

## 45-47. Three Stelae of the Chamberlain Intef son of Sent

From Abydos  
BM 572, 562 & 581  
Sesostris I, year 39

Deriving from the spoils of the Anastasi collection, the three stelae must have stood together within one Abydene chapel, for they are closely similar in style and interdependent in their texts. The tall BM 572 will have occupied a central position. Beginning with the regnal date, its text focuses on the courtier's exalted career, describes his functions and lauds his performance.

Of BM 562 only the lower part is extant, amounting to about two-thirds of the stone. Its inscription provides the owner's moral profile in a prayerful recital of his virtues and good deeds, all told without reference to his official position.

BM 581 rounds it off by a hymn to the hallowed ground of Abydos, which now harbors his memorial, and a self-laudation phrased as a first-person speech of twenty sentences, each beginning with *ink*, "I am/was".

The relief scenes, too, are complementary. BM 572 has an offering-table scene joining Intef and his parents, and the two narrow registers below it are filled with family members. In BM 562 Intef stands in the lower left corner, leaning on a staff, and in BM 581 he stands in the upper left corner facing his consecration hymn.

### 45. BM 572

Piehl, *Inscriptions III*, xii-xiii; HT II, 22; Simpson, *Terrace*, ANOC 5.1, pl. 12. Franke, *Personendaten*, Dossier 138.

A tall, delicately carved limestone rectangle, 109.2 x 45.7 cm. The fourteen-line text fills the upper half. The lower half has the relief scenes in three registers.

(1) Year 39 under the majesty of Horus *Ankh-mesut*, the Good God, Lord of the Two Lands, King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Son of Re *Senwosret*, given life forever.

(2) An offering-that-the-king-gives (to) Osiris, lord of Busiris, Khentamenthes great god, lord of Abydos : a voice-offering of bread and beer and 1000 beef and fowl (3) to the honored Chamberlain (*mr-'bnwty*) Intef.

Usher of magnates of Upper Egypt,  
who presents them prostrate in (4) the prince-vizier's hall,  
submits (cases) for adjudgement at the hearing of duties,

and is mighty to punish one slack in (5) his service.<sup>1</sup>  
 Who explains to the querulous<sup>2</sup> and instructs the officials  
 in the hall of (6) the cattle tax,  
 of whom is said, "Await his coming"<sup>3</sup>  
 by those in any half-month jobs.  
 Attentive to (7) one busy with tasks,  
 and given thanks for the success  
 of inspection made long by sacred cows  
 in the presence of the great council.<sup>4</sup>  
 One stands and sits (8) by my goodness,  
 for I am a servant beloved;  
 I was granted to reach old age,  
 with my children holding office in (9) the palace.  
 Controller of works in Upper Egypt,  
 who knows the legal course of action,  
 and is wise in judging between two men.  
 (10) Uniquely skillful, excellent of counsel,  
 who heeds the words of those who know their speech,  
 who is sent because deemed worthy,<sup>5</sup>  
 (11) who gives his account to the judge,  
 'knowing the turn of the heart's concern'.<sup>6</sup>  
 Praised by his chiefs known in the lord's house,  
 (12) whose heart conducts his affairs,  
 who bends his arm to his superiors,  
 and is beloved by the king's courtiers.  
 (13) A famed name as a knower of things,  
 who follows the path without swerving,  
 who hears the word in the chapel (14) of Geb,  
 privy to the secrets of the judgment hall –  
 the honored Chamberlain Intef son of Sent.

#### Notes

1) Read '3 *snk kni hr wnwtf*; *kni* (Wb. V, 131) is here spelled *ink*. Much of the text is difficult and the copy in HT II has faults. With lines 4-7 I had substantial help from P. Kaplony whom I consulted. — 2) What is written as *šntw* is perhaps a contamination of *šni*, "ask", and *šnt*, "quarrel". — 3) On *s3w iwt.f* see p. 77, n. 11. — 4) *Spd-ib* and 'š3 *irw* are unusual terms. As for *sw3ḥ m3w m wrwt*, the meaning seems to be that assessing the cattle tax took extra long when sacred cows were included in the inspection because they were dealt with in a special way. — 5) On *h3b n mnḥ.f hr ib* see p. 76 with n. 11. — 6) *Rḥ phr n wnwnt m ib*; cf. *rḥ phr m swn ddt* in No. 47, line 7.

## 46. BM 562

Piehl, Inscriptions III, xiii-xiv; HT II, 24; Simpson, Terrace, ANOC 5.3, pl. 12.

The lower part of a rectangular limestone stela, now measuring 59.7 x 49.5 cm. There are fifteen lines of text, and in the lower left corner is the standing figure of Intef leaning on a staff.

(x) -----

(1) ..... on my stela<sup>e</sup>.<sup>1</sup>

(2) May the nobles who shall pass by speak,  
may they give me spirithood (3<sup>h</sup>),  
that I may live by the breath people give;  
reviving (3) my name makes them gods in a potent hereafter,  
and the *ba* is content when they make it remembered.

I endowed myself (4) for after-years,  
I labored at what would serve me;  
he who can<sup>2</sup> may imitate what I did for me :

(5) reaching the limits of knowledge of things.  
I set my goodness before my household,  
love of me pervaded the whole land;  
(6) I 'blackened'<sup>3</sup> no man to his master  
in order to seek favor<sup>4</sup> with a potentate.

I gave bread to the hungry, beer to the thirsty,  
(7) I ferried one I found stranded.

I quickened the pace under royal command  
and partook (8) of praises :<sup>5</sup>

"Man of rightness toward people,  
straight in conduct to the learner,<sup>6</sup>  
whence the people (9) say of him,  
'were the land full of his likes' !"<sup>7</sup>

I say (10) this to the members of my estate :  
I have buried the old, clothed (11) the naked,  
I committed no crime against people –  
a thing hateful (12) to the god –<sup>8</sup>

I did the justice desired by the king.

I came to<sup>9</sup> my town,

I descended (13) from my nome,  
having done what people love and gods (14) favor.

It was his majesty the King of Upper and Lower Egypt *Kheperkare* Son of Re *Senwosret*, ever living, (15) who placed me among his courtiers<sup>10</sup> – the honored Chamberlain Intef son of Sent.

## Notes

1) The word 'b' means both stela and offering stone, and the meaning "stelae" is suitable here. Mentuwsre (No. 44) also called his stela 'b'. — 2) The passage was mistranslated by Kees, Totenglauben<sup>2</sup>, 284, and *qn* here merely means "being able to". — 3) The meaning of *qr*, spelled without determinative, is obscure. Janssen, Autobiografie II, 192(44) proposed a derivation from *qrr*, "brand" (Wb. V, 61) in the sense of "blacken". — 4) Rather than postulating an unknown root *fr*, I read *d'r*, "to seek". The flattened shape of the cobra (hieroglyph I.10) recurs on BM 581 (No. 47) cols. 7 & 8 and BM 561 (No. 49) line 14 (cf. p. 116, n. 6). In all these instances the cobra rightly lacks the horns that belong to the horned-viper hieroglyph *f* (I.9); only here in BM 562 there is a faint indication of incipient horns, which I take to be a stone-cutter's blunder. As for *d'r* construed with the preposition *n*, it agrees with the meanings listed in Wb. V, 540, c & e, "seek to be useful", etc. — 5) The same phrase as in No. 31, of Wepwawet-aa, see p. 76 with n. 7. — 6) Reading '*q3 m sbi n sb3(w)*'. Janssen, Autobiografie II, 26 top also considered reading '*q3 ms n sb3*'. — 7) *H3 i3 mh m mitw.f*, a proverbial saying which recurs on the Edfu stela of prince *Hnsw-m-W3st* (Helck, 2. Zwischenzeit, p. 42, line 6) where the scribe forgot the verb *mh*. — 8) Another of the many moral clichés which Intef shares with Wepwawet-aa (No. 31, p. 76). While all these are from the stock of Middle Kingdom moralizing phrases, the number of shared sentences on the stelae of these two men is so considerable as to suggest a connection. — 9) In using this ancient formula – *ii.n.i m niwt.i h3.n.i m spt.i* – the scribe changed *m niwt.i* to *r niwt.i* – an error? or a deliberate change so as to indicate the coming to the holy city of Abydos? — 10) Yet another phrase shared with stela No. 31, 1. 7 (p. 76).

### No. 47. BM 581

HT II, 23; Sethe, Les., no. 20, pp. 80f.; Simpson, Terrace, ANOC 5.2, pl. 12. Lichtheim, AEL I, 120-123; Spiegel, Götter, 131-137.

A rectangular limestone stela, 66 x 36.8 cm., carved in the same delicate style as the other two. The carving style, it seems to me, is closely similar to that of the Munich stela of Wepwawet-aa (No. 32), while the literary affinities of Intef are with the Leiden stela of Wepwawet-aa (No. 31), as we have noted. The stela is divided in three registers. In the uppermost, Intef stands on the left with one arm raised toward his seven-line consecration text. The two lower registers each have ten text columns of identical length, all beginning with the word *ink*, "I am/was". We have encountered this form of self-presentation in the stela of Mentuwsre (No. 44) and noted there that it flourished in the reign of Sesostris I (p. 105). It reaches its culmination on this stela of Intef son of Sent, in a visual and verbal symmetry which could go no further. The text paints the portrait of the perfect civil servant who is controlled, calm, patient, friendly, concerned, generous, candid yet discreet, wise, skilled, and loyal. As a catalog of virtues it would also be a suitable

declaration to be made before the divine tribunal, and Spiegel, loc. cit. surmised it to be an anticipation in positive terms of the "negative confessions" of BD 125.

The consecration text, which precedes the self-laudation, is a poetic and fervent praise of the hallowed ground of Abydos, upon which Intef has now built his monument, called 'h't – by all indications a cenotaph.

*Consecration Text (lines 1-7)*

(1) Kissing the ground to Khentamenthes,  
seeing the beauty of Wepwawet  
(2) by the Chamberlain Intef, he says :  
Now as for this chapel ('h't),  
I made (it) (3) in the desert of Abydos –  
this island of refuge,  
rampart ordained (4) by the All-Lord,  
seat blessed since the time of Osiris,  
settled by Horus (5) for the forbears,  
served by the stars in heaven,  
mistress of mankind,  
(6) to whom the great of Busiris come,  
peer of On in (7) blessedness,  
whereon the All-Lord-rests –  
A voice-offering for the honored Chamberlain Intef son of Sent.

*Self-Presentation (cols. 1-20)*

- (1) I am silent with the angry, polite with the ignorant,  
so as to quell strife.
- (2) I am cool, free of haste, one who knows the issue, foresees the  
outcome.
- (3) I am a speaker<sup>1</sup> in situations of strife<sup>2</sup>, one who knows which word  
causes anger.
- (4) I am friendly when I hear my name to him who would tell me his  
heart's concern.
- (5) I am controlled, pleasant, friendly, one who calms the weeper with  
good words.
- (6) I am generous<sup>3</sup> to his client, one helpful to his equal.
- (7) I am a straight one in his lord's house, who knows flattery when it is  
spoken (*rḥ phr m sw n ddt*).
- (8) I am generous, open-handed (*3w-drt*), rich in food, not stingy.<sup>4</sup>
- (9) I am a friend of the poor, well-meaning to the have-not.
- (10) I am one who feeds the hungry in need, one open-handed to the pauper.
- (11) I am a knower for him who lacks knowledge, who teaches a man what  
is useful to him.
- (12) I am a straight one in the king's house, who knows what to say in

- every office.
- (13) I am a listener who hears the truth 'and passes over what seems false'.<sup>5</sup>
- (14) I am one pleasing to his lord's house, one remembered for his good qualities.
- (15) I am kindly in the offices, one patient (*w3ḥ-ib*), free of ...<sup>6</sup>
- (16) I am kindly, not short-tempered, not one who attacks a man for a remark.
- (17) I am accurate like the scales, straight and true like Thoth.
- (18) I am firm-footed, excellent of counsel, faithful to his benefactor.
- (19) I am a knower who taught himself knowledge, who consults so as to be consulted.<sup>7</sup>
- (20) I am a speaker in the hall of justice, skilled in speech in situations of anxiety.<sup>8</sup>

#### Notes

1) *Mdww*, here and in 1.20, is a "speaker" who intercedes and conciliates, like German "Fürsprecher". — 2) *Swt-ḏnd*, and in 1.20 *swt ḥns-ib*, show that not only was the singular, *st*, "place", used to create abstractions, but the plural, too, could transform concrete "places" into abstract "situations". — 3) Lit. "bright-faced" (*ḥḏ-ḥr*). — 4) Lit. "free of face-veiling" (*šw m ḥbs-ḥr*). — 5) The translation of *sw3w3 isst ḥr ib* is uncertain, owing to the unknown *isst*. — 6) For the unknown *rrit* Faulkner, Dict. 151 guesses "piggishness". — 7) The same two sentences occur on stela Leiden V 6 (No. 48), see p. 113 with n. 8. — 8) On *swt-ḥns-ib* see n. 2 above.

### 48. Stela of the Overseer of Districts Intef

From Abydos  
Leiden V 6 = No. 4  
Amenemhet II, year 9

Piehl, Inscriptions III, xxiiiA-xxivB; Boeser, Beschr. II, no. 4, pl. III. Spiegel, Götter, 125-127.

A tall rectangular limestone stela with cornice, 119 x 57 cm., of unrecorded provenience but certainly from Abydos. The text covers the upper half of the surface in sixteen lines, with line 1, the regnal date, written on the rim of the cornice, above the cavetto design. On either edge of the stone is a text column containing the adoration formula. The lower half has three registers. The first shows Intef and his wife seated before offerings and receiving more gifts from two sons. The second register has a similar scene with Intef's parents. In the bottom register additional male and female