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Saqqara 2007 : Inscribed Material

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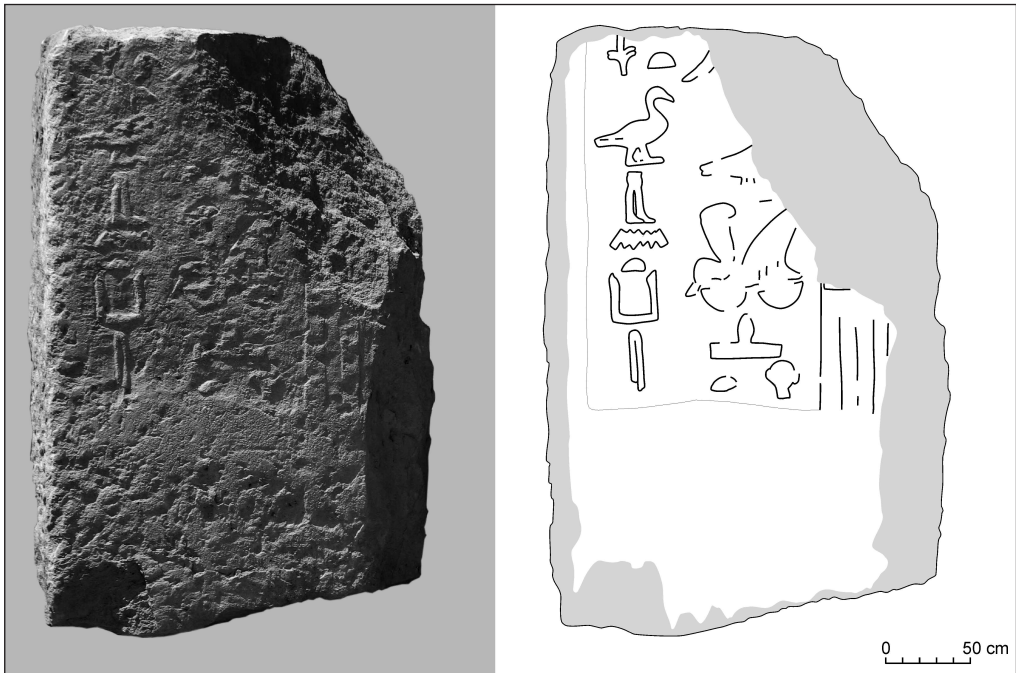
SAQQARA 2007: INSCRIBED MATERIAL

Kamil O. Kuraszkiewicz

FRAGMENT OF A BOUNDARY STELA
OF NETJERYKHET

A limestone block found in the surface layer of sand (Field inv. no. S/07/9) can be identified beyond all doubt as a fragment of a boundary stela of Netjerykhet (Firth, Quibell 1935: 119, Pl. 86; Lauer 1936: 187–190; cf. e.g. Kahl *et alii* 1995: 70–75, 80–89, 112–113; Baud 2002: 83–85; Espinel

2003: 215–220) [*Fig. 1*]. The stela seems to have been re-used (probably already during the construction of the Netjerykhet's funerary complex (cf. Firth 1925: 149, Pl. 4; Lauer 1936: 189–190) as building material: its upper (and possibly also the lower right-hand) part has been cut straight, possibly to



*Fig. 1. Fragment of the boundary stela of Netjerykhet
(Photo and drawing K.O.Kuraszkiewicz)*

obtain a smaller, rectangular block. The bottom edge of the fragment is broken off, whether intentionally or not it is impossible to say.

In its present state the block is 37 cm high, 25 cm wide and 11 cm thick. It is carved in fine white limestone and decorated rather carelessly with an inscription in relief. The hieroglyphic signs are left without modelling or internal details; the background around them is slightly depressed and it probably formed a kind of rectangular panel.¹

On the right side, the lower part of Netjerykhet's *serekh* (which should have been situated approximately in the middle of the stela originally) is visible, while the names and titles of Hetephernebtj and Inetkaes are placed between the *serekh* and the left edge of the block. There are no grounds to assume that the composition of this object differed from other stelae of Netjerykhet; thus the *Jmj-wt* fetish can be reconstructed between the royal name and the right edge of the stela, and a horizontal line of text mentioning Anubis above these.

The inscription panel is to be reconstructed as follows:

- a. [*Jnpw hntj t3-dsr*]
[Anubis, Foremost of the Sacred Land]²
- b. [*Hr Ntrj-ht*]
[Horus Netjerykhet]³
- c. [*m3t-Hr z3t njswt*] *Htp-hr-Nbtj*
[She who sees Horus, king's daughter]
Hetephernebtj⁴
- d. *z3t* [*njswt*] *Jnjt-k3.s*
[King's] daughter Inetkaes⁵

The stela belongs to the flat, round-topped type (Lauer 1936: 189–190, Kahl *et alii* 1995: 80–89, 112–113), numerous examples of which were found in the Netjerykhet's complex (in the *serdab* court, by the wall of the north temple, in the temple itself and in the central pit under the pyramid, Lauer 1936: 189–190; cf. Mohamed Aly 1998: 224–226), but also outside it.⁶ The exact number of this type stelae discovered to date is difficult to ascertain but evidently it was significant, for according to J.-Ph. Lauer, there was “*près d'une soixantaine*” of them found in the complex itself. The fact that more than one stela was discovered in the relatively near vicinity of the western and southern wall of the complex may indicate that their re-use was not restricted to the areas north and east of the pyramid; this, in turn, may suggest that also originally they were distributed in and around the temenos. If so, it would corroborate Firth's original conjecture that the stelae were boundary

1 Unlike, for example, a fragment of a similar stela found in the pyramid complex of Sekhemkhet (Goneim 1957: 10, Fig. 26), where only the outline of signs is carved.

2 Leitz 2002: 874.

3 Preserved is only the lower part of the *serekh* with the palace façade panelling. Originally, the royal name was situated approximately on the vertical axis of the stela; cf. Firth, Quibell 1935: 119, Pl. 86.

4 Hetephernebtj was probably a daughter of Khasekhemwy and a wife of Netjerykhet: Baud 1999: 477–478; cf. also Troy 1986: 110–111, 152–153 (no. 3.2). On the title *m3t-Hr*, cf. e.g. Kaplony 1963: 423; Troy 1986: 189 (no. B3/1).

5 Inetkaes is identified as a daughter of Netjerykhet, cf. Baud 2002: 83–85; Troy 1986: 153 (no. 3.3).

6 Stelae of the same type have been found in the pyramid complex of Sekhemkhet (cf. Goneim 1957: 10, Fig. 26), in the tomb of Mereri near the pyramid of Teti (Lloyd, Spencer, El-Khouli 1990: Pl. 28.2), another one in the late Old Kingdom necropolis excavated by the Polish Mission (Mysliwiec 2002: 132–133; Kuraszkiewicz 2008), and even as far as Dahshur (Oppenheim 2007). Recently, a well preserved stela was found in the New Kingdom necropolis south of the Netjerykhet complex: El-Aguizy 2007: 1–4.

marks of a kind, possibly delineating the temenos as a whole (rather than an area inside it) prior to the construction of the

limestone wall (Firth 1925: 149; cf. also Baud 1999: 415; Espinel 2003: 218–219; Oppenheim 2007; Kuraszkiwicz 2008).

DECORATED WOODEN COFFIN FROM SHAFT 73

Shaft 73 was explored in 2007 in the northern part of the late Old Kingdom necropolis. It is situated in square 1903, to the north of Complex 6 (cf. Kuraszkiwicz 2007: 173–175). The superstructure of the mastaba of which the shaft was part is not preserved, but its position indicates that it was significantly earlier than Complex 6 and possibly also earlier than Complex 2.⁷ The shaft measures approximately 1.77 by 1.76 m at the mouth and is 9.40 m deep. Just above the ceiling of the burial chamber, there is a narrowing with an irregular hole that gives access to the lower part (cf. Kuraszkiwicz 2009: 165–170).

The burial chamber (3.05 m N–S, 1.65 m E–W, 1.08 m high) is situated on the west side of the shaft, symmetrically extending towards the north and south (T-shaped) (Kuraszkiwicz 2009: Fig. 2b, 3). A rectangular pit (2.16 m N–S, 0.62–0.64 m E–W, 0.74 m deep) is hewn in the floor of the burial chamber, intended for the body of the deceased. The pit was originally covered with a rough lid (x+1.33 m long, 0.67 m wide) made of greyish limestone. The shaft had been plundered in antiquity (traces of a robbers' tunnel were clearly visible in the fill in the southwestern corner of the shaft), the lid of the burial pit had been broken (parts of it were found inside the pit) and the body of

the deceased removed from its original resting place.

Several wooden planks were discovered inside the burial pit, indicating that the body had been buried in a wooden coffin inserted into the pit covered with a stone lid.⁸ The planks are broken and severely weathered, making it impossible to determine the original dimensions of the coffin. Traces of decayed wood indicate, however, that the coffin could not have been significantly smaller than the burial pit. Decoration in finely carved sunken relief has survived on a number of fragmentary planks lying by the east wall of the burial pit. Several elements of the decoration can be identified on the inside east wall of the coffin [Fig. 2]:

1. Elaborate palace façade motif, preserved on planks near the northeastern corner of the burial pit [Fig. 3].

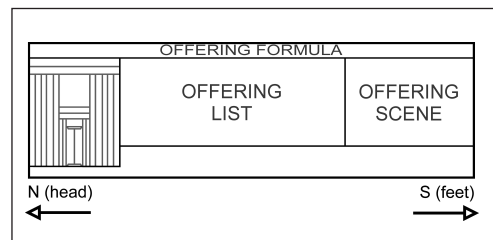


Fig. 2. *Decoration scheme of coffin from Shaft 73 (Drawing K.O. Kuraszkiwicz)*

7 If the mastaba of Shaft 73 was more or less contemporary with Complex 2, it may be expected that their shafts would have been aligned, i.e., Shaft 73 would be situated directly north of shafts 2 and 23.

8 Although such a practice is not uncommon, this is the only evidence to date from the part of the necropolis explored by the Polish mission; in other cases, bodies were found in a coffin or in a burial pit/sarcophagus, never in both of them. This rather expensive arrangement could be indicative of the relatively high social status of the deceased.

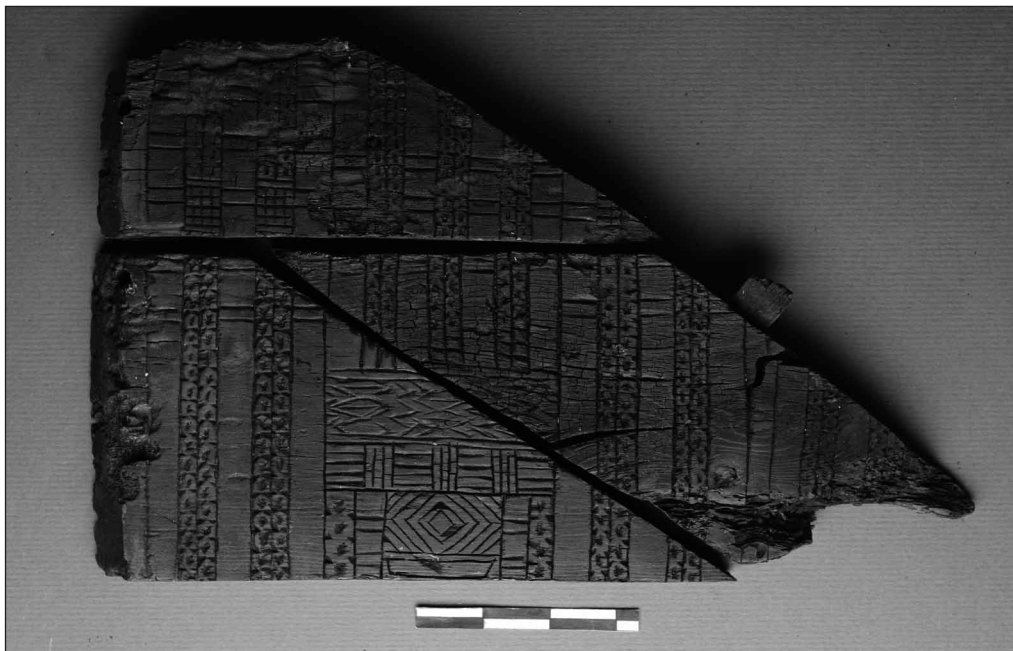


Fig. 3. *Fragment of the coffin from Shaft 73 depicting a palace façade*
(Photo J. Dąbrowski)

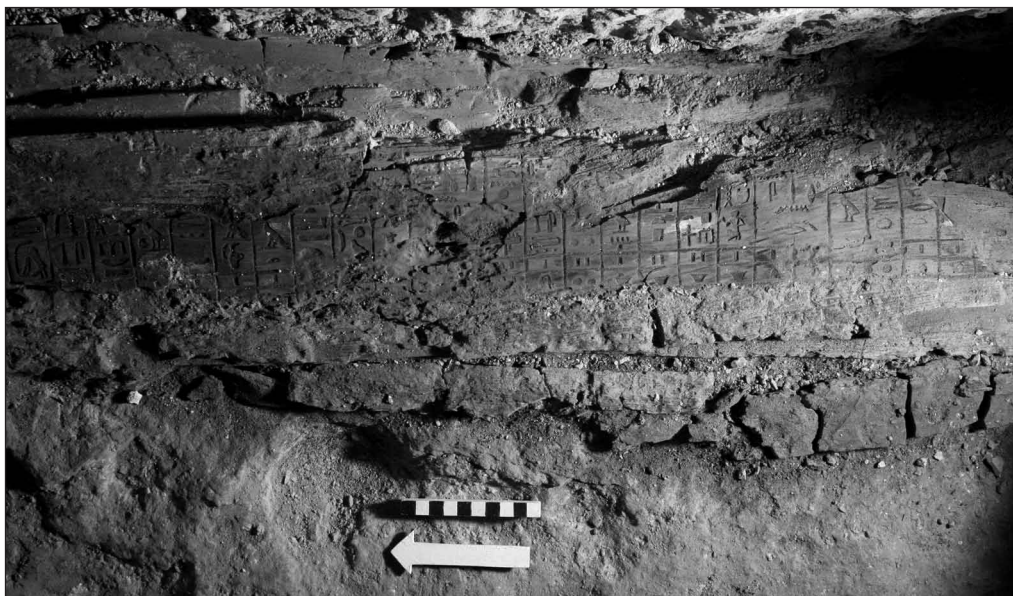


Fig. 4. *Fragment of the coffin from Shaft 73 presenting an offering list*
(Photo J. Dąbrowski)



*Fig. 5. Fragments of an offering formula on the coffin from Shaft 73
(Photo J. Dąbrowski)*



*Fig. 6. Lector-priests depicted on the coffin from Shaft 73
(Photo J. Dąbrowski)*

2. Long offering list in the middle part of the coffin's length; below it, there was a blank horizontal band [Fig. 4].

3. The offering formula along the upper edge of the coffin side [Fig. 5], probably above the offering list. Preserved are the phrases:

htp djw njswt nb Ddw hntj Jmntjw [...]
prjt-hrw n.f m zmjt jmntt [...]

An offering that the king gives and the Lord of Busiris, Foremost of the Westerners [...] an invocation offering for him in the western desert [...] (Lapp 1986: 102 §. 181).

4. At least two identical male figures facing to their right, depicted to the right of the offering list (i.e., at the foot of the coffin). Both of them wear shoulder-length wigs

and broad, diagonal bands across their chests. This, combined with the position of the arms (right one crossing the chest, left one raised in the *hmnw*-gesture), identifies them as lector-priests performing an offering ritual (late type 1 or type 2: Lapp 1986: 158–192, §§. 268–323) [Fig. 6].

There was most probably no decoration on the coffin's inside north, west and south walls. No traces are preserved also on outer surfaces of the planks. The coffin seems to belong to the Sixth Dynasty type, but the state of preservation precludes a more precise identification (Lapp 1993: 32–33, Tf. Va–b). The fine quality of craftsmanship, evidenced even by the small surviving fragments of the coffin, is noteworthy.

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