

9) The final section declares the purpose of the *m'h't* monument in terms other than the usual statements of the consecration texts. Formulated as an address to readers of the stela, it combines a self-justification with a prayer for an Osirian spiritual afterlife. – Like Ded-Iqu and Djaa (Nos. 39 & 40) Semti used the opportunity of a royal mission to stop at Abydos in order to set up a memorial to himself, a memorial which, by all indications, was not a tomb but rather a cenotaph or a single stela.

42. Stela of the Overseer of the Treasury Ikhernofret

From Abydos
Berlin 1204
Reign of Sesostri III

PM V, 97. Schäfer, *Mysterien*; Aegypt. Inschr. I, 169-175; Sethe, *Les.*, no. 14, pp. 70f.; Simpson, *Terrace*, ANOC 1.1, pl. 1. ANET, 329f.; Lichtheim, *AEL I*, 123-125. Helck, *ArchOr.* 20 (1952), 72ff.; Anthes in *Fs Berlin*, 15-49; Leprohon, *JARCE* 15 (1979) 33-38; Franke, *Personendaten*, Dossier no. 27.

A massive round-topped limestone stela, 100 x 65 x 20 cm., framed by a raised border. In the lunette, under the winged sundisk, the standing figure of Osiris faces the titular of Sesostri III. Below it is the main text in twenty-four lines. At the bottom, Ikhernofret is seated on the left, facing an offering table and members of his family. On the raised border are the full titularies of Sesostri III and of Ikhernofret.

(1) The living Horus *Netjery-khepru*, Two Ladies *Netjery-mesut*, Gold-Horus *Kheper*, King of Upper and Lower Egypt *Khakaure*, Son of Re *Senwosret*, given life forever like Re.

(2) King's command to the Prince, Count, Royal Seal-bearer, Sole Companion, Overseer of the Two Gold-houses, Overseer of the Two Silver-houses, Overseer of the Treasury, Ikhernofret (*mr-sḏwt li-hr-nfrt*) :

(3) My majesty deigns to have you journey upstream to Thinite Abydos, to make monuments for my father Osiris Khentamenthes, and to adorn his secret (4) image with the fine gold which he has let my majesty bring back from Nubia in triumphant victory.

You will surely do this in (5) the best manner of acting for the benefit of my father Osiris. For my majesty sends you confident that you will do everything (6) to the heart's content of my majesty. For you were brought up as a pupil of my majesty. You have indeed grown up as a foster-son of my majesty (7) and sole pupil of my palace. My majesty made you a Companion when you were a youth of twenty-six years. My majesty did this (8) because I saw you as one of excellent counsel, keen of tongue, who came from the

womb as a wise one. Now my majesty (9) sends you to do this because my majesty knows that no one could do it all except you. Go then and return when you have done all that my majesty commanded.¹

(10) I acted² according to all that his majesty had commanded in furnishing all that my lord had commanded for his father Osiris Khentamenthes, lord of Abydos, great power in the nome of This.

(11) I served as "his beloved son" for Osiris Khentamenthes, and I furnished [his] great ['image'] of eternity and everlastingness.³

I made for him (12) the palanquin "Carrier of the beauty of Khentamenthes" of gold, silver, lapis lazuli, bronze, *ssndm*-wood, and *mrw*-wood. The gods (13) who attend him were fashioned, their shrines were made anew.

I made the hour-priests of the temple [diligent] at their tasks, and made them know (14) the ritual of every day and of the feasts of the beginnings-of-the-seasons.

I directed the work on the *neshmet*-bark; I fashioned the cabin.

(15) I adorned the breast of the lord of Abydos with lapis lazuli and turquoise, fine gold and all costly stones as (16) ornaments of the god's limbs.

I clothed the god in his regalia, in my office of Master-of-Secrets, my function of Stolist.

(17) I was pure of hand in adorning the god, a priest whose fingers are clean.

I conducted the Procession of Wepwawet when he goes forth to rescue his father⁴. (18) I repulsed the attackers of the *neshmet*-bark, I felled the foes of Osiris.

I conducted the Great Procession and followed the god in his strides. (19) I made the god's boat sail, Thoth guiding the sailing. I equipped the bark "Truly-risen-is-the-lord-of-Abydos" with a cabin (20) and affixed his beautiful regalia, that he might proceed to the domain of Peqer.

I cleared the god's path to his tomb (*m'h't*) in Peqer. (21) I rescued Wennofer on that day of great combat, and felled all his foes on the shore of Nedyt.

I made him go (22) inside the Great Bark, and it bore his beauty. I rejoiced the heart of the eastern deserts, I caused jubilation in the western deserts (23) when they saw the beauty of the *neshmet*-bark as it landed at Abydos.

I brought [Osiris Khentamenthes, lord of] Abydos, to his palace. I followed the god to his house. (24) His cleansing was done; his seat was made spacious, as I loosened the knot in ---; ['he came to rest' among] his followers, his retinue.

Notes

1) Compare the accounts of Wepwawet-aa and Senti (Nos. 31-32 & 41) about their youths, their rises in rank, and their being chosen for special missions or highest positions, with that of Ikhermofret. They share similar and identical formulations; but where the former give the background of their appointments in the form of self-presentations, Ikhermofret relates it in terms of a royal speech. One gets an insight into the various schemes of self-presentations. Here the royal command incorporates the laudation of the official. And the genre "royal speech" had a precursor in the "royal letter", such as the letter king Pepi II sent to his envoy Harkhuf (Urk. I, 128-131) — 2) *Ir.kwi* is another of those first-person old perfectives of which Senti had made such ample use. Gardiner, Gr. §310 had taken it to be a geminating form, but Edel, ZÄS 84 (1959) 105ff. has shown that there are no geminating old perfectives of *tertiaefirmae* verbs. — 3) Sethe's restoration *wi3.f wr*, "his great bark", was rightly questioned by Anthes, loc. cit. p. 33, n. 31. The *wr* bird is visible on Simpson's pl. 1. The illegible noun must have been a word for the cult statue of Osiris, whether *bsw* of line 3, or another. — 4) Here begins Ikhermofret's account of his leading the performance of the Osiris mysteries. As to the content and sequence of the Osirian festival that scholars call the "Osiris mysteries" we know today not much more about its Middle Kingdom form than what Schäfer had extrapolated from the sources in his basic monograph of 1904 cited above. For readers not familiar with the problems some further references are cited here: The sober articles "Osiris" and "Mysterien" in Bonnet's RÄRG. Helck, "Osirisritual" in ArchOr 20 (1952) 42-85. The entries "Hakerfest" and "Mysterien" in LÄ II, 929ff. and LÄ IV, 276f. Spiegel, Götter, 147ff. The labored reconstruction of the "mysteries" by Anthes, "Die Berichte des Neferhotep und des Ichernofret über das Osirisfest in Abydos" in Fs Berlin. And for the Osirian festival as celebrated in the Late Period, E. Chassinat, Le Mystère d'Osiris au mois de Khoiak. 2v. Cairo 1966-1968. — For the festival performed at Abydos in the Middle Kingdom, there is general agreement among scholars only on the one basic fact that the festival encompassed four distinct acts: 1. The "first procession", led by the god Wepwawet, which entailed combat against the enemies of Osiris. 2. The "great procession" of Osiris, the Egyptian accounts of which are so deliberately reticent as to defy all modern attempts to establish what took place. The surmises of Schäfer, Helck, and Anthes differ widely. There is consensus only on the one point that an image representing the dead Osiris was, in the course of the act, conveyed to the god's tomb in Peqer. 3. The renewal of the god's image during a night of *sdrt*, rendered as "sleep" or as "vigil". This seems to have been the most secret part of the whole secret proceedings. The festivity called "the night of *haker*" appears to have been a part of this act. The sources also name a great slaughter of rebels at this point. 4. The return voyage to Abydos of the renewed divine image among scenes of general rejoicing, and the god's reentry into his temple.