
Mahmoud Ebeid

Six Demotic Inscriptions on Stone from Tuna el-Gebel.

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Dernières publications

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I am grateful to Prof. Dr M.A.A Nur El-Din, Prof. Dr D. Kessler, the team work of the joint archaeological mission of Cairo and Munich Universities in Tuna el-Gebel situation, to Prof. Dr O. El-Aguizy, and to my colleague Dr M. S. Ali, for their help and encouragement. For the photographs I would like to thank Mr P. Brose (Munich University). My thanks are also due to Prof. Dr S. P. Vleeming who has read my manuscript and presented some useful corrections, suggestions and comments that I have included in my article.


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.


The six demotic inscriptions published here are engraved on limestone objects, or on limestone blocks (nos 1, 2, 6) or stelae (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-Dhuṭy ḫw=f nh on the eastern side of the galleries, and kept now in Tuna el-Gebel magazine. As for TG 433, TG 109 and TG 428 (nos 4, 5, 6), they were...
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.

![Limestone block Inv. No. 1728/258.](image)

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

[1] nȝ ntr.w pȝ ʿ.wy-ḥtp dỉ.t ʿnh n swrḏ (n) pȝ hb
[2] Pȝ-di-pȝ-hb sȝ Pȝy-Wsỉr (?) {pȝ} ŭrm nȝy=f rmt(.w) dr=w i.tr di.t tr=w
[3] pȝ ʿ(.wy)-p⟨s⟩y m-bȝḥ pȝ hb Ḏi.t n-tr.t Ḏd-hr sȝ Ḏḥwty-mn
[4] pȝ wʿb n Ḏy-m-ḥtp wr sȝ Ptḥ

The gods (of) the resting place give live to caretaker (of) the Ibis.

P2·di·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 Iy-m-htp, the Great, son of Ptah.

Commentary

• Line 1


  – nȝ ntr.w pȝ ʿ.wy-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, while the official name of the subterranean galleries in Tuna el-Gebel necropolis is “the resting place of the ibis, the baboon, the falcon and the gods who rest with them”.


[7] D. Kessler, M.A. Nur El-Din, op. cit. p. 137; as well as the previous name and others, in dem. Pap. Cairo 24/11/62/2, 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 ʿ.wy-ḥtp n pȝ hb pȝ “n nty r mmnt n hmwtu, 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.
The reading $pȝ\overset{\text{w}}{\text{y}}$ -psy, the bakery, 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 ἀρτοκοπεῖον in Demotic Texts”, BIFAO 45, 1945, p. 59-60; and see also Fr. De Cenival, Papyrus démotiques de Lille (III), MIFAO 110, 1984, p. 49-50, 41.

The sign $\overset{\text{y}}{\text{y}}$ which follows the personal name $pȝ\overset{\text{w}}{\text{y}}$ -Wsỉr (?) 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.

$i.\overset{\text{r}}{\text{r}}\overset{\text{i}}{\text{t}}\overset{\text{t}}{\text{r}}\overset{\text{w}}{\text{w}}\overset{\text{pȝ}}{\overset{\text{w}}{\text{y}}}\overset{\text{pȝ}}{\text{y}}\overset{\text{m}}{\text{b}}\overset{\text{h}}{\overset{\text{h}}{\text{b}}}$ $pȝ\overset{\text{h}}{\text{i}}\overset{\text{s}}{\text{t}}$, who have let the bakery be made before the Ibis (and) Isis; $i.\overset{\text{r}}{\text{r}}\overset{\text{i}}{\text{t}}\overset{\text{t}}{\text{r}}\overset{\text{w}}{\text{w}}\overset{\text{pȝ}}{\overset{\text{w}}{\text{y}}}\overset{\text{pȝ}}{\text{y}}\overset{\text{s}}{\text{y}}$ is a relative clause followed by passive form, in which the antecedent – $pȝ\overset{\text{w}}{\text{y}}$ -pȝ-hb son of $pȝ$ -Wsỉr and all his people donators of the dedicatory object – is identical to the subject.

In this text the vivifying gods are “the gods of the resting place”, while the gods to whom the bakery was donated are the Ibis and Isis, for further information on this formula in the votive inscriptions see, S.P.Vleeming, op. cit, § 3, p. 254-255.

As for the writing way of $pȝ\overset{\text{w}}{\text{y}}$ -psy, one can observe that $\overset{\text{y}}{\text{y}}$ was written without the house determinative $\overset{\text{y}}{\text{y}}$ at the end, and the oblique stroke on the vertical sign is a natural fault on the stone surface. The determinative of the word $pȝ\overset{\text{w}}{\text{y}}\overset{\text{y}}{\text{y}}$ depicting the brazier with flame rising from it $\overset{\text{y}}{\text{y}}$ 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 $pȝ\overset{\text{w}}{\text{y}}$ -psy $[pȝ \overset{\text{w}}{\text{y}} (n) psy]$, 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 ἀρτοκοπεῖον in Demotic Texts”, BIFAO 45, 1945, p. 59-60; and see also Fr. De Cenival, Papyrus démotiques de Lille (III), MIFAO 110, 1984, p. 49-50, 41.

As for the vertical sign and its variant forms, it is problematic in Tuna el-Gebel demotic inscriptions, because it could be read sh and 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 n-tr.t is usually followed by the name of the donor of the votive object. In this text Dd-br son of Dhwty-mn who bears the rank “the priest of Ḫy-m-ḥtp, the Great, son of Ptah” who made the dedicatory object for the donors, is mentioned after n-tr.t. He might be one of the responsible for the Ibis organization in Tuna el-Gebel necropolis. As for the personal name Dhwty-mn, see Demot. Nb. 1/17, p. 1303.

Line 4

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

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.

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

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.

• Line 2
– As for the name Ḥr-nḏ-ỉṱ=f see, Demot. Nb. I/11, p. 825-826.
– 𓊱𓊱𓊱𓊱𓊱𓊱, a title beginning with pȝ mr, the overseer, the leader, while the determinative of the word represents the 𓊱 sign, but the reading of the word is not clear.

• Line 3
n nfr n nfr 𓊱-𓊱-𓊱-𓊱 as a thing of real goodness. For the expression 𓊱-𓊱-𓊱 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 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.
Commentary

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

- Line 2
   The group Ḥʿ could be read Ḥʿ or Ḥʿ⟨.⟩ (?).

- 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.

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\textsuperscript{15} P.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 Ns-nḥm-ʿn, see Demot. Nb. I/9, p. 684. The following traces are probably a brief name or title following Ns-nḥm-ʿn.

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

- Line 3
  – The traces preceding Smȝ-tȝ.wy are probably the first element of the personal name. As for the personal name Smȝ-tȝ.wy, see Demot. Nb. I/12, p. 924-925.
  – pȝ ḫy.ṱ: The word pȝ ḫy.ṱ after the personal name [……]-smȝ-tȝ.wy could be taken as a title or as a profession. For further information on pȝ ḫy.ṱ, see W. Erichsen, Demotisches Glossar, p. 350; G. Vittmann, Der demotische Papyrus Rylands IX, I-II,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

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

[1] Wsỉr Ns-nḥm-ʿn…….
[2] [Dd-ḥr(?)]-pȝ-hb son of Hr-nfr the…..
[3] [……]-smȝ-tȝ.wy pȝ ḫy.ṱ

Osiris Ns-nḥm-ʿn…….
[……]-smȝ-tȝ.wy the……..
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-ỉs.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(?) mȝʿ-ḥyw

The tomb of []
Wr son of Mȝʿ-Dḥwy[ ]
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 α[ίου] 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 ἐτῶν 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.

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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, 29/55.

FIG. 3. Limestone tomb stela TG 5275.
Fig. 4. Limestone stela TG 433.

Fig. 5. Limestone stela TG 109.

Fig. 6. Limestone block TG 428.