

Memorial Types

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THE STELE

The Stele type, Egyptian and Greek in its origin, is the classic predecessor of the modern Tablet type. In fact, the Stele is purely a Tablet example, but because of its unique classical perfection it is unquestionably worthy of type distinction. Its usual form is an upright slab crowned with a cap, extensively ornamented in bas-relief, surmounted on one or two bases or occasionally rising direct from the ground without a base structure. If used with bases, the best character of the Stele type is brought forth by making the entire composition about twice as high overall as the width across the front of the bottom of the base. The form of the crown ornamentation might vary the height to some extent.

In many of the ancient examples of the Stele, events of the life or death of the person to whom it was erected are depicted in bas-relief carving on the upright slab in the surface below the crown. The Stele should not be greater in thickness from front to back than stability requires. Its appeal, like the Tablet and Panel types, is by virtue of character and graceful lines rather than mass. The ornamentation of this type should be extensive and creates an unusual opportunity for the sculptor to display his skill.

Either double, single or no bases at all covers an extensive range of the ethical in the design

of the Stele. In some very beautiful examples of the Stele type, the die, in which case it is taller in proportion to its width, rises up from the ground without underplacing of a base structure. In many cases, the die and crown are carved solid, but modern commercial economy has caused the recent examples to be executed in separate pieces. The weight of the crown is usually quite sufficient to insure stability, and in the interest of economy, it may be considered quite proper to develop this particular structure in a separate piece.

The principles of environment and application set forth in bulletin regarding the Tablet type are equally applicable to the Stele type. It is best adapted to mark a single grave or a four grave lot, two spaces in front and two spaces behind. When best situated it is surrounded by other memorials of a lower height such as the panel or sarcophagus types.

The cresting ornaments shown in the accompanying Plate are just a few of the many designs used by the Greeks to finish off the tops of their monumental stelae. The Greeks devised a great variety of ornaments for this purpose, all similar in type to the ones here illustrated; but the four examples reproduced may be considered as fairly representative of some of the best general types.

