

Stela of Neswy



From Thebes, Egypt
Ptolemaic Period, perhaps 3rd century BC

Neswy and the 'Great Ennead'

Numerous wooden stelae made in the Ptolemaic period have been found in Thebes, but almost nothing is known of their exact origin. It is likely that they come from shaft tombs with one or two chambers, probably without structures above ground level. The coffins from Neswy's burial are now in Stockholm.

Neswy is shown adoring a multitude of deities. At the top Neswy and his ba spirit (the small human-headed bird) are shown worshipping six gods of the 'Great Ennead'. In the lower register is 'the great ennead of the West'; this group of deities are concerned with the welfare of the deceased. Included here are Osiris, Isis, and Horus, as well as Anubis. The lower part of the stela is a five-line prayer to the solar deities Re-Horakhty and Khepri. The two wooden feet at the bottom allow the stela to be free-standing.

M.L. Bierbrier (ed.), *Hieroglyphic texts from Egypt-5, Part 11* (London, The British Museum Press, 1987)