

Original article

STELA OF RAMOSE NO. 1759 AT MANCHESTER MUSEUM

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Abstract:

The abroad museums are home to a vast array of valuable artefacts, many of which are worth highlighting. This paper aims to fully publish and highlight the stela of Ramose which is being displayed at Manchester Museum no. 1759 and dated back to the New Kingdom. The presented stela - whose owner was one of the well-known characters during the Ramesseid Period - is one of the numerous stelae discovered in Thebes and were being donated to its principal gods and goddesses. The study includes the discovery of the stela, description, and facsimile, in addition to the transliteration and translation of the texts with comments and notes on the texts and scenes. Furthermore, general comments on the elements that were depicted and included in the texts. It also analyzes the different aspects of the selection of specific titles of the depicted gods and their sequences.

1. Introduction

The stela is on display at Manchester Museum under the number 1759, fig. (1-a & b). It was discovered by Quibell and Petrie in the area of the Ramesseum in 1896, which they mentioned in their excavation publication [1]. The stela was donated to the museum in 1896 by Mr. Jesse Haworth. Besides the publication of the Ramesseum excavations by Quibell, Kitchen copied and translated the texts of the stela without any comments [2]. This stela is one of several monuments, along with graffiti, ostraca, and coffins, erected by the scribe Ramose, who was one of the most famous workmen and scribes during the years from 5 to 38 of the reign of King Ramses II [3,4]. The characteristics of the stela: *Original place*: nearby the Ramesseum (the mortuary temple of King Ramses II). *Material*: limestone. *Dimensions*: 60.5 cm H × 40 cm W. *Dating*: 19th dynasty (1270-1240 B.C.). *State*: The stela is in a good state of preservation; there are traces of yellow color on several parts, which indicates that it was entirely colored.

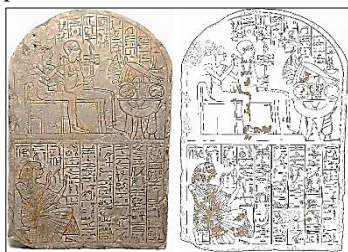


Figure (1) Stela of Ramose no. 1759 at Manchester Museum

2. Methodological study

2.1. Description

The finely carved limestone round-topped stela [5] is carved in sunken relief. Its framed surface is divided into two registers: the upper register depicts the god Ptah in his mummy form with a long beard and wearing a pectoral, fig. (2-a & b). His two hands emerge from the garment and hold a *Djed* pillar merged with the *Was*-scepter, which is shown in full length, extending downward in sharp angles that follow the shape of Ptah's legs. Behind Ptah stands the goddess Maat in a tight garment, raising her hands behind him in a gesture of support for her consort. Both are seated on a chair with a short back pillar, resting on a base in the form of the sign of *m3^c* (Gardiner Aa11) [6]. Above the scene is a hieroglyphic text.

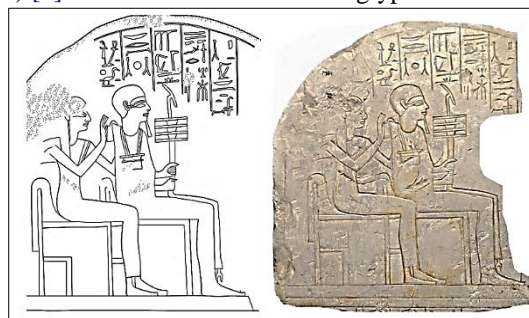


Figure (2) the god Ptah and his consort Maat

In front of the god Ptah, an offering table is placed, piled with a beer jar, two loaves of bread, a bouquet of lotus flowers, a piece of ox meat, and a small basket containing two conical loaves, fig. (3). Above the scene, there is a hieroglyphic text.



Figure (3) offering table

The lower register depicted barefoot Ramose with long hair and a necklace consisting of several rows, kneeling with raised hands in an adoration attitude. He is wearing a wide-pleated garment, fig. (4). In front of Ramose is a hieroglyphic text.



Figure (4) Ramose in an adoration attitude

2.2. Text



2.2.1. Over Ptah and Maat

The text consists of five columns facing right; four of them are dedicated to Ptah, while the fifth belongs to Maat. A damaged area in the last column most likely contained additional epithets of Maat, mirroring those in the lower register (columns 3-4).

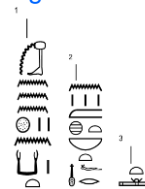


Pth nb m3t nsw t3wi⁽¹⁾ nfr hr ms ntrw⁽²⁾ ntr 3 nb r nhh m3t s3t-R^c

Ptah, the lord of the Truth, the king of the Two Lands, with a beautiful face, who fashioned the gods, great god, lord until eternity, Maat, daughter of Ra [...].

- (1) *nb m3t*: this epithet was commonly used as a designation of Ptah at Memphis and elsewhere. Despite its use since the Old Kingdom (PT 1520a) [7]. It is not attested as a designation for Ptah before the New Kingdom, where it became widely used for the god; for example, on stelae BM EA 265 [4]; Turin 1459 [5]. This epithet was also applicable to many of the greater Egyptian gods [8]. This title is accompanied by the familiar title *nsw t3wi* "the Lord of the Two Lands", both of which are often attributed to Ptah. The combination of these two epithets first appeared during the Middle Kingdom, particularly during the reign of Amenemhat I, as seen on a limestone fragment from Memphis [9,10].
- (2) *ms ntrw*: Except for the meaning "who gives birth", which was used as an epithet for the female goddess, this title was applied to male gods, where it conveyed the meaning "to fashion" [11] or "to manufacturer of images of gods". Both Sethe [12] and Junker [13] translated it as "who create (form) the gods". further: "But this same statement can only be understood by the heart and tongue or by forces that work through the heart and tongue", because in the following section, there is always talk of their creative power, and of heart and mouth it is stated: "His (Ptah's) nine gods are before him as teeth and lips, these are the seed and the hands of Atum. The nine gods of Atum came into being through his seed and his finger. But the ninety of the gods is, in reality, the teeth and lips in that mouth that gave the name of all things, from which Shu and Tefnut emerged, who created the ninety" [13]. Ultimately, this title refers to manufacturing or fashioning and it corresponds to the role of the god Path as a god of crafts and manufacturing.

2.2.2. Over the offering table



wcb sp sn n k3 .in⁽¹⁾ m ht nbt nfrt⁽²⁾

Purity, purity for your Ka in every good thing

- (1) In the Pyramid texts, the purification of the *Ka* signifies the purification of the deceased himself: "The purification of your *Ka* is your purification" [7].
- (2) Because of the lack of space, the scribe wrote the word *nfrt* in two columns.

2.2.3. In front of the deceased







Rdit i3w⁽¹⁾ *n Pth nb m3ct nsw t3wy nfr hr*⁽²⁾ *hri st.f wrt*⁽³⁾ *nb š3y*⁽⁴⁾ *šhpr rnnt*⁽⁵⁾ *s'nh t3wi m hmwt.f*⁽⁶⁾ *sn t3*⁽⁷⁾ *n M3t s3t-Rc nbt pt hnwnt ntrw nbw*⁽⁸⁾ *irt R*⁽⁹⁾ *imt h3t.f nfr hr m wi3 n hhw hnwnt pr Imn*⁽¹⁰⁾ *di.sn qrst nfrt*⁽¹¹⁾ *hr i3w*⁽¹²⁾ *hr imntt wrt nt W3st smyt n m3ct*⁽¹³⁾ *n k3 n Wsir*⁽¹⁴⁾ *sš m3c m st- m3ct*⁽¹⁵⁾ *R*⁽¹⁶⁾ *msiw*⁽¹⁷⁾ *m3c-hrw*

Giving praise to Ptah the lord of the Truth, king of the Two Lands with a beautiful face, who is on his great throne, the lord of destiny, who creates fortune, who preserves the Two Lands with his crafts, and kissing the earth for Maat, daughter of Ra, mistress of the sky, mistress of all the gods, the eye of Ra on his forehead, with beautiful face in the bark of millions, mistress of the temple of Amun, so that they may give a beautiful burial after old age in the great necropolis of Thebes, the district of the two Truths, for the Ka of Osiris, a true scribe at the Place of Truth, Ramose, justified.

- (1) *Rdi.t i3w*: This expression was used in the sense of praising the gods [14]. During the Old Kingdom (PT Neith 493) [15], it was attested as *di.t i3w*. From the Middle Kingdom onwards, it was used side by side with *rdi.t i3w* as an expression for worshipping and praising the gods, and sometimes, the two forms occurred together; for example, on the stela of Neferrenpet TR 14.6.24.17 [16]. It is also documented in the greeting and veneration of the king by foreigners in the 18th dynasty, e.g. [17]. It can be stated that the expression was commonly attested of the stelae from Deir El-Medina; e.g., JE 43564; JE 43566; JE 43567; JE 65059, and JE 72020 [18]. According to Blumenthal [19], this expression was basically used in the context of the hymns to the king, for example, "*rdi.t i3w n nsw c3*" [20]. Since the Middle Kingdom, particularly on the stela BM EA 580 [21], it was used as a reference to human behaviour towards the gods as a technical term.
- (2) *nfr hr*: This expression, which is usually translated as "with a beautiful face, beautiful of face" was often used


as an epithet for many gods [7], especially for Ptah [22]. Spiegelberg noted that the epithets of the Egyptian gods are only very rarely applied to their physical beauty [23]. On the stela of Nebamun from the 18th dynasty [24], the deceased says to Osiris "May you have mercy on me; may your face be beautiful to me on the day when I behold your beauties", here apparently *nfr hr.k m.i* "may your face be beautiful to me" has the meaning "may you be merciful to me", so it is synonymous with *htp.k n.i*. Thus, the epithet *nfr hr* can likely be understood in the sense of "gracious" [23].

- (3) *st wrt*: According to José, the name was used as a reference to the necropolis before the term *st m3ct* [18].
- (4) *nb š3y*: This epithet is first attested in Amarna tombs from the reign of Akhenaten, where it is used as a designation for Aten [25,26]. On the presented stela, there is the only direct reference, in which the epithet is used as a designation of Ptah [8], even though Ptah is known from several texts as the god who controls the fate of people and gods. In the political doctrine of Memphis from the time of King Shabaka (25th dynasty), the text states that Ptah dispenses both good and evil and governs time: "him who does that which is loved; him who does that which is abhorred... life is given to the peaceful man and the death to the wrongdoer He indeed created the gods, made the towns, founded the provinces and placed the gods at their worship places... he had determined their offerings" [13]. In this text, he is also referred to as the "lord of the years".
- (5) *šhpr rnnt*: This title first appears in the New Kingdom as a divine epithet meaning "who creates wealth" or "gives rise to wealth". It was associated with several gods, including such as Amun-Re; Atum and Sobek-Ra [8]. According to the significance of the title, it is clearly related to the title *nb š3y*. Besides its appearance on the presented stela, this epithet appears after *nb š3y* twice in the New Kingdom: in the tomb of Any at Amarna [25], and in the temple of Kom Ombo from the Greek-Roman period, where the two epithets are associated with Sobek-Ra [27].
- (6) *s'nh t3wi m hmwt.f*: The sign of *hmwt* represents a drill for rock-boring (Gardiner U 24), but here it is mistakenly depicted with a feather on top instead of the stone that normally weighs it. Thus, it takes on the reading of the sign *imntt* (Gardiner R 14). This sign has the phonetic value of *hmw* or *hmi*, and it is sometimes attested as an abbreviation for *hmw.w*, which means "craftsman" or "artisans". It is also used for *hmw.t*, which means "crafts" and this also includes stone vessel making, joinery, statue fashioning, and boat-building [14], thus, it was likely used to denote various kinds of crafts [10]. The expression is attested exclusively on this stela as a designation for Ptah [28].
- (7) *sn t3*: the inner details of the determinative of the word *sn* including eyes and nose were omitted as it is written in cursive hieroglyphs. Still, there may be confusion because it is difficult to distinguish between the sign  = (Gardiner D 19) , which should be the determinative for "kiss" and the sign  = (Gardiner N 29) , which was copied

here. This expression means literally "kissing the earth", but it is used to denote praising or bowing down before a god [29]. On Deir El-Medina stelae, this expression is connected to several gods and goddesses, e.g., Mut, Djehuty, Hathor, and Mereseger [18].

- (8) *hnwt ntrw nbw*: the mistress of all the gods is first mentioned in the Coffin Texts (CT 670) [30] as a designation for Hathor. However, it is attested as an epithet for several goddesses since the New Kingdom [8]. As a designation for Maat, it appears twice during the New Kingdom, particularly in the Ramesside period [31], and once during the Third Intermediate Period (Temple of Khonsu) [32].
- (9) *Irt R^c*: Like most of the goddesses in the Egyptian pantheon, here, Maat is identified with the all-seeing, fiery eye of the sun god [8]. This epithet was used to designate Maat only during the Ramesside Period. Besides its occurrence on the presented stela, it is also attested twice more in the tomb of Ramesses VI, and the temple of Dendara [33]. The spelling of the epithet in this case is typical of the New Kingdom, as seen on the stela of Seti I [4].
- (10) *hnwt pr Imn*: This title, which designates Maat as the lady of the temple of Amun or the domain of Amun, is only attested in Deir el-Medina during the Ramesside Period. Besides its occurrence here, this epithet is also associated with Maat in the Temple of Khnum at Elephantine [34]. In addition to Maat, this title is connected with Mut [2,4] and Renenutet [2]. It should be noted that—except for the Khnum Temple—this epithet only occurs in the Ramesside texts from Deir El-Medina [2, 10]. The orthography of the epithet is usually written in full form, except on the presented stela and the statue Berlin 6910 [4].
- (11) *qrst nfrt*: the use of the mummy shape (Gardiner A 54) as a determinative for *qrst* instead of (Gardiner T 19) or (Gardiner Q 6) is attested in the tomb of Eje from the Amarna period [26]. It occurs rarely, for example, in the graffiti of the vizier Paser at Thebes (reign of Ramesses II) [4], and also on a lintel fragment of Paser [2]. This sign is used as a determinative for the word *nb nḥ*, which means sarcophagus [6].
- (12) *hr i3w*: The usual prepositions that proceed *i3w* is *m-ḥt* and sometimes *ḥt* conveying the meaning of "after the old age". The same thing is attested on another stela of Ramose [35], and on various monuments [26]. In this case, the scribe used *hr*, meaning "in the time", as a synonym for *m-ḥt*, assigning the same meaning of "after old age". On the limestone fragment of a door jamb JE 40367, both prepositions *hr* and *ḥt* are used together [13].
- (13) *smyt n m3^cti*: This expression refers to the hereafter. It is attested in the same spelling on a sandstone lintel of the fortress of Buhen [2], and on the stela at the Pushkin Museum [2]. It is written *st n m3^cti* on a fragment of the vizier Paser [2,8].
- (14) Individuals have been designated as Osiris for their resurrection since the Middle Kingdom. The designation of

the deceased as Osiris is exclusively written before the king's name during the Old Kingdom [36].

- (15) *sš m3^c m st- m3^ct*: This title, meaning "True Scribe at the place of the Truth (= Necropolis)", is only applied to Ramose on most of his monuments, even in his tomb TT 7 [37]; for example, stelae JE 21064 [38] and JE 72023 [18]. According to Černý, *m3^c* is a mere epithet not used by administration [3]. In other instances, the title appears as *sš m st-m3^ct* and is attested several times on objects from Deir el-Medina [37]. The title is also mentioned as *sš m st-nḥḥ* "Scribe in the Place of eternity", where it is exclusively associated with Ramose on the stela E. 16373 [2]. Anyway, both *st-m3^ct* and *st-nḥḥ* referring to the necropolis [3,39].
- (16) The upper part of the biceps brachii of the sign "e" is incorrectly written as a triangle. Later, it was corrected to the standard rectangular form.
- (17)  This determinative became common from the 18th dynasty onwards and refers to the deceased person [6].

3. Result

The presented stela is inscribed with several epithets and concepts connected to the gods Ptah and his consort Maat, two of the earliest known deities in Ancient Egypt. They were worshipped in their famous residence in Memphis and several other places. The ancient Egyptians associated Ptah with various epithets.

4. Discussion

4.1. Reading the *m3^ct*

In the texts of the stela, one can notice the repetition of the term *m3^ct*, in addition to the depiction of the goddess Maat. According to Kees [40] and Sandman [10], the phenomenon of the frequent application of Ptah as the lord of the truth since the New Kingdom, particularly, the time of Amenhotep III onwards, is most likely due to the growing importance of the concept of *m3^ct* as it gained more importance. Sandman noted that great emphasis is placed on the gods' relationship with *m3^ct* in the texts, for instance, in the Amun ritual [41, 10]. This emphasis is also evident in the texts of the Ramessium, where several epithets of Ptah are mentioned, including: "Ptah, the Lord who confirms *m3^ct*", "Ptah, father of *m3^ct*", "Ptah, firm in the *m3^ct*", "Ptah, who has fortified *m3^ct*", "Ptah, who has lifted up *m3^ct*", "Ptah, who is pleased with *m3^ct*" [42].

4.2. The relation between Maat and Ptah

Although the common female member of the Triad of Memphis is Sekhmet, the consort of Ptah, other goddesses, including Maat, are also associated with Ptah. Like Sekhmet, Maat is identified as the beloved of Ptah in texts: "Maat, the great, united with Amun, Re's daughter, beloved of Ptah" [10]. In the texts of the Temple of Dendara, Maat is depicted alongside the goddess Tefnut within the Ptah-Sekhmet group: "Sekhmet, the beloved of Ptah, the glorious one, who is at the head of Dendara, Tefnut; Maat, the great mistress at Memphis" [43]. Furthermore, the association between Ptah and the concept of *m3^ct* is evident through the epithet *nb m3^ct* found in the stela texts, which connect him to truth and righteousness.

4.3. The association between Ptah and Thebes

Ptah, the principal god of Memphis, has been revered since early ancient Egyptian history. However, like many major Egyptian deities, Ptah also had a specific cult presence in Thebes alongside the city's primary gods. Several monuments were erected in eastern Thebes in his honour, such as his temple within Karnak, built by Thutmose III and subsequent kings [43]. In the texts of his temple, there is a description of how the offerings were made to be laid by priests, who had to follow detailed regulations regarding the offerings to Ptah in his temple. These offerings were supposed to go firstly to Amun, and secondly to Ptah. Sandman noted that this hierarchy suggests Ptah held a subordinate position to Amun during the New Kingdom [10], possibly reflecting Amun's status as Thebes' chief deity, with Ptah as a guest. In the Ramesseum temple, where the presented stela was found, Ptah held a special cult when Ramose erected his stela. This is evident in both the scenes and texts dedicated to Ptah within the temple and its library. King Ramesses II instituted a formal offering to Ptah, which is recorded as follows: "Offering to Ptah, south of his wall, Lord of *ꜥnh t3wy*, in all his names by the king Ramesses II in his temple at Thebes" [42]. Additionally, several titles point to Ptah's distinct cult in Thebes, such as "Ptah, who is south of his wall at Thebes" [5] and "Ptah, who is at the head of the south area (Theban area)" [43].

4.4. The sequence of Ptah titles

4.4.1. *Pth nb m3ꜥt nsw t3wy nfr hr hri st.f wrt*

The three titles occur together in the same order on the stela of Neferabet from Deir El Medina [5,38]. In the temple of Edfu, Ptah is named as *Pth nfr hr ntr ʿ3 hnt Bhd t hꜥ3 hꜥ3w hnt st wrt* "Ptah with beautiful face, the great god at the head of Edfu, the ruler of rulers at the head of *st wrt*" [44]. Although Sandman noted that *st wrt* is a very common name for the Horus temple at Edfu [10], it may be because Ptah had a certain cult in the Horus temple at Edfu [44], but *st wrt* is a common name for sanctuaries in different temples [39]. On the stela no. 20025 [45], *st wrt* is mentioned as a place dedicated to Ptah on the territory of the 15th Nome of Upper Egypt (Hermopolis), or perhaps rather the sanctuary reserved for Ptah in the very city of Hermopolis Magna, metropolis of the Nome mentioned above [39].

4.4.2. *nb š3y šhpr rnnt sꜥnh t3wi m hmwt.f*








































These designations of Ptah highlight one of his most distinctive attributes—his role as the lord of craftsmen. Since the 10th dynasty, Ptah has frequently been described as the god who creates with his hands. In the tomb of Khety at Asyut, Ptah is named as the one who built with his fingers [46]. In New Kingdom texts, Ptah is associated with the term *nbi*, meaning "melt, mould, carve, and fashion" further emphasizing his creative powers. This expression also links Ptah to the concept of human creation [10]. In the temple of Seti I at Abydos, there is a depiction of the god Khnum fashioning the king on the potter's wheel in the presence of Ptah. The accompanying text declares, "See, I'm moulding the body". In the texts of the temple of Medinet Habu, Ptah is given the epithet "One, whom Ptah has created with his hands to

protect the two lands" [10]. Furthermore, in the 4th dynasty [20], the priests of Ptah held the title *wr hrp hmwt* "the supreme leader of handicraft", a designation that persisted into the New Kingdom, where it was exclusively applied to the high priests of Ptah. Papyrus Harris I states: "He, who made their body as desired. Thus, the gods entered into their bodies of all kinds of wood; all kinds of minerals; all kinds of clay and all kinds of the other things that grow thereon in which they had taken shape" [10].

4.5. Paleographic remarks

The texts inscribed on the stela display several hieroglyphic signs written in diverse palaeographic variations, as outlined in tab. (1).

Table (1) the texts inscribed on the stela with several hieroglyphic signs

Sign	Forms			
	Text of Ptah	Texts of Maat	Text of offering table	Text of Ramose
1				Col. 1:  Col. 2:  Col. 5: 
2				Col. 1: 
3		Col. 1:  Col. 4: 		Col. 1: 
4		Col. 1: 	Col. 2: 	Col. 1: 
5				Col. 4 & 5: 
6		Col. 1:  Col. 3: 		Col. 1:  Col. 3: 
7		Col. 3:  Col. 1: 		Col. 3:  Col. 1: 
8		Col. 1: 		Col. 3 & 6:  Col. 9:  Col. 4:  Col. 5: 
9		Col. 2: 		

Most of the signs are copied in cursive hieroglyphics, and the ripples which are the distinctive shapes of the hieroglyph have mostly disappeared, which can be observed on the entire stela and which is typical for the New Kingdom objects [47].

- (1) The sign *n* is written in three different forms: the standard zigzag pattern, a cursive form with a straight line and two zags at each end, and another cursive form with an irregular line and two zags at each end. Additionally, in column 5 in front of Ramose, is written in two separate parts, divided in the middle.
- (2) The directions of the horns vary, and the head is depicted in different forms, sometimes thin and sometimes thick.
- (3) The upper line of the sign appears irregular, and the sign itself looks somewhat shallow.
- (4) The lower part (windpipe) varies in shape, appearing sometimes in a standard oval form and other times irregular. The height of the vertical line above the crossbar also differs in length.
- (5) The sign of life (*ankh*) above the goddess's knee is written as an extension of the knee making them appear as a single unit. The feather above her head varies, sometimes depicted straight and other times bent. The headband strip extending behind her back is inconsistently shown, occasionally depicted and sometimes omitted.
- (6) The sign is written with vertical lines, with the head omitted and merged with the beard, which is rendered as a horizontal bent line.

- (7) The three pennants are drawn connected, giving the appearance of a single unit.
- (8) The sign appears in different forms: it is written once in its standard form, and alternatively as a line with a bent end.
- (9) The face is not drawn as a single unit but is divided into three parts: the face itself and the two ears. Additionally, the thickness of the face is sometimes depicted as standard, while at other times it appears thinner than usual.

5. Conclusion

Through the scenes and texts of the stela, it becomes evident that, despite Ptah's widespread cult as the principal god of the Memphite region, he also maintained a special cult in Thebes—a city that served as a center for the worship of many Egyptian gods. The scribe Ramose, one of the most renowned scribes of Ancient Egypt, particularly during the Ramesside Period, gained fame for his long service as "sš m3^c m st- m3^t". This title is uniquely associated with Ramose and is not attested elsewhere. On the stela, Ramose focused solely on using his most distinguished titles, as well as the epithets for Ptah and Maat, entirely omitting his genealogy. Most of these titles and epithets follow the conventional patterns and arrangements seen on many of his monuments.

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