

The Stela of Nb ann sw & Imn Htp from the New Kingdom

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ABSTRACT

The paper publishes the scenes and hieroglyphic inscriptions of the Stela CG 34096 – SR 3/ 10165 - Cairo Museum, dating to the New Kingdom, as noted by the CG. (pl.1, fig.2)

ARTICLE INFO

Received
Accepted

The stela of Nebanensu and Amenhotep was divided into: the Lunette with its main decorative elements; the first register where the owners of the stela offer offerings to Osiris and Anubis; the second register shows the members of the family offer different offerings with libation and fumigation; finally the stela ends at the bottom with the Htp di nsw formula.

Keywords

Funerary stelae - Stela CG 34096 – Cairo Museum
Stelae

New Kingdom

Nebanensu and Amenhotep – Nb ann sw & Imn Htp

Sandstone

50cm, W: 38cm, D:7cm.

good, with traces of colors remain





2. Description

A painted arch-topped rectangular stone slab funerary stela, divided into three main parts: the Lunette and two registers. A horizontal line separates the two registers of the stela, while its edge is surrounded by a single thin line. All figures and hieroglyphic inscriptions are executed in shallow sunk relief featuring inner details.

The stela follows the classic style of stelae which appeared and became widespread in use since the Middle Kingdom. The same style and probably by the hand of the same artist who engraved the stela CG 34035. (Lacau, 1909; Aisha, 1995)

The back of the stela (the verso) was polished with no scenes or texts (*).

2.1. The Lunette

It contains the following decorative elements: the WDA^t eyes  , the pot  and three ripples of water .

Discussion

The arched top

The arch-topped stela appeared from the first dynasty, where two were placed in front of the tombs at that time, it was the dominant shape throughout Egyptian history until the end of the Greco-Roman period. (Martin, 1986 ; Hölzl, 2000)

Many explanations have been given to interpret the round shape of the top among which:

1- Maspero suggested that the round top may be influenced by the architectural elements of the tombs in Upper Egypt: vaulted chambers - corridors, or arched doors, while Müller opposed this theory saying that the relationship between the vault and the round topped stelae cannot

be proven. Moreover, most of the stelae are too small to be considered as a wall in a vaulted chamber. (Maspero, 1908 ; Müller, 1933)

2- An imitation of the primitive chapels of gods. (Badawy,1948)

3- Religiously, as a monument used for funeral purposes, it must be connected with eternity and heavenly connotations, accordingly, some scholars suggested that the round top of the stelae incarnates the celestial vault and its goddess *Nwt*, whose body, sometimes, occupied the top of the stela as a curved woman leaning with her arms and legs on the ground. (Westendorf, 1966 ; Murad, 2008)

The last suggestion would be acceptable if the ancient Egyptians depicted the sky as a curved body of a leaning goddess from the first dynasty onwards, but it did not appear that way before the 19th dynasty, when the human body of the sky goddess (*Nwt*) appeared for the first time on the ceiling of the sarcophagus chamber in the cenotaph of Seti I (the book of Nut, the book of the Night) then on the ceiling of some Ramesside tombs (R IV,VI, IX), despite the mention of her female body parts in the pyramid texts and her appearance as a woman raising the *pṯ* sign on the coffin lid of *@ny* from the 11th dynasty. (El-Shaieb,2008)

Most probably the curved top represents a different art style in the stelae tops, because it appeared in the same era as the straight tops.

As for the decoration of the Lunette Hölzl pointed out that "The social status of the owner of the stela is determined by the religious symbols decorating its top". (Hölzl, 1992)

The decorative elements of the Lunette appeared on many stelae in a variety of combinations: *WDAṯ*, *iab* cup, ripples of water, *Sn* and two jackals (CG 34044), *WDAṯ* and *iab* cup (CG 34035), *WDAṯ*, *iab* cup and *Sn* (CG 34049, 34050, 34055), *WDAṯ* and *Sn* (CG 34070),

WDA τ , Sn and the winged disc (CG 34004, 34018, 34024), iab cup, ripples of water, Sn and two jackals (CG 34054).

The WDA τ eye

The WDA τ eye, the famous amulet of protection worn by the living was considered a religious symbol and a decorative element as well, played an important role in the afterlife and the funeral monuments.

From the Middle Kingdom era onwards it was a common symbol on the Lunette of both votive and funerary stelae; in the beginning of the 12th Dynasty it appeared on this kind of monuments as a protective royal symbol; then, it was widely used even on the individual's stelae. (Aisha,1995)

Perhaps the reason for the appearance of two WDA τ eyes on the stelae's top was their first appearance, as religious and decorative elements, on the false doors since the 6th Dynasty, when they represented probably the eyes of the deceased, which he looked with from the other world to see the offerings and the ceremonies made for him, or to see the sun rises, as was mentioned in a text engraved on the pyramidion of Amnemhat III in Dahshour, perhaps they appeared for the same reason on the coffin lids of the 18th Dynasty. Hermann and Bonnet did not agree with this point of view believing that two WDA τ eyes were only placed on the Lunette due to their religious and magical role to prevent evil and to protect. While Westendorf thought, for many reasons, that these two eyes must represent the eyes of the sky god not human eyes. (after Murad, 2008)

The WDA τ eyes also represent a major source of light (life) for the deceased, as the solar and lunar eyes of Horus and Ra, they can also be considered a healing and good fortune symbol, since the name means the "intact" or the "well-being". They symbolize the completeness and integrity of the disk of the sun or the moon. (Radwan, 2010)

Portraying the WDAṯ eye on stelae ensure for the owners protection, renewal of life as well as an important element of lighting.

The iab vessel & the ripples of water

A small domed like cup appeared since the Old Kingdom as one of the water (beer – wine) vessels, it was inscribed on the sarcophagus of Princess Kawit from the Middle Kingdom, the cup appeared on stelae since the end of this era.

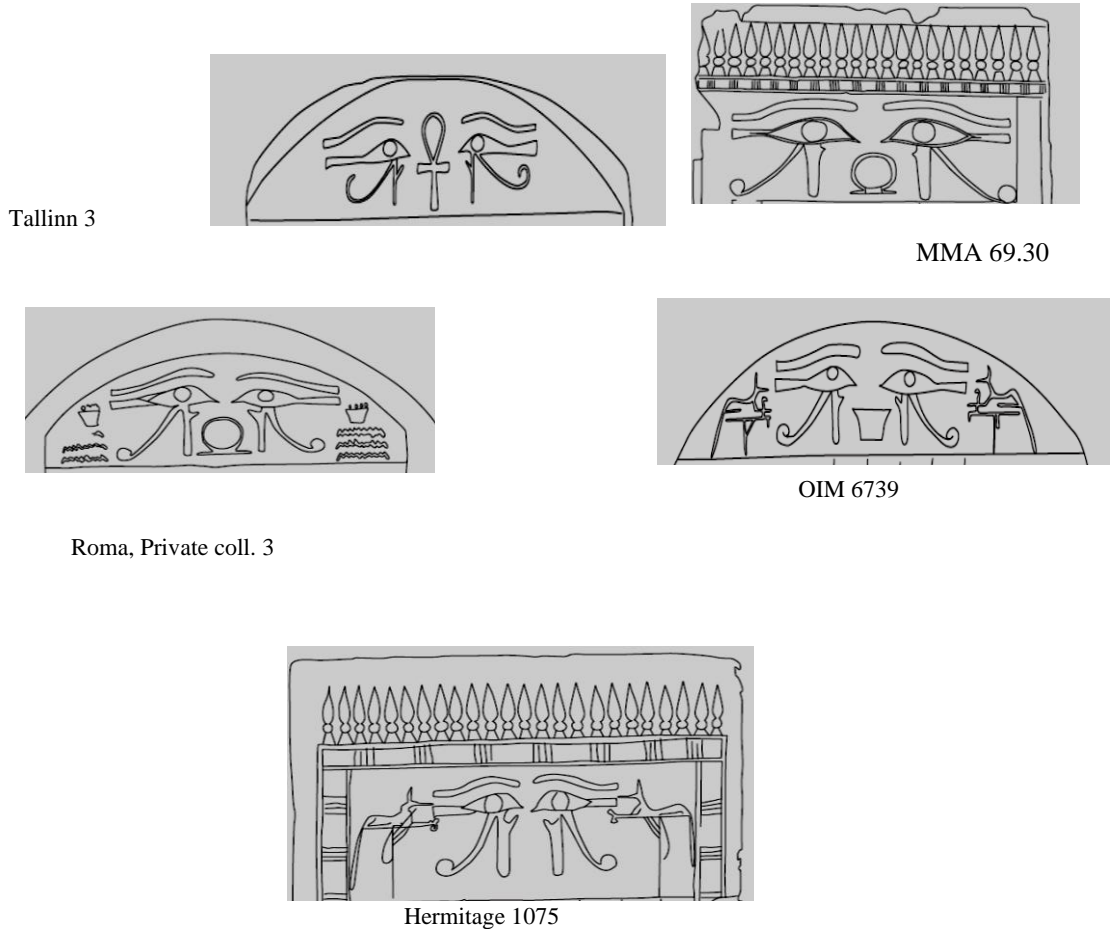




Fig. 1: Varieties of Late Middle Kingdom stela tops from Thebes (after Tomich, 2012)

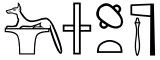
It is logical to add the iab vessel to the group of decorations that adorn the Lunette, since it was associated with water and therefore "purification", as a symbol of the continuous purity of the deceased. (Radwan, 2010)

From water life came out at the beginning of creation, so water simply is life for gods, people and all beings, it is also one of the important factors for the restoration of life and the eternal recurrence of birth; that is why water is a greater common denominator in religious and funeral rituals.


2.2. The first register

It is directly connected to the Lunette without the usual horizontal dividing line; it is divided into two symmetrical halves, right and left:

A. On the right, one of the two owners of the stela Amenhotep (is shown facing towards the viewer's left), shaved head, wears a wide collar and a short kilt, stands facing Anubis, offering him with both hands two bouquets of roses, the smaller of which is in his left hand, the god appeared in a mummified form, wearing a wide collar sitting on his chair , holding the was scepter  with both hands, his name and titles are above his head:



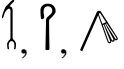
 Inpw imy wt nTr aA Anubis, who is in the mummy wrappings, the Great God.


Between Amenhotep and the god is a vertical column of hieroglyphs:

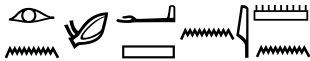
 sDm aS n Imn Imn-Htp

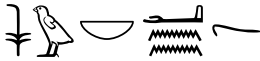
(Who) hears the call of Amen; Amenhotep.

The bodies of the god and Amenhotep are painted red.

B. On the left, the other owner of the stela Nebanensu (is shown facing towards the viewer's right) shaved head, wears a wide collar and a short kilt, stands facing Osiris, offering him, in addition to the offering table, a tray of offerings, the god, shown from the profile, appeared in a mummified form, wearing the divine beard, the Atef crown  and a wide collar which its hind part hangs over the back, he sits on his chair  holding, with both hands, the wAs, the HkA scepters and the nVAVA flail  in front of a small offering table. Above the god, the offering table and Nebanensu are two vertical columns and one horizontal line of hieroglyphs includes the name and the title of Osiris:

 Wsir nTr aA - Osiris the Great God.





ir.n sDm aS n Imn Nb ann sw - (Who) caused the call of Amen be heard; Nebanensu.

The body of the god is painted green, while Nebanensu's body is colored red.

The two gods are sitting back to back, their chairs were placed on a slightly raised pedestal.

Discussion

Osiris and Anubis appeared among the gods who were invoked in the offering formula on the stelae from the first half of the 18th dynasty, (Radwan, 2010) as on stelae (CG 34004 – 34133), Osiris alone (CG

34024 – 34060), Anubis alone (CG 34008 – 34035), but the appearance of Osiris was more frequent.

From the New Kingdom onwards Anubis was depicted as a jackal-headed man. As a god of the necropolis he was colored black, a color symbolic of the afterlife and fertility (although he was colored red on the stela). For the deceased he was the guide and the protector. (Doxey, 2001)

Most of the scenes in which Osiris appears sitting or standing holding the HkA scepter and the nVAVA flail date to the late 18th dynasty and the early 19th dynasty era. (Atallah, 2007)

Both Osiris and Anubis hold the wAs scepter, which is a stick its bottom ends in the form of a fork; its top in the shape of an animal resembling the god Seth, this scepter is a symbol of power and control, therefore it was carried by gods and kings, what supports this idea is the derivation of the stick's name wAs from the verb wAsi "destroys". (Te veled, 1977)

This scepter was more associated with gods than with goddesses. (Wilkinson, 1994)



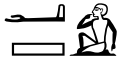


Offering bouquets of roses was a very common element on stelae in this era, the same as: CG 34023 – 34024 – 34049 – 34054 – 34060 – 34062 – 34100.


Between Nebanensu and Osiris engraved an offering table, its stand is wider at the bottom, bearing a big Lotus flower, two Lotus buds, which was a common offering since the Old Kingdom, the same as (CG 34035 – 34037 – 34040 – 34056 – 34085), on the tray of offerings are: a big Lotus flower, two Lotus buds, a goose, four conical loaves of bread, an eggplant (?) and another vegetable (?).

Notes on the text


- Inpw imy wt nTr aA Anubis, who is in the mummy wrappings, the Great God: the artist wrote mistakenly aA before nTr. Anubis unusually has here the title nTr aA which emphasizes god's divine authority, a title that was connected more with the gods of the state, he and other deities of the necropolis like Osiris had the title "Lord of the sacred land", it is likely that the artist tried to preserve the symmetry of the two halves of the register. (Doxey, 2001)



- sDm aS n Imn Imn-Htp (Who) hears the call of Amen;

Amenhotep: sDm was written with the sign  instead of the sign ,  aS was a variation of   iAS (Gardiner, 1957), if

sDm aS  is translated (servant) the meaning will be: The servant of Amen; Amenhotep, then Amenhotep could be a priest of Amen. Without an obvious reason the CG noted that the repetition of Imn was an artist mistake. Furthermore both sDm aS & Imn were written without determinatives, perhaps owing to the lack of space.

- iri.n sDm aS n Imn Nb ann sw - (Who) caused the call

of Amen be heard; Nebanensu: sDm was written with the  sign only, aS was written without a determinative. Although the CG considered

the sign  an artist mistake, it appeared from the Old Kingdom as an equivalent to the adze , and similar to the sign used as determinative of an (t) – nail, claw, but from the beginning of the second half of the 18th dynasty this sign, and a number of other signs, appeared in

inscriptions frequently without any meaning, to fill in the blanks as a feature of "Late Egyptian".(Gardiner, 1957)


2.3. The second register

A horizontal line, separates the first and the second register, which shows the family members of Nebanensu and Amenhotep the owners of the stela. The hieroglyphic texts are engraved vertically and horizontally in ten different places.

Six women and four men all offer different offerings:

On the right four standing men two by two facing the left; the second person appears next to the first, where only the side of the face and arms are visible, while the rest of the body cannot be seen.

The first two pour water with the right hand into a large vessel in the shape of an open Lotus flower placed on the ground, with the left hand they present two smoking censers, shaved heads, wearing a wide collar and a short kilt. One horizontal line of hieroglyphs was engraved before them under the censers:

 Hm kA(y) nfr nb.f - The kA priest (the servant) his lord is good.

The next two men are wearing the same clothes, offering a Lotus flower, Lotus buds and three geese. A vertical column of hieroglyphs was engraved behind their head:

 sA Imn (Htp) - The son of Amen(hotep)

A vertical column of hieroglyphs before their head:

 sn .f sS

A name before them under the geese:



KAY

sn .f sS KAY His brother the scribe Kay .

A vertical column of hieroglyphs under the Lotus flower:




sn .f #Awt - His brother Khaout

Standing on the left are six women two by two, facing towards the right; the side part of the second woman appears next to the first one. The first group presents with the right hand two smoking censers, and pours water into the same large vessel placed on the ground with the left hand. The second group presents a sack, and the third group presents two geese. All women wear the same costume; long tight-fitting garments, long wigs and headbands, with aromatic cones on their heads, their names were engraved next to them.

A vertical column of hieroglyphs before the first group of women:



mwt .s @rt tAwy - mwt .s @rrt (?) 

Her mother @rt tAwy - @rrt (?).

A horizontal line of hieroglyphs between the first and the second group of women:



sAt sAt mwt

The daughter, the daughter of the mother (granddaughter ?).

A vertical column of hieroglyphs between the first and the second group of women:



sAt.s iabt wrt snt.s irt mwt (.s) Her daughter iabt wrt her sister her mother's eye.

A horizontal line of hieroglyphs between the second and the third group of women:



mwt nfirt The beautiful mother.

A vertical column of hieroglyphs between the second and the third group of women:



snt.f wAD(t) rnpwt His sister wAD(t) rnpwt

Discussion

Four people pour water into a large vessel in the shape of an open Lotus flower placed on the ground, with the other hand they present three smoking censers:

The Nile water used in offering ceremonies has the ability to purify and revive together, furthermore it has the ability to resuscitate the body of the gods, and also of the deceased by replacing the vital fluids that he lost upon death, so the spilled water should always be cool water QbHw, not just water mw, to refresh the body. As the water dries up quickly, it is poured in this scene in a huge vessel in the shape of a large Lotus flower.

The vessel used to pour water is the Hst vessel, which dates back to the 1st dynasty, and perhaps before that, as a similar copper vessel was found in the tomb of king +r in Abydos, it appeared in the pyramid texts and was among the sacrificial tools from the Old Kingdom onwards. (Du Mensil,1935)

As a water vessel *Hst* was associated with the god *@apy* in particular, it was used in daily life and afterlife, as one of the most famous and common utensils in religious rituals such as "the founding of the temple ceremony", and the "pouring water ceremony" on the offering tables, altars, and in front of statues and false doors for purification and libation. (Du Mensil,1935)

Pouring water over the Lotus flowers (as on CG 34091 – 34099) preserves their life in order to play their important role in the morning rebirth of the gods, and in the revival of the deceased (**), it was a common scene the same as on stelae (CG 34008 - 34023 – 34038 – 34060), while pouring water into a large vessel in the shape of an open Lotus flower placed on the ground was an uncommon scene resembles the scene on the stela (CG 34061).

Incense has also been associated with exorcism and purification in daily life, afterlife, religious rituals and ceremonies. Traces of incense have been discovered in graves from the earliest to the latest eras of Egyptian history. (Lucas, 1962)

Osiris has an ancient relationship with incense; scholars believe his name means "the place of the eye", in reference to the legend of Horus when he presents his "sweet-smelling" eye to his father as a symbol of victory over Seth. (Baly, 1931)

Accordingly, fumigation and "pouring water ceremony" have an important role in reviving the body of the gods and the deceased. Moreover, the incense and libations used to "open the mouth" of mummies primarily referred to as Osiris, fumigation assured "living" offerings for the "living" gods and people. Funeral fumigation resurrected the dead by administering Osiris's resinous flesh, bones, and sweat to the mummy, transforming the corpse into Osiris. (Wise, 2009)

Fumigation and pouring water using a Hst vessel resembles scenes on stelae (CG 34035 – 34083 – 34086 – 34087 – 34110).

The aromatic cones on the heads of the six women appeared from the 18th dynasty since the reign of King Amenhotep III, on the heads of women and men with the aim of giving a pleasant smell to those who wear them when the fat melts little by little. (Mannich, 2003)

This fragrant smell also has a role in protecting the person from evil forces and aiding in the rebirth. (Cherpion, 1994)









The aromatic cones was a common element on the majority of the stelae in this era: (CG 34023 – 34024 – 34054 – 34055 – 34056 – 34097).

Four of the six women offer offerings with one hand, while raising the other hand to Osiris and Anubis, which is an expression of greeting and reverence for them, (Griffiths, 1982) the same on stelae (CG 34023 – 34024).

The second group of women offer a sack of cloths which was a rare offering appeared on the stela CG 34035, sometimes strips of cloth are presented (CG 34023 – 34055).

Notes on the text

- Hm kA(y) nfr nb.f - The kA priest (the servant) his lord is good: considering (y) a sign of duality what is meant here is the two kA(s) of Osiris and Anubis, so one of these two men (holding 2 censers and making a libation) was a priest, perhaps he was not relative to the owners of the stela as the text mentions nothing about that.

- sA Imn (Htp) - The son of Amen(hotep): the name of Amenhotep was written Imn only, perhaps owing to the lack of space.
- sn .f sS KAY His brother the scribe Kay: CG mistakenly wrote  as , the letter  in sn is a feature of "Late Egyptian", his name maybe derived from the verb  kAi (devise – think out), if so the name of the brother means "the thinker - the wise one".
- sn .f #Awt His brother Khaout: it was written without a determinative.
- mwt.s @rt tAwy - mwt.s @rrt (?) Her mother @rt tAwy - @rrt (?): CG wrote the name as , but it was engraved on the stela as , if the artist mistakenly replaced  with  the name would be @rrt "the flower".
- sAt sAt mwt The daughter, the daughter of the mother: if the artist made a mistake in repeating the word sAt then the phrase would simply be " the daughter of the mother", but if he was right perhaps he meant the granddaughter.
- sAt.s iabt wrt snt.s irt mwt (.s) Her daughter iabt wrt her sister her mother's eye: Considering the meaning of iabt wrt (the great purifier) the daughter could be a priestess, note that it was unusual for women to have this title, it did not appear on any of the similar stelae. As for irt it took no determinative, and the phrase " her mother's eye" corresponds to what is said in the vernacular of modern times.

2.4. The bottom, the Htp di nsw formula

The stela ends at the bottom with the Htp di nsw formula:



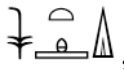
Htp di nsw(n) Wsir di.f Vt nbt nfirt wab(t) n
kA.tn iw.w wab(w) sp sn m pr TAY nb.w tA Dsr

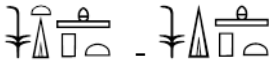
"An offering that the king gives (to) Osiris, that he may give every good purified thing to your KA, they purify twice in the house of all men (in) the sacred land (the necropolis).

Discussion



The Htp di nsw formula appeared at least from the 4th dynasty onwards. (Müller, 1933)

From the Old Kingdom until the end of the 13th Dynasty, the




hieroglyphic signs were arranged in this way: , but in the era of the New Kingdom, onwards, the order of the hieroglyphic signs


became as follows: . (Smither, 1939)

In the very end of the 12th dynasty or in the 13th dynasty onwards the

sign  was used instead of  like on the stela Cairo CG 20322. (Franke, 1988)

Notes on the text

- "Written backwards", the name of Osiris was written  while it appeared in the first register differently , the t of wab(t) preceded , perhaps to preserve the usual layout of the line, .tn

sould be .Tn. The artist used the sign  (man – men) to refer to the owners of graves in the necropolis.

Conclusion

- As most of the scenes in which Osiris holds the HkA scepter and the nVAVA flail date to the late 18th dynasty and the early 19th dynasty; the stela probably dates to this era.
- It seems that the sculptor of the stela was not professional, as he engraved the signs in a very simple way.
- Most probably the curved top represents a different art style in the stelae tops, as it appeared in the same era with stelae of straight tops, it did not represent in any way the celestial vault.
- Anubis unusually has here the title nTr aA.
- There is a great possibility that the two owners of the stela are brothers or a father and a married son as the text used the pronoun . f after the names in the second register that contains: a priest, a son (of Amenhotep), a daughter (maybe two), two brothers, two sisters, a granddaughter, two mothers (most probably a mother and a grandmother).

(*)The back of the stelae (the verso) was usually polished with no scenes or texts ; rarely was it left rough. (Bierbrier, 1999)

(**)Water poured on lotus flowers in front of Osiris and Anubis appeared in tombs, such as tomb No. 40 – in the Htp - in Qornat Marai - the reign of Amenhotep IV and Tutankhamen.

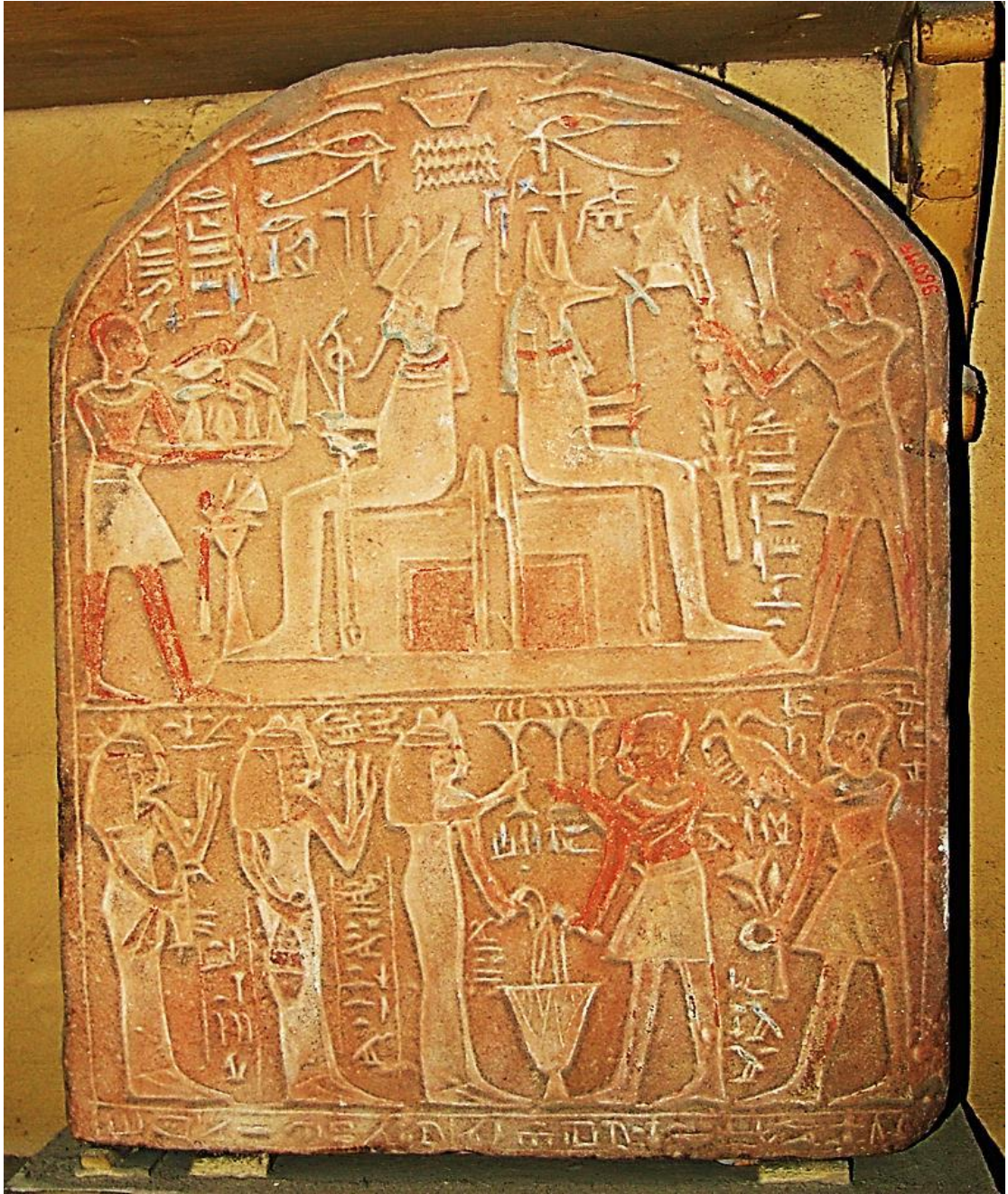


Plate 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3: Pouring water over the lotus flowers

Relief from temple of Seti I – Abydos (after Wise, 2009)



Fig. 4: Pouring water over the lotus flowers

Relief from temple of Seti I – Abydos (sailingstonetravel.com)

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sign in: 12-11-2020