

The World of Middle Kingdom Egypt (2000-1550 BC)

Contributions on archaeology, art, religion, and written sources

Volume II

Edited by

Gianluca Miniaci, Wolfram Grajetzki

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Front cover: Model of a scribe from shaft 16L25/1C (2710/144) at Deir el-Bersheh, compare colour plate XIII

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Table of Contents

<i>Introduction</i>	
Wolfram Grajetzki, Gianluca Miniaci	ix
List of contributors	xiii
List of Abbreviation	xv
<i>Tombs in transition: MIDAN.05 and windows in the early Eighteenth Dynasty</i>	
Marilina Betrò.....	1
<i>Precious finds from an early Middle Kingdom tomb in Thebes: reconstructing connections between the dead and their goods</i>	
Anna Consonni	13
<i>Umm-Mawagir in Kharga Oasis: an Industrial Landscape of the Late Middle Kingdom/Second Intermediate Period</i>	
John Coleman Darnell, Colleen Manassa Darnell.....	27
<i>The tomb of a Governor of Elkab of the Second Intermediate Period</i>	
Vivian Davies	71
<i>An Isolated Middle Kingdom Tomb At Dayr Al-Barsha</i>	
Marleen De Meyer	85
<i>The Transmission of Offices in the Middle Kingdom</i>	
Nathalie Favry	117
<i>The stela of the Thirteenth Dynasty treasurer Senebsumai, Turin Cat. S. 1303</i>	
Wolfram Grajetzki, Gianluca Miniaci.....	133
<i>Some Remarks on the Relations between Egypt and the Levant during the late Middle Kingdom and Second Intermediate Period</i>	
Karin Kopetzky	143
<i>Female Burials in the Funerary Complexes of the Twelfth Dynasty: an Architectonic Approach</i>	
Ingrid Melandri.....	161
<i>Diachronic questions of form and function: falcon-head utensils in Middle Kingdom contexts</i>	
Stephen Quirke.....	181
<i>The Egg as a Metaphor for Isis: A Coffin Text Imagery</i>	
Mohammed Gamal Rashed.....	203
<i>‘Writing-Board Stelae’ with Sokar-Formula: A Preliminary Account with a note on the Archaeological Context of Tomb C 37, Asasif, by Gianluca Miniaci</i>	
Gloria Rosati.....	209
<i>Two Blocks of Sobekhotep from Hawara</i>	
Ashraf Senussi, Said Abd Alhafeez Abd Allah Kheder.....	237
<i>An Unpublished Scarab of Queen Tjan (Thirteenth Dynasty) from the Louvre Museum (AF 6755)</i>	
Julien Siesse.....	243

<i>Literary exploitation of a craftman's device: the sandal-maker biting leather (Teaching of Chety, pSallier VIII, 12). When philology, iconography and archaeology overlap</i>	
Pascal Vernus	249
<i>Boundaries of Protection. Function and significance of the framing (lines) on Middle Kingdom apotropaia, in particular magic wands</i>	
Fred Vink	257
<i>On the Context and Conception of Two 'Trademark' Styles from Late Middle Kingdom Abydos</i>	
Paul Whelan	285
Colour plates	339

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 *sḥ* – 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 *sḥ*-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’Athanasia 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 ÄS 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.

WHELAN, in GRALLERT, GRAJETZKI (eds.), *Life and Afterlife in Ancient Egypt*, 130-54; National Museum Rio de Janeiro 635+636 [2427]: KITCHEN, BELTRAO, *Catalogue of the Egyptian Collection*, vol. I, 47-9, vol. II, 25-6, no.11; Vienna ÄS 109: HEIN, SATZINGER, *Stelen des Mittleren Reiches*, vol. II, 37-44; MMA 65.120.1 and MMA 65.120.2: DOXEY, in OPPENHEIM *et al.* (eds.), *Ancient Egypt Transformed*, 266-7; MMA 2014.283a-b: LAPP, *MDAIK* 50, 231-52, tfln. 37-41; Tadross Collection monument: VERNUS, *RdE* 26, 101-14. Although sold at auction recently by Pierre Bergé & Associates (<http://www.kunicki.eu/Kunickiexpertise_UK/PBA-29-November-204-Chapel.html>, accessed 01.12.2014). I have retained the original collection name for the object. A more extensive (though not up to date) bibliography for all Group One objects can be found in: WHELAN, in GRALLERT, GRAJETZKI (eds.), *Life and Afterlife in Ancient Egypt*, 144-54.

⁴ HILL, in HAWASS, WEGNER (eds.), *Millions of Jubilees*, 227-47 (with additional bibliographical references).

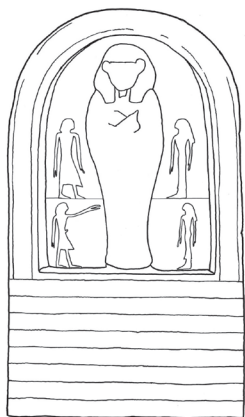
⁵ These illustrations highlight only the principal image(s) under discussion and do not show all incised decorations or inscriptions.

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:

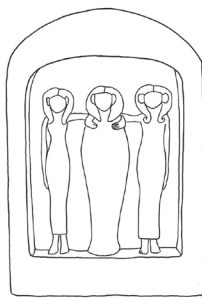
GROUP ONE



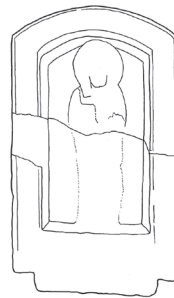
Musée de Bâle
Switzerland III 5002



Egyptian Museum
Cairo CG 20038



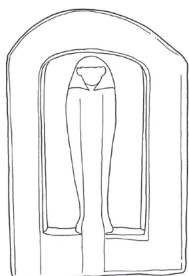
Egyptian Museum
Cairo CG 20097



Musees Royaux d'Art
et d'Histoire Brussels
E.4860



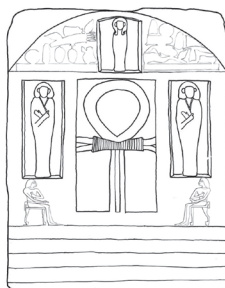
Tadross collection



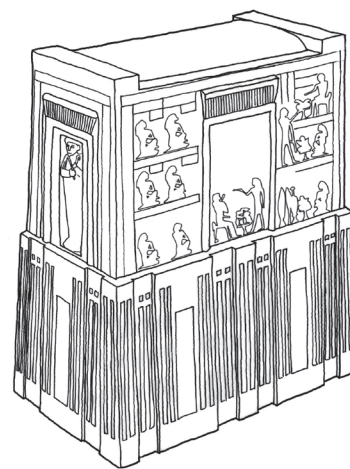
Egyptian Museum
Cairo CG 20569



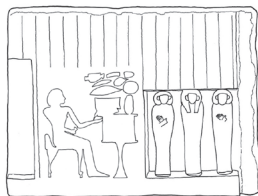
National Museum
Rio de Janeiro
635+636 [2427]



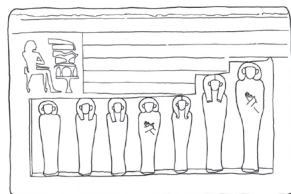
Kunsthistorisches Museum
Vienna AS 109



Metropolitan Museum of Art
2014.283 a-b



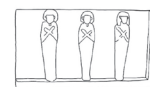
Metropolitan Museum of Art
MMA 65.120.1



Metropolitan Museum of Art
MMA 65.120.2



Museo Egizio Turin
1630



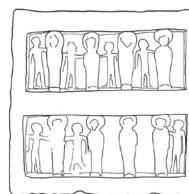
British Museum
London
EA 8893



Egyptian Museum
Cairo CG 20497



Musée du Louvre
Paris C44



Petrie Museum
of Egyptian Archaeology
London
UC14347

Shown to scale

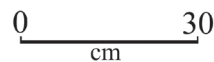


Fig. 1

GROUP TWO

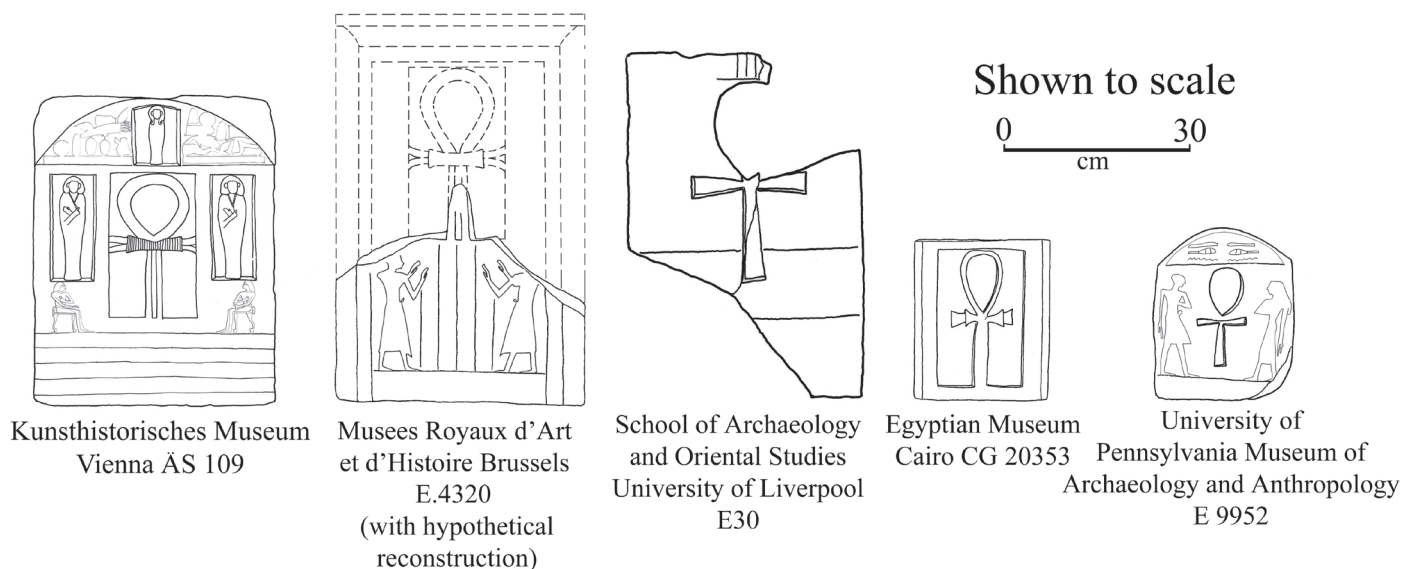


Fig. 2

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).⁶ 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 mummiform 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 hnty-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 mummiform 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 mummiform 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 mummiform male figure wearing a bag wig and framed by a vertical columns of inscription giving two *htp-di-nsw*

⁶ More detail will be given to the descriptions of objects that previously have received little attention.

formulae and a version of CT 788.⁷ All three mummy-form 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

groups (Fig. 3).⁸ 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 Iykhernofret 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



Fig. 3 – Cairo Museum, CG 20038. Close up of second figure from left. Photograph by Gianluca Miniaci. Published with the kind permission of the Egyptian Museum Cairo

wide), the smallest of the group, is dedicated to the well-known official Iykhernofret (*iy-hr-nfrt*) and belongs to the first of Simpson's Abydos North Offering Chapel

⁷Versions 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.

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

⁸ SIMPSON, *The Terrace of the Great God at Abydos*, 17.

statuettes.⁹ CG 20038 is the only object from both groups with figures that are not in the strictest sense mummiform. However, while they lack the all-enveloping mantle 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 enveloping wrappings of the characteristic mummiform body. In addition, both CG 20038’s male figures grasp *ankh* symbols most often associated with freestanding shabtis/funerary statuettes and thus represent the earliest example 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 niche a single recognisably mummiform statuette. The niche is framed by two mirrored *hṭp-di-nsw* formulae both dedicated to the ‘interior-overseer’ Sa-satet (*imy-r ḥnwty 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 mother Sat-khety-wer (*s3t-ḥty-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 *hṭp-di-nsw* formula also dedicated to Sa-satet.

CG 20097 (sandstone, 46 cm high x 33 cm wide) displays 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 Hathoric 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 carefully 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 belies 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 controller of work’ Senbef (*imy-r pr n(y) wd3 n(y) ḥrp 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



Fig. 4 – CG 20569. Photograph by Gianluca Miniaci. Published with the kind permission of the Egyptian Museum Cairo

⁹For example: DELANGE, *Catalogue des statues égyptiennes du Moyen Empire*, 130, E 10914; PEET, 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 Mentuhotep*, 46-9, pls. 25-7).

¹⁰ GRAJETZKI, WHELAN, *SAK* 37, 125-30; SCHNEIDER, *Shabtis*, vol. I, 180-2.

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, SCHÄFER, *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, *Sesostris und Amenemhet*, 101).

inscriptions; the left side bears a *hṭp-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 upstream¹⁴ may you say a thousand of bread, beer, cattle and fowl [...]” (*i r(m)t sw3.t(y).sn hr w3t.tn m hḏ m hnty dd.tn h3 m t hnkṭ k3 3pd [...]*). This seems to be an abbreviated and partly garbled redaction taken from the Abydos stela of the deputy treasurer Sehetepibre (CG 20538).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 to the bottom of the stela and, even then, still required the concluding epithet *nb im3h* 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”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.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 109, which was acquired from the Austrian collector E.A. Burghart,¹⁸ partly from an entry in the museum’s object records¹⁹ 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.

¹⁵ LANGE, SCHÄFER, *Grab- und Denksteine des Mittleren Reiches*, vol. II, 145-50.

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.

¹⁹ “In der Beschreibung von 1826 ist als Herkunftsangabe ‘Ypsambul’ genannt, womit zu Beginn des 19. Jahrhunderts auch Abydos bezeichnet wurde” (HEIN, SATZINGER, *Stelen des Mittleren Reiches*, vol. II, 39).

(Vertical columns)

(1) *hṭp-di-nsw 3sir nṯr 3 prt-hrw t hnkṭ k3 3pd šs mnḥt n k3 n(y) ipt ir.n snbi* (2) *wn-hr nw snbf.pn m3.f nb 3h.t d3i.f* (3) *hr.t hms i.f m hnt(y) itr.ty 3h.t di.k 3k snhn n 3sir* (4) *hr nḥt ir.n kmḥ.t(w)s m3c hrw 3nh ir.n kmḥ.(tw?) s* (5) *hṭp d nsw wpw3wt nb t3 dsr prt-hrw t hnkṭ k3 3pd n k3 nw snbf ir.n mri* (6) *ipt ir.n nb im3h snbi* (7) *hnmw ir.t s3t-hṭ-hr* (8) *prt-hrw t hnkṭ k3 3pd šs*

(Horizontal lines)

(9) *nb.f mry m3c hsy.f n(y) st-ib.f hm-nṯr w3b db3w wdpw iri 3ht nṯr sn* (10) *d3w hr h3wt dwi psdt r šbw nr-st snbf* (11) *dd.f ir.n.i n.i m3c hṭ tw s3ht.s mnḥ st.s r rd(w) n nṯr 3 nb 3nh hnty 3bdw* (12) *hr w3rt(y) nb.t hṭpwt sn.i snṯr pr m hnt s3w.i m nṯr idit*

(Vertical columns)

(1) An offering which the king gives to Osiris great god, a voice offering of bread, beer, ox, fowl, alabaster and linen for the *ka* of Ipet born of Senbi. (2) Opening the sight of this Senbef (so that) he sees the lord of the horizon cross (3) the sky (as) he dwells in front of the horizon of the gods of Upper and Lower Egypt so that you may give your hand to guide for the Osiris (4) Hornakht born of Kemehtus, the justified; Ankh born of Kemehtus (?) (5) An offering which the king gives to Wepwawet lord of the sacred land, a voice offering of bread, beer, ox and fowl for the *ka* of Senbef born of Meri (6) Ipet born of the possessor of veneration Senbi (7) Henemu born of Sat-hathor, (8) a voice offering of bread, beer, ox, fowl and alabaster.

(Horizontal lines)

(9) Truly beloved of his lord, his praised one of his affection, the god’s servant and the priest pure-of-fingers, cupbearer, chamber-keeper of the god’s farmland, (who) supplies (10) provisions upon the table of offerings, the one who summons the Ennead to food-offerings (by) the store overseer Senbef. (11) He says: I made for me this memorial-chapel beautified it, established its place at the Terrace of the Great God, Lord of Life, one foremost (of) Abydos (12) (and established for it) offerings from every district, and I smell incense coming forth and I am satisfied by the god’s fragrance

With the definite Abydene provenance for three stelae and virtual certainty for two, it is not unreasonable to assume the same for uninscribed CG 20097²⁰ 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.

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 Iykhernofret 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 Sehetepibre erected under this king. Stela Rio de Janeiro 635+636 [2427] is assigned variously to the late Twelfth or

Thirteenth Dynasty,²⁶ though the prefixing of the title ‘overseer of fields’ (*imy-r 3hwt*) to ‘seal-bearer of the king’ (*htmw bity*) belonging to one of the officials on the stela favours a date at the end of this range.²⁷ Vienna ÄS 109 has been tentatively assigned to the penultimate reign of the Twelfth Dynasty on the basis of prosopographical data linking one of the individuals named on it to an administrative document from Kahun bearing a regnal year 1 believed to be that of Amenemhat IV.²⁸ However, the title *wdpw iri ht ntr* is suggestive of somewhat later in the Thirteenth Dynasty when roles developed around the title of *wdpw*,²⁹ 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.³⁰

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



Fig. 5 – CG 20497. Photograph by Gianluca Miniaci. Published with the kind permission of the Egyptian Museum Cairo

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

²¹ FRANKE, *Personendaten*, 56, Doss. 27; 92, Doss. 94; 332, Doss. 551.

²² The relationship between individuals mentioned in the inscriptions and Iykhernofret are discussed in detail by: LEPROHON, *JARCE* 15, 33-8.

²³ WHELAN, in GRALLERT, GRAJETZKI (eds.), *Life and Afterlife in Ancient Egypt*, 135-6.

²⁴ BERLEV, *KCIHA* 46, 49 and 61.

²⁵ FRANKE, *Personendaten*, 379, Doss. 643; for the other related documents see: 141, Doss. 181; 372, Doss. 630.

²⁶ KITCHEN, BELTRAO, *Catalogue of the Egyptian Collection*, vol. I, 47; GRAJETZKI, *Die höchsten Beamten der ägyptischen Zentralverwaltung*, 133; STEFANOVIĆ, *The Holders of Regular Military Titles*, 128, Doss. 682.

²⁷ GRAJETZKI, *Die höchsten Beamten der ägyptischen Zentralverwaltung*, 137; see also QUIRKE, *Titles and bureaux of Egypt*, 91.

²⁸ FRANKE, *Personendaten*, 382, Doss. 650 (=GRIFFITH, *The Petrie Papyri*, 64-5, pl. 26a, l. 11). The Twelfth Dynasty dating is followed in the recent Metropolitan Museum of Art exhibition catalogue (YAMAMOTO, in OPPENHEIM *et. al.* (eds.), *Ancient Egypt Transformed*, 267-8.

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 ḥnwty*) belongs to the monument’s owner Amenemhat (*imn-m-ḥ3t*), 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’:

(1) *imy-r ḥnwty imn-m-ḥ3t*
dd.f ir.n.i n.i mḥt tw s3h-
t(i) smnh st.s r rd n

(2) *ntr 3 nb ḥnh hnt 3bdw*
hr wḥrt nb.t dḥ(w) hr wḥrt
nb.t ḥtp.t sn.i

(3) *sntr pr m hnt ḥtmw.i*
m idt ntr i srw (4) *imyw*
3bdw wnw.t i mi ḳd.s mrr.
tn wpw3wt ntr.tn bnr mrwt

(5) *dd.tn ḥtp-di-nsu h3 t*
ḥnkt k3 3pd šs mnht sntr
mrht n k3 n(y) imy-r ḥnw-
ty imn-m-ḥ3t ir.n iwi

(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-djefau* (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

Below the text is an undecorated and roughly cut rebate running across the width of the slab,³² approximately half the depth of the niche and about the same height as the panel of text above, which presumably served as a tenon for attachment to some other element (discussed further in the physical setting section of this article).

Turin 1630 (limestone, 35 cm high x 45.5 cm wide) has finely executed decoration occupying two registers;³³ the top half is occupied with sunk relief depictions of the principal deceased, the ‘overseer of the army’ Sahur-hetep (*mr-mš^c s3-ḥr-ḥtp*), seated on the far left before a table piled high with food offerings with his wife Ity (*ity*) to the right of it, both of whom are each attended by one of their children. To the right of this is a scene on a slightly

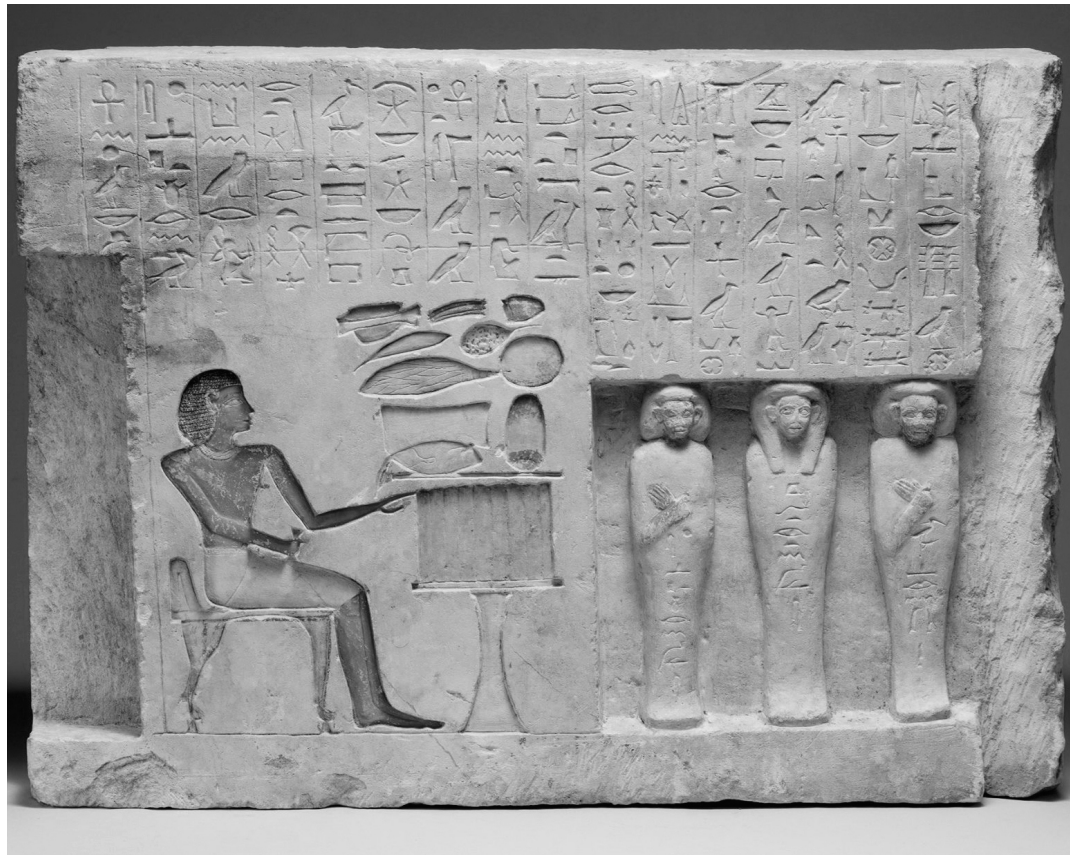


Fig. 6a – MMA 65.120.1,

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³¹ VANDIER, *Manuel d'archéologie égyptienne*, vol. II, 484.

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^c-pp-ptḥ*) and Itu (*itw*), 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^c sḥtp-ib-r^c*).³⁵ MMA 65.120.1 has a niche in the

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 (*dhwtj-ḥtp*). 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



Fig. 6b – MMA 65.120.2, Open Access for Scholarly Content www.metmuseum.org

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 stela is filled with six-

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.

³⁵ DOXEY, in OPPENHEIM *et. al.* (eds.), *Ancient Egypt Transformed*, 266-7, cat. 202.

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.³⁸ 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 crops the final hieroglyphic sign of the word *im3h* in the last column of inscription.³⁹ 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.⁴⁰ 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 m3c n(y) st-ib.f*, which is usually preceded by preliminaries such as the name of the individual,⁴¹ 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 m3c 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 col-

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.

⁴⁰ E.g. three rectangular slabs from the chapel of *s3-hwt-hrw* in the Hermitage (BOLSHAKOV, QUIRKE, *The Middle Kingdom Stelae in the Hermitage*, 94-104, pls. 21-3); SIMPSON, *The Terrace of the Great God at Abydos*, pls. 21 [ANOC 12.1-3]; 70-1 [ANOC 52.1-3]; 74 [ANOC 55.2-4].

⁴¹ DOXEY, *Egyptian non-royal epithets*, 3.

umns above (see full text above). It seems unlikely that the inscription on MMA 65.120.1 would have provided the preliminary section since its width is 6 cm narrower than MMA 65.120.2 and would have looked at odds if placed directly above it and unbalanced if arranged on an opposite wall of a chapel.⁴² This difference in width is also relevant in considering the arrangement – usually the wider slabs form the side walls of the chapel, whereas this reconstruction would have a longer back wall. An alternative solution for the original arrangement of these slabs will be discussed later in the section on physical context.

The inscriptions on MMA 65.120.1 and MMA 65.120.2 present us with extensive offering formulae and an unusual version of the 'Appeal to the Living', which combined represent the longest funerary texts of any object in this group:

MMA 65.120.1

(1) *hṭp-di-nsw 3sir nb ḏdw* (2) *nṯr 3 nb 3bdw wpw3wt*
 (3) *hr nd-hr it.f hkt hnmw* (4) *hwt-hr nbt pr k3w*
 (5) *nṯr(w) nṯr(w)t imyw 3bdw* (6) *d.sn prt-hrw t hnkṯ k3*
3pd šs mnḥt snṯr (7) *mrḥt ḥt nb(t) nfr(t) w'bt* (8) *ddt pt*
km3t t3 (9) *innt h'p(y)* (10) *'nḥt nṯr im m* (11) *3bd ?nt*
w3g (12) *ḏhwtṯ (prt) mnw* (13) *prt spdt w3h 'h* (14) *n k3*
n(y) mr-mšc (15) *šḥtp-ib-r'c ir n* (16) *s3t-'nhw 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 m3c n(y) st-ib.f ḏd nfrt whm mrrt m hrt-hrw*
nt r'c-nb mr-mšc šḥtp-ib-r'c ir.n s3t-'nhw (2) *ḏd.f i srw*
imyw 3bdw wnwṯ hwt-nṯr mi kd.s w'c nb n(y) s(y) imy
 (3) *kih ḏrt.f n nṯr mrr.tn wn tp t3 hr sn t'w n(y) m3'w*
mrr.tn (4) *wpw3wt nṯr.tn bnr murwt ḏd.tn hṭp-di-nsw h3*
m t hnkṯ (5) *k3 3pd šs mnḥt snṯr mrḥt ḥt nb(.t) nfrt w'bt*
 (6) *n k3 n(y) mr-mšc šḥtp-ib-r'c ir.n s3t-'nhw m3'c 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 mummies, all but one with hands shown⁴³ and sporting bag wigs, and the female mummies 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 mummiform figures is preserved along the bottom and right edges;⁴⁴ the top and left borderless edges are trimmed with less care than the others.⁴⁵ Of the three slender mummiform 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 yellow face, all with hands visible. Down the front of each is a single column of crudely scratched black-filled hieroglyphs opening with the epithet *im3hy* and 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

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.

⁴⁶ PEET, *The Cemeteries of Abydos. Part II*, 121-2, pl. XXIII.2. It seems less likely that BM EA8893 was fitted into the top of an offering-table as is known for comparable examples, but with half-round human-form figures, such as Louvre E 11573 (DELANGE, *Catalogue des statues égyptiennes du Moyen Empire*, 144-7). Similarly, a slab in a private collection which displays the same crude workmanship as BM EA8893 also suits an offering-table setting (SCOTT, *Temple, Tomb and Dwelling*, 76-7, no. 42 who proposes a niche setting). However, unlike BM EA8893, this has a bottom ledge bearing inscription on its upper face similar to that of Louvre E 11573.

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 marks⁴⁷ 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 mummiform figures. In the upper niche three of the four mummies are female, and all are embraced by a living-form figure carved in less bold relief; in the lower niche, all four mummiform 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 mummies 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-bnh*) has a rectangular niche containing five mummiform 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 noted long ago by Jean Capart,⁴⁸ though 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 *hṯp-dī-nsw* formulae, one invoking Osiris and the other Anubis.⁴⁹ Charles Boreux likened the niche and depictions of offerings to false-doors and their associated decoration,⁵⁰ no doubt because of the partially preserved raised border around the niche similar to those found on other false-door stelae.⁵¹ 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-

Likewise, Leiden AST 47 (SCHNEIDER, RAVEN, *De Egyptische 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.

⁴⁸ CAPART, *Recueil de Monuments Égyptiens*, vol. II, unnumbered description and pl. 58.

⁴⁹ A full edition of the inscriptions has yet to be published and my notes are based on hand copies.

⁵⁰ BOREUX, *Département des antiquités égyptiennes*, vol. I, 149-50.

⁵¹ E.g. LANGE, SCHÄFER, *Grab- und Denksteine des Mittleren Reiches*, vol. IV, pl. 3, CG 20021-3.

door stela. Having said that, the ‘floating’ location of the niche is somewhat reminiscent of the false-door found on a recently discovered shrine at Dahshur⁵² and on a tomb slab from Hawara.⁵³

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 dꜛw* and *nb.t ḥtp.t* located close to the Osiris-Khenyimentiu temple.⁵⁴ Exactly where these are to be located has yet to be established, though the phrase on Vienna ÄS 109, [and established for it] offerings from every district (*hr wꜛt (y) nb.t ḥtpwt*), might be seen as a collective term for both *nb.t dꜛw* and *nb.t ḥtp.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 House’ (*nb.t pr kꜛw*).⁵⁷ This form of the goddess occurs on just a handful of Abydene stela of which three, significantly, have empty rectangular niches that once likely accommodated statuettes.⁵⁸ Also compelling is the list of

seven festivals on MMA 65.120.1 that occur with some frequency on Abydene stela⁵⁹ together with an ‘Appeal to the Living’ on MMA 65.120.2 tailored for local officials and the temple priesthood.⁶⁰

The inscriptions on Turin 1630 provide no explicit locative information other than the ubiquitous mention of ‘Osiris lord of Djedu, great god lord of Abydos’ and ‘Khenyimentiu’ in the offering formula. The stela entered the museum via the collection of Drovetti, a known excavator at Abydos.⁶¹ However, its styling and workmanship is so close to that of MMA 65.120.1 and MMA 65.120.2 that it is virtually certain to have been set up at Abydos also.

Louvre C 44 was acquired in 1826 from the collection of Henry Salt,⁶² which included many stela from Abydos. The only clue as to its provenance comes from the Anubis epithet string, *tpy dw.fimy-wt nb tꜛ-dsr*, which is the most popular combination for this god on stela from Abydos.⁶³

According to Arthur Weigall, Petrie purchased UC 14347 at Abydos in 1901-1902, presumably during his time working at the site.⁶⁴ The provenance of EA 8893 British Museum is the least certain of all the rectangular slabs; all that can be said at present is that it was acquired from the bookseller and antiquities dealer Joseph Sams who is known to have purchased objects from the D’Athanasii collection, which included numerous Abydene stela.⁶⁵

Dating

General dating criteria can be found in the inscriptions on MMA 65.120.1 and MMA 65.120.2; the aforementioned

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 dꜛw* and *nb.t ḥtp.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 *wꜛt* s, besides indicating that *nb.t dꜛw* and *nb.t ḥtp.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 *wꜛt mnḥt nꜛw* (‘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 *wꜛt mnḥt nꜛw* as well as and another designation, *wꜛt ꜥt hmḥmt*, referred to the totality of the cultic area at north Abydos.

⁵⁶ LILYQUIST, 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 stela with this epithet by MAREÉ, in MARÉE (ed.), *The Second Intermediate Period*, 253.

⁵⁹ E.g. the comparable, though slightly more extensive festivals listed on two Twelfth Dynasty stela for Wepwawet-aa (SETHE, *Aegyptische Lesestücke*, 72-4, nos. 15a-b).

⁶⁰ While I also believe Denise Doxey’s contention of where the stela were set up (DOXEY, 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 RIDLEY, *Napoleon’s Proconsul in Egypt*, 91, 105 (referring to his work at Abydos), 250-71 (Drovetti and the Turin museum).

⁶² LEBÉE, *La collection de stèles égyptiennes*, 6.

⁶³ SPIEGEL, *Die Götter von Abydos*, 171.

⁶⁴ WEIGALL, *RT* 29, 217.

⁶⁵ I am grateful to John Taylor of the British Museum for this information. The sale catalogue of D’Athanasii includes many Abydene stela, but none of the descriptions match BM EA 8893 (D’ATHANASII, *A Brief Account of the Researches and Discoveries in Upper Egypt*, 162-3, 174-5, 185-6, 207-8, 222-4, 235-6, 248-50. For a short biography of Joseph Sams see: BIERBRIER, *Who Was Who in Egyptology*, 485).

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 m3c* 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 srw 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 Dynasty⁶⁸ and by Ilin-Tomich specifically to the reign of Senwosret III/Amenemhat 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 individuals⁷¹ 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 (*s3t-ḥwt-ḥrw*) and Ipi (*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 (*imy-r ḥnww kms*). 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

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).

⁶⁷ DOXEY, *Egyptian non-royal epithets*, 134.

⁶⁸ FRANKE, *Personendaten*, 81, Doss. 77.

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.

⁷⁰ DOXEY, in OPPENHEIM *et. al.* (eds.), *Ancient Egypt Transformed*, 266.

⁷¹ *ipnw*, *ty*, *hns* (possibly an incomplete writing of *hns* (RANKE, *PN I*, 270.16), *hw*, *ms3n*).

⁷² RANKE, *PN I*, 234.10.

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).

⁷⁴ RANKE, *PN I*, 304.17.

⁷⁵ RANKE, *PN I*, 305.9; MOGENSEN, *Stèles égyptiennes*, 16-7,

no. 19.

⁷⁶ This is the dating for Vienna 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).

⁷⁷ STEWART, *Egyptian Stelae. Part II*, 34.

⁷⁸ MORET, *RT 32*, 152-3, pl. II.2; FRANKE, *Personendaten*, 133, Doss. 168; 273, Doss. 435.

⁷⁹ FRANKE, *Das Heiligtum des Heqaib*, 115; GRAJETZKI, *Two Treasurers of the Late Middle Kingdom*, 62-3.

⁸⁰ LAPP, *MDAIK 50*, 232.

⁸¹ *Art. cit.*, 236-7.

⁸² For a discussion of this type of shrine see: ARNOLD, in *LA IV*, 932-3.



Fig. 7 – MMA 2014.283a-b. Copyright: Pierre Bergé & Associés

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 *hṯp-di-nsw* formulae dedicated to Kemes and other members of his family, the extensive inscriptions include Coffin Text spells, CT 353, 387, 773 and 788,⁸³ 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 šm^c snb-r-šw*) 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 *hṯp-di-nsw* formulae;⁸⁴ 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

⁸³ Only part of this is preserved: ... [*3h.t*]*d^ci*[.]*lf hr*[.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: WILLEMS, *Chests of life*, 87, *h^ci-hpr-R^c-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.



Fig. 8 – Tadross Collection monument. Copyright: Pierre Bergé & Associés

its Heliopolitan manifestation, *sbk nb iwnw*,⁸⁵ as well as Anubis with the Middle Kingdom epithet, *nb hn*,⁸⁶ which originally was associated with the god's Memphis cult.⁸⁷ Furthermore, the opening of the 'pyramidion spell' to Anubis precisely copies the version on the Dahshur pyramidion of Amenemhat III.⁸⁸ 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 pannelled outer casings of *mastabas* of late Twelfth Dynasty high officials at Dahshur and el-Lisht.⁸⁹ Perhaps then, the latter architecture had more bearing on its design.⁹⁰ Even the arm and hand positions of the mummiform figure are characteristic of Lower Egyptian manufacture,⁹¹ whereas for all other mummiform figures in the corpus where arms are indicated their positions follow the predominantly Upper Egyptian tradition of right arm crossed over left.⁹² 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.⁹³ If the mon-

ument'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,⁹⁴ 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 (*hny n pr-hd hr-wr-r*), was connected to the royal palace at Lisht⁹⁵ and perhaps the pyramid town at Dahshur.⁹⁶ 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.⁹⁷ 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).

⁹⁴ LANGE, SCHÄFER, *Grab- und Denksteine des Mittleren Reiches*, vol. II, 373-6, CG 20742; vol. IV, pl. 56. The Cairo catalogue erroneously states that the chapel's origin is unknown, but it is published in MARIETTE, *Catalogue générale des monuments d'Abydos*, 587-9, no. 1496. Fine photographs of CG 20742 can be found in RUSSO, *The territory w*, pls. 7-10 (p. 55-6 for discussion).

⁹⁵ For a discussion of Horwerra's and related titles see: QUIRKE, *Titles and bureaux of Egypt*, 59-60.

⁹⁶ WILDUNG, *Die Rolle ägyptischer Könige*, vol. I, 140.

⁹⁷ QUIRKE, *Titles and bureaux of Egypt*, 59-60; BOURRIAU, in QUIRKE (ed.), *Middle Kingdom Studies*, 8. Also relevant in this regard is an unprovenanced Middle Kingdom miniature chapel in the Musée Calvert, Avignon, which is dedicated to an 'overseer of the house/department of reckoning *ḥw*-ships' (MORET, *RT* 32, 146-52; JONES, *A Glossary of Ancient*

⁸⁵ BROVARSKI, in *LÄ* V, 998-1002 (Lower Egyptian ref. 1).

⁸⁶ LAPP, *MDAIK* 50, 234.

⁸⁷ KEES, *ZÄS* 87, 132, n. 1.

⁸⁸ MASPERO, *ASAE* 3, 207.

⁸⁹ ARNOLD, *The Pyramid of Senwosret I*, 16, pls. 2-6; ARNOLD, in *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*.

⁹⁰ And even the decoration of full-size coffins (GRAJETZKI, *The coffin of Zemathor*, 89).

⁹¹ According to Günther Roeder's analysis of Osiris statuettes, albeit applicable primarily for those of bronze rather than stone (ROEDER, in FIRCHOW (ed.), *Ägyptologische Studien*, 249.

⁹² ROEDER, in FIRCHOW (ed.), *Ägyptologische Studien*, 249, pl. 1d.

⁹³ The block of Sobekhotep is published by A. Senussi in this volume and can be compared with LAPP, *MDAIK* 50, pls. 37-



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 rwti iswt*,⁹⁸ becomes prominent at Abydos in the Middle Kingdom when it is associated exclusively with the syncretic god Ptah-Sokar-Osiris.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 mummiform 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/Osiris.¹⁰⁴ It is clearly not Osiris

represented here, but an 'Osirianised' 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 Osirian/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

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-r^c*, is the prenomen of Amenemhat II, while the other, *sn^{cc}-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 (*sn^{cc}-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 *sn^{cc}-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, . Several variant writings of the name are known (RANKE, *PNI*, 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, l. 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 mummiform 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.

¹⁰⁸ FRANKE, in MEYER (ed.), *Egypt – Temple of the Whole World*, 118.

¹⁰⁹ LAPP, *MDAIK* 50, 236.

Egyptian Nautical Titles, 57, no. 35).

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* 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, *Amenophis 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; MARÉE, *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* 65, 141-61.

¹⁰⁴ Two of the personal names inscribed on MMA 2014.283a-b

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 *hṯp-di-nsw* formulae on it,¹¹⁵ and by the presence of Senebrau’s wife’s title ‘royal ornament’ (*hkrt-niswt*) with his title *wr-mdw šm^c*, 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

¹¹⁰ QUIRKE, *Going out in Daylight*, viii.

¹¹¹ Besides the Osirianisation of the deceased, experimentation in burial practices evident in Upper Egypt at this time extends to tomb layout and a range of burial equipment, the variety of which “seems to defy classification or ordering” (MINIACI, QUIRKE, *BIFAO* 109, 368, (for quote) 370).

¹¹² CT 353 provides the opening section of Chapter 57 attested from the mid-Eighteenth Dynasty (QUIRKE, *Going out in Daylight*, 142); CT 387 is incorporated into Chapter 29, found on papyri and on tomb walls from the mid-Eighteenth Dynasty (*ibid.*, 95); CT 788 occurs on stelae and statuettes –most frequently shabtis– as a version of Chapter 6 (ALLEN, *The Book of the Dead*, 9 Spell 6B, 246 (based on a Nineteenth-Twentieth Dynasty shabti). For more attestations see: LOHWASSER, *Die Formel ‘Öffnen des Gesichts’*, 91-105).

¹¹³ WHELAN, *RdE* 65, 161.

¹¹⁴ Contra Vernus, who concluded that the monument was closer to the Twelfth Dynasty than to the Second Intermediate Period (*RdE* 26, 114), even though he noted that certain traits of its shabti spell conform to those from the later period (*RdE* 26, 110-1 notes *k* and *o*); the differences are also briefly discussed in: WHELAN, *RdE* 65, 148.

¹¹⁵ SMITHER, *JEA* 25, 34. The stela of prince Djehuty-aa dedicated by his father king Paentjeny, also considered by Ryholt to belong to the ‘Abydos Dynasty’ (RYHOLT, *The Political Situation in Egypt*, 163-6), displays the later writing of the *hṯp-di-nsw* formula (PETRIE, *Abydos. Part II*, pl. XXXI, XXXII.2 = BUDGE, *Hieroglyphic Texts from Egyptian Stelae*, vol. IV, 9, no. 282 [BM EA 630], pl. 26).

¹¹⁶ VERNUS, *RdE* 26, 110 (h), 113, fig. 2; a more detailed discussion can be found in GRAJETZKI, *Two Treasurers of the Late Middle Kingdom*, 48-51.

¹¹⁷ MOJE, *CdE* 83, 9-11.

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 mummiform figures. Their dating also corresponds to the period defined by Detlef Franke (specifically the reigns of Sobekhotep II to Sennaib) 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 mummiform 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 Amenyseneb (*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 Amenyseneb (one damaged) carved in sunk relief with arms raised in an attitude of praise flank the *ankh*. Above the right figure,

¹¹⁸ FRANKE, in MEYER (ed.), *Egypt – Temple of the Whole World*, 129.

¹¹⁹ KITCHEN, *JEA* 47, pls. 1-2; BOURRIAU, *Pharaohs and mortals*, 61-2.

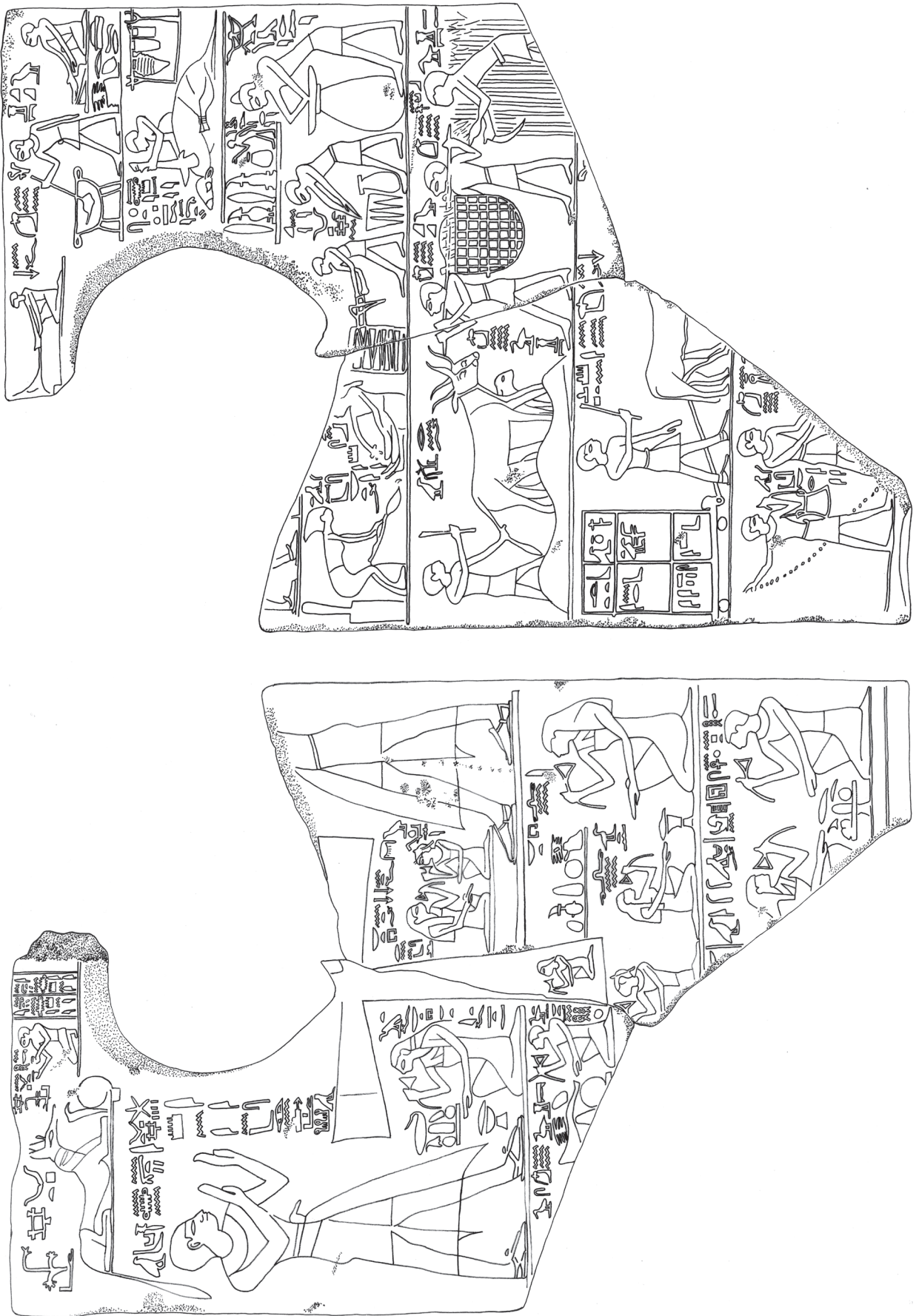


Fig. 9 – Liverpool E 30 recto and verso

and probably originally the left also, is the recumbent jackal of the Upper Egyptian Wepwawet.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 Amenyseneb’s estate. Liverpool E 30 is included in Simpson’s ANOC 58 group together with Amenyseneb’s two other well-known biographical stelae, Louvre C 11 and C 12.¹²¹

Rectangular stela CG 20353 (limestone, 21 cm high x 18 cm wide) for the ‘interior-overseer and controller of troops’ Sobekhotep (*imy-r ḥnwty ḥrp skw sbk-ḥtp*)¹²² was discovered by Mariette at North Abydos in 1862. The central *ankh* is finely carved in raised relief in a plain rectangular panel itself framed by a raised border. The arms of the *ankh* display similar elaboration to the *ankh* on Vienna ÄS 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 without a two-dimensional depiction of the owner (and other family members/colleagues) – an absence that might be explained because two (virtually destroyed) limestone mummiform statuettes, each 26 cm high and both dedicated to Sobekhotep, were found with the stela.¹²³ Each statuette stood upright on its own separately fashioned stone pedestal inscribed with a short *ḥtp-di-nsw* formula, one invoking Anubis, the other Osiris,¹²⁴ and probably served as the focus for offerings.

Pennsylvania E 9952 (limestone, 30 cm high x 25.5 cm wide) is undoubtedly the crudest stela from this group. Its overall form is less precise than the others and the inscriptions and decoration are more coarsely worked. The loop of the central *ankh* is pierced through the stela’s thickness, diminishing in size towards the back and ending up noticeably smaller than it is at the front;¹²⁵ the ‘arms’ and ‘stem’ are achieved in shallow sunk relief with no internal detail and painted a dark yellow. The lunette contains a pair of *wedjat*-eyes surmounting water signs¹²⁶ and below to either side of the *ankh* and facing

towards it, are sunk relief depictions of, on the left, the stela owner the ‘commander of the crew of the ruler’ Sobekhotep (*3tw n tt ḥk3 sbk-ḥtp*), sporting a close-cut coif and wearing a short kilt, while on the right is his wife Neferu-Ptah (*nfrw-ptḥ*) wearing a tri-partite lappet wig and a calf-length strap dress; before each of them is a single column of text giving their name and title.

Of the fifth stela in this group, Brussels E 4320 (limestone, 32 cm high x 37 cm wide), only the lower part survives which nevertheless preserves the tantalising remains of a vertical stem of a pierced-work *ankh* that once must have dominated the composition. Originally, the symbol was framed within a rectangular aperture similar to that of Vienna ÄS 109, but only part of the lower edge remains. Beneath the stem are two mirrored *ḥtp-di-nsw* formulae arranged in six vertical columns and on each side is a figure of the ‘overseer of Lower Egypt’ Pepi (*imy-r t3-mḥw ppi*), wearing a calf-length kilt and facing the *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. 1.¹²⁷ It belongs in Simpson’s ANOC 47.1 group with two other stelae and an offering table.¹²⁸

Provenance

Leaving aside the already discussed Vienna ÄS 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-Khentymentiu temple on the northern edge of the *wadi*.¹²⁹ Peet stated that Cemetery W and the areas immediately to the north and west contained predominantly “tombs of the XIIIth to XVIIth Dynasties”.¹³⁰ Given Pepi’s title of ‘overseer of Lower Egypt’ his burial

the same lunette motif and with a sunk relief *ankh* symbol in between *wedjat*-eyes. For examples see: HÖLZL, *Die Giebelfelddecoration von Stelen*, 17, 27.

¹²⁷ Noted by Jane Hill (HILL, in HAWASS, WEGNER (eds.), *Millions of Jubilees*, 235). A good example of a false-door stela with a similar plain raised border was excavated in Cemetery D around the same time as Brussels E 4320, for which see: PEET, LOAT, *The Cemeteries of Abydos. Part III*, pl. XIII.2.

¹²⁸ SIMPSON, *The Terrace of the Great God at Abydos*, pl. 64.
¹²⁹ PEET, LOAT, *The Cemeteries of Abydos. Part III*, xi, 37. For Peet’s sketch plan showing region W see: PEET, *The Cemeteries of Abydos. Part II*, xiv, fig. 1.

¹³⁰ PEET, LOAT, *The Cemeteries of Abydos. Part III*, xv.

¹²⁰ Presumably its Lower Egyptian counterpart was in the now missing opposite corner.

¹²¹ SIMPSON, *The Terrace of the Great God at Abydos*, 21, pl. 80.

¹²² WARD, *Index*, no. 136.

¹²³ MARIETTE, *Catalogue générale des monuments d’Abydos*, 55-6, nos. 399-400 (for the statuettes).

¹²⁴ BORCHARDT, *Statuen und Statuetten*, Vol. IV, 128, nos. 1246-47 (for the plinths).

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

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 redeem 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".¹³¹ 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.¹³² 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.¹³³

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 great natural *wadi* and roughly 450 metres from Khasekhemwy's enclosure. This was itself a continuation of Cemetery E investigated by John Garstang in 1900.¹³⁴ 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 Sebky, ¹³⁵ 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",¹³⁶ is the only stela from this group excavated at Abydos not to have come from a cemetery/tomb location.

¹³¹ SNAPE, *Mortuary Assemblages from Abydos*, vol. I, 204 (304.A07).

¹³² *Op. cit.*, 221 (360.A07).

¹³³ Kitchen places the stelae in Tomb 303 or 305 according to docketts on excavation photographs (KITCHEN, *JEA* 47, 10), indicating that the find-spot of the second fragment was a secondary location.

¹³⁴ RANDALL-MCIVER, MACE, *El Amrah and Abydos*, 63.

¹³⁵ *Op. cit.*, 69, 100, pls. 43, 54.

¹³⁶ MARIETTE, *Catalogue générale des monuments d'Abydos*, 339, no. 948; LANGE, SCHÄFER, *Grab- und Denksteine des Mittleren Reiches*, vol. I, 363-4.

Dating

There are several reasons to believe that Vienna ÄS 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 ÄS 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,¹³⁷ but rarer still, they also wear the same type of long kilt with prominent downward-pointing frontal pleat.¹³⁸ 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.¹³⁹ 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.¹⁴⁰ Franke dates Brussels E 4320 to the end of the Twelfth or Thirteenth Dynasty.¹⁴¹

CG 20353 has been dated approximately to the reigns of Neferhotep I or Sobekhotep IV¹⁴² which ties in with the dating of the majority of other stelae for individuals

¹³⁷ LANGE, SCHÄFER, *Grab- und Denksteine des Mittleren Reiches*, vol. IV, pl. 4, CG 20039 (Neferhotep I-Sobekhotep IV: FRANKE, *Personendaten*, 65, Doss. 45; 401, Doss. 687); pl. 7, CG 20068, CG 20077; pl. 14, CG 20153 (with niche); pl. 15, CG 20177 (with rectangular niche); pl. 15, CG 20180; pl. 20, CG 20277 (Thirteenth Dynasty: FRANKE, *Personendaten*, 343, Doss. 572), CG 20281; pl. 23, CG 20314; pl. 26, CG 20348; pl. 27, CG 20360 (Twelfth/Thirteenth Dynasty or later: FRANKE, *Personendaten*, 312, Doss. 513, 333, 553 and 438; Doss. 759); pl. 28, CG 20397 (with niche); pl. 29, CG 20404 (Thirteenth Dynasty: FRANKE, *Personendaten*, 74, Doss. 63), CG 20410 (beginning Twelfth Dynasty: FRANKE, *Personendaten*, 226, Doss. 343); pl. 31, CG 20451; pl. 48, CG 20612 (Thirteenth Dynasty: FRANKE, *Personendaten*, 140, Doss. 179, 241, Doss. 373).

¹³⁸ LANGE, SCHÄFER, *Grab- und Denksteine des Mittleren Reiches*, vol. IV, pl. 4, CG 20039; pl. 15, CG 20177 (with rectangular niche); pl. 19, CG 20240 (Thirteenth Dynasty: FRANKE, *Personendaten*, 215, Doss. 321; 254, Doss. 399); pl. 74, CG 20267; pl. 29, CG 20404; pl. 33, CG 20472; pl. 50, CG 20670.

¹³⁹ Louvre stelae C 11 and C 12, both recently discussed and translated in: BAINES, in MAGEE, BOURIAU, QUIRKE (eds.), *Sitting beside Lepsius*, 1-22.

¹⁴⁰ GRAJETZKI, *Two Treasurers of the Late Middle Kingdom*, 67.

¹⁴¹ FRANKE, *Personendaten*, 166, Doss. 232.

¹⁴² *Op. cit.*, 352, Doss. 591.

with the uncommon title *hꜣp 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’ (*3tw n tt hk3*) 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 kings¹⁴⁶ 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

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 RYHOLT, *The Political Situation in Egypt*, 197, table 36, 219.

¹⁴⁸ The connection between Seb-kay Seneb-kay was, I believe, first noted publicly by Wolfram Grajetzki on www.egyptologyforum.org. For the discovery of Seneb-kay’s tomb and discussion of the chronological implications see: WEGNER, *World Archaeology* 64, 20-37; WEGNER, *Near Eastern Archaeology* 78.2, 68-78.

¹⁴⁹ PEET, *The Cemeteries of Abydos. Part II*, 61, pls. XIII.4, XXXVI). These are the only two instances from Abydos of an individual named *sbk-hꜣp* 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.

¹⁵⁰ WHELAN, *RdE* 65, 158-9.

¹⁵¹ SIMPSON, *The Terrace of the Great God at Abydos*, 10.

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 mummiform 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-Khentyimentiu 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 mummiform 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 mummiform 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

¹⁵³ SIMPSON, *The Terrace of the Great God at Abydos*, 9-10.

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, BELTRAO, *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).

¹⁵⁷ MASPERO, in MASPERO (ed.), *Études de Mythologie*, 331-7.

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).

¹⁶⁰ O'CONNOR, in POSENER-KRIÉGER (ed.), *Mélanges Gamal Eddin Mokhtar*, vol. II, 167-8, n. 18; SIMPSON, O'CONNOR, *Inscribed Material*, 33.

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 stelae of Wegaf/Neferhotep I (RANDALL-MCIVER, MACE, *El Amrah and Abydos*, 63-4) and for such stelae one would still expect their back and sides to be finished smooth.

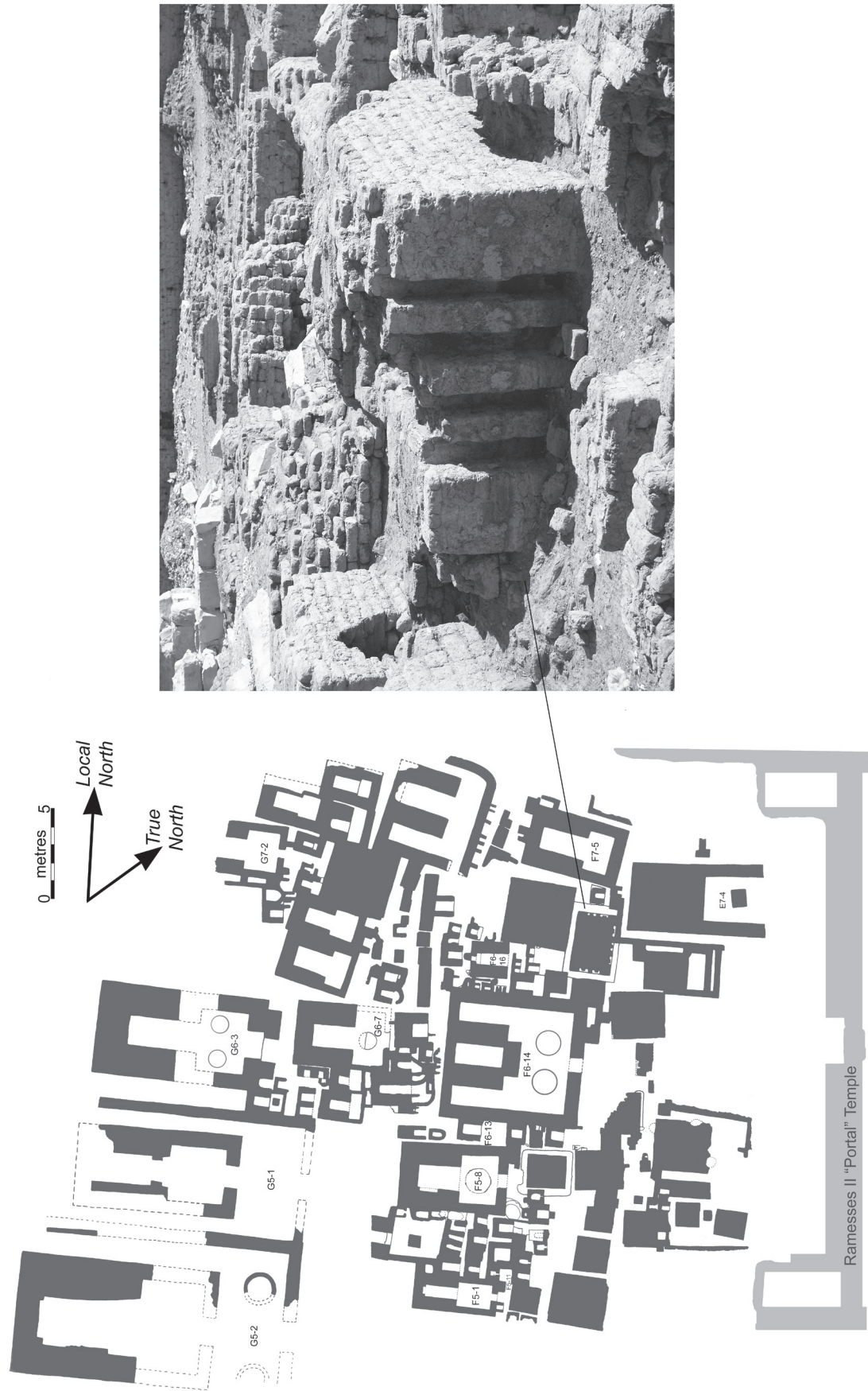


Fig. 10 – Plan of memorial chapel area excavated by the Pennsylvania-Yale Expedition (adapted from O’CONNOR, in POSENER-KRIEGER (ed.), *Mélanges Gamal Eddin Mokhtar*, 169, fig. 2. Inset photograph of the solid mud-brick structure with palace-façade motif (author’s photograph)

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 visible¹⁶³ 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 corner¹⁶⁹ 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, QUIRKE, *The Middle Kingdom Stelae in the Hermitage*, 101, n. a.

¹⁶⁷ HILL, in 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.

¹⁶⁸ SNAPE, *Mortuary Assemblages from Abydos*, vol. I, 203, no. 302 A’07.

¹⁶⁹ BAINES, in MAGEE, BOURIAU, 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.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.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 6.¹⁷⁴ 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.¹⁷⁵ Unlike the previous example, this stela is decorated with an offering scene and formulae dedicated for the ‘leader of the broad hall’ Khons.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.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 ÄS 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.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.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.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.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 mummiform figures.¹⁸² The possible context of CG 20353 has already been discussed in 1), while the larger and more elaborate stela Vienna ÄS 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 stela¹⁸³ 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

¹⁷² On the use of portcullises see: ARNOLD, *Building in Egypt*, 73-4.

¹⁷³ As far as can be determined from the excavation photograph.

¹⁷⁴ KITCHEN, *JEA* 47, 13, n. 7.

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.

¹⁷⁶ GRAJETZKI, *Court Officials*, 93-4, fig. 42.

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.

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, *Pharaohs and mortals*, 40 (Garstang’s photograph) and 65, no. 50 (for description)). In the courtyard Garstang found a miniature stone sarcophagus with a wooden coffin inside containing

a gilded wooden statuette (now lost). MMA 2014.283a-b represents something more complex and the Tadross Collection monument something quite different.

¹⁷⁹ SIMPSON, O’CONNOR, *Inscribed Material*, 36-9, fig. 61 and pls. 6B-7. According to the excavator “[a] few were found *in situ*”, details of these remain unpublished (SIMPSON, O’CONNOR, *Inscribed Material*, 33), though presumably these are the small crude ostraca-like stelae mentioned by O’Connor (in POSENER-KRIEGER (ed.), *Mélanges Gamal Eddin Mokhtar*, 177), that could easily have been missed or considered unattractive by early collectors and left.

¹⁸⁰ Basel III 5002 may have originally been set up this way as it is presented today attached to a plinth. For other examples see: MÜLLER, *MDAIK* 4, 200-1, fig. 20; LANGE, SCHÄFER, *Grab- und Denksteine des Mittleren Reiches*, vol. IV, pl. 26, CG 20352.

¹⁸¹ WHELAN, in GRALLERT, GRAJETZKI (eds.), *Life and Afterlife in Ancient Egypt*, 132. Of course, as this object was never finished one would not expect to find traces of plaster on the back.

¹⁸² Vienna ÄS 109 by virtue of its mention of the ‘Terrace of the Great God’ and CG 20353 from its find-spot just outside the Osiris-Khentyimentiu temple precinct.

¹⁸³ Similar tabs are to be found on other stelae e.g. CG 20458 (SIMPSON, *The Terrace of the Great God at Abydos*, pl. 36) and CG 20050 (LANGE, SCHÄFER, *Grab- und Denksteine des Mittleren Reiches*, vol. IV, pl. 5).

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.¹⁸⁴ This setting would also hide the stela's undecorated and roughly dressed back¹⁸⁵ (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.¹⁸⁶

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.¹⁸⁷ This border motif is more frequently associated with an internal rather than external location in a small shrine, in imitation of Middle Kingdom tomb chambers and stone sarcophagi.¹⁸⁸ Typically two of the three associated slabs are longer horizontally (forming the two sides of the shrine), but a few are known where the vertical edge is longer and these presumably belonged to a tall-

¹⁸⁴ The most elaborate example of this fixing method appears on an arch-topped stela of unknown provenance which has a 3 cm border recessed to a depth of 1 cm running all the way around it (CG 20672: LANGE, SCHÄFER, *Grab- und Denksteine des Mittleren Reiches*, vol. II, 299-300; vol. IV, pl. 50).

¹⁸⁵ HEIN, SATZINGER, *Stelen des Mittleren Reiches*, vol. I, 44.

¹⁸⁶ O'CONNOR, in POSENER-KRIÉGER (ed.), *Mélanges Gamal Eddin Mokhtar*, 171, 174, fig. 5.

¹⁸⁷ 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 Arabah*, pl. VI.E295 (= [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]).

¹⁸⁸ ILIN-TOMICH, *GM* 234, 171. Several Theban tombs with such borders are conveniently published in: SOLIMAN, *Old and Middle Kingdom Theban Tombs*, 71 (burial chamber of Kawit); 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).

er, perhaps *per-nu*-like, shrine.¹⁸⁹ In addition, the orientation of texts and scenes on the two side slabs are usually mirrored so that both face towards the rear of the shrine where the third, usually squarer slab or arch-topped stela was set up often including a central *wedjat*-eye motif and/or symmetrical layout of figures and/or text.¹⁹⁰ At first glance, the rectangular slabs in Group One seem likely candidates for this setting, especially Turin 1630, CG 20497, Louvre C 44 and UC 14347 as their relatively symmetrical decorative layouts lend themselves to serving as the rear panel element. However, for reasons stated at the beginning of this section, I doubt that Simpson's format is applicable to these or indeed any of the rectangular slabs from Group One not least because the mummiform figures were most likely in exposed settings visible to all.¹⁹¹ Furthermore, as discussed earlier, with their less than symmetrical layouts and doubts over their original sizes, MMA 65.120.1 and MMA 65.120.2 are not entirely convincing as two parts of a three-sided chapel.

Instead, I offer an alternative explanation that would have most of the rectangular slabs in Group One belonging to another type of Abydene shrine, remnants of which were actually found *in situ* during the Pennsylvania-Yale excavations in the memorial chapel area, yet remain unidentified. Amongst the identifiable miniature vaulted and open-ended shrines erected against the enclosure walls of larger chapels O'Connor noted the presence of a number of enigmatic solid mud-brick structures.¹⁹² Most display a simple rectangular 'footprint', though a few low *htp*-shaped examples were also found.¹⁹³ At the time, the excavator offered no explanation as to their function; however I propose that these may represent the solid inner cores of a type of shrine originally clad with rectangular stone slabs, including those from Group One. With scenes and texts necessarily facing *outward* their original appearance would have approached those of freestanding monuments such as MMA 2014.283a-b and that of the Tadross Collection, the only difference being that, according to the memorial chapel plan (Fig. 10), most of the blocks have one side attached to or against a chapel wall. Unlike the more conventional shrines and chapels, their design and

¹⁸⁹ For example: SATZINGER, STEFANOVIĆ, in KÖHBACH *et al.* (eds.), *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes M. Köhbach*, 337, n. 1 (with references for other examples).

¹⁹⁰ See n. 40 for examples.

¹⁹¹ And may account for why none have a checker-pattern or even plain border with or without a *khekher*-frieze framing the decorated area.

¹⁹² O'CONNOR, in POSENER-KRIÉGER (ed.), *Mélanges Gamal Eddin Mokhtar*, 171.

¹⁹³ Conceivably the latter represent foundations for stone offering tables of the same shape.

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 mummiform 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 mummiform 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 mummiform 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-

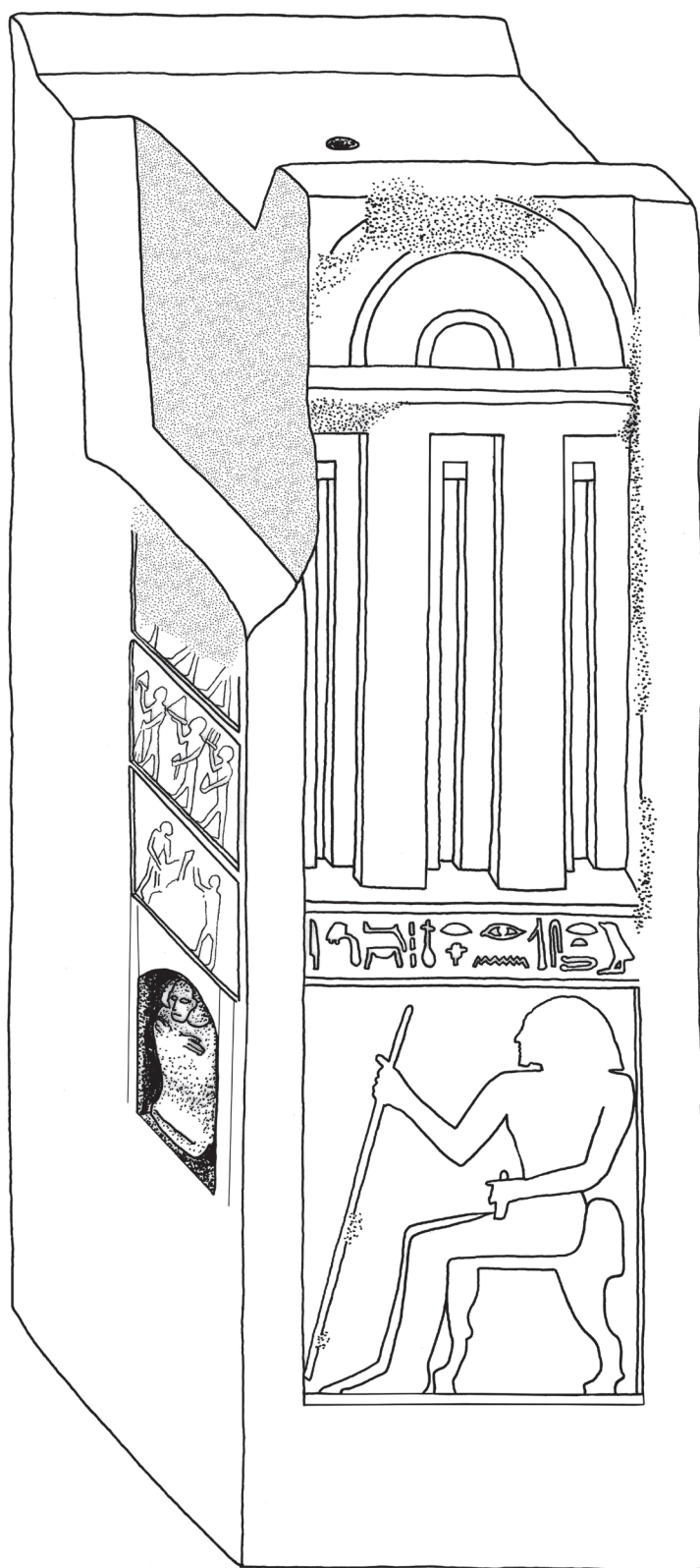


Fig. 11 – CG 20704

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).

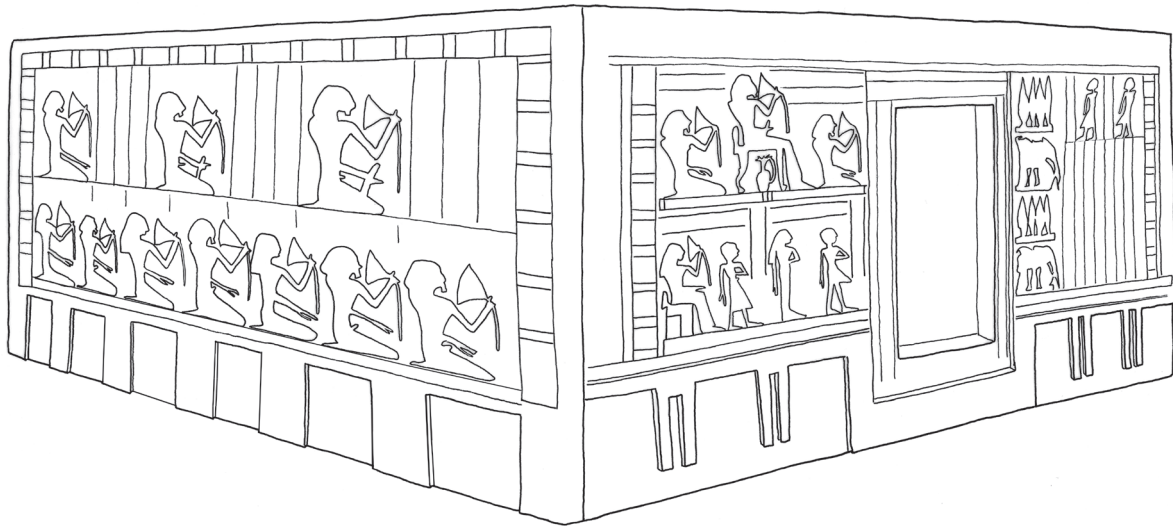


Fig. 12 – Hypothetical reconstruction of the slabs of Louvre E 25485

decorated¹⁹⁸ 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 1963.¹⁹⁹ 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).²⁰⁰ Vandier assumed the prove-

nance of Louvre E 25485 to be Atfih on the basis of a regional form of the goddess Hathor mentioned in the inscriptions²⁰¹ 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 (Shunet 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.²⁰² The west side is completely smooth for the obvious reason that any decoration here would have been hidden by the monu-

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 ‘canvases’ for inscriptions of any length and pictorial decoration, which means that these must have been placed elsewhere; 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 decoration as well as scenes and dedications on a single slab.²⁰³ Most importantly, the presence of F6-42 in the memorial chapel 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 solid-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 Pennsylvania-Yale expedition give a ‘snap-shot’ of just how densely populated the non-funerary cultic landscape immediately (local) west of the Osiris-Khentyimentiu temple complex had become during the late Middle Kingdom.²⁰⁴ Occupying roughly 32.5m x 45m, the concentration of chapels in this area represents only a fraction 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 structures is matched by the considerable variation in their sizes, with some less than a metre square and the largest, 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 enclosure 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 entrance. 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 practicalities 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 attendants 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 (*m^ch^t*).²⁰⁷ It has been assumed that the smaller structures 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 familial, personal or professional connection, who simply wished to have their own memorial in this prime location 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 POSENER-KRIÉGER (ed.), *Mélanges Gamal Eddin Mokhtar*, 171).

²⁰⁵ O’CONNOR, in POSENER-KRIÉGER (ed.), *Mélanges Gamal Eddin Mokhtar*, 175.

²⁰⁶ 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 (HABACHI, *The Sanctuary of Heqaib*, vol. I, 140-57).

²⁰⁷ 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.

²⁰⁸ O’CONNOR, in POSENER-KRIÉGER (ed.), *Mélanges Gamal Eddin Mokhtar*, 171.

dle Cemetery at Abydos where commemorative chapels close to Old Kingdom *mastaba* tombs were built in veneration of illustrious ancestors within.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.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,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.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 later²¹³ and this could partly account for the significant number of smaller structures built around the few larger chapels.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

chapel superstructure of west and south walls of kiosk with trace of plaster. In west wall to south, a square projection 2 m x 1 m about, with oblong shrine"²¹⁵ Here then it seems Garstang had found a small presumably open-ended shrine, the interior walls of which may once have been lined with decorative rectangular slabs with an arch-topped stela at the back, together with a solid rectangular structure of no obvious purpose. This arrangement is comparable to the range of structures in the memorial chapel zone. Garstang also photographed another dense concentration of smaller structures consisting of a rectangular mud-brick shrine with central door-like aperture close to another with a more rounded top and the narrow space between them filled by a slender structure with a central opening containing what appears to be a statuette.²¹⁶ This disparate and seemingly *ad hoc* arrangement is perhaps further evidence of stone-clad monuments and a need to build ever-smaller chapels/shrines in ever-decreasing spaces in this part of the necropolis.

Both solid-core shrines and especially freestanding monuments provided the ideal compromise; with their modest 'footprint' and comprehensive array of pictorial and inscriptional decoration they could be placed with relative ease into the tightest of spaces and still fulfil the prevailing votive and religious needs of pilgrims wishing to set up a memorial. Furthermore, the logistics of transporting and erecting them, especially those manufactured elsewhere (as seems likely to be the case at least for MMA 65.120.1, MMA 65.120.2, Turin 1630, MMA 2014.283a-b and possibly the Tadross Collection monument), would be more straightforward than for shrines composed of a greater number of elements.

The desire to erect a memorial in this already built-up prime chapel location close to the Osiris temple and overlooking the festival procession route could easily have stimulated the innovation of monuments intended to function essentially in the same way as larger more architecturally complex structures, yet small enough to fit within the ever-decreasing available space. While the area close to the temple remained free of any tomb building at this time, farther (local) west, north and south it seems that any boundary existing between purely commemorative and cemetery zones as indicated by the Neferhotep I decree may, over time, have become blurred. Only through future excavations in the area of desert margin west of the Osiris temple complex will it be possible to clarify the full extent of the 'Terrace of

²⁰⁹ RICHARDS, *Expedition* 44/3, 22-3.

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*).

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.

²¹² The choice of term is briefly discussed by Leahy (*JEA* 75, 45 (p)).

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).

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).

²¹⁵ SNAPE, *Mortuary Assemblages from Abydos*, vol. I, 204 (305 A'07).

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.

the Great God’ and whether a point of transition ever truly existed between funerary and non-funerary cults.

Socio-cultural Context

Eleven objects from Group One and all of Group Two²¹⁷ 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,²¹⁸ 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^c* – Tadross Collection monument) that gained extra importance during the late Thirteenth Dynasty and Second Intermediate Period,²¹⁹ 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 *štw n tt hk3*, ‘commander of the crew of the ruler’ (Pennsylvania E 9952), who was a palace official²²⁰ and the *šmsw*, ‘guard’ (Rio de Janeiro 635+636 [2427]), who protected the king.²²¹ Even the four individuals holding the title *imy-r mš^c*, ‘overseer 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.²²²

After positions connected to the Palace, the second highest number of titles relate to temple institutions and occur on CG 20497, CG 20038, Vienna ÄS 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 s3 n 3bdw*) held by Amenyseneb the stela owner who restored the Osiris-Khentyimentiu temple under king Khendjer.²²³ 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 s3*) 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.²²⁴ 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 Osirian religion, just as high officials on royal mission were so clearly inspired to do.²²⁵

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.²²⁶ 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:²²⁷

- 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.

²¹⁷ Both given totals include Vienna ÄS 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: STEFANOVIĆ, *The Holders of Regular Military Titles*, 95-124.

²²² CHEVEREAU, *RdE* 42, 46. For an updated list of holders of this title see: STEFANOVIĆ, *The Holders of Regular Military Titles*, 182-202.

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

²²⁴ QUIRKE, *Titles and bureaux of Egypt*, 119-20.

²²⁵ FRANKE, in MEYER (ed.), *Egypt – Temple of the Whole World*, 129.

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 Heqaib*, 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 Iykhernofret, 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 Iykhernofret 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-Khentymentiu temple at Abydos in the time of Senwosret I and whose skills were likely imparted to local craftsmen.²²⁸ 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 ḥnw*). The owner of the Tadross Collection monument, two of his sons and another possibly related individual all bear the title ‘Great One of Tens of Upper Egypt’ (*wr-mḏw šmꜣ*); two more of his sons are the ‘Mouth of

Nekhen’ (*s3b 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 mšꜣ ḥnty-ḥty-rꜣ*) is represented by the leftmost mummiform 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 Ankhu (*ꜣnhw*), while on both MMA 65.120.1 and MMA 65.120.2 the mother of Sehetepibre is named ‘daughter (of) Ankhu’ (*s3t-ꜣnhw*), 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 Iykhernofret,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

²²⁸ FAULKNER, *JEA* 38; LICHTHEIM, *Ancient Egyptian Autobiographies*, 91.

²²⁹ FRANKE, in MEYER (ed.), *Egypt – Temple of the Whole World*, 133. This topic will be explored further in the final section of this article. Objects of known Abydene manufacture include: statuettes: SNAPE, in EYRE, LEAHY, LEAHY (eds.), *The Unbroken Reed*, 304-14; stelae: MARÉE, in MARÉE (ed.), *The Second Intermediate Period*, 241-81; inscribed bowls and mud figurines of New Kingdom-Late Period date: O’CONNOR, in POSENER-KRIÉGER (ed.), *Mélanges Gamal Eddin Mokhtar*, vol. II, 168, n. 19.

²³⁰ GRAJETZKI, in MORENO GARCIA (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 stelae (STEFANOVIĆ, *The Holders of Regular Military Titles*, vii).

²³³ LEPROHON, *JARCE* 15, 34-5.

²³⁴ As is known from other stelae, for example: BOURRIAU, *Pharaohs 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,²³⁵ 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.²³⁶ 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.²³⁷ 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.²³⁸ 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 Amenenseneb’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 represents 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.²³⁹ 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.

²³⁵ FRANKE, *GM* 167, 33-48.

²³⁶ O’CONNOR, in POSENER-KRIÉGER (ed.), *Mélanges Gamal Eddin Mokhtar*, vol. II, 175-7; Simpson and O’Connor, *Inscribed Material*, 33-53.

²³⁷ FRANKE, in MEYER (ed.), *Egypt – Temple of the Whole World*, 125.

²³⁸ For an overview and discussion of such burials: GRAJETZKI, in GRALLERT, GRAJETZKI (eds.), *Life and Afterlife in Ancient Egypt*, 25, 30-3.

²³⁹ E.g. SIMPSON, O’CONNOR, *Inscribed Material*, 45-7, C16-18.

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.²⁴⁰ 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.²⁴¹ 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).²⁴² 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.²⁴³

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-

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.

²⁴¹ WEGNER, in HAWASS, WEGNER (eds.), *Millions of Jubilees*, 351-78.

²⁴² Such as visceral remains from the embalming process or mummiform figurines.

²⁴³ 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.²⁴⁴ 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 stela. One cannot discount the possibility that a practical motivation lay behind the use of engaged mummiform statuettes and to some extent pierced-work *ankhs* – 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 and ‘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 *ankhs* 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,²⁴⁵ 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.²⁴⁶ 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).²⁴⁷ 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.²⁴⁸ As the mummiform statues are located in the corridor immediately before the cult chamber, we can presume that they functioned differently to the *k3*-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 Sarenput²⁴⁹ 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.²⁵⁰ Around the same time, the earliest of the

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 (FAKHRY, *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, *Pharaohs 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 Ankhui 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 de divinités*, 66 (CG 28230), pl. 12).

²⁵⁰ The royal statues closest in scale and appearance to those



Fig. 13 – One of six near life-size mummiform statues in the tomb of Sarenput II at Aswan (author’s photograph)

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-form²⁵¹ but also as mummies²⁵² of-

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-BÖER, *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; BOURRIAU, *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 stelaie niches²⁵³ 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

in SILVERMAN (ed.), *Searching for Ancient Egypt*, 128-9.

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-Khentyimentiu temple precincts, served as an *ankh*-shaped 'window' enabling the two mummiform 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 mummiform rather than living-form images of the deceased, nor why the *ankh*-form aperture was sometimes favoured over a plain rectangular one. Jane Hill addressed some of these questions by presenting the pierced-work *ankh* 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 mummiform 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 sev-

en 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 *hṯp-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 mummiform statuettes and *ankh*-form apertures is shown by their inclusion on Vienna ÄS 109 and also by the two mummiform 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 mummiform figure in Group One serves as the proxy for the *actual* mummified 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

b3's connection with representations of mummiform 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 mummiform statuettes in mortuary and funerary cults. In the recent Metropolitan Museum of Art exhibition catalogue the idea that the mummiform 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 OPPENHEIM *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 mummiform 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

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 *ankh* may have served as a motif of the epithet *b3i-nḥ*, 'the living-ba', and specifically the *b3*'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

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 Seidlmayer proposed that the appearance of the mummiform image resulted from changes in perception of the deceased’s body linked to new embalming techniques.²⁶³ 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 stage²⁶⁴ represented by the cocoon-like mummy, that eventually came to be known as the *s^ch*. While this new imagery permeated Middle Kingdom funerary art, its certain connection with the *s^ch* name can rarely be made in texts of the period. This is no better illustrated than by the many dozens of occurrences of *s^ch* in the Coffin Texts where the word is almost invariably translated as ‘dignity’ or ‘dignitary’²⁶⁵ and attractively explained as referring to “the privileged deceased ones or Sahu (who) lived in the company of the ruler of the Beyond”.²⁶⁶ In only one CT spell can it be more clearly understood as referring to the physical ‘mummy’,²⁶⁷ yet from the context where *s^ch* 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

does this entry refer specifically to MMA 2014.283a-b or any of the Group One objects. The second reference more specifically relates to the Group One corpus since it is Pascal Vernus’ judgement that the Tadross Collection monument figures are shabtis (VERNUS, *RdE* 26, 107-12). However, as will be discussed at the end of this section, this may not be quite so clear cut even despite the presence of the shabti spell on the monument, and is unlikely to relate to MMA 2014.283a-b or any of the other Group One objects.

²⁶³ SEIDLMAYER, in WILLEMS (ed.), *Social aspects of funerary culture*, 227-30.

²⁶⁴ Some time ago Berlev noted (*KCIHA* 46, 50) the ‘blurred’ use of the mummy on a bed determinative for the euphemism “repose” (*hpt*) instead of “death” (*hpt*) that seems to highlight a transitional phase of from the deceased in sleeping human-form to that of mummiform. Such images occur at the same time as the earliest appearance of the mummiform corpse, as indicated by the inscriptions on the sarcophagus of Kawit from the mortuary temple of Montuhotep II (NAVILLE, *The XIth Dynasty Temple at Deir el-Bahari*, vol. I, pls. 20-1).

²⁶⁵ Wb IV, 49-50; VAN DER PLAS, BORGHOUTS, *Coffin Text Word Index*, 245-6.

²⁶⁶ SCHNEIDER, *Shabtis*, vol. I, 65.

²⁶⁷ CT Spell 45 (CT I, 198e) *hw^c tw ip.t(i) swd3.t(i) m s^ch pn nty m-b3h.i*, “you can be counted (and) preserved in the shape of this mummy which is in front of me!”.

50 the phrase “your *s^ch* in the House of Two Bas” (*s^ch.k m pr b3-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.²⁶⁸ 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^ch* not only refers to the mummified body²⁶⁹ but is depicted as distinct from other key elements of the deceased, the *k3*, *ib* and *b3*, in tomb scenes.²⁷⁰ 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 *h^tp-di-nsw* formulae inscribed on eleven of the objects,²⁷¹ and distinct also from the two-dimensional living-form depictions of the deceased and/or other individuals found on ten.²⁷² According to Jan Assmann, like the *k3*, the *s^ch* defined the person in the social sphere and similarly was also the focus of cult attention,²⁷³ 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^ch* was certainly regarded as a stage in the corporeal remains of the deceased requiring rituals in order for it to be transformed into the revived dead called the *3h* and re-take the form of a living human being.²⁷⁴ 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.²⁷⁵ These concepts are maintained in later funerary texts in which the *s^ch*-form image is linked to the necropolis, the Osiris cult and the sun, highlighting their enduring role as an essential component in the revivi-

²⁶⁸ WILLEMS, *Chests of life*, 154.

²⁶⁹ Wb IV, 51-2; BONNET, *RÄRG*, 486.

²⁷⁰ 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^ch* in other comparable funerary scenes/texts assembled by Assmann.

²⁷¹ MMA 65.120.1-2, Turin 1630, CG 20497, Louvre C 44, Vienna ÄS 109, Basel III 5002, Brussels E 4860, CG 20038, MMA 2014.283a-b and the Tadross Collection monument.

²⁷² 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.

²⁷³ ASSMANN, *Death and Salvation*, 91-2.

²⁷⁴ The mention of *s^ch* in Coffin Texts (where it does not clearly mean ‘mummy’) has nevertheless been interpreted in some instances as having close connections to the *3h* (DEMARÉE, *The 3h ikr n R^c-Stelae*, 227, n. 169).

²⁷⁵ *s^ch^c.tw s^ch.k n r^cw m wsht is.k* (ASSMANN, *MDAIK* 28, 126-7).

fication process.²⁷⁶ Even though no text on any Group One object mentions the *s^ch* or the *3h*, the mummiform imagery they employ cannot so easily be dismissed as simply another form of, or repository for, the deceased's *k3* – and it takes no great stretch of the imagination to understand them as being early visual manifestations of the *s^ch* 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.²⁷⁷

Even though the *s^ch*-mummy cuts an elusive figure in pre-New Kingdom literature, the theological belief underlying the transformation of the deceased to an *3h* 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 *3h*”.²⁷⁸ 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 *3h* thereby”.²⁷⁹ In an act of reciprocity, we are also told in §1730 of Spell 612 that Osiris transfigures Horus.²⁸⁰ 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 *3h*.²⁸¹ When viewed through an Abydo-centric lens we can see that the *s^ch*-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 mummiform figures from the Group One corpus.²⁸² Indeed, of the four objects bearing ‘Appeals to the Living’²⁸³ which, like Montuhotep’s version, ex-

pressly encourage the intercession of passers-by to recite the texts for the benefit of the deceased,²⁸⁴ three are aimed specifically at the Abydene religious institution and priests.²⁸⁵ 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.²⁸⁶ In the cultic environment of Abydos, the objectified *s^ch*-mummy would have provided a more tangible focus for rituals especially those seeking the transfiguration of the deceased, whose resultant *3h* 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 *3h(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 *3h*-spirit, who shall read aloud for any man his invocation offering of bread and beer for me”.²⁸⁷ 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, the status of *3h*, might, justification and satisfaction in the beautiful West [...]”.²⁸⁸ The very act of breathing, poetically described as ‘the sweet breath of life’ (*t3w ndm n nḥ*), was hugely important in the transformation of the deceased (as a mummy) to an *3h*, 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

²⁷⁶ REYMOND, *ZÄS* 98, 133.

²⁷⁷ ROBERSON, in SILVERMAN, SIMPSON, WEGNER (eds.), *Archaism and Innovation*, 428-9 (with additional references).

²⁷⁸ CT II, 65-66b: *wn n dw3.t ist N pn pr(.w) m hrw pn m irw.i pn m irw.i pnm 3^c 3h nḥ(.w)*.

²⁷⁹ FAULKNER, *Pyramid Texts*, 314.

²⁸⁰ *Op. cit.*, 255.

²⁸¹ *dd.in s3h 3sir ḥnty-imntyw Mntw-[ḥtp]* (first line of main body of text). PETRIE, *Tombs of the Courtiers*, pls. 22-3.

²⁸² This aspect of mummiform figures is discussed by Hans Schneider (*Shabtis*, vol. I, 65-7) who is, however, inclined to associate the half-round versions in niches with shabtis (63-4).

²⁸³ CG20497, CG20569, MMA 65.120.2 and Basel III 5002.

²⁸⁴ SHUBERT, *Those who (still) Live on Earth*, 438.

²⁸⁵ CG 20497, MMA 65.120.2 and Basel III 5002.

²⁸⁶ [...] *i srw imyw 3bdw wnwḥ ḥwt-nṯr mi ḳd.s w^cb nb n(y) s(y) imy kiḥ dṛt.f n nṯr [...]*.

²⁸⁷ SHUBERT, *Those who (still) Live on Earth*, 66-7 (with additional bibliography).

²⁸⁸ BOLSHAKOV, QUIRKE, *The Middle Kingdom Stelae in the Hermitage*, 43 (Hermitage 1086). The stela is almost certainly from Abydos.

of one of the statuettes found with CG 20353.²⁸⁹ 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’,²⁹⁰ which refers to Senbef who is represented only as a mummy.²⁹¹

The ability to breathe/smell epitomised the difference between the inanimate mummified corpse and the revived *3h* and became a tenet of later prayers.²⁹² 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 Texts²⁹³ where Shu is actually called ‘Ankh’.²⁹⁴ 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.²⁹⁵

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.²⁹⁶

²⁸⁹ BORCHARDT, *Statuen und Statuetten*, 128, CG 1247.

²⁹⁰ HILL, in HAWASS, WEGNER (eds.), *Millions of Jubilees*, 239 mentions this phrase in her discussion, though a possible connection between the mummiform statuettes and the *ankh* stela is not explored.

²⁹¹ One of whom is also represented by a mummiform figure. Shubert suggests (SHUBERT, *Those who (still) Live on Earth*, 428-9) that the “sweet breath of life” was given to the *ka* of the deceased “so that the deceased may breathe easier in the Afterlife”, but this rather overlooks the breath’s fundamental life-giving property stressed by the phrase.

²⁹² E.g. One written on the Eighteenth Dynasty statue of Minnakht reads: “The sky for your soul, the netherworld for your corpse, linen raiment for your mummy (*sʿh*), the breath of the north wind at your nose, and mortuary offerings of bread and beer every day, (O) Osiris NN” (ALLEN, *The Book of the Dead*, 168, n. 272). BORCHARDT, *Statuen und Statuetten*, 170-1, CG 624). The writing of *sʿh* is here abbreviated using just the goat sign (Gardiner E 31).

²⁹³ WILLEMS, *The Coffin of Heqata*, 272, n. 1564.

²⁹⁴ WILLEMS, in VAN DIJK (ed.), *Essays on Ancient Egypt in Honour of Herman te Velde*, 361.

²⁹⁵ ROBERSON, *The Awakening of Osiris*, 23.

²⁹⁶ It has been reasonably suggested that the *ankh* provides

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.²⁹⁷ 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 though, 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.²⁹⁸ 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.²⁹⁹ 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 *sʿh*-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,

an appropriate motif on the stela symbolising the benefits of Amenyseneb’s eternal ‘life’ (YAMAMOTO, in OPPENHEIM *et al.* (eds.), *Ancient Egypt Transformed*, 268), as opposed to a rather more active role in ritual practices associated with the deceased as this article proposes.

²⁹⁷ LANGE, SCHÄFER, *Grab- und Denksteine des Mittleren Reiches*, vol. I, 6; vol. IV, pl. 1, CG 20006. For a brief discussion of this object see: FISCHER, *ZÄS* 100, 24.

²⁹⁸ I am not entirely convinced by Jane Hill’s suggestion (HILL, in HAWASS, WEGNER (eds.), *Millions of Jubilees*, 240) that libations could have been poured through the *ankh*’s pierced loop. While liquids often formed a part of offering rituals, on a purely practical level it would be difficult pouring water through such apertures unless the stelae were horizontal. I can see no evidence of water marks, staining or wear on any of the stelae to suggest this occurred and, furthermore, from an ideological standpoint a connection to lustration on these objects is far less obvious compared to the clear textual and visual references to breath/smell.

²⁹⁹ BAINES, in MAGEE, BOURRIAU, QUIRKE (eds.), *Sitting beside Lepsius*, 8.

wedjat-eyes, or by the *hṯp-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 *wꜣs*-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 ÄS 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 'squin', sometimes labelled "the eyes of the *kꜣ*-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 spell³⁰⁶ 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 ÄS 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 en-

sured 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 Nebupusenwosret, which enabled the deceased to witness Osiris and Wepwawet in his procession.³¹¹ The overtly Osirianised version of CT 788 on Vienna ÄS 109, which invokes Re's favour by stating: "so that you may give your hand to guide for the Osiris" (*di.k ˆ.k snnḥ n ꜣsir*), 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 Dynasty³¹³ the deceased is likened to Osiris³¹⁴ and restored with voice (for which one needs to breathe), paralleling the restoration of senses in the versions of CT 788 on Vienna ÄS 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-

³⁰⁰ VANDIER, *Manuel d'Archéologie Égyptienne*, vol. II, 490-1, fig. 298; FISCHER, *ZÄS* 100, 23-4. To these references can be added LANGE, SCHÄFER, *Grab- und Denksteine des Mittleren Reiches*, vol. II, 13-4, CG 20415; vol. IV, pl. 30.

³⁰¹ ASSMANN, *Altägyptische Totenliturgien*. 3, 49-50. Coffin Texts funerary rituals are also believed to be closely linked to the Hourly Vigil (WILLEMS, *Chests of life*, 156-60).

³⁰² E.g. BM EA 10541 (TAYLOR, *Journey through the Afterlife*, 234-5); Leiden T2. For a brief discussion of this aspect with other examples see: DERCHAIN, in *LÄ* I, 268-9.

³⁰³ LOHWASSER, *Die Formel 'Öffnen des Gesichts'*, 31.

³⁰⁴ ASSMANN, *Liturgische Lieder and den Sonnengott*, 249.

³⁰⁵ BLACKMAN, *JEA* 3, 252.

³⁰⁶ WILLEMS, *Chests of Life*, 168-9, n. 171a.

³⁰⁷ ROEDER, *Mit dem Auge sehen*, 108-9.

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 (LOHWASSER, *Die Formel 'Öffnen des Gesichts'*, 31).

³⁰⁹ Willems (*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 BADAWY, *BIE* 35, 123.

³¹¹ LOHWASSER, *Die Formel 'Öffnen des Gesichts'*; BOLSHAKOV, *Man and his Double*, 174.

³¹² VAN DIJK, *BACE* 18, 53-6. See also FRANKE, *Das Heiligtum des Heqaib*, 250-1.

³¹³ GEISEN, *Ein Totentexte*, 14 (for dating); 39-40, 89 (the spell).

³¹⁴ And those of the Eighteenth Dynasty (QUIRKE, *Going out in Daylight*, 82-3).

³¹⁵ LAPP, *MDAIK* 50, 233-7. For the connection between the deceased and Osiris in this formula see: FRANKE, *Das Heiligtum des Heqaib*, 247, n. g.

³¹⁶ QUIRKE, *Going out in Daylight*, 40-2.

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 mummiform 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 stands a second smaller mummy of his father Re(n) seneb. Both mummies hold the flail 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 mummiform 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 *hṭp-di-nsu* 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, mummiform 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 *3h*, 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 *3h* as described in CT 316: “Look with your eyes [...] on this *3h* 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 sšnw*), 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

Culture, 288, 358-61.

³²³ CT III, 325: *iw.i i.k(w) r r3-st3.w r rh sšt3 n(y) dw3.t ib.s(w).t inpw hr.s wp(w).t r3.i wp(w).t ir.ty.i s3h(w).t w(i)*.

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 Peftuaneith, 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 Peftuaneith’s statement (EFFLAND, *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 hr.tn ntr.w smsw.w hpr.w tp-^c.wy m-b3h.w r 3h pn i(w) min hpr n.f m 3h.t i n.f m iw nsr.sr*.

³²⁶ FAKHRY, *The Monuments of Sneferu at Dahshur*, vol. II, 63-9, pls. 68-9.

³²⁷ Besides this monument, Fakhry discovered a number of stelae fragments, an altar and another miniature *per-nu* shrine (none with features of Groups One or Two), all of which

³¹⁷ *Op. cit.*, 95.

³¹⁸ LANGE, SCHÄFER, *Grab- und Denksteine des Mittleren Reiches*, vol. I, 66-8, CG 20056; vol. IV, pl. 6; LOHWASSER, *Die Formel ‘Öffnen des Gesichts’*, 83.

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/Amenemhat 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 (Amenemhat 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’*, 123.1; to which one can add FRANKE, *Das Heiligtum des Heqaib*, 245-6.

³²² WILLEMS, in WILLEMS (ed.), *Social Aspects of Funerary*



Fig. 14 – CG 20056

from New Kingdom sources when it appears in several tombs³²⁸ and is related to Chapter 137 of the Book of the Dead.³²⁹ 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.³³⁰ If

belonged to non-royal religious activity in an area where the mortuary cults of earlier kings had been revived and considered to be of great sanctity, and thus not directly associated with burials (FAKHRY, *ASAE* 52, 573-4). A similarly shaped *monobloc* shrine has recently been discovered at Dahshur, for which see the article by BABA, YAZAWA in MINIACI, GRAJETZKI (eds.), *The World of Middle Kingdom*, vol. I, 1-24.

³²⁸ HAIKAL, in POSENER-KRIEGER (ed.), *Mélanges Gamal Eddin Mokhtar*, vol. I, 362.

³²⁹ QUIRKE, *Going out in Daylight*, 306-12.

³³⁰ FAKHRY, *The Monuments of Sneferu at Dahshur*, vol. I, 64. The night-time performance of torch rituals was also firmly entrenched in the funerary liturgies inscribed on Middle Kingdom coffins. For a convenient summation of their place in Osirian-solar religious context see: WILLEMS, *Chests of life*, 155. The 'fingers of bronze' in this spell find parallels in the

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.³³¹

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 top³³² and the other, CG 20742, discovered by Mariette in the 'nécropole du nord',³³³ 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).³³⁴ 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.³³⁵

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 *3h*, as revealed in the rubric of one Eighteenth Dynasty torch hymn: "Formula for the four torches, (for) transfigurations performed for an *3h*, 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.

³³¹ 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).

³³² LANGE, SCHÄFER, *Grab- und Denksteine des Mittleren Reiches*, vol. II, 331.

³³³ MARIETTE, *Catalogue générale des monuments d'Abydos*, 587-8, no. 1496.

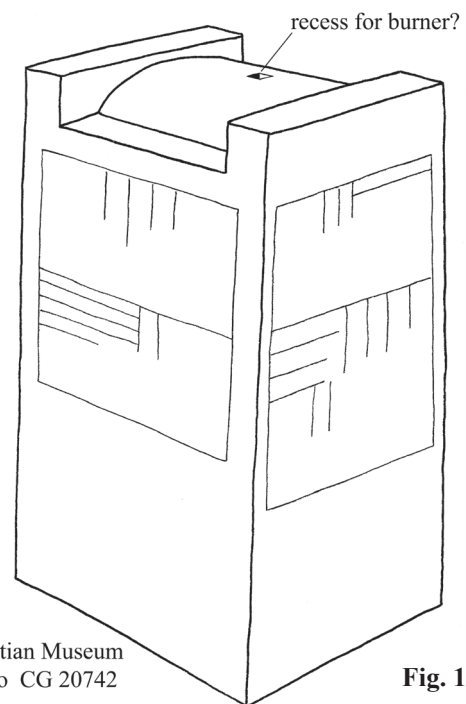
³³⁴ Interestingly, a connection can be made between Seshenu's Dahshur shrine and Abydos since he is known from a stela in the British Museum (EA 844) considered to be from the latter site (BUDGE, *Hieroglyphic Texts from Egyptian Stelae*, vol. V, 6, pl. 13), which lists members of his family, some of whom were also sculptors.

³³⁵ 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 mummy-form figures.³³⁶ 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,³³⁷ 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,³³⁸ 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.³³⁹ This interpretation is even more applicable to the two female relatives flanking the central mummy-form 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,³⁴⁰ 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,³⁴¹ 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.³⁴² In contrast, the niche on each narrower side is considerably tighter around the single mummy-form figure which fills it entirely. This was necessary to accommodate the lengthy shabti spell written in multiple horizontal and vertical columns around each niche.³⁴³ It is strange why the living-form figures and minimal text were not placed on the narrow sides and the mummy-form figures and lengthy inscriptions on the longer sides. This incongrui-



Egyptian Museum
Cairo CG 20742

Fig. 15

have been performed there as well.

³³⁶ 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).

³³⁸ ASSMANN, *Death and Salvation*, 311-2.

³³⁹ ALTENMÜLLER, in BARTA, KREJČÍ (eds.), *Abusir and Saqqara*, 305-16.

³⁴⁰ VERNUS, *RdE* 26, 103.

³⁴¹ E.g. BOSTICCO, *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.

ty 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

³⁴² 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.

³⁴³ VERNUS, *RdE* 26, pls. 10-1.

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.³⁴⁴ In funerary contexts, the obelisk served on a functional level as a focal point for offerings in the forecourt of the tomb complex,³⁴⁵ while also conceptually symbolising the Egyptian belief in the solar rebirth and an object associated with Osiris.³⁴⁶ 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.³⁴⁷ 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—³⁴⁸ there is a little more evidence to suggest that by the Thirteenth Dynasty small obelisks and ‘obelisk stelae’³⁴⁹ 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.³⁵⁰ 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 mummiform figures, both rea-

³⁴⁴ MARTIN, in *LA*, 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-stelae 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 KUENTZ, *Obelisks*. 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 (KUENTZ, *Obelisks*, 1-2, 1308 (Old Kingdom), pl. 1; MARTIN, *Ein Garantsymbol des Lebens*, Abb. 6 (Late Old Kingdom), 11a-d (Late Period)). Senebrau's plain pyramidion also contrasts the substantially decorated royal pyramidions of Amenemhat III (MASPERO, *ASAE* 3, 206-8 with plate) and the chronologically more relevant Khendjer (JÉQUIER, *Deux pyramides du moyen empire*, 19-26, pl. 6).

sonably classified as shabtis by Pascal Vernus due to the presence of CT 472.³⁵¹ 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 mummiform statuettes inscribed with the shabti spell and those without – a relationship that continues to vex Egyptologists to the present day.³⁵² Unlike numerous inscribed freestanding shabtis of the late Middle Kingdom,³⁵³ the monument's mummiform statuettes do not bear the spell even though they are large enough for this to be entirely feasible.³⁵⁴ 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.³⁵⁵ 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 *sh* 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 *sh*-mummy and not a shabti, with the spell intended for Senebrau's *sh* 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,

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 MINIACI, *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).

³⁵⁵ SCHNEIDER, *Shabtis*, vol. I, 46-9.

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 mummified state (frequently referred to in later texts as *sḥ*) to that of the transfigured and immortal *ḥh*. This is symbolically embodied by all the pierced-work *ankh* monuments and implicit in both the *wn-ḥr* 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 *ḥtp-di-nsw* and *pṛt-ḥrw* 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 mummiform figure (itself an Osirianised likeness) once transformed by the necessary spells was able to witness the renowned annual festival of the god. It was through this expression of piety that the deceased would garner the god’s favour and protection. And, once transfigured, the deceased could perform the same service to others, in an act of reciprocity mimicking the myth of Osiris and Horus. Thus personal piety and ritual became intertwined into a circular self-reinforcing act, the ultimate goal of which was to ensure the deceased’s successful transformation into an immortal being and so become one favoured by Osiris in the realm of the dead.

It is virtually certain that all Group One objects come from non-funerary settings in the commemorative chapel zone close to the Osiris-Khentyimentiu temple. In contrast, the majority from Group Two were found in cemetery locations, which suggests that the pierced-work *ankh*’s revitalising symbolism was intended primarily for the actual mummy of the deceased. Even the two stelae from Group Two with non-funerary contexts can be straightforwardly explained because of their association with ‘proxy’ mummies of the deceased – represented by the engaged and freestanding statuettes.

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

The production of monuments bearing mummiform 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.³⁵⁶ 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 mummiform figures carved in raised relief (Fig. 16),³⁵⁷ the object is without provenance, but can be firmly dated to the Nineteenth Dynasty since it belonged to the ‘overseer of works in the Ramesseum’ 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,³⁵⁸ which also stresses an affinity to the Group One objects.³⁵⁹ A possible Abydene connection can be established through Imeneminet’s connections with the well-known High Priest of Osiris Wenennefer.³⁶⁰ Moreover, Imeneminet served under Ramesses II, whose own connection with Abydos ran deep; not only did the king complete Seti I’s huge memorial complex, but also constructed several substantial temples of his own and made additions to existing buildings.³⁶¹ It is also worth noting the prominent re-appearance around this time of CT 788 on shabtis and other statuettes,³⁶² and even the inclusion of the *wn-ḥr* 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).

³⁵⁷ Now in the Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli; see: TRAPANI, in EYRE (ed.), *Proceedings of the Seventh International Congress of Egyptologists*, 1169-76.

³⁵⁸ Visitors are asked to make offerings to Imeneminet’s *k3* (TRAPANI, in EYRE (ed.) *Proceedings of the Seventh International Congress of Egyptologists*, 1169). Here, as with Group One inscriptions, mention of the *k3* 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’.

³⁶⁰ PIRELLI, in EYRE (ed.) *Proceedings of the Seventh International Congress of Egyptologists*, 877.

³⁶¹ KEMP, in *LÄ* I, 28-42.

³⁶² LOHWASSER, *Die Formel ‘Öffnen des Gesichts’*, 95-105.

on Ramesses II's Abydene memorial temple.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 when cult activity and temple building at Abydos reached another zenith. Carved from sandstone, the rectangular slab displays a rectangular niche containing two mummiform and four living-form figures carved in half-round relief (Fig. 17).³⁶⁴ Although stated to have come from Memphis, the archaising wig styles of both male and female figures is undeniably like those on several of the Group One monuments.³⁶⁵ It is entirely conceivable that these Middle Kingdom monuments were encountered once again, either in the Twenty-fifth Dynasty when Abydos became the only place in Egypt apart from Thebes where Nubian royalty chose to be buried,³⁶⁶ or in the Twenty-sixth Dynasty which saw an even greater focus on the Abydene cult of Osiris with temple building activity under kings Apries and Amasis.³⁶⁷

To this example can be added another object dated to the Twenty-sixth or perhaps Thirtieth Dynasty that recently appeared on the art market.³⁶⁸ Carved from black basalt with three niches each containing a figure carved in the half-round; two niches each containing a human-form figure flank a central smaller niche with a *per-nu* shaped roof containing a figure of Osiris, reminiscent of the shrine on Rio de Janeiro 635+636 [2427]. Even its possible dating to the Thirtieth Dynasty coincides with the last great phase of temple building at Abydos under Nectanebo I and II.³⁶⁹

In addition to these physically similar examples, there are at least two conceptual parallels that warrant mention here especially because they are closer in time to the Middle Kingdom. The first comes from the early Eighteenth Dynasty Theban tomb complex of the high official Tetiky (TT15) who served under the Eighteenth Dynasty kings Ahmose and Amenhotep I.³⁷⁰ Placed in

four niches cut in to the western wall of the tomb's courtyard were dozens of crudely fashioned wooden mummiform statuettes mostly provided with their own miniature coffins.³⁷¹ With their deliberate setting in above-ground and east-facing niches, the shabtis embodied the sentiments of CT 788 by being able, symbolically, to 'open their sight to see the sun-god'. The second example is found in another Theban tomb of a similar date which incorporates 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.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,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

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³⁶³ EL-SABBAN, *Temple Festival Calendars*, 56-7.

³⁶⁴ MAHRAN, in BAREŠ, COPPENS, SMOLÁRIKOVÁ (eds.), *Egypt in Transition*, 269-71, fig. 1.

³⁶⁵ CG20038, CG 20497, CG 20569. Also noted by MAHRAN, in BAREŠ, COPPENS, SMOLÁRIKOVÁ (eds.), *Egypt in Transition*, 270.

³⁶⁶ LEAHY, in EYRE, LEAHY, LEAHY (eds.) *The Unbroken Reed*, 171-92.

³⁶⁷ KEMP, *MDAIK* 23, 146-7.

³⁶⁸ CHARLES EDE LTD., *Egyptian Antiquities*, 15.

³⁶⁹ MARLAR, *The Osiris Temple at Abydos*.

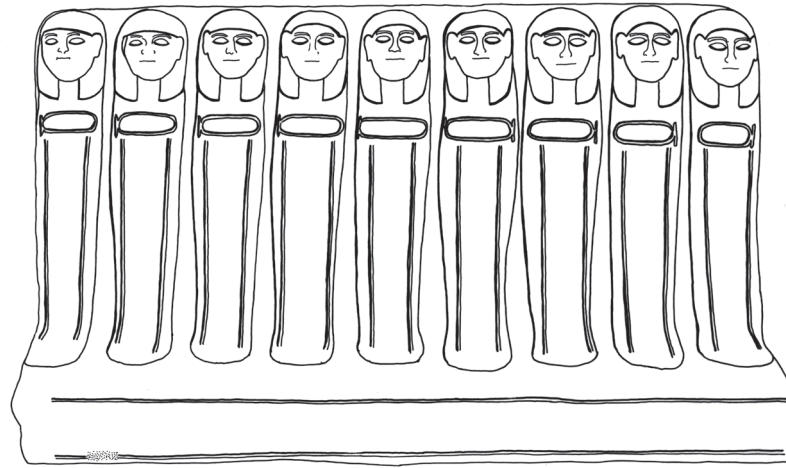
³⁷⁰ For a discussion of the features with additional bibliography

see: WHELAN, *17th-18th Dynasty Stick Shabtis*, 10-4.

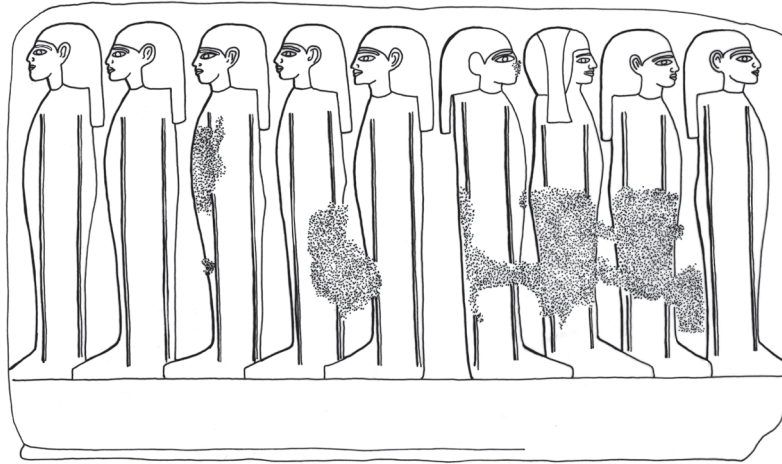
³⁷¹ Although usually referred to as stick shabtis, very few are actually inscribed with the shabti spell.

³⁷² WHELAN, *17th-18th Dynasty Stick Shabtis*, 15-9.

³⁷³ WILLEMS, in CLAES, DE MEULENAERE, HENDRICKX (eds.), *Elkab and Beyond*, 518, no. 2.



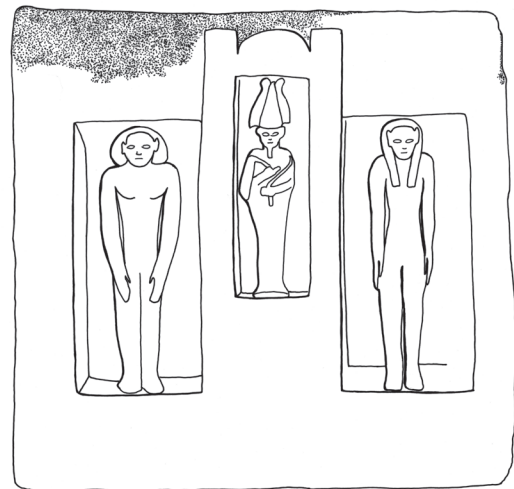
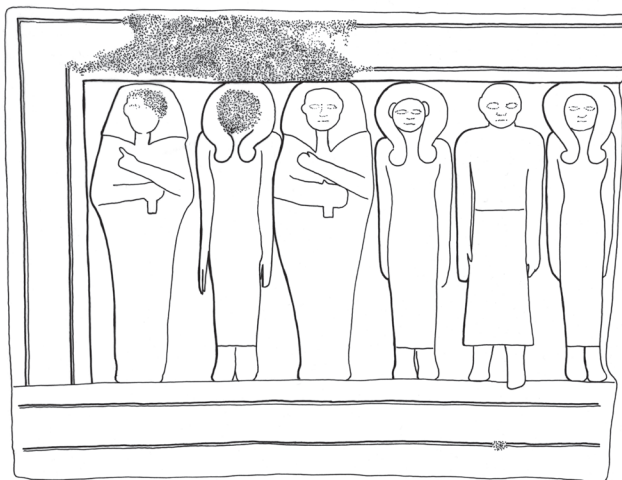
Front



Back

Fig. 16 – Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli, 1069

Fig. 17 – (lower left): JE 36728; (lower right): Private collection



GROUP ONE	A B Y D O S	Dynasty	<i>http di nsw</i>	Appeal to the Living	CT 788 (with other 'pyramidia spells'†)	Other CT spells	Name only (with or without title/epithet)
MMA 65.120.1		Late 12 th					
MMA 65.120.2		Late 12 th					
Turin 1630		Late 12 th					
British Museum EA 8893		13 th					
Cairo CG 20497		Late 12 th					
Petrie Museum UC 14347		13 th					
Louvre C44		12 th /13 th					
Cairo CG 20097		Late 12 th					
Cairo CG 20569		12 th /13 th					
Basel III 5002		Late 12 th					
Brussels E.4860		Late 12 th					
Cairo CG 20038		Late 12 th					
Vienna ÄS 109		13 th					
Rio de Janeiro 635+636 [2427]		12 th /13 th					
MMA 2014.283a-b		13 th			†	353,387,773	
Tadross Collection		13 th / SIP				472	
GROUP TWO							
Brussels E.4320		13 th					
Liverpool E30		13 th					
Cairo CG 20353		13 th					
Pennsylvania E 9952		13 th / SIP					

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

GROUP ONE	Against temple enclosure wall	Free- standing	In tomb chapel/ associated shrine	In non- funerary chapel/ shrine	Slab from wall of miniature chapel/ shrine	Slab from solid core shrine
MMA 65.120.1						
MMA 65.120.2						
Turin 1630						
British Museum EA 8893						
Cairo CG 20497						
Petrie Museum UC 14347						
Louvre C44						
Cairo CG 20097						
Cairo CG 20569						
Basel III 5002						
Brussels E.4860						
Cairo CG 20038						
Vienna ÄS 109						
Rio de Janeiro 635+636 [2427]						
MMA 2014.283a-b						
Tadross Collection monument						
GROUP TWO						
Brussels 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

Administrative Spheres	Object Number	Title
PALACE	Cairo CG 20497	<i>imy-r ḥnwty</i> †
	Basel III 5002	<i>imy-r ḥnwty</i> †
	Cairo CG 20038	<i>imy-r st</i>
	Cairo CG 20038	<i>wdpw</i>
	Vienna ÄS 109	<i>imy-r st</i>
	Vienna ÄS 109	<i>wdpw</i>
	Rio de Janeiro 635+636 [2427]	<i>šhd sš(w)</i>
	MMA 2014.283a-b	<i>ḥkrt nswt</i>
	Tadross Collection	<i>ḥkrt nswt</i>
	Tadross Collection	<i>bšk.t nt ḥkš</i>
TREASURY	Cairo CG 20569	<i>imy-r pr n(y) wdš n(y) ḥrp kšwt</i> †
	Cairo CG 20038	<i>imy-r ḥtmt</i> †
	Rio de Janeiro 635+636 [2427]	<i>imy-r pr</i> †
	Rio de Janeiro 635+636 [2427]	<i>rh nsw</i> †
	Cairo CG 20353	<i>imy-r ḥnwty ḥrp skw</i> †
BUREAU OF THE VIZIER	Tadross Collection	<i>wr-mḏw šm</i> †
	Tadross Collection	<i>sšb r nḥn</i>
BUREAU OF FIELDS	Rio de Janeiro 635+636 [2427]	<i>ḥtmw bity</i>
	Rio de Janeiro 635+636 [2427]	<i>imy-r šḥwt</i>
ORGANISATION OF LABOUR	Tadross Collection	<i>ḥry n tm</i>
LOCAL ADMINISTRATION	Brussels E.4320	<i>imy-r tš-mḥw</i> †
MILITARY	New York MMA 65.120.1	<i>imy-r mš</i> †
	New York MMA 65.120.2	<i>imy-r mš</i> †
	Turin 1630	<i>imy-r mš</i>
	Rio de Janeiro 635+636 [2427]	<i>šmsw</i>
	Pennsylvania E 9952	<i>štw n tt ḥkš</i> †
TEMPLE ADMINISTRATION	Cairo CG 20497	<i>mt(y) n sš</i>
	Cairo CG 20038	<i>ḥm-nṯr</i>
	Vienna ÄS 109	<i>ḥm-nṯr w^cb ḏb^cw</i>
	Vienna ÄS 109	<i>iri ḥt nṯr</i> †
	MMA 2014.283a-b	<i>imy-r ḥnww</i> †
	Liverpool E30	<i>mt(y) n sš n šbdw</i> †
	Liverpool E30	<i>mt(y) n sš</i>
	Liverpool E30	<i>w^cb n šbdw</i>
	Liverpool E30	<i>w^cb n in-ḥrt</i>
	Liverpool E30	<i>iry-š n ḥwt-nṯr</i>

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

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