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OFFERINGS FOR THE KAS OF SIX LADIES
 (BRITISH MUSEUM STELA NO. 1679)

ABSTRACT: Publication of an element of a Middle Kingdom stela-chapel London, BM EA 1679, including comments on the style, iconography, paleography, and dating criteria.

KEYWORDS: London, BM 1679; stela; Middle Kingdom; offering formula

Upright rectangular limestone slab (33 x 79,5 cm), probably the right element of a stela-chapel.¹ The slab is divided into four registers (A, B, C, D). The depicted figures and hieroglyphs are incised. It may be supposed that originally another slab on the left, and perhaps even another one on the right, continued the scene and inscription, in both directions.

Register A displays a man, perhaps a servant, driving a bullock.²

Register B displays a standing male figure (facing left) in front of an offering table which is highly piled with various types of food. Under the table there are two big baskets with undefinable contents. The man wears short hair which leaves the ear uncovered,

¹ See ANOC 57 (Hermitage 1063; Hermitage 1064; Hermitage 1075) and ANOC 52 (Louvre C 16; Louvre C 17; Louvre C 18).

² Compare with Brooklyn Museum of Art, 37.1349E (T. G. H. James, *Corpus of Hieroglyphic Inscriptions in The Brooklyn Museum I: From Dynasty I to the End of Dynasty XVIII*, Brooklyn 1971, 45—6 [104c] pl. lxxxviii [as possibly even early Dyn. XVIII]); Cairo, CG 20725 (ANOC 48/1); Louvre C 17 (ANOC 52/2).

and a knee-length kilt with a girdle. He is holding a lotus blossom in his right hand, and conical loaves of bread in his left.

Behind the scene, there are two lines of inscription, written from left to right, with an offering-formula on behalf of the persons mentioned in the lower part of the slab.



- 1) *htp di nsw^a pth-skr di=f prt-hrw t hnkt k3w 3pdw sš mnht*
- 2) *sntr mrht nbt nfrt w^bbt ḥnh.ti ntr im*

- 1) A boon which the King has given to/and³ Ptah-Sokar, that he may give invocation offerings of bread and beer, cattle and fowl, alabaster and clothing,
- 2) incense and oil, and all good and pure things on which a god may live.









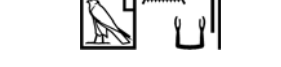
Register C displays the kneeling figures of three women facing left, each with one hand extended over the leg, the other one held to the chest. They wear long tripartite wigs, close-fitting dresses, and broad necklaces. Their hair-dress is exceptional.⁴

Above the scene, there is an inscription, which also serves as a caption for the persons depicted.

(3)	(4)	(5)

³ See H. Satzinger, *Beobachtungen zur Opferformel: Theorie and Praxis, Lingua Aegyptia* 5, 177—88; D. Franke, *The Middle Kingdom Offering Formulas — A Challenge, Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 89, 2003, 45—50.

⁴ Compare with hair-dress of Bersheh princesses (W. S. Smith, *Paintings of the Egyptian Middle Kingdom at Bersha, American Journal of Archaeology* 55/4, 1951, 323, fig. 1 [321—332]).

(6) 	(7) 	(8) 
		
		

- 3) $n^b s^{\text{3}}t=f \text{ }^{\text{3}}bt\text{-}jb(=j?)^c jrt.n pthj^d$ — $n k^{\text{3}}=s$
 3) for his daughter $^{\text{3}}bt\text{-}jb(=j?)$, born of $pthj$ — for her ka
- 4) $n s^{\text{3}}t=f rn=s\text{-}snb^e jrt.n hr\text{-}m\text{-}hb^f$ — $n k^{\text{3}}=s$
 4) for his daughter $rn=s\text{-}snb$, born of $hr\text{-}m\text{-}hb$ — for her ka
- 5) $n s^{\text{3}}t=f hr\text{-}nht^g jrt.n ptw^h$ — $n k^{\text{3}}=s$
 5) for his daughter $hr\text{-}nht$, born of ptw — for her ka

The appearance of the women in register D is almost identical except that they are holding lotus blossoms up to their noses.

- 6) $n nbt pr s^{\text{3}}t\text{-}hntj\text{-}htj^i jrt.n s^{\text{3}}t\text{-}hr\text{-}nht^j$ — $n k^{\text{3}}=s$
 6) for the mistress of the house $s^{\text{3}}t\text{-}hntj\text{-}htj$, born of $s^{\text{3}}t\text{-}hr\text{-}nht$ — for her ka
- 7) $n snt=f hnwt^k jrt.n s^{\text{3}}t\text{-}hwt\text{-}hr^l$ — $n k^{\text{3}}=s$
 7) for his sister $hnwt$, born of $s^{\text{3}}t\text{-}hwt\text{-}hr$ — for her ka
- 8) $n snt=f hr\text{-}m\text{-}hb jrt.n s^{\text{3}}t\text{-}hwt\text{-}hr$ — $n k^{\text{3}}=s$
 8) for his sister $hr\text{-}m\text{-}hb$, born of $s^{\text{3}}t\text{-}hwt\text{-}hr$ — for her ka

Notes:

^a See Satzinger, *Lingua Aegyptia* 5, 1997, 177—188; Franke, *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 89, 2003, 45ff; D. Franke, The Good Shepherd Antef (Stela BM EA 1628), *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 93, 2007, 170—171.

^b We do not know of any other Middle Kingdom example of n plus name and appositional $n k^{\text{3}}=f/s$, “to NN., that is to say to his/her ka ”, in particular in the context of the offering formula. Note, however, in an offering list of the Old Kingdom: $[n Zzj] n k^{\text{3}}=f \text{ }^{\text{3}}\text{š}rt mjzt njšm$ etc., “[For Zezi,] (that is to say) for his Ka : an *aschet-ret* roast, liver, milt, etc”. (mastaba of Ankh-ma-hor, east wall of

tomb chamber: N. Kanawati and A. Hassan, *The Teti Cemetery at Saqqara Vol II: The Tomb of Ankhmahor*, ACE Report 9, 1999, pl. 63); and in a scene of slaughtering: *jṯi jwḏ n ḥꜣt n jwꜣ n ḥryt tn n Zzj n kꜣ =f*, “Take meat of the ox’s front part for this animal sacrifice for Zezi, (that is to say) for his Ka” (same mastaba, east wall of room no. 4, lower-most register, 2nd col. from left: Kanawati — Hassan, *The Tomb of Ankhmahor*, pl. 49).


^c E. Ranke, *Die altägyptischen Personennamen*, 2 Bde, Gluckstadt 1935—1952, I 1.19



^d Ranke, *PN* I 142.3

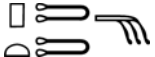
^e Ranke, *PN* I 224.1

^f Ranke, *PN* I 248.7

^g Ranke, *PN* I 249.10

^h Ranke, *PN* II 358;  (stela Cairo CG 20163, 1),

 (Louvre C. 6),  (Leiden: P. A. A. Boeser, *Beschrijving van de Egyptische verzameling in het Rijksmuseum van Oudheden te Leiden. De monumenten van den tijd tusschen het Oude en het Middelrijk en van het Middelrijk. Eerste afdeeling: Stèles*, Gravenhage 1909 pl. 35, no. 53, 3rd reg.; Jean Jacques Clère, *Notes d’onomastique à propos du dictionnaire des noms de personnes de*

H. Ranke, *Revue d’Égyptologie* 3, 1938, 75—80),  (CG 20261, 5).

ⁱ Ranke, *PN* I 292.21

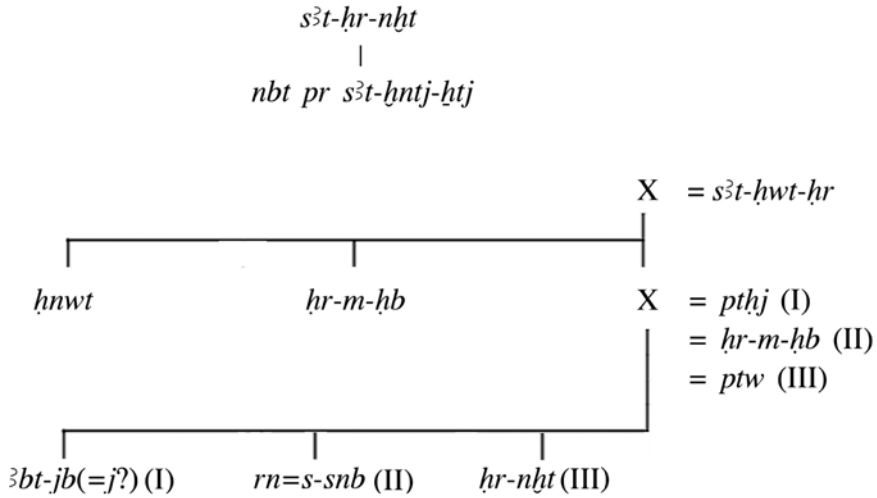
^j Ranke, *PN* I 292.3

^k Ranke, *PN* I 242.18

^l Ranke, *PN* I 291.14

With most of the women attested on the stela BM EA 1679, a possessive pronoun refers to a man: three are “his daughter” (*ꜣbt-jb(=j?)*, *rn=s-snb*, and *ḥr-nḥt*), and two are “his sister” (*ḥnwt* and *ḥr-m-ḥb*), whereas one (*sꜣt-ḥntj-ḥtj*) is a “lady of the house”, with no possessive reference. They obviously belong to the same family. Three of the females are daughters, and two are sisters of a man that is not mentioned by name on this element, and who is probably the person who commissioned the monument. Sisters and brother have the same mother (*sꜣt-ḥwt-ḥr*), while the father is not recorded. The mothers of his daughters (*pthj*, *ḥr-m-ḥb*, and *ptw*) are also mentioned. The *nbt pr sꜣt-ḥntj-ḥtj* was perhaps the wife of the man in the time of monument’s commission.

Family tree:



The relief slab is obviously part of a larger composition. The deity invoked in the offering formula is Ptah-Sokar; the name of god Ptah recurs in the name of the lady *pthj*, mother of „his daughter *ḅbt-jb(=j?)*”, and even *ptw*, the name of the mother of “his daughter *ḥr-nḥt*”, may by a hypochoristic derived from a name commencing with *pth* (though the hair determinative would not suit this assumption). The name of the god Horus recurs in several names, viz. *ḥr-m-ḥb* (probably two persons: “his sister”, and the mother of “his daughter *sn=s-snb*”), *ḥr-nḥt*, and *s̅3t-ḥr-nḥt*.



As the monument represents a whole family, it certainly was not part of a real tomb, but rather of an Abydene cenotaph (an “ANOC”). In real tombs, it is only a very restricted number of persons — mostly the tomb owner and his wife — who receive offerings, whereas Abydos monuments do not know any such limit. For this reason the divine names, which are several times represented in the onomastic material, do not give a clue to the location of the monument; they may, however, be an indication of the home of the family.

The general shape of the object, the appearance of the figures,⁵ as well as the form of the offering formula, point to a Late Middle Kingdom date. The form of the offering formula suggests a date in

⁵ R. Freed, 'The Development of Middle Kingdom Egyptian Relief Sculptural Schools of Late Dynasty XI with an Appendix on the Trends of Early Dynasty XII (2040—1878 B. C.)' PhD thesis, New York University, Ann Arbor: UMI, 1985, 200—201.

Dynasty 12 or 13, according to the criteria established by Bennett and Smither, and later refined by Satzinger (for example: the prayer for the good things on which a god can live precludes any earlier date, although the spelling of *htp* (the *t* above *htp*) is typical for an earliest time. The lack of phonetic components for the *htp* sign was known and usual from the Dynasty 11 to the Dynasty 13, but uncommon from the Dynasty 14 to the Dynasty 20.⁶

The appearance of *di.f* after the *htp di nsw* formula is an indication of late Dynasty 12 (see C. Obsomer, ‘*Di.f prt hrw* et la filiation *ms(t).n/ ir(t).n* comme critères de datation dans les textes du Moyen Empire’, in Ch. Cannuyer and J.-M. Kruchten (eds), *Individu, société et spiritualité dans l’Égypte pharaonique et copte: Mélanges égyptologiques offerts au Professeur Aristide Théodorides* (Brussels, 1993), 163—201, and Satzinger, *Lingua Aegyptia* 5, 1997, 177—188).

Another dating criterium is the transformation in the form of the unguent jar  which occurred before Dynasty 12. The jar has the simple shape  from the Old Kingdom through Dynasty 11. More complicated depictions of the jar with at least one or two ties next to the seal and sometimes cloth strips down the neck and around the body of the jar occur at some point before Dynasty 12.⁷

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⁶ See P. C. Smither, The Writing of HTP-D’I-NSW in the Middle and New Kingdoms, *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 25, 1939, 34 and W. Barta, *Aufbau und Bedeutung der altägyptischen Opferformel*. Ägyptologische Forschungen 24, Glückstadt 1968, 72, 81, 85, 107, 139, 162.

⁷ D. B. Spanel, Paleographic and Epigraphic Distinctions between Texts of the So-called First Intermediate Period and the Early Twelfth Dynasty, in: *Studies in Honor of William Kelly Simpson*, Boston 1996, 770, n. 18.



Fig. 1 London, BM EA 1679
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ПОНУДЕ ЗА КА ШЕСТ ДАМА
(СТЕЛА БРИТАНСКИ МУЗЕЈ БР. 1679)

Резиме

У раду је публикована стела Лондон, БМ 1679. Даровна формула (распоред елемената, епиграфске карактеристике), иконографски елементи и ономастика указују на то да споменик припада периоду позног Средњег царства. Стела је вероватно део породичне вотивне капеле, какве су често подизане у Абидосу у време Средњег царства, на шта указује реконструисана генеалогичка женских чланова породице неименованог достојанственика.

