

13-270 Limestone round-topped stela of Amenemhat, early 18th Dynasty, c.1550-1450 BCE.

This stela of the early Dynasty 18 supervisor Amenemhat was bought by Sir William Burrell on 3 May 1954 at the very end of his life (he died in 1958 at the age of 96), from the dealer Spink & Son (from whom he acquired many of his Egyptian antiquities) for the sum of £30. Although the provenance of the object is not known it possibly came from western Thebes. It depicts the deceased Amenemhat smelling the perfume of a lotus blossom and sitting beside his wife, Henuttawy, on a lion-footed chair. Before him is a table of offerings piled with vegetables, fruit, bread and the foreleg of an ox, being offered by his brother, the scribe Senenu. Both men carry a bolt of folded cloth in one hand as a symbol of their authority. Below them Amenemhat's three sons kneel, also smelling lotus blossoms, before another offering table. It is possible therefore that Amenemhat and his sons are all deceased, so explaining why it is that his brother rather than his eldest son performs the funerary ritual and hence inherits his estate. Alternatively, the three sons are represented as attending the funerary banquet for the deceased.

The inscriptions read:

Lunette:

ptr sn

"Viewing eternity"

(two falcon eyes show that this is the sky domain of Horus who oversees all)

Upper Register:

hry [imn]-m-h3t

"The supervisor [Amen]-em-hat"

(hry = "over" or "above" hence meaning an "overseer", "supervisor" or "manager")

nbt-pr hnwt-ttwy

"The lady of the estate, Henut-tawy"

(her name means "mistress of the twin lands")

in sn=f s-cnḥ rn=f sh snnw

"It is his brother who makes his name live, the scribe Senenu"

(note the importance of preserving the name to ensure the survival of deceased's spirit)

Middle register:

s? = f k3-m-ntr

"His son Ka-em-netjer"

s3 = f [imn]-m-ipt

"His son [Amen]-em--ipet"

s3 = f [imn]-nht

"His son [Amen]-nakht"

Lower Register:

htp-di-nsw 3sir hki dt ntr cl hnty imntt

"An offering which the king gives to Osiris, ruler of eternity, great god, foremost of the westerners"

di = f prt-hrw t hnkt k3(w) 3pd(w) mnht sntr rnrht rnpwt nbt ht nbt nfrt wcbt

"that he may give a voice-offering of bread and beer, oxen and fowl, clothing, incense, oil, every vegetable, and all things perfect and pure"

cnht ntr im=s n k3 n hry imn-m-h\$ṯ

"on which a god lives, for the ka of the supervisor Amen-em-hat".