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Citation

Worp, K. A., & Kaper, O. E. (1995). A Bronze representing Tapsais of Kellis. *Revue D'egyptologie*, 46, 107-118. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/14949>

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A BRONZE REPRESENTING TAPSAIS OF KELLIS*

[PLANCHES IX-XI]

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The site of Ismant el-Kharab, ancient Kellis, has been a focus of excavations by the Dakhleh Oasis Project since 1986. The period of occupation attested at the site covers the first to the fourth centuries AD. In 1991 the temple complex of Kellis was chosen for further investigation. Its main temple was dedicated to the god Tutu, a late addition to the Egyptian pantheon of whom no other shrines have been discovered¹. It consists of a small, three-roomed stone temple with a contra temple of two rooms, surrounded by a vast complex with mud-brick chapels and other subsidiary buildings. This article will focus upon one of the small finds from the temple, which sheds some light upon the local deities worshipped at Kellis.

Description

A bronze statue (Pl. IX) was found in 1992 in the contra temple against the back of the sanctuary of the Main Temple at Kellis². A preliminary description of the archaeological context of the find was published by Colin A. Hope³. The bronze was still lying in the place where it had fallen in antiquity, on the surface of damaged floor material in which a stone pedestal was set, in the north-eastern corner of the inner room of the contra temple⁴. Owing to the frequent pouring of libations in this room, the statue had become covered by a thick crust built up from the libations and dust. As a result of this protective layer, the statue has been preserved in mint condition. The statue received the excavation number

* For various suggestions, the authors are grateful to professor dr. W. Clarysse, dr. C.A. Hope and professor dr. J. Quaegebeur.

¹ On Tutu, cf. J. Quaegebeur, *LÄ* VI, col. 602-06, with references. A monograph on Tutu is now being prepared by O.E. Kaper at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven.

² For permission to publish this statue in advance of the full archaeological report on the site, and for providing the necessary photographs, we are grateful to dr. C.A. Hope.

³ C.A. Hope *e.a.*, *JSSSEA* 19 (1989), p. 6-12, pl. II-VIII. The drawing reproduced here as fig. 1 appears in this article as pl. VIIb. A summary of the discovery including a photograph of the bronze appeared in C.A. Hope and O.E. Kaper, *The Bulletin of the Australian Centre for Egyptology* 3 (1992), p. 42-47, pl. 6-10. The bronze is depicted in pl. 8.

⁴ A plan of the temple, which shows the pedestal *in situ*, appears in Hope *e.a.*, *o.c.*, p. 7 fig. 3.

31/420-D6-1/D/1/87 and EAO number 2162. It is currently on display in the New Valley Museum in Kharga (no. 1583).

The statue's height is 14.1 cm, of which the crown measures 3.0 cm; the width at the shoulders is 3.8 cm. It is cast solid in bronze. The statue is extremely well finished, with elaborate details incised into its surface (Pl. IX-X et figs 1, 2 and 3). The polish has removed all traces which might reveal the original method of casting. The soles of the feet are perfectly smooth. The only element which might indicate manufacturing techniques is a small rectangular piece of bronze attached to the rear, against the seam of the goddess' dress, because this does not form part of the conventional iconography. This element seems to indicate the place where the bronze was poured into the mould during the casting of the statue. The attributes which the goddess holds in her hands, a staff and the hieroglyph of 'life', were made as separate elements. The staff was found bent at its lower part.

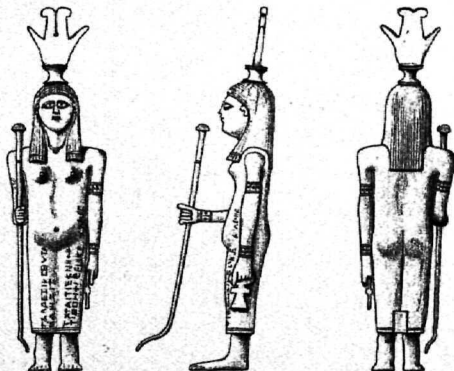


Fig. 1. Three views of the bronze (drawing by J.P. Clarke).

The statue is executed in the traditional pharaonic style, with its design based upon a strictly frontal orientation. Even though the overall proportions of the body have not succeeded everywhere, notably the somewhat short legs and the oversized head and feet, the details of the iconography are characteristic for Egyptian goddesses of the period. She wears a long tight-fitting dress which shows all details of her breasts, pubic region and legs. The legs are shown together. The goddess wears a long wig of which two tresses fall

over the breasts and her jewellery consists of armlets and bracelets on both arms and a small necklace with a round pendant⁵. The crown is that of Hathor or Isis, composed of cow horns, a sun disk (indicated as a small circle in this example) and two ostrich feathers⁶. The entire composition of the crown is set upon a high 'modius'.

In some other details the statue also betrays its late date of manufacture. The treatment of the face is not according to ancient ideals (pl. X). The prominent eyelids with their slightly drooping outer corners bring to mind the roughly contemporary, although unrelated, faces of Meroitic ba-bird statues. The necklace is of a type never shown on goddesses represented in the traditional Egyptian manner. The tip of the staff in Tapsais' right hand is decorated in an atypical manner; the more usual version of this staff is topped by a papyrus umbel.

Nevertheless, in all other details the bronze may be said to follow closely the traditional way of representing an Egyptian goddess. This makes the bronze a rarity, because we can date the piece with certainty to the Roman period, when bronzes were only exceptionally made according to the pharaonic models⁷. Most bronzes dating to this period treat their subject in the classical style. The date of the Kellis bronze is determined by the archaeological context, which has yielded as yet no evidence earlier than Hadrian⁸, while it is clear from papyrus finds from the temple (see below) that it functioned as a religious centre into the first half of the fourth century. The bronze's manufacture can therefore be roughly dated to the second or third century AD. The Greek inscription on the statue does not allow a more precise dating on paleographical grounds, owing to a lack of parallels.

Traditionally, the Egyptian style bronzes were employed as votive offerings. In the temple of Hibis, a cachette of bronzes has been found, which probably dates from the Roman period⁹, and also at the temple of Dush in Kharga, a few bronzes in the pharaonic style were found¹⁰. A few more examples from the Nile Valley and the Fayum may be added to this list¹¹.

⁵ This type of necklace is also depicted on Roman mummy portraits; e.g. K. Parlasca, *Mumienporträts und verwandte Denkmäler*, 1966, pl. 3.2, 31.2, 31.4.

⁶ The crown could indicate the queenship of Isis and the Ptolemaic queens, according to M. Malaise, *SAK* 4 (1976), p. 231. This crown was known as *basileion* according to Plutarch; *ibid.*, p. 216.

⁷ G. Roeder assigns only a few 'entartete' bronzes to the Roman Period; *Ägyptische Bronzefiguren*, 1956, p. 249.

⁸ The earliest dated inscription from the temple was found on the surface of the site in 1969. It is a building inscription whose date has been tentatively ascribed to Antoninus by G. Wagner, *BIFAO* 73 (1973), p. 177-180. The earliest coinage from the temple dates to Hadrian; G.E. Bowen, in: Hope *et al.*, *o.c.*, p. 17.

⁹ H.B. Winlock, *The Temple of Hibis in El Khargeh Oasis I, The Excavations*, 1941, p. 42-43, pl. 27, 30.

¹⁰ P. Posener-Krieger, *BIFAO* 90 (1990), p. 303 and M. Reddé, *Le trésor: inventaire des objets et essai d'interprétation* (*Douch*, 4), 1992, p. 1. The closest parallel to the Tapsais bronze from this find is the statue of Isis, which was made of gilded lead. This statue measures 29 cm. in height and it is on display in the New Valley Museum, Kharga. The bronzes from the same find include a bronze Horus in military dress and a bronze Osiris; Posener-Krieger, *o.c.*, p. 303, 305 fig. 13.

¹¹ The Karnak cachette has yielded hundreds of votive bronzes from earlier periods; P. Bargeat, *Le temple d'Amon-Ré à Karnak: Essai d'exploration* (*RAPH* 21), 1962, p. 277, and also the Luxor cachette contained a few bronze pieces; M. El-Saghir, *Das Statuenversteck im Luxortempel*, 1992, p. 19, fig. 41. We may, in addition, refer to the few bronzes found in the late Ptolemaic and Roman temples at Bacchias and Euhemeris in the Fayum; B.P. Grenfell and A.S. Hunt, *Fayûm Towns and Their Papyri*, 1900, p. 38, 45.

The Inscription

A dedicatory inscription in Greek of four lines has been incised into the legs of the goddess (pl. XI). The fourth line runs over onto the figure's flank. The height of the letters is approximately 0.5 cm. The execution of the inscription is less careful than the workmanship of the statue as a whole.

1. Ταλαεους θυγά(τηρ)	(Of?) Talaëous, daughter
2. Θαησις	(of?) Thaësis
3. Ταψάτι εκνίκωφ	To Tapsais all-victorious (?) <and>
4. Τιθοῆτι θεῶ Κέλλεως	To Tithoes, the god of Kellis.

Notes:

¹ Ταλαεους may be taken as the genitive of a new female name Ταλαῆς (accentuate Ταλαέους) or as the nominative of a new female name (accentuate Ταλαεοῦς); furthermore, Θαησις may be taken as representing a nominative (accentuate Θαῆσις) or as a genitive (accentuate Θαῆσις). We cannot tell with certainty, whether Thaësis was the daughter of a mother Talaëa, or whether she was the mother of a daughter Talaëous. Neither a personal name Ταλαῆς nor a personal name Ταλαεοῦς has occurred before; they are missing in the usual onomastica and on PHI CD-ROM 6. The name is, however, of a well-known type, and consists of the female prefix Τα- + an element λαῆς / λαεοῦς, the meaning of which remains unclear¹².

There is nothing visible to indicate that the word θυγά(τηρ) was abbreviated, but with θυγα alone one does not come very far.

² Θαῆσις is a common female personal name, 'She who Belongs to (the goddess) Isis'. Even though it is difficult to decide which name on the statue refers to the mother, the mentioning of only the maternal ancestry is relatively common on documents of a religious nature¹³.

³ Ταψάτις, 'She who Belongs to Fate' cf. below.

ἐκνίκωφ: On the one hand it seems very unlikely that ἐκ should be separated here from a following element Νικω. Following that line of thought and taking ἐκ as meaning 'born from', one might think of some kind of genealogy, but a name Νικω (undeclined? or should we read Νικου?) or even Νικω() is unknown either as a personal name or as a toponym. On the other hand, a Greek adjective ἐκνικος has never occurred before. Its word-formation itself is not irregular, cf. adjectives like ἐπίνικος, πάννικος, Ὀλυμπιόνικος, Ἰσθμιόνικος, Πυθ(ι)όνικος, etc., but its meaning is not quite certain. While combining an element ἐκ- = 'thoroughly, completely' with the verb νικῶ = 'to win a victory' (cf. ἐκνικάω = 'to win a complete victory') one might conclude that the adjective ἐκνικος would mean 'conquering completely, all-victorious' vel sim. (cf. the meaning of πάννικω). In itself, such a meaning would fit well with the character of the goddess as expressed in the legend in figure 4 (cf. below), and we may point at the use of a similar epithet νικῆφορος with the god Khnum¹⁴.

¹² F. Preisigke, *Namenbuch*, 1922, p. 191, who also lists the variants λαῆῦ, λαῆη and λαεῦ.

¹³ J. Quaegebeur, *Oriens Antiquus* 25 (1986), p. 78-79.

¹⁴ In the demotic P. Berl. 15518; K.-Th. Zausch, *Papyri von der Insel Elephantine 1 (Demotische Papyri aus den Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin 1)*, 1978. We owe this reference to professor W. Clarysse.

It remains, however, slightly problematic that the author of the inscription preferred devising a new adjective $\epsilon\kappa\upsilon\lambda\omicron\varsigma$ rather than use an existing adjective with much the same meaning, viz. $\kappa\acute{\alpha}\nu\upsilon\kappa\omicron\varsigma$. So much is certain that the reading $\epsilon\kappa\upsilon\lambda\omicron\varsigma$ itself is not at stake.

The Goddess Tapsais

From the excavations of the temples at Ismant el-Kharab, the figure of the goddess Tapsais has emerged as a hitherto unknown goddess in the Egyptian pantheon. Her name has thus far been found six times in the hieroglyphic inscriptions at Kellis, listed here in figure 2 (n^{os} 1-6). The name is in Egyptian *Ta-pi-šy* and refers to the concept of fate, *šy*, which was embodied in a god of the same name, Shay, often rendered as Psais in Greek. According to J. Quaegebeur, the name Tapsais was well-known as a personal name for women, and it can be translated as 'She who belongs to (the god) Shay'¹⁵, referring to either the god Shay or the concept of fate.

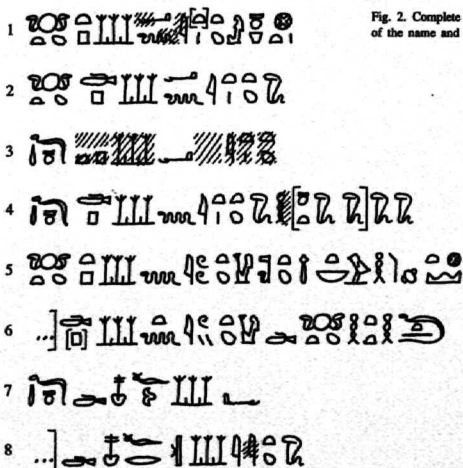


Fig. 2. Complete list of hieroglyphic renderings of the name and titles of Tapsais / Tapsarsais.

¹⁵ Quaegebeur, *Le dieu Égyptien Shaï dans la religion et l'onomastique (OLA 2)*, 1975 (hereafter abbreviated as Quaegebeur, *Shaï*), p. 200f. The name is attested from the mid — Ptolemaic period into the fourth century AD.

From the inscriptions and representations on the walls of the temple, it is clear that Tapsais was considered to be one of the main deities of Kellis, on a par with the gods Tutu and Neith. Apart from the inscription upon the bronze under discussion, which mentions Tapsais together with Tutu, the goddess forms a pair with Tutu in several of the main scenes in the mudbrick Shrine I south of the Main Temple at Kellis¹⁶. In addition, she is coupled with the goddess Neith in the West Temple, a subsidiary of the Main Temple. From the inscriptions upon the outer doorjambs of this temple (partly in fig. 2, n° 6), it is clear that it was dedicated exclusively to these two goddesses¹⁷. Unfortunately, only small fragments remain of the original decoration of the building.



Fig. 3. The emperor Pertinax and Tapsais upon a fragment from the original decoration of the contra temple.

¹⁶ On this shrine, which has extensive painted plaster decoration, cf. the initial report Hope *et al.*, *o.c.*

¹⁷ This temple was excavated already during the survey of the Dakhleh Oasis in 1981-1982. A preliminary report appeared in A.J. Mills, *JSEEA* 12 (1982), p. 99, pl. XIIIa-b. Unfortunately, as was reported in *id.*, *JSEEA* 20 (1990), p. 13-14, two of the four decorated doorjambs of the temple were robbed of their decorated surfaces between 1988 and 1991. Photographs of these were published in *ibid.* pl. II-III (the image in pl. III has been reversed). The name of Tapsais appears in the inscription visible on the first of these and in our figure 2, n° 6. It reads: 'Tapsais, the queen (*H R' t*, see below, n. 22) for ever and ever (*nḥt d' t*)'.

In the contra temple where the bronze was found, a section of the original decoration upon a block from one of the door jambs has survived (fig. 3). It shows the goddess Tapsais, wearing the same crown as on the bronze, being presented with a *sistrum* and menat by the emperor Pertinax (193 AD). The protagonists are both identified by hieroglyphic legends¹⁸. Tapsais' name is here followed by the titles 'the great goddess, mistress of the oasis' (= fig. 2, n° 5).

In two scenes in Shrine I, Tapsais is shown wearing the red crown of Lower Egypt. In one case (fig. 4) this crown is surmounted by the crown of Hathor and Isis, a sun disk with two feathers set in between cow's horns, similar to the crown of certain Ptolemaic queens¹⁹. The aspect of queenship forms part of Tapsais' character (see below), and a reference to the Ptolemaic queens may therefore have been intentional. The red crown may have been adapted from that of Neith, although Tapsais does not show any other



Fig. 4. Line drawing of a painting of Tapsais upon the vaulted ceiling of Shrine I.

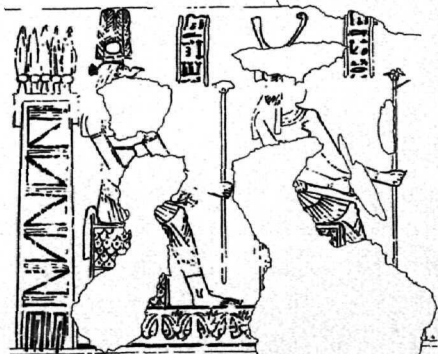


Fig. 5. Line drawing of a painting of Neith and Tausersais upon the northern wall of Shrine I.

¹⁸ A full publication of this only known Egyptian temple relief of Pertinax still awaits a more thorough cleaning of the relief. The doorjambs of the contra temple, as elsewhere in the building, were covered by an oily crust caused by libations.

¹⁹ J. Quaegebeur, in: *Arabis Aegypti: Studia in honorem Bernardi V. Bothmer a collegis amicis discipulis conscripta*, ed. by H. de Meulemaere and L. Lissac, 1983, p. 110-113. The set of ram's horns which usually forms part of the Ptolemaic crown is omitted in the Kellis painting.

similarities with this goddess. In the third instance where Tapsais has been found in the decoration of Shrine I (fig. 5, see further below), she wears a crown consisting only of two tall plumes with a sun disk and cow horns set upon a vulture headdress. This crown is again derived from the crown worn by the queens in pharaonic and Ptolemaic Egypt. The association of Tapsais with queenship is confirmed by the recurrence of the same crown set upon a cartouche containing the goddess' name (fig. 2, n° 2)²⁰. This cartouche was painted upon a cavetto cornice set over the doorway in the north wall of Shrine I, next to a cartouche containing the name of Tutu, which was also surmounted by the god's crown. Another instance of the plumed crown upon the head of Tapsais, with the addition of two symmetrical curving ribbons, is found upon the southern doorjamb of the West Temple at Kellis referred to above²¹. Although no legend with the figure survives, we may be certain that the latter represents Tapsais from the parallel scene on the northern doorjamb which shows the goddess Neith.

From the nature of her various crowns, we may conclude that Tapsais was considered to possess certain traits of sovereignty. Three times, moreover, she is given the title *R'*, which is found referring specifically to queens as well as to the goddesses Hathor and Isis²². The queenship of Tapsais would accord well with the nature of the god Tutu, with whom she formed a pair. Tutu was, as is especially apparent in the decoration of Shrine I, a god who had adopted many traits of ancient pharaonic royal imagery. In the legend to the figure of Tutu in one of the scenes just mentioned, the god is designated 'King of Upper Egypt and King of Lower Egypt'. A full study of this aspect of the god Tutu will be published elsewhere.

Other information on the nature of the goddess Tapsais may be gained from her titles in the inscriptions. She is designated 'mistress of the city' (fig. 2, n° 1), which indicates her important position within the temple²³. Another title is 'mistress of the oasis' (fig. 2, n° 5),

²⁰ The same iconography as was used for the names of the queens upon the colossi of Memnon in Thebes; M. Eaton-Krauss and B. Fay, *GM* 52 (1981), p. 27.

²¹ Cf. Mills, *JSSA* 20, pl. III (printed reversed).

²² A. Garbub, *LÄ* V, 87-90 and D. Devauchelle, *RdÉ* 40 (1989), p. 190; The translation of the title is the equivalent of *hgt*, 'ruler'. The reading *R'* for this title may not always be the correct one. The sign consistently employed for the title in the Kellis inscriptions, in the titulary of Tapsais or Tutu, is the sun disk with two flanking cobras. This sign is usually read as *nsw-bity*, or it has a more symbolical role in the temple inscriptions; E. Winter, *Untersuchungen zu den ägyptischen Tempelreliefs der griechisch-römischen Zeit*, 1968, p. 23 n. 3, 41. At Kellis, the same sign occurs in its masculine form in front of the name of Tutu. The reading in that case should be *nsw-bity*, rather than *R'*, and possibly the feminine form should therefore read *nsw-btjw*, where it appears in front of divine names. It is significant that the title may function as an introduction to divine names, replacing the common *gd mdw in*. In unpublished inscriptions of the temple of Deir el-Hagar, Dakkeh, the same title occurs in its masculine form with Amon-Re and its feminine form with Mut, Triphis and Nut, placed in front of the name. A similar use of this title may be observed in the temple of Dush in Kharga.

²³ The word *nwt*, 'city', may, in addition, refer specifically to a temple precinct; H. Te Velde, in: *Studies in Egyptian Religion: Dedicated to Professor Jan Zandee - Studies in the History of Religions*, 43, ed. by M. Heerma van Voss *e.a.*, 1982, p. 127.

which has also been attested with a number of other gods venerated in Dakhleh in the Roman period, such as Neith, and Nephthys, and as 'lord of the oasis' with Seth and Osiris²⁴.

As for the origin of the goddess, we may venture a suggestion, although nothing can be said with certainty. The name Tapsais is known as a female personal name before the Roman period²⁵ and it is not impossible that an ancestor cult for an individual Tapsais developed at Kellis, which later became adopted into the local cult of Tutu. Parallel cases are provided by the wife and mother of the deified Imhotep, called Renpet-nefret and Kheredu-anekh respectively²⁶. Nothing is certain about the historical reality of these two ladies, but we find them appearing as goddesses together with Imhotep in the Ptolemaic temples. Of Kheredu-anekh there are also bronzes known²⁷. These goddesses resemble Tapsais in their iconography, because they are depicted wearing the tall plumed crown of the pharaonic and Ptolemaic queens²⁸.

The legend in fig. 4 adds a more forceful trait to Tapsais character, when she is made to say: "I send your enemies to the slaughtering place" (*dl. n.l sbiw .k r nmt*). This aspect of the goddess coincides with that expressed in the epithet $\epsilon\kappa\nu\iota\kappa\omicron\varsigma$, 'all-victorious', upon the bronze.

One scene on the walls of Shrine I still needs to be discussed in more detail here. The painting reproduced in fig. 5, shows two goddesses seated in front of the hieroglyph 𓏏 , which indicates the temple²⁹. The first is identified in the legend as Neith and she is followed by a goddess wearing the crown of Tapsais, but who bears the name Tanefershay (fig. 2, n^o 7-8). The explanation for this unexpected appearance of the name Tanefershay, which corresponds to Tnaphersais in Greek³⁰, is provided by one of the Greek papyri found in the temple. This papyrus bears the inventory number 31/420-D6-1/D/1/84, frame 19, and contains a petition to the Praeses Thebaidos in thirteen lines of which only the first five yield a sufficiently intelligible text. The petition was written by a priest called Stonios, who is well known from several fourth-century documents from Kellis.

²⁴ Unpublished inscriptions from Shrine I. For Seth and Nephthys as 'lord' respectively 'mistress of the oasis', see J. Osing, *MDAIK* 41 (1985), p. 229-233.

²⁵ The earliest attestation for the personal name Tapsais is known from the Thebaid in 103/102 BC; Quaegebeur, *Shaf*, p. 296.

²⁶ D. Wildung, *Imhotep und Amenhotep: Gotterverdung im alten Ägypten* (MÄS 36), 1977, index.

²⁷ *Ibid.* p. 47 (h). The Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden has at least two examples: no. AED 84 (14 cm high) and no. F.1900/4.1 (13.5 cm high); P.A.A. Boeser, *Beschreibung der Ägyptischen Sammlung des Niederländischen Reichsmuseums der Altertümer in Leiden*, 1925, XII, n^o 8 and n^o 11 respectively; G. Roeder, *Bronzefiguren*, § 294.1, fig. 289. The goddess appears with a short round wig with the feather crown on top.

²⁸ As attested at Philae, Kalabsha, Deir el-Bahari and Deir el-Medina; Wildung, *o.c.* § 105, 125, 146.1 and 147.5.

²⁹ M. Gittin, *BIFAO* 74 (1974), p. 63 n.3). Compare the image of a cultic statue of the goddess Mut in a relief from the time of Taharqa; R.A. Fazzini, *Egypt, Dynasty XXII-XXV (Iconography of Religions 16^e s., 10)*, 1988, pl. 30.

³⁰ This name is to be distinguished from the Greek (T)nepheres; Quaegebeur, *Shaf*, p. 217-223. The painting in fig. 5 contains the first known attestation of the name in hieroglyphs.

- 1 Τουλίωφ Ἀθη[νο]δώρω τῷ διασημοτάτῳ
 - 2 ἡγουμ[έν]ω Θε[βα]ίδος
 - 3 Παρὰ Αὐρηλίου Στωνίου Τεπν[άχθιος] ἱερέως
 - 4 ἱεροῦ Τιθέως καὶ Τναφεροσάτι[ος] Θεῶν ἀπὸ
 - 5 κώμης Κέλλεως τῆ[ς] μεγάλῃ[ς] Ὀάσεως
- 1 To Julius Athenodoros, vir prefectissimus,
 - 2 Praeses Thebaidos,
 - 3 from Aurelius Stonios, son of Tephakhthis, priest
 - 4 of the temple of Tithoes and Tnaphersais the gods, from
 - 5 the village of Kellis of the Great Oasis

Notes:

¹ The governor of the Thebaid (*praeses Thebaidos*) Julius Athenodoros is known from sources around 300 AD³¹.

² The name of Stonios' father, Tephakhthis, is Egyptian (*tj=f nht*). It is a shortform in which the name of a deity has been omitted³².

³ The size of the lacuna does not seem to allow a restoration as Θεῶν μεγίστων, "the great gods".

The priestly title of Stonios contained in this document could only refer to the main gods of the temple, in this case the gods Tutu and Tapsais. We can conclude therefore, that the name Tnaphersais is another name for Tapsais which can be used as an alternative designation for the goddess. The name Tnaphersais was already known from the titulary of a number of goddesses, such as Isis and Nut or Hathor, and its application to Tapsais is not surprising, especially because of the element 'shay' contained in both names³³. The name Tnaphersais was, in addition, employed as a female personal name³⁴. We may compare Tnaphersais with the divine names *T3-ngrt-3t* ('The Great Goddess') and *Nbt-ihy* ('Mistress of The Stable' or 'Mistress of Jubilation') of El-Qal'a and Shenhur, which were recently interpreted by J. Quaegebeur and Cl. Traunecker as manifestations of the goddesses Isis and Nephthys respectively³⁵.

³¹ Cf. J. Lallemand, *L'administration civile de l'Égypte... (Mémoires de l'Académie des Lettres 57)*, 1964, p. 249-250. The P.Cairo. inv. 10268 cited there is now published as SB XVIII 13295.

³² Cf. H. Jacquet-Gordon, *ZAS* 94 (1967), p. 90; J. Quaegebeur, in: S.P. Vleeming (ed.), *Aspects of Demotic Lexicography*, 1987, p. 77 n. 12.

³³ Quaegebeur, *Shaf*, p. 83, 86.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 217-23.

³⁵ The latter identification is not quite certain; J. Quaegebeur and Cl. Traunecker, *CRIPPEL* 16 (1994), p. 205-207. 'The Great Goddess' probably included aspects of goddesses other than Isis, but so far, there is no evidence that Tnaphersais incorporated aspects of others than Tapsais.

Tnaphersais means 'The one who is good as regards destiny' or more freely: 'She with a good destiny'. Considering the implications of this information for our understanding of the goddess Tapsais, it may be concluded that her specific area of influence was thought to comprise control over human destiny. From the two different names of the goddess, it seems that the name Tapsais itself does not necessarily imply a relationship between the goddess and the god Shay, but that it is more probable that the name refers to the concept of 'shay' (destiny), instead of to the god of that name. The addition of a serpent in the hieroglyphic rendering of Tapsais' name must therefore be interpreted as 'sportive writing'. The name Tapsais can thus be translated as 'She who Belongs to Fate', and we should not interpret the goddess as a female derivation of the god Shay. This does not mean that the divinity Shay was unknown at Kellis. On the contrary, his popularity with the inhabitants of the town is apparent from the common occurrence of the private name Psais given to boys in Kellis far into the fourth century AD³⁶. In the local theology of the temple, however, the concept 'shay' formed part of the personalities of Tutu and Tapsais³⁷.

Conclusion

The bronze depicts the goddess Tapsais, who has been found to embody a number of different aspects. She has royal traits, she is the mistress of Kellis and also mistress of the oasis, and she embodies human destiny like the god Shay. The inscription on the bronze adds that the goddess was thought to be 'all-victorious', if our interpretation is correct, which refers to her effective power against misfortune. All of these aspects she shares with her partner deity Tutu, which explains why these two gods were coupled in the first place. The association of Tapsais with the goddess Neith seems to depend solely on the individual goddesses' shared relationship with Tutu; Neith being the mother of the god and Tapsais his 'partner'.

The triad of Tutu at Kellis resembles in various ways the triad associated with Imhotep. Both gods appear with their mother and with a wife, and the iconography given to the wife is in both cases that of a pharaonic or Ptolemaic queen. Moreover, the origin of both Renpet-Nefret and Tapsais may lie in a historical figure elevated to the status of goddess. The similarity of the gods Tutu and Imhotep was recognized by temple theologians, who placed the two gods sometimes in parallel positions upon the temple walls³⁸. Tutu and

³⁶ The latest certain example from the Kellis papyri dates to 369 AD (P.Kellis inv. 17L). On this name as referring to the god rather than to the concept of destiny; Quaegebeur, *Shaf*, p. 191. The Kellis evidence thus confirms Quaegebeur's conclusions about a possible cult for Shay within the Great Oasis; *ibid.*, p. 162-163.

³⁷ The affinity between Tutu and Shay is apparent from the occurrence of the personal name *Tiwwe-Šty* in Roman Egypt; *ibid.*, p. 106, 224-226 (one example only).

³⁸ As in Philae; Wildung, *o.c.*, § 116, 117, and Kalabsha; *ibid.*, § 126. We may in addition refer to the private name *Twtw-Šmḥtp*; Ranke, *PN I*, p. 379, 17.

Neith are found as a pair already in the Ptolemaic period, while Tapsais appears only at a later date. It seems likely, therefore, that the triad of Imhotep provided the inspiration for adding Tapsais to Tutu and Neith.

Résumé/ Abstract

Description d'une statuette bronze votive trouvée en 1992 dans le temple principal d'Ismant el-Kharab (Kellis) dans l'Oasis de Dakhla, ainsi qu'une discussion de la déesse représentée. Des considérations archéologiques et artistiques mènent à la conclusion que le bronze date du second ou du troisième siècle apr. J.-C. La statuette représente la déesse Tapsais, qui n'est connue qu'à Ismant el-Kharab; toutes les sources la concernant sont décrites. Tapsais joue le rôle de déesse parèdre du dieu Toutou, avec qui elle partage certains traits. Elle est aussi nommée Tnaphersais.

Description of a bronze votive statuette found in 1992 in the Main Temple at Ismant el-Kharab (Kellis) in the Dakhleh Oasis and a discussion of the goddess it represents. The bronze can be dated to the second or third century AD on archaeological and artistic grounds. It represents the goddess Tapsais, who is known exclusively from sources at Ismant el-Kharab, all of which are briefly described. *Tapsais functions as the partner deity to the god Tutu with whom she shares certain traits. An alternative designation occurs as Tnaphersais.*



The bronze of Tapsais from Kellis.

O. E. Kaper & K. A. Worp, *A bronze representing Tapsais of Kellis.*



Detail of the face.

O. E. Kaper & K. A. Worp, *A bronze representing Tapsais of Kellis.*



Detail of the Greek dedication.

O. E. Kaper & K. A. Worp, *A bronze representing Tapsais of Kellis.*