OFFERING STANDS FROM THE PYRAMID OF AMENEMHET I

HENRY G. FISCHER

Lila Acheson Wallace, Curator in Egyptology, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

In an article entitled “Two Royal Monuments of the Middle Kingdom Restored” (The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin 22 [1963–64] pp. 235–245) I concluded that the upper portion of a red granite offering stand donated by Dulaney Logan (63.46) derived from the North Pyramid at Lisht and that it was one of a pair that stood in front of our offering table from that pyramid (09.180.526). Further evidence for this conclusion has subsequently come to light among notes that were made by William C. Hayes in the winter of 1933–34, recording miscellaneous material that had been excavated at the North Pyramid during previous seasons. These notes show a fragment of an offering stand (apparently left at the site) that was identical in material, scale, and design (Figures 1, 2). Since it shows the tops of the heraldic plants of Upper and Lower Egypt, as in the case of the more complete stand (Figure 3), this fragment confirms the existence of the pair as well as the correctness of the provenance.

As the late Dr. T. George Allen pointed out (by letter to Eric Young), the phrase לק תחפ on the top of the more complete stand (Figure 4) poses a difficulty. To him the lack of the indirect genitive after לק (tpyt) suggested that the signs in question may actually be לק (whmt), which would yield the meaning: “mansion which repeats offerings.” This may in fact be the right solution, despite the apparent lack of any parallel for such a designation, and despite the likelihood that such a designation would more probably employ the infinitive of וה (‘mansion of repeating offerings’) rather than a participle.

On the other hand the alternatives לק and לק were both carefully considered when my drawing was made, and לק tpyt actually occurs in the following statements referring to a temple of Amenemhet I’s grandson, Amenemhet II, presumably located at Abydos:

1. Described thus: “Fragment of a red granite column-like object, circular in plan, with a minimum diameter of 17 cm., but flaring out toward the top at a rate of 1.5 cm. in 8 cm. Maximum height of fragment 13 cm. over all. (Breaks of fragment, top and bottom, are sloping and uneven.) Around the “column” runs the design shown in the drawing below (projection) carved in relief 8 mm. high: 2 sma signs with upright papyrus clump and looped-over lotus (?) . . . All extant surfaces polished.”

2. Theoretically one might interpret the phrase as a passive construction (the mansion “offerings are repeated”), but in this case the passive idm.f might be expected rather than the idm.tw.f form.

3. Hieroglyphic Texts in the British Museum II (London, 1912) pl. 10 (BM 576); III, pl. 38 (BM 256). In both cases the speaker is “revered with Khentamentiu Lord of Abydos” and has the title imr ’hnwt. But they do not appear to be related by kinship.

123
FIGURE 1
Design on fragment of red granite offering stand found at Lisht

FIGURE 3
Design of offering stand from Lisht, accession number 63.46, front and back, lower two-thirds restored

FIGURE 2
Fragment of offering stand found at Lisht

FIGURE 4
Inscription in basin of offering stand 63.46
The first says: “I was one who directed this first mansion of the majesty of the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Nbw-k3w-R’.” The second says: “I came to direct this first mansion of the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Nbw-k3w-R’, may he live forever!”

Probably the problem is to be resolved by interpreting the phrase in question as a case of graphic transposition: “offerings of the first mansion of Shtp-ib-R’.”

The revised translation suggests a new and more concrete explanation for the inscription of an earlier

---

4. The use of ḫp as the determinative of ẖp “offerings,” rather than a more current form, showing one or both ends of the string on either side of the papyrus sealing (ẖp), might suggest that the three signs are actually ḫp and that the correct reading is ḫp ḫp “altar of offerings” (ẖp ḫp) is not unusual as a writing of ḫp; compare A. Erman, “Defective Schreibungen,” Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache 29 [1891] p. 37). But ḫp ḫp recurs more clearly on the sides of the more intact stand (The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin 22 [1963–64] p. 299), where it alternates with ḫp (ẖp) in the common expression ḫp ḫp “offerings/food.”
offering stand in the Metropolitan Museum (Figure 5). This has been taken to mean: “Re‘ is content [with] the Horus Woser-yeb Chephren...,” but more likely refers to “the offering of Re” or “the altar of Re”

[provided by] “the Horus Woser-yeb Chephren...” In the second case the word り would designate the flat offering stone beside which the stand was placed, as in the Old Kingdom tomb chapel shown in Figure 6.


6. As it is designated in the biography of Wên, K. Sethe, Urkunden des Alten Reiches (Leipzig, 1935) p. 107, line 17. There is little Old Kingdom evidence among which to look for a parallel for り in either sense, but one might compare the sign † that appears on some calcite canopic jars of the Sixth Dynasty, opposite the column of inscription that identifies the deceased; the addition of this hieroglyph “evidently marked them as destined for the Necropolis” (C. Firth and B. Gunn, Teti Pyramid Cemeteries (Cairo, 1926) p. 126, pl. 12 A, b.

7. After a photograph in the records of Albert Lythgoe, now in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, representing the offering niche of Giza tomb 1455. The limestone stand on the left is in Berkeley, as is the offering basin (H. F. Lutz, Egyptian Tomb Steles and Offering Stones of the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnology of the University of California [Leipzig, 1927] pls. 4 [6] and 3 [5]). For examples of pottery stands in situ see G. A. Reisner, Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts 33 (1935) p. 71; Abdel-Moneim Abu-Bakr, Excavations at Giza 1949–1950 (Cairo, 1953) pl. 63 B; H. Junker, Giza I (Vienna, 1929) pp. 199–200, fig. 40, pl. 8 b. These stands are also represented on the jambs flanking offering niches (Junker, Giza III [1938] fig. 31, p. 171), where it is seen that they serve for all categories of offerings. Other representations (e.g., Junker, Giza III, fig. 35, p. 191) show that the tall stands supported relatively small bowls and dishes.