicate that the stela had ever been inserted into a separate base – at least not for any length of time for weathering to have occurred, as appears to be the case with other examples.⁵

At some point, most probably in antiquity, the stela was broken in two and a fracture runs diagonally across the object, roughly a third of the way down the left edge to midway on the right edge. The break affects both vertical sections of inscription, but particularly the left column, which is missing a portion of stone resulting in the loss of about a quarter of the text. In modern times this area has been filled with plaster and the inscription restored; presumably the two halves of the stela were rejoined at the same time.

The ruined state of the mummiform statuette is apparently the result of a failed attempt to chisel out the image. Only battered parts of the figure's upper half remain and nothing of the lower portion has survived other than the merest suggestion of a gently tapered body form indicated by chisel marks in the stone. Despite such extensive damage it is still possible to offer a few observations as to the original appearance of the statuette. The rounded outer shape of a large tripartite wig as well as parts of its front lappets is clearly visible, on which a few small patches of blue pigment are still preserved. The top of both narrow shoulders and part of the upper chest and left arm remain intact, but only the outlines of the upper right arm and torso are preserved in the otherwise shattered stone. Although Speelers described the figure as having "croisant les mains," the damage to the chest area makes it impossible to determine whether the lower arms and/or hands were once modelled in relief or merely implied by the slight projection of the elbows captured in the outline of the statuette.⁶ Similarly, due to the missing chin and central portion of the neck immediately below, it cannot be established whether the figure originally sported a short beard. However, traces of reddish skin colour preserved on the sides and base of the neck indicate that it was almost certainly a male figure.⁷ Green pigment in the area immediately below the neckline is undoubtedly the remains of a decorative collar, the modest size

⁴ A sketch of the stela in the *journal d'entrée* indicates a vertical line on the left, although this is no longer visible.

⁵ The similarly notched base of Leiden stela 35 appears to show some discolouration in the area between the "tenon" and the decorated surface, possibly as a result of it having weathered differently while inserted into a separate base. P.A.A. BOESER, *Beschreibung der Aegyptischen Sammlung des Niederländischen Reichsmuseum der Altertümer in Leiden II*, Haag 1909, No. 35, pl. 25. Object F has a similar horizontal rebate without the side notches, presumably also to facilitate its secure installation into a separate base.

⁶ In all but one instance, the arms modelled on mummiform figures of eleven objects from this type-group are depicted crossed, right over left.

⁷ Where identification is possible on other examples in the type-group the main dedicator is always male. In every instance where female mummiform figures are depicted, they are secondary individuals.

of which is indicated by the fact that the green colour does not continue beyond the outer sides of the lappets⁸ where traces of the original white coloured garment are preserved.

As a result of the extensive damage to the lower half of the figure it is not possible to determine whether the tight-fitting garment terminated above the ankles, thus exposing the feet, or enveloped the entire lower body. One would favour the latter type of garment, since this is found on all but two mummiform figures from this object group.⁹

The back of the stela has a rough chiselled surface with a slightly curved hull-like section; however, there are no traces of plaster to indicate that it was ever fixed to a wall or other structure.¹⁰

The Inscriptions

ḥtp dj nsw^a 3sjr nb 3bdw^b d[.f.....]^c ḥt nb.t nfr(.t) w^cb(.t) n k3 n(j)^d (left)

“An offering which the king has given and Osiris, lord of Abydos, so that [he] may give [...] everything good and pure for the ka of ...”

ḥtp dj nsw jnpw^e tp(j) dw.f jm(j) w(t)^f nb t3-dsr^g d.f prt-ḥrw t ḥnkt k3 3pd ḥt nb.t nfr(.t) w^cb(.t)^h n k3 n(j)ⁱ (right)

“An offering which the king has given and Anubis, who-is-upon-his-mountain, the one in the *wṯ*, lord of the sacred land, so that he may give a voice offering of bread, beer, ox and fowl and everything good and pure for the ka of ...”

Notes to Inscriptions

a) The use of a single sedge plant sign shared by both symmetrically reversed offering formula is uncommon: W. BARTA, *Aufbau und Bedeutung der altägyptischen Opferformel (Ägyptologische Forschungen 24)*, Glückstadt 1968, 53 note 1. The possible chronological implication of this is discussed later. The single *t* sign following *ḥtp* is not indicated in the transliteration as it has been shown that its use in horizontal inscriptions simply follows the arrangement often found in vertical arrangements of the formula where it serves only as a phonetic complement of *ḥtp*: G. LAPP, *Die Opferformel des Alten Reiches unter Berücksichtigung einiger späterer Formen (Sonderschriften des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts Kairo 21)*, Mainz 1986, 4-5. However, the *nsw ḥtp t dj* arrangement rarely occurs in horizontal stelae inscriptions of the Middle Kingdom, although it is firmly attested in offering formulae of the Old Kingdom and First Intermediate Period. Barta, for example, lists only sources from these earlier periods; none from the Middle Kingdom: *Aufbau und Bedeutung der altägyptischen Opferformel*, 12-14 and 43. I know of only one other Middle Kingdom stela with the same arrangement, Cairo CG 20427, which interestingly also derives from North

⁸ Although broad collars which extend beyond the lappets are more commonly represented, narrow examples are to be found, e.g. W.C. HAYES, *The Scepter of Egypt. A Background for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Part I: From the Earliest Time to the End of the Middle Kingdom*, New York 1953, 328, fig. 216 (left statuette).

⁹ Only K has figures with garments terminating around the ankle area. In this respect, the statuettes are not strictly mummiform.

¹⁰ The unfinished back suggests that the stela was intended to be erected against or set into a wall. For an example of an *in situ* stela with a separate stone plinth erected against the wall of an Abydene memorial chapel see W.K. SIMPSON, *Inscribed Material from the Pennsylvania-Yale Excavations at Abydos (Publications of the Pennsylvania-Yale Expedition to Egypt 6)*, New Haven-Philadelphia 1995, pl. 6 B and 7 A-B.

Abydos: H.O. LANGE/H. SCHÄFER, *Catalogue général des antiquités égyptiennes du Musée du Caire N^{os} 20001-20780, Grab- und Denksteine des Mittleren Reiches II*, Berlin 1908, 22-24. It is perhaps tempting to see this as evidence of a regional variation of the formula; however its occurrence on the Cairo stela might be explained simply as one of a number of orthographic blunders in the inscriptions. These include the wrong order of signs writing *ht* in the offering formula and similar errors in two of the personal names, and most significantly by the fact that the second line of the formula continues above the first!

b) This combination of Osirian epithets regularly occurs on Abydene stelae and is second only in frequency to the epithet string *3sjr nb ddw ntr 3 nb 3bdw*: BARTA, *Aufbau und Bedeutung der altägyptischen Opferformel*, 56. For the range and frequency of epithet combinations on Abydene stelae see: J. SPIEGEL, *Die Götter von Abydos (Göttinger Orientforschungen IV.Reihe Ägypten 7)*, Wiesbaden 1975, 173-176.

c) The damaged portion may have borne a list of the same offerings as those preserved in the inscription on the right side, although the lower ends of four plural strokes which are visible above the *ht nb.t* group are not apparent on the opposite formula.

d) At this point one would expect the name (and titles) of the deceased to follow as well as one, or both, of the expected epithets *nb jm3h* and *m3c hrw*. An explanation for their absence is presented later.

e) The way of writing the name Anubis with an ideogram of a recumbent canid on a shrine (Gardiner-Sign E16) without additional phonetic complements is attested from the Old Kingdom (A. ERMAN/H. GRAPOW (eds.), *Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache I*, Berlin 2nd ed. 1957, 96). The symbolism of this sign has been discussed in some detail, most recently by H. WILLEMS, *The Coffin of Heqata (Cairo JdE 36418). A Case Study of Egyptian Culture of the Early Middle Kingdom (Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 70)*, Leuven 1996, 144-146. Willems concludes that the object beneath the animal originally represented a container of equipment associated with rituals carried out in the Place of Embalming. In this respect its singular use here instead of, or combined with, the phonetic spelling of the god's name certainly seems more appropriate for a stela bearing a three-dimensional representation of an embalmed and mummified body before which one can imagine rituals were also performed. However, unlike the name of Osiris which occurs in most of the inscriptions on objects from this type group, Anubis is found on only two other examples G¹¹ and N.¹² Of these, only the latter bears the name written with the ideogram of a canid upon a shrine, while on the former the name is written phonetically.

f) The *w(t)* determinative (Gardiner-Sign Aa2) is rather small and indistinctly carved above the quail chick. Lacking a definitive explanation for the *w(t)* I have chosen to leave the word untranslated. A comprehensive discussion of its development and possible meaning is offered by U. KÖHLER, *Das Imiut. Untersuchungen zur Darstellung eines mit Anubis verbundenen religiösen Symbols II (Göttinger Orientforschungen IV.Reihe Ägypten 4)*, Wiesbaden 1975, 444-452.

g) *tp(j) dw.f jm(j) w(t) nb t3-dsr* is the most frequent Anubis epithet combination found on Middle Kingdom stelae from Abydos – examples are listed in SPIEGEL, *Götter von Abydos*, 42, 171. Spiegel suggests that the Osirian cult had a direct bearing upon the development of Anubis's epithets, and in particular that of *tp(j) dw.f*, which supplanted *hnty zh-ntr* as the principal epithet (SPIEGEL, *Götter von*

¹¹ The inscriptions on this object remain unpublished, and this observation is based on a hand copy of the text made by the writer.

¹² G. LAPP, *Die Stelenkapelle des Kms aus der 13. Dynastie, Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts Kairo* 50 (1994), 251-252 fig. 7 and 8.

Abydos, 42-49). In addition, there is reason to believe that *tp(j) dw.f* may have held greater significance in the late Twelfth and Thirteenth Dynasties as a result of developments at South Abydos during the reign of Senusret III. A recently discovered seal impression bearing the mountain (*dw*) hieroglyph surmounted by a recumbent canid upon a shrine has been interpreted as the toponym *dw-jnpw* (Mountain-of-Anubis) associated with the tomb complex of Senusret III and the nearby pyramid-like gebel formation at South Abydos, where it would seem that this natural topographical feature became identified as the symbolic domain of the god: J.W. WEGNER/M.A. ABU EL-YAZID, The Mountain-of-Anubis: Necropolis Seal of the Senusret III Tomb Enclosure at Abydos, in: E. CZERNY/I. HEIN/H. HUNGER/D. MELMAN/A. SCHWAB (eds.), *Timelines. Studies in Honour of Manfred Bietak I* (*Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta* 149), Leuven 2006, 419-435.

h) For this grouping of offerings see: BARTA, *Opferformel*, 57, Bitte 2 h.

f) See note d) above.

Provenance

The stela's provenance is recorded in the *Journal d'Entrée* as having been found at Abydos by John Garstang, to which Speleers's catalogue adds that it came from his excavations in 1907. This date precludes the stela's association with a group of 95 objects in the Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire also excavated by Garstang at Abydos, since these all come from his 1908-9 seasons and were given in recognition of funding received from Jean Capart on behalf of the museum.¹³ One can suppose therefore that the stela came from one of two areas of North Abydos excavated by Garstang and his team in 1907 (Fig. 2).¹⁴ The first of these was located in the main wadi approximately 400 metres south of the Osiris temple enclosure and probably just beyond the southern limits of the Nineteenth Century excavations of Auguste Mariette who brought to light a large quantity of Middle Kingdom artefacts.¹⁵ The 1907 wadi excavations were supervised by Garstang's assistant E. Harold Jones who it seems kept no record of the work. Analysis of archival material relating to the 1907 season suggests that few, if any, Middle Kingdom artefacts were found by Jones. His main discovery of about three hundred stelae came from a large Ptolemaic-Roman Period cemetery which had developed in the wadi as well as a cemetery of mummified hawks.¹⁶ Some time after Jones's work began Garstang commenced excavations in an area of the western bank of the wadi roughly 500 metres south west of the Osiris temple enclosure. Here, Garstang encountered numerous Middle Kingdom burials, some containing later interments, which belonged to a continuation of a sector of the cemetery he had encountered seven years earlier at which time it was given the designation "E".¹⁷ Given the concentration of Middle Kingdom remains this would seem to be the more likely location where Brussels E.4860 was found. However, it should also be borne in mind that Jones's earlier excavation

¹³ For a list of objects see S.R. SNAPE, *Mortuary Assemblages from Abydos* (unpublished PhD thesis), Liverpool 1986, 595. Jean Capart joined the committee overseeing Garstang's excavations at Abydos in September 1907 (IBID., 57).

¹⁴ The approximate locations were established by Kemp in B. KEMP/R. MERRILEES, *Minoan Pottery in Second Millennium Egypt* (*Sonderschriften des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts Kairo* 7), Mainz 1980, 106 fig. 6 and 287-289.

¹⁵ A. MARIETTE, *Catalogue générale des monuments d'Abydos*, Paris 1880, 103-230. For a discussion of the area worked by Mariette see B.J. KEMP, s.v. *Abydos*, in: W. HELCK/W. WESTENDORF (eds.), *Lexikon der Ägyptologie* I, Wiesbaden 1975, 28-41.

¹⁶ The limited archival evidence concerning the wadi excavations is discussed in SNAPE, *Mortuary Assemblages from Abydos*, 52-57; and in KEMP/MERRILEES, *Minoan Pottery in Second Millennium Egypt*, 105-107.

¹⁷ IBID., 108-109; J. GARSTANG, *El Arábah: A Cemetery of the Middle Kingdom; Survey of the Old Kingdom Temenos; Graffiti from the Temple of Sety* (*Egyptian Research Account* 6), London 1900, 1-27.

in the wadi encompassed an area adjacent to, or possibly even overlapping, part of Mariette's "nécropole du nord" from where stelae I and K derive.

Dating

It has long been established that small-scale monuments incorporating niched mummiform figures appear in the reign of either Senusret III or Amenemhat III.¹⁸ This date is confirmed by two arch-topped stelae, J and K, which belong to the Abydene offering chapel group of the celebrated official Iykhernofret.¹⁹ Less secure dates have been proposed for half of the remaining fourteen objects in this type group which nevertheless suggest that this distinctive sculptural style continues in use into the early Thirteenth Dynasty and possibly later still.²⁰ So far, other than Speleers's overly vague "moyen empire" no precise date has been proposed for the Brussels stela however, the following analysis attempts to show that it should be considered as one of the earliest examples.

Its distinctive low-arched form was used for private stelae from the Eleventh Dynasty and throughout the Middle Kingdom; however the shape became increasingly popular from the reign of Amenemhat II²¹ and remained in vogue into the Thirteenth Dynasty.²² Besides E.4860, another four round-topped stelae within the type-group – H, I, K and L²³ – display the same abrupt transition between the low arch and the vertical sides;²⁴ of these only the aforementioned K has been securely dated to the last great period of the Twelfth Dynasty, when the stela's low-arch parallels funerary architecture, most notably the precisely executed vaulted ceilings and arched doorways used extensively in the subterranean compartments of the Dahshur pyramid complexes of Senusret III²⁵ and Amenemhat III.²⁶ In this respect, the preciseness of stela E.4860's low arch should be noted especially as it compliments what appears to be a more reliable dating criterion. The symmetrically reversed *hṭp dj nsw* formulae around its niche, which serves to emphasise this architectural comparison, is regularly found on stone doorframes as well as offering tables, although far less often on stelae.²⁷ Indeed, the relative infrequency of this arrangement on stelae has clear chronological implications in dating

¹⁸ H.G. EVERS, *Staat aus dem Stein II*, Munich 1929, 81.

¹⁹ Both stelae, together with a further nine examples, make up the Abydos North Offering Chapel (ANOC) No. 1 (W.K. SIMPSON, *The Terrace of the Great God at Abydos. The Offering Chapels of Dynasties 12 and 13 (Publications of the Pennsylvania-Yale Expedition to Egypt 5)*, New Haven-Philadelphia 1974, 17). For a detailed discussion of the relationships between individuals named on the various stelae belonging to this offering chapel group see R.J. LEPROHON, *The Personnel of the Middle Kingdom Funerary Stelae*, *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 15 (1978), 33-38.

²⁰ For the possible dating of monument O to the latter half of the Thirteenth Dynasty, see P. VERNUS, *Une formule des shaouabtis sur un pseudo-naos de la XIII^e Dynastie*, *Revue d'Égyptologie* 26 (1974), 101-114.

²¹ K. PFLÜGER, *The Private Funerary Stelae of the Middle Kingdom and Their Importance for the Study of Ancient Egyptian History*, *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 67 (1947), 128.

²² R. HÖLZL, *Round-Topped Stelae from the Middle Kingdom to the Late Period. Some Remarks on the Decoration of the Lunettes*, *Sesto Congresso Internazionale di Egittologia Atti I*, Turin 1992, 285-286.

²³ Although stela L still retains two corner tabs of the original rectangular slab, the actual decorated surface has an arch top.

²⁴ It is possible that some of the rectangular slab monuments were originally round-topped stelae, since none appear to be complete and their original shapes are uncertain.

²⁵ D. ARNOLD, *The Pyramid Complex of Senusret III at Dahshur. Architectural Studies (Publications of the Metropolitan Museum of Art Egyptian Expedition 26)*, New York 2002, in particular pl. 11b, 12a, c and d.

²⁶ D. ARNOLD, *Der Pyramidenbezirk des Königs Amenemhet III. in Dahschur I. Die Pyramide (Archäologische Veröffentlichungen 53)*, Mainz 1987, pl. 10-12 and 14. For a general discussion of the vault roof style in the Middle Kingdom see D. ARNOLD, *Building in Egypt. Pharaonic Stone Masonry*, New York 1991, 195-199.

²⁷ Symmetrical reversal was used for two identical texts, so that they appear mirrored, or with different texts, as with E.4860. A discussion of this arrangement without however detailed analysis of its use on stelae, can be found in H.G. FISCHER, *Egyptian Studies III: The Orientation of Hieroglyphs, Part I. Reversals*, New York 1977, 13-14.

Brussels E.4860. A study of nearly a thousand Middle Kingdom stelae has revealed relatively few with symmetrically reversed *hṯp dj nsw* formulae (cf. Fig. 3).²⁸ The most common arrangement of the formulae employs two centrally positioned and mirrored sedge plants (Gardiner-Sign M23) at the beginning.²⁹ This style occurs on rectangular and round-topped stelae, most frequently in horizontal inscriptions, but also in ten curved texts, from the early Twelfth to Thirteenth Dynasty.³⁰ However, far fewer stelae (fifteen examples) were found with symmetrically reversed *hṯp dj nsw* formulae sharing a single centrally positioned sedge plant sign. Of these, thirteen have the offering formulae composed in a horizontal line,³¹ while only two examples, Brussels E.4860 and the previously mentioned and firmly dated K, bear curved inscriptions. Based on the apparent rarity of this arrangement and, albeit to a much lesser extent, on the carefully fashioned low-arch shape, I believe that Brussels E.4860 should be dated to the same period, i.e. the reign of either Senusret III or Amenemhat III.

General Commentary

Already mentioned above is the fact that both symmetrically reversed inscriptions are incomplete ending with the phrase *n k3 n(j)* which lacks not only the name and title(s) of the dedicator, but also one or both of the expected epithets *m3c hrw* and *nb jm3h*. These undoubtedly remained to be added, and indeed the outer of the two incised border lines extends beyond both inscriptions and into the lower section of the stela in anticipation of additional text, for which the artisan had also marked out a rectangular frame in black draught lines immediately below the niche. It is unlikely that the mummiform figure alone would have been inscribed with any concluding text. Such an arrangement would have resulted in a large gap between the central inscription and those around the niche thus interrupting the visual relationship between all three and contrary to the artisan's otherwise carefully considered layout of the stela. In fact, the importance placed on the close spatial arrangement of inscription around a niche is evident from arch-topped stela I from the type-group, which also derives from Abydos and also bears a central niche containing a single mummiform figure. On this object, one text runs down the right side of the niche and then continues in a perpendicular plane beneath, while the left text maintains its vertical descent terminating at the base of the stela. A central column of inscription runs down, and immediately below, the mummiform figure where it continues in the remaining small blank area beneath the niche to the left. As a result there is very little space between the three lines of text and despite the fact that they are asymmetrical the overall composition appears visually balanced. However, the clumsy workmanship and inelegantly carved hieroglyphs indicate that stela I was not made by the sculptor of Brussels E.4860, which in any case could not have borne the same uneven text arrangement; although a number of different layouts could have been accommodated

²⁸ I believe the scope of the survey, while not exhaustive, is sufficiently broad to validate the conclusions made herein.

²⁹ Stelae with symmetrically reversed formulae separated by a single incised vertical line or with vertical inscriptions are not included in the survey.

³⁰ An early date is attested, for example, by Cleveland Museum of Art 21.1017 which is assigned to the reign of Senusret I, cf. L.M. BERMAN, *The Stele of Shemai, Chief of Police, of the Early Twelfth Dynasty*, in *The Cleveland Museum of Art*, in: P. DER MANUELIAN (ed.), *Studies in Honor of William Kelly Simpson I*, Boston 1996, 98. One can cite Cairo CG 20391 as a stela of a later date which, on the basis of genealogical evidence, has been assigned to the reign of Sobekhotep II of the Thirteenth Dynasty, cf. D. FRANKE, *Personendaten aus dem Mittleren Reich (20.-16. Jahrhundert v. Chr.)*. *Dossiers 1-796 (Ägyptologische Abhandlungen 41)*, Wiesbaden 1984, Doss. 167.

³¹ Five of the stelae with horizontal inscriptions have been dated to the late Twelfth to early Thirteenth Dynasties.

by a simple process of lengthening the existing border lines and utilising the space beneath the niche and on the body of the mummiform figure.

In his study of Elephantine stelae, Detlef Franke suggested that the wishes of the client was an important factor influencing the final appearance of a stela, along with the artistic and technical abilities of an artisan and the prevailing religious and social conventions of the time.³² One option available to the potential client was to purchase a “blank” already carved stela bearing the main body of text, which could be personalised simply by the addition of the purchaser’s name and epithets. A stela chosen from stock was likely not only to be less costly, but also would require the shortest time to complete. This might have been an important consideration for pilgrims on a brief visit to Abydos, or perhaps the only option available at certain times when increased demand for cult objects may have strained the capabilities of local workshops. In consideration of this point, it should be noted that although the Brussels stela is clearly unfinished, the fact that the mummiform figure and the inscriptions are painted suggests that this was not an object simply awaiting the name of the purchaser, but rather a finished sculptor’s trial piece or display model that was presented in its final decorated form except for a personalised dedication. Even so, the artisan who created it seems to have deliberately left the border lines incomplete in acknowledgement of the different ways in which the concluding inscription could have been arranged on copies of the stela.

Interestingly, arch-topped stela H also appears to be an example of an unfinished workshop product. This unprovenanced round-topped stela has a central niche incorporating a single mummiform statuette flanked by two slender female figures depicted in everyday attire. The skilful carving and carefully prepared surfaces of the stela are conspicuous only by the absence of an inscription and painted decoration. Since it is unlikely to have been supplied to the customer in this state one can suppose that it represents yet another unfinished project, on which the text remained to be added.³³ It is also hard to believe that stela H can be anything other than either a display model used to demonstrate one of the stylistic options available to a would-be client or a sculptor’s guide, since it would seem unlikely that a workshop would have speculatively created for stock a composition of two female and one mummiform figure in the hope of attracting a suitable customer.³⁴ Conversely, a greater demand can be envisaged for stelae such as E.4860 which incorporate a single mummiform figure and could, therefore, have been a pre-prepared stock item.³⁵

Any attempt at reconstructing the use-life of the Brussels stela is hindered by the lack of a recorded archaeological context, however a plausible explanation based on the following observations may be proposed that would account for the damage and/or attempted removal of the mummiform figure. At first glance one can be forgiven for concluding that the same artisan who fashioned the stela was also responsible for trying to chisel out the mummiform figure, perhaps due to a mishap during manufacture, at which point the stela broke. However, this scenario does not readily explain why the hieroglyphs and figure were painted, or why both formulae end incomplete at exactly the same point

³² D. FRANKE, *Das Heiligtum des Heqaib auf Elephantine. Geschichte eines Provinzheiligtums im Mittleren Reich (Studien zur Archäologie und Geschichte Ägyptens 9)*, Heidelberg 1994, 109.

³³ It is possible that it bore an inked inscription now worn away. Finely carved stelae with inked inscriptions are known, for example Cairo CG 20325 and CG 20720. However, it should be noted that all of the texts on objects in the type-group are carved in sunk relief.

³⁴ This view contrasts that of Wildung who suggested that group-statues were likely to have been a stock product of a temple workshop, D. WILDUNG, *Sesostris und Amenemhet. Ägypten im Mittleren Reich*, Munich 1984, 101.

³⁵ The commercial appeal of the two most popular Abydene deities included in the inscriptions of Brussels E.4860 may also be relevant in this respect.

yet have the same extended outer border line in anticipation of additional text. It would seem more logical for the artisan to have finished carving the inscription before applying any colour decoration. While it is true that examples of unfinished Middle Kingdom stelae with two-dimensional decoration in sunk relief indicate that both image and hieroglyphic text were carved at the same time³⁶, a different procedure was used for the creation of statues and likely also for other three-dimensional objects. From the Old Kingdom, if not before, as many as eight stages were employed in the manufacture of statues, and it was only after the main carving and the final surface preparation of the object had been completed that inscriptions and painted decoration were added.³⁷ The same procedure was almost certainly followed for Brussels E.4860, in which case it makes little sense for the artisan to have coloured the existing hieroglyphs when there were others still to be carved. In addition, whoever removed the lower half of the mummiform figure left a coarsely chiselled area which is *below* the smoothed surface of the niche's back. Surely, the skilled artisan who created the stela was unlikely to have made such a clumsy attempt at removing the statuette if it was his intention to reuse the object.

Given these considerations, I believe the most logical explanation for the stela's condition is as follows: the stela represents an example of a sculptor's trial piece or display model, left unfinished at the point where the personalised portion of inscription was all that remained to be added. For reasons unknown the stela was abandoned/lost/misappropriated and only some time later was an attempt made to reuse it by someone lacking any stone-working skills, who sought to modify it perhaps into a stelanaos, by clumsily chiselling out the mummiform figure. It was during this attempted reuse that the object broke and was thus abandoned.³⁸ The lack of any personal name on the object would have made it more attractive for reuse by another individual whose own statue, for example, placed within the vacant niche would have effectively served to personalise the stela without the need for re-cutting the existing inscription. In the absence of a firm provenance, it remains unclear when or where the attempted re-use occurred, but perhaps it was during a period of later activity in the Middle Kingdom cemetery "E" excavated by Garstang.

Since it is unlikely that anyone would transport an unfinished object any considerable distance, it seems reasonable to assume that Brussels E.4860 was manufactured locally.³⁹ Firm evidence for the existence of stelae workshops at or near to Abydos in the Middle Kingdom is known principally from textual sources⁴⁰, or understood from the numerous Abydene stelae of similar appearance.⁴¹ Likewise, a number of analogous Middle Kingdom statuettes deriving from Abydos may be taken as evidence of the commercial mass production of stone objects by a local workshop.⁴² Until recently there was little

³⁶ J. BOURRIAU, *Pharaohs and Mortals. Egyptian Art in the Middle Kingdom* (exhibition catalogue), Cambridge 1988, 29-31.

³⁷ Best attested by the well-known group of Fourth Dynasty royal statues, cf. G.A. REISNER, *Mycerinus. The Temples of the Third Pyramid at Giza*, Massachusetts 1931, 115-116 and pl. 62-63. For a discussion of statue production using evidence from different periods see J. VANDIER, *Manuel d'Archéologie Égyptienne* III, *Les Grandes Époques, La Statuaire*, Paris 1958, 3-13. The final stages of statue production including the addition of inscriptions are most vividly depicted in a scene in the New Kingdom tomb of Rekhmire, for which see N. DE G. DAVIES, *The Tomb of Rekh-mi-Rē' at Thebes II* (*Publication of the Metropolitan Museum of Art Egyptian Expedition* 11), New York 1943, pl. LX.

³⁸ Although the stela's original context is not known it would seem unlikely, given its damaged and un-personalised state, that it served as a memorial.

³⁹ Seven of the fifteen stelae with the same unusual arrangement of the *hṯp dj nsw* formulae were excavated at North Abydos, while the remaining unprovenanced examples are also considered to have come from the site, either by association with an Abydene offering chapel or by internal evidence.

⁴⁰ R.O. FAULKNER, The Stela of the Master-Sculptor Shen, *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 38 (1952), 3-5; O. BERLEV, Review of W.K. Simpson, The Terrace of the Great God at Abydos, *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 33 (1976), 326.

⁴¹ SIMPSON, *Terrace of the Great God*, 13-16.

⁴² VANDIER, *Manuel d'Archéologie* III, 270-272.

to suggest the presence of workshops at North Abydos even though this was the area where most of the temple and funerary activity was located. However, evidence for specialised craft production has been found within the south western corner of the Osiris enclosure, which included a number of circular faience kilns dated by the excavators to the First Intermediate Period and possibly into the Middle Kingdom.⁴³ Although no evidence of stone working was found, the discoveries nevertheless reveal the existence of specialised craft workshops operating in relatively close proximity to the main temple and cultic area of North Abydos, and at a time when such production centres are considered to have been attached only to private establishments.⁴⁴ Stela E.4860's probable place of discovery in the northern cemetery suggests that a stone workshop was likely to have been located not too far away and may have been attached to the Osiris temple complex.

Furthermore, the likelihood that Brussels E.4860 represents an example of a workshop's pre-prepared display or trial piece implies a degree of popularity for this distinctive class of stela that is otherwise unapparent from the small number of examples known.

⁴³ M.D. ADAMS, The Abydos Settlement Project, in: C.J. EYRE (ed.), *Proceedings of the Seventh International Congress of Egyptologists, Cambridge, 3-9 September 1995 (Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 82)*, Leuven 1998, 25-28. See also P.T. NICHOLSON/E. PELTENBURG, Egyptian Faience, in: P.T. NICHOLSON/I. SHAW (eds.), *Ancient Egyptian Materials and Technology*, Cambridge 2000, 180-181.

⁴⁴ R. DRENKHahn, Artisans and Artists in Pharaonic Egypt, in: J.M. SASSON (ed.), *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East I*, New York 1995, 333.

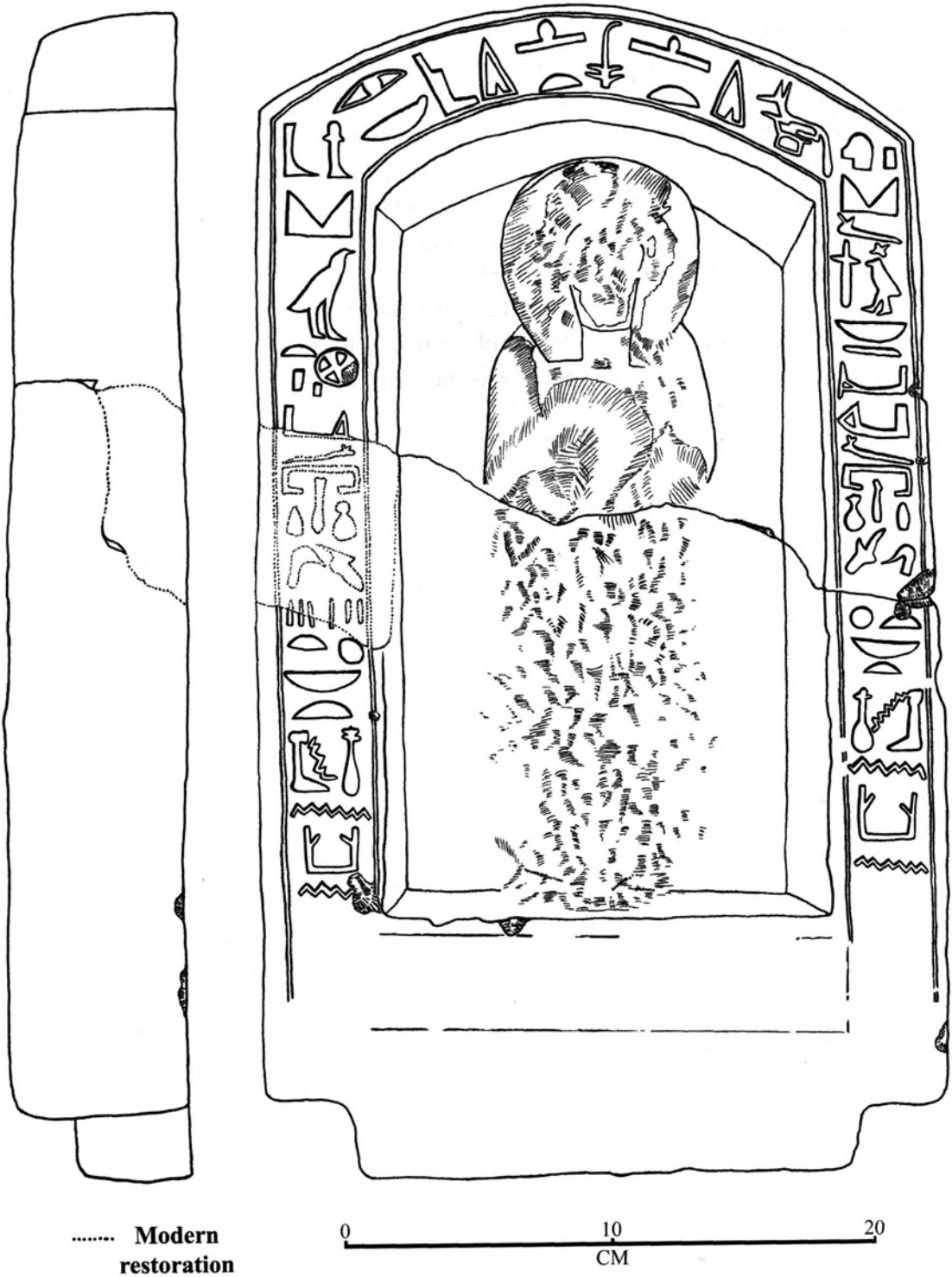


Fig. 1: Stela Brussels E.4860 (drawing by P. Whelan)

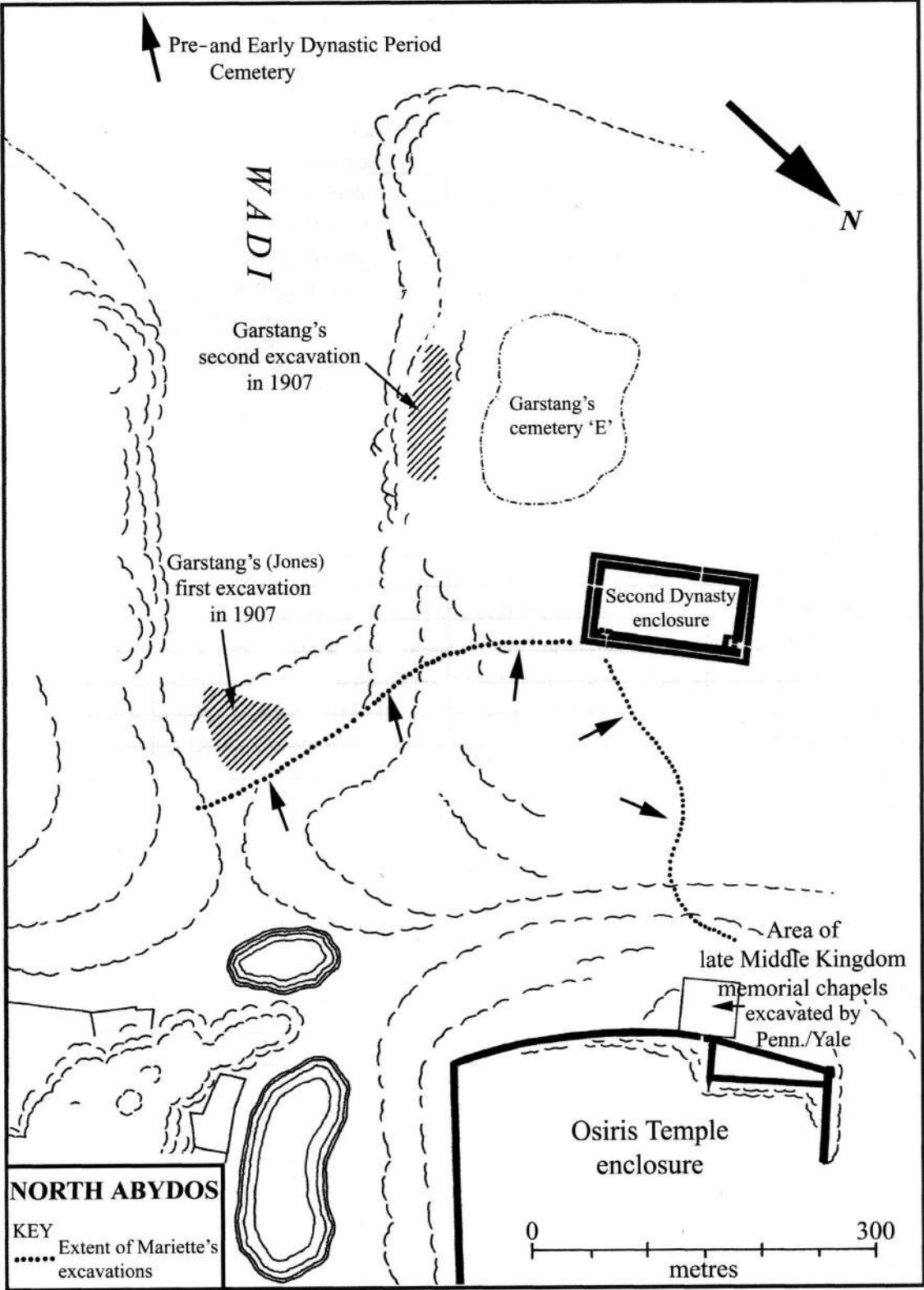


Fig. 2: Map of North Abydos (adapted from KEMP/MERRILEES, *Minoan Pottery*, 106 fig. 36)




Horizontal Inscription	Curved Inscription	Horizontal line	Curved line
			
Beni Hasan T. 360 ⁱ	Cairo CG 20119	Abydos, Garstang excav. ^{†xxvi}	Brussels E.4860 [†]
Birmingham (no number) ⁱⁱ	Cairo CG 20169	Beni Hasan T163 ^{xxvii}	Cairo CG 20038 [†]
Cairo CG 20048 ⁱⁱⁱ	Cairo CG 20177	Cairo CG 20020 ^{†xxviii}	
Cairo CG 20059	Cairo CG 20536	Cairo CG 20092 [†]	
Cairo CG 20075	Cairo CG 20629	Cairo CG 20126 [†]	
Cairo CG 20122	Carlsberg ÆIN 1539 ^{xxi}	Cairo CG 20279	
Cairo CG 20127	Firenze 2500 ^{xxii}	Cairo CG 20595 [†]	
Cairo CG 20186	London BM 805 ^{xxiii}	Paris Louvre C25 ^{xxix}	
Cairo CG 20217	Louvre C5 ^{xxiv}	Meylan ^{xxx}	
Cairo CG 20292	Rio de Janeiro 627 [2419] ^{xxv}	Rio de Janeiro 630 [2422] ^{xxxi}	
Cairo CG 20391		Vienna ÄS 103 ^{xxxii}	
Cairo CG 20452		Vienna ÄS 171 ^{xxxiii}	
Cairo CG 20456			
Cairo CG 20491			
Cairo CG 20549			
Cairo CG 20627			
Cairo CG 20633			
Cairo CG 20639			
Cairo CG 20713			
Carlsberg ÆIN 1025 ^{iv}			
<i>Cem. Abydos III</i> ^v			
Cleveland CMA 21.1017 ^{vi}			
Hannover 2930 ^{vii}			
Leiden 6 ^{viii}			
Leiden 8 ^{ix}			
Leiden 45 ^x			
London BM 318 ^{xi}			
London UC 14488 ^{xii}			
Louvre C34 ^{xiii}			
Louvre A70 ^{xiv}			
Louvre C145 ^{xv}			
Pittsburg 21538-38 ^{xvi}			
Pushkin I.1.a.5348(4042) ^{xvii}			
Rome 441428 ^{xviii}			
Turin 1612 ^{xix}			
Vienna ÄS 199 ^{xx}			

Fig. 3: Stelae with symmetrically reversed *hṭp-dj-nsw* formulae composed with a single or two sedge plants

References to Fig. 3:

i) J. GARSTANG, *The Burial Customs of Ancient Egypt*, London 1907, 187, fig. 195; ii) D. LINES, A Curious Middle Kingdom Stela in Birmingham, *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 87 (2001), 43-54; iii) The source for all Cairo Museum stelae: LANGE/SCHÄFER, *Grab- und Denksteine des Mittleren Reiches I-IV*; iv) O. KOEFOED-PETERSEN, *Les stèles égyptiennes*, Copenhagen 1948, 18-19, pl. 18; v) T.E. PEET/W.L.S. LOAT, *The Cemeteries of Abydos Part III. – 1912-1913*, London 1913, pl. XIII.2; vi) BERMAN, *Stele of Shemai*, 93-99; vii) M. CRAMER, Ägyptische Denkmäler im Kestner-Museum zu Hannover, *Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde* 72 (1936), 86-87, pl. IV.4 (I am grateful to Wolfram Grajetzki for this reference); viii) BOESER, *Beschreibung der Aegyptischen Sammlung*, 3-4, pl. V; ix) IBID., 4, pl. VII; x) IBID., 12, pl. XXXIV; xi) *Hieroglyphic Texts from Egyptian Stelae, &c., in the British Museum IV*, London 1913, pl. 46; xii) H.M. STEWART, *Egyptian Stelae, Reliefs and Paintings from the Petrie Collection II*, London 1979, 35, pl. 36.5; xiii) SIMPSON, *Terrace of the Great God*, 19, pl. 43; xiv) P. PIERRET, *Recueil d'inscriptions inédites II*, Paris 1878, 8 (formula not shown); xv) IBID., 49; xvi) D. CRAIG-PATCH, *Reflections of Greatness. Ancient Egypt at The Carnegie Museum of Natural History*, Pennsylvania 1990, 28-29, no.18; xvii) S. HODJASH/O. BERLEV, *The Egyptian Reliefs and Stelae in the Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow, Leningrad 1982*, 74 no. 31; xviii) F. MANERA/C. Mazza, *Le Collezioni Egizie del Museo Nazionale Romano*, Milan 2001, 93 no. 61; xix) A.M. DONADONI ROVERI, *Egyptian Civilization. Religious Beliefs*, Milan 1988, 107, fig. 141; xx) I. HEIN/H.SATZINGER, *Stelen des Mittleren Reiches II (Corpus Antiquitatum Aegyptiacarum Wien 7)*, Mainz 1993, 7, 133-135; xxi) KOEFOED-PETERSEN, *Les stèles égyptiennes*, 10-11, pl. 11a-b; xxii) S. BOSTICCO, *Le stele egiziane dall'antico al nuovo regno. Museo archeologico de Firenze*, Rome 1959, 33-35 no. 30, pl. 30a-c; xxiii) *Hieroglyphic Texts from Egyptian Stelae, &c., in the British Museum III*, London 1912, 10, pl. 40; xxiv) SIMPSON, *Terrace of the Great God*, 17, pl. 3; xxv) KITCHEN/BELTRAO, *Catalogue Rio de Janeiro I*, 14-23 and II, pl. 1-2; xxvi) An unpublished photograph from Garstang's 1907 excavations (Liverpool A.640 - album A07I, 63) shows a group of stelae amongst which is a rectangular stela with cavetto cornice and symmetrically reversed formulae; xxvii) GARSTANG, *Burial Customs of Ancient Egypt*, 185, fig. 192; xxviii) The source for all Cairo Museum stelae: LANGE/SCHÄFER, *Grab- und Denksteine des Mittleren Reiches I-IV*; xxix) P. PIERRET, *Recueil d'inscriptions inédites II*, 4-5 (formula not shown); xxx) P. TRESSON, Une petite stèle inédite du Moyen Empire provenant de la Collection du Bois-Aymé, *Kêmi* 1 (1928), 69-82, pl. VIII (= ANOC 68.1, SIMPSON, *Terrace of the Great God*, 22, pl. 33); xxxi) KITCHEN/BELTRAO, *Catalogue Rio de Janeiro I*, 35-36, II, pl.11-12; xxxii) I. HEIN/H. SATZINGER, *Stelen des Mittleren Reiches I (Corpus Antiquitatum Aegyptiacarum Wien 4)*, Mainz 1987, 4,9-12; xxxiii) IBID., 4,124-128; xxxiv) I. HEIN/H. SATZINGER, *Stelen des Mittleren Reiches II (Corpus Antiquitatum Aegyptiacarum Wien 7)*, Mainz 1993, 7,145-148.

Catalogue

This catalogue lists all objects in this category known to me. Due to limitations of space only a brief description of the physical appearance of each object is given accompanied by a thumbnail drawing showing the categorising feature(s) as well as the position of any incised border lines. All other decorative elements and/or inscriptions are omitted from each drawing, but are described in the accompanying text. All objects are decorated on one side only, except for block monuments N and O. Photographs of each object, except G, are published; hieroglyphic transcriptions and/or translations of texts have yet to be published for objects A, B, C, D, and G.

A New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art 65.120.1

Limestone

H. 30.5 cm W. 42 cm

Owner: *sh̄tp-jb-r̄*

Title: *mr-mš̄*

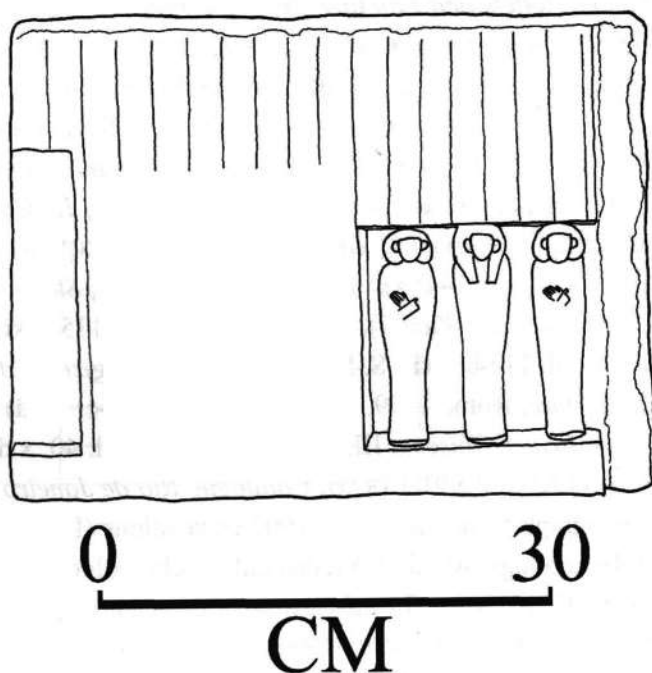
13th Dynasty

Provenance: unknown, Ex collection W.

H. Irvine

Published:

The Metropolitan Museum of Art:
Notable Acquisitions 1965-1975, New
York 1975, 66.



Description:

A rectangular slab, the upper half of which is inscribed with sixteen vertical lines of hieroglyphs below which, on the right, is a rectangular niche containing three mummiform figures each bearing a single vertical line of inscription. The central female figure sports a lappet wig and is flanked by male figures each with hands modelled in relief and wearing a "khat" wig. To the left of the niche is a scene carved in sunk relief showing the deceased seated before an offering table piled high with food. A narrow rebate of uncertain function runs down the right edge. On the far left is an enigmatic recess, which may be part of another niche, the bottom of which is aligned with the base of the right niche, while its top is below the short final column of inscription. This slab is associated with object B and both may be fragments from a larger decorated stela or elements from a larger composite memorial.

B New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art 65.120.2

Limestone

H. 30.5 cm W. 48 cm

Owner: *sh̄tp-jb-r̄*^c

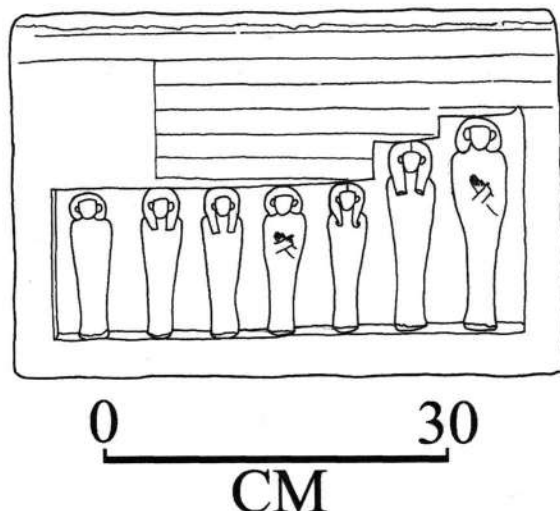
Title: *mr-mš̄*^c

13th Dynasty

Provenance: unknown, Ex collection W.H. Irvine

Published:

The Metropolitan Museum of Art: Notable Acquisitions, 1965-1975, New York 1975, 66.



Description:

This is either part of a larger stela or an element from a monument that almost certainly belongs with object A. A horizontal line of inscription across the top of the rectangular slab is followed below by five shorter horizontal lines. On the left a small offering scene shows the deceased facing to the right and sitting before an offering table piled with food. The lower register is entirely filled with a rectangular niche containing seven mummiform figures representing three males and four females, each bearing a single column of text. The top edge of the niche steps upwards twice on the right to accommodate two larger mummiform figures of the deceased and his spouse. All three male figures wear "khat" wigs, but only two have hands modelled in relief. Three of the female figures are depicted with lappet wigs; the fourth sports a Hathor wig.

C Turin, Museo Egizio 1630

Limestone

H. 45.5 cm W. 35 cm

Owner: *r̄-pw-pt̄h* (?)

Title: Uncertain

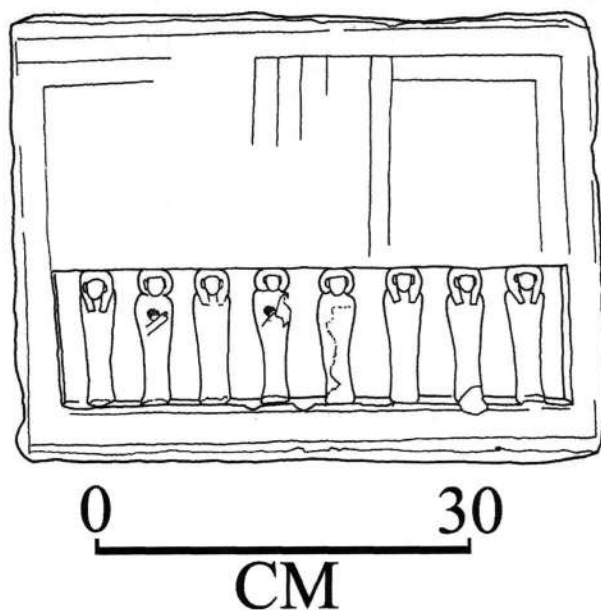
13th Dynasty

Provenance: probably Abydos, Ex collection

Drovetti

Published:

A. FABRETTI/F. ROSSI/R.V. LANZONE, *Regio Museo do Torino: Antichità egizie*, Turin 1882, 177; DONADONI ROVERI, *Egyptian Civilization. Religious Beliefs*, 111, pl. 148.



Description:

The rough edges of the slab suggest that it has been cut from a larger stela/monument. The whole composition is framed by single lines of inscription. A niche in the lower portion contains three male mummiform figures with hands modelled in relief and wearing “khat” wigs, and five female mummiform figures without hands modelled and wearing lappet wigs. To the side of each figure there is a single column of text. In the upper register two scenes are carved in sunk relief and framed by horizontal and vertical lines of text. To the right a seated couple face toward the left; while on the left another scene depicts the deceased, whose leg is touched by a smaller standing figure, his spouse, to whom a smaller kneeling figure gestures, sitting on either side of a table piled high with offerings.

D London, British Museum EA 8893

Limestone

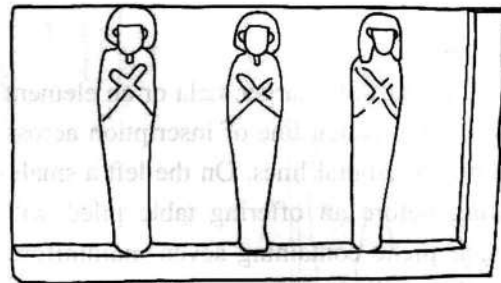
H. 12.8 cm W. 23.6 cm

Owner: The owner may be one of the five individuals named *jp.nw(w)* (♂); *tj* (♀); *hns* (♂); *hw* (♂); *ms3n* (♀)

Title: none indicated

13th Dynasty

Provenance: unknown, Ex collection J. Sams



Published:

J.H. TAYLOR, *Death and Afterlife in Ancient Egypt*, London 2001, 114 (I am grateful to John Taylor for the opportunity to study the object)

Description:

Almost certainly a fragment from a larger monument, which preserves the right and bottom edges of a niche incorporating three mummiform figures with hands shown in relief each bearing a single column of crudely scratched hieroglyphs. The two male figures have “khat” wigs and short beards; the female figure wears a longer lappet wig.

E London, Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology, University College London UC 14347

Limestone

H. 30 cm W. 31 cm

Owner: *sbk-nht-htp*

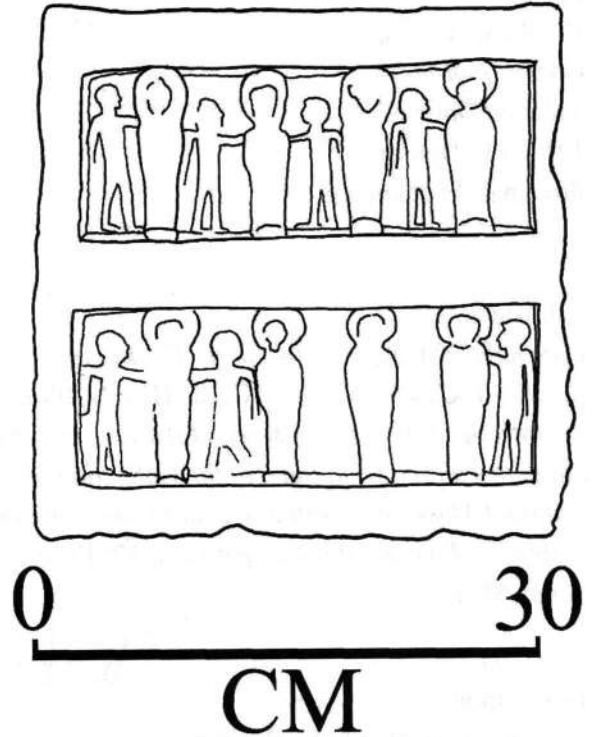
Title: none indicated

13th Dynasty

Provenance: Purchased by Petrie at Abydos

Published:

STEWART, *Egyptian Stelae Petrie Collection II*, 34 no. 144, pl. 40; J. CAPART, *Recueil de Monuments Égyptiens II*, Brussels 1905, pl. LVIII; A.E.P. WEIGALL, Some Inscriptions in Prof. Petrie's Collection of Egyptian Antiquities, *Recueil de Travaux Relatifs à la philologie et à l'archéologie Égyptiennes et Assyriennes* 19 (1897), 217; PORTER/MOSS, *Topographical Bibliography V*, 102.



Description:

The rectangular slab appears to have been trimmed from a larger stela/monument and is decorated with two rectangular niches of similar size; the upper one of which contains four much abraded mummiform figures representing three female and one male. Each mummiform figure is embraced by a male figure carved in low relief. The lower niche contains three male and one female mummiform figures, three of which are embraced by male figures carved in low relief. Each of the human-form figures bears a single column of inscription.

Description:

The slab appears to be a fragment of a larger stela or an element from a composite monument. A central rectangular niche contains two male and two female mummiform figures. Both male figures wear “khat” wigs and have hands modelled in relief; the female figures sport lappet wigs. Three of the four mummiform figures are shown embraced by a human figure carved in sunk relief above each of which is a single column of inscription. A central scene carved in sunk relief above the niche depicts offerings on, and below, a low table. Twelve columns of inscription are arranged both sides of the niche and the offering scene; two horizontal lines of inscription run immediately below the base of the niche.

H Cairo, Egyptian Museum CG 20097

Sandstone

H. 46 cm W. 33 cm

Owner: uninscribed

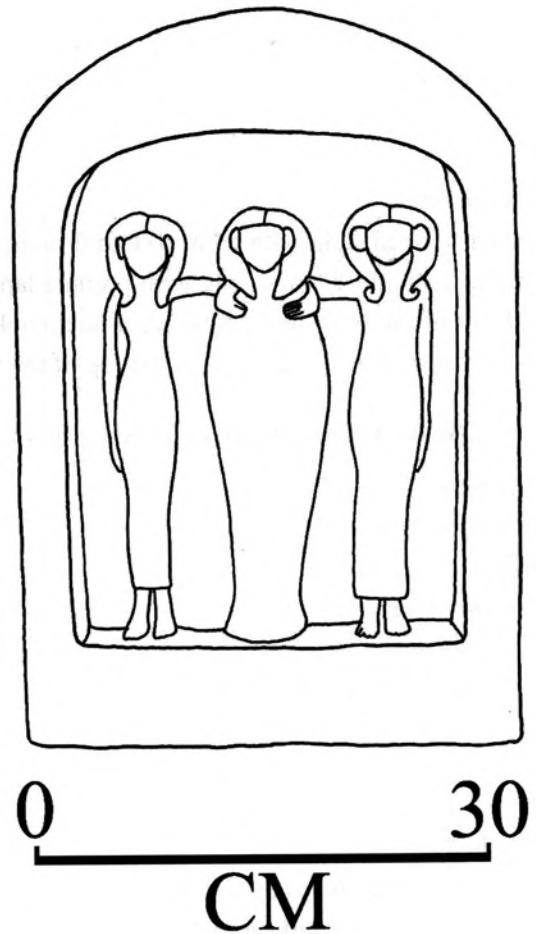
Title: uninscribed

12th Dynasty

Provenance: Unknown

Published:

LANGE/SCHÄFER, *Grab- und Denksteine des Mittleren Reiches* I, 117, IV, pl. IX; VANDIER, *Manuel d'archéologie* II, 487, fig. 296 (lower left); SCHNEIDER, *Shabtis* I, 63.



Description:

An arch-topped stela with a niche containing a central male mummiform figure sporting a shoulder length wig with pointed lappets flanked and embraced by two human-form female figures wearing tight fitting long dresses, both wearing Hathor-style wigs. The object is otherwise undecorated.

F Cairo, Egyptian Museum CG 20497

Limestone

H. 54 cm W. 34 cm

Owner: *jmn-m-ḥ3t*

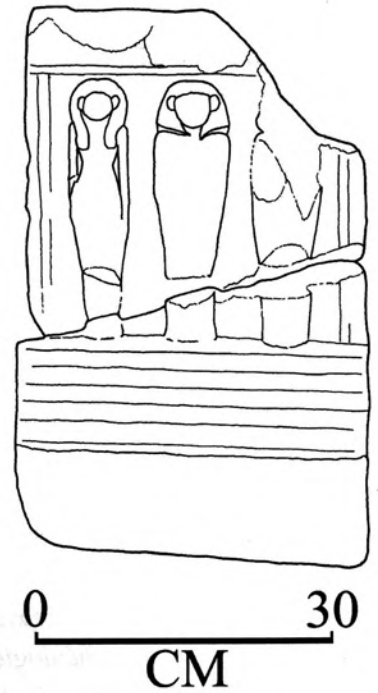
Title: *mr ḥnwty*

12th – 13th Dynasty

Provenance: unknown

Published:

LANGE/SCHÄFER, *Grab- und Denksteine des Mittleren Reiches* I, 88-89, IV, pl. XXXIII; H.D. SCHNEIDER, *Shabtis. An Introduction to the History of Ancient Egyptian Funerary Statuettes with a Catalogue of the Collection of Shabtis in the National Museum of Antiquities at Leiden* I, Leiden 1977, 63; SIMPSON, *Terrace of the Great God*, 12; FRANKE, *Personendaten*, 81, Doss. 77.



Description:

The top of the slab bears the remains of a cavetto cornice below which a recess (originally a niche?) contains two male mummiform figures and one female figure in human form, all bearing a single column of inscription. Both male figures wear shoulder length wigs with pointed lappets; the female sports a long Hathor-style wig and has both arms tight against her sides. Five horizontal lines of text are inscribed beneath the recess, below which a rebate runs across the width of the slab.

G Paris, Musée du Louvre C44

Limestone

H. 44 cm W. 43.5cm

Owner: *ḥr-bḥn*

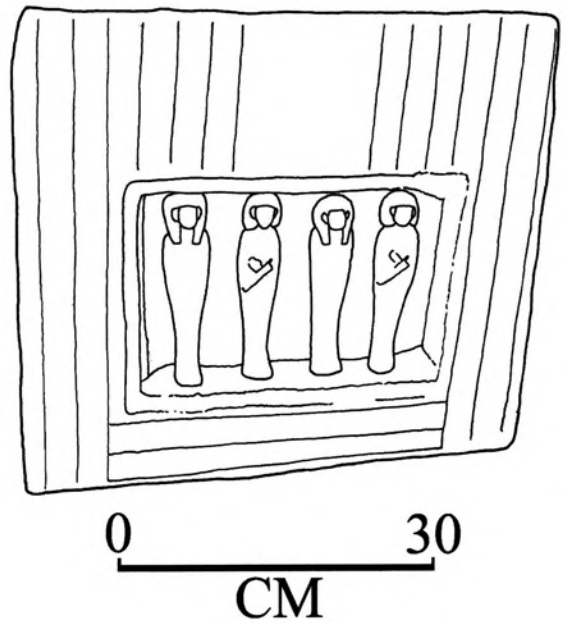
Title: none indicated

13th Dynasty

Provenance: Not known

Published:

C. BOREUX, *Département des Antiquités Égyptiennes. Guide catalogue sommaire I Salles du Rez-de-chaussé escalier et Palier du Premier Étage Salle du Mastaba et Salle de Baouît, Musées Nationaux Palais du Louvre*, Paris 1932, 149-150; FRANKE, *Personendaten*, 133, Doss. 168 and 273, Doss. 435.



I Cairo, Egyptian Museum CG 20569

Limestone

H. 43 cm W. 30 cm

Owner: *snb-f*

Title: *mr-pr n(j) wd3 n(j) hrp k3wt*

12th – 13th Dynasty

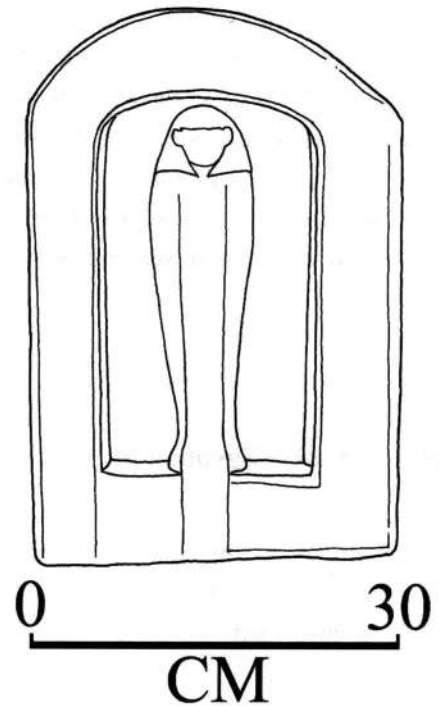
Provenance: Abydos; Mariette excavations in the “nécropole du nord”

Published:

LANGE/SCHÄFER, *Grab- und Denksteine des Mittleren Reiches* I, 206-207, IV, pl. XLV; SCHNEIDER, *Shabtis* I, 63; FRANKE, *Personendaten*, 379, Doss. 643.

Description:

An arch-topped stela with a large central niche of similar shape containing a male mummiform figure wearing a shoulder length wig with pointed lappets. A single vertical column of inscription runs down the front of the body and continues immediately beneath the niche and to the left. Two single lines of reversed inscription beginning at the top of the arch run around the niche.



J Switzerland, Musée de Bâle III 5002

Limestone

H. 65.5 cm W. 44.5 cm

Owner: *s3-stjt*

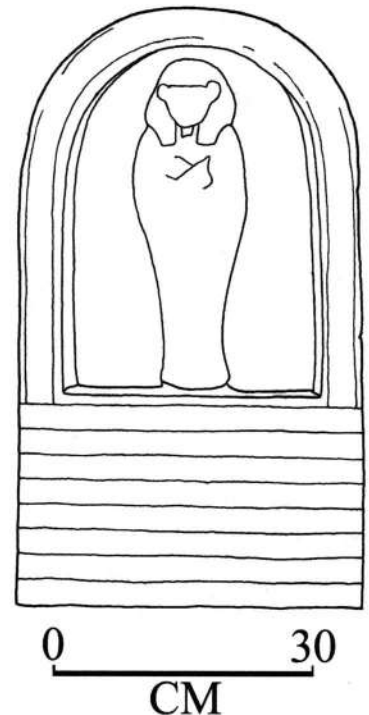
Title: *mr-hnwtj*

12th Dynasty

Provenance: Not known

Published:

E. NAVILLE, Une stèle funéraire au Musée de Bâle, *Archives suisses d'anthropologie générale* 3 (1919), 200-205; *Führer durch das Museum für Völkerkunde Basel*, Basel 1930, 16-17, fig. 9; PORTER/MOSS, *Topographical Bibliography* V, 100; SCHNEIDER, *Shabtis* I, 63; SIMPSON, *Terrace of the Great God*, ANOC 1.8, pl. 3; E. HORNUNG, *Geschenk des Nils. Ägyptische Kunstwerke aus Schweizer Besitz*, Basel 1978, 47-48, pl. 153.



Description:

An arch-topped stela with a similarly shaped niche containing a male mummiform figure sporting a lappet wig and with hands modelled in relief. To the right of the mummiform figure, two human-form female figures one above the other are carved in sunk relief at the back of the niche accompanied by inscriptions. Two male human-form figures with accompanying inscriptions are carved in sunk relief to the left of the mummiform figure. Two lines of reversed text begin at the top of the arch and run either side of the niche terminating in line with its base. The bottom portion of the stela immediately below the niche is filled with seven horizontal lines of inscription.

K Cairo, Egyptian Museum CG 20038

Limestone

H. 35 cm W. 29 cm

Owner: *jj-hr-nfrrt*

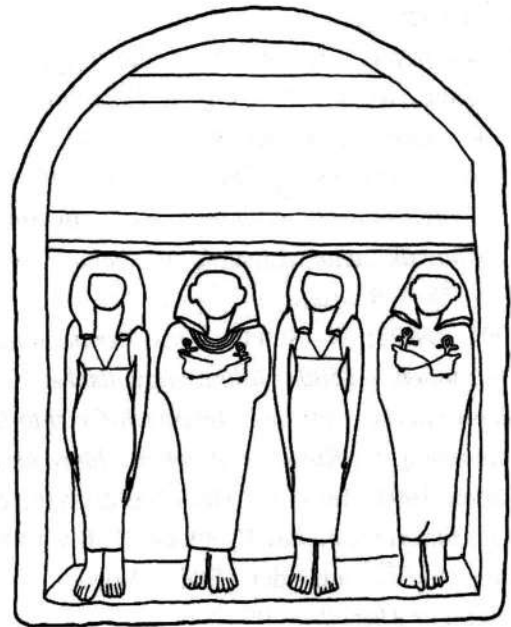
Title: *mr htmt (mr-prwj ḥd mr prwj nbw)*

12th Dynasty

Provenance: Abydos; Mariette's excavations in the "nécropole du nord"

Published:

SCHNEIDER, *Shabtis* I, '63; LANGE/SCHÄFER: *Grab- und Denksteine des Mittleren Reiches* I, 46-48, IV, pl. IV; SIMPSON, *Terrace of the Great God*, ANOC 1.2, pl.2; FRANKE, *Personendaten*, 56, Doss.27.



0 30
CM

Description:

An arch-topped stela around the front of which is a raised band bearing two lines of reversed inscriptions which begin at the top of the arch and run down either side of the stela. A slightly recessed panel in the lunette is decorated with two horizontal lines of inscription beneath which an offering scene on the left depicts the deceased seated before a small offering table and with his back to other offerings. On the right, one seated and two standing figures face the deceased. Below this scene is a large rectangular niche containing two male mummiform and two human-form female figures, each bearing a single vertical line of inscription. Both male figures wear a shoulder length wig with pointed lappets and hold ankh symbols in their hands, which are revealed through a tightly wrapped shroud that terminates above the ankles leaving the feet exposed. One male figure wears also a multi-banded collar. Both female figures are shown with a lappet wig and with arms extended at their sides, wearing a tight-fitting strap dress which terminates above the ankles.

M Rio de Janeiro, National Museum 635+636 [2427]

Limestone

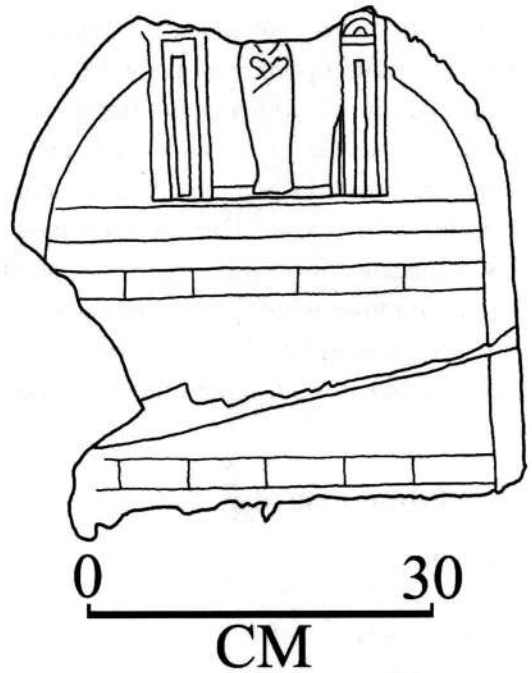
H. 44 cm W. 43.5cm

Owner: *hntj-hty-htp*

Title: *mr-pr*

12th or 13th Dynasty

Provenance: Collection Fiengo; gift of Dom Pedro I; probably from Abydos



Published:

A. CHILDE, Museu Nacional, Rio de Janeiro (IV^a Secção): Guia. Collecções de Archeologia Clássica, Rio de Janeiro 1919, 42 [2427], IX; KITCHEN/BELTRAO, *Catalogue Rio de Janeiro I*, 47-49, II, 25-26 no. 11.

Description:

An arch-topped stela in a fragmentary condition with a single niche in the lunette which contains male mummiform figure of which the head is missing; the hands are modelled in relief. Two stylised chapels or shrines flank the figure. Directly below the niche are three horizontal lines of inscription followed by a fragmentary scene, carved in sunken relief, of five male figures in human form standing before an offering table. A single horizontal line of inscription runs across the bottom of the stela.

N Bonn, Ägyptisches Museum der Universität L 1675

Limestone

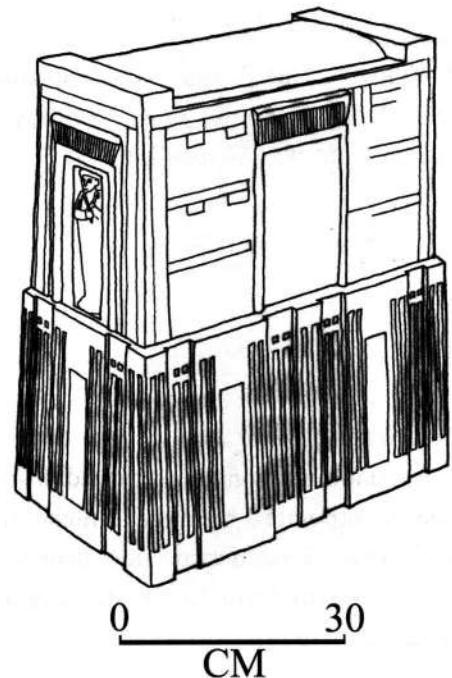
H. 73 cm W. 65.3 cm D. 25.6 cm

Owner: *kms*

Title: *mr-hnww*

13th Dynasty

Provenance: unknown, possibly Abydos



Published:

G. LAPP, Die Stelenkapelle des Kmz aus der 13. Dynastie, *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts Kairo* 50 (1994), 231-252, pl. 37-41.

Description:

A rectangular limestone block carved all-round. The lower part is decorated with a niched palace façade motif and is surmounted by a miniature coffin or chapel with a vaulted lid and upright ends; a single line of inscription runs along the centre. In the middle of each long side a false door is carved in raised relief, inside which is an offering scene with accompanying inscriptions carved in sunk relief. Offering scenes carved in sunk relief either side of the false door depict family members and are accompanied with inscriptions. A false door incorporating a rectangular niche is also carved at either end of the coffin/chapel. One niche contains a male human-form figure standing in a pious pose with arms extended downwards, wearing a short wig and knee-length pleated kilt; the composition is framed with inscriptions. The other niche, also framed by inscriptions, contains a mummiform male figure with a short beard and wearing a “khat” wig, with hands holding the crook and flail carved in relief. The figure wears a tight fitting garment which leaves the lower legs and feet exposed (cf. cover picture).

O Private Collection, Tadross

Limestone

H. 60 cm W. 36 cm D. 12 cm

Owner: *snb-r-3w*

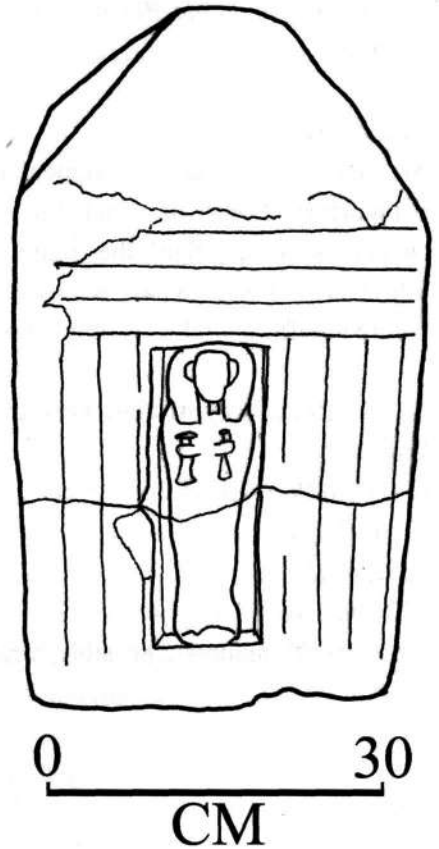
Title: *wr mdw šm^c*

13th Dynasty

Provenance: Not known, possibly Gebelein or Abydos

Published:

P. VERNUS, Une formule des shaouabtis sur un pseudo-naos de la XIIIe Dynastie, *Revue d'Égyptologie* 26 (1974), 101-114; SCHNEIDER, *Shabtis* I, 63-64.



Description:

A freestanding monument carved all-round with an undecorated pyramidion-shaped top. Both longer sides incorporate a rectangular niche, framed by inscription, which contains a male and female human-form figure. Each narrow side incorporates a rectangular niche, framed by inscription, which contains a male mummiform figure sporting a lappet wig and a beard, with hands holding two Hes vases modelled in relief.



Plate 8: Stela Brussels MRHA E.4860
(reproduced by permission of the Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire, Brussels)