
Mahmoud Ebeid

Six Demotic Inscriptions on Stone from Tuna el-Gebel.

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The six demotic inscriptions published here are engraved on limestone objects¹ or on limestone blocks² (nos 1, 2, 6) or stelae³ (nos 3, 4, 5). They were found in Tuna el-Gebel necropolis. The first two objects (nos 1, 2) were found during Cairo University excavations carried out by S. Gabra and others, while no. 3 was found during the excavations of the joint archaeological mission of Cairo and Munich Universities in season 2004. Nos 4, 5, 6 were found during the excavations of Munich University in seasons 1980 and 1983. The original place where nos 1, 2 (Inv. no. 1728/258, Inv. no. 1489/774, 29/s.s.) were found is unknown. According to the acronym s. s – “south-sector” – registered on the second object, they might have been found in the area of the funerary houses to the south of the tomb of Petosiris. They are kept now in el-Ashmonein magazine. As for TG 5275 (no. 3), it was found in a secondary Roman stone tomb (tomb no. 3) to the west of the wall of the tomb no. 1, and at the north eastern corner of the tomb of Dd-Dhwty iw=f’nh on the eastern side of the galleries, and kept now in Tuna el-Gebel magazine.⁴ As for TG 433, TG 109 and TG 428 (nos 4, 5, 6), they were

² For blocks of stone with demotic inscriptions, see A. Farid, *op. cit.*, p. 199-200.
³ For stone stelae with demotic inscriptions, see ibid., p. 216-223.
found in the subterranean galleries (gallery C- C- 4) of the sacred animals (Ibiotapheion), and kept also in Tuna el-Gebel magazine.

Owing to the bad condition of these pieces, some strokes in the inscriptions could easily be confused during the preparation of the facsimiles with the natural faults of the stone surface.

I. Limestone block

*Inv. No.*: 1728/258.

*Provenance:* Tuna el-Gebel necropolis, area of the funerary houses (?) .

*Material:* Limestone.

*Dimensions:* Height: 9 cm; Width: 25,5 cm; Thickness: 6 cm.

*Bibliography:* Unpublished.

*Content:* Votive inscription.

*Dating:* Late Ptolemaic period or early Roman period according to the script, but the early Roman period is more plausible here on account of the place in which the block was found.

*Description:* Rectangular block of limestone with an engraved demotic text of four lines; the text on the block is in a good state of preservation.

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1. Limestone block Inv. No. 1728/258.

[1] nȝ ntr.w pȝ „wy-htp di.t „nh n swrd (n) pȝ hb

[2] Pȝ-dỉ-pȝ-hb sȝ Pȝy-Wsỉr (?) {pȝ} ỉrm nȝy=f ḏr=w ḏr=w ḏr=w

[3] pȝ „(wy)-pȝ(s>y m-bȝḥ pȝ hb Ỉs.t n-tr.t _DD-hr sȝ Dḥwty-mn

[4] pȝ wʿb n ḏy-m-htp wr sȝ Pṯḥ

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The gods (of) the resting place give live to caretaker (of) the Ibis.
P2-dt-p2-hb son of P2-y-Wsir [the] and all his people who have let that
the bakery be made before the Ibis (and) Isis, by Dd-hr son of Dhwty-mn
the priest of Ḥy-m-htp, the Great, son of Ptah.

Commentary

Line 1

– pȝ ʿwy-ḥtp, [pȝ ʿwy n Ḥtp], the resting place, see W. Erichsen, Demotisches
P. W. Pestman, The Archive of the Theban Choaichites (Second Century B.C.). A Survey of the
Demotic and Greek Papyri Contained in the Archive, Stud. Dem. 2, 1993, § 23b [iii], p. 466;
G. Vittmann, “Das demotische Graffito vom Satettemple auf Elephantine”, MDAIK 53, 1997,
p. 268, n.i.

In this text pȝ ʿwy-ḥtp refers to the subterranean galleries of the sacred animals in Tuna el-Gebel
(Ibiotapheion), see G. R. Hughes, “The Cruel Father. A Demotic Papyrus in the Library of

– nȝ ntr.w pȝ ʿwy-ḥtp, the gods of the resting place. In the subterranean
galleries of Tuna el-Gebel large numbers of the sacred animals are buried (baboons, falcons,
snakes, shrews, etc.); they are all referred to as pȝ ntr,6 while the official name of the subter-
ranean galleries in Tuna el-Gebel necropolis is “the resting place of the ibis, the baboon, the
falcon and the gods who rest with them.”

– swrd (n) pȝ hb, caretaker (of) the Ibis. The same title was mentioned in
P. Louvre E 3333, 3 [Ir B 47] and P. Louvre E 3334, 1 [Ir B 48] and read by J. Ray as swt,
embalmer, see J. Ray, “The Complaint of Herieu”, RdE 29, 1979, p. 107, p. 110. But now the
reading swrd/swrd/swrt is preferred, see K.-Th. Zauzich, “Einige Bemerkungen zu den demot.
Amasis”, in J. Johnson (ed.), Life in a Multi-Cultural Society: Egypt from Cambyses to Constantine
and beyond, SAOC 51, 1992, p. 362; M. Pezin, “Hor, fils de laby, φροντιστήϛ / swrd d’Hathor
de Dendera, en 98”, RdE, 43, 1992, p. 214; The Demotic Dictionary of the Oriental Instiute
of the University of Chicago, online version, CDD H (01.1): p. 38.

6 M. Ebeid, “Demotic Inscriptions from the Galleries of Tuna el-Gebel”, BIFAO 106, 2006, p. 58; as for the various
sacred animals and birds which were buried in the galleries of Tuna el-Gebel, see
D. Kessler, M.A. Nur El-Din, “Tuna
al-Gebel. Millions of Ibises and Other
Animals”, in S. Ikram (ed.), Divine Creatures. Animal Mummies in Ancient Egypt,
Cairo, 2005, p. 152-163; A. Von den
Driesch, D. Kessler, F. Steinmann,
V. Bertaux, J. Peters, “Mummified,
Deified and Buried at Hermopolis
Magna – The Sacred Birds from Tuna
el-Gebel, Middle Egypt”, AgLev 15, 2005,

2 D. Kessler, M.A. Nur El-Din, op. cit. p. 137; as well as the previous name and others, in dem. Pap. Cairo
24/11/62/6, r.6, dem. Pap. Cairo
24/11/62/3, r.6, another name of the
subterranean galleries in Tuna el-Gebel
necropolis is mentioned as follows:
pȝ ʿwy-ḥtp n pȝ hb pȝ “n nty ʿbr hmt n
ḥmnw, the resting place of the Ibis and the
Monkey, which is in the west of Hermopolis,
see A. Farid, “Two Demotic Annuity
Contracts”, in Studies in Honor of Ali
Radwan, CASAE 34/1, 2005, p. 326,
p. 342.
As for the formula nȝ ntr.w pȝ ‘.wy-htp dl.t ‘nh n swrd (n) pȝ bb Pȝ-di-pȝ-hb ss Pȝy-Wsir (?) irm nȝy=f rmt(w) dr=w, the gods (of) the resting place give life to caretaker (of) the Ibis Pȝ-di-pȝ-hb son of Pȝy-Wsir and all his people. [God X gives life to N.N.], as a formula of the votive inscriptions, see S. P. Vleeming, op. cit, § 1, p. 250-253.

- The sign which follows the personal name Pȝy-Wsir (?) is written in a rounded form like the rounded forms of the article pȝ in the text, so it could be read as {pȝ} which ought to be inserted here.

- Pȝ-di-pȝ-hb son of Pȝy-Wsir and all his people are the owners and donors of the dedicatory object.

- The sign which follows the personal name Pȝy-Wsir (?) is written in a rounded form like the rounded forms of the article pȝ in the text, so it could be read as {pȝ} which ought to be inserted here.

- As for the writing way of pȝ ‘.(wy)-p⟨s⟩y, the bakery, see W. Erichsen, Demotisches Glossar, p. 53, p. 139.

- As for the writing way of pȝ ‘.(wy) - p⟨s⟩y, one can observe that {pȝ} was written without the house determinative at the end, and the oblique stroke on the vertical sign is a natural fault on the stone surface. The determinative of the word p⟨s⟩y depicting the brazier with flame rising from it {pȝ} runs in favour of the meaning bakery.

The inscription on this block commemorated erection of this bakery – the dedicatory object – for the production of the bread used for offerings in the necropolis.

8 The reading pȝ ‘.wy-ps(y) [pȝ ‘.wy (n) ps(y)], the bakery, the bake house, the house of baking, the house of cooking, was first established by G. Mattha, see G. Mattha, “The Word for ‘Bake House’ in the Demotic Texts”, Miscellanea Gregoriana, 1941, p. 133-134; G. Mattha, “The αρτοκοπεῖον in Demotic Texts”, BIFAO 45, 1945, p. 59-60; and see also Fr. de Cenival, Papyrus dématographiques de Lille (III), MIFAO 110, 1984, p. 49-50.4.

– As for the vertical sign \( \text{n-tr.t} \) and its variant forms, it is problematic in Tuna el-Gebel demotic inscriptions, because it could be read \( \text{sh} \) and \( \text{n-tr.t} \). But the exact reading and meaning of the sign depends on the nature and the context of the text.

In the votive inscriptions preposition \( \text{n-tr.t} \) is usually followed by the name of the donor of the votive object. In this text \( \text{Dd-br} \) son of \( \text{Dhwty-mn} \) who bears the rank “the priest of \( \text{Iy-m-ḥtp}, \) the Great, son of Ptah” who made the dedicatory object for the donors, is mentioned after \( \text{n-tr.t} \). He might be one of the responsible for the Ibis organization in Tuna el-Gebel necropolis. As for the personal name \( \text{Dhwty-mn} \), see Demot. Nb. 1/v, p. 1303.

• Line 4

\[ \text{Iy-m-ḥtp wr sȝ Ptḥ, Imhotep, the Great, son of Ptah, see A. Farid, “Sieben Mettalgefäße mit demotischen Inschriften aus Kairo und Paris”, RdE 45, 1994, p. 120-122; Chr. Leitz, LGG I, p. 124-125, s.v.lm-m-hṭp.} \]

2. Limestone block Inv. No. 1489/774, 29/s.s.

**Material:** Limestone.

**Provenance:** Tuna el-Gebel (area of the funerary houses (?)).

**Dimensions:** Height: 17 cm; Width: 29 cm; Maximum Thickness: 5 cm.

**Bibliography:** Unpublished.

**Content:** Votive inscription.

**Dating:** Early Roman period.

**Description:** Rectangular block of limestone with an engraved demotic text in three lines with some traces of red colour; the text on the block is not very clear in some parts.

10 M. Ebeid, “Demotic Inscriptions from the Galleries of Tuna el-Gebel”, BIFAO 106, 2006, p. 60-7. In his fruit-ful commentary on my previous article, Dr M. Chauveau suggested reading the vertical sign \( \text{n-tr.t} \) “la main de, par”, instead of \( \text{sh} \). I agree with him now.

[1] ḥȝ.t-sp 35.t ḫ.t-2 pr.t (sw> 5 (t cô> h.t n
[2] Twtw (sô) Hr-nd-ît=f pȝ Mr …… pȝ rmt
[3] Ḥmnw n nfr n nfr

[1] Year 35, Mechir, <day> 5, <the> tomb of
[2] Twtw (son of) Hr-nd-ît=f, the overseer ……, the inhabitant of

Commentary

• Line 1
   As for the dating “Year 35, Mechir, <day> 5”, it might refer to the year 35 of the reign of Emperor Augustus [30 Jan.-31 Jan. 5-6 AD] who ruled between 30 BC - 14 AD\(^{12}\).

• Line 2
   – As for the name Hr-nd-ît=f see, Demot. Nb. I/11, p. 825-826.
   – Ḥr-nḏ-ỉṱ=f, a title beginning with pȝ mr, the overseer, the leader, while the determinative of the word represents the \(\text{}}\) sign, but the reading of the word is not clear.\(^{13}\)

• Line 3
   n nfr n nfr as a thing of real goodness. For the expression \(\text{}}\) nfr n nfr, a thing of real goodness, in the votive inscriptions almost written in hieroglyphic, see S.P. Vleeming, op. cit, § 4, p. 255.

3. Limestone tomb stela\(^{14}\) TG 5275

Provenance: Roman tomb no. 3 (to the east of the galleries), season 2004.
Material: Limestone.
Dimensions: Height: 27 cm; Width: 25 cm; Maximum Thickness: 8 cm.
Bibliography: Unpublished.
Content: Votive inscription.
Dating: Early Roman.
Description: Limestone stela bearing four incomplete lines of a demotic text partly damaged. Apparently the block was reused for other purposes.
[1] Wsỉr…… Osiris……
[2] Ns-pò- hb (ṣw) [Ḫʾ(?)] Ns-pò- hb (son of) [Ḫʾ]
[3] ḫw (=f) mwt n ḥȝ.t-sp 42 - <he> is dead in year 42
[4] ḫb.t ṣpr.t….. Phamenoth…..

Commentary

• Line 1
  The traces following the title Wsỉr are probably the first element of the name of the owner of the stela which continues on the next line.

• Line 2
  The group ḫ could be read Ḫʾ or Ḫʾ⟨.w⟩(?).

• Line 3
  As for the dating, year 42 is more likely although the text is damaged and is not clear in this part. It might refer to the year 42 of the reign of Emperor Augustus (Feb.– March 12th – 13th AD)\textsuperscript{15}, especially that the stela has been reused and the archaeological proof denotes an early Roman dating to this tomb. The rest of the dating which comprises the day is broken.

4. Limestone stela TG 433

Provenance: Tuna el-Gebel. Gallery C-C-4\textsuperscript{16}. Season 1983.
Material: Limestone.
Dimensions: Height: 23,5 cm; Width: 24,5 cm; Maximum Thickness: 9 cm.
Bibliography: Unpublished.
Content: Votive inscription.
Dating: Early Ptolemaic\textsuperscript{17}.
Description: Incomplete limestone stela. The upper part of the stela shows the figure of a god, probably Osiris, standing before an offering table. On the lower part, three demotic lines. The scene and the text are both engraved on the surface of the stela.

\textsuperscript{15} A.W. Pestman, op. cit., p. 91.
\textsuperscript{17} The dating here depends on the place in which this piece was found as well as on the palaeographical characteristics.
Commentary

- Line 1
  As for the personal name \textit{Ns-nhm-n}, see \textit{Demot. Nb. I/9}, p. 684. The following traces are probably a brief name or title following \textit{Ns-nhm-n}.

- Line 2
  - The traces at the beginning of the line might be the first element of a personal name, it could be restored as \textit{[Dd-hr(?)]-pȝ-hb sȝ Hr-nfr pȝ} as Prof. S.P. Vleeming proposed.
  - As for the personal name \textit{Hr-nfr}, see \textit{Demot. Nb. I/11}, p. 824. The Group \textit{[Dd-hr(?)]-pȝ-hb} which followed the name with the definite article \textit{pȝ} might denote a title or profession. I have no satisfactory reading for this group.

- Line 3
  - The traces preceding \textit{smȝ-tȝ.wy} are probably the first element of the personal name.\footnote{[1]} As for the personal name \textit{Smȝ-tȝ.wy}, see \textit{Demot. Nb. I/12}, p. 924-925.
  - \textit{[......]-smȝ-tȝ.wy pȝ ḫy.ṱ}: The word \textit{pȝ ḫy.ṱ} after the personal name \textit{[......]-smȝ-tȝ.wy} could be taken as a title or as a profession. For further information on \textit{pȝ ḫy.ṱ}, see W. Erichsen, \textit{Demotisches Glossar}, p. 350; G. Vittmann, \textit{Der demotische Papyrus Rylands IX, I-II}, \textit{ÄAT} 38, 1998, p. 539-540 (P. Ryl. IX, col. XVIII, 1). As Prof. S.P. Vleeming suggested to me, this is probably to be taken as the noun discussed by G. Vittmann.

5. Limestone stela TG 109

\textit{Provenance:} Tuna el-Gebel, gallery C-C-4, season 1980.
\textit{Material:} Limestone.
\textit{Dimensions:} Height: 24.5 cm; Width: 22 cm; Maximum Thickness: 6 cm.
\textit{Bibliography:} Unpublished.
\textit{Content:} Votive inscription.
\textit{Dating:} Early Ptolemaic.
\textit{Description:} Part of incomplete limestone stela, in a bad state of preservation; it bears two lines of demotic text which are partly damaged.

\footnote{[1]} As for these traces Prof. S.P. Vleeming suggested to me that they might be restored as \textit{[...... ṣȝ Pȝ-di-Hr-smȝ-tȝ.wy: [...... son of Pȝ-di-Hr-smȝ-tȝ.wy, or something like this.}
Commentary

• Line 1
  For the personal name Wr-di.w, see Demot. Nb. I/3, p. 179. As for ʿl (?), cf. W. Erichsen, Demotisches Glossar, p. 67.

• Line 2
  For the personal name Pȝ-di-Wsỉr, see Demot. Nb. I/5, p. 298-299. The personal name Nfr-smȝ-tȝ.wy is not attested in Demot. Nb. I. Prof. S. P. Vleeming reads the first name Pȝ-di-tȝ.t instead of Pȝ-di-Wsỉr and considered the god’s determinative at the end of the name as mw.t⟨=f⟩: <his> mother, followed by the woman’s name Nfr⟨t⟩-smȝ-tȝ.wy.


Provenance: Tuna el-Gebel, gallery C-C-4, season 1983.
Material: Limestone.
Dimensions: Height: 25 cm; Width: 34 cm; Maximum Thickness: 10 cm.
Bibliography: Unpublished.
Content: Unclear.
Dating: Early Ptolemaic.
Description: Incomplete block of limestone in a bad state of preservation bearing six lines of bilingual Greek and demotic text, four Greek lines, and two lines of demotic text at the end. The demotic text is lost, except for two lines partly damaged.

The demotic text

[1] Wr-di.w-ʿl(?). justified.  Wr-di.w-ʿl(?)

The tomb of []
Wr son of Msȝ-Dhwty [ ]
• Line 2
  The first element of the personal name could be read also Ḫḥ; as for the personal name ḫḥ ḫẖ, see Demot. Nb. I/8, p. 583.

The Greek part

As for the Greek part of this text, the rough surface of the stone does not allow a coherent reading.

• Line 1
  The reading: Πτ[ο]λεμαῖ[ος] or αῖ[ου] seems possible. The space for ο is a little bit too large.

• Line 2-3
  The traces are weak; the reading: γυνή or similar can not be proved.

• Line 3
  It is seducible to read ἔτων in combination with the age of the person following. But it is not possible to define the inscription as a tomb inscription.

  It is uncertain if these are traces of another line above. In this case the stone must have been cut above secondary.

Indexes

I. Personal names

1. Wr s. of ḫẖ ḫẖ [ ] ....................... 6, 2
2. Wr-dl-w(?)[?] ....................................... 5, 1
3. ḫḥ dl Wsỉr (s.of) Nfr-sm2-tw wy .... 5, 2
4. ḫḥ dl-hb s. of ḫḥ wsỉr(?)[?] .......... 1, 2
5. ḫḥ-nhm-nr…………. .......................... 4, 1
6. Tutw (s. of) ḫḥ nd-ḥt=f .... 2, 2
7. Dd-br s. of ḫẖwy-μn ………………….. 1, 3
8. [Dd-br(?)]- hb s. of ḫẖ nd-sfr … 4, 2
9. ………-ns-p2-hb (s. of) [Ḥ(?)] …… 3, 1-2
10. [ ]- sm2-tw wy ………………….. 4, 3

II. Gods

1. Ḫḥ-m-hpt…………………….. 1, 4
2. Ḫḥ-t…………………………… 1, 3
3. Wsỉr ………………………… 3, 1; 4, 1
4. ḫḥ hb ………………………… 1, 3
5. Ptb …………………………… 1, 4
6. ḫḥ ntr w n ḫḥ ‘wy-hpt ……………… 1, 1

III. Titles

1. ḫḥ w b n Ḫḥ-m-hpt ………………… 1, 4
2. ḫḥ mr(?)[ ] …………………………… 2, 2
3. ḫḥ hs(?)[ ] …………………………… 4, 3
4. ḫḥ …………………………… 4, 2
5. swrd (n) ḫḥ hb ……………………… 1, 1

IV. Toponyms

1. ḫḥ ‘wy-hpt ………………… 1, 1
2. Ḫḥnw …………………………… 2, 3
3. Ḧḥnw …………………………… 2, 3
4. ḫḥ tḥ ……………………………… 2, 3

[19] The Greek part of this inscription has been given to Prof. H. Heinen (Trier University) via Prof. D. Kessler, who kindly made the comment on this part.
fig. 1. Limestone block Inv. No. 1728/258.

fig. 2. Limestone block Inv. No. 1489/774, 29/s.s.

fig. 3. Limestone tomb stela TG 5273.
FIG. 4. Limestone stela TG 433.

FIG. 5. Limestone stela TG 109.

FIG. 6. Limestone block TG 428.