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A DONATION STELA IN THE NAME OF TAKELOTH III FROM AMHEIDA, DAKHLEH OASIS

OLAF E. KAPER, ROBERT J. DEMARÉE

Introduction

The stela published here was discovered in February 2005 at the site of Amheida in the north-western part of the Dakhleh Oasis¹. Amheida is the largest surviving Roman town site of the oasis. Its ancient name was Trimithis in Greek², and *St-w3h* (perhaps 'Place of Endowment', cf. below) in Egyptian.

The principal hill of Amheida, which lies close to its geographical centre, was chosen for excavation because previous surface examination in 1979 and again in 2004 had indicated the likely presence of a temple at this location. Surface finds included a block of weathered temple relief, found in 1979, and several bronze Osiris statuettes, found in 2004. A single square of 10 x 10 m. was chosen for excavation in the central part of the hill, which was later extended by an adjacent square on the east. No in situ remains of the temple were found at this location, because the area had been severely disturbed by later human activity. Large holes had been dug into a layer of mudbrick rubble and debris, including many building blocks of the temple. This extensive demolition is likely to have been the result of treasure-hunting in the past, the date of which is as yet unknown. In the nearby town of el-Qasr several blocks from the same temple appear reused in the houses from the 17th and 18th centuries, and it seems likely, therefore, that the robbing of the temple had taken place at that time.

The excavations in 2005 have uncovered some three hundred temple blocks and fragments with decoration, which have led to the following preliminary conclusions about this building. The latest phase of the temple was constructed in the Roman period, to which the name of Domitian may be linked. The same emperor's name is found in the nearby temple of Deir el-Hagar, which was already known to be closely associated with a temple of Thoth in the vicinity³. The current excavations have confirmed that this temple was located at Amheida.

The Roman period temple had been constructed out of building blocks from an earlier temple of the 26th and 27th dynasties. Three kings of the 26th dynasty are named on the blocks: Necho II (610-595), Psamtek II (595-589) and Amasis (569-526). Especially the

¹ The excavations were conducted by a team of Columbia University directed by R.S. Bagnall as part of the Dakhleh Oasis Project, which is led by A.J. Mills.

² R.S. Bagnall and G.R. Ruffini, 'Civic Life in Fourth-Century Trimithis. Two Ostraka from the 2004 Excavations', *ZPE* 149 (2004), 143-152.

³ O.E. Kaper, 'A Painting of the Gods of Dakhla in the Temple of Ismant el-Kharab', in: S. Quirke (ed.), *The Temple in Ancient Egypt*, London 1997, 206.

cartouche of Amasis occurs on many of the reliefs. A fragmentary cartouche may also point at the presence of Darius I on the temple walls, as at Hibis. The reuse of the blocks in the later temple of the Roman period is evident from the occurrence of gypsum mortar on the faces of all earlier reliefs. The temple of the 26th and 27th dynasties stood on the same site as the Roman temple, as it was likewise dedicated to Thoth of Set-wah.

Among the reused blocks of the Roman period temple are also blocks from an earlier temple dated to one of the kings with the name Pedubast (Fig. 1). There are three kings known of this name, and therefore we need to discuss this matter in some detail here. The first Pedubast is known from Karnak, where he had building works carried out at the 10th pylon. His highest recorded regnal year is 23. He ruled at the time when Sheshonq III ruled the north of the country. His name is written in many different forms, usually including the title *s3-3st*⁴. The building inscription upon the 10th pylon in Karnak demonstrates that Sheshonq III and Pedubast I ruled peacefully at the same time⁵. The land donation stelae of his reign are from Herakleopolis, Memphis and Bubastis, which shows the geographical extent of his control. D. Redford thinks that Pedubast I also started building the chapel of Osiris Heka-djet⁶. The title *s3-3st* is typical for the Theban kings of the Third Intermediate Period⁷, although there are some northern examples known.

Pedubast II is known from Tanis, from reused temple blocks found in the sacred lake, and the same king is also mentioned in the Assyrian records from the time of Assurbanipal I⁸.

Pedubast III carried the epithet *s3-B3stt* in his name. He ruled over Memphis shortly around 520 BCE⁹.

Only Pedubast I is known in the south of the country, and we therefore choose this king, even though the spelling of his name is more like that of Pedubast II from Tanis. The cartouche does not carry the epithet *s3-3st* or *s3-B3stt*, both of which are frequently attested with the name Pedubast. This addition is not essential, however, and it seems that wherever the throne-name is lacking, the epithet was not written either¹⁰.

⁴ His cartouches read in full *Wsr-m3't-R' stp-n-Imn p3-di-B3stt s3-B3stt/s3-3st mri-Imn*.

⁵ Cf. G. Legrain, 'Au pylone d'Harmhabi à Karnak', *ASAE* 14 (1914), 13-17; 39-40.

⁶ D.B. Redford, *Pharaonic King-Lists, Annals and Day-Books: A Contribution to the Study of the Egyptian Sense of History*, Mississauga 1986, 312, n. 110.

⁷ J. Yoyotte, 'Pharaon Iny, un roi mystérieux du VIII^e siècle avant J.-C.', *CRIPEL* 11 (1989), 124-125; M.-A. Bonhême, *Les noms royaux dans l'Égypte de la Troisième Période Intermédiaire*, BdE 98, Cairo 1987, 268-271; B. Muhs, 'Partisan royal epithets in the late Third Intermediate Period and the dynastic affiliation of Pedubast I and Iuput II', *JEA* 84 (1998), 220-223.

⁸ 668-627 BCE; his cartouches in full: *Shtp-ib(-n)-R' p3-di-B3stt*; cf. P. Montet, *Le lac sacré de Tanis*, Paris 1966, 63-65, no. 230-235; on the Rassam Cylinder, cf. H.-U. Onasch, *Die Assyrische Eroberungen Ägyptens*, Wiesbaden 1994, 118-119; R. Borger in: R.J. Demarée and K.R. Veenhof (eds), *Zij schreven geschiedenis. Historische documenten uit het Oude Nabije Oosten (2500-100 v.Chr.)*, Leiden and Leuven 2003, 341-350; two door posts from a temple may also be attributed to this Pedubast; cf. L. Habachi, 'Three Monuments of the Unknown King Setheptibre Pedubastis', *ZÄS* 93 (1966), 72.

⁹ J. Yoyotte, 'Pétoubastis III', *RdE* 24 (1972), 216-223; J. von Beckerath, 'Beiträge zur Geschichte der Liby-erzeit, 3. Die Könige namens Pedubaste', *GM* 147 (1995), 9-13.

¹⁰ The authors owe this idea to M. Elebaut, and they gratefully acknowledge benefiting from her MA-thesis: *Een 23ste Tanitische Dynastie? Een studie over de spilfiguur koning Pedubastis*, Leuven 2004.



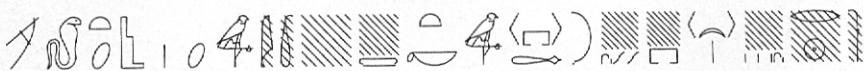
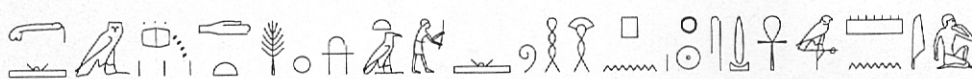
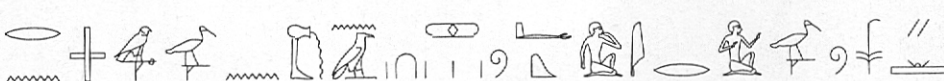
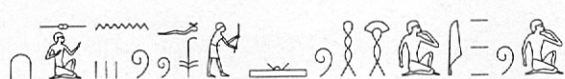
Fig. 1 Temple relief fragment with the cartouche of Pedubast I.

Physical description of the stela (Fig. 2-7)

The stela received excavation no. Amheida A05/4.1/11/3073 and SCA no. 2816. It is made of local sandstone and its measurements are: between 42-48 cm wide; between 47-51 cm high; between 10-16 cm thick. The surface is not flush, but it is slightly depressed in the centre. The back is irregularly shaped. It is clear that the surface of the stone was not smooth before the inscription was carved, as some signs, e.g. the beginning of line 3 and the word *w3h* in line 5, seem to take account of imperfections in the surface. It is unclear how the stela was set up initially; perhaps it was intended to be set into a wall. Because of its shape, the stone was not suitable for reuse in a visible face of a wall, so that when it was reused in the masonry of the Roman period, it must have been placed in the foundations or the core filling of a wall. At this stage, two lines had been incised into its surface with a sharp tool. The lines are close to the sides of the block and run parallel to these. It seems unlikely that these narrow grooves were intended as a conduit for the mortar¹¹. Several other reused blocks with sunk relief from the 26th dynasty temple at Amheida show the same treatment, and perhaps the lines were drawn in preparation for the block to be resized by a stone cutter. By following the incised lines, the irregular shape of the block would have been cut down to a more regular shape that could more easily be fitted into the masonry.

The inscription consists of five lines of hieratic signs (max. 3.5 cm in height), followed by a line with a priest's name in a somewhat smaller size, beneath which are two parallel columns with another 11 names in again a smaller size of signs.

The text

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 
6. 

¹¹ For this practice, cf. J.-Cl. Goyon, J.-Cl. Golvin, Cl. Simon-Boidot and G. Martinet, *La construction pharaonique du Moyen Empire à l'époque gréco-romaine. Contexte et principes technologiques*, Paris 2004, 276-277.

1. *ḥṣt-sp 13 <3bd> I prt sw 10 <n> Pr '3 Tkrt s3-3st mri*
2. *'Imn 'nh wḏ3 snb hrw pn w3ḥ t3 ḥ3r 1/4 bd.t m-b3ḥ*
3. *Dḥwty nb S3-wh3t in wr n3 Š3m3in Ns-*
4. *Dḥwty r 'kw 11 n3 w'bw n Dḥwty imy-rn*
5. *=w i-w3ḥ=f sw n=w s 10*
6. *ḥm-ntr n Dḥwty ?? s3 P3-in-mw 1*

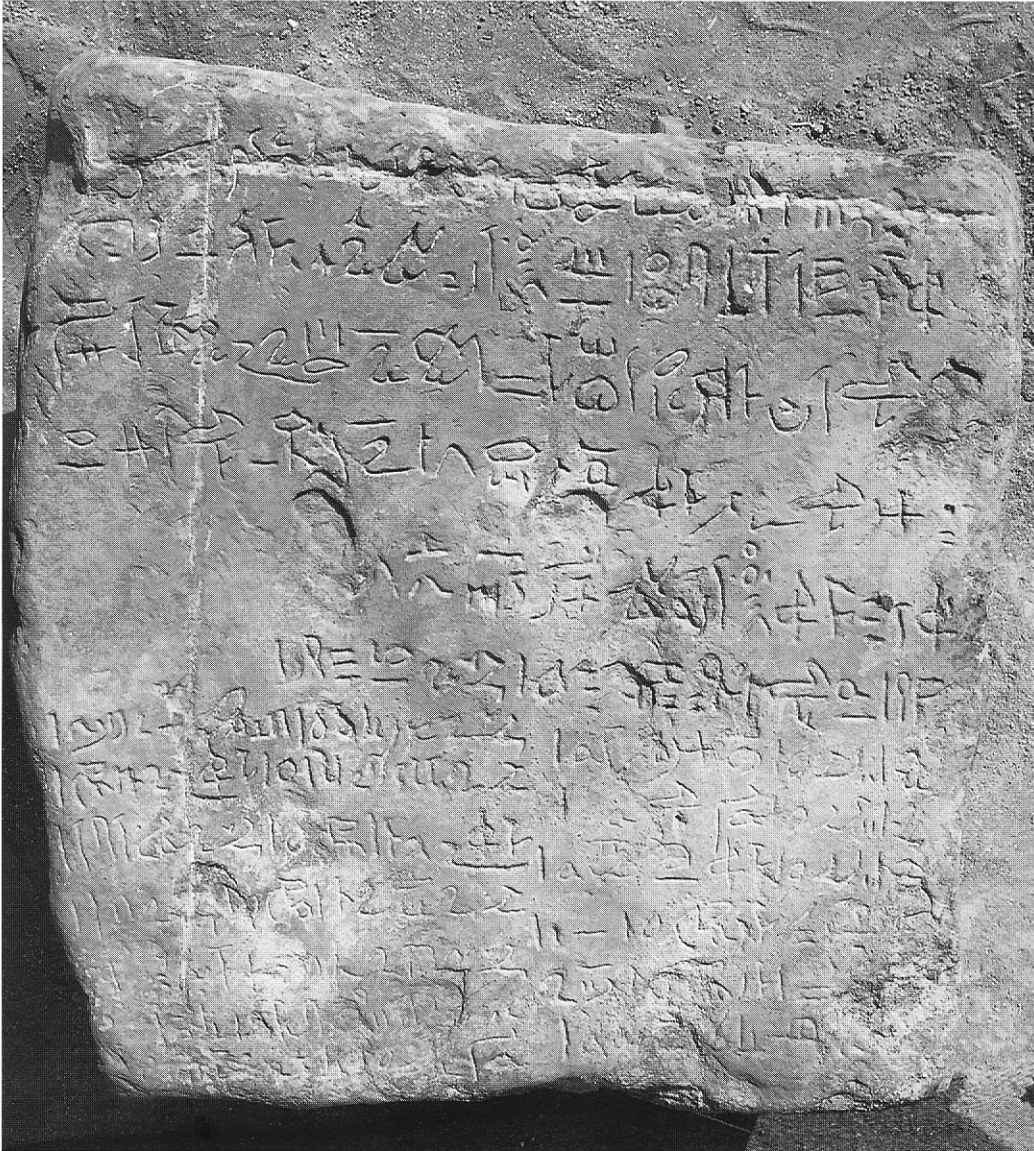
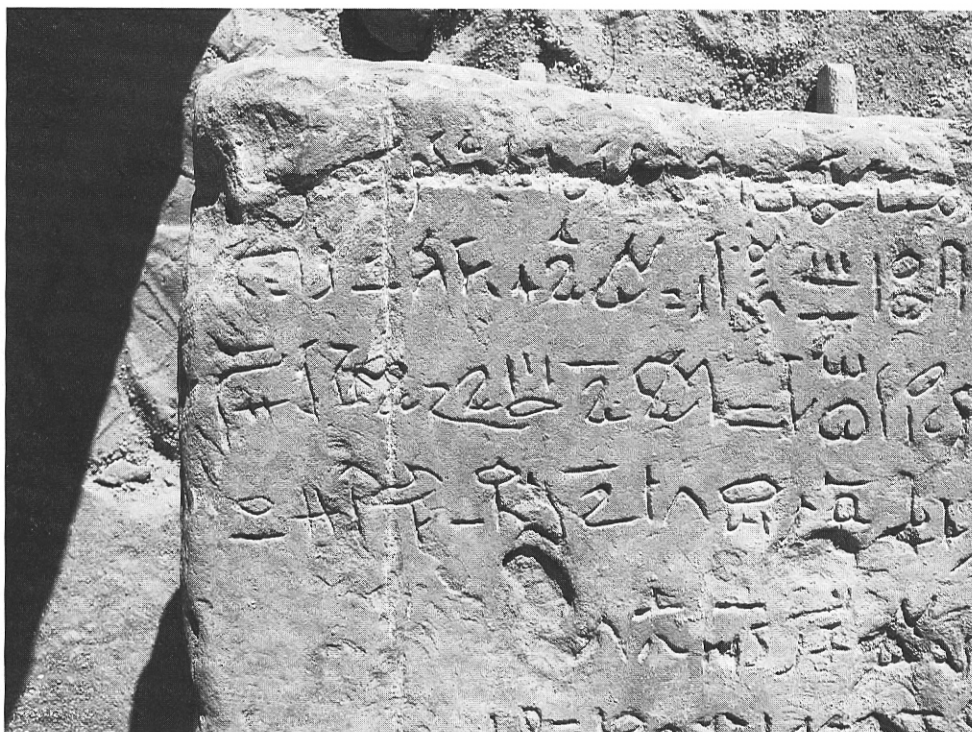
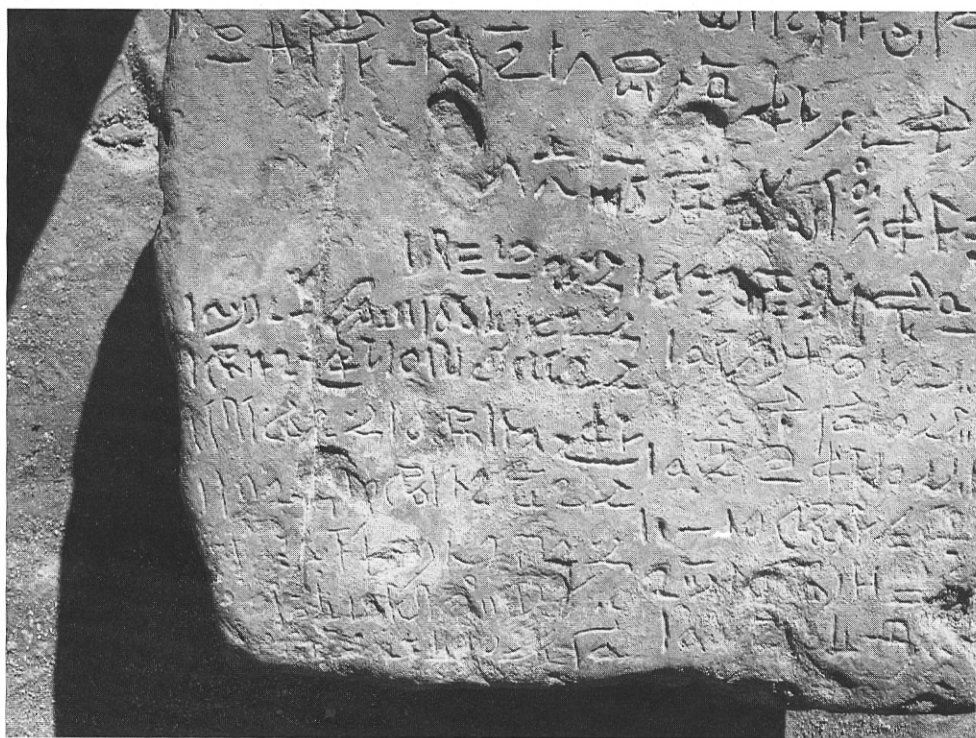


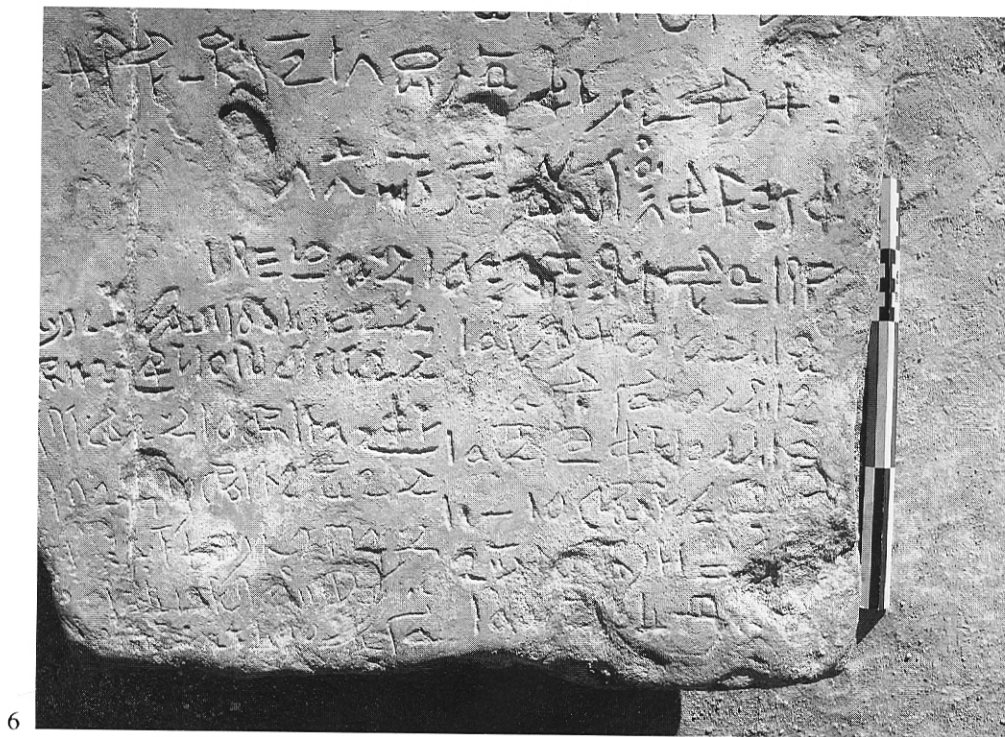
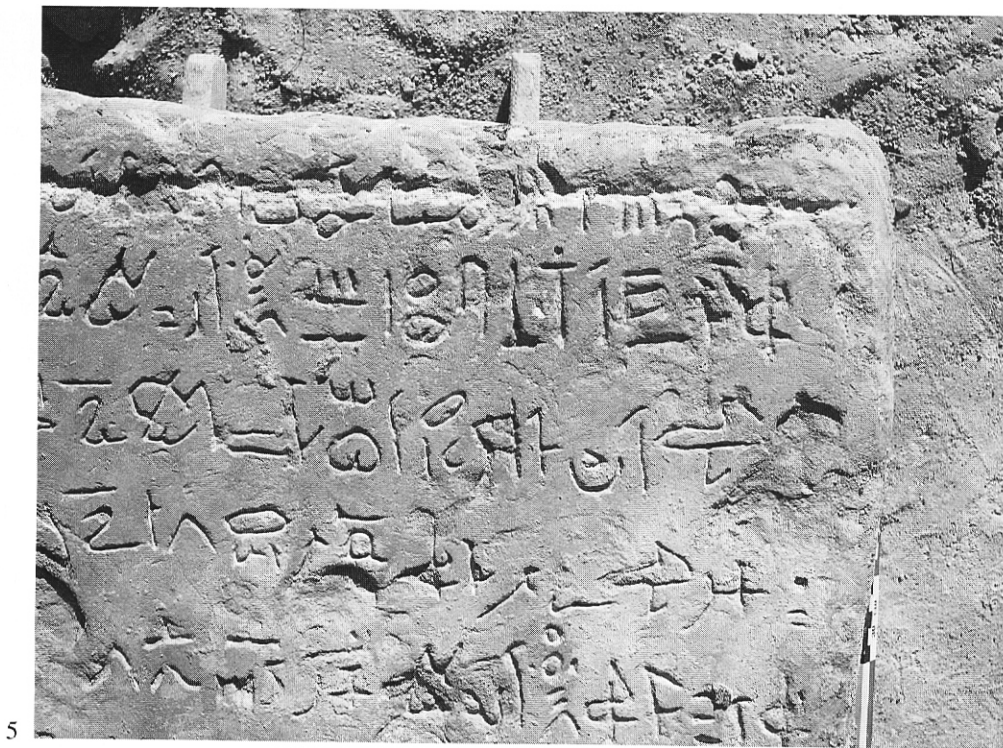
Fig. 2 Stela of Takeloth III from the temple area at Amheida.

3



4





Figs. 3-6 Details.

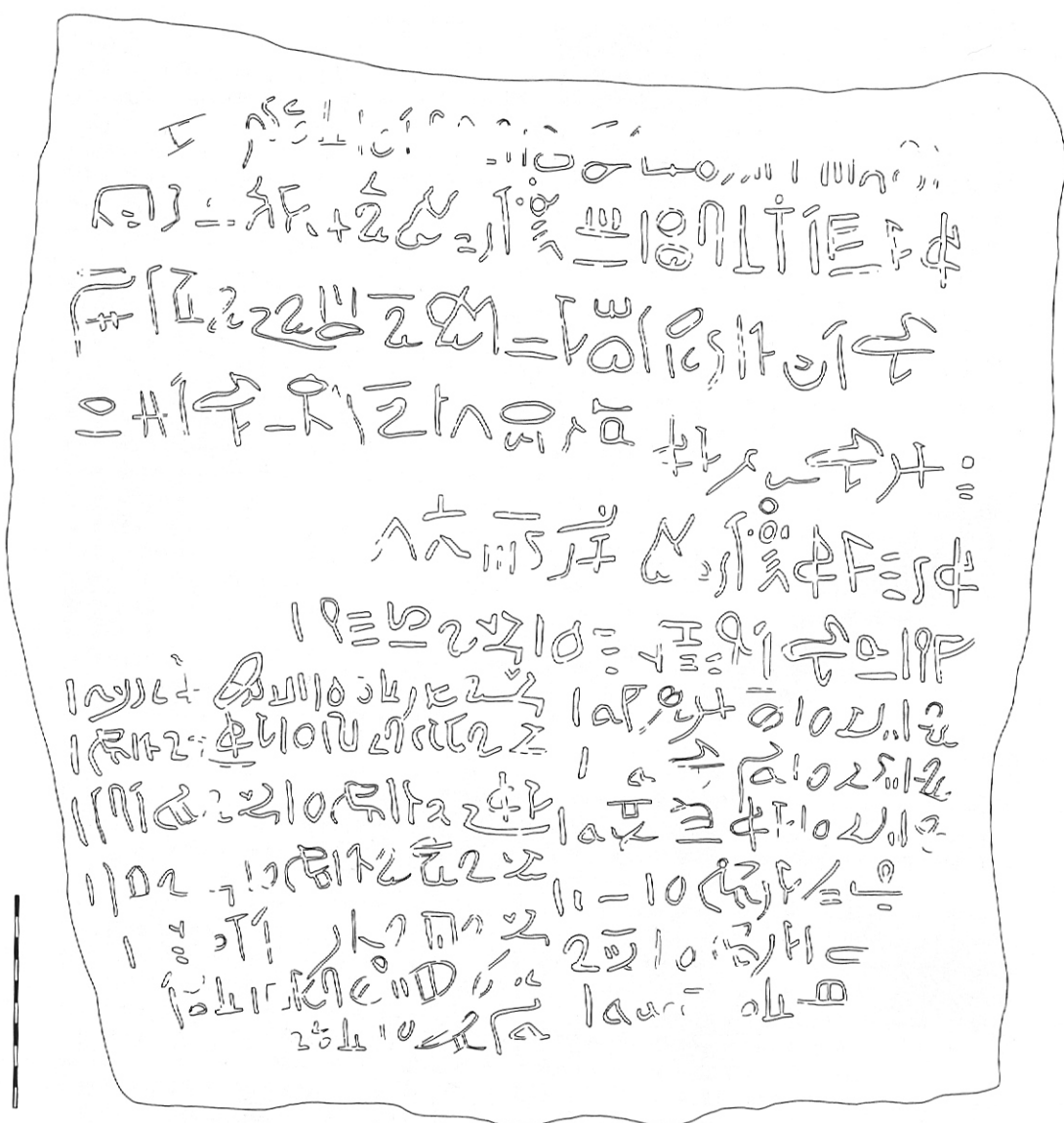
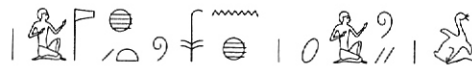
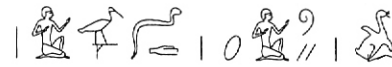


Fig. 7 Line drawing of the hieratic text.

col. I, line 1



col. I, line 2



col. I, line 3



col. I, line 4



col. I, line 5



col. I, line 6



col. II, line 1



col. II, line 2



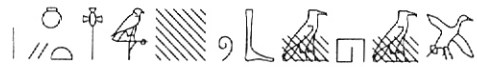
col. II, line 3



col. II, line 4



col. II, line 5



col. II, line 6



col. II, line 7



col. I

1. $\overline{T}3wy$ s3 $Nh(?)$ - $\overline{Sw}th$ 1
2. $\overline{T}3wy$ s3 $\overline{Dd}$ - $\overline{D}hwty$ 1
3. $\overline{T}3wy$ s3 $\overline{I}$ - $\overline{wn}$ 1
4. $-\overline{s}ri?$ s3 $\overline{mi}$ - $\overline{nn}$ 1
5. $-\overline{i}w?$ s3 $\overline{wy}$ -
6. $-\overline{hr}$ - $\overline{W}sir?$ 1

col. II

1. $P3$ - $\overline{di}$ - $\overline{3}st$ s3 $-\overline{i}3wt=f??$ 1
2. $P3$ - $\overline{nh}s<y>$ $\overline{wr}$ s3 $\overline{I}$ - $\overline{m}3$ - $\overline{s}3$ 1
3. $\overline{I}$ - $\overline{m}3$ - $\overline{s}3$ s3 $P3$ - $\overline{nh}s<y>$ 1
4. $P3$ - $\overline{dgs}$ s3 $P3$ - $\overline{Imn}$ (?) 1
5. $P3$ - $\overline{hb}$ - $\overline{ndty}$ (?) 1
6. $\overline{mtr}$ - $\overline{s}3$ s3 $\overline{w}$ $\overline{pr}$ - $\overline{W}sir$
7. $\overline{Dd}$ - $\overline{Hr}$ - $\overline{s}3$ - $\overline{3}st$ -

Translation

1. Year 13, first month of the Winter, day 10(?), of the Pharaoh $\overline{T}krt$, son of Isis, beloved
2. of Amun, l.p.h. This day installing the $\frac{1}{4}$ khar of emmer before
3. Thoth, lord of Sawahet by the chief of the Shamain $\overline{Ns}$ -
4. $\overline{D}hwty$, for 11 loaves of bread. The wab-priests of Thoth. List of
5. those for whom he installed it: 10 persons.
6. The prophet of Thoth ...son of $P3$ - $\overline{in}$ - $\overline{mw}$ (?)

col. I

1. $\overline{T}3wy$ son of $Nh(?)$ - $\overline{Sw}th$ 1
2. $\overline{T}3wy$ son of $\overline{Dd}$ - $\overline{D}hwty$ 1
3. $\overline{T}3wy$ son of $\overline{I}$ - $\overline{wn}$ 1
4. $-\overline{s}ri(?)$ son of $\overline{mi}$ - $\overline{nn}$ 1
5. $-\overline{i}w(?)$ son of $\overline{wy}$ -
6. $-\overline{hr}$ - $\overline{W}sir(?)$ 1

col. II

1. $P3$ - $\overline{di}$ - $\overline{3}st$ son of $-\overline{i}3wt=f??$ 1
2. $P3$ - $\overline{nh}s<y>$ $\overline{wr}$ son of $\overline{I}$ - $\overline{m}3$ - $\overline{s}3$ 1
3. $\overline{I}$ - $\overline{m}3$ - $\overline{s}3$ son of $P3$ - $\overline{nh}s<y>$ 1
4. $P3$ - $\overline{dgs}$ son of $P3$ - $\overline{Imn}$ (?) 1
5. $P3$ - $\overline{hb}$ - $\overline{ndty}$ (?) 1
6. The 'witness-scribe', the guardian of the temple of Osiris
7. $\overline{Dd}$ - $\overline{Hr}$ - $\overline{s}3$ - $\overline{3}st$ -

Commentary

- (1) The year-number 13 is virtually certain. Theoretically there would be room for a second '10'-sign above the one present, but not a single remaining trace provides evidence. Day 10 is somewhat problematic, since only the lower parts of the signs have remained.

<n> Pr-3, 'of the Pharaoh': although usually in donation stelae the date is followed by *hr hm n nswt-bity* X, the expression used here is also known from the smaller Dakhleh stela, line 2 (cf. J.J. Janssen, in *JEA* 54 (1968), 168, note e). The title 'Pharaoh' is used in private documents from the reign of Siamun onwards. The earliest known example in J.-M. Kruchten, *Les annales des prêtres de Karnak (XXI-XXIII^{es} dynasties) et autres textes contemporains relatifs à l'initiation des prêtres d'Amon*, OLA 32, Leuven 1989, 47-48, cf. Bonhême, *op.cit.* (in n. 7), 92; the smaller Dakhleh stela provides the most recent example.

The name of the Pharaoh is undoubtedly *Tkrt*, but the precise combination of the signs remains uncertain. For the many different writings of the name *Tkrt*, cf. J. Berlandini, in: *Hommages à Serge Sauneron*, I, BdE 81, Cairo 1979, 95-97; Bonhême, *op.cit.*, 191-192.

- (2) *hrw pn*, 'this day', written with a double sun-sign is noteworthy.

w3h, 'to found', 'to install', is known from the expression *w3h htp-ntr*, 'to institute an endowment', cf. WB I, 254, 6, and D. Meeks, *Année Lexicographique* III, Paris 1982, 60; P. Grandet, *Le papyrus Harris I (BM 9999)*, BdE 109, Cairo 1994, vol. 2, note 143. The expression is also attested in a private dedication from the reign of Aspelta (S. Grallert, *Bauen – Stiften – Weißen: ägyptische Bau- und Restaurierungsschriften von den Anfängen bis zur 30. Dynastie*, Berlin 2001, 145). More rarely, the verb *w3h* may be constructed with *imnyt*, 'daily offering' (*op.cit.*, 167).

t3 h3r 1/4 bd.t, the $\frac{1}{4}$ khar = 1 oipe of emmer — a similar expression and writing occurs in the smaller Dakhleh stela, line 4, where Janssen transcribed the sign for a $\frac{1}{2}$ khar as the 'wood-determinative' (*JEA* 54, 168 note k). For a suggestion to read *ipt* — oipe — cf. J. Černý and R.A. Parker, *JEA* 57 (1971), 128-131. The correct reading and interpretation of the expression in the smaller Dakhleh stela was given by T. Pommerening, *Die altägyptischen Hohlmasze*, SAK Beihefte 10, Hamburg 2005, 159, duly noticing that since the late New Kingdom amounts smaller than 1 khar were written not in oipe but with the khar-sign followed by the fraction-sign ('Horusaugenbruch'). However, her translation "...1/2 khar Emmer und 5 Brote..." is based on Janssen's incomplete transcription of this passage, and should read "... $\frac{1}{2}$ Khar Emmer für 5 Brote...", see note to line 4 below. The amount of emmer noted in our text is half of the donation in the smaller Dakhleh stela.

- (3) *S3-wh3t*, Sawahet — see for this toponym the general commentary below.

A similar spelling of *in*, 'by', with double *n* occurs often in the Saite Oracle Papyrus. R.A. Parker writes of the latter: "*n* at the end of words (as *in*) was frequently written twice, no doubt to ensure its pronunciation" (*A Saite Oracle Papyrus from Thebes in the Brooklyn Museum [Papyrus Brooklyn 47.218.3]*, Providence, Rhode Island 1962, 9). This feature should be compared to the private dedication formula *ir.n s3=f* (or the like), which also occasionally occurs with a double *n* on Theban bandage-epitaphs from the later 21st dynasty (Kitchen, TIP §371-378, Type A3), in the smaller Dakhleh stela, lines 1 and 17 (*JEA* 54, 167, a), as well as on private statues from Karnak, the earliest of which

may date from the reign of Takeloth II; J.-Cl. Goyon and Chr. Cardin, *Trésors d'Égypte: La "cachette" de Karnak 1904-2004*, Grenoble 2004, no. 6 (Horakhbit), and the latest may date to the early 26th dynasty; *op.cit.* nos 15-16 (Nespasefy).

(3-4) The chief of the Shamain Eshduti is most probably the same as the 'great chief' (*wr 3*) mentioned in the smaller Dakhleh stela from year 24 of Piy (*JEA* 54, 166). See further below.

- (4) The sign after the determinative of the personal name most probably reads 'r', written as in abnormal hieratic or early demotic. A similar sign in a similar construction is found in line 3 of the smaller Dakhleh stela - between '*p3 h3r 1/2 bd.t*' and '*k3w 5*' -, where it was left untranscribed by Janssen (*JEA* 54, pl. XXVa), but clearly means 'for' (5 loaves).

It is also possible that '*k3w*' here and in our text means bread-rations as income. See for the bread-rations, or salaries: J.P. Allen, *The Hekanakht Papyri*, New York 2002, 145ff.; M. Malinine, *Choix de textes juridiques en hiératique "anormale" et en démotique*, Paris 1953, 110, n. 11; M. Malinine, *JEA* 35 (1949), 150-153; U. Kaplony-Heckel, in N. Grimal and B. Menu (eds.), *Le commerce en Égypte ancienne*, BdE 121, Cairo 1998, 207 ff.

Probably we have to understand that, just like in the smaller Dakhleh stela, the loaves of bread were intended to be 'daily' (*m mnt* omitted).

(4-5) *imy-rn=w*, 'list of them', cf. J. Černý, 'Parchemin du Louvre No. AF 1577', *Mélanges Maspero*, I, Cairo 1934, 235, n. 4 (also referring to Dakhleh stela, line 16, and P. Louvre E 3228 F, 4).

- (5) *i.w3h=f sw n=w*, 'for whom he installed it', a correct relative form after *imy-rn=w*. For *s*, 'man', 'person', cf. J. Černý, 'The abnormal-hieratic tablet Leiden I 431', in: *Studies presented to F.Ll. Griffith*, London 1932, 55-56 n. 61.

- (6) We hesitatingly read in the father's name the middle group as *in* (the fish-sign plus *n*). The name *P3-in-mw* is recorded in H. Ranke, *PN*, I, 101, 7. In hieroglyphs it is of course written with Gardiner Sign List W 25, but in (early) demotic writings this is often replaced by the fish-sign *in*, cf. W. Erichsen, *Demotisches Glossar*, 33. It is highly unlikely that the number should be read as 11, as there is no trace of an additional sign after the 'ten'. The number ten here may refer only to the names listed in the double column below. Otherwise it is not clear why eleven names have received the addition of the numeral.

(col. I 1) For the name *T3-wy*, here and in col. I 3 and 4, cf. H. Ranke, *PN*, I, 389, 3.

The name *Nh-Swth* is not recorded by H. Ranke, *PN*, or B. Backes, 'Index zu Michelle Thirion, "Notes d'onomastique... 1-11e série", *BMSAES* 3 (2002), or M. Thirion, 'Notes d'onomastique': contribution à une révision du Ranke *PN*, in *RdE* 54 (2003), 177-190 and idem, *RdE* 55 (2004), 149-159, but it follows a well-known pattern. The writing of the god's name *Swth* is quite similar to that in the smaller Dakhleh stela, in the lunette and in line 5; Setekh being the writing for Seth as lord of the Dakhleh Oasis, cf. H. te Velde, *Seth, God of Confusion*, Groningen 1967, 2-3 and 115 ff.; O.E. Kaper, 'The Statue of Penbast: On the Cult of Seth in the Dakhleh Oasis', in: J. van Dijk (ed.), *Essays on Ancient Egypt in Honour of Herman te Velde*, Groningen 1997, 232-233.

(col. I 3) The personal name of the father, *Y-wn*, is not recorded by H. Ranke, *PN*, or M. Thirion, *op.cit.* (and index Backes). It could be an abbreviated form of the name *Hr-p3y=i-wn*, in P. Louvre AF 1577, line 5, cf. J. Černý, 'Parchemin du Louvre No. AF 1577', in: *Mélanges Maspero* I, MIFAO 66, 1e fasc., Cairo 1934, 234-235.

(col. I 4) The father's name is indicated by a vertical and a small horizontal stroke, clearly reading *mī-nn*, a writing comparable to that in early demotic (cf. W. Erichsen, *Demotisches Glossar*, 152). In biographical texts of the Third Intermediate Period it normally stands for 'of the same profession' (K. Jansen-Winkel, *Spätmittelägyptische Grammatik der Texte der 3. Zwischenzeit*, Wiesbaden 1996, §236). A similar combination of two small strokes is used in late hieratic administrative texts to indicate 'ibidem'.

(col. I 5) For a personal name 'wy, cf. stela Michaelides, line 3, J. Yoyotte, 'Les principautés du Delta au temps de l'anarchie libyenne', *Mélanges Maspero* I, MIFAO 66, 4e fasc., Cairo 1961, 144.

(col. II 1) The first element of the patronym remains an enigma; the second element may possibly stand for *īw.t=f*.

(col. II 2) After the name *P3-nhs<y>*, *wr* is clearly written after the determinative and therefore most likely means 'senior'. This raises the question as to whether we have to interpret the child-sign after *'Im*s and *P3-dgs* in this and the next lines as a determinative, or as *šrī*, 'junior'. In almost all recent publications of abnormal hieratic or early demotic texts the *šrī*-sign after personal names is duly transcribed but never read, but see H. Ranke *PN*, II, 10-12.

The personal name *'Im*s (*'I-m3-s3*) is not recorded by H. Ranke, *PN*, or M. Thirion, *op.cit.* It could well be a Libyan name.

(col. II 4) The personal name *P3-dgs* seems unrecorded so far. The father's name is most probably to be read *P3-'Imn*, cf. H. Ranke, *PN*, I, 106, 8. The sign after *P3-* is almost the same as in smaller Dakhleh stela line 1 and line 8, correctly interpreted by Janssen (*op.cit.* 167 note d) as Gardiner Sign List O 25, the obelisk which regularly stands for Amun in the Late Period; e.g. in the titles of priests of Amun-Re from the Karnak cachette; J.-Cl. Goyon and Chr. Cardin, *op.cit.*, *passim*; as also on scarabs: E. Hornung and E. Staehelin (eds), *Skarabäen und andere Siegelamulette aus Basler Sammlungen*, Mainz am Rhein 1976, 175.

(col. II 5) The name *P3-hb* is common, cf. H. Ranke, *PN*, I, 115, 4. The extended version here seems to be unrecorded. Except for the first sign the final element of the name is rather damaged. We can only suggest *ndty*, 'protector'.

(col. II 6) The title *mtr-sš* was so read by M. Malinine, *Choix de Textes Juridiques*, Paris, 1953, 14, n. 19, and in spite of the objections by J. Černý and R.A. Parker, *JEA* 57 (1971), 128, note f., remarking that "if *mtr-sš* were a compound title 'witness-scribe' it should not have the definite article" (present in several examples), the reading 'witness-scribe' was retained by S.P. Vleeming, 'The Sale of a Slave in the Time of Pharaoh Py', *OMRO* 61 (1980), 15 n. 55, and all scholars since. Its occurrence in our stela would be one of the earliest attestations, at the dawn of the heyday of this title during the 25th dynasty, together with P. Louvre 3228 C 2, 19 of year 6 of Taharqa, cf. M. Depauw, 'Demotic Witness-Copy-Contracts', *RdÉ* 50 (1999), 90, n. 126.

(col. II 7) The signs after the name *Hr-s3-3s.t* probably contain a patronym, but we failed to make any sense out of them, mainly due to the serious damages on this lower left corner of the stela.

Historical implications

The stela should date to the reign of Takeloth III rather than Takeloth II, because of the mention of the same local ruler Esdhuty in this stela and in the smaller Dakhleh Stela from

the reign of Piy. There are also several features in the text that demonstrate its affinity to abnormal hieratic and early demotic inscriptions. Since we now know that Pedubast I had ordered building activities to be carried out in the temple at Amheida, the stela is likely to have been erected in front of that temple or chapel for Thoth of Sawahet.

Other known dated documents from the reign of Takeloth III are the following:

Inscription 4 upon the quay at Karnak, dated to year 6 of "Takeloth, son of Isis, beloved of Amun, whose mother is Tsentaïs"¹².

Inscription 13 upon the same quay names both year 28 of Osorkon III and year 5 of "Takeloth, son of Isis, beloved of Amun, the god, the ruler of Thebes"¹³. A graffito upon the roof of the Khonsu temple was dated to year 7 of king Usermaatre Takeloth¹⁴. F. Payraudeau has argued that papyrus Berlin 3048 verso should also be assigned to the reign of Takeloth III¹⁵. This papyrus contains 37 different texts written in abnormal hieratic, some of which are dated to regnal years 13, 14 and 16. One such document mentions a year 13 of a king Takeloth¹⁶. The presence of abnormal hieratic on this papyrus, as well as some genealogical considerations, make a convincing case for its redating.

Payraudeau is probably also right in ascribing the regnal year 19 of the Wadi Gasus inscription to Takeloth III instead of Rudamun as was done before by i.a. Aston and Taylor¹⁷, or of Iuput II as was claimed by Kitchen¹⁸. The present stela brings a new argument into this discussion, as it establishes the length of the reign of Takeloth III at 13 years as a minimum. The year 19 of the Wadi Gasus text coincides with year 13 of another king, who is probably Piy, according to the reconstruction offered by Payraudeau (p. 88-89).

Consequently, the Amheida stela from year 13 coincided with year 6 of Piy, when Amenirdis I was already installed as God's Wife of Amun in Thebes. The presence of the same chief of the Shamain upon two different stelae from year 13 of Takeloth III and year 24 of Piy indicates that these dates were close in time, and in accordance with the reconstruction presented by Payraudeau they would only be some 18 years apart, which is acceptable. Takeloth III was succeeded by Rudamun and perhaps others for no more than a few years¹⁹.

¹² J. von Beckerath, 'The Nile Level Records at Karnak and their Importance for the History of the Libyan Period (Dynasties XXII and XXIII)', *JARCE* 5 (1966), 44-45, 49-50, pl. I, I.4; G.P.F. Broekman, 'The Nile level records of the twenty-second and twenty-third dynasties in Karnak: a reconsideration of their chronological order', *JEA* 88 (2002), 165, 169. G.P.F. Broekman, 'The Chronological Position of King Shoshenq Mentioned in Nile Level Record No. 3 on the Quay Wall of the Great Temple of Amun at Karnak', *SAK* 33 (2005), 75-89.

¹³ Ibidem.

¹⁴ LD III, pl. 258c; Daressy, *RT* 18 (1896), 51-52; PM II² (1972), 242-243; This graffito is not discussed in H. Jacquet-Gordon, *The Temple of Khonsu 3: The Graffiti on the Khonsu Temple Roof at Karnak; a manifestation of personal piety*, Chicago 2003, because it can no longer be located; cf. J. Yoyotte, "'Osorkon fils de Mehytouskhé", un pharaon oublié?', *BSFE* 77-78 (1976-1977), 40, and esp. note 2 on p. 51.

¹⁵ F. Payraudeau, 'Le règne de Takélot III et les débuts de la domination koushite à Thèbes', *GM* 198 (2004), 79-90, esp. 82-83.

¹⁶ Cf. K. Donker van Heel, 'The Scribbling-pad of Djedmontefankh son of Aafenmut, priest of Amonrasontet and overseer of the king's treasury (P. Berlin 3048 verso)', in: K. Ryholt (ed.), *Acts of the seventh International Conference of Demotic Studies*, Copenhagen 2002, 139-147.

¹⁷ D.A. Aston and J.H. Taylor, 'The Family of Takeloth III and the "Theban" Twenty-third Dynasty', in: A. Leahy (ed.), *Libya and Egypt c. 1300-750 BC*, London 1990, 145-146.

¹⁸ TIP §143-145; a complete overview of opinions is provided by Payraudeau, *op.cit.*, 85.

¹⁹ Cf. O. Perdu, 'Le roi Roudamoun en personne!', *RdE* 53 (2002), 157-158; J. Yoyotte, 'Pharaon Iny, un roi mystérieux du VIII^e siècle avant J.-C.', *CRIPEL* 11 (1989), 113-131.

The material from Amheida shows that Pedubast I and Takeloth III were recognized as kings in the Southern Oasis. Probably this region had never been loose from Theban control. We briefly sketch our current knowledge of the history of its relations with the Nile Valley during the Third Intermediate Period as a background to this political situation.

The New Kingdom *Tale of Woe* speaks of the miserable living conditions in *Knmt*²⁰, the Southern Oasis, which may reflect the plight of the Libyans who came to the Nile Valley searching for food. The late-Ramesside records from Deir el-Medina refer to the arrival of *ḥ3styw*, 'desert people', and *Rbw* and *Mšwš* Libyans, which disrupted the normal work routine.

The Banishment Stela from the 21st dynasty²¹, possibly from year 25 of Pinodjem I²², describes two oracle decisions of the god Amun of Karnak, the second of which granted asylum to certain people that had been banned to the oases. This is the earliest record of the practice of banishment. A fragmentary doorpost found at Hibis (Kharga) may date to the same reign²³.

The greater Dakhleh Stela (line 11) mentions a cadastral register of Dakhleh that was drawn up in year 19 of "Pharaoh Psusennes".

An unfinished fragmentary stela found at Bahariya possibly also dates from the reign of Psusennes I. It mentions the "Lord of the Two Lands Aakheperre"²⁴, which must refer to either Psusennes I or Sheshonq V, and it indicates that central control over the Northern Oasis was maintained during either of these reigns.

The greater Dakhleh Stela dates to year 5 of Sheshonq I²⁵. It shows that the central authorities of that time felt responsible for maintaining order in the oases. The stela mentions a prince and governor of the oases Wayheset, who resided in the area of Diospolis Parva and who came to restore the region to order (*spd*). The result of his visit was the erection of this large limestone stela in the temple precinct of Seth in Mut. A small fragment of another limestone stela was found on the site of the temple at Amheida (Fig. 8), which closely resembles the greater Dakhleh Stela from Mut el-Kharab. It preserves the legs of two goddesses on the left of the stela, with a fragment of the hieratic text underneath²⁶. The text is not sufficiently preserved to allow conclusions, but it does not seem to be fully identical to the Mut stela. The occurrence of this similar piece at Amheida is interesting as an additional piece of evidence of Third Intermediate Period activity on the site. Moreover, the greater Dakhleh Stela from Mut mentions the "town of Sa-wahet", and the wells "to the west of Sa-wahet", both of which may refer to Amheida and indicate a direct association of the two towns, even though this can not be confirmed at present.

²⁰ R.A. Caminos, *A Tale of Woe from a Hieratic Papyrus in the A.S. Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts in Moscow*, Oxford 1977. On *Knmt*, cf. O.E. Kaper, *BIFAO* 92 (1992), 117-121.

²¹ Louvre C.256; J. von Beckerath, 'Der "Stele der Verbannten" im Museum des Louvre', *RdE* 20 (1958), 7-36.

²² According to K. Jansen-Winkel, *ZÄS* 119 (1992), 22-37.

²³ As reconstructed by J. Osing, in: Osing et al., *Denkmäler der Oase Dachla*, Mainz am Rhein 1982, 39. Bonhême, *op.cit.*, 39, does not refer to this example.

²⁴ A. Fakhry, *Bahria Oasis II*, Cairo 1950, 87-88.

²⁵ It could not be Sheshonq III; cf. R. Krauss, 'Das *wš*-Datum aus Jahr 5 von Sheshonq [I]', *DE* 62 (2005); we are grateful to the author for a pre-publication copy of this article.

²⁶ A modern photo of the Oxford stela appears in Kaper, *Temples and Gods*, pl. 3; and in H. Whitehouse, *The Ashmolean* 43 (2002), 3.

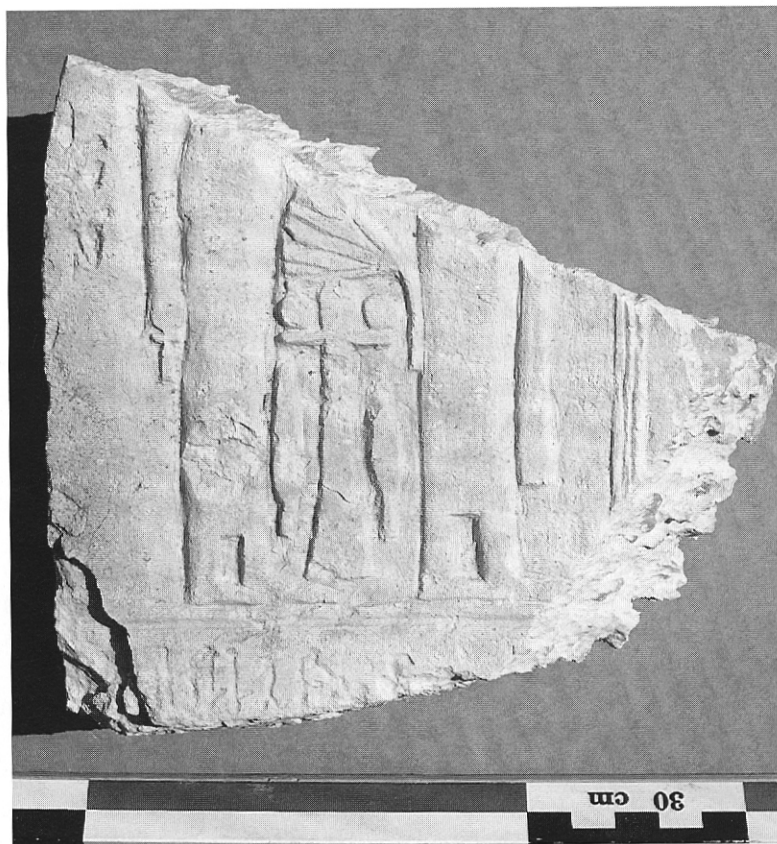


Fig. 8 Fragment of a stela from the Third Intermediate Period from the temple area at Amheida.

Sa-wahet

The temple was dedicated to the god Thoth of Sa-wahet, whose name appears on many blocks. Sa-wahet was the name of the area that included both Amheida and Deir el-Hagar. In 1992, the available evidence for this toponym was collected and discussed by Kaper²⁷, leading to the conclusion that the area involved may have extended eastward as far as Mut, and secondly, that there was an exceptional change in the writing of this placename. In the New Kingdom sources, the name *S3-wh3t* is mentioned in wine dockets²⁸, in P. Turin 2074 from the 20th dynasty²⁹, and in the greater Dakhleh Stela from the reign of Sheshonq I, mentioned above. Later the same name reappears under a different form as *St-w3h*, mainly in sources from the western end of Dakhleh, from el-Qasr, Deir el-Hagar and Muzawwaqa, but also from a few other locations in the oasis. It is certain that it denotes the same region as the

²⁷ O.E. Kaper, 'Egyptian Toponyms of Dakhla Oasis', *BIFAO* 92 (1992), 117-132, esp. 124-129.

²⁸ P. Tallet, 'A Particularity of the Toponymy of Dakhla Oasis: *S3-wh3t* and *'Tw-mrw'*', *GM* 173 (1999), 169-174, esp. 170.

²⁹ Idem, 171.

older toponym. In his article, Kaper suggested that the change occurred somewhere between the time of the greater Dakhleh Stela of dynasty 22 and the Roman period, as no dated occurrences of the name were known from the intervening reigns. This dating can now be narrowed down considerably, as the later version of the toponym was already in use in the 26th dynasty. It occurs on the temple reliefs from the reign of Amasis found at Amheida. The stela published here provides the most recent occurrence of the older spelling *Š3-wḥḏt*. The change in spelling of the toponym can therefore now be dated to the period between c. 740 and c. 570 BCE.

Why would the name of the area have been deliberately changed? There are no parallels for this practice from other parts of Egypt. We can only suggest that the endowment recorded in our stela, or perhaps a larger endowment of another occasion, gave rise to the wish to name the region after it, as 'The Place of Endowment'.

The donor

Esdhuti was the Libyan chief of the oasis, as is confirmed by his portrait on the smaller Dakhleh Stela (fig. 9), where he is shown with a feather on his head. The name Shamain for the local ethnic group is not known from other sources outside the oasis. We now have three spellings of this ethnic name. On the basis of the smaller Dakhleh Stela, K. Zibelius had expressed doubts as to the reading of the *m* in the name, because one of the writings on that stela omits this part³⁰. The new example is longer, however, and confirms the presence of the *m*.

This name must be related to the verb *š3m*, 'traverse', which is once used at Medinet Habu specifically to describe the wandering movements of the Meshwesh³¹. The Libyan ethnicity of the Shamain is not immediately apparent from the names occurring in the stela, although a few, such as *ʿims*, might well be Libyan. The egyptianization of the Shamain had evidently been thorough. The present stela confirms the control that Esdhuti exercised over the entire oasis, as well as the length of his career. We reject the idea that our stela refers to another person of the same name, even though that remains a theoretical possibility. The close resemblance of the two stelae in phraseology and contents demonstrates their close proximity in time. In the earlier stela, Esdhuti bears the title *wr n3 š3m3in*, and in the second he is called *wr ʿ3 n š3m3in*. The title *wr ʿ3* is the usual for local princes of the Third Intermediate Period, and it might be that Esdhuti acquired an increased independence after the advent of the Kushite forces in the oasis. The depiction of Esdhuti on the stela from Mut is at a larger scale than that of the god facing him, and the royal nature of his offering (flowers and wine) also confirms this impression of relative autonomy.

Already during the Ramesside period, Libyans seem to have inhabited the oases³², but the ethnic name of these groups is not known. In the greater Dakhleh Stela, the "Chief of the Two Lands of the Oasis", a state official, is the son of the great chief (*wr ʿ3*) of the Ma, but this

³⁰ K. Zibelius, *Afrikanische Orts- und Völkernamen in hieroglyphischen und hieratischen Texten*, Wiesbaden 1972, 155.

³¹ KRI V, 24.9; perhaps also the verb *š3m*, 'whirl around', may be linked to this stem; cf. L. Lesko, *A dictionary of Late Egyptian*, 2nd ed., vol. III, Providence 2004, 121.

³² K.A. Kitchen, in *Libya and Egypt*, 21; Leahy, in idem, 163; cf. G. Vittmann, *Ägypten und die Fremden im ersten vorchristlichen Jahrtausend*, Mainz am Rhein 2003, 5.



Fig. 9 The smaller Dakhleh Stela.

person may not have been an indigenous inhabitant of the oases. The generic term Tjemehu (as also Tjehenu), which occurs elsewhere with reference to Libyans in monumental and literary texts was not a tribal designation any more.

The donation stelae

The donation stelae of the Third Intermediate Period form a distinct group within the tradition of stelae in the Egyptian temples. They were set up to record the donation of land, or the produce thereof, to a specific temple. A list of the known stelae was published by D. Meeks in 1979³³. The use of hieratic on these has been indirectly linked to the Libyan cultural influence of the times³⁴, but a small number of hieratic donation stelae continued to be produced into the Saite period³⁵.

Land donation stelae are typical for Lower Egypt³⁶. They are found principally in economically important areas, and only very few have been found in Upper Egypt. Generally, their number increased towards the end of the Libyan period, when they also start appearing in the south, dated to the Theban 23rd dynasty, as is the present example.

The vocabulary of the texts of the donation stelae normally includes the verbs *rdi* or *hmk* to express the installation of the endowment³⁷, after the date of the stela, usually followed by *hrw pn hmk*. Usually, the text states that a foundation (*mnw*) was established, a threat against violators would be included and the wish for it to last for ever. There is usually an image at the top of the stela depicting gods and a king offering a field (*sh*). Instead of the king, some stelae name an intermediary, such as a local prince or another person from the immediate surroundings of the king³⁸.

The Amheida stela thus presents some unusual traits, because of its use of the term *w3h*, because of the absence of the usual terminology with a threat and pious wishes, and because of the absence of an image with the text. The stela is one of the rare examples of a donation stela from outside the Nile Delta. D. Meeks already commented on the unusual character of the donation stela from Mut, the terminology of which he compared to a contract, and he observed that the oasis will have been influenced by the Upper Egyptian donations rather than by Delta examples³⁹. A number of Saite donations on papyrus have been preserved from Thebes⁴⁰, with which the Dakhleh stelae may be compared. In the case of the Amheida stela, the presence of a witness-scribe at the bottom of the text confirms Meeks' observation, because also here, a legal procedure was followed in the establishment of a pious donation.

³³ D. Meeks, 'Les donations aux temples', in: E. Lipinski (ed.), *State and Temple Economy in the Ancient Near East*, vol. II, OLA 6, Leuven 1979, 605-687.

³⁴ A. Leahy, 'The Libyan Period in Egypt: An Essay in Interpretation', *Libyan Studies* 16 (1985), 60.

³⁵ F. Förster, 'Eine saïtische Votivstela aus dem Tempelbezirk von Buto/Tell el-Fara'in', *MDAIK* 60 (2004), 50.

³⁶ Meeks, *op.cit.*, 614-622.

³⁷ Meeks, *op.cit.*, 625f. Upper Egyptian stelae may also employ *smn*; p. 613, n. 25.

³⁸ We have here also benefitted from the material collected in the PhD thesis of Gillian Pyke, whom we thank for making this available to us.

³⁹ Meeks, *op.cit.*, 651-652.

⁴⁰ Meeks, *op.cit.*, 652, n. 213.

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