

The house existed before the temple which is modeled after it. Similarly the equipment of the house served as the model for the equipment of the temple. The dish and the bowl were the original of the offering stone and the altar. For this reason it is not advisable to make a division into temple altars, house altars and grave altars. Professor Gáppling, formerly of Berlin, but now of Haloe advises rather to make the division along the lines of differences in form which are produced by differences in materials which we will divide as stone altars and movable altars of wood, bronze and clay. Of the first named group all the samples can be designated as immovable; however, the movable altars, also in practice, were not often moved.

A Stone Altars

1. The Hotep Tables

The Egyptian hieroglyphic for offering is nothing other than the simplified picture of a rectangular mat in the middle of which there is a round bowl with a white loaf of bread. Rarely there is a pitcher in the place of the bowl. From this it is evident that at the time at which this sign originated the usual support for the sacrificial instruments was a mat made of twisted straw or grass. That is the oldest form of support for the Egyptian offering that was used for foods for the divinity and the dead that we can find evidence of according to its primitive condition and it is undoubtedly the oldest form and at the same time it is also the oldest support used in place of a table for the daily food of the living. For a land which is rich in grain and marsh plants. For a land which is rich in grain and in marsh plants like Egypt this is natural and almost to be taken for granted. In the case of the Western Semites, the original form of the table placed quite a different appearance upon it, for there it is in the form of the hide of an animal, spread out upon the ground. For this reason (𐤇𐤍𐤔𐤏) it is likely that it is derived from (𐤇𐤍𐤔𐤏), a hide.

The Hotep table, (in the sense of an altar) is the designation for an oblong stone, of moderate size, which generally has on the longer