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Middle Kingdom Studies 2
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On the Context and Conception of Two ‘Trademark’ Styles from Late Middle Kingdom Abydos

Paul Whelan

Abstract
This paper discusses two groups of remarkable late Middle Kingdom stelae and freestanding monuments, all virtually certain to have come from Abydos; the first group is defined by the use of one or multiple half-round mummiform figures in their layout; and the second by a large central pierced-work ankh symbol as their dominant feature. Evidence for their original contexts within the cultic milieu of Abydos is discussed which raises the possibility that certain objects belong to a previously unconsidered architectural setting. Analysis of their physical attributes, pictorial scenes and inscriptions, and especially the presence across both groups of uncommon spells and formulae, reveals that aside from the familiar food-offering elements found on more ‘traditional’ stelae of the period, there is a distinct emphasis on the deceased’s revivification. In some instances, these parallel liturgies associated with the actual mummy – or s’h - of the deceased, performed during the annual festival of Osiris. In this respect, it is proposed that these monuments provide a tangible developmental link between the otherwise relatively subtle Middle Kingdom sources relating to the s’h-mummy and the overt religious and ritual practices evident from the early New Kingdom.

Introduction
One cannot overstate the value of the textual and pictorial data offered by Middle Kingdom stelae for improving our understanding of socio-cultural, political and artistic trends in this important period. Of all the archaeological sites in Egypt yielding Middle Kingdom stelae, Abydos has proved the most fertile hunting ground with thousands recovered initially from the undocumented activities of antiquities agents such as Bernardino Drovetti and Giovanni D’Athanasi and then from official excavations beginning in the latter half of the nineteenth century with those of Auguste Mariette and thereafter many other missions that take us up to the present day. There is still much to be gained from ‘mining’ this vast corpus as this present study of two small groups of quite remarkable objects aims to show.¹ The first (hereafter referred to as Group One) comprises fourteen stelae and two freestanding monobloc monuments all distinguished by having one or more niches cut into their surface containing single or groups of mummiform figures carved in half-round relief (Fig. 1).² While all sixteen objects have been published, mostly as catalogue entries, to date only eight have been discussed in any depth or with much comparative analysis.³ The second corpus (hereafter Group Two) comprises three complete and two damaged stelae whose decorative schemata are dominated by a single central pierced-work ankh (Fig. 2). This smaller group has received a little more attention, most recently in an insightful article by Jane Hill.⁴ As can readily be appreciated from the illustrations in Figs. 1 and 2, Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna stela AS 109 falls within both groups, incorporating as it does several half-round mummiform figures in niches as well as a large pierced-work ankh.⁵ This object alone suggests that a common ideology underlies the conception of these otherwise visually distinct styles, yet this aspect has until now received only passing attention.

¹ Not all of the objects from these two groups have firm Abydene provenances but, as the data presented in this article will attempt to show, even those lacking such information almost certainly come from the site.
² All drawings in this article are by the author.
³ Musée de Bâle III 5002: HORNUNG, Le Don du Nil, 46 and pl.153; Musées Royaux d’Art et d’Histoire Bruxelles E 4860: these illustrations highlight only the principal image(s) under discussion and do not show all incised decorations or inscriptions.
⁴ HILL, in HAWASS, WEGNER (eds.), Millions of Jubilees, 227-47 (with additional bibliographical references).
⁵ Hill, in HAWASS, WEGNER (eds.), Millions of Jubilees, 227-47 (with additional bibliographical references).
GROUP ONE

Fig. 1

Musée de Bâle
Switzerland III 5002

Egyptian Museum
Cairo CG 20038

Egyptian Museum
Cairo CG 20097

Musées Royaux d’Art
et d’Histoire Brussels
E.4860

Tadross collection

Egyptian Museum
Cairo CG 20569

National Museum
Rio de Janeiro
635+636 [2427]

Kunsthistorisches Museum
Vienna AS 109

Metropolitan Museum of Art
2014.283 a-b

Metropolitan Museum of Art
MMA 65.120.1

Metropolitan Museum of Art
MMA 65.120.2

Museo Egizio Turin
1630

British Museum
London
EA 8893

Petrie Museum
of Egyptian Archaeology
London
UC14347

Musée du Louvre
Paris C44

Paul Whelan

Shown to scale

0 cm 30 cm

Fig. 1
On the Context and Conception of Two ‘Trademark’ Styles from Late Middle Kingdom Abydos

GROUP TWO

The first part of the article gives brief descriptions of the objects making up Groups One and Two and presents evidence for their provenance and dating (summarised in Table 1). Then follows an attempt to contextualise these objects in the physical environment of Middle Kingdom Abydos, initially by reconciling them against the funerary and votive settings for stelae established some years ago by William Kelly Simpson and for objects that fall outside their scope, offer an alternative context (summarised in Table 2). The final section discusses socio-cultural aspects of these monuments (to which Table 3 relates) and then offers a hypothesis for the conception and role they played in the cultic environment of Abydos.

Group One Objects

Arch-topped stelae

Seven objects in this group take the form of arch-topped stelae of which all but two are essentially intact. Of the two with damage, stela National Museum Rio de Janeiro 635+636 [2427] (limestone, 44 cm high x 43.5 cm wide), is missing its very top, part of the left side and lower half, but the curve of the arch either side of the central shrine motif is intact leaving one only to speculate whether the shrine’s top extended above the line of the arch or was fully contained within it. In the centre of the shrine is a niche containing a single mumiform figure now missing its head; the damage at this point makes it impossible to determine if the niche was originally arched top or rectangular. Beneath the niche are three horizontal lines of inscription, two with htp-di-nsw formulae for the stela’s owner the ‘steward’ Khenty-khety-hetep (imy-r pr lnty-hty-htp) and the third lists the names and titles of five standing figures depicted in an offering scene below. A further six individuals named in a fourth line were likely depicted in another scene in the missing lower portion of the stela.

The second damaged stela, Brussels E 4860 (limestone, 46.5 cm high x 26.5 cm wide), was broken in two in antiquity and the lower half of the single sizeable mumiform figure in the arch-topped niche deliberately chiselled away. The niche is framed with the opening sections of two mirrored offering formulae both of which are incomplete where one would expect to find the name of the deceased, indicating that the stela was probably a prototype or stock item awaiting a purchaser.

Despite having an overall rectangular outline, it is clear from the carefully executed decorated surface of Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna ÄS 109 (limestone, 45.5 cm high x 35 cm wide) that the finished stela was intended to be arch-topped. In the centre of the lunette is a single niche with a shallow arched top containing a mumiform female figure sporting a Hathoric wig; piled either side are various food offerings carved in sunk relief. Beneath them and in the centre of the stela is a large rectangular aperture with a pierced-work ankh flanked by two rectangular niches each containing a single mumiform male figure wearing a bag wig and framed by a vertical columns of inscription giving two htp-di-nsw

More detail will be given to the descriptions of objects that previously have received little attention.
formulae and a version of CT 788. All three mumiform figures bear a single column of inscription down their front giving the owner’s name. Immediately beneath each niche is a seated male figure in sunk-relief facing towards the ankh symbol and a short hieroglyphic inscription giving their names and titles. The lower register consists of four horizontal lines of inscription on behalf of the stela owner Senbef (snb.f).

Stela CG 20038 (limestone, 35 cm high x 29 cm wide), the smallest of the group, is dedicated to the well-known official Lykhernofret (iy-hr-nfrt) and belongs to the first of Simpson’s Abydos North Offering Chapel groups (Fig. 3). The raised border running around the front of the stela framing the main composition is inscribed with two mirrored htp-di-nsw formulae both for lykhernofret with a third arranged in two horizontal lines in the upper part of the lunette. Beneath is an offering scene executed in sunk relief depicting four family members or colleagues followed by yet a fourth htp-di-nsw formula inscribed in a single horizontal line. The remaining approximately three-fifths of the stela is dominated by a single niche containing half-round figures of two women in tight-fitting strap dresses that end just above the ankles, and two male figures each clad in what can best be described as a shroud-like garment which leaves the feet and ankles exposed. Similar garments are depicted on a number of other late Middle Kingdom male

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1 Versions of the spell (presenting the wn-hr formula) appear on a variety of objects and these have been studied in some detail, principally by Lohwasser, Die Formel ‘Öffnen des Gesichts’; Franke, Das Heiligtum des Heqaib, 246-51.

statuettes. CG 20038 is the only object from both groups with figures that are not in the strictest sense mummi-
form. However, while they lack the all-enveloping man-
tle expected of a mummy, it is reasonable to assume that
they represent a style of shroud that was soon replaced
(at least in funerary iconography) by the tight envelop-
ing wrappings of the characteristic mummiform body.
In addition, both CG 20038’s male figures grasp ankhl symbols most often associated with freestanding shab-
tis/funerary statuettes and thus represent the earliest ex-
ample of this tradition.10

Another Group One stela closely related to CG 20038
seems to mark this transition in the attire of the deceased
from shroud to fully wrapped body. Basel III 5002 (limestone, 65.5 cm high x 44.5 cm wide) belongs to the same
Iykhernofret ANOC 1 group and has in its arch-topped
niches a single recognisably mummiform statuette. The
niches are framed by two mirrored htp-di-nsw formulae
both dedicated to the ‘interior-overseer’ Sa-satet (imy-r’hnwty s3-styt). The single large mummiform figure within the niche sports a lappet wig with hands visible over its tight fitting shroud and a single column of inscription giving Sa-satet’s name and title and naming his moth-
er Sat-khety-wer (s3t-hty-wr). The figure is flanked by
four smaller human-form figures carved in sunk relief –
two men on the left side and two women on the right.
Arranged below the niche are seven horizontal lines of
text which include CT 788, an ‘Appeal to the Living’
and htp-di-nsw formula also dedicated to Sa-satet.

CG 20097 (sandstone, 46 cm high x 33 cm wide) dis-
plays a niche with a low arch top containing a single
mummiform figure flanked and embraced by two female attendants in tight-fitting dresses and sporting Hathor-
ic wigs. With its delicate carving, assured rendering of
facial features, wigs, garments and overall harmonious
arrangement, the stela ranks amongst the finest example
in the group. The border surrounding the niche is care-
fully smoothed and bears no trace of an inscription,11
which suggests that, like Brussels E 4860, it represents
an unfinished stock product or even a fine sculptor’s pro-
totype.12 The presence of stelae produced speculatively
for sale hints at a degree of popularity for a style that be-
lies the otherwise modest number of known examples.13

CG 20569 (limestone, 43 cm high x 30 cm wide) is
inscribed for the ‘steward of the storehouse of the con-
troller of work’ Senbef (imy-r pr n(y) wds n(y) hpr k3wt
snb.f) and is undoubtedly the crudest of all the arch-
topped stelae in Group One (Fig. 4). It is almost entirely
covered with red pigment contrasted only by the incised
hieroglyphs coloured pale green and the black-painted
mummiform figure, sporting a wig and with no hands visible. The central arch-topped niche is surrounded by

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9 For example: DELANGE, Catalogue des statues égyptiennes du
Moyen Empire, 130, E 10914; PUYET, LOAT, The Cemeteries of
Abydos. Part III, pl. 9. The vee-neck formed by the cloak is
similar to that on statues of king Nebhepetre Montuhotep from
Deir el-Bahari, which are the earliest royal statues defined as
‘Osiride form’ and sport an even shorter knee-length cloak
(ARNOLD, The Temple of Montuhotep, 46-9, pls. 25-7).
10 GRAJETZKI, WHelan, SAK 37, 125-30; SCHNEIDER, Shabtis,
11 It is possible that the stela once bore inked inscriptions
that have now worn away. Examples of finely carved stelae
with inked inscriptions are known, for example: LANGE, SCHAFER,
Grab- und Denksteine des Mittleren Reiches, vol. IV, pl. 24,
CG 20325; pl. 54, CG 20720.
12 Also CG 20497 described below. See also: WHelan, in
GRALLERT, GRAJETZKI (eds.), Life and Afterlife in Ancient
Egypt, 137.
13 As has already been suggested for the production by temple
workshops of human-form group-statues (WILDUNG, Sesostis
und Amenemhet, 101).

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Fig. 4 – CG 20569. Photograph by Gianluca Miniaci. Published with the kind permission of the Egyptian Museum Cairo
inscriptions; the left side bears a htp-di-nsw formula and around the right is a short ‘Appeal to the Living’: “O people who shall pass by this road (going) downstream or upstream\(^\text{14}\) may you say a thousand of bread, beer, cattle and fowl [...]” (i r(m)t swi.t(y), sn hr w3.t.t n m hñt dñ.t.t n t hñkt k3 ŋp [ ... ]). This seems to be an abbreviated and partly garbled redaction taken from the Abydos stela of the deputy treasurer Sehetepibre (CG 20538).\(^\text{15}\) The execution and layout of the hieroglyphs running around the niche is awkward to say the least, even though the signs were drafted in black ink before carving (traces of outlines are still visible). To make matters worse, not enough room was allowed for the dedicatory text in the vertical column on the mummy, necessitating its continuation down beyond the figure on the bottom of the stela and, even then, still required the concluding epithet nb im³b to be placed to one side! Perhaps this stela was a stock-product like Brussels E 4860 and CG 20097 and the sculptor ran into difficulties accommodating a longer-than-anticipated personalised portion of text for its purchaser.

### Provenance

Only three of these arch-topped stelae come from documented excavations at Abydos. CG 20569 and CG 20038 were excavated by Auguste Mariette in the “nécropole du nord”\(^\text{16}\) and Brussels E 4860 by John Garstang just beyond the (local) western limits of the Frenchman’s concession on the (local) north side of the main wadi where a large Middle Kingdom cemetery had developed.\(^\text{17}\) As mentioned above, Basel III 5002’s connection to the same Abydene memorial chapel as CG 20038 is virtually certain. An Abydos provenance can also be proposed for Vienna ÄS 20097 which was acquired from the Austrian collector E.A. Burghart,\(^\text{18}\) partly from an entry in the museum’s object records\(^\text{19}\) and partly because its lengthy inscriptions include several references to Abydene locations including the ‘Terrace of the Great God’ as well as a distinctly Osirianised version of CT 788 (lines 2-4):

\(^{14}\) The writing of ‘downstream or upstream’ is abbreviated here using just two opposite-facing boats.


\(^{16}\) Mariette, Catalogue générale des monuments d’Abydos, 341, no. 952, CG 20569; 221-2, no. 746, CG 20038.

\(^{17}\) Whelan, in Grallert, Grajetzki (eds.), Life and Afterlife in Ancient Egypt, 134-5.

\(^{18}\) Brief details about the activities of Burghart can be found in: Coenen, Orientalia 68, 99.


With the definite Abydene provenance for three stelae and virtual certainty for two, it is not unreasonable to assume the same for uninscribed CG 20097\(^\text{20}\) and also Rio de Janeiro 635+636 [2427], whose connection oth-

\(^{20}\) CG 20097 is the only object from Groups One and Two made from sandstone (an uncommon material for Middle Kingdom stelae in general). Sandstone is not local to the Abydos region and would have been imported from one of the quarries between Esna and Aswan or even Nubia (for the quarries see: Klemm, Klemm, Stones and Quarries, 167-213), but this only shows that the material’s origin lay elsewhere and does not unduly question an Abydene provenance.

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erwise comes only from having the generic invocation ‘Osiris-Khentyimentiu lord of Abydos’ in its offering formula.

**Dating**

Of all the objects in Group One, only Basel III 5002 and CG 20038 can be precisely dated. Both are associated in one way or another with the treasurer lykhernofret who served under Senwosret III21 and represent, together with a further nine stelae Simpson’s ANOC 1.22 Roughly the same date can be argued for Brussels E 4860 on the grounds that it shares with CG 20038 an extremely uncommon arrangement of the signs composing the mirrored *htp-di-nsw* formulae framing the sides of its niche.23 The execution and style of the figures and overall quality of CG 20097 is closest to those of CG 20038 and may indicate a similar date. The remaining stelae in this group can be placed between the terminal Twelfth and early Thirteenth Dynasty based primarily upon prosopographical and genealogical data. Oleg Berlev places CG 20569 in the second half of the Middle Kingdom on account of its ‘Appeal to the Living’ being inscribed in the raised border around the niche;24 a dating Detlef Franke refines to the end of Twelfth to Thirteenth Dynasty since the owner Senbef is known also from an offering-table naming his children who in turn are linked to several other monuments, the latest of which belongs in the early Thirteenth Dynasty.25 We can be reasonably sure that it was made sometime after the reign of Amenemhat III because its ‘Appeal to the Living’ is inaccurately copied from the stela of Someremhet IV.26 However, the title *wdpw iri ḫt ntr* is suggestive of somewhat later in the Thirteenth Dynasty when roles developed around the title of *wdpw,*27 and a dating closer to those proposed for the other stelae from Group Two (discussed later).

**Rectangular slabs and stelae**

The first aspect to note about the rectangular slabs in this group is that unlike the arch-topped stelae, they *all* incorporate multiple mummiform figures carved in high-relief, ranging in number from two up to eight. The second, less obvious aspect, is that in terms of their composition and inscriptions, only three slabs, CG 20497, Louvre C 44 and Turin 1630, appear to be intact and/or display a seemingly complete and self-contained range of dedications and formulae.28

CG 20497 (limestone, 54 cm high x 34 cm wide) has

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21 Franke, *Personendaten*, 56, Doss. 27; 92, Doss. 94; 332, Doss. 551.
22 The relationship between individuals mentioned in the inscriptions and lykhernofret are discussed in detail by: Leprohon, *JARCE* 15, 33-8.
27 Grajetzki, *Die höchsten Beamten der ägyptischen Zentralverwaltung*, 137; see also Quirke, *Titles and bureaux of Egypt*, 91.
29 Grajetzki, *Two Treasurers of the Late Middle Kingdom*, 55.
30 As this discussion will show later, this does not mean that they are to be treated as isolated stelae, but represent individual elements of more complex multi-part monuments.
a rectangular niche containing two mummiform male figures and a living-form female in a tight-fitting strap dress, each with their names and titles inscribed down their front (Fig. 5). Although the name on the central figure can no longer be read, the still-preserved title ‘interior-overseer’ (imy-r ‘hnyty) belongs to the monument’s owner Amenemhat (imn-m-hḥt), whose wife is named in the inscription on the female figure. Of the second mummiform figure only the title is preserved leaving us to guess at his relationship to Amenemhat. The overall shape and layout of the slab with the remains of a cavetto-cornice modelled directly above the three figures, themselves framed by vertical border lines, resembles a familiar type of Middle Kingdom ‘false-door’ stela.\(^{31}\)

It is unlikely to have been trimmed from something larger as the five horizontal lines of inscription immediately beneath the niche present a complete ‘Appeal to the Living’:

\[
\begin{align*}
(1) & \text{imy-r ‘hnyty imn-m-hḥt dddf r.n.i n.i mḥḥ’t tw sḥḥ(t)}(i) \text{ snḥḥ st.s r rd n} \\
(2) & \text{ntr ‘3 nb ‘nhḥt ṣḥḥw hr wʾrt nb.t dfs(w) hr wʾrt nb.t hʾḥt sn.i} \\
(3) & \text{snfr pr m ḥḥt ḥtnw.i m ʾdṭ ntr i srw (4) imyw ṣḥḥw ṣḥḥw i m ṭi ṣḥḥr. ṭn ṣḥḥw i m ṭi ṣḥḥr. brr mḥḥ nḥḥt snfr mnḥḥ n k3(y) imy-r ‘hnyty imn-m-hḥt ir n īw } \\
\end{align*}
\]

(1) The interior-overseer Amenemhat he says: I made for me this offering chapel, it being made effective, its place being made excellent at the Terrace of (2) the Great God, Lord of Life, one foremost (of) Abydos at the district of Nebet-djeifau (and) at the district of Nebet-hetepet, that I might inhale (3) the incense that comes forth and that I be provided with the fragrance of the god. O officials (4) in Abydos and the entire temple priesthood, as you love Wepwawet, your god, sweet of love, (5) (so) may you say an offering which the king gives a thousand (of) bread, beer, ox, fowl, alabaster, linen and incense for the ka of the interior-overseer Amenemhat born of Iwi.

\(^{32}\) There are a few markings on the rebate but these appear to be of little significance (“Roh. Einige Kritzeleien ohne Bedeutung” as noted in: LANGE, SCHÄFER, Grab- und Denksteine des Mittleren Reiches, vol. II, 89 f.).

\(^{33}\) For a colour photograph of Turin 1630: DONADONI ROVERI, Egyptian Civilization: Religious Beliefs, 111, pl. 148. A detailed edition of the inscriptions has yet to be published and my observations are taken from notes made during a visit to the museum.
smaller scale of another seated couple, Re-pep-Ptah (r"-pp-pth) and Itu (iw), facing towards Sahur-hetep and Ity. The lower register comprises a horizontal niche running almost the entire width of the slab incorporating eight mummiform figures with their names inscribed in the spaces between them. The whole composition, which is framed by columns of mirrored inscription, appears essentially complete.34

Both MMA 65.120.1 (limestone, 30.5 cm high x 42 cm wide) and MMA 65.120.2 (limestone, 30.5 cm high x 48 cm wide) (Fig. 6a-b), were made by the same careful hand and must come from the same monument belonging to another ‘overseer of the army’ Sehetepibre (mr-mš sHtp-ib-r').35 MMA 65.120.1 has a niche in the lower half of the right side with three mummiform figures, two male and one female. To the left, Sehetepibre is depicted seated before a table piled high with offerings realised in sunk relief, and behind part of a second niche (?). The upper half of the stelae is filled with six-teen columns of inscription. The lower half of MMA 65.120.2 is occupied by a wide niche containing seven mummiform figures, three male and four female; the top of the niche has two taller steps on the right to accommodate the two larger mummies of Sehetepibre and his wife Djehuty-hetep (dlwtw-htp). Above the niche on the left Sehetepibre is shown seated before offerings similar to MMA 65.120.1 but on a smaller scale. The remainder of the slab is filled with six horizontal lines of inscription.

It is suggested that originally they were set up at right angles to one another to form the internal corner of a chapel, resulting in an L-shape stela displaying a single continuous niche with ten mummiform figures, with MMA 65.120.2 as the back wall.36 Initially, this reconstruction appears totally secure, especially as there is a vertical rebate on the right edge of MMA 65.120.1 seemingly designed to locate with the left hand side of MMA 65.120.2, and because both slabs share the same overall height and have matching base lines for their niches.37 However, a

34 Despite the badly worn lower register and significant chipping elsewhere, it is possible to see an outer vertical margin line on the left and right sides running the height of the slab.
36 LILYQUIST, in The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 66. DOXEY, in OPPENHEIM et. al. (eds.), Ancient Egypt Transformed, 266.
37 In its present condition, the left edge of MMA 65.120.2 could not have been placed flush to the surface of MMA 65.120.1 as this arrangement would leave a void visible at the right edge.
closer examination of the two objects reveals a number of issues that cast some doubt on this arrangement. Firstly, the rebate running along the right edge of MMA 65.120.1 is of insufficient depth to accommodate the left edge of MMA 65.120.2 so as to create the appearance of an uninterrupted right-angled niche with the other slab; and anyway, such a reconstruction would partly obscure the last hieroglyph in the horizontal inscription above the seated figure on MMA 65.120.2. The rebate probably relates to another, now missing, element of the monument from which the two slabs come or is evidence of a carefully executed later adaptation. The narrow open-sided recess on the left of MMA 65.120.1 has no obvious purpose and possibly represents one side of a niche, but suggests that the slab was once wider or was connected to another element that completed the niche – the latter possibility is incompatible with the proposed three-sided chapel format. The recess/partial niche is itself a later addition to the original decoration since the top of it partially crowds the final hieroglyphic sign of the word im3h in the last column of inscription. It should also be noted that the proposed back wall does not display the symmetrical layout using mirrored text and/or figures and/or sometimes centrally positioned motifs frequently defining the focal point slab of such chapels. Furthermore, whereas there is no reason to doubt that MMA 65.120.1 preserves its original height principally because its sixteen columns of inscription are essentially complete, the same may not be true for MMA 65.120.2 whose text appears to belong to a longer composition. The text opens with an epithet string, mry nb.f m3' n(y) st-lb.f, which is usually preceded by preliminaries such as the name of the individual, and may therefore be missing at least one additional line of text. A complete form of this arrangement is conveniently demonstrated on Vienna ÄS 109, which has a similar epithet string mry nb.f m3' hsy.f opening the four horizontal lines of text in the lower half of the stela, but as a continuation of a dedicatory inscription beginning in the vertical column of the latter’s niche.

38 In this respect, it has been noted that one mummiform figure on MMA 65.120.2 appears to have been re-worked (DOXEY, in OPPENHEIM et. al. (eds.), Ancient Egypt Transformed, 266).

39 The cropping of the hieroglyph is unlikely to be an artist’s blunder, since the layout of the text and other elements are otherwise carefully rendered. It is difficult to imagine that the neatly cut rebate and incomplete niche are modern alterations or the bi-product of the slab’s removal from its original location. E.g. three rectangular slabs from the chapel of s3-hwt-hrw in the Hermitage (BOLSHIKOV, QUIRKE, The Middle Kingdom Stelae in the Hermitage, 94-104, pls. 21-3); SIMPSON, The Terrace of the Great God at Abydos, pl. 21 [ANOC 12.1-3]; 70-1 [ANOC 52.1-3]; 74 [ANOC 55.2-4].

40 DOXEY, Egyptian non-royal epithets, 3.

MMA 65.120.1

(1) htp-di-nsw tsir nb dddw (2) ntr ‘ti nb lbqw wwpwnt
(3) hr nd-kr it.f hkt hnmw (4) hwt-hr nbtr pr k/w
(5) ntr(w) ntr(w) imyw lbqw (6) d.sn prt-hrw t lnkt k3
3pd ss mnht snr7 (7) nbht ht nb(t) nfr(t) w’t (8) ddnt
knt t (9) innt hftp(y) (10) nfr nbtr ln m (11) nbw
w3g (12) dhwnt (prt) mwnt (13) prt spld wth ‘b (14) n3
n(y) mr-m3' (15) shtp-ib-r’t r n (16) s’t-r’nw nb im3h

(1) An offering which the king gives to Osiris lord of Djedu (2) great god, lord of Abydos; Wepwawet; (3) Horus the avenger of his father; Heket; Khnum, (4) Hathor lady of the High House; (5) gods, goddesses (and) those in Abydos, (6) so that they may give a voice offering of bread, beer, ox, fowl, alabaster, linen, incense (7) and oils, everything good and pure (8) which the heavens give, which the land creates (9) (and) which Hapi brings (10) which a god lives on in the Monthly Festival, the Half-Monthly Festival, the Wag Festival, (12) the Thoth Festival, the Min (Procession), (13) the Sothis Procession (and) the Festival of Setting Up of the Fire Altar (14) for the ka of the overseer of the army (15) Sehetepibre, born of (16) Satankhu, possessor of veneration

MMA 65.120.2

(1) mry nb.f m3' n(y) st-lb.f dd ntr whm mrt m hrt-hrw
at r’t-nb mr-m3' shtp-ib-r’t ir.n st-t’nhw (2) dd.f i srw
imyw lbqw wwnwt hwt-ntr mi kds w’b nb n(y) st(y) imy
(3) kht dtrf n ntr mrtr-tn wn tp t3 kr sn t’w n(y) m3'w
mrtr-tn (4) wpwnt ntr.tn bnr mrwnt dd.tn htp-di-nsw h3
m t lnkt (5) k3 3pd ss mnht snr mnht ht nb(t) nfr t w’t
(6) n k3 n(y) nr-m3' shtp-ib-r’t ir.n st-t’nhw m3' hrw

(1) Truly beloved of his lord of his affection who says what is good and repeats what is loved during the course of every day, the general Sehetepibre born of Satankhu.

42 As suggested by DOXEY, in FREED et al. (eds.), The Secrets of Tomb 10A, 63.
(2) He says: "O officials, those in Abydos (and) the entire temple priesthood and every wab-priest belonging to it, (3) who stretches out his hand (in a ritual gesture) to the god you wish being (to be) upon the earth smelling the breath of the (fair) wind (and) as you love (4) Wepwawet, your god, sweet of love (so) may you say an offering which the king gives a thousand (of) bread, beer, (5) ox, fowl, alabaster, linen, incense (and) oil, everything good and pure (6) for the ka of the overseer of the army Sehetepibre, born of Satankhu, true of voice.

As can be seen even from the line drawings in Fig. 1, MMA 65.120.1 and MMA 65.120.2 so closely resemble the style of Turin 1630 that undoubtedly the same artisan/workshop was responsible for the production of all three. Not only are there similarities in the rendering of the male mumiforms, all but one with hands shown and sporting bag wigs, and the female mumiforms with hands hidden and wearing the same lappet wigs (the only exception is one on MMA 65.120.2 sporting a wig with Hathor-curl terminals), but also the two-dimensional scenes on all three slabs are also comparable, with virtually identical internal detailing applied to the wigs, food offerings and the same style of leonine-legged chairs.

BM EA 8893 (limestone, 23.6 cm x 12.8 cm) is evidently trimmed from a larger composition as only part of the raised border that once framed the mumiform figures is preserved along the bottom and right edges; the top and left borderless edges are trimmed with less care than the others. Of the three slender mumiform figures, two are male (left and centre) with red faces and black painted bag wigs and beards while the third is a female with a black lappet (or possibly Hathoric) wig and mummy, all with hands visible. Down the front of each is a single column of crudely scratched black-filled hieroglyphs opening with the epithet imy humb followed by the owner’s name and filiation (ir.n +N). Similar slabs with human-form figures, but without framing borders, are known to have been inserted into niches in Abydene stelae.46

UC 14347 (limestone, 30 cm x 31 cm) is another object displaying signs of having been trimmed from an original larger size; Harry Stewart noted that its upper edge preserves saw marks and also the right edge is noticeably more damaged, perhaps where it was cut from a larger slab. The two long rectangular niches occupying most of the decorated surface are arranged one above the other, and each contains four mumiform figures. In the upper niche three of the four mumiform figures are male, and all are embraced by a living-form figure carved in less bold relief; in the lower niche, all four mumiform figures are male. One living-form figure embraces the mummy on the far right and two more flank the leftmost. Only the living-form figures are accompanied with labels giving their names and filiations; there is no trace of inscription on the mumiforms or the raised borders around the niches, which suggests that another element (or missing portion of the same slab?) bore offering formulae and dedications.

Louvre C 44 (limestone, 44 cm high x 43.5 cm wide) belonging to an untitled man named Hor-benekh (hr-b-tnh) has a rectangular niche containing five mumiform figures, each embraced by a much smaller living-form figure achieved in sunk relief similar to those on UC 14347. The resemblance of this aspect on both stelae was noticed long ago by Jean Capart, although in all other respects the arrangement of their compositions is quite different. Above Louvre C 44’s niche is a sunk relief scene of food offerings – with no accompanying human figure. Framing this scene and the niche are twelve vertical lines of inscription, six on each side, listing a total of seventeen men and women and giving two htp-di-nsw formulae, one invoking Osiris and the other Anubis. Charles Boreux likened the niche and depictions of offerings to false-doors and their associated decoration, no doubt because of the partially preserved raised border around the niche similar to those found on other false-door stelae. However, this connection is less obvious on Louvre C 44 than it is for CG 20497, partly because running beneath its niche is an uncharacteristic horizontal line of inscription and also because it lacks the cavetto cornice above the composition typical for false-

43 See above, n. 38.
44 Taylor, Death & the Afterlife, 114, fig. 75.
45 There are two square holes in the base which appear to be a modern addition to aid attachment to a plinth. The resemblance of this aspect on both stelae was noted long ago by Jean Capart, although in all other respects the arrangement of their compositions is quite different. Above Louvre C 44’s niche is a sunk relief scene of food offerings – with no accompanying human figure. Framing this scene and the niche are twelve vertical lines of inscription, six on each side, listing a total of seventeen men and women and giving two htp-di-nsw formulae, one invoking Osiris and the other Anubis. Charles Boreux likened the niche and depictions of offerings to false-doors and their associated decoration, no doubt because of the partially preserved raised border around the niche similar to those found on other false-door stelae. However, this connection is less obvious on Louvre C 44 than it is for CG 20497, partly because running beneath its niche is an uncharacteristic horizontal line of inscription and also because it lacks the cavetto cornice above the composition typical for false-doors.

Likewise, Leiden AST 47 (Schneider, Raven, De Égyptische Oudheid, 67, no. 48) probably came from an offering-table setting since it also has only a bottom ledge.

47 Stewart, Egyptian Stelae. Part II, 34, pl. 40.
49 A full edition of the inscriptions has yet to be published and my notes are based on hand copies.
51 E.g. Lange, Schäfer, Grab- und Denksteine des Mittleren Reiches, vol. IV, pl. 3, CG 20021-3.
door stelae. Having said that, the ‘floating’ location of the niche is somewhat reminiscent of the false-door found on a recently discovered shrine at Dahshur and on a tomb slab from Hawara.

**Provenance**

None of the rectangular slabs come from documented excavations, though internal evidence confirms an Abydene provenance for several. The ‘Appeal to the Living’ on CG 20497 calls upon Abydene temple staff and mentions the ‘Terrace of the Great God’ as well as two sacred districts of $nb.t$ df$\ddot{w}$ and $nb.t$ htp$\ddot{t}$ located close to the Osiris-Khenymentiu temple.\(^{54}\) Exactly where these are to be located has yet to be established, though the phrase on Vienna ÅS 109, [and established for it] offerings from every district ($lr$ w$r't$ ($y$) $nb.t$ htp$\ddot{w}t$), might be seen as a collective term for both $nb.t$ df$\ddot{w}$ and $nb.t$ htp$\ddot{t}$ and therefore denotes a location close to the ‘Terrace of the Great God’ which occurs in both inscriptions.\(^{55}\) Both MMA 65.120.1 and MMA 65.120.2 were acquired from a private collection in 1965,\(^{56}\) but an Abydene provenance is made virtually certain by the occurrence on MMA 65.120.1 of Hathor with the rare epithet ‘Lady of the High Terrace of the Great God’ at Abydos.\(^{57}\) For a short biography of Joseph Sams see: BierBrier, Who Was Who in Egyptology, 485).\(^{58}\)

\(^{52}\) Baba, Yazawa, in Miniaci, Grajetzki (eds.), *The World of Middle Kingdom*, vol. I, 1-24.

\(^{53}\) Senussi this volume.

\(^{54}\) For a discussion of $nb.t$ df$\ddot{w}$ and $nb.t$ htp$\ddot{t}$ see Simpson, *The Terrace of the Great God at Abydos*, 13. Simpson suggests that both areas were prime chapel building locations where owners received offerings from the nearby temple establishments. However, it is thought that the two areas were in different locations at different periods.

\(^{55}\) Regrettably, none of these inscriptions reveal anything more about the organisational aspects of the (re-)distribution of offerings that their names imply nor the relationship between the various w$r't$ s, besides indicating that $nb.t$ df$\ddot{w}$ and $nb.t$ htp$\ddot{t}$ were likely to have been topographically close. J. Wegner suggests that these regions were possibly associated exclusively with private memorial/funerary chapels with another location w$r't$ mnht ntrw (‘excellent district (of the) gods’) referring to the area where royal cult structures were built (Wegner, *The Mortuary Complex of Senwosret III*, 135-6). In fact, Wegner’s evidence seems to invalidate Miriam Lichtheim’s suggestion (Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Autobiographies*, 92) that w$r't$ mnht ntrw as well as and another designation, w$r't$ *3* hm$hnt$, referred to the totality of the cultic area at north Abydos.

\(^{56}\) Lequoust, in *The Metropolitan Museum of Art*, 66.

\(^{57}\) Allam, Beiträge zum Hathorkult, 96; Spiegel, *Die Götter von Abydos*, 64, 172.

\(^{58}\) Lange, Schäfer, *Grab- und Denksteine des Mittleren Reiches*, vol. I, 395-6, CG 20397; vol. IV, pl. 27; vol. II, 338-40, CG 20713; vol. II, 381-2, CG 20748; vol. IV, pl. 57. See also the brief discussion of stelae with this epithet by MAREE, in *MAREE* (ed.), *The Second Intermediate Period*, 253.

\(^{59}\) E.g. the comparable, though slightly more extensive festivals listed on two Twelfth Dynasty stelae for Wepwawet-aa (Sethé, *Aegyptische Levestücke*, 72-4, nos. 15a-b).

\(^{60}\) While I also believe Denise Dovey’s contention of where the stelae were set up (Dovey, in Freed et al. (eds.), *The Secrets of Tomb 10A*, 63), her statement that the inscriptions include “a brief description of the dedication of his monument at the Terrace of the Great God” needs comment since nowhere is this location mentioned on either stela.

\(^{61}\) Duley, *Napoleon’s Proconsul in Egypt*, 91, 105 (referring to his work at Abydos), 250-71 (Drovetti and the Turin museum).


\(^{63}\) Spiegel, *Die Götter von Abydos*, 171.

\(^{64}\) Weigall, RT 29, 217.

epithet ‘lady of the High House’ on MMA 65.120.1 occurs on a tiny number of stelae ranging in date from the late Twelfth to possibly the Seventeenth Dynasty.\(^66\) The epithet mry nb f m\(^\text{t}\)\(^\text{a}\) on MMA 65.120.2 becomes most evident in the latter part of the Twelfth Dynasty.\(^67\) The ‘Appeal to the Living’ on the same object opens with the phrase “O officials, those in Abydos” (\(i\,x\,r\,w\,\text{imyw 3bdw}\)) which is paralleled by the ‘Appeal to the Living’ on CG 20497, the latter dated by Franke to the end of the Twelfth Dynasty\(^68\) and by Ilin-Tomich specifically to the reign of Senwosret III/Amennemhat III.\(^69\) However, I wonder if these three stelae represent a somewhat later developmental phase than the earliest arch-topped stelae in the group, since their designs—especially of MMA 65.120.1 and MMA 65.120.2—represent such a radical departure. In a recent exhibition catalogue the latter are given a Thirteenth Dynasty date, based on the treatment of the faces and range of formulae.\(^70\) Their close resemblance to Turin 1630 suggests that all three share the same dating.

BM EA 8893 has only the title-less names of five individuals\(^71\) which offer little help with dating. Only one name, Hu (\(hw\)), belonging to a woman, is found in Ranke’s Personennamen.\(^72\) The female version occurs on a stela from the reign of Senwosret I—a dating incompatible with our object—whereas the single attestation for the male version (CG 20716) comes from the mid-Thirteenth Dynasty.\(^73\)

In considering the date of UC 14347, one might suppose that the name of its owner, sbk-nht-htp, would favour a Thirteenth Dynasty date; however, this is the only attestation of the name I am aware of,\(^74\) unless we consider it to be a variant spelling of sbk-htp-nht which occurs on a stela in Stockholm (no. 19)\(^75\) and is datable to the Thirteenth Dynasty on account of its relatively uncommon lunette decoration with jackals on shrines flanking a pair of \(wedjat\)-eyes.\(^76\) In his catalogue entry for UC 14347, Harry Stewart tentatively proposes an even later Second Intermediate Period date, though the basis for it is unstated.\(^77\)

Detlef Franke dates Louvre C 44 to the end of the Twelfth to Thirteenth Dynasty on the basis that three of the ten names mentioned in its texts—the father Hor-bener (\(hr-bnr\)), mother Sat-Hathor (\(s\,\text{nt-hwt-hrw}\)) and Ipi (\(\text{ipi}\)), sister of the principal deceased—occur on arch-topped stela Musée Calvet 26;\(^78\) however the silhouette-style figures on the latter may place it, and thus Louvre C 44, closer to the mid-Thirteenth Dynasty when this decorative technique was most popular.\(^79\)

Freestanding monuments

The two free-standing monuments in Group One are in some ways the most interesting because we can be certain that each is essentially complete. MMA 2014.283a-b is composed of two rectangular limestone blocks placed one on top of the other together measuring 65.3 cm long \(x\) 33.2 cm wide and 73 cm high.\(^80\) The lower block is decorated on all sides with an elaborate niched panelling with inscribe symbols preserved on three sides indicating their orientation,\(^81\) while the upper block represents a coffin or per-nu shrine with vaulted lid and vertical end boards.\(^82\) Both longer sides incorporate a central false-door framing a pictorial offering scene carved in sunk relief depicting the monument’s owner the ‘overseer of drummers/sistrum players’ Kemes (\(\text{imin-r hntw kns}\)). On either side of the false-door on the best preserved (east) side are three rows of pictorial scenes executed in sunk relief depicting family members with accompanying inscriptions; the false-door on the (west) side is framed by eight vertical columns of inscription. Each end of the coffin/shrine also has a central false-door incorporating a niche with a figure carved in half-round

\(\text{CG 20748} \text{ end Twelfth/ beginning of Thirteenth Dynasty (Franke, Personendaten, }\text{231, Doss. 353; 418, Doss. 721; BM EA 1213 Senwosret III (283, Doss. 455); Garstang, }\text{El Arábah}, \text{pl. 13, E172, possibly Seventeenth Dynasty (162, Doss. 223).}

\(\text{Doxey, Egyptian non-royal epiteths, }\text{134.}

\(\text{Franke, Personendaten, }\text{81, Doss. 77.}

\(\text{Ilin-Tomich, in Miniaci, Grajetzki (eds.), The World of Middle Kingdom, vol. I, 145-68, who also suggests that they belong to the same workshop.}

\(\text{Doxey, in Oppenheim et al. (eds.), Ancient Egypt Transformed, }\text{266.}

\(\text{ipnw, tty, hns (possibly an incomplete writing of h\text{ns}w (Ranke, PN I, 270.16), hw, ms\text{tn}.}

\(\text{Ranke, PN I, 234.10.}

\(\text{Franke, Personendaten, Louvre C 168 dated to Senwosret I (112, Doss. 133; 114, Doss. 137; 198, Doss. 288; 228, Doss. 347; 438, Doss. 760) and CG 20716 dated to mid-Thirteenth Dynasty (239, Doss. 368; 240, Doss. 371; 426, Doss. 735).}

\(\text{Ranke, PN I, 305.9; Mogensen, Stèles égyptiennes, 16-7,}

\(\text{no. 19.}

\(\text{This is the dating for Vienna }\text{ÄS 156 (Hein, Satzinger, Stelen des Mittleren Reiches, vol. II, 84-92) which bears the same decoration (for dating see: Franke, Personendaten, 71, Doss. 56).}

\(\text{Stewart, Egyptian Stelae. Part II, 34.}

\(\text{Moret, RT 32, 152-3, pl. II.2; Franke, Personendaten, 133, Doss.168; 273, Doss. 435.}

\(\text{Franke, Das Heiligtum des Hegaib, 115; Grajetzki, Two Treasurers of the Late Middle Kingdom, 62-3.}

\(\text{Lapp, MDAIK 50, 232.}

\(\text{Art. cit., 236-7.}

\(\text{For a discussion of this type of shrine see: Arnold, in LÄ IV, 932-3.}

\(\text{66 CG 20748 end Twelfth/ beginning of Thirteenth Dynasty (Franke, Personendaten, 231, Doss. 353; 418, Doss. 721; BM EA 1213 Senwosret III (283, Doss. 455); Garstang, El Arábah, pl. 13, E172, possibly Seventeenth Dynasty (162, Doss. 223).}

\(\text{67 Doxey, Egyptian non-royal epiteths, 134.}

\(\text{68 Franke, Personendaten, 81, Doss. 77.}

\(\text{69 Ilin-Tomich, in Miniaci, Grajetzki (eds.), The World of Middle Kingdom, vol. I, 145-68, who also suggests that they belong to the same workshop.}

\(\text{70 Doxey, in Oppenheim et al. (eds.), Ancient Egypt Transformed, 266.}

\(\text{71 ipnw, tty, hns (possibly an incomplete writing of h\text{ns}w (Ranke, PN I, 270.16), hw, ms\text{tn}.}

\(\text{72 Ranke, PN I, 234.10.}

\(\text{73 Franke, Personendaten, Louvre C 168 dated to Senwosret I (112, Doss. 133; 114, Doss. 137; 198, Doss. 288; 228, Doss. 347; 438, Doss. 760) and CG 20716 dated to mid-Thirteenth Dynasty (239, Doss. 368; 240, Doss. 371; 426, Doss. 735).}

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\(\text{75 Ranke, PN I, 305.9; Mogensen, Stèles égyptiennes, 16-7,}

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\(\text{77 Stewart, Egyptian Stelae. Part II, 34.}

\(\text{78 Moret, RT 32, 152-3, pl. II.2; Franke, Personendaten, 133, Doss.168; 273, Doss. 435.}

\(\text{79 Franke, Das Heiligtum des Hegaib, 115; Grajetzki, Two Treasurers of the Late Middle Kingdom, 62-3.}

\(\text{80 Lapp, MDAIK 50, 232.}

\(\text{81 Art. cit., 236-7.}

\(\text{82 For a discussion of this type of shrine see: Arnold, in LÄ IV, 932-3.}
relief; the northern niche contains the mummiform figure of Kemes (Fig. 7), who appears in everyday dress in the southern false-door niche. Besides fifteen *htp-di-nsw* formulae dedicated to Kemes and other members of his family, the extensive inscriptions include Coffin Text spells, CT 353, 387, 773 and 788, as well as two ‘pyramidia spells’, one to Geb and the other to Anubis.

The truncated obelisk shape of the Tadross Collection monument (limestone, 60 cm high x 42 cm wide x 36 cm deep), belonging to the ‘chief of tens of Upper Egypt’ Senebrau (*wr-mdw snn Across wb-Aw*) is markedly different in form and layout to that of MMA 2014.283a-b. It has a rectangular plan, instead of square as one might expect for a pyramidion-topped object. The decoration and inscriptions are arranged on each of the four vertical sides, some of which is now missing through damage; the pyramidal top section is left plain (Fig. 8). The two wider sides each incorporate a large, almost square, niche framed on either side by single columns of inscription and above by a single line of text on one and two lines on the other, both comprising two mirrored *htp-di-nsw* formulae; each niche contains a male and female figure in everyday dress carved in half-round relief. One male has close-cropped hair and wears a calf length kilt and holds the hand of the female who sports a heavy shoulder length wig and wears an ankle-length strap dress; the other male figure has a bag-like wig and knee-length tri-partite kilt and the female is similarly attired to her counterpart, but whose right arm is stretched out almost horizontally to embrace the man. Each narrower side displays a noticeably slimmer niche incorporating a single half-round figure of a mummy holding two hes-vases and sporting a heavy lappet wig. The area around both niches is almost entirely occupied by inscriptions – one niche is framed by three columns on either side with three horizontal lines above, the other has two columns either side and two lines above – comprising an uncommon version of the shabti spell.

**Provenance**

Neither monument comes from documented excavations, though a non-Abydene provenance has been proposed for both based on the regionally-specific deities and locales mentioned in their offering formulae. In the case of MMA 2014.283a-b, the crocodile god Sobek appears in

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83 Only part of this is preserved: … [*kh.t*]Δ*p* [t] Δ*hir.t*. The spelling matches a version on the middle of three coffins for an overseer of priests at Meir dated to the reign of Amenemhat III or later (*KAMAL, ASAE* 14, 76; for the dating: *WILLEM, Chests of life*, 87, *b’t-hpr-R’t snb* - C, no. 2; M20-21).

84 The second line of inscription just above the top of the niche has no border lines unlike the others and appears to be a later addition.
its Heliopolitan manifestation, *sbk nb hnw*, as well as Anubis with the Middle Kingdom epithet, *nb ln*, which originally was associated with the god’s Memphis cult. Furthermore, the opening of the ‘pyramidion spell’ to Anubis precisely copies the version on the Dahshur pyramidion of Amenemhat III. It is worth noting also that the ‘palace façade’ motif decorating the base of MMA 2014.283a-b resembles not only the enclosure of the Step Pyramid of king Djoser at Saqqara, but temporally and symbolically more relevant the elaborately panelled outer casings of mastabas of late Twelfth Dynasty high officials at Dahshur and el-Lisht. Perhaps then, the latter architecture had more bearing on its design.

Even the arm and hand positions of the mumiform figure are characteristic of Lower Egyptian manufacture, whereas for all other mumiform figures in the corpus where arms are indicated their positions follow the predominantly Upper Egyptian tradition of right arm crossed over left. Most significant of all, the style and execution of the false-doors and especially the internal decorative layout of those on the longer sides are virtually identical to one from a Hawara tomb. If the monument’s northern manufacture now seems certain (see also social context section below), it is equally likely that it was transported south and set up at Abydos. In fact, a miniature chapel carved from a single block of limestone found at Abydos by Mariette in the “nécropole du nord” (CG 20742) adds credence to this scenario, bearing as it does an offering formula invoking several Memphite gods as well as the deified king Sneferu. The owner of this monument, the ‘rower of the treasury’ Horwerra (*hn n pr-hd hr-wt-r*), was connected to the royal palace at Lisht and perhaps the pyramid town at Dahshur. In his capacity as ‘rower of the treasury’ Horwerra was quite likely to have travelled to Abydos on official assignments, which would explain how his monument, and others with distinctly Memphite characteristics, came to be erected there. Thus, MMA 2014.283a-b and

40. Note in particular in the false-doors on the longer sides, the same two plain horizontal bands running beneath the offering scenes, the substantial undecorated section underneath these borders, and the identical treatment of the seated figures (pls. 37-8).

93 For a discussion of Horwerra’s and related titles see: Quirke, *Tiles and bureaux of Egypt*, 59-60.


95 The block of Sobekhotep is published by A. Senussi in this volume and can be compared with LAPP, *MDAIK* 50, pls. 37-97.
Horwerra’s monument were likely manufactured in a northern workshop and transported to Abydos to commemorate their owners’ actual or notional pilgrimages to the sacred site. As a consequence monuments such as these would have contributed to the southward transmission of Memphite religious beliefs and terminology, and explains how another phrase on MMA 2014.283a-b with Memphite origins, m wrtj iswr,98 becomes prominent at Abydos in the Middle Kingdom when it is associated exclusively with the syncretic god Pthah-Sokar-Osisris.99

A similar explanation may be advanced for the Tadross Collection monument with its offering formula calling upon Hathor of Gebelein, which was regarded by Pascal Vernus as proof of its original location.100 However, subsequent studies have shown that reference to a regional divinity is no guarantee of provenance.101 In light of the positive evidence for an Abydene provenance for the majority of other objects from Group One presented so far we can be fairly confident that the Tadross Collection monument was set up there102 and, even more convincingly, because the only parallel known to me of its extremely rare version of the shabti formula occurs on a crude limestone statuette of a ‘steward of Divine-Offerings at Abydos’ named Ipu, which was discovered by John Garstang at North Abydos in 1907.103

**Dating**

The mumiform figure of MMA 2014.283a-b provides us with a valuable clue for dating because, unlike any other figure in the corpus, it grasps the crook and flail associated with kingship/Osisris.104 It is clearly not Osiris represented here, but an ‘Osinarian’ form of the monument’s owner Kemes, whose name appears three times in the inscription around the niche.105 As such, it belongs to a funerary tradition evident from the end of the Twelfth-Thirteenth Dynasties whereby the deceased was provided with physical or pictorial examples of Osiris/royal regalia in the tomb.106 The date can be refined further by virtue of the manner in which the sunk relief living-form image of Kemes on the west side grasps the tail of his leopard skin garment, which follows those on stelae from the period of Sobekhotep III-Neferhotep I.107 Equally unusual is the presence of several Coffin Text and two ‘pyramidia’ spells that contributed to Detlef Franke’s “late first or early second quarter of the Thirteenth Dynasty” dating of the monument.108 Having this many spells on just one monument would be somewhat at odds with a later dating when one would expect an ever decreasing range of spells to be used, ultimately condensing into the Book of the Dead.109 On the other

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98 Wb V, 405-7; Spencer, The Egyptian Temple, 198.
99 Lapp, MDAIK 50, 235; Spiegel, Die Götter von Abydos, 18-20, 178.
100 Vernus, Rde E 26, 107 (a).
101 E.g. Hathor of Dendera appears in the tomb of Tetiky (TT15) at Thebes. This aspect has recently been discussed in: Hollender, Ammenophis I. und Ahmes Nefertari, 15-6.
102 I am also not aware of any even remotely comparable objects from Gebelein. Admittedly, the inadequacy of published reports of the Middle Kingdom cemetery at Gebelein make it impossible to accurately assess the material assemblages that may have come from votive or burial activity at the site. Even so, none of the recorded stelae display the variety of innovative styles apparent at Abydos (Fraser, PsBA 15, 498; Steindorff, Grabfunde des Mittleren Reichs, 11-34; PM V, 162-4; Donadoni Roveri, Gebelein, 41-59; Maree, OMRO 73, 7-22). The same is also true for the very few non-royal votive stelae of Middle Kingdom date recovered from nearby el-Tod (Postel, in Goyon, Cardin (eds.), Actes du IXe Congrès international des égyptologues, 1548-9).
103 Whelan, Rde E 65, 141-61.
104 Two of the personal names inscribed on MMA 2014.283a-b are those of kings from two substantially different periods, but are less helpful with dating than might be imagined (Lapp, MDAIK 50, 232). The first name, nbw-k3w-mr, is the prenomen of Amenemhat II, while the other, snr-t-ib, belongs also to an ephemeral king whose existence is so far attested only by a single Abydene stela found at Kom es-Sultan (Lange, Schäfer, Grab- und Denksteine des Mittleren Reiches, vol. II, 111-2, CG 20517). On dating see: von Beckerath, Untersuchungen zur politischen Geschichte, 68-9, 223 (snr-t-ib is there placed provisionally as the penultimate ruler of the Thirteenth Dynasty though it is unlikely that he can be accommodated very much earlier); Ryholt, The Political Situation in Egypt, 163 ff. (who makes him a king of the ‘Abydos Dynasty’). It should be noted, however, that the writing of snr-t-ib on MMA 2014.283a-b is markedly different from the version on the royal stela which employs the scribal equipment sign to write the king’s name, HJIP. Several variant writings of the name are known (Ranke, PN I, 312, 14, n. 1), though the closest parallel to that on MMA 2014.283a-b occurs on just one other stela known to me, CG 20215, which can be dated stylistically to the Thirteenth Dynasty (Lange, Schäfer, Grab- und Denksteine des Mittleren Reiches, vol. I, 237-8, 1. g). As such, the occurrence of this name cannot be taken as proof that MMA 2014.283a-b is contemporary with the like-named king of Ryholt’s putative ‘Abydos Dynasty’, though when taken with other considerations does favour a Thirteenth rather than Twelfth Dynasty date.
105 Contra Hans Schneider who states: ‘the private mumiform statue is never provided with the attributes of Osiris’ (Schneider, Shabtis, vol. I, 66).
106 And continued to influence funerary culture at Abydos and Thebes in conjunction with the appearance of new magical texts (Grajetzki, The coffin of Zemathor, 90-2).
107 Patch, Allon, in Oppenheim et al. (eds.), Ancient Egypt Transformed, 266, n. 7.
109 Lapp, MDAIK 50, 236.
hand, if we consider that chapters from the Book of the Dead were displayed on a greater number of small-scale objects than was previously the case,110 then the inclusion of several spells may be seen as a remarkable example of experimentation along these lines at some considerable time prior to the New Kingdom and ties in with the innovative nature of both free-standing monuments.111 It may, then, be no coincidence that three of its four Coffin Text spells made their way into the Book of the Dead.112

A slightly later dating can be proposed for the Tadross Collection monument on the basis of its rare variant of CT 472, which occurs on the aforementioned shabti of Ipu dated to the terminal Thirteenth Dynasty or early Second Intermediate Period.113 A comparison of the two spells suggests that the Tadross Collection monument sits at the former end of this range114 and is corroborated to some extent by the orthography of the htp-di-nsw formulae on it,115 and by the presence of Senebnu’s wife’s title ‘royal ornament’ (ḏkrt-niswt) with his title wr-mdw smv’, which was a combination popular in the late Thirteenth Dynasty.116 In addition, mummiform figures holding hes-vases appear no earlier than the Thirteenth Dynasty and is a style believed to have originated at Abydos.117

With their sophisticated combination of visual and textual content arranged in the round, MMA 2014.283a-b and the Tadross Collection monument stand apart from all other objects under study and, being amongst the latest examples, represent the zenith in the production of monuments incorporating half-round mumiform figures. Their dating also corresponds to the period defined by Detlef Franke (specifically the reigns of Sobekhotep II to Senaia) as the climax in the innovation of hymns and other religious texts centred upon the Osiris cult and its renowned annual festival at Abydos.118

Based on the above analyses and in the absence of any certain data to the contrary, we can say that the latter part of Senwosret III’s reign represents the terminus post quem for the appearance of mumiform figures in niches, initially on arch-topped stelae, on rectangular slabs perhaps a little later, and then freestanding monuments. The popularity of the style appears strongest during the late Twelfth Dynasty and continues to feature at Abydos at least into the late Thirteenth Dynasty.

**Group Two Objects**

The three complete stelae in this group, Vienna ÄS 109, CG 20353 and Pennsylvania E 9952, as well as the near intact Liverpool E 30 (though broken, most of its key decorative elements are largely preserved), are all distinguished by having a single centrally placed ankh symbol with its loop pierced through the thickness of the slab to create an aperture. Vienna ÄS 109 (and possibly Brussels E 4320) takes this a stage further having the entire rectangular aperture pierced through around the ankh, leaving only the ends of the ‘arms’, base of the ‘stem’ and uppermost curve of the loop attached.

Both sides of rectangular stela Liverpool E 30 (limestone, 51 cm high x 35 cm wide) are entirely covered with inscriptions and depictions of the deceased—the well-known official Amenyseb (imny-snb)—as well as numerous members of his family, and perhaps colleagues and retainers performing various tasks (Fig. 9).

The ankh is centrally located in the upper section of the stela; the arm and stem are lightly recessed on the recto but absent on the verso where only the shape of the pierced-through loop hints at the full form of the sign.119 On the recto two standing figures of Amenyseb (one damaged) carved in sunk relief with arms raised in an attitude of praise flank the ankh. Above the right figure,
Fig. 9 – Liverpool E 30 recto and verso
and probably originally the left also, is the recumbent jackal of the Upper Egyptian Wepwawet.\textsuperscript{120} The remaining space is occupied by four male and seven female kneeling figures arranged in four registers with accompanying text ‘labels’, all but one (male) holding a flower to their nose. The verso is arranged in six registers with fifteen male and two female figures engaged in various daily activities presumably connected with Amenseneb’s estate. Liverpool E 30 is included in Simpson’s ANOC 58 group together with Amenseneb’s two other well-known biographical stelae, Louvre C 11 and C 12.\textsuperscript{121}

Rectangular stela CG 20353 (limestone, 21 cm high x 18 cm wide) for the ‘interior-overseer and controller of troops’ Sobekhotep (\textit{imy-r ‘hnyty ḫr ṣkw sbk-htp})\textsuperscript{122} was discovered by Mariette at North Abydos in 1862. The central \textit{ankh} is finely carved in raised relief in a plain rectangular panel itself framed by a raised border. The arms of the \textit{ankh} display similar elaboration to the \textit{ankh} on Vienna ÅS 109, though the execution is of noticeably lesser quality. On each side of the recessed panel is a vertical column of inscription giving a dedication for Sobekhotep (left) and a prayer to Osiris ‘Lord of Eternity’ (right). This is the only stela from the group \textit{without} a two-dimensional depiction of the owner (and other family members/colleagues) – an absence that might be explained because two (virtually destroyed) limestone mumiform statuettes, each 26 cm high and both dedicated to Sobekhotep, were found with the stela.\textsuperscript{123} Each statuette stood upright on its own separately fashioned stone pedestal inscribed with a short \textit{ḥtp-di-snsw} formulae arranged in six vertical columns and on each side is a figure of the ‘overseer of Lower Egypt’ Pepi (\textit{imy-r t-imbw ppi}), wearing a calf-length kilt and facing the \textit{ankh} with arms raised in an attitude of praise. The overall shape of the stela can no longer be determined with certainty, but the substantial raised border running vertically up either side closely resembles those found on rectangular false-door stelae and is hypothetically restored as such in Fig. 1.\textsuperscript{127} It belongs in Simpson’s ANOC 47.1 group with two other stelae and an offering table.\textsuperscript{128}

Provenance

Leaving aside the already discussed Vienna ÅS 109, the four remaining stelae from this group come from documented excavations at Abydos which provide us with varying amounts of contextual information.

Brussels E 4320 was discovered in the surface sand by T. Eric Peet during the 1912-13 season for the Egypt Exploration Fund in Cemetery W which lay (local) west of the Osiris-Khentyimentiu temple on the northern edge of the wadi.\textsuperscript{129} Peet stated that Cemetery W and the areas immediately to the north and west contained predominantly “tombs of the XIIIth to XVIIth Dynasties”.\textsuperscript{130} Given Pepi’s title of ‘overseer of Lower Egypt’ his burial the same lunette motif and with a sunk relief \textit{ankh} symbol in between \textit{wedjat}-eyes. For examples see: HÖLZL, \textit{Die Giebelfelddekoration von Stelen}, 17, 27.

\textsuperscript{120} Presumably its Lower Egyptian counterpart was in the now missing opposite corner.

\textsuperscript{121} SIMPSON, \textit{The Terrace of the Great God at Abydos}, 21, pl. 80.

\textsuperscript{122} WARD, \textit{Index}, no. 136.

\textsuperscript{123} MARIETTE, \textit{Catalogue générale des monuments d’Abydos}, 55-6, nos. 399-400 (for the statuettes).


\textsuperscript{125} Fine colour photographs are available on <http://www.penn.museum/collections/object/293538>, accessed 7.03.2016.

\textsuperscript{126} Pennsylvania E 9952 may be closely related to stelae with
place would be expected to be in a northern elite cemetery and the stela may therefore belong to a non-funerary votive shrine set up amidst tombs close to the edge of the wadi.

Liverpool E 30 was discovered in 1907 by John Garstang not far from Peet’s excavations. The stela was broken in two and each half was discovered in a different location. One was found “in reedem 6ft below (and) to south-east” of “two parallel walls 3ft below surface running north and south, about a metre apart. East wall slopes outwards about 2ft down”. There is no other information to reveal if the parallel walls were remnants of a shaft lining or tomb chamber, although their depth argues against them being part of an above-ground structure such as a chapel or votive shrine. The other half of the stela was discovered in another tomb together with a range of artefacts including inlaid eyes from at least two coffins, a fragment of a statuette and various vessels. It is unclear if they belong to a single tomb assemblage, nor do we know how far apart the two find-spots were, though as their entries are separated by fifty-four other recorded loci we can assume they were some distance from one another.

A more detailed, though ultimately inconclusive, contextual record is available for Pennsylvania E 9952, which was discovered by Arthur Mace during the 1899-1900 excavations of the Egypt Exploration Fund in an area of the North Abydos necropolis labelled Cemetery D, situated between the (local) northern side of the natural wadi and roughly 450 metres from Khasekhemwy’s enclosure. This was itself a continuation of Cemetery E investigated by John Garstang in 1900. The stela was found in a simple shaft burial, labelled D78, which also contained a substantial group of vessels and a jackal-headed ebony ‘wand’ inscribed with a cartouche of Sekhay, an ephemeral ruler possibly of the Sixteenth or ‘Abydos’ Dynasty (see below). Since Mace found no intact burials in the cemetery it is highly doubtful that all the objects from tomb D78 belonged to a single interment.

CG 20353, which was discovered by Mariette at the “enceinte du nord – Kom es-Sultan”, is the only stela from this group excavated at Abydos not to have come from a cemetery/tomb location.

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**Dating**

There are several reasons to believe that Vienna ÅS 109 (see Group One for dating), Brussels E 4320 and Liverpool E 30 represent the earliest examples in this group. Firstly, although incomplete, Brussels E 4320 displays the same carefully rendered bi-part fluting of the ankh’s stem as that of Vienna ÅS 109 and an equally skilful execution of text and figures. Indeed, the overall quality of these two sets them apart from the three other stelae in the group. An even firmer link between Brussels E 4320 and Liverpool E 30 can be made on account of the two sunk relief figures of their deceased owners who not only stand in the same attitude of veneration, which in itself is a relatively uncommon pose on Middle Kingdom stelae, but rarer still, they also wear the same type of long kilt with prominent downward-pointing frontal pleat. This is significant for dating because Amenyseneb of Liverpool E 30 carried out refurbishments to Senwosret I’s temple of Osiris-Khentyimentiu at Abydos on behalf of the Thirteenth Dynasty king Khendjer. The possibility that all three stelae were produced around this time ties in with a period of popularity at Abydos for the ankh symbol when also two-dimensional versions were frequently placed in the lunettes of stelae, particularly from the reign of Sobekhotep III. Franke dates Brussels E 4320 to the end of the Twelfth or Thirteenth Dynasty. CG 20353 has been dated approximately to the reigns of Neferhotep I or Sobekhotep IV, which ties in with the dating of the majority of other stelae for individuals in the Twelfth Dynasty.
with the uncommon title *hpr skw.*\(^{143}\)

Pennsylvania E 9952 presents us with something of a dating puzzle. Detlef Franke places it in the Thirteenth Dynasty, possibly around the reign of Sobekhotep II,\(^{144}\) when also the military title ‘commander of the crew of the ruler’ (*b tw n n tkk*) held by the stela’s owner certainly occurs with greater frequency.\(^{145}\) In addition, the ebony wand bearing the cartouche of king Sebkay, once thought to be a variant writing of one of the Sobekhotep kings\(^{146}\) or another ephemeral king of the Thirteenth Dynasty,\(^{147}\) is now thought to be a variant writing of king Seneb-kay whose recently discovered tomb at South Abydos is dated to the Sixteenth or the ‘Abydos’ Dynasty.\(^{148}\) This later dating for Pennsylvania E 9952 is supported by another piece of evidence, as Sobekhotep appears to have added his name and title to a wood coffin made for someone else, fragments of which were discovered by Peet in a shaft of a plundered and emptied tomb not far from where the stela was found.\(^{149}\) Presumably, Sobekhotep had re-appropriated the tomb and its coffin for his own burial. Sometime later the tomb was re-used or plundered and as a result Sobekhotep’s funerary equipment was scattered over some distance. According to the inconsistent application of incomplete hieroglyphs in the coffin’s original inscriptions, a dating at the very end of the Thirteenth or into the Second Intermediate Period is probable.\(^{150}\)

As Sobekhotep’s name was added sometime later it is reasonable to place Pennsylvania E 9952 much closer in time to the ebony wand bearing the cartouche of king Sebkay and potentially making it the latest object from either Group One or Two.

### Physical context

While we have details of the general find-spots for a number of objects from Group One and Two, nothing certain is known about their original architectural setting. This is of no real surprise as such information is equally lacking for almost all of the thousands of Middle Kingdom stelae from Abydos. Another complication to contend with for stelae from this site is that aside from tombs, they could also derive from dummy tomb complexes (cenotaphs) or non-funerary chapels erected in pious commemoration of the Osiris cult and its annual festival. The situation is further compounded by the paucity of photographic evidence showing in-situ stelae by which we might more confidently judge the original location of others, and what there is does not represent all five architectural settings proposed by William Kelly Simpson in his seminal study of ANOC object groups.\(^{151}\) Nevertheless, by assessing what we do know about the objects from Groups One and Two against Simpson’s criteria I believe some constructive observations can be made about their possible original contexts, which are summarised in Table 2.

It should be noted from the outset that I am classing *all* Group One objects as belonging to non-funerary commemorative chapels/shrines set up by those who wished to have a presence at Abydos but were buried elsewhere. There are three main reasons for this; firstly, the tombs of Iykhernofret and other high officials would have been located in a northern elite cemetery closer to the royal residence.\(^{152}\) Secondly, the work of Simpson established that many unprovenanced Abydene stelae as well as those Mariette designated as coming from the “nécropole du nord”—which includes CG 20569, CG20038 (and by association Basel III 5002) and even Brussels E 4860– are

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\(^{143}\) For the list see: *Ward, Index*, 136, nos. 1167 (for which see Franke, *GM* 83, 121) and 1173. CG 20075 (early Thirteenth Dynasty): Grajetzki, *Court Officials*, 125-7; CG 20391 (Sobekhotep II): Franke, *Personendaten*, 132, Doss. 167; CG 20023 (Sobekhotep II-IV): Franke, *Personendaten*, 356, Doss. 598, see also index (464) for ten related objects; BM EA 238 (Neferhotep I-Sobekhotep IV): 352, Doss. 591; only Sinai inscriptions 89, 90, 406 are earlier (Amenemhat III): 270, Doss. 429, see also index (482) for five entries relating to Sinai 90.

\(^{144}\) Franke, *Personendaten*, 345, Doss. 577.

\(^{145}\) Stefanović, *The Holders of Regular Military Titles*, 72-94. The clear majority, around 43% (35 dossiers, including Pennsylvania E 9952), are dated to the Thirteenth Dynasty, followed by 20% to the Late Middle Kingdom-Second Intermediate Period, 15% are Late Middle Kingdom and 15% assigned to the Middle Kingdom. Other percentages: Late Twelfth Dynasty 2%; beginning of Twelfth Dynasty 1%; Twelfth Dynasty 3%; date unassigned 1%.

\(^{146}\) Von Beckerath, *Untersuchungen zur politischen Geschichte*, 46.

\(^{147}\) Rhyolt, *The Political Situation in Egypt*, 197, table 36, 219.


\(^{149}\) Peet, *The Cemeteries of Abydos. Part II*, 61, pls. XIII.4, XXXVI(1). These are the only two instances from Abydos of an individual named *sbk-htp* with this title (the Sobekhotep of the coffin is not listed in the relevant section of Stefanović, *The Holders of Regular Military Titles*, 89-90). Pottery vessels also found in the shaft (pls. 30-33) may not have belonged with the coffin, but suggest a date in the Seventeenth or early Eighteenth Dynasty (Grajetzki, *The coffin of Zemathor*, 42). Their forms however differ from those of the vessels found with Pennsylvania E 9952.


\(^{152}\) See Table 3 and discussion in section below on *Socio-cultural Context*. 
very likely to have originated from, or close to, a dense cluster of memorial chapels with no associated real or dummy burials located a short distance local west of the Osiris-Khentyimentiu temple complex, which were re-excavated in the late 1960’s by the Pennsylvania-Yale expedition (Fig. 10). 153 Thirdly, the significant presence across the Group One corpus of ‘Appeals to the Living’ and CT 788, as well as two freestanding monuments—one bearing additional ‘pyramidia spells’—strongly suggest that all monuments with mumiform figures were intended to be publicly visible in outward-facing settings rather than concealed inside a tomb chamber, chapel or shrine,154 and thus more suited to the Pennsylvania-Yale memorial chapel area which comprised solely non-funerary above-ground structures, as well as similar structures built amidst or very close to tombs situated on the (local) northern bank of the natural wadi.155

By way of contrast, there is good reason to believe from their cemetery/tomb find-spots that Liverpool E 30, Pennsylvania E 9952 and Brussels E 4320 from Group Two belonged to settings associated with actual burials.

1) Set up against the enclosure wall of the Osiris-Khen-tyimentiu temple complex (and other enclosures)156

Only Group Two stela CG 20353 can belong to this setting, having been found by Mariette at the northern wall of Kom es-Sultan. The only documented details for other in situ stelae from this area come from brief written accounts of Auguste Mariette and Gaston Maspero.157 Though neither Egyptologist gave detailed information on individual stelae, Maspero likened them to the votives left by worshippers in Christian churches, arranged side by side against the enclosure wall.158 His description is unlikely to apply to all of the stelae from here, since some of those recovered are decorated on more than one face and thus would not have been placed against a wall.159 More recently, David O’Connor proposed that the stelae described by the Frenchmen were in a secondary location having been removed from the memorial chapel zone in the Nineteenth Dynasty during the building of Ramesses II’s ‘portal’ temple, which covered many Middle Kingdom chapels as a result.160 Interestingly, neither of the above scenarios adequately account for the circumstances of CG 20353 which was found with two free-standing mumiform statuettes and their separately fashioned plinths. It is doubtful that all five elements for the same person could have remained together over several millennia (especially if they had already been moved from the memorial chapel area) unless sheltered in some way, most obviously within some form of structure such as a small shrine built close to the enclosure wall (or even excavated within it?)161 that simply went unrecorded by Mariette’s men. The non-cemetery location also indicates that CG 20353 performed a commemorative rather than funerary role and thus belongs in Simpson’s fourth setting. A plausible reconstruction could have CG 20353 attached to the front of a small mud-brick shrine serving, in effect, as an ankh-shaped ‘window’ so that only the decorated side was visible to passers-by, while behind the stela (i.e. sealed inside the shrine) stood the mumiform statuettes of the deceased facing out through the aperture.

2) Freestanding stelae with or without an associated chapel or tomb

Aside from MMA 2014.283a-b and the Tadross Collection monument, Liverpool E 30 is the only other object from the corpora conforming to Simpson’s definition of freestanding stelae – those bearing decoration on two or more sides, either standing alone or within some kind of structure.162 The records of the find-spots for Liverpool E 30 reveal nothing about its original setting, only that it came from part of the cemetery area filled with tombs

154 Contra Kitchen who suggests that arch-topped stela Rio de Janeiro 635+636 [2427] was set up against the rear wall of a chapel (KITCHEN, BELTRAN, Catalogue of the Egyptian Collection, vol. I, 47).
155 Franke proposes above-ground publicly visible settings for dozens of monuments with unusual texts and/or having an unusual appearance, including some from Group One: “They do not belong to a funerary context but are memorials for the immortalization of their owner’s name” (FRANKE, in MEYER (ed.), Egypt – Temple of the Whole World, 131).
156 “Nécropole du nord – zone de nord-est, contre le mur extérieur de l’enceinte” (MARIETTE, Catalogue générale des monuments d’Abydos, 134-7, nos. 604-7).
158 “Serrées côté à côté comme des ex-votos dans nos églises”, op. cit., 337.
159 CG 20538 is decorated on all faces and edges (LANGE, SCHÄFER, Grab- und Denksteine des Mittleren Reiches, vol. II, 145-50; vol. IV, pl. 11).
161 For instance, a cavity was excavated in the southern wall of the Shunet es-Zebib which contained a shabti for Ramesses IV (MARIETTE, Abydos, vol. II, pl. 60; MARIETTE, Catalogue générale des monuments d’Abydos, 63, no. 409).
162 Freestanding single-sided stelae were sometimes set up on their own, but these are exceptions such as the decree stela of Wegaf/Neferhotep I (RANDALL-McIVER, MACE, El Amrah and Abydos, 63-4) and for such stela one would still expect their back and sides to be finished smooth.
Fig. 10 – Plan of memorial chapel area excavated by the Pennsylvania-Yale Expedition (adapted from O’Connor, in Posener-Krieger (ed.), Mélanges Gamal Eddin Mokhtar, 169, fig. 2. Inset photograph of the solid mud-brick structure with palace-façade motif (author’s photograph).
with *mastaba* superstructures and smaller (ancillary?) shrines of which some were attached to larger offering chapels. From a practical point of view it is difficult to see how Liverpool E 30 could have been freestanding since its scenes and inscriptions virtually fill both sides leaving no substantial undecorated border at the base by which it could be adequately secured to a plinth or offering table. Alternatively, the narrow undecorated borders framing the decoration could have been securely gripped by the inner edges of an opening in the wall of a chapel/shrine, thus allowing both sides to remain visible\(^{163}\) and preserve the window/door-like aspect; this places its setting in category 3 or 4 below.

**3) Stelae erected in accessible interiors of mastaba or pyramidal tomb superstructures**

In his study of Liverpool E 30 Kenneth Kitchen commented that due to its double-sided decoration the stela could not have served as a “normal serdab squint” —*i.e.* placed in front of a void— and instead proposed that it was fixed against the wall of an otherwise undecorated mud-brick *mastaba*. Even though the verso would be completely hidden by such an arrangement and effectively block off the *ankh*-shaped aperture, he considered that the efficacy of the decoration would not be compromised.\(^{164}\) This seems unlikely — after all, even the decorations and inscriptions in burial chambers that were certainly hidden from view once the tomb was sealed still remained exposed for the benefit of the deceased.\(^{165}\) It would make more sense to have the stela placed before a void of some kind — at the entrance of a tomb, chapel or small hollow shrine. These settings would retain the full-effect of the *ankh*-shaped aperture and allow the agricultural and production scenes on the verso to function like those on the interior walls of elite tomb chambers of the period.\(^{166}\)

A more sophisticated setting that emphasises both decorated sides was proposed by Jane Hill, whereby the stela served as a decorative ‘fanlight’ set in to the thickness of a wall above the entrance of a chapel and flanked by Amenyseneb’s two larger rectangular stelae (Louvre C 11 and C 12).\(^{167}\) Potential structures capable of accommodating such an arrangement were discovered beside a tomb not far from where one half of Liverpool E 30 was found, including a group described by Garstang thus: “*very much broken mastaba with kiosk to the north. South and east walls of kiosk complete, with fragments of the west. Behind the west wall, to the west and lower down a shrine (here a rudimentary sketch of a vaulted structure) facing east*”.\(^{168}\) It is not clear if the shrine adjoined the western wall of the *mastaba* tomb’s funerary chapel (‘kiosk’) or stood a short distance from it. One thing we can be certain of is that the ‘kiosk’, and most likely the shrine too, belonged to a real tomb and not a cenotaph, because finds from the associated two-chambered burial compartments comprised a body within a fragile wooden coffin and a fragment of a gilded mummy mask, besides several vessels and a seal. Whatever the arrangement, the recto of Liverpool E 30 would have faced east on account of the image of the Upper Egyptian Wepwawet in the top left corner\(^{169}\) with the verso facing towards the tomb of Osiris at Umm el-Qa‘ab and the West.

It remains to be established if all the ancillary shrines encountered by Garstang in the cemetery were set up by family members and colleagues in honour of the deceased whose tomb they were built beside, or whether some served a non-funerary purpose like those in the memorial chapel zone (for which see below no. 4) and were simply mixed in amongst real tombs because of lack of space elsewhere.

Even with their undecorated backs, Pennsylvania E 9952 and Brussels E 4320 probably came from a similar setting to Liverpool E 30. However, the discovery of Pennsylvania E 9952 in a tomb shaft raises the question of whether the original setting was below ground, particularly because this is the only stela belonging to an individual whom we can be fairly certain was buried at Abydos. An underground setting for stelae with apertures is suggested by Kitchen based on a rectangular stela with centrally positioned circular aperture discovered by Garstang *in situ* at the bottom of the shaft of Tomb 1043, which he believed may have served as a ‘serdab squint’.\(^{170}\) This seems most compelling until one reads Garstang’s unpublished record of the discovery where the stela is described as a limestone ‘portcullis’ blocking the entrance to the burial chamber.\(^{171}\) Presumably the ‘squint’ is in fact the hole through which a rope was

\(^{163}\) **Dakin**, *JEA* 24, 190, n. 5.  
\(^{164}\) **KITCHEN**, *JEA* 47, 17, n. 4.  
\(^{165}\) Indeed, the circumstances of CG 20353 discussed above argues against Kitchen’s view.  
\(^{166}\) **BOLSHAKOV** and **QUIRKE**, *The Middle Kingdom Stelae in the Hermitage*, 101, n. a.  
\(^{167}\) **HILL**, ed., *Hawass, Wegner* (eds.), *Millions of Jubilees*, 239-40. The only issue with this scenario is that Hill assigns it to a memorial (*i.e.* non-funerary) chapel, when the stela was actually found amidst real burials and would favour a setting in an offering chapel of a tomb or ancillary shrine associated with it.  
\(^{169}\) **BAINES**, in **MAGEE**, **BOUIRAU**, **QUIRKE** (eds.), *Sitting beside Lepsius*, 3.  
\(^{170}\) **KITCHEN**, *JEA* 47, 13, n. 8.  
\(^{171}\) **SNAPE**, *Mortuary Assemblages from Abydos*, vol. I, 387 (1043 A’09); vol. II, 641, pl. 52.
threaded in order to lower the slab down the shaft.\textsuperscript{172} Although cursorily fashioned as a false-door, the slab is otherwise roughly finished and appears undecorated as one would expect of a primarily utilitarian object.\textsuperscript{173} Actually, Kitchen gives details of another in situ stela with two “small holes”, also found by Garstang, blocking the entrance to the burial chambers of Tomb 6.\textsuperscript{174} However, closer inspection of the excavation photograph reveals that these circular apertures in fact accommodated cylindrical lugs spaced some distance apart, presumably around which a rope was secured for lowering the stela in to place.\textsuperscript{175} Unlike the previous example, this stela is decorated with an offering scene and formulae dedicated for the ‘leader of the broad hall’ Khons.\textsuperscript{176} Nevertheless, the lugs – or the holes they fill – do not form part of the incised decoration and, besides, the presence of two rather than one is strange were they to be portals or ‘squints’ of some kind. Furthermore, this stela is much larger than any of those from Group Two, measuring 150 cm x 105 cm, evidently because it sealed the entrance of a chamber large enough to receive a coffin.\textsuperscript{177} Not only do these realisations effectively preclude a similar context for Liverpool E 30, Pennsylvania E 9952 and Brussels E 4320, the assured above-ground setting for CG 20353 (and likely Vienna ÅS 109) also argues against it.

4) Set up in memorial chapels with no associated burials

The most obvious setting for all Group One objects would be in the façade of a memorial chapel or in the internal/external courtyard walls belonging to one.\textsuperscript{178} The area excavated by the Pennsylvania-Yale expedition contains the lower sections of many well preserved large chapels as well as more complete smaller shrines, yet so thoroughly were these stripped of stone elements in both the recent and ancient past that they encountered hardly anything in situ. They published just one limestone arch-topped stela still attached to its separately carved plinth that was found set up against the inner face of the (local) north forecourt wall of a large memorial chapel.\textsuperscript{179} With their tenons for insertion into a separate pedestal base or offering table, CG 20497 and unfinished Brussels E 4860 are appropriate candidates for precisely this setting.\textsuperscript{180} In fact, the back of Brussels E 4860 has a curved hull-like profile presumably to help bed it firmly into wet plaster when set up against a wall.\textsuperscript{181}

It may be no coincidence to find that the only objects from Group Two associated with non-funerary memorial chapel settings are also the only ones either directly or indirectly associated with mumiform figures.\textsuperscript{182} The possible context of CG 20353 has already been discussed in 1), while the larger and more elaborate stela Vienna ÅS 109 would perhaps be better suited to Hill’s central ‘fanlight’ setting suggested for Liverpool E 30. The rough-worked ‘tabs’ in either top corner of the stela\textsuperscript{183} likely served as tenons inserted into mortises in the internal corners of an arch-topped niche or as securing tabs that were covered over when the wall was plastered to create a more secure bond – a particularly important consideration for stelae situated over a doorway. The recessing of the ‘tabs’ below the decorated surface of a gilded wooden statuette (now lost). MMA 2014.283a-b represents something more complex and the Tadross Collection monument something quite different.

\textsuperscript{172} On the use of portcullises see: ARNOLD, Building in Egypt, 73-4.
\textsuperscript{173} As far as can be determined from the excavation photograph.
\textsuperscript{174} KITCHEN, JEA 47, 13, n. 7.
\textsuperscript{175} SNAPE, Mortuary Assemblages from Abydos, vol. II, 609, pl. 4; images of this stela and another near identical one from the same tomb can be found at <http://www.globalegyptianmuseum.org/record.aspx?id=3061>, accessed 9.03.2016.
\textsuperscript{176} GRAJEZTKI, Court Officials, 93-4, fig. 42.
\textsuperscript{177} At 51 cm high x 35 cm wide Liverpool E 30 is little more than a third of the size of Khons’s stela yet represents the largest from Group Two.
\textsuperscript{178} A good example of a courtyard wall setting, albeit from a cenotaph, was discovered and photographed by John Garstang in 1907, slightly further local west of the Pennsylvania-Yale memorial chapels and comprised a small courtyard surrounded by a substantial mud-brick enclosure in which stelae were set up in the inner faces of the northern, southern and eastern walls. A mud-brick vaulted chapel at the western end incorporated a niche for an arch-topped stela (BOURRIAU, Pharaobs and mortals, 40 (Garstang’s photograph) and 65, no. 50 (for description)). In the courtyard Garstang found a miniature stone sarcophagus with a wooden coiffin inside containing

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the stela would make it easier to plaster up to the edge of the face, thus reducing the risk of overspill and conceal them in the process. This setting would also hide the stela’s undecorated and roughly dressed back (and those of Pennsylvania E 9952 and Brussels E 4320), which one would doubt was left visible to visitors to the chapel. This would matter less if it belonged to a type of chapel encountered by the Pennsylvania-Yale expedition which had no door yet had a hollow core that conceivably could have been linked to the outside via the ankh-shaped aperture.

Whereas all of the arch-topped stelae from Group One with their obvious symmetry would serve as an appropriate focal point in whatever structure they once belonged to, the same cannot be said for some of the rectangular slabs, for reasons that will be discussed below.

5) Miniature chapels constructed from three or four slab stelae

No in situ examples for this particular arrangement have been documented, but their existence is virtually certain due to the format of two or three slab stelae for the same individual, often displaying the same checker-pattern border sometimes surmounted by a khekher-frieze. This border motif is more frequently associated with an individual, often displaying the same checker-pattern frieze above see: Lange, Schäfer, Grab- und Denksteine des Mittleren Reiches, vol. II, 299-300; vol. IV, pl. 50).

Hein, Satzinger, Stelen des Mittleren Reiches, vol. I, 44.

O’Connor, in Posener-Krieger (ed.), Mélanges Gamal Eddin Mokhtar, 171, 174, fig. 5.

For examples of checker-pattern borders without a khekher-frieze above see: Lange, Schäfer, Grab- und Denksteine des Mittleren Reiches, vol. IV, pl. 2, CG 20012; pl. 5, CG 20053 and pl. 33, CG 20475. For checker-pattern borders topped by a khekher-frieze see: Garstang, El Arábah, pl. VLE295 (= [ANOC 56]); Simpson, The Terrace of the Great God at Abydos, pl. 70 (Louvre C 17 and C 18 = [ANOC 52]). For plain borders see: Simpson, The Terrace of the Great God at Abydos, pl. 72 (Avignon-Calvet 5 and 6 = [ANOC 53]).

Lin-Tomich, GM 234, 171. Several Theban tombs with such borders are conveniently published in: Solman, Old and Middle Kingdom Theban Tombs, 71 (burial chamber of Kawai); 73-4 (burial chamber of Nefru); 99 (burial chamber of Khety); 106-7 (sarcophagus of Meru – checker-pattern band only); 116-8 (sarcophagus of Ipi).
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decoration would have necessitated a slightly different approach since they did not offer accessible interiors to accommodate freestanding objects such as statuettes and offering tables nor the internal walls for decoration.194 Added to the challenge of incorporating the necessary internal scenes and texts on to the exterior of a small monument was the need to incorporate the multiple mumiform figures found on every one of the rectangular slabs from Group One. One can imagine that this often required some compromise to the overall balance of the decoration, as can be seen with MMA 65.120.1-2 where the artisan’s attempt to commemorate a large number of individuals, represented mostly by engaged mumiform figures, as well as incorporating a comprehensive array of formulae, dedications and two-dimensional pictorial elements has resulted in a less than symmetrical layout.195 This is not so apparent from the much more balanced decorative elements on MMA 2014.283a-b and the Tadross Collection monument, though can be seen in the layout of a monobloc monument from Abydos, now in the Cairo Museum (CG 20704) (Fig. 11).196 Fashioned from a single limestone block to resemble a slender per-nu shrine measuring 46.5 cm high x 15 cm wide x 23 cm deep and, while lacking any mumiform figures, it has an arch-topped niche containing a seated human ‘block’ figure carved in half-round relief located off-centre to the right in the lower half of the left side197 with three rows of offering scenes carved in sunk relief arranged above and also aligned to the right edge. Only the monument’s front is arranged symmetrically with a boldly executed panelled façade – similar in style to that of the two-dimensional shrine on Rio de Janeiro 635+636 [2427], beneath which is a seated figure of the ‘overseer of goldsmiths’ Nefer-Hor (imy-r nbyw nfr-hr) carved in sunk relief. The back, right side and rearmost portion of the left side are smooth and un-

194 Even the ‘solid’ type could accommodate statuettes in their hollow middles.
195 This critique is not aimed at the quality of workmanship, which is of the highest standard, but in itself stresses that the layout must have been the result of a considered design made by a skilled artisan based on factors about which we can only speculate. On the whole the Egyptians would always favour symmetry over asymmetry even when displaying a variety of eclectic elements (Backes, in Grallert, Grajetzki (eds.), Life and Afterlife in Ancient Egypt, 1-15, particularly 14).
196 Lange, Schäfer, Grab- und Denksteine des Mittleren Reiches, vol. II, 331; vol. IV, pl. 53. It is dated to the end of the Twelfth-Thirteenth Dynasty (Franke, Personendaten, 298, Doss. 484).
197 A good example of the usually symmetrical placement of this form of statuary can be seen with the monument of Sahathor whose block-statue is set up in a central niche of its own separately carved stela (both now in the British Museum (EA 569-570); Russmann, Eternal Egypt, 96-7, no. 25).
perhaps because the monument was placed against two perpendicular walls and/or amidst existing shrines that would otherwise have obscured any decoration on these surfaces. Interestingly, there is evidence of a (later?) adaption whereby a rebate is cut in to the top of the left side and partly through the uppermost figurative scene, reminiscent of the curious recess cut into the left side of MMA 65.120.1.

The proposed type of solid-core monument perfectly explains the original setting of four rectangular stone slabs now in the Louvre (E 25485) which were first published by Jacques Vandier in 1963. All belong to the same individual and undoubtedly come from a single square plan monument with sides at least 65 cm long x 38 cm high. Vandier cautiously reconstructed their original arrangement with the decorated surfaces facing outward so as to appear like a solid stone block decorated all round with offering scenes and rows of family members similar to those of late Middle Kingdom stelae together with a false-door-like niche on one side and a palace-façade motif running around the lower part of each slab (Fig. 12). Vandier assumed the provenance of Louvre E 25485 to be Atfih on the basis of a regional form of the goddess Hathor mentioned in the inscriptions but, as has been discussed above, this is no guarantee of where it was actually set up. There is some justification in believing that it stood somewhere in the North Abydos memorial chapel zone on account of the fact that the panel façade motif decorating the lower portion of each slab, which is most elaborate on the side with the false-door niche, mimics the unequally decorated sides of Khasekhemwy’s massive enclosure (Shinet es-Zebib) that is still clearly visible from the memorial chapel area. More significantly, Louvre E 25485’s proposed reconstructed form bears a striking resemblance to a solid mud-brick structure situated in the north-eastern sector of the memorial chapel zone (see plan and inset photograph of Fig. 10). Designated F6-42, this so far unique rectangular mud-brick mass measures approximately 4m x 3m and has on its (local) north, east and south faces niched decoration seemingly inspired by Khasekhemwy’s enclosure. The west side is completely smooth for the obvious reason that any decoration here would have been hidden by the monument. In the latter scenario, the partly worked side was almost certain to have faced inwards, suggesting that it could have been hollow. A slightly different variation of this proposed by J. van Dijk has the two-sided slab set into the thickness of a chapel wall with an aperture created around the figures (van Dijk, BACE 18, 56-7, n. 1). In this instance, the checker-pattern border on the slabs does not indicate that they should face inwards like other chapel ‘wall’ slabs, for the obvious reason that a hollow chapel composed of four slabs rather than three would have no opening for access.

Fig. 12 – Hypothetical reconstruction of the slabs of Louvre E 25485

198 Lange, Schäfer, Grab- und Denksteine des Mittleren Reiches, vol. II, 331 “die Rückseite und die hintere Hälfte der rechten Seite nicht glatt bearbeitet”. The undecorated areas might indicate that it was unfinished (though one would imagine that it was unlikely to have been set up in such a condition), or that it was intended to be a family shrine with other scenes and inscriptions to be added from time to time. This would likely only add to the lack of symmetry as displayed on its left side.

199 Vandier, Revue du Louvre 13, 1-10.

200 They are not displayed in this arrangement today. There are four figures carved in raised relief in a horizontal register on the reverse side of the slab with the niche, which are either an abandoned work or part of the intended overall decorative scheme for the monument. In the latter scenario, the partly worked side was almost certain to have faced inwards, suggesting that it could have been hollow. A slightly different variation of this proposed by J. van Dijk has the two-sided slab set into the thickness of a chapel wall with an aperture created around the figures (van Dijk, BACE 18, 56-7, n. 1). In this instance, the checker-pattern border on the slabs does not indicate that they should face inwards like other chapel ‘wall’ slabs, for the obvious reason that a hollow chapel composed of four slabs rather than three would have no opening for access.

201 Vandier, Revue du Louvre 13, 5.

202 F6-42 is even surrounded by a narrow secondary ‘enclosure’ like that of Khasekhemwy’s – not visible today, but indicated on the excavator’s plan (Fig. 7).
ment standing immediately behind it. The three heavily
niched surfaces would also have been unsuitable ‘can-
vases’ for inscriptions of any length and pictorial decora-
tion, which means that these must have been placed else-
where; perhaps on a miniature shrine – or coffin-shaped
monument that once may have surmounted F6-42, so
that it resembled MMA 2014.283a-b. The logical focal
point for decoration would be on the (local) eastern side
which faced towards the Osiris-Khentyimentiu temple
complex and (notionally) the rising sun, thus following
the orientation of entrances of other chapels in the
memorial chapel zone. Louvre E 25485 possibly represents
a more compact and squat version of this small-scale
monument type, which incorporates niche panel decor-
a as well as scenes and dedications on a single slab.203
Most importantly, the presence of F6-42 in the memori-
chal zone confirms beyond doubt the existence of
small solid-core structures with external decoration in
an area dominated by structures, both large and small,
with accessible interior chambers.

With their smaller footprint, the development of sol-

id-core shrines and monobloc monuments may have been
a response to space restrictions in parts of the North
Abydos cultic and cemetery zones. The cluster of mud-
brick memorial chapels brought to light by the Pennsyl-
vena-Yale expedition give a ‘snap-shot’ of just how
densely populated the non-funerary cultic landscape
immediately after the Osiris-Khentyimentiu temple complex had become during the late Middle
Kingdom.204 Occupying roughly 32.5m x 45m, the con-
centration of chapels in this area represents only a frac-
tion of what originally must have extended further out
along the edge of the wadi overlooking the processional
route that led out from the temple enclosure towards the
Umm el-Qa‘ab. The high number and density of struc-
tures is matched by the considerable variation in their
sizes, with some less than a metre square and the larg-
est, a chapel complex labelled G5-2, covering an area
of over 16m x 10m. Situated in the (local) south-eastern
corner of the group, G5-2 comprises a rectangular en-
closure surrounded by a low wall with a central opening
on its north-eastern side giving access to a small chapel
fronted by a small courtyard measuring approximately
10m x 4m with two brick lined tree pits flanking the en-
trance. The chapel measures overall 7m wide x 11m in
length and has a central narrow chamber 2.5m wide x
5m long with recessed stela emplacements, one in each
side wall and another in the rear.205

As can be seen in Fig. 10, the entrances of the largest
chapels, including that of F6-14 in the heart of the area,
allow relatively easy access to the courtyard and
the main building within. However, the same cannot be
said for the multitude of smaller structures built around
and against the enclosure walls of larger chapels which,
in many instances, occupy virtually all of the available
space and restrict or completely block access. Visitors to
Abydos today can still readily appreciate the ‘cheek by
jowl’ arrangement, which would have seemed even more
confining when the upper parts of the larger chapels were
intact.206 This aspect must have impacted on the practi-
calities of cultic activity at Abydos, especially when one
considers that besides family and friends honouring the
memorial of a loved one or colleague, the chapel zone
would have seen duly remunerated priests performing
essential rituals on their behalf as well as other attend-
ants involved in the general upkeep of the buildings and
their immediate surroundings. Indeed, according to the
aforementioned stela of Sehetepibre (CG 20538), the
services of the priest and possibly secular attendants
were secured upon or before completion of his chapel
(mn‘bt).207 It has been assumed that the smaller struc-
tures built against the enclosures of grander Abydene
chapels belonged to those directly connected with its
owner,208 but it is worth considering that some could be
later additions made by individuals with no direct fa-
milial, personal or professional connection, who simply
wished to have their own memorial in this prime loca-
tion or possibly even desired to be in close proximity
to the chapel of an illustrious Egyptian (whether real or
notional). Evidence for ancestor worship at Abydos in
the Twelfth Dynasty has already been found in the Mid-

203 Although it cannot be discounted that it too was surmounted by another (now lost) element.
204 The earliest datable artefact found in the chapel zone bears the cartouche of Amenemhat II (SIMPSON, O’CONNOR, Inscribed
Material, 36-7, fig. 59, pl. 6A), which might be when the first of the extant chapels was built. After this time no chapels
appear to have been demolished and the entrance of one was blocked “presumably to protect its’ contents” (O’CONNOR, in
205 This is in complete contrast to the far more orderly layout of the late Middle Kingdom sanctuary of Heqaib on Elephantine
Island, with its series of peripheral shrines arranged around a relatively open courtyard (HABACH, The Sanctuary of Heqaib,
vol. I, 140-57).
206 SETHE, Ägyptische Lesestücke, 68, no. 13a. One can presume that Sehetepibre’s memorial chapel stood close to, or was even one of,
those exposed by the Pennsylvania-Yale expedition, since Mariette discovered his stela just a short distance away at the exterior of the main temple enclosure wall (MARIETTE, Catalogue générale des monuments d’Abydos, 34) and was
perhaps another one of those believed to have been moved from the memorial chapel zone in the Nineteenth Dynasty at
the time construction began on Ramesses II’s ‘portal’ temple.
dle Cemetery at Abydos where commemorative chapels close to Old Kingdom mastaba tombs were built in veneration of illustrious ancestors within.\textsuperscript{209} This might account for Senbef’s copy on his Group One stela (CG 20569) of an ‘Appeal to the Living’ taken from the stela of Sehetepibre (CG 20538), for whom no connection is otherwise known.\textsuperscript{210}

We know from the Neferhotep I decree that overcrowding in the North Abydos cultic zone was an issue in the Thirteenth Dynasty, particularly in the transitional zone between the cemeteries and already densely populated memorial chapel area. The decree sought to protect the processional route and memorial chapel zone from over-zealous tomb building,\textsuperscript{211} specified as $h't$, as opposed to memorial chapels ($m'h't$), which are nowhere mentioned in the document, perhaps because they were not the immediate concern.\textsuperscript{212} We shall never know precisely what effect Neferhotep I’s measures had at Abydos, but logic dictates that unless a systematic programme was in place for demolishing or re-appropriating older tombs and chapels to make way for new, the most sought after sector of North Abydos would eventually have become seriously overcrowded. Evidence of demolition is lacking in the area of Middle Kingdom chapels dating from the time of Amenemhat II through the Thirteenth Dynasty or later\textsuperscript{213} and this could partly account for the significant number of smaller structures built around the few larger chapels.\textsuperscript{214} A similar crowding of small structures was encountered by John Garstang during his 1907 excavations farther west of the Pennsylvania-Yale memorial chapel zone. He describes the presence of shrines and other enigmatic mud-brick blocks attached to or built beside funerary chapels and tombs in an area of the cemetery just beyond what one would imagine to be the prime ‘Terrace of the Great God’ location. Not far from where he discovered the two halves of Liverpool E 30 he came upon an “[o]ffering

\textsuperscript{209} Richards, Expedition 44/3, 22-3.

\textsuperscript{210} Other inscriptions on Sehetepibre’s stela also copy elements from an early Twelfth Dynasty stela (Leprohon, in Silverman, Simpson, Wegner (eds.), Archaism and Innovation, 277 and passim).

\textsuperscript{211} Leahy, JEA 75, 53. As the memorial chapels were built in commemoration of the annual festival of Osiris it would be counterproductive for them to obstruct the procession itself.

\textsuperscript{212} The choice of term is briefly discussed by Leahy (JE 75, 45 (p)).

\textsuperscript{213} Simpson, O’Connor, Inscribed Material, 36, C3, fig. 59, pl. 6A (fragment with Amenemhat II cartouche). The latest fragment records the partial cartouche of a Second Intermediate Period king (48 C21, fig. 78, pl. 9A).

\textsuperscript{214} Kei Yamamoto’s limited excavations in the memorial chapel zone identified destruction levels of what he believed were memorial chapels of the earlier Twelfth Dynasty (Yamamoto, A Middle Kingdom Pottery Assemblage, 58-60).

\textsuperscript{215} Snape, Mortuary Assemblages from Abydos, vol. I, 204 (305 A’07).

\textsuperscript{216} The unpublished photograph (364 A’07 – book A07 11, 123) is now in the archives of the School of Archaeology, Classics and Egyptology, University of Liverpool.
Socio-cultural Context

Eleven objects from Group One and all of Group Two yield prosopographical data summarised in Table 3. Where it is possible to do so, the principal named individual on each monument is indicated with the symbol †. As can be seen from the range of titles, the majority of stela owners belong to the various administrative spheres proposed by Stephen Quirke, and a good many fall into the three highest levels of the central administration: the palace, the treasury and the vizierate. Even taking into account fluctuations in the relative status of certain titles during the Middle Kingdom, for instance ‘chief of tens of Upper Egypt’ (wr-mdw šm’ – Tadross Collection monument) that gained extra importance during the late Thirteenth Dynasty and Second Intermediate Period, and possible changes in location of the administrative centre to which such titled officials were connected (Lisht, Thebes), the overall impression is that many of these objects, including the earliest examples, were commissioned by Egyptian elites primarily linked with the royal court at el-Lisht in the north of the country. These included the military title śtw n tt ḫkš, ‘commander of the crew of the ruler’ (Pennsylvania E 9952), who was a palace official and the šmsw, ‘guard’ (Rio de Janeiro 635+636 [2427]), who protected the king. Even the four individuals holding the title imy-r mt(y), ‘oversee of the army’ (MMA 65.120.1, MMA 65.120.2 and Turin 1630) could have belonged equally to the royal court or a local Abydene militia organised by a regional governor.

After positions connected to the Palace, the second highest number of titles relate to temple institutions and occur on CG 20497, CG 20038, Vienna ÅS 109, MMA 2014.283a-b, and Liverpool E 30. These five monuments list a total of nine different priestly titles, three belonging to the monument owner and the remainder to secondary individuals. Only titles on Liverpool E 30 are explicitly connected with Abydos which includes

‘regulator of the watch of Abydos’ (mt(y) n sỉ n šḏw) held by Amenyseneb the stela owner who restored the Osiris-Khentyimentiu temple under king Khendjer. None of the other religious titles reveal the establishments to which they belonged, though on CG 20497 the Abydene-specific ‘Appeal to the Living’ leads one to suspect that the ‘regulator of the watch’ (mt(y) n sỉ) represented by one of the mummiform figures (name not preserved), was attached to the Osiris-Khentyimentiu temple where his responsibilities may well have encompassed other cultic establishments at the site. Being closer to the cultic ‘pulse’ of Abydos than most Egyptians, it comes as no surprise to find priests like Amenyseneb embracing and probably thereby promulgating innovations centred on Osiran religion, just as high officials on royal mission were so clearly inspired to do.

The emphasis on titles of the royal court leads one to suspect that the earliest objects from both groups were made by northern-based artisans. Alexander Ilin-Tomich proposes that Basel III 5002, CG20038 and possibly MMA 65.120.1 and MMA 65.120.2 were produced in the north, not least because of their owners’ known or probable connection with the central administration. If this is the case, then it seems they were made exclusively with Abydos in mind since no comparable objects displaying their main defining features are known from anywhere in the Memphite/Fayum regions. However, this raises an interesting question: assuming they were manufactured by northern sculptors, what should be made of unfinished stela Brussels E 4860 found at Abydos, and possibly even CG 20097, which appear to be roughly contemporary with the securely dated CG 20038? Three scenarios I believe are possible, which broadly follow those proposed by Detlef Franke for Middle Kingdom stelae in general:

1) The stelae were produced in an unfinished state in a northern workshop and shipped to Abydos where they awaited a prospective purchaser for whom a local sculptor would have added the personalised portion of inscription (which for these two examples never happened). 2) They were produced in the north and sent south to serve as prototypes for local Abydene sculptors.

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217 Both given totals include Vienna ÅS 109.

218 Quirke, RdE 37, 116 ff. The table includes the additional office ‘Temple Administration’ also proposed by Stephen Quirke (Titles and bureaux of Egypt, 119-31).

219 Grajetzki, Two Treasurers of the Late Middle Kingdom, 49.

220 Ryholt, The Political Situation in Egypt, 222.

221 For holders of this title see: Stefanovic, The Holders of Regular Military Titles, 95-124.


223 The ‘priest of Osiris’ (w’b n in-hrt) also mentioned on the stela could belong to Abydos and/or Thinis.

224 Quirke, Titles and bureaux of Egypt, 119-20.


226 See Ilin-Tomich, in Miniaci, Grajetzki (eds.), The World of Middle Kingdom, 145-68. To these should be added Turin 1630 which is closely related in style to the two Metropolitan Museum of Art stelae.

227 Franke, Das Heiligtum des Hekaib, 108.
3) The stelae were made at Abydos by a northern palace sculptor who had accompanied a high official to Abydos on royal mission. Either they represent prototypes destined for local Abydene workshops or the northern sculptor produced them with potential customers in mind, but was unable to finish them before leaving for the north.

Given the proposed late Twelfth Dynasty dating of unfinished stelae Brussels E 4860 and CG 20097 the official may well have been lykhernofret, whose intensive involvement in the Osiris cult at Abydos while on mission there for Senwosret III could have been the necessary stimulus behind the creation of the first Group One objects. It is not hard to imagine lykhernofret commissioning a northern sculptor accompanying him on his mission to interpret certain prevailing themes of the local Osiris cult into a new type of object, the result of which was CG 20038, Basel III 5002, Brussels E 4860 and CG 20097. Such a scenario brings to mind the autobiography of the master sculptor Shen-Setji whose career began in the royal workshops at Itjtawy before being sent to work on the Osiris-Khentyimentiu temple at Abydos in the time of Senwosret I and whose skills were likely imparted to local craftsmen.229 If such innovations were initiated by the desires of high officials, it would not take long for local ateliers to capitalise on the demand by producing their own comparable objects. Detlef Franke believed that this type of localised customer-led innovation and demand was the driving force behind the transmission of religious hymns in the late Middle Kingdom, such as those borne by several objects under study here, which may have been personal copies of those recited during the annual festival of Osiris.229

Three Group One objects, MMA 2014.283a-b, the Tadross Collection monument and MMA 65.120.2 include two or more individuals with the same title suggesting the hereditary transmission of their positions. The owner of MMA 2014.283a-b and his father both hold the title ‘overseer of drummers/sistrum players’ (*imy-r ḫnw*). The owner of the Tadross Collection monument, two of his sons and another possibly related individual all bear the title ‘Great One ofTens of Upper Egypt’ (wr-mdw 3m); two more of his sons are the ‘Mouth of Nekhen’ (*sḥb r nḥn*). Both titles are associated with the administration under the vizier, but rather than representing specific functions within it they may have served as ‘status markers’ for elite individuals.230 The most interesting of the three objects, MMA 65.120.2, includes an individual with the same title as the stela owner. The ‘overseer of the army’ Khenty-khety-Re (*imy-r mŠ ḫnty-hyty-r*) is represented by the leftmost mumiform figure. His relationship to Sehetepibre is unstated, though the fact that his mummy is with others that are clearly identified as family members indicates a familial rather than professional connection. Intriguingly, Sehetepibre may himself represent a member of a multi-generational military family. Listed in Pierre-Marie Chevereau’s catalogue of Middle Kingdom military title-holders is an ‘overseer of the army’ named Sehetepibre, known from a small arch-topped stela discovered by Mariette in the ‘nécropole du nord’.231 We can be certain that this Sehetepibre is not the same as the Sehetepibre of the Metropolitan Museum of Art slabs by virtue that each has a different mother. Nevertheless, a familial link may tentatively be proposed for both men through other individuals named in the inscriptions. On the Mariette stela one of Sehetepibre’s sons is named Ankhuf (‘nhw), while on both MMA 65.120.1 and MMA 65.120.2 the mother of Sehetepibre is named ‘daughter (of) Ankhuf’ (sḥt-‘nhw), presenting us with the possibility that the three stelae could record as many as four generations of the same family spanning some 80-100 years.232

The honouring of superiors by subordinates is evident on several stelae, notably CG 20038, which includes the names of several lesser officials who worked under the treasurer lykhernofret,233 and Rio de Janeiro 635+636 [2427] whose owner is of lower rank than other officials named in the inscriptions and therefore represent his superiors and/or other colleagues.234 It is likely, then, that these stelae belonged to shrines built next to, or set

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229 Faulkner, JEA 38; Lichtheim, Ancient Egyptian Autobiographies, 91.

230 Grajetzki, in Moreno García (ed.), Ancient Egyptian Administration, 236-7.
231 Chevereau, RdE 42, 54, no. 84 (no Cairo Museum number); Mariette, Catalogue générale des monuments d’Abydos, 172, no. 656; Stefanović, The Holders of Regular Military Titles, 198, Doss. 1059. Unfortunately the present location of this stela in the Egyptian Museum Cairo is unknown and is not listed in Lange, Schäfer, Grab- und Denksteine des Mittleren Reiches; as a result it is not possible to fully investigate and refine the dating.
232 Evidence for the hereditary transmission of military offices is noted for other stela (Stefanović, The Holders of Regular Military Titles, vii).
233 Leprinon, JARCE 15, 34-5.
234 As is known from other stelae, for example: Bourriau, Pharaobs and mortals, 63-4; Grajetzki, Two Treasurers of the Late Middle Kingdom, 70-3.
into the enclosure wall of, the chapel of their superior.

However, not all of these distinctive monuments were commissioned solely by the upper echelons of society; there is evidence that some belong to lower status Egyptians from the less visible ‘middle class’ of ancient Egyptian society, namely the untitled people on UC 14347, Louvre C 44 and BM EA 8893. In this respect, the objects from Group One represent a similar social range to that attested on more traditional stelae recovered from Abydos, including those from the Pennsylvania-Yale expedition memorial chapel zone. The presence of numerous individuals on a single monument may coincide with the ‘demotization’ of certain aspects of cult religion in the Thirteenth Dynasty that previously had been confined to the elite class, as is believed possible for hymns. Another influential factor may have been the practice of multiple burials apparent in late Middle Kingdom Abydene tombs, which are thought to have developed for reasons of economy, space restrictions and/or as part of the changing funerary culture at that time. The same social diversity is not evident in the Group Two objects with the exception of Liverpool E 30, which includes depictions and inscriptions of untitled workers presumably belonging to Amenyseneb’s estate.

The prominence of the high officials from the central administration as well as non-local elites on many of the monuments under scrutiny testifies to the powerful draw of Abydos and the cult of Osiris on the upper echelons of Egyptian society in the late Middle Kingdom, fuelled at least in part by the considerable royal activity at the site at certain times during this period. It was the high officials sent on royal missions to Abydos who would have been exposed to the stimulating religious fervour surrounding the Osiris cult and therefore it comes as no surprise to find that they make up many of the individuals represented on the objects from both groups. Even so, it is also apparent that the Group One corpus presents the same broader range of Egyptian society as is found on many other Middle Kingdom stelae from Abydos including those from the memorial chapel area. Thus the appeal of this particular style, from its initial association with the elite class, gradually broadened to include the less visible middle classes too.

I know of no royal objects directly comparable to those from either Group One or Two, an indication perhaps that the impetus behind both styles was likely to have come from the non-royal (yet nonetheless elite) sphere and not by ultimate ‘top-down’ imitation. That being said, the recently discovered fragments from two or more miniature rectangular limestone sarcophagi near the entrance to Senwosret III’s tomb/cenotaph at South Abydos at least present us with small-scale royal objects that might have played some kind of extra-sepulchral role – an aspect shared with the Group One corpus. They display the same kind of niche panelling and vaulted lid with end boards as MMA 2014.283a-b, but as they are hollow boxes rather than solid, they were made to contain something (whether notional or real). Regrettably, there are no inscriptions to reveal their exact function. Nevertheless, they do offer the possibility that Senwosret III (or perhaps a later Middle Kingdom king buried nearby) partook in certain votive practices outside the tomb that previously were known only in the non-royal sphere and, tantalisingly, that such activity could have involved miniature mummiform figures.

The Conception and Function of Mummiform Figures in Niches and Pierced-work Ankh Stelae

What, then, was the impetus behind the appearance of these two distinctively styled monument types at Abydos in the late Middle Kingdom, especially as neither replaced more conventionally decorated stelae at this time? From their relatively small numbers it is reasonable to assume that they served a more specialised role in cult activity, and one that remained in vogue for sev-

238 For an overview and discussion of such burials: Grajetzki, in Grajetzki, Grajetzki (eds.), Life and Afterlife in Ancient Egypt, 25, 30-3.
239 E.g. Simpson, O’Connor, Inscribed Material, 45-7, C16-18.
240 The only example of a relatively small-scale royal object bearing figurines carved in high relief that comes to mind is the striking red granite altar of king Khaankhre-Sobekhotep, believed to have come from Abydos and now in Leiden (Schneider, Raven, De Egyptische Oudheid, 73, no. 60). The rectangular altar measures 1.14m high x 1.6m long x 1.2m deep and carved in half-round relief around it below the offering platen are eight living-form depictions of the king all posed in the same attitude of reverence. Apart from their comparably small size and similar sculptural technique, there is no obvious reason to believe that these living-form statuettes are conceptually the same as those from Group One. Wegner, in Hawass, Wegner (eds.), Millions of Jubilees, 351-78.
241 Such as visceral remains from the embalming process or mummiform figurines.
242 This would be significant since, at present, the earliest mummiform statuette for a king belongs to Ahmose of the Eighteenth Dynasty (Hall, JEA 17, 10-2).
eral centuries at least. That being said, the inclusion of traditional images and offering formulae suggests that these monuments should not be entirely isolated from the vastly greater corpus of more conventional Abydene stelae. One cannot discount the possibility that a practical motivation lay behind the use of engaged mummiform statuettes and to some extent pierced-work ankh-s – namely a means of ensuring the integrity of a small memorial by preventing the theft or accidental damage that could more readily befall a separately modelled statuette or symbol – all potential hazards in the highly crowded cultic zones of North Abydos. However, such a motive is too simplistic to fully account for their development, not least because the number of magical spells, formulae, ‘Appeals to the Living’ found across the two groups argue that more complex issues lay at the heart of their conception and their role in the cultic milieu of Abydos. Regrettably, these texts make no explicit reference to the mummiform figures or pierced-work ankh-s that so dominate these objects, but they do point us in a direction that leads to the working hypothesis discussed in this section.

Whereas the pierced-work ankh style is not found elsewhere in Middle Kingdom material culture, engaged mummiform figures do occur in roughly contemporaneous non-royal contexts from the mid-late Twelfth Dynasty, and it is worth considering these briefly here for any insight into the development of Group One objects.

The earliest instance of niches containing half-round mummiform figures, albeit on a larger scale than those under study, occur in the imposing rock-cut tomb at Aswan belonging to the district governor Sarenput II who held office during the reigns of Senwosret II and III. Cut into the walls either side of the narrow corridor leading to the rearmost cult chamber are a total of six niches each containing a life-size mummiform statue carved in half-round relief. Of these only one is completely finished with a broad multi-coloured bead collar and black tripartite wig framing the red-painted face (now mostly missing) and a single column of inscription naming Sarenput (Fig. 13). Significantly, like the owners of several objects from Group One, Sarenput is also depicted in living-form in images elsewhere in the tomb and by a hardstone seated statue set up in the false-door styled niche in the cult chamber. As the mummiform statues are located in the corridor immediately before the cult chamber, we can presume that they functioned differently to the kl-statue of Sarenput within the rearmost niche (and indeed other two dimensional representations of the official elsewhere in the tomb). Even though no other non-royal equivalents are known, the engaged statues of Sarenput demonstrate that by the late Middle Kingdom mummiform imagery was beginning to be boldly employed outside the burial compartment in above-ground and accessible areas of the tomb.

244 For general conclusions about the facilitating role of mummiform statuettes in rituals see PUMPENMEIER, in FITZENREITER, LOEBEN (eds.), Die ägyptische Mumie, 77-8.
245 The use of integrally carved high-relief living-form human figures goes back much earlier to the early Fourth Dynasty when they were employed as part of the decoration in King Snefru’s valley temple of his (‘Bent’) pyramid at Dahshur (FAKIRY, ASAE 52, pls. 18-9; RICKE, ASAE 52, 615-6, figs. 5-6). The trend was adopted by members of the royal family and the elite in their tombs with one of the earliest, the Giza mastaba of Meresankh III, notably containing six niches varying in depth from 15 to 34 cm in which were sculpted a total of fourteen standing female and six seated male figures. (DUNHAM, SIMPSON, The Mastaba of Queen Mersyankh III, 7, 17-20, pls. 4, 8, 9, 11). Where, presumably for technical reasons, it was not possible to cut the niches and figures directly into the rock, the entire niche and statues could be made as a separate unit and inserted into the tomb structure. For an example of this see: BORLA et al., The Egyptian Museum of Turin, 47, fig. 45. It is also noted that niches containing freestanding statues occurred in the First Dynasty, or perhaps even earlier, for which see BARTA, MDAIK 54, 66. It is uncertain whether this development directly inspired the creation of half-round figures carved out of the tomb walls.

246 MÜLLER, Die Felsengräber der Fürsten von Elephantine, 64-88, Abb. 37-42, pls. 27, 30-6. For a detailed discussion of Sarenput II’s family and dating see: HABACHI, The Sanctuary of Heqaib, vol. I, 47. Its overall appearance closely resembles the near contemporary inner coffin of Userhat discovered by Garstang at Beni Hasan (GARSTANG, Burial customs, 173-5, fig. 181). The precise date of Userhat’s burial is uncertain, though pottery styles suggest the reign of Senwosret III (BOURRIAU, Pharaons and mortals, 91).
247 MÜLLER, Die Felsengräber der Fürsten, 72-4. The remaining five uninscribed mummiform figures were probably intended to represent other male family members, contra Müller proposed that they were multiple images of Sarenput II because no other family members other than his son Ankhu are represented anywhere else in the tomb (MÜLLER, Die Felsengräber der Fürsten, 73).
248 JIMÉNEZ SERRANO, Nova StudAeg 9, 323. The back wall of the niche was also decorated with a stela depicting Sarenput before offerings (MÜLLER, Die Felsengräber der Fürsten, Abb. 39, pls. 29, 31, 33).
249 Müller posited that Sarenput’s use of niched mummiform figures in his tomb design was influenced by the series of limestone Osiride statues in Senwosret I’s pyramid complex at Lisht that lined the causeway leading to his mortuary temple (MÜLLER, Die Felsengräber der Fürsten, 98; see also: WINLOCK, BMMA, 24, fig. 25; ARNOLD, The Temple of Mentuhotep, 46-9). Equally influential in this respect are the colossal painted limestone ‘Osiride’ statues of Senwosret I from the Osiris-Khentyimentiu temple built by the king at Abydos (DARESSY, Statues of divinités, 66 (CG 28230), pl. 12).

250 The royal statues closest in scale and appearance to those
Group One monuments appear, attested by the securely dated CG 20038 and Basel III 5002, as well as other novel types of group statuettes with individuals depicted mostly in living-form but also as mummies, as in Sarenput’s tomb come from above-ground chapels of the ‘labyrinth’ of Amenemhat III at Hawara. Although surviving only as fragments, several statues represent not only the king, but also mummiform deities (Blom-Boer, Die Tempelanlage Amenemhets III, 149-53).

251 E.g. Fischer, in Terrace, Fischer (eds.), Treasures from the Cairo Museum, 81-4; Schulz, Seidel, Egyptian Art: The Walters Art Museum, 48-9, no. 16; Bourriaud, Pharaohs and mortals, 70-1, no. 56; Engelbach, Harageh, 13, pl. XXV.162.

252 Wildung, Sesostris und Amenemhet, 101-2, fig. 91; Fischer, ten separately modelled and placed into stelae niches or shown standing before an integral stela-form back slab. Collectively, these objects point out the late Middle Kingdom as a time of innovation in the presentation of notions centred on the cult of the deceased, with increasing visual references to the mummy-form, employing a wider range of small-scale religious objects than in previous periods, many of which functioned in


253 Peet, The Cemeteries of Abydos. Part II, 121, no. 27, fig. 86; pl. XXIII, 2. See also the group statue contained within a niche set on an offering table in Turin published in Evers, Staat aus dem Stein, vol. II, tfl. IV, 42.
extra-sepulchral settings.254

Previous studies on objects from both groups under study have focussed on the k3 and b3 elements of the body. Alexander Badawy proposed that the pierced-work ankhs functioned like false-doors, providing a portal through which the b3 of the deceased was able to leave the tomb,255 a connection seemingly corroborated by examples of stelae with empty niches styled as false-doors.256 A subtly different explanation was proposed by David O’Connor in respect of a stela with a rectangular aperture discovered in the memorial chapel zone, calling it a ‘window’ through which the k3 of the deceased, presumably represented by a statuette placed within (or behind) it, was able to witness the important Osirian festivities.257 Equally then, we might consider that CG 20353, which was found in a prime location just outside the Osiris-Khentyimenti temple precincts, served as an ankhs-shaped ‘window’ enabling the two mumiform statuettes of the deceased recovered with the stela to witness the great procession of the god’s statue as it left the temple enclosure.

It is easy to accept the portal aspect of Badawy’s and O’Connor’s explanations as applicable to both niches in stelae and fully pierced-through apertures, and thus potentially to every object in the corpus, but neither accounts for the use of mumiform rather than living-form images of the deceased, nor why the ankhs-form aperture was sometimes favoured over a plain rectangular one. Jane Hill addressed some of these questions by presenting the pierced-work ankhs as a versatile device that offered a portal for the k3, sweetened and made holy any offerings passing through it, and symbolised the ideal divine eternity only the worthy deceased could attain.258 However, it is difficult to accept without question that the presence of mumiform statuettes is connected solely with the k3 or are even his b3. Besides the fact that none in the corpus is unequivocally identified as either,259 several of the objects also include two-dimensional depictions of the living-form deceased in food offering scenes more readily identified with the k3 as the traditional recipient of the htp-di-nsw formulae.260 With MMA 2014.283a-b this distinction is made virtually certain as the owner of the monument is represented in half-round relief both as a mummy and in living-form. The close connection between mumiform statuettes and ankhs-form apertures is shown by their inclusion on Vienna ÄS 109 and also by the two mumiform statuettes recovered with CG 20353, although the reasoning behind the ‘marriage’ of these two otherwise distinct styles and what lay at the heart of their symbiotic potency is not obviously stated in any inscription. Nevertheless, I believe it is possible to make some headway in this area if instead of regarding them as an ‘additional home for the k3’,261 largely duplicating the role served by other living-form images of the deceased in the offering cult, we consider for a moment that the each mumiform figure in Group One serves as the proxy for the actual mumified body, whose revivification and transformation to the blessed dead is sought through the utterance of specific magical texts and some form of ritual performance. This hypothesis, for it cannot be anything more than that at present, is supported by the presence of certain magical formula, phraseology and specific decorative elements found on many of the objects in this study.262 As a starting point, I

254 Other innovations in areas of the funerary/mortuary cult include the appearance of small-scale magical objects such as wands and rods (BOURRIAU, in QUIRKE (ed.) Middle Kingdom Studies, 15).
255 BADAWY, BIE 35, 138. Kitchen suggested that the pierced-work ankhs may have served as a motif of the epithet bi’t-nh, ‘the living-ba’, and specifically the b’s ability to move freely (KITCHEN, JEA 47, 13).
256 E.g. Lange, Schäfer, Grab- und Denksteine des Mittleren Reiches, vol. IV, pl. 52, CG 20686; pl. 57, CG 20748 = SIMPSON, The Terrace of the Great God at Abydos, pl. 52 [ANOC 34.2].
257 O’Connor, Expedition 21, 49. In fact, O’Connor follows Badawy’s suggestion that statuettes were placed in these apertures (SIMPSON, O’Connor, Inscribed Material, 39, C6).
258 Hill, in HAWASS, WEGNER (eds.), Millions of Jubilees, 243.
259 In two- and three-dimensional art the k3 is represented as the deceased in living-form (BONNET, RÄRG, 358). The

b3’s connection with representations of mumiform figures is usually explicit – most notably on New Kingdom shabti figures where it appears as a separate bird-like entity about to fly from the breast of the deceased (TAYLOR, Journey through the Afterlife, 25, no. 2).
260 Rio de Janeiro 635+636 [2427], CG 20038, MMA 65.120.1-2, Turin 1630, MMA 2014.283a-b, Vienna ÄS 109. For a discussion of the k3 in two-dimensional offering scenes see: BOLSHAKOV, Man and his Double, 135-52.
261 This definition was used by TAYLOR, Death & the Afterlife, 112 for shabtis in general although BM EA 8893 is included in the discussion (114, fig. 75).
262 As obvious as it might seem, there is no clear consensus on the role(s) played by funerary figurines, shabtis and other mumiform statuettes in mortuary and funerary cults. In the recent Metropolitan Museum of Art exhibition catalogue the idea that the mumiform figure of Kemes on MMA 2014.283a-b could represent his actual mummy is one of two different explanations referenced in a footnote (PATCH, ALLON, in OPENHEIM et. al. (eds.), Ancient Egypt Transformed, 266, n. 5). The basis for this definition is John Taylor’s general discussion about the embalmed body of the deceased (TAYLOR, Journey through the Afterlife, 20) – though he does not refer to the roles of mumiform statuettes (which, in an earlier work, he associates with the k3 (see above n. 261) – and a catalogue entry for a 2/3 life-size limestone tomb ‘sah’-statue (1.08 m high) of an Eighteenth Dynasty Chantress of Amun Ipay (TAYLOR, Journey through the Afterlife, 24, no. 1). Neither
briefly outline here the role mummiform imagery played in the developing Osirian-solar funerary religion of the late Middle Kingdom, as this sets the stage for the appearance of the Group One objects.

In his interpretive exploration of funerary iconography Stephan Seidlmaier proposed that the appearance of the mummiform image resulted from changes in perception of the deceased’s body linked to new embalming techniques. More specifically, whereas Old Kingdom tomb scenes represented the deceased as a living person laying on a bier as though asleep, by the end of the First Intermediate Period/early Middle Kingdom the embalmed and wrapped corpse was no longer perceived to be paralleled by any activity of the living but a distinct intermediary stage represented by the cocoon-like mummy, that eventually came to be known as the s’t w. While this new imagery permeated Middle Kingdom funerary art, its certain connection with the s’t w name can rarely be made in texts of the period. This is no better illustrated than by the many dozens of occurrences of s’t w in the Coffin Texts where the word is almost invariably translated as ‘dignity’ or ‘dignitary’ and attractively explained as referring to “the privileged deceased ones or Sahu (who) lived in the company of the ruler of the Beyond”. In only one CT spell can it be more clearly understood as referring to the physical ‘mummy’. Yet, from the context where s’t w occurs in other spells it is possible to see how interpreting the word as (the deceased’s) mummy also makes sense. For example, in CT 267 the phrase “your s’t w in the House of Two Bas” (s’t w k n pr b’t-wy) has been interpreted by Harco Willems as likely referring to ‘your (the deceased’s) mummy’ rather than ‘your dignity’, and thus characterising the deceased as Re united with Osiris. It is tempting to see here the beginnings of a clearer association between word and image that becomes explicit by the New Kingdom when s’t w not only refers to the mummified body but is depicted as distinct from other key elements of the deceased, the k3, ib and h3, in tomb scenes. Likewise, the mummiform figures from Group One may already be regarded as separate from the k3, especially as the latter continues to be the recipient of food offerings in the htp-di-nsw formulae inscribed on eleven of the objects, and distinct also from the two-dimensional living-form depictions of the deceased and/or other individuals found on ten. According to Jan Assmann, like the k3, the s’t w defined the person in the social sphere and similarly was also the focus of cult attention, which further promotes the idea that the mummiform figures on all Group One monuments represent a strand of ritual belief distinct—though not entirely divorced—from those related to the k3. By the New Kingdom the s’t w was certainly regarded as a stage in the corporeal remains of the deceased requiring rituals in order for it to be transformed into the revivified dead called the s’h and re-take the form of a living human being. One of the rites at this time was even performed over the mummy in the tomb courtyard so that it could be exposed to the revivifying rays of the sun, firmly highlighting the centrality of solar-Osirian religious beliefs surrounding the deceased’s revivification. These concepts are maintained in later funerary texts in which the s’h-form image is linked to the necropolis, the Osiris cult and the sun, highlighting their enduring role as an essential component in the revivification.

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264 Willems, Chests of Life, 154.
265 Wb IV, 51-2; Bonnet, RARG, 486.
266 Assmann, JEA 65, 72-7 (for discussion and references), pl. 10. In TT163 the mummiform body is actually labelled h3t, though it is referred to as s’h in other comparable funerary scenes/texts assembled by Assmann.
267 MMA 65.120.1-2, Turin 1630, CG 20497, Louvre C 44, Vienna ÅS 109, Basel III 5002, Brussels E 4860, CG 20038, MMA 2014.283a-b and the Tadross Collection monument. MMA 65.120.1-2, Turin 1630, UC14347, Basel III 5002, CG 20038, Rio de Janeiro 635+636 [2427], Vienna ÄS 109, MMA 2014.283a-b, Tadross Collection monument.
268 Assmann, Death and Salvation, 91-2.
269 The mention of s’h in Coffin Texts (where it does not clearly mean ‘mummy’) has nevertheless been interpreted in some instances as having close connections to the s’h (Demarée, The s’h ikr n R3-Stelae, 227, n. 169).
271 MMA 65.120.1-2, Turin 1630, CG 20497, Louvre C 44, Vienna ÅS 109, Basel III 5002, Brussels E 4860, CG 20038, MMA 2014.283a-b and the Tadross Collection monument.
Even though no text on any Group One object mentions the sḥ or the šḥ, the mumiform imagery they employ cannot so easily be dismissed as simply another form of, or repository for, the deceased’s kꜣ – and it takes no great stretch of the imagination to understand them as being early visual manifestations of the sḥ concept, prefiguring their unambiguous presence in the religious texts of the New Kingdom and when they became the subject of specific rituals. That they could belong to such a transitional and developmental process is not without precedent as a number of other characteristically New Kingdom funerary/mortuary practices are now believed to have origins firmly rooted in the Middle Kingdom.

Even though the sḥ-mummy cuts an elusive figure in pre-New Kingdom literature, the theological belief underlying the transformation of the deceased to an šḥ is nonetheless firmly entrenched in Middle Kingdom liturgies as CT Spell 93 reveals: “The Netherworld has been opened….for I have gone out in this day in this form which is mine, in this true form which is mine of a living šḥ”. The original concept of this transformation appears much earlier in the Pyramid Texts where Horus revives Osiris by reciting magical words as utterance §2264 of Spell 734 makes clear: “Hear, hear the word which Horus said to his father Osiris, so that you may be an šḥ thereby”.

In an act of reciprocity, we are also told in §1730 of Spell 612 that Osiris transfigures Horus. Already in the early Middle Kingdom this concept was adapted for use in the non-royal sphere at Abydos where it can be found in the stela inscription of the priest Montuhotep, which calls upon passers-by to beseech Osiris-Khentyimentiu to transform him to an šḥ. When viewed through an Abydene-centric lens we can see that the sḥ-mummy image of the deceased, especially with its obvious similarity to the quintessential form of Osiris, would serve as a most appropriate recipient of such recitations and may reasonably explain the role of all mumiform figures from the Group One corpus. Indeed, of the four objects bearing ‘Appeals to the Living’ which, like Montuhotep’s version, expressly encourage the intercession of passers-by to recite the texts for the benefit of the deceased, three are aimed specifically at the Abydene religious institution and priests. Of these, the most comprehensive appeal belongs to MMA 65.120.2 with its call to: ‘…officials, those in Abydos (and) the entire temple priesthood and every wab-priest belonging to it, who stretches out his hand (in a ritual gesture) to the god…’, which surely alludes to the participatory aspect of the annual festival when the Abydene populace and pilgrims alike raised their arms in veneration as the statue of Osiris was carried along the processional route before them. In the cultic environment of Abydos, the objectified sḥ-mummy would have provided a more tangible focus for rituals especially those seeking the transfiguration of the deceased, whose resultant šḥ status would enable them to participate in the Osiris festival. This was especially relevant for palace officials, such as Iykhernofret, whose actual mummies lay in tombs far away in northern cemeteries.

In addition, like Osiris’s reciprocal transfiguration of Horus, the šḥ(w) were likewise capable of perpetuating rituals for other deceased individuals as revealed in an ‘Appeal to the Living’ from Saqqara: “[As for (any)] skilled lector-priest (or any properly) equipped šḥ-spirit, who shall read aloud for any man his invocation offering of bread and beer for me”.

To the Egyptians, then, both living and dead were equally qualified to perform rituals for the benefit of another deceased individual (even one unrelated to them). This would have benefitted the multiple individuals listed on many of the objects from the two groups under study, not all of whom were related to the principal deceased.

The restoration of breathing was an essential requirement in the transfiguration process, as stated in a late Twelfth – mid Thirteenth Dynasty offering formula: “that he may give voice offerings (of) … the sweet breath of life, of Horus, the sweet breath of life”.

Of these, the most comprehensive appeal belongs to MMA 65.120.2 with its call to: ‘…officials, those in Abydos (and) the entire temple priesthood and every wab-priest belonging to it, who stretches out his hand (in a ritual gesture) to the god…’, which surely alludes to the participatory aspect of the annual festival when the Abydene populace and pilgrims alike raised their arms in veneration as the statue of Osiris was carried along the processional route before them. In the cultic environment of Abydos, the objectified sḥ-mummy would have provided a more tangible focus for rituals especially those seeking the transfiguration of the deceased, whose resultant šḥ status would enable them to participate in the Osiris festival. This was especially relevant for palace officials, such as Iykhernofret, whose actual mummies lay in tombs far away in northern cemeteries.

The very act of breathing, poetically described as ‘the sweet breath of life’ (tꜣw nḏm n ‘nh), was hugely important in the transformation of the deceased (as a mummy) to an šḥ, and is something that also features across the Group One and Two corpora; the ‘sweet breath of life’ is mentioned in the offering formula inscribed on MMA 2014.283a-b and the base
of one of the statuettes found with CG 20353. MMA 65.120.2 refers to the deceased “smelling the breath of the (fair) wind” and CG 20497 the ability to “inhale incense that comes forth and that I be provided with the fragrance of the god”. Comparable sentiments are expressed in the text on Vienna ÄS 109 with the phrase, ‘I smell incense coming forth and I am satisfied by the god’s fragrance’, which refers to Senbef who is represented only as a mummy.

The ability to breathe/smell epitomised the difference between the inanimate mummified corpse and the revivified šḥ and became a tenet of later prayers. On a deeper theological plane, it may have intentionally mirrored the role played by Shu in resurrecting his father Atum by providing him with air – a concept firmly rooted in the Coffin Texts where Shu is actually called ‘Ankh’. Likewise, in one of the New Kingdom Underworld books dealing with the awakening of Osiris by Horus the phrase “I have given sweet breath on your behalf, to your very nose” alludes to the dry air of Shu at the moment of creation.

From the perspective outlined above one can see how this could relate to the dominant ankh-form feature on all Group Two objects. Any breeze or wafting aroma of food offerings and incense passing through their shaped apertures could be magically transformed into the ‘sweet breath of life’ fundamental to the transfiguration of the deceased. It would be hard to find a more appropriate and aesthetically pleasing visual metaphor for symbolically facilitating the moment of revivification through the restoration of the senses of smell and sight.

Pictorially, the ability to breathe and smell is frequently symbolised by the deceased holding a flower close to his/her nose to take in its perfume. On at least one stela from around the same time as the earliest appearance of mummiform iconography an ankh was used instead of a flower. And Liverpool E 30 takes this connection between ankh/smell/flower a step further, with its depictions on the recto of ten kneeling figures (both men and women) each holding a single flower to their nose; as if to reinforce the link, one is even carved upon the stem of the central ankh motif itself. Interestingly enough, except for Vienna ÄS 109, neither Liverpool E 30 nor any other object from Group Two bears any phrase mentioning or even alluding to breath, smell or breeze – though neither do they feature mummiform figures. Perhaps such texts were written elsewhere in the chapel/shrine where these stelae were set up. This is certainly true for Liverpool E 30, as the phrase ‘sweet breath of life’ occurs on Amenyseneb’s Louvre C 11 stela. The absence of engaged mummiform figures would also be logical if the ankh motif related to an actual body in a tomb or a separately modelled statuette, as appears to be the case for CG 20353. The mummiform figures of Vienna ÄS 109 would serve not only as effective replacements for the actual mummies of the deceased or their separately modelled statuettes, but also comfortably integrate into a single monument the ideological link between the life-giving properties of the ankh and the revitalisation/transformation of the deceased’s sḥ-form. Furthermore, the prominence of the ankh here seems to tie in with a period of popularity for the symbol during the Thirteenth Dynasty, when it also appeared on Abydene stelae as a central element in lunettes sometimes flanked by jackals.
wedjat-eyes, or by the *htp-di-nsw* formula.\(^{300}\) The basis for the symbol’s connection with the mummy is probably the hourly vigil (*Stundenwachen*), in which the deceased was presented with an *ankh* and a *wIs*-sceptre.\(^{301}\) In these contexts the *ankh* also embodies a strong solar connection, evident in some vignettes from the Book of the Dead where it is shown supporting the rising sun.\(^{302}\)

Similarly, versions of CT 788 on Basel III 5002, Vienna ÅS 109 and MMA 2014.283a-b contain a solar theme by invoking the deceased to open his eyes in order to see the splendour of the sun god.\(^{303}\) Some time ago Jan Assmann suggested that the original meaning of the *wn-hr* element (lit. ‘opening the face’) of the spell refers to the opening of the doors of a shrine so that the statue inside could ‘see’,\(^{304}\) i.e. the moment its face is first illuminated from its concealment in the dark. This visual effect likely lies at the heart of CT 788 and may owe its origins to the development of the serdab in Old Kingdom tombs where the ‘squint’, sometimes labelled “the eyes of the *k3*-house”, provided the statue(s) with the ability to ‘see’ the mortuary cult activities.\(^{305}\) The formula first appears in the non-royal sphere on rectangular wooden coffins dating to sometime before the reign of Senwosret II as a ‘deviant’ coffin spell\(^{306}\) and was part of a ritual primarily intended for the actual body of the deceased.\(^{307}\) From the reign of Senwosret III, the spell finds its way onto objects not necessarily directly associated with real burials, but employed in non-funerary cultic activity, to which stelae Vienna ÅS 109, Basel III 5002 and MMA 2014.283a-b firmly belong.\(^{308}\) Used on its own or combined with other ‘pyramidia spells’ such as those found on the latter monument,\(^{309}\) the spell ensured for the deceased the restoration of sight, enabling them to witness and bathe in the sun-god’s transformative light. In the context of Abydos it also served to emphasise personal piety insofar as once ritually transformed from their mummy-form and endowed with sight the deceased were able to witness the festival of Osiris.\(^{310}\)

This much is explicit in two versions of the spell on the Abydene stela of Nebupusenwesret, which enabled the deceased to witness Osiris and Wepwawet in his procession.\(^{311}\) The overtly Osirianised version of CT 788 on Vienna ÅS 109, which invokes Re’s favour by stating: “so that you may give your hand to guide for the Osiris” (*dIk _school sDmr n IsIr*), alludes to the final stage of the deceased’s journey through the hours of the night, before being reborn at dawn into the realm of Osiris, and serves to remind us of the Egyptian’s reliance, expressed in spells, rituals and through imagery, upon the divine protection and guidance believed necessary to reach this ultimate destination.

Besides the insights provided by the physical appearance of the aforementioned Louvre E 25485, one of its texts also aligns with CT 788. Inscribed over its doorway-like niche is the opening from a restorative spell that eventually becomes Chapter 22 from the Book of the Dead.\(^{312}\) In the earliest complete version of the spell which appears on the coffin of queen Montuhotep dated to the end of the Thirteenth Dynasty,\(^{313}\) the deceased is likened to Osiris\(^{314}\) and restored with voice (for which one needs to breathe), paralleling the restoration of senses in the versions of CT 788 on Vienna ÅS 109, Basel III 5002 and MMA 2014.283a-b.\(^{315}\)

In addition, the three other Coffin Text spells, 353, 387 and 773 inscribed on the upper half of MMA 2014.283a-b’s eastern side are also designed to offer protection and facilitate the deceased’s journey through the netherworld; spell CT 353 gives the deceased power over water and occurs on coffins of the early Middle Kingdom and then forms, in part, Chapter 57 of the Book of the Dead, attested from the mid-Eighteenth Dynasty.\(^{316}\) Spell CT 387 protects the deceased’s heart and would later become Book of the Dead Chapter 29 found on pa-

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\(^{300}\) \textit{Vandier, Manuel d’Archéologie Égyptienne}, vol. II, 490-1, fig. 298; \textit{Fischer}, \textit{ZÄS} 100, 23-4. To these references can be added \textit{Lange}, \textit{Schafer}, \textit{Grab- und Denksteine des Mittleren Reiches}, vol. II, 13-4, CG 20415; vol. IV, pl. 30.

\(^{301}\) \textit{Assmann}, \textit{Altsyptische Totenliturgien}, 3, 49-50. Coffin Texts funerary rituals are also believed to be closely linked to the Hourly Vigil (\textit{Willems}, \textit{Chests of Life}, 156-60).

\(^{302}\) E.g. BM EA 10541 (\textit{Taylor}, \textit{Journey through the Afterlife}, 234-5); Leiden T2. For a brief discussion of this aspect with other examples see: \textit{Dercich}, in \textit{LÄ} I, 268-9.


\(^{304}\) \textit{Assmann}, \textit{Liturgische Lieder und den Sonnengott}, 249.

\(^{305}\) \textit{Blackman}, \textit{JEAI} 3, 252.


\(^{308}\) In the royal sphere CT 788 is not securely attested until the reign of Amenemhat III whose pyramid capstone is inscribed with a version (\textit{Lohawasser}, \textit{Die Formel ‘Öffnen des Gesichts’}, 31).

\(^{309}\) \textit{Willems} (\textit{Chests of Life}, 168-169) summarises the spells to Anubis and Geb with Osiris, as found on MMA 2014.283a-b, as referring to the burial of the deceased who comes under the protective arms of Anubis, with Geb and Osiris supporting his/her body, whereas CT 788 with its *wn-hr* formula is concerned with the celestial afterlife.

\(^{310}\) \textit{Badawy, BIE} 35, 123.


\(^{312}\) \textit{Van Dijk, BACE} 18, 53-6. See also \textit{Franke, Das Heiligtum des Heqaib}, 250-1.

\(^{313}\) \textit{Geissen, Ein Totentexte}, 14 (for dating); 39-40, 89 (the spell).

\(^{314}\) And those of the Eighteenth Dynasty (\textit{Quirke}, \textit{Going out in Daylight}, 82-3).

\(^{315}\) \textit{Lapp, MDAIK} 50, 233-7. For the connection between the deceased and Osiris in this formula see: \textit{Franke, Das Heiligtum des Heqaib}, 247, n. g.

\(^{316}\) \textit{Quirke, Going out in Daylight}, 40-2.
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pyri and tomb walls from the mid-Eighteenth Dynasty.317 Finally, spell CT 773 refers to the celestial ferry crossing and links with water-related CT 353 and ultimately also with CT 788 as the culmination of the deceased’s solar barque journey and exposure to the first rays of the sun.

If further proof were needed that CT 788 was specifically intended for the mumiform figures from Group One, we can look to another unusual arch-topped stela discovered by Mariette at North Abydos (Fig. 14).318 Its owner, Nefer-hotep, is represented as a mummy carved in sunk relief before whom are two vertical columns of inscriptions giving a version of CT 788. Behind Nefer-hotep’s stela stands a second smaller mummy of his father Re(n) seneb. Both mummies hold the flag of Osiris and thus represent the ‘Osirianised’ deceased, similar to that of Kemes on MMA 2014.283a-b.319 The positioning of the spell directly before Nefer-hotep’s mumiform figure leaves no doubt that it relates to this image, which is not labelled as his k3 and thus may be understood as something distinct from it, not least because his k3 is mentioned as the traditional recipient in a separate htp-di-nsw formula inscribed in the central column on the stela.320 When Nefer-hotep’s spell is counted with those of Basel III 5002, Vienna AS 109 and MMA 2014.283a-b they represent around a third of all known versions on Middle Kingdom stelae,321 almost all of which were found at (or considered to be from) Abydos. Such a significant percentage emphasises the close relationship between spell, mumiform figure and Abydos, and leads one to suspect that some conceptual elements were drawn from the Osiris Mysteries during which the cult image of the god was symbolically revived. We know that a non-royal version of Osiris’s revivification ritual was incorporated into Coffin Texts and was meant to be performed by the son of the deceased (or a priest), sometimes accompanied by other family members who may have presented offerings and recited parts of it.322 According to CT 241 the ritual was performed on the deceased as Osiris who “goes to Rostau to know the secret of the Duat into which Anubis is initiated. You can open my mouth, you can open my two eyes, you can transfigure/glorify me”.323 Here, the opening of the mouth and eyes of the deceased’s mummy (as Osiris), preceding its transformation into an nh, are the same processes alluded to in CT 788 and in phrases on Group One objects. Fire was also a feature of the ceremony,324 including the burning of incense to create a fragrant air to aid the restoration of life to the deceased – seemingly echoed in the ‘sweet breath of life’ phrase frequently mentioned in stelae texts. The flame was itself also an essential element and quintessence of the nh as described in CT 316: “Look with your eyes […] on this nh who has come here. He has become a flame, it is he that has come into the Island of Fire”.325 It is certain that some late Middle Kingdom monobloc monuments with statuettes were employed for similar rituals involving fire – and thus the possibility that this might include Group One objects – most convincingly from the example discovered by Ahmed Fakhry during his excavations in the valley temple of king Sneferu’s Bent pyramid at Dahshur.326 Belonging to the ‘overseer of sculptors’ Seshenu (imy-r gnw.tyw swnw), the limestone monument measures 61 cm high x 35.5 cm wide and 35.5 cm deep and is shaped like a per-nu shrine with a sizeable niche that once accommodated a statuette of a god or owner (now missing). Originally a burner was attached to the top of the shrine supported on copper rods and lit during the recitation of the ‘Hymn to a Torch’ inscribed around it.327 This hymn is better known as

319 Somewhat curiously they do not hold the crook as well, as one might expect.
320 Nefer-hotep’s stela is one of three making up Simpson’s ANOC 16 group with dates ranging from Senwosret III/Amemhat III to the Thirteenth Dynasty and so fits perfectly within the timeframe of objects from Group One (Simpson, The Terrace of the Great God at Abydos, pl. 25; Franke, Personendaten, 215, Doss. 321 (Thirteenth Dynasty); 231, Doss. 352 (Amemhat III/IV or beginning of Thirteenth Dynasty); 254, Doss. 399 (Thirteenth Dynasty)).
321 Most of the stelae are conveniently listed in: Lohwasser, Die Formel ‘Öffnen des Gesichts’, 123; to which one can add Franke, Das Heiligtum des Hegab, 245-6.
323 CT III, 325: iw.i.lk(w) r r3-st: w r r[h] s3t n(y) dw:w.t lb.s(w).t inpw hw sr wp(w).t r r3.t wp(w).t ir ty i s3h(w).t w(l).
324 Smith, The Liturgy of Opening the Mouth, 31, col. II, l. 12 and 32, col. IV, l. 5 (there, the deceased holds a wick in the presence of Osiris). According to the Twenty-sixth Dynasty official Pefuaneith, braziers were set up around the notional tomb of Osiris at Umm el-Qa’ab and presumably featured in ceremonies performed over the statue of the god during his annual festival (Lichtheim, Ancient Egyptian Literature, vol. III, 35). The discovery of the remains of a stone fire-altar connected with Ptolemaic or Roman Period activity at Umm el-Qa’ab lends weight to Pefuaneith’s statement (Efland, Abydos, 123, Abb. 1). A graphic depiction of a ritual burner/torch set up before Osiris appears in the burial chamber of Pashedu at Deir el-Medineh (Bierbrier, in Weeks (ed.), Valley of the Kings, 358, 362-3).
325 CT IV, 101-2: m3 m hw th nfr.w smsw.w hpr.r wp t‘wy m-bh.w r nh p(w) mnh hnr n fr.m nh.b n hw mrsr
327 Besides this monument, Fakhry discovered a number of stela fragments, an altar and another miniature per-nu shrine (none with features of Groups One or Two), all of which
from New Kingdom sources when it appears in several tombs and is related to Chapter 137 of the Book of the Dead. Both the recitation of Seshenu’s hymn and the lighting of the torch were performed at night, when the bright flames dramatically ‘animated’ the statue within the niche, mimicking the effect of dawn sunlight on the deceased after its perilous night-time journey. The performance of the ritual is described thus: “wash your face, wipe away your tears and open your mouth with these fingers of bronze”, which closely resembles elements from the Opening of the Mouth Ceremony. If one substitutes the separately modelled statuette from Seshenu’s shrine for a mummy of the deceased carved in half-round relief, such revivification rituals take on even greater relevance in respect of the Group One objects.

The likelihood that such torch ceremonies were performed in similar circumstances at Abydos is supported by two per-nu styled monobloc monuments from the site each with a central recess in the top likely to have accommodated a ritual burner. One is the above mentioned CG 20704, which has a circular hole in its vaulted top and the other, CG 20742, discovered by Mariette in the ‘nécropole du nord’, has a more elaborate rectangular recess measuring 5 cm x 5 cm x 2.5 cm deep that more closely resembles the Dahshur example (Fig. 15).

With the integration of such features and employing entirely outward-facing decorations, the compact and self-contained aspect of these monuments had a practical advantage in the confined spaces of the memorial chapel zone. Even with these, there would still remain obvious difficulties in performing any kind of ritual or presenting offerings in the most congested areas, as is apparent with the dense clusters of smaller peripheral shrines shown in the Fig. 10 plan.

Opening of the Mouth ceremony in which the mouth and eyes of the deceased are opened with a finger of gold (Otto, Mundöffnungsritual, vol. I, 91). More elaborate versions of the torch ceremony were sometimes performed, all still related to the transfiguration of the deceased’s mummy to an ëh, as revealed in the rubric of one Eighteenth Dynasty torch hymn: “Formula for the four torches, (for) transfigurations performed for an ëh, when you have made four clay basins struck with incense, filled with milk of a white cow, in which the four torches are extinguished”, Quirke, Going out in Daylight, 307.

This association is alluded to in a charming vignette on the Eighteenth Dynasty papyrus of Nu which depicts four torch bearers standing before a smaller image of a mummy (Lapp, Catalogue of Books of the Dead, pl. 76). Such rituals may have exerted a long-lasting and deep-rooted influence at Abydos; for instance, in Ptolemaic Period temple liturgies the use of torches for night-time illumination of rituals performed over the embalmed deceased developed from earlier Osirian (Abydene) cult traditions (Assmann, in Israelit-Groll (ed.), Studies in Egyptology, vol. I, 7, 33, no. 13).


Mariette, Catalogue générale des monuments d’Abydos, 587-8, no. 1496.

Interestingly, a connection can be made between Seshenu’s Dahshur shrine and Abydos since he is known from a stela in the British Museum (EA 844) considered to be from the latter site (Budge, Hieroglyphic Texts from Egyptian Stelae, vol. V, 6, pl. 13), which lists members of his family, some of whom were also sculptors.

Since the most viable space belonged to the courtyards of larger chapels, rituals intended to benefit the smaller inaccessible shrines around their periphery may by necessity...
Yet the active participation of the living in rituals for their beloved dead was vital for their effectiveness and is implicit on several objects from Group One which depict male and female relatives embracing the mummiform figures. The largest number appear on UC 14347 with seven, all male, living-form figures embracing both male and female mummies. Whereas two-dimensional depictions of a wife embracing her husband are fairly commonplace in offering scenes, emotionally charged physical acts between males are rarely shown except when carrying out ritual activities such as the Opening of the Mouth ceremony, which was performed by the son or priest. In pictorial scenes of this event, female relatives are also shown mourning the mummy and are perhaps the influence behind the depictions on the Group One stelae. Female relatives in scenes of the Opening of the Mouth Ceremony are considered to play a double role as Isis and Nephthys attending to the body of Osiris, which appears with such frequency in funerary art of the New Kingdom and later, but may itself have developed out of the activities of embalming attendants in the Old Kingdom. This interpretation is even more applicable to the two female relatives flanking the central mummiform figure on CG 20097.

A subtle visual metaphor for the solar aspect of the deceased’s transfiguration contained in CT 788 may be suggested for the overall form of the Tadross Collection monument. Although described by Pascal Vernus “faute de mieux” as a ‘pseudo-naos’ on the basis that each of the four sides represents types of naos or niched-stelae firmly attested in the Middle Kingdom, closer inspection leads one to suspect that this is an over simplification of the design which fails to acknowledge specific differences in decoration and layout (Fig. 8). It is true that with the niches containing living-form figures of the monument’s owner Seneberau and his wife in one and his brother Sobekemheb and wife in the other, the appearance of each longer side resembles the stela type proposed by Vernus, yet their overall arrangement is not without issue. Firstly, it is noticeable that each niche is larger than is necessary to accommodate the figures within, partly it would seem to avoid leaving what would have been an unduly wide undecorated border between the niche and the single line of inscription framing it. In contrast, the niche on each narrower side is considerably tighter around the single mummiform figure which fills it entirely. This was necessary to accommodate the lengthy shabti spell written in multiple horizontal and vertical columns around each niche. It is strange why the living-form figures and minimal text were not placed on the narrow sides and the mummiform figures and lengthy inscriptions on the longer sides. This incongruity cannot be explained away as simply the result of poor workmanship, since the inscriptions and borderlines are well executed and neatly aligned, and the details on the figures skilfully rendered. Rather, it seems that the sculptor deliberately made the monument with unequal sides and placed the decoration accordingly to make some kind of visual statement. Whereas each longer side resembles a late Middle Kingdom naos-stela, both narrow sides—especially when viewed front-on—look very much like an obelisk with a pyramidal-top and provide a fitting solar inspired backdrop for the Osirianised figures of the deceased in niches. The tradition of using obelisks to have been performed there as well.

338 UC 14347 and Louvre C 44. In addition, Basel III 5002 has four living-form figures surrounding though not embracing the mummy. Nevertheless, their attendant nature is indicated by their close proximity and that they all face towards the figure. 337 Sometimes the female figure is the mother (e.g. CG 20456: Lange, Schäfer, Grab- und Denksteine des Mittleren Reiches, vol. II, 53; vol. IV, pl. 32 recto). 336 Assmann, Death and Salvation, 311-2. 335 Altenmüller, in Barta, Krečí (eds.), Abusir and Saqqara, 305-16. 334 Vernus, RdE 26, 103. 333 E.g. Bostico, Le stele egiziane dall’Antico al Nuovo Regno, 52-3, no. 51, pl. 51; Lange, Schäfer, Grab- und Denksteine des Mittleren Reiches, vol. IV, pl. 12, CG 20136. 332 See n. 87 regarding the second horizontal line of inscription on one of the sides. The niches in the Rome and Cairo examples cited in the note above are tighter around the figures.
express the deceased’s connection with the Heliopolitan solar cult goes back to the Old Kingdom where they were placed at the entrance or in the forecourt of private tombs. In funerary contexts, the obelisk served on a functional level as a focal point for offerings in the forecourt of the tomb complex, while also conceptually symbolising the Egyptian belief in the solar rebirth and an object associated with Osiris. In later periods this relationship was even more popular, attested by the production of vast numbers of miniature votive obelisks combined with either an integral or attached statuette of Osiris. Even though very few non-royal Middle Kingdom obelisks have been found—perhaps because their use for much of that time had become a royal prerogative—there is a little more evidence to suggest that by the Thirteenth Dynasty small obelisks and ‘obelisk stelae’ were used as dedicatory objects by non-royal Egyptians and, perhaps intentionally, differentiated from their royal counterparts by being far smaller and by leaving the pyramidion-like top undecorated. The dating of the object certainly accords with this period of use.

A further observation about this monument relates to the identification of its two mumiform figures, both reasonably classified as shabtis by Pascal Vernus due to the presence of CT 472. No other object from Group One can be so assuredly defined as such. However, as clear cut as Vernus’ definition appears to be, it is the Tadross Collection monument alone that brings into focus the contradictory relationship that exists between mumiform statuettes inscribed with the shabti spell and those without—a relationship that continues to vex Egyptologists to the present day. Unlike numerous inscribed freestanding shabtis of the late Middle Kingdom, the monument’s mumiform statuettes do not bear the spell even though they are large enough for this to be entirely feasible. By serving as the carrier of the spell, the monument adopts a role similar to rectangular coffins on which the earliest versions of the spell were inscribed. There is no suggestion in the latter circumstance that the spell defined the occupant of the coffin as a shabti, but was there to exempt the deceased’s  ′h from onerous menial labour in the Afterlife. Should, then, we consider that the similar separation of spell and figure on the Tadross Collection monument was actually a deliberate attempt to identify the latter as a sḫ-mummy and not a shabti, with the spell intended for Senebrau’s  ′h just as it was on rectangular coffins? While it is unlikely that we will ever be able to answer this with certainty, it is an intriguing possibility to consider in light of the discussion in this section. We can be sure that such conundrums rarely troubled the mind of the ancient Egyptian!

Conclusion

This study shows that the Osiris cult at Abydos was the primary stimulus behind the development of objects from Group One and Two. The Group One corpus spans a considerable period of time beginning in the reign of Senwosret III through to the late Thirteenth Dynasty, first with arch-topped stelae and joined a little later by rectangular stelae/slabs. Freestanding monuments were the last of the objects to appear, perhaps in response to space and even economic constraints affecting the cultic zone of North Abydos in the Thirteenth Dynasty. Most,

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344 Martin, in LÄ, IV, 542. Examples come from the Memphite area and as far south as Aswan.
345 Martin, Ein Garantsymbol, 58.
346 It is no accident that obelisks were placed either side of a tomb entrance, for it was here that the deceased would first exit the tomb and be bathed in sunlight. For solar rebirth in funerary theology see: Assmann, The Search for God, 104.
347 Hastings, The Sculpture from the Sacred Animal Necropolis, 29, pl. 30, no. 94; 30, pl. 34, no. 98; 27, pl. 35, no. 88.
348 Bourriau, Pharaohs and mortals, 66. The paucity of evidence may of course be the result of chance survival and discovery of such objects.
349 Bourriau’s observation on an obelisk-stela that “the shape would appear to be almost fortuitous – simply a means of providing four stelae from one piece of stone” (Bourriau, Pharaohs and mortals, 66), fails to account for the object’s deliberately slender obelisk-like proportions. Only the use of horizontal lines of inscription is unusual for obelisks, none, for example, are recorded in Kuertz, Obelisques. Therefore, it would seem that again the artisan may have intentionally combined two objects—as proposed for the Tadross Collection monument—the distinctive slim shape of an obelisk and the text and figure layout of a stela.
350 If one excludes obelisk-form monuments with rounded tops, there are very few examples of non-royal obelisks where the decoration extends onto the pyramidion – I know of none from the Middle Kingdom (Kuertz, Obelisques, 1-2, 1308 (Old Kingdom), pl. 1; Martin, Ein Garantsymbol des Lebens, Abb. 6 (Late Old Kingdom), 11a-d (Late Period)). Seneberau’s plain pyramidion also contrasts with the substantially decorated royal pyramidions of Amenemhat III (Maspero, ASAE 3, 206-8 with plate) and the chronologically more relevant Khendjer (Jequier, Deux pyramides du moyen empire, 19-26, pl. 6).
351 Vernus, RDE 26, 107-12.
352 The topic has been broached in many studies, but more specific articles dealing with the identity of shabtis include: Poole, in Eyre, (ed.) Proceedings of the Seventh International Congress of Egyptologists, 893-901; and the recent study by Mlnaci, JEA 100, 245-73.
353 A number of examples are listed in Whelan, RDE 65, 146.
354 Almost 30 cm high, the two figures are actually larger than most Middle Kingdom shabtis bearing the spell e.g. Renseneb BM EA 49343 is 23 cm high (Taylor, Death & the Afterlife, 118, fig. 78 top left).
if not all, were commissioned by Egyptians desiring a presence at Abydos, but who were buried elsewhere. The first of the Group Two objects most likely appeared in the early Thirteenth Dynasty and correspond to a period when the ankh-symbol was employed with increasing prominence in stelae decoration. These were commissioned by Egyptians buried at Abydos or elsewhere.

Three distinct theological concepts can be identified across the two corpora. Firstly, the notion of the deceased’s revivification from his/her transitional mumified state (frequently referred to in later texts as sḫ) to that of the transfigured and immortal ḫḥ. This is symbolically embodied by all the pierced-work ankh monuments and implicit in both the wn-hr element of CT 788 and phrases referring to breathe/smell, and may even be subtly implied through the obelisk-form appearance of the Tadross Collection monument. Secondly, securing food offerings for the cult of the deceased. This was achieved primarily through the use of the ḫt-dī-nsw and prt-hrw formulae found on the majority of inscribed objects and supplemented on occasion with pictorial offering scenes. The third concept sought to forge an explicit link between the monument owner and the Abydene Osiris cult by ensuring that the mumiform figure (itself an Osirianised likeness) once transformed by the necromancer’s enchantments served to the mummiform owner as a means of effecting protection. And, once transfigured, the deceased could perform the same service to others, in an act of reciprocating for the goods and food provided by the owner.

Postscript: Is there a legacy of Groups One and Two objects?

The production of monuments bearing mumiform statuettes in niches and pierced-work ankhs seems to have waned by the end of the Middle Kingdom or early Second Intermediate Period. It remains to be seen if this is simply an accident of preservation or evidence that both styles had fallen out of fashion. I know of no objects from any later periods directly analogous to the pierced-work ankh monuments of Group Two. However, we find an intriguing situation that, after an apparent hiatus of three or four centuries, an object appears that is so closely comparable to those from Group One its inspiration seems virtually certain to have been drawn directly from Middle Kingdom prototypes at Abydos.

Carved from a rectangular block of diorite with all four sides entirely covered by 22 mumiform figures carved in raised relief (Fig. 16), the object is without provenance, but can be firmly dated to the Nineteenth Dynasty since it belonged to the ‘overseer of works in the Ramessum’ Imeneminet who served under Ramesses II. While the role of the figures is ambiguous—the single column of text inscribed down each gives only a name—the object also bears an ‘Appeal to the Living’, indicating that it came from an above-ground setting visible to passers-by, which also stresses an affinity to the Group One objects. A possible Abydene connection can be established through Imeneminet’s connections with the well-known High Priest of Osiris Wenennefer. Moreover, Imeneminet served under Ramesses II, whose own connection with Abydos ran deep; not only did the king construct several substantial temples of his own and make additions to existing buildings. It is also worth noting the prominent re-appearance around this time of CT 788 on shabitis and other statuettes, and even the inclusion of the wn-hr element of the spell in festival and feast lists.

356 Closest to them perhaps are the dozens of faience and wooden ankhs recovered from the tomb of Amenhotep II (DARESSY, Fouilles de la Vallée des Rois, 118-32, pls. 27-9) and more relevant is a rectangular wooden stela with a large painted central ankh recently discovered in an Abydos tomb dating to the terminal Late-Ptolemaic Period (LANDVATTER, Near Eastern Archaeology 76/4, 242, fig.13).


358 Visitors are asked to make offerings to Imeneminet’s kꜣ (TRAPANI, in EYRE (ed.) Proceedings of the Seventh International Congress of Egyptologists, 1169). Here, as with Group One inscriptions, mention of the kꜣ does not occur on the figures themselves, but in the accompanying formulae.

359 Trapani notes the visual similarity between this and three of the Group One objects (Op. cit., 1170, n. 6), but not the ‘Appeal to the Living’.


361 KEMP, in LA 1, 28-42.

on Ramesses II’s Abydene memorial temple.\textsuperscript{363} Could it be that Group One objects were amongst other Middle Kingdom stelae encountered during the demolition of memorial chapels to make way for Ramesses II’s own ‘portal’ temple and these served as the inspiration for a minor revival of the late Twelfth-Thirteenth Dynasty imagery and formulae? Interestingly, another object bearing an even closer resemblance to those from Group One dates to the Twenty-fifth/Twenty-sixth Dynasty that probably incorporated three above-ground mud-brick shrines built beside the burial shaft. The overall form of each shrine is different – one distinctly pyramidal in form, one resembling a squat obelisk with what appears to be an integral offering slab and another of rectangular shape with integral offering slab and possible traces of a palace-façade decorated exterior. Several artefacts found around these modest structures include a number of crude wooden shabtis and miniature coffins.\textsuperscript{372} It is not difficult to see the similarities between the elements of two of these shrines and the forms of MMA 2014.283a-b (palace-façade) and the Tadross Collection monument (pyramidal-obelisk-form). Furthermore, whereas the practise of depositing shabtis in above-ground cult areas of the tomb has been seen as a Theban development of the Second Intermediate Period,\textsuperscript{373} the existence of the Group One objects show that inspiration could easily have come from cult practices at Abydos in the late Middle Kingdom.

**Acknowledgements**

I am most grateful to Gianluca Miniaci for taking the fine images of several of the Cairo Museum stelae featuring in this article and also to Nathalie Du Breuil and Céline Scaringi of Pierre Bergé & Associates for providing me with images of MMA 2014.283a-b and the Tadross Collection monument. I wish also to thank John Taylor for his assistance during my visit to the British Museum to examine EA 8893, to Joan Detter (retired) of the Metropolitan Museum of Art for providing me (many years ago) with information on MMA 65.120.1 and MMA 65.120.2, and to Wolfraam Grajetzki and Jane Hamilton for their most valuable comments.

\textsuperscript{363} *El-Sabban, Temple Festival Calendars*, 56-7.
\textsuperscript{364} *Mahran*, in *Bares, Coppens, Smoláriková* (eds.), *Egypt in Transition*, 269-71, fig. 1.
\textsuperscript{365} CG20038, CG 20497, CG 20569. Also noted by *Mahran*, in *Bares, Coppens, Smoláriková*, *Egypt in Transition*, 270.
\textsuperscript{366} *Leahy*, in *Eyre, Leahy, Leahy* (eds.) *The Unbroken Reed*, 171-92.
\textsuperscript{367} *Kemp, MDAIK* 23, 146-7.
\textsuperscript{368} *Charles Edeltd.*, *Egyptian Antiquities*, 15.
\textsuperscript{369} *Marlar*, *The Osiris Temple at Abydos*.
\textsuperscript{370} For a discussion of the features with additional bibliography see: *Whelan, 17th-18th Dynasty Stick Shabtis*, 10-4.
\textsuperscript{371} Although usually referred to as stick shabtis, very few are actually inscribed with the shabti spell.
\textsuperscript{372} *Whelan, 17th-18th Dynasty Stick Shabtis*, 15-9.
\textsuperscript{373} *Willems*, in *Claes, De Meulenaere, Hendrickx* (eds.), *Elkab and Beyond*, 518, no. 2.
On the Context and Conception of Two ‘Trademark’ Styles from Late Middle Kingdom Abydos

Fig. 16 – Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli, 1069

Fig. 17 – (lower left): JE 36728; (lower right): Private collection
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GROUP ONE</th>
<th>ABYDOS</th>
<th>Dynasty</th>
<th>Appeal to the Living</th>
<th>CT 788 (with other 'pyramidia spells'†)</th>
<th>Other CT spells</th>
<th>Name only (with or without title/epithet)</th>
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<tr>
<td>MMA 65.120.1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Petrie Museum UC 14347</td>
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<td>Louvre C44</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cairo CG 20038</td>
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<tr>
<td>MMA 2014.283a-b</td>
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<td>13th</td>
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<td>†</td>
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<td>Tadross Collection</td>
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<td>13th / SIP</td>
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</table>

| GROUP TWO   |        |           |                      |                                        |                 |                                           |
| Brussel E.4320 |    | 13th        |                      |                                        |                 |                                           |
| Liverpool E30 |      | 13th        |                      |                                        |                 |                                           |
| Cairo CG 20353 |    | 13th        |                      |                                        |                 |                                           |
| Pennsylvania E 9952 | | 13th / SIP |                      |                                        |                 |                                           |

Table 1: Summary of dating, provenance and inscriptive information for objects from Groups One and Two

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GROUP ONE</th>
<th>Against temple enclosure wall</th>
<th>Free-standing</th>
<th>In tomb chapel/associated shrine</th>
<th>In non-funerary chapel/shrine</th>
<th>Slab from wall of miniature chapel/shrine</th>
<th>Slab from solid core shrine</th>
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<tr>
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</table>

| GROUP TWO   |                               |               |                               |                               |                                          |                            |
| Brussel E.4320 |                             |               |                               |                               |                                          |                            |
| Liverpool E30 |                              |               |                               |                               |                                          |                            |
| Cairo CG 20353 |                             |               |                               |                               |                                          |                            |
| Pennsylvania E 9952 |                       |               |                               |                               |                                          |                            |

Table 2: Proposed setting of objects from Groups One and Two

Grey = possible / Black = most likely
<table>
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<th>Object Number</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<td><em>imy-r ḫnwtY†</em></td>
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<td><em>imy-r st</em></td>
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<td><em>wdpw</em></td>
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<td><em>imy-r st</em></td>
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<td><em>wdpw</em></td>
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<td></td>
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<td><em>shd sḏ(w)</em></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MMA 2014.283a-b</td>
<td><em>ḥkr nswt</em></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tadross Collection</td>
<td><em>ḥkr nswt</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Tadross Collection</td>
<td><em>ḥk.t ḳnt ḥkt</em></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cairo CG 20569</td>
<td><em>imy-r pr n(y) ḫb n(y) ḫrp kṣwt†</em></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cairo CG 20038</td>
<td><em>imy-r ḫmt†</em></td>
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<td>Rio de Janeiro 635+636 [2427]</td>
<td><em>imy-r pr†</em></td>
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<td>Rio de Janeiro 635+636 [2427]</td>
<td><em>ṛḥ nṣw†</em></td>
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<td><em>imy-r ḫnwtY ḫrp skw†</em></td>
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<td>Tadross Collection</td>
<td><em>wr-mḏw šm</em>†</td>
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<td>Tadross Collection</td>
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<td>Rio de Janeiro 635+636 [2427]</td>
<td><em>imy-r ḥḥwt</em></td>
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<td>Tadross Collection</td>
<td><em>ḥry n ṭm</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Brussels E.4320</td>
<td><em>imy-r ṯ-mḥw†</em></td>
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<td></td>
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<td><em>imy-r mšc†</em></td>
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<td><em>imy-r mšc</em></td>
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<td><em>šmsw</em></td>
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<td>Pennsylvania E 9952</td>
<td><em>ḥtw n tt ḥkš†</em></td>
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<td></td>
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<td><em>mt(y) n ṣṭ</em></td>
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<td><em>ḥm-nṯr</em></td>
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<td>Vienna ÄS 109</td>
<td><em>ḥm-nṯr ṭb ḡḥw</em></td>
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<td>Vienna ÄS 109</td>
<td><em>iri ḥḥ nṯr†</em></td>
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<td>MMA 2014.283a-b</td>
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<td>Liverpool E30</td>
<td><em>mt(y) n ṣṭ n ṣḏḥw†</em></td>
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<td>Liverpool E30</td>
<td><em>mt(y) n ṣṭ</em></td>
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<td>Liverpool E30</td>
<td><em>wḥ b ṣḏḥw</em></td>
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<td>Liverpool E30</td>
<td><em>wḥ b n ḳn-hṛt</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Liverpool E30</td>
<td><em>ḥry-cṯ n ḫw-t nṯr</em></td>
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</table>

Table 3: Titles on objects from Groups One and Two and their administrative spheres
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