

Gurob Papyrus Shrine

Thoughts on the Design Drawing, Design and Construction

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The highly illustrated talk dealt with images about the shrine drawn on the Gurob Papyrus UC27934 i and ii in the Petrie Museum. The papyrus, in two sheets, was purchased at an unknown date from an antiques dealer in el-Luhan so has no provenance. The papyrus depicts a per-wer shrine of Upper Egypt drafted over a square grid drafted in red ink. UC27934 i depicts the front elevation (Fig. 1) and UC27934 ii depicts the side elevation (Fig. 2).




Fig 1: UC29734 i. Shrine front elevation



Fig 2: UC29734 ii. Shrine side elevation

The talk comprised of two parts, the first dealing with the history of the papyrus and the drawing of the elevations depicted, while second was on the dating of the papyrus and the 3D reconstructions of the shrine.

The shrine drawings represented the front and side elevation of a 'per-wer'  shrine of Upper Egypt with a baldachin canopy. It was drawn in black ink over a red ink preliminary drawing which was still visible in certain areas such as the papyrus bud capitols of the canopy columns and on the uraeus frieze to the canopy. From the technique employed in using a sedge pen, the direction in which the line was drawn can be ascertained. Using this knowledge, the sequence of drawing the grid and elevations was explained. From a detailed study of the elevations, it was proposed

that although the draftsman was competent in 2D work experience in perceiving things in 3D was lacking as there were a number of obvious mistakes. For example, the clashing of the rear of the papyrus bud capitals to the canopy columns with the cavetto cornice of the shrine roof and the shrine and canopy columns not fitting onto the base frame. Although the blocks for the carrying poles were shown, a number of other fittings such as supporting figures to the canopy column bases, coverings the rope fixings and the shrine doors were discussed and accompanied with examples from temple reliefs and examples from museum collections.

Petrie dated it to the New Kingdom. Later articles discussing the papyrus support this dating but refine the date to the 18th and 19th Dynasties and emphasise it is the only New Kingdom papyrus using a construction grid. The talk, however, challenged this dating based on the use of grid, which appears on a number of Ptolemaic period papyri and on the stylistic comparison of the shrine and canopy depicted to those from the 18th Dynasty to the Ptolemaic period. The conclusion was the papyrus was from the Ptolemaic period rather than the New Kingdom.

Using the grid a method of scaling and using the idea it was drawn in the Ptolemaic period, the shrine was drawn at an approximate scale of 1:2 or approximately half full size. Slides showing the possible front and side elevations complete with all the fittings previously discussed were presented, followed by coloured 3D reorientations of a cedar wood shrine (Fig. 3), a gilded shrine (Fig. 4) and a gilded shrine with faience and semi-precious stone inlay (Fig. 5).

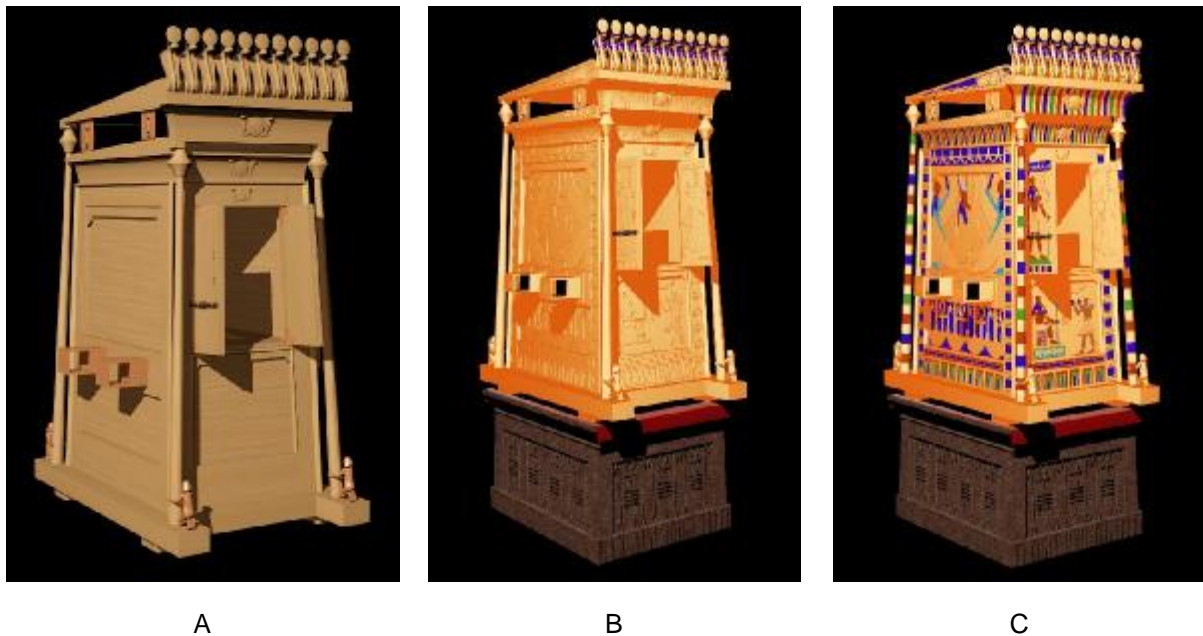


Fig 3: 3D renderings of shrine. A – Plain cedar with bronze fittings and ebony door bolts.
B – Bas relief embossed gold leaf sheet covering.
C - Bas relief embossed gold leaf sheet covering with semi-precious stone and faience inlay.

The talk concluded with a discussion on the weight of the completed shrine and the number of priests required to process the shrine around the temple. This was illustrated with an animation of multiple clones of the author carrying the shrine shoulder height across the screen.