

of his house : in case of north-wind he will sit on the south side (*hr rsy*). If I understand the stela text at all, Ankhu is saying that he was a very capable person who came out on top in every situation.

44. Stela of the Steward Mentuwosre

From Abydos
Metropolitan Museum 12.184
Sesostris I, year 17

PM V, 102. C. Ransom-Williams, *The Stela of Menthu-weser*, New York 1913; Sethe, *Les.*, no. 19, pp. 79f.; Hayes, *Scepter I*, 299f. & fig. 195.

An upright rectangular painted limestone stela, 103 x 50 cm., of excellent quality. The surface is divided in two halves. In the upper half is the inscription in three lines and sixteen columns. In the lower half Mentuwosre is seated on the left, facing an offering table, two sons, and a daughter.

(1) Year 17 under the majesty of Horus *Ank-mesut*, the Good God *Kheperkare*, ever living. My majesty gives you this stela as (2) an offering-that-the-king-gives (to) Osiris, the great god, lord of Abydos¹, that he may give a voice-offering of bread and beer, beef and fowl, alabaster and clothing, and all things good and pure (3) on which a god lives, to the *ka* of the honored Steward Mentuwosre, born of Abihū (*mr-pr Mntw-wsr ms n 'b-iḥw*). He says :

(4) I am one who cares for the sick, buries the dead, gives goods to one in need.²

(5) I am a brave second in the king's house, one sent for strength of character.³

I was overseer of the double granary at the count of (6) northern barley.

I was overseer of people in excess of thousands.

I was overseer of cattle, overseer of (7) goats, overseer of donkeys, overseer of sheep, overseer of swine.

I delivered clothing to the treasury (8) the accounting being in my charge in the king's house, and I was acclaimed and thanked.

I am one generous with fodder (9) and food; one whom I gave did not lack; I dealt big meat cuts to those seated (10) beside me.

I am one loved of his kindred, one close to his kin; I did not avert the face from one in (11) servitude.

I am father to the orphan, support of widows; no man slept hungry (12) in my district.

I hindered no man at the ferry; I maligned no man to his superior; I paid no heed to (13) calumny.

I am one who speaks in the presence of nobles, one free of talking gossip.⁴

I am one who listens to (14) justice, and leans not to him who can pay.

I am wealthy, rich in treasure, free of loss in all my (15) goods.

I am owner of oxen, rich in goats, owner of donkeys, rich in sheep. I am rich in barley and spelt, opulent (16) in clothing, without loss in all my wealth.

I am rich in ships, great in vintages.⁵

Now as for all people (17) who shall harken to this stela (*'b'*), who are among the living and shall say, "It is true", and whose children shall say to their children (18) "It is true, there is no lie in it", and as for every scribe who shall read this stela and all people who shall approach it : as you love life and hate death (19) and as Khentamenthes will love you and favor you at his terrace⁶, you shall say, "Bread, beer, beef, fowl, food offerings to the owner of this stela".

Notes

- 1) With regard to the regnal dates on stelae Nos. 30, 31-32, 36, 39 and 40, we noted that they do not signify that the stelae owners were envoys on official missions; rather do they indicate an interest in recording the date of erection of the monuments. In the case of Me.tuwsre that interest was heightened by the fact that the stela was a royal gift. That the stela was set up at Abydos is indicated by its being called a royal offering to Osiris of Abydos, and by the reference to "Khentamenthes at his terrace" in the closing statement. —
- 2) The entire self-presentation is phrased as a first-person speech in which nominal sentences beginning with *ink* alternate with verbal sentences employing first-person verb forms. Compare this with the third-person self-presentation of the steward Henu (No. 21). One sees how the scribes explored the possible forms of self-presentation. The first-person form reaches its peak in the reign of Sesostris I, most notably in stela BM 581 = No. 47. Also deserving of note is how scribe and sculptor here worked closely together on the layout, so that the introduction occupies three horizontal lines at the top and the speech fills sixteen vertical columns precisely aligned to fill the whole width under the horizontal lines. —
- 3) The term is *mds bi(3)t*. —
- 4) The precise meaning of *p3w* has not been established. —
- 5) Note the assonances of *h'w* and *h3w*. —
- 6) Note the phrase "at his terrace" (*r rd.f*) and that *rd* here has the house determinative.