

THE STELOPHORE OF AMENHOTEP AND ITS INTERESTING DETAILS

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It is a great pleasure to contribute to this celebration of Emily Teeter's esteemed career through this tribute to her work within the Egyptological and museum communities. With this brief note, I wish to salute her sharp eye for the history and detail of museum objects in addition to her ever-keen interest in the work of others and, not least, her support of CIPEG.

When statuette ÆIN 49 in the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek's Egyptian collection was recently requested as a loan for an exhibition in Budapest about the reign of Amenhotep II,¹ it prompted a closer look. The statuette belonged to a man named Amenhotep and is of the type known as a 'stelophore' or 'stelophorous statue', which typically shows an individual with raised hands kneeling behind a stela (variants of the form can show the individual supporting the stela on their knees or holding it). It is a fine and well-preserved example of this group. Previous publications have drawn attention to the clear-cut inscription of a sun hymn on the miniature stela and the additional vertical column of hieroglyphs found on the back. The details that will be brought to light here, however, were added to the top of the stela, in the space between the stela and Amenhotep's chin. This part of a stelophore is not normally decorated, an interesting fact that raises the question of why it was carved in this specific case.

THE ACQUISITION OF THE STELOPHORE

The stelophore of Amenhotep was acquired in Paris at the sale of the collection of Baron Jacques Menascé in 1891 and was thus among the relatively early

¹ The exhibition, originally scheduled to open in the spring of 2020, has now been postponed to April 2021.

objects in the Egyptian collection of brewing magnate Carl Jacobsen (1842–1914).² Valdemar Schmidt (1836–1925), Denmark’s first Egyptologist and Jacobsen’s main aid in establishing an Egyptian collection,³ was dispatched to Paris to attend the auction. He wrote home to Jacobsen before, during, and after the auction, where he also bought a number of bronze figurines of deities for Jacobsen’s Egyptian Pantheon.⁴



FIG. 1: Steloophore of Amenhotep, ÆIN 49. (Photo by the author, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek.)

- 2 On Menascé, see Bierbrier 2019: 312–13. Jacobsen’s first Egyptian acquisition was a coffin with a mummy in 1884, see Jørgensen 2015: 17–20. For the history of the collections of Carl Jacobsen and the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek cf. Buhl Andersen 2019 et al.: 7–15.
- 3 Jørgensen 2015: 13–15 about the relationship between Jacobsen, Schmidt, and the Egyptian collection at the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek.
- 4 Jørgensen 2015: 23, figs 14–25. Schmidt was a man with a very principled nature and, when Jacobsen had provided him with too much money for his travel expenses, he would buy additional objects and donate them to the Glyptotek. This was the case with some of the bronzes at the Menascé sale, as well as other occasions. The letters from Schmidt to Jacobsen are stored in the archive of the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek.

In the sale catalogue for the Menascé collection the statuette was lot no. 1 and referred to as an ‘Adorant’, i.e. ‘worshipper’.⁵ It was clearly a highly valued object, indicated by its prominent position in the catalogue and the fact that it was the only object to be given two photographs. The auction began at 2pm on 23 February 1891 in the Hôtel Drouot, and continued the next day; the sales objects were put on display for study from 1–6pm the day before the sale. Surprisingly, though, lot no. 1 was not the first item to be sold at the sale, which did not take place in numerical order. From the correspondence between Schmidt and Jacobsen, we learn that lot no. 16, a granite naophore with an Osiris shrine, was also a popular item and that Henri Hoffmann, a known antique dealer in Paris, was interested in purchasing it.⁶ Schmidt wrote that it was mostly a political decision to let lot 16 go to Hoffmann,⁷ who had told him that lot 1 was worth 5000 French Francs and that he wanted either lot 1 or lot 16 for his own collection. Hoffmann appreciated this gesture and when lot no. 1 came up, Schmidt, ultimately, only had to compete with the Louvre. The French museum’s highest bid was 2050 Fr, which allowed Schmidt to acquire it for 2100 Fr.

THE STELOPHORE OF AMENHOTEP

The stelophore is made of limestone. It is 32 cm high, 16.5 cm wide and 22 cm in depth. Amenhotep’s skin and mouth are painted reddish. He wears a long white loincloth and a striated wig with curls behind and below the ears, where the black colour is preserved in its lower parts. The style dates it to the reign of either Thutmosis III or, more likely, Amenhotep II.⁸ The hieroglyphs and motif on both the frontal stela and the back ‘pillar’, which is also shaped like a round-topped stela, are in sunk relief and all painted yellow. The back ‘pillar’ is somewhat taller than the front stela, matching the height of the kneeling Amenhotep, and the complete composition rests on a rectangular base with rounded corners, extending a little in front of the stela.

A closer look at ÆIN 49 reveals, on one hand, fine details such as Amenhotep’s bent toes with their toenails shown, his raised hands touching the back of the stela, and his chest with rolls of fat indicated. On the other hand, the red paint is somewhat sloppily applied in places (fig. 1) and the base is higher at the left side (from the viewer’s perspective). Additionally, the decoration on the lunette of the stela, with a pair of *udjat* eyes on both sides of a *shen* sign above three wavy lines of water, is not completely centred. This motif is placed a little to the right while the *shen* is not totally horizontal and its

5 Legrain 1891: 1–2, pl. I.

6 For Hoffmann, see Bierbrier 2019: 221–22. The front page of the sales catalogue names Hoffmann as the legally required ‘Expert’ for the sale.

7 Hoffmann sold it again in 1894, cf. Legrain 1894: 15–16, pl. VIII (no. 39).

8 Jørgensen 1998: 62. Cf. also Stewart 1964: 169 and Stewart 1967: 34 for the dating of this type of stelophore with the stela resting on the ground ‘from c. Amenhotep II’.

two ends of ‘rope’ are not of matching length, all of which lends the otherwise perfect composition a charming, human touch.

The text of the stela⁹ starts by identifying Amenhotep as Scribe at the Offering Table in the ‘House of Amun’, i.e. Amun’s temple estate,¹⁰ and identifies both his father Amenemhat, who was Overseer of Scribes, and his mother Amenuser, Mistress of the House. The remainder is Amenhotep’s hymn to the sun god. In the first invocation the deity is named ‘Ra in the middle of the sky,’ while in the subsequent commencement of Amenhotep’s recitation, he is ‘Ra-Atum, Lord of All the World, who came into being at the beginning of times’. After praising the sun god, the text concludes with the reason for Amenhotep’s prayers: his wish that the sun god will ‘watch over [Amenhotep’s] destiny and



FIG. 2: The inscription on top of the stela of ÆIN 49 and the offering table on top of the negative space between Amenhotep and the stela. (Photo by the author, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek.)

accomplish all good for [him] every day.’ Here the deity’s name is in the shorter form, ‘my Lord, Ra’. On the back ‘pillar’ the single column of inscription in the middle is a short text where the venerated Amenhotep is under [the protection] of Ra-Horakhty. His title is, here, written in the short logogram form of the offering table (Gardiner R3).¹¹

NEGATIVE SPACE AND THE INTERESTING DETAIL

In fashioning a stelophore it was necessary to consider how best to deal with the negative space the image possessed, namely the space between the stela and the person behind it (fig. 2). The stela itself could rest on the knees or thighs of the worshipper or

9 For a complete translation see Jørgensen 1998: 62; Assmann 1999: 145 (no. 52); Podemann Sørensen 2017: 10.

10 *Pr-Imn* is sometimes identified with Karnak, but Eichler 2000: 9–11 refers to the difficulties of interpreting *pr* as temple or domain; she prefers domain (or estate) and states “Das *pr-Imn* umfasst verschiedene Teildomänen, die über das ganze Land verstreut liegen dürfen.” She mentions Amenhotep ÆIN 49 and his title p. 167–68 and 258, no. 129 where it is suggested that he might be identified with Amenhotep no. 128 with variations of the title. See also Binder 2010: 4 n. 27 (citing ÆIN 49) and 5–6 about the title and translation of *m pr-Imn* as ‘in the estate of Amun’.

11 Binder 2010: 3, who states that this is the more common form.

stand before him, as in the case of ÆIN 49,¹² and it was important that the adoring hands, which in most cases were shown touching the stela,¹³ should be visible, together with the kneeling legs. On most stelophores the breast and the area below the chin were cut free (fig. 3), but in Amenhotep's case most of the stone was retained and smoothed. It looks as though his chin is resting on the negative space, with only the sides of his neck and chest being visible. The horizontal edge of the negative space between the stela and Amenhotep's chin has rounded sides, but it was perfect for an added illustration of offerings made in low, raised relief (figs 2, 4).

A broad *htp*-sign is made parallel to the stela with a round loaf on either side of the *htp* bread and with meat and vegetable offerings 'on top' as the space narrows towards the chin (and mouth) of Amenhotep. He is thus *directly* provided with eternal offerings – or 'all good, every day'. On top of the stela itself an additional inscription was added: 'bread from the House of Ra'. The hieroglyphs are larger and more widely spaced than those of the stela, so they fit the thickness of the stela, and the length of the inscription corresponds with the width of the *htp*-sign. The inscription is thus combined with the depiction of offerings, although the top of the stela is on a slightly

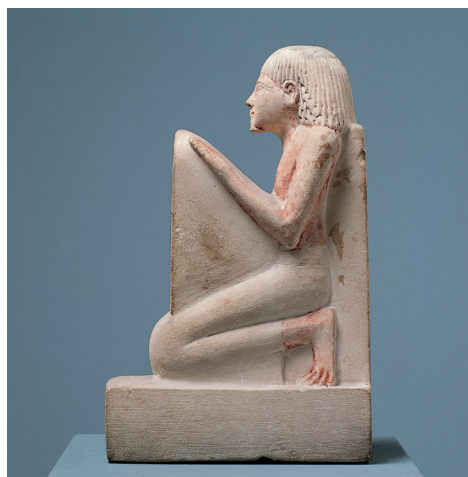


FIG. 3: ÆIN 663, side view. (Photo: Ole Haupt, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek.)

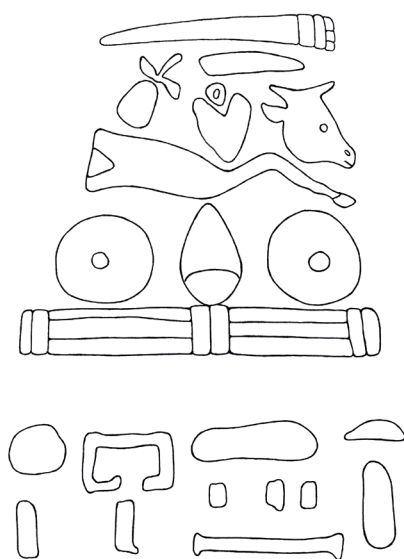


FIG. 4: The inscription on top of the stela of ÆIN 49 and the offering table on top of the negative space between Amenhotep and the stela. (Drawing by Ida Adsbøl Christensen.)

12 Stewart 1967: 34 for his short version of the chronological significance of the position of the stela. Also mentioned by Vandier 1958: 471.

13 Winlock 1920: 2–3 about the position of the hands.

higher level. These hieroglyphs are relatively coarse and imperfectly aligned, looking rather like an afterthought. It may, however, still have been made by the same scribe/artist as the inscriptions on the stela and the back, as the writing of the *n* has the same shape, with only one ripple at either end. The added inscription and decoration was mentioned in the Menascé sales catalogue and most of it is also visible in one of the two illustrations of the piece.¹⁴ In the early publications by Schmidt it is also noted, but not in the subsequent museum catalogues.¹⁵

Amenhotep is, as mentioned, ‘Scribe in the House (Estate) of Amun,’ but in the extra text atop the stela he apparently prays for bread from the House of Ra: in other words, from the estate of the principal god of Heliopolis instead of from the Theban equivalent, in whose estate he worked.¹⁶ Since a stelophore is concerned with sun worship this may have been deemed more appropriate.

OTHER EXAMPLES OF ADDITIONAL INSCRIPTIONS/DECORATION

Other examples of stelophores with an added inscription and/or decoration may be identified. The best parallel is the stelophore of Amenemhet in Berlin Ägyptisches Museum Inv. 2316 from the mid-Eighteenth Dynasty like *ÆIN 49*¹⁷ (fig. 5). Here ‘his beloved wife’ is mentioned on an additional piece of stone below the stela between Amenemhet’s legs. The profile view shows that he is wearing a short kilt, and the inscribed protrusion looks like the central element of a *shendyt* kilt. This extra text continues with his wife’s name on the top of the base. Amenemhet’s stelophore parallels *ÆIN 49* in having an additional inscription on the left side of the negative space below the chin, between hand and chest. Like *ÆIN 49*, Amenemhet’s stela is also connected to his chin, but the upper part is less spacious than *ÆIN 49* and the added inscription is placed on the side. I have not seen the stela in person, but photographs suggest the inscription, which is not well written, mentions ‘his father’.

A further example (fig. 6) also belongs to another Amenemhet, from Thebes, Subsidiary Tomb R. 12,

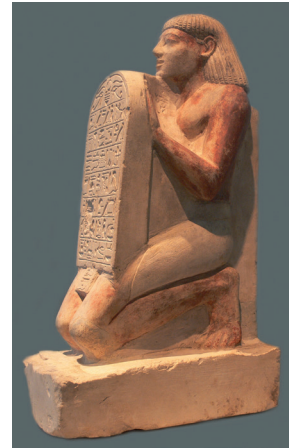


FIG. 5: Stelophore of Amenemhet, Egyptian Museum Berlin, Inv. 2316. (Photo by Andreas Praefcke, Commons Wikimedia, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Stelophor_des_Amenemhet.jpg.)

14 Legrain 1891: 1: ‘Une table d’offrandes est représentée entre Amenhotep et la stèle. Ces offrandes sont, d’après l’inscription: “des pains de la maison de Ra”.’ The illustration to the right on pl. 1.

15 Schmidt 1899: 83; 1908: 128; 1912: 54. But not later: Mogensen 1930: 18–19 (A70); Koefoed-Petersen 1936: 9 with the hieroglyphs on the stela and the back; 1938: 13; 1950: 30–31; Jørgensen 1998: 62.

16 Spencer 1984: 20 mentions both estates.

17 Porter and Moss 1999: 566 (no. 801-633-102). See fig. 5 above and for a discussion of the possible two wives of Amenemhet and TT82: https://www.osirisnet.net/tombes/nobles/amenemhat82/e_amenemhat82_05.htm.

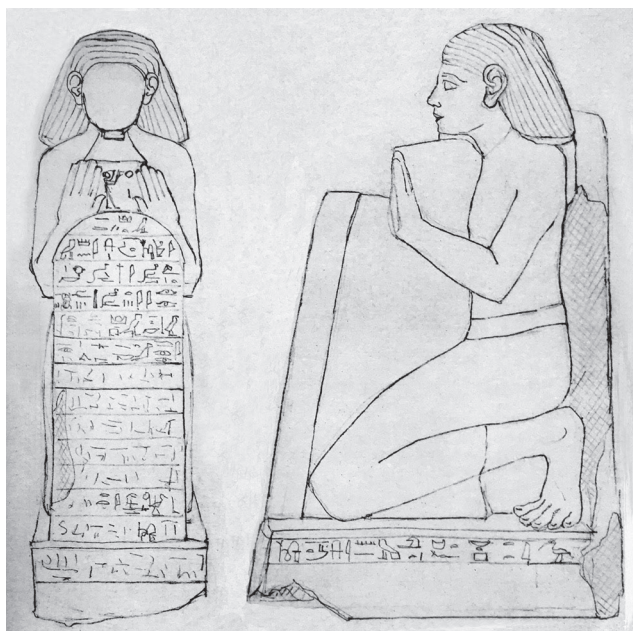


FIG. 6: Stelophore of Cairo, Egyptian Museum, JE 34583. (From Hornemann 1957: pl. 630.)

Asâsîf, at the foot of the causeways near the Valley Temple of Hatshepsut, now in the Egyptian Museum Cairo, JE 34583 and also dated to mid-Eighteenth Dynasty.¹⁸ This reveals an additional illustration on the negative space between the hands of Amenemhet, above the stela showing a man worshipping the sun.¹⁹ As the stela has no lunette decoration but Horakhty (with no sun disc on the head of the falcon) written as the start of the text, the text above may (also) be the actual start although ‘the worshipping person’ (Gardiner A30) is rather larger than the hieroglyphs on the stela.

The final example (not illustrated) from the same period displays a similar decoration at the space between the hands although the sculpture is not a genuine stelophore, *per se*. It is, rather, like a square pillar inscribed on all four sides with a sun hymn, and the owner’s head and raised hands emerging at the top. This belonged to Sa-Renenutet and was found in Karnak, and is now in the Egyptian Museum Cairo, CG 632.²⁰ Between his hands is carved a kneeling man worshipping the name of Ra-Horakhty, but in this case, it is repeated as the start of the text. On the horizontal space above his ‘shoulders’ Sa-Renenutet is ‘under [the protection of] the Great God’. The additional text here can thus be considered a parallel to the text on the back ‘pillar’ of ÆIN 49.

¹⁸ Hornemann 1957: pl. 630.

¹⁹ Another example with decoration of the negative space is British Museum EA1222, a stelophore from the post-Amarna period with a kneeling woman with arms outstretched in an attitude of adoration on the negative space between figure and stela. For more details see https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/Y_EA1222.

²⁰ Borchardt 1925: 180, pl. 116; Hornemann 1957: pl. 634; Vandier 1958, 473–74, pl. CLXI.3 lists it with the stelophores.

CONCLUSION

To sum up, there were, as with every category of ancient Egyptian sculpture, individual possible variations when composing a stelophore, but the artists responsible for ÆIN 49 were certainly innovative. Although there are a few other examples of decoration carved on the negative space of stelophores, ÆIN 49 remains unique in the ways in which the negative space and the top of the stela were utilised. The ‘extra’ offerings must have been intended for Amenhotep and, very appropriately, were placed right in front of his mouth. If more space for an inscription had been required, it could have been added on the base in front of the stela. Moreover, the sculpture with its back ‘pillar’ shaped like an additional round-topped stela and the base with rounded front corners makes an elegant composition, somewhat different from other stelophores, and even the sun hymn, not dealt with here in detail, is unique.²¹ 🙏

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²¹ Assmann 1999: 145: ‘Der Hymnus ist wohl eher als eine permanente Anbetung des Sonnengottes während seines Tageslaufes gedacht denn als eine Anbetung speziell am Mittag, was - von der 6. Hymne des Stundenrituals und Nr. 19 abgesehen - ein ganz singulärer Fall wäre ...’.

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