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David Klotz

Two Studies on the Late Period Temples at Abydos

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Two Studies on the Late Period Temples at Abydos

DAVID KLOTZ

THROUGHOUT Pharaonic history, Abydos ranked among Egypt’s most revered sites.¹ Reputed to contain the actual tomb of Osiris at Umm el-Qa‘ab, this Upper Egyptian city attracted devoted pilgrims until the late Roman Period. Yet despite its legacy as a holy site in all eras, only scant architectural traces remain from the Late Period,² even though many private sarcophagi, stelae, and other objects attest to the continued performance of local cults.³ Recent excavations have identified a sizeable temple near Kom el-Sultan dating primarily to the reigns of Nectanebo I and II of the Thirtieth Dynasty (c. 380–343 BCE), with building phases going back to the New Kingdom.⁴ Additional material from outside Abydos provides

An early version of this paper was presented at the Institute for the Study of the Ancient World, New York University, October 13, 2009. The author would like to thank John C. Darnell for offering many important suggestions and comments.

1 See recently D. O’Connor, Abydos: Egypt’s First Pharaohs and the Cult of Osiris, Cairo, 2009.
new historical background to these remarkable discoveries. Previously neglected Pharaonic blocks reused in the White Monastery Church in Sohag and a beautiful private statue in the Metropolitan Museum of Art shed light on the fate of the Late Period temples in Abydos.

1. THE LOST TEMPLE OF AMASIS?

A private statue belonging to the high-ranking official Peftuaneith (Louvre A 93) includes a wealth of information concerning the temple of Osiris at the end of the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty. In a lengthy hieroglyphic inscription, Peftuaneith records the extensive renovation works he conducted in Abydos for Apries and Amasis. He enumerates the most substantial building efforts as follows:

*I reported the condition of Abydos to the palace, to his majesty’s ear. His majesty ordered me to do work in Abydos, in order to rebuild Abydos; I labored greatly in restoring Abydos, I put everything belonging to Abydos in its place. I lay awake seeking what was good for Abydos, I begged favors from my lord daily, in order to restore Abydos.*

*I built the temple of Khentamenti as a solid work of eternity at his majesty’s command, that he might see prosperity in the affairs of Tawer. I surrounded it with walls of brick, the shrine ‘rq-bh was of one block of granite, the august chapel of electrum, ornaments, divine amulets, all sacred objects were of gold, silver, and all precious stones.*

Peftuaneith’s comprehensive renovation included the temple of Osiris-Khentiamentiu, the ‘rq-bh chapel, an august shrine (ḥḏ šps), a brick enclosure wall, the w-pqr (wpq) chapel (the monumental tomb of Osiris in Umm el-Qa’ab), and a new House of Life (scriptorium). Furthermore, Peftuaneith organized the economic infrastructure necessary to “provision the temple of Khentiahsntiu,” establishing “the Osiris Village (grg.t-Wsỉr),” a large agricultural estate and vineyard to supply divine offerings, and replacing ritual equipment such as the sacred bark. Although Peftuaneith was active already under Apries, the restoration work at Abydos took place during the reign of Amasis.

Peftuaneith’s testimony is substantiated to a small degree in the meagre archaeological record. While excavating the Osiris temple precinct in Kom el-Sultan, Petrie discovered foundation deposits of both Apries and Amasis, a naos inscribed with the cartouches of both pharaohs.

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8 Petrie, *Abydos I*, p. 32 and pl. LXX, figs. 6-9.
Amasis’s architectural contributions have come to light at Abydos. Amélineau had previously discovered a fragmentary stela of Amasis at Umm el-Qa’ab, apparently related to the Osiris burial in the tomb of Djer. In addition, an obelisk of Amasis dedicated to gods from Abydos (Osiris, Sokar and Re-Harakhty), turned up slightly north in Menasha (Ptolemais), and Golenischeff recorded a statue of the important Saite official Neshor in Sohag bearing an inscription dedicated to Osiris Lord of Abydos, probably from the reign of Apries.

The textual and archaeological evidence agrees that Amasis was engaged in building projects near the temple of Osiris Khentyamenty in Kom el-Sultan, perhaps continuing the construction program of his predecessor Apries. However, little remains of the temple besides the foundations and the various Kleinfunde mentioned above. While some blocks may have found their way into the expanded Thirtieth Dynasty temple (see infra), no further traces of Amasis’s architectural contributions have come to light at Abydos.

Spolia in the White Monastery Church, Sohag

New information concerning this temple may be found in the White Monastery Church of St. Shenoute in Sohag, roughly 45 km north of Abydos. Like many early Christian monuments, this church (c. 450 CE) is partially built from Pharaonic and Graeco-Roman spolia – blocks, columns and other architectural elements salvaged from earlier buildings. Although these pagan monuments at Sohag are quite famous, and several authors have recorded individual objects, the spolia have never been the object of a comprehensive catalogue.

In 2007, the Yale White Monastery Church Documentation Project began recording all decorated material presently visible as part of broader multi-disciplinary investigations of

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9 *Ibid.* p. 31-2, pl. LXVIII.
10 *Ibid.* p. 32, pls. LXIX and LXX, fig. 10; this object is now in the British Museum, EA 610.
11 Petrie, *Abydos* II, pl. XLIII, 6, p. 19; “temple built by Ahmes II [Amasis],” whose name is frequently found cut as a quarry-mark on the blocks; cf. B. Kemp, “The Osiris Temple at Abydos,” *MDAIK* 23, 1968, p. 147, pl. XII, b.
13 CG 17029; Ch. Kientz, *CGC Obélisques,* 1932, p. 59-60, pl. 15.
14 O. Perdu, “Socle d’une statue de Neshor à Abydos,” *Rede* 43, 1992, p. 145-162 (the statue is now missing); for the career of Neshor, see *id., “Neshor à Mendes sous Apriès,”* *BSFE* 118, 1990, p. 38-49.
the site. The epigraphic mission has thus far recorded over fifty inscribed blocks, dating from the Twenty-Second Dynasty to the reign of Antoninus Pius. While the final edition of all blocks is still in progress, one can already hazard some preliminary conclusions on the well-preserved objects.

Scholars have traditionally assumed that Shenoute’s masons salvaged building material from earlier pagan temples close to the White Monastery complex, either from a completely vanished sanctuary of Horus-ỉmy-šnw.t (in ancient Nỉw/Siw, or from the temple of Repyt (Triphis) at nearby Atripe, roughly three kilometers south of the church. Since the ongoing documentation survey has yet to discover any mentions of Horus-ỉmy-šnw.t, aside from the free-standing naos now in the Long Hall of the church, the first hypothesis is no longer tenable.

As expected, many blocks can be securely traced to the temple at Atripe, including a Graeco-Roman ceiling block with a building inscription mentioning “Repyt, Eye of Horus in the West.” Most pieces from the Atripe group are concentrated in the interior (north-eastern) staircase.
While the church builders employed a substantial number of blocks from neighboring Atripe, the majority of identifiable spolia derive from sites further south. The naos of Achoris dedicated to Horus-ỉmy-ỉnut could come from Mensha (Ptolemais) (cf. supra), while the granite altar of Necho II and Psamtek II, dedicated to Mehyt, should have originally stood in her temple in Eastern Behdet (Nag‘a al-Mesheyekh). Furthermore, a number of objects almost certainly traveled downstream from Abydos, including a statue belonging to the Saitic official Neshor, and at least five pieces of a monumental cenotaph of the High Priest of Amun, Iuput II.

To this list, one can now add more than thirty large pink-granite blocks with fine reliefs and inscriptions. These pieces are scattered throughout the church, functioning primarily as door jams and lintels in the various portals, and as ceiling slabs for the west staircase and windows between the Long Hall and the Nave. The architects quite naturally preferred granite for these critical architectural elements over the more fragile limestone found in the temple of Atripe. The decoration on around thirty blocks is still visible, but the reliefs on other granite pieces throughout the church are obscured, either due to infelicitous location (i.e. built into the wall), or because the original surface has been effaced. Additional decorated blocks were also used for the church foundations, but these are not visible at present without excavation.

A precise date for this stylistically homogenous group is confirmed by several cartouches of Amasis, some of which suffered from damnatio memoriae. On a block in the western staircase, the prenomen was selectively effaced so that the divine names (“Moon (俫ḥ)” and “Neith”) remained intact (fig. 1a). The cartouches on most Hapi figures, meanwhile, were rendered...
almost completely illegible (fig. 1b). Occasionally, the name of Amasis escaped destruction, as on the interior door jambs of the north portal.

Given the fragmentary preservation of the Amasis material, the overall decoration program of which the blocks were originally part remains tantalizingly obscure. In addition to cartouches and processions of fecundity figures, the granite spolia predominantly feature legs and torsos of the king and various divinities (fig. 2). One large block preserves a small excerpt of an archaizing offering list (fig. 3a); other fragments feature episodes from a Sed-Festival for Amasis. On one block, the Wepwawet-standard accompanies two labels: “first occasion of celebrating the [Sed]-Festival ([zp-tpy sd ḥȝb[-sd]])” and “the king makes a processional stop ([ḥtp nsw.t])” (fig. 3b). Elsewhere, the Horus name of Amasis appears to the left of another Wepwawet-standard, while on the right one discerns a label for a Meret-goddess ([Mr.t] and the phrase “fashioning (a statue and performing) the Opening of the Mouth ceremony ([ms.(t) ṭw(.t)-rȝ])” (fig. 3c). A larger block near the church roof contains a remarkable example of the Ruderlauf (fig. 4a), and the lintel slab of the north portal depicts a king wearing the red crown and the Sed-Festival robe, although his face is now partially obstructed by support beams (fig. 4b).

35 Based on his copy of the inscription, R. Weill already noted one of these blocks and correctly attributed it to Amasis (RT 36, 1914, p. 98); so far fifteen of the expected forty-two Hapi figures have been recorded, with the following distribution: Upper Egypt, noms 1-3, 7, 12-14; Lower Egypt, noms 1; unknown, seven examples (all with missing nome emblems).

36 For the position of these texts, see Lefebvre, DACL IV1, col. 475, fig. 3651; de Bock, Matériaux pour servir à l’archéologie de l’Égypte chrétienne, p. 48; Deschmann, Die Spolien in der spätantiken Architektur, fig. 25; the portal is no longer bricked up, but the inscriptions are still partially obscured by support beams.

37 A photograph appears already in Deschmann, Die Spolien in der spätantiken Architektur, fig. 24. For parallels, see W. Barta, Die altägyptische Opferlist von der Frühzeit bis zur griechisch-römischen Epoche, MÄS 3, 1963, p. 48 (Nos. 8-15), 163; cf. the similar layout in the Saite tomb of Bakenrenef from Saqqara (LD III, 260c), which hints at the colossal scale of the present offering list.

38 The only other Sed-Festival scene for Amasis comes from Sais; see L. Habachi, “Sais and its Monuments,” ASAE 42, 1943, p. 185, fig. 105.

39 East portal of the Long Hall. This block was described in part by R. Weill (RT 36, 1914, p. 97-98) who recorded the entire Horus name of Amasis, now missing.

40 For these activities in the context of the Sed-Festival, see P. Munro, “Bemerkungen zu einem Sedfest-Relief in der Stadtmauer von Kairo,” ZÄS 86, 1961, p. 65-67.

41 For the Ruderlauf ritual, cf. H. Kees, Der Opfertanz des ägyptischen Königs, 1912, p. 22-52, 74-102; M. J. Leblanc, The Rituals of the Sed Festival: Ancient Egyptian Royal Ideology and Iconography from the Predynastic through the Graeco-Roman Period (PhD Diss.; Yale University, 2011), Chapter 4 (with many references).
Among all the divinities represented, only Osiris appears with any frequency. One window slab preserves a full relief of Osiris with the following label (fig. 5a):

\[
\text{Wsỉr nb ḏw di ʿnh d.t} \\
\text{Osiris Lord of Abydos, given life eternally.}
\]

Other blocks preserve images of mummiform Osirian deities (fig. 5b-c); another relief juxtaposes “Khentyamenty, Lord of Abydos” with the cartouches of Amasis, and the royal titularies on the door jambs claim he is “beloved of Sokar” (cf. supra). Finally, a cartouche on the interior jambs of the north portal belongs to Amasis “son of Osiris” (fig. 6a) instead of the usual “son of Neith,” a variant attested only on material from Abydos.42

From the preceding evidence, it is clear that the granite blocks at Sohag come from a sanctuary of Amasis in which Osiris played a major role, and the most likely candidate for their location would be Abydos, the closest temple with reliefs attributable to Amasis. These granite blocks could easily join the list of similar monuments definitely traced to Abydos, including the Amduat scenes of Iuput II (cf. supra).43 Compelling evidence for this provenance comes from yet another block, currently along the north wall of the Nave, bearing the initial fragments of a royal titulary in large hieroglyphs (roughly 20 cm high): \[
\text{[Hnm-ib]-Rʿ} \\
\text{[Khnem-ib]-re} \quad \text{(Amasis)}
\]
The bottom surface contains a smaller and more crudely inscribed text, which very closely resembles the ownership inscription of Amasis from Abydos.44


43 In a discussion of the Abydene statue of Neshor found at Sohag, O. Perdu (RdE 43, 1992, p. 146, n. 6) had already suggested that the Amasis material (as recorded by Weill and Vernus) could have also come from Abydos, without elaborating on the content of the reliefs.

44 A photograph of this inscription was published by P. Vernus (BIFAO 75, 1975, p. 67, pl. VI), but with no scale, discussion of the context, or mention of the name Osiris. Similar ownership inscriptions have been found on blocks of Apries from Saïs and Tanis: P. Wilson, The Survey of Saïs (Sa el-Hagar), 1977-2002, MEES 77, 2006, p. 210-211, fig. 69, pl. 29b.
Although the inscription from Sohag is almost twice the size of its parallel at Abydos, both are stylistically similar, and one may easily restore the leftmost line of the Sohag text as follows: [mry] Wsỉr nb [ȝbdw]. “[beloved of] Osiris Lord of [Abydos]”. While Osiris can appear in offering scenes at any Egyptian temple, it is highly unlikely that this type of ownership inscription would mention Osiris unless the block belonged to his cult center at Abydos.

**Interpretation**

The large group of granite blocks in the White Monastery Church can be securely attributed to Amasis. The fine granite, exceptional workmanship, content of the reliefs, and multiple references to Osiris, Sokar and Abydos in the few surviving texts, all strongly suggest that these *spolia* derive from nearby Abydos.

Since Osiris features prominently in the decoration program of most Egyptian temples, one might argue that these blocks actually came from an Osirian chapel of another temple in the vicinity of Sohag, such as Atripe or Akhmim. However, if this were the case, one would expect at least one reference to this alternate toponym, whereas all the blocks from Sohag exclusively mention Abydos. Furthermore, there is no evidence for constructions of Amasis at any other site between Memphis and Thebes, while numerous sources attest to the extensive activity under his reign at Abydos. In other words, the Saite blocks at Sohag either derive from a temple of Amasis in an unknown location (never specifically named in the surviving inscriptions), a structure otherwise completely unattested in the archaeological and textual record, or they come from his well-known temple at Abydos, a place mentioned several times on the reliefs. While either interpretation is theoretically plausible, the latter option most adequately explains the decoration of the blocks in the context of Amasis’s known building activities.

As noted above, the decorated blocks represent a mere fraction of the combined granite material at Sohag, and thus the original temple would have been a substantial construction. The preserved Hapi figures permit a rough estimate of the scale. Each fecundity figure with his column of text measures roughly 50 cm in width, thus assuming all 42 nomes were originally represented, this procession would require a minimum perimeter of 21 meters.

Since all the Amaside decoration from Abydos was discovered at Kom el-Sultan, the blocks from Sohag should ultimately derive from the same building. Nonetheless, the exact nature of this structure is unclear. Petruaneith claimed to have rebuilt the temple of Khentiamenty for Apries and Amasis (cf. *supra*), and Barry Kemp assumed the Saite traces at Kom el-Sultan...
represent the latest phase of the Osiris temple. However, David O’Connor suggested the smaller buildings at Kom el-Sultan were actually royal Ka-chapels going back to the Old Kingdom, and that the main Osiris temple was the much larger structure to the south (cf. infra, Section 2). Recent excavations by Michelle Marlar have confirmed the latter theory, and suggesting the smaller temple of Amasis at Kom el-Sultan was indeed a type of Ka-chapel.

According to Kemp’s reconstruction, the Amasis temple would have opened to the south-west, with the entrance being parallel to the processional road leading to the Portal Temple of Ramesses II and ultimately to Umm el-Qa’ab. Since the main Osiris temple faced to the north-east, diagonal to the Amasis shrine, the bark of Osiris would have passed by the Ka-chapel before reaching the causeway and could have easily made processional stops therein during the Khoiak or Valley Festivals.

Despite their fragmentary nature, the surviving reliefs from Abydos may provide further support for the Ka-chapel interpretation. In particular, the multiple Sed-Festival scenes (cf. supra) would be perfectly appropriate for a chapel celebrating the divine kingship of Amasis. Other scenes bear comparison to the preserved decoration of earlier Ka-chapels from Abydos, including the archaizing offering list (fig. 3a) and another scene in which the King and a lumnutef priest standing before a deity (fig. 6b).

It is impossible to determine when or how these blocks came to Sohag, or when the Amasis temple was dismantled. More intriguing, however, are the traces of damnatio memoriae on most of his cartouches. Since the attackers took care to not destroy the divine names, the erasures must have occurred while people could still read hieroglyphs. The most plausible candidate would be the Persian conqueror Cambyses, who famously exhumed Amasis’s corpse just to flay and burn it (Herodotus III, 16). If this is the case, these minor attacks to the Amasis temple may be related to the greater damage the Persians reportedly inflicted upon Abydos and its people (cf. infra, Section 2).

49 Kemp, MDAIK 23, 1968, p. 146.
50 O’Connor, Abydos, p. 80–81, 111-113; Marlar, in J.-Cl. Goyon, Chr. Cardin (eds.), Proceedings of the Ninth International Congress of Egyptologists, II, 2007, p. 1251-1252; id., The Osiris Temple at Abydos, 2009, p. 35-36; for the relative positions of these two structures, cf. O’Connor, Abydos, p. 120, fig. 66; J. Garstang, El Arábah, A Cemetery of the Middle Kingdom: Survey of the Old Kingdom Temenos; Graffiti from the Temple of Sety, ERA 6, 1900, pl. XXXVII, where the Amasis temple is labeled “Stone Pavement,” and the larger temple covers the areas labeled “Platform and Pavement of Stone,” “Rough Ground with traces of Brick Walls” and “Irregular Mound covered with Stone Chippings” (cf. Marlar, The Osiris Temple at Abydos, 2009, p. 12-14).
51 Compare the stela of Sety I commemorating the erection of a cenotaph for his father, Ramesses I, at Abydos (KRI, 112, 4-6): “I caused his statue to reside within it, being provided like (previous) kings (di=i ḫtp šm=f m-ḥnw=s, sḏfȝ.tỉ mỉ nsw.w). Whenever the majesty of this august god, (Osiris)-Wennefer would come forth to rest therein, he would honor my father like those in the past (p= ḫm n nṣf pn ḫt: ḫnt nṣf r ḫtp ḫm, tr=f it=i mi ḫmy.w= kỉ t’), having elevated him among the blessed dead (c’2. n=sfw m-m bỳw.)”.
52 For the decoration of earlier Ka-chapels, see Marlar, The Osiris Temple at Abydos, 2009, p. 234-235, 355-356 (fig. 116-117).
53 For the interpretation of Amasis’s damnatio memoriae, see the forthcoming study by A.J. Leahy (supra, n. 33); for the various crimes attributed to Cambyses, see recently D. Kahn, “Note on the Time-Factor in Cambyses’ Deeds in Egypt as told by Herodorus,” Trans. euphratène 34, 2007, p. 103-112.
2. **STATUE MMA 1996.91: A GENERAL FROM BUSIRIS AND THE RESTORATION OF ABYDOS**

After the surge of building activity under Apries and Amasis, work at Abydos came to a dramatic halt after the invasion of Cambyses in 525 BC, and no records survive of architectural work at Abydos attributable to the Twenty-Seventh to Twenty-Ninth Dynasties. Nonetheless, Abydos experienced a renascence in the Thirtieth Dynasty, a period of intense reconstruction throughout the entire country. Nectanebo I and II donated two granite naoi to local deities, and recent excavations by M. Marlar have yielded additional relief fragments confirming that Nectanebo I and II renovated the main Osiris temple originally constructed in the Eighteenth Dynasty or earlier.

Private monuments further attest to cult activity at Abydos at this time. The vizier Harsiese, whose career spanned the Thirtieth Dynasty, was also “prophet of Osiris and Horus of the temple of ṣe-pa(wr) (Umm el-Qa’ab),” and a sarcophagus of another priest of Nectanebo II was found at Abydos. An Abydene funerary stela belonging to the “overseer of singers for the Osiris festival” Chaonnophris contains a unique autobiographical statement alluding to the resumption of proper temple services:

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54 G. Vittmann (“Rupture and Continuity: On Priests and Officials in Egypt during the Persian Period,” in P. Briant, M. Chauveau (eds.), *Organisation des pouvoirs et contacts culturels dans les pays de l’Empire achéménide*, Persika 14, 2009, p. 112) recently discussed two cases of priests from Abydos who may have been active in the late Twenty-Seventh Dynasty, but precise dates are impossible to determine.


59 P. Petrie, *Abydos I*, p. 33; *Abydos II*, pl. XLIX.

60 Marlar, in J.-Cl. Goyon, Chr. Cardin (eds.), *Proceedings of the Ninth International Congress of Egyptologists, II*, 2007, p. 1251-1259; *ead., The Osiris Temple at Abydos*, 2009, especially p. 142-168, 312-317 (figs. 73-78); O’Connor, *Abydos*, p. 128-129. Note also that several blocks with the cartouches of Nectanebo I have also been found at Sohag (noted already by El-Masry, *MDAIK* 57, 2001, p. 209) see D. Klotz, “A Naos of Nectanebo I from the White Monastery Church (Sohag)”, (forthcoming), although those objects do not necessarily come from Abydos.


63 Cairo TR 29/10/24/2; following the translation of K. Jansen-Winkeln, *Beiträge zu den Privatschriften der Späzeit*, ZÄS 125, 1998, p. 12-13, who dated it to the Thirtieth Dynasty on the basis of stylistic criteria.
A statue in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (MMA 1996.91) offers a valuable new perspective for the history of the Osiris temple in the Late Period (fig. 7). This object is notable for its exceptional workmanship, and it is certainly one of the finest examples of Thirtieth Dynasty statuary. The hieroglyphic inscriptions are equally important for their historical significance and philological peculiarities, but they have so far remained unpublished and garnered only brief mentions in Egyptological literature.

The statue is made from light meta-graywacke, and measures 69.2 cm in height. Only the torso, thighs and arms are preserved, and a diagonal crack has removed most of the right side. Nonetheless, the statue is remarkably well carved, finely polished, and the sculptor captured the musculature and subtle torsion using a classical, archaizing pose. Stylistically, the torso is a great example of Thirtieth Dynasty sculpture. The figure wears a tripartite, striated kilt and the bottoms of the pleats are carved in a scalloped form popular in the reign of Nectanebo I (fig. 8a), although not necessarily exclusive to his reign. The torso displays a moderate degree of bipartition, with no trace of a median line. Although

\[
\text{smn.n=i im' m pr-Wsir}  \\
\text{dr gm.n.tw=f hr-h2.t wfl.(t) r wsy}
\]

I reinstated ceremonial music in the temple of Osiris, since it was found to have fallen into ruin previously.

64 PM VIII.2, 1999, p. 769, 801-737-730; Sotheby's LONDON, Egyptian, Middle Eastern, Greek, Etruscan and Roman Antiquities, Ancient Glass, and Art Reference Books, July 13, 1981, p. 80-82, no. 164; M. Hill, J.P. Allen, BMMMA 54/2, 1996, p. 8-9; Do. Arnold, Apollo, October, 1997, p. 15; ead., in Philippe de Montebello and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1977-2008, 2009, p. 7-8, fig. 9. The author would like to thank Dorothea Arnold, Lila Acheson Wallace Curator of Egyptian Art, for granting permission to publish the statue, Marsha Hill for offering additional photographs and many helpful suggestions, and Isabel Suenkel for providing detailed measurements.


66 The back pillar is 12 cm wide, and the intercolumnar width is 2.4 cm; the depth of the statue is 19.5 cm at the chest, and 26.6 cm at the legs.

67 M. Chevereau (op. cit., p. 164) dated the statue to the period of the “dernières dynasties indigènes” (Twenty-Ninth to Thirty-First Dynasties); B. Bothmer (file in CLES), M. Hill, J.P. Allen (op. cit., p. 8) and Do. Arnold (op. cit., p. 15) placed it specifically in the reign of Nectanebo I.


69 At least one example occurs after the reign of Nectanebo I (kindly noted by Marsha Hill); British Museum EA 1079 (Nectanebo II); N. Spencer, A Naos of Nebhsorobeh from Babastis. Religious Iconography and Temple Building in the 30th Dynasty, BMFR 156, 2006, colour plate 4). Others are of uncertain date: Marseille, musée d’Archéologie méditerranéenne 826 (P.E. Stanwick, Portraits of the Ptolemies: Greek Kings as Egyptian Pharaohs, Austin, 2002, p. 105, fig. 41. Cat. A42: “Late fourth or third century B.C.”), and Berlin 13254 (Ägyptisches Museum Berlin, 1967, p. 99, Cat. 962: “Römisch, wohl 1. Jh. n. Chr.”).

the head is broken, surviving traces confirm that the top of the back pillar had a trapezoidal shape typical for the period. ¹⁷¹ He carries small rolls of cloth in both hands, ¹⁷² and he displays the so-called “Isis-knot” (tıt) on his left shoulder (fig. 8b). In general, this statue is quite similar to other striding statues of the Thirtieth Dynasty. ¹⁷³ While its provenance is uncertain, the inscription indicates that it originally came from the temple of Osiris in Busiris, ¹⁷⁴ a very important site which has yielded only a handful of objects thus far. ¹⁷⁵

The back pillar features four columns of inscriptions composed in very clear hieroglyphs. This text is well preserved with lacunae limited to the upper-right corner, the middle of the fourth column, and the entire bottom of the statue. The inscription is composed in the terse and very difficult semi-cryptographic style characteristic of the early Thirtieth Dynasty, evidenced on the Naucratis stela of Nectanebo I, the Metternich Stela (New York, MMA 50.85), and the statue of Tjaihapim (New York, MMA 08.205.1). ¹⁷⁶ During the reign of Nectanebo I, scribes experimented with new orthographies, rendering words by the barest consonantal elements (e.g. $\text{ḏ}$ = $d < \text{dd}$, “to say”; $\text{ḏd}$ = $tw < t(2)w$, “breath”; $\text{ḏḏ}$ = $wt < w2.t$, “road”). Employing novel alphabetic orthographies and graphic puns while simultaneously eschewing determinatives and phonetic complements, hieroglyphic inscriptions from this period appear deceptively simple. Despite its use of formulaic royal epithets and beautifully carved hieroglyphs, the Naucratis stela remains one of the most difficult inscriptions from any period, ¹⁷⁷ and its various orthographic riddles were only gradually solved through the successive attempts by many eminent philologists. ¹⁷⁸ The first section of the present statue — consisting primarily of laudatory clichés — is quite difficult in this regard, and the translations proposed are sometimes

¹⁷¹ For this development of the back pillar, see Perdu, op. cit., p. 250-252; Vittmann, in Brian, Chauveau (eds.), Organisation des pouvoirs et contacts culturels dans les pays de l’Empire achéménide, 2009, p. 98.


¹⁷³ Compare especially the statue of Tjaiborba (Brooklyn Museum of Art, 68.10.1; D. Wildung, Imhotep und Amenhotep: Gottwerdung im alten Ägypten, MAS 46, 1977, p. 44-45, pl. 7).

¹⁷⁴ Especially in col. 3, where the statue owner implores future readers to say his name beside the great god (Osiris) on account of the benefactions he performed in Busiris.


tentative. However, the historical content, recounting military actions against foreigners and the reconstruction of temples is relatively straightforward, and bears many similarities with the biographies of contemporaneous Generals from the Delta.79

Text and Translation

A. Titles and Epithets (cols. 1-2)

[FIG. 9]

A.

B.

C.

D.

E.

F.

G.

H.

I.

J.

K.

L.

M.

N.

O.

P.

Q.

R.

S.

T.

U.

V.

W.

X.

Y.

Z.

The titles are restored on the basis of similar sequences from the Late Period.81

b. Niw.t-rn=s is another name for Mostai (usually Msḏ.t),82 a city in the Busirite nome.83 In a recently published geographic list from Athribis, Niw.t-rn=s appears in apposition to Msḏ.t (reading 𓊫𓊫, instead of 𓊩𓊫).84 The contemporaneous General Hor was also “director of the districts (ḥrp w.w) of Busiris, Heliopolis and Niw.t-rn=s.”85

c. The epithet “great of knowledge (wr m rḥḥ)” occurs on two sarcophagi of the Thirtieth Dynasty.86 Although the latter epithet bw(ȝ) m kꜣb-ỉb, “great of trustworthiness (or: discretion)”
is apparently without parallel,\textsuperscript{87} one might compare the similar phrase \textit{wr m `m-ib}, “great of omniscience (lit. “consuming of heart”)” in a Saite Period autobiography (Zagreb No. 672).\textsuperscript{88}

d. Tentatively reading \textit{ḥȝ.t mtr} as \textit{mt(r)-ḥȝ.t}, “true of heart.”\textsuperscript{89} A similar orthography of \textit{md} (\textit{ḥȝ.t}) for \textit{mtr} in the epithet \textit{mt(r)-ḥȝ.t} occurs in two autobiographies of the Twenty-Ninth and Thirtieth Dynasties.\textsuperscript{90} One might also consider reading \textit{md-ib}, “deep of heart/mind,”\textsuperscript{91} although such an epithet is not attested elsewhere. An early Ptolemaic inscription spells \textit{mt(r)-ḥȝ.t} as \textit{ḥȝ.t nṯr} (Urk. II, 60, 1).

For \textit{ḥȝ.t} one might compare the use of this sign to write \textit{ḥw.t},\textsuperscript{92} noting that this phenomenon is quite popular in the Thirtieth Dynasty: \textit{ḥȝ.t nṯr}, \textit{ḥȝ.t nṯr} \textit{ḥȝ.t} (\textit{ḥȝ.t} \textit{nṯr}) \textit{ḥȝ.t} = \textit{ḥȝ.t nṯr} \textit{ḥȝ.t} “temples.”\textsuperscript{93} Alternatively, this could simply be a variant \textit{mt(r)-ḥȝ.t}, “true of body,” since the terms \textit{ḥȝ.t} and \textit{ḥȝ.t} are relatively interchangeable in other epithets.\textsuperscript{94}

e. \textit{Ỉmn-sḫr.w} is apparently a variant of the more common epithets \textit{ḥȝ.t ḫn} \textit{ḥȝ.t}, who builds their statues therein, “hidden of body concerning his designs,” and “one who hides/ suppresses the designs of the body (\textit{Ỉmn/hṛp sḫr.w} \textit{ḥȝ.t} = f),” both of which express “discretion.”\textsuperscript{95}

f. A similar sequence of epithets occurs on a statue attributed to the General Hor currently in Alexandria:\textsuperscript{96}

\begin{itemize}
  \item MMA 1996.91:
  \begin{itemize}
    \item \textit{ḥȝ.t ḫn} \textit{ḥȝ.t} \textit{ḥȝ.t mtr} \textit{ḥȝ.t} \textit{ḥȝ.t} \textit{ḥȝ.t} \textit{ḥȝ.t} \textit{ḥȝ.t} \textit{ḥȝ.t} = f
  \end{itemize}
  \item Alexandria w/o #:
  \begin{itemize}
    \item \textit{ḥȝ.t ḫn} \textit{ḥȝ.t} \textit{ḥȝ.t} \textit{ḥȝ.t} \textit{ḥȝ.t} \textit{ḥȝ.t} \textit{ḥȝ.t} \textit{ḥȝ.t} \textit{ḥȝ.t} \textit{ḥȝ.t} \textit{ḥȝ.t} \textit{ḥȝ.t} \textit{ḥȝ.t} \textit{ḥȝ.t} \textit{ḥȝ.t} \textit{ḥȝ.t} \textit{ḥȝ.t} = f
  \end{itemize}
\end{itemize}


\textsuperscript{89} R. Vernus, \textit{Arhibis}, p. 174, col. 1, 175, n. (a); id., “Inscription d’un personnage d’Arhibis bien en cours sous la XXIX\textsuperscript{e} Dynastie,” \textit{MAIK} 37, 1981, p. 484, n. (c).


\textsuperscript{91} For the sentiment, compare Ani D, 4, 2-3 (= J.Fr. Quack, \textit{Die Lehren des Ani: ein neunügäsischer Weisheitstext in seinem kulturellen Umfeld}, OBO 141, 1994, pp. 106-7, 174, 308-9): \textit{ḥȝ.t} (\textit{rmṯ}) \textit{wšt r inwḥt}, \textit{ḥȝ.t} \textit{wšt r iḏḥt}, “As for the heart (of a man), it is wider than a granary, it is deeper than a well.”


\textsuperscript{94} G. Roeder, “Zwei hieroglyphische Inschriften aus Hermopolis (Oberägypten),” \textit{ASAE} 52, 1954, p. 384, line 4 (reign of Nectanebo I), in the context: “he who gives temples to them (viz. the gods), who builds their statues therein, (and puts) every body in their service, so they might bring to him a great Induction in its season (\textit{rdl ḫw.t} nṯr \textit{ḥȝ.t} \textit{ḥȝ.t} \textit{ḥȝ.t} \textit{ḥȝ.t} \textit{ḥȝ.t} \textit{ḥȝ.t} \textit{ḥȝ.t} \textit{ḥȝ.t} \textit{ḥȝ.t} \textit{ḥȝ.t} \textit{ḥȝ.t} \textit{ḥȝ.t} \textit{ḥȝ.t} = f).” Cf. also I. Guermuer, “Le groupe familial de Pachéryntaisouy. Caire JE 36576,” \textit{BIFAO} 104, 2004, p. 253, 254, n. x (fourth century BC).


\textsuperscript{97} Vercoutter, \textit{BIFAO} 49, 1950, p. 103, pl. V, col. 2.
Vercoutter translated the Alexandria example as follows: “son horreur, c’est l’homme qui ne sait payer (lit. qui ignore le paiement), possesseur de plus de biens que le grenier royal (lit. le Double Grenier).”\(^{98}\) However, this interpretation requires interpreting \(\text{rh}\) as an unusual spelling of \(\text{fr.tlh.t}\), “goods.”\(^{99}\) Moreover, if \(\text{hm-fq}\) were truly a compound meaning, “the one ignorant of reward,” one would expect the seated-man determinative to follow \(\text{fq}\), not \(\text{hm}\).

Instead, one could translate the Alexandria example as follows: “one whose abomination is the ignorant, (but) who rewards (\(\text{fq}\))\(^{100}\) the possessor of knowledge; overseer of the Double Granary (\(\text{imy-rȝ snw.ty}\)).”\(^{101}\)

The dichotomy between “the learned (\(\text{rh}\))”\(^{102}\) and “the ignoramus (\(\text{hm}\))” pervades Egyptian wisdom literature.\(^{103}\) The extreme reactions to these groups on the Alexandria statue recall an earlier statement about Akhenaten: “He sets his wrath against the one ignorant of his teaching, (but) his praise is for the one who knows it (\(\text{ir=f h₂ w=f ḥm sb₂ y.t=f hzw.t=f n rḥ s.t}\)).”\(^{104}\) The owner of the MMA statue was more open-minded, and vaunts of having guided (\(\text{sim}\)) the ignorant towards knowledge.\(^{105}\)

g. In the absence of any obvious parallels, the translation of this passage remains speculative, inspired by earlier autobiographical phrases like: “one to whom people tell their secrets (\(\text{dd. n=ḥ w.t ūml.t=sn=f hr.t=sn}\))” (lit. “to whom bodies (again \(\text{ḥ w.t}\)) tell their contents.”\(^{106}\) The lack of determinatives is particularly frustrating here, since the element or \(\frac{\text{ḥ w.t}}{\text{ḥ rḥ}}\) could potentially write \(\text{ḥ w.t.r.t}\), “wisdom,” \(\text{ḥ w.t.sḥr.t}\), “satiete,”\(^{107}\) \(\text{ḥ ḥ rḥ r}\) “to await,”\(^{108}\) or \(\text{ḥ ḥ rḥ r}\) “to perceive.”\(^{109}\)
h. Literally, “heavy of speech,” with the general meaning “reserved.”\textsuperscript{110} The present spelling with the hippopotamus for \textit{dns}, “heavy,” occurs already on a statue of the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty.\textsuperscript{111}

i. The first sign (\(\text{ṯȝw}\)) could alternatively write the particle \(\text{iw}\), resulting in a slightly different translation: “whatever he says is the breath of life.” The abbreviated orthographies \(\text{ḏw} \) for \(\text{ḏw} \)\textsuperscript{112} and \(\text{ḏw} \) for \(\text{ḏw} \)\textsuperscript{113} and \(\text{ḏw} \) for \(\text{ḏw} \)\textsuperscript{114} are all attested in texts from the Thirtieth Dynasty. Kings or gods can communicate the “breath of life” through their voices,\textsuperscript{115} but some private individuals bear epithets such as “one who rejuvenates millions with his speech (alone) (\textit{snbn hh.w m tp-rꜣ=f}).”\textsuperscript{116}

for this term spelled \(\text{ḏw} \) (for \(\text{ḏw} \)), cf. Chr. Thiers, Prolématique Phyladéphie et les prêtres d’Atoum de Tjekou: Nouvelle édition commentée de la « stèle de Pithom », \textit{OrMonu} 17, 2007, p. 70, line 24.


\textsuperscript{109} E.g. \textit{di.n=f f.t nb.(t) sỉȝ r=s dỉ.t=f ẖ.t nb(.t) sỉȝ r=f} (for \(\text{ḏw} \)).\textsuperscript{110} “he ensured that everyone was aware of it (viz. the reward).” For the phrase \(\text{sỉȝ r } \), “to be aware of,” cf. K. Jansen-Winkeln, “Drei Gebete aus der 22. Dynastie,” in J. Osing, G. Dreyer (eds.), \textit{Form und Mass}, \textit{AAT} 12, 1987, p. 238-239, fig. 1, col. 6, 248, n. 8: “You know all the things I have done, you are aware of it (\textit{ṣỉȝ=r tw”} (\(\text{ḏw} \)).\textsuperscript{111} This translation could correspond to other biographies in which officials claim to have instructed the deceased (see J.C. Darnell, “Les impondérables de l’hellénisation: littérature d’hiéroglyphes,” \textit{SAK} 5, 1977, p. 283-284; Cresciani et al., \textit{La galleria di Padineit, visir di Nectanebo I, pl. XII, col. 1, p. 73, n. (d)}; G. Posener, “Du nouveau sur Kombanos,” \textit{RdE} 37, 1986, p. 95.


\textsuperscript{112} Other examples from the Thirtieth Dynasty include Naucratis Stela, cols. 5, 6, 8, 13; H.G. Fischer, “An Eleventh Dynasty Couple Holding the Sign of Life,” \textit{ZAS} 100, 1973, p. 23-25.


\textsuperscript{114} Jansen-Winkeln, col. 4; Yoyotte, \textit{BIFAO} 54, 1954, 92, Doc. 6a.


j. One could possibly restore “protector of [the orphan],” “[the widow],” “[the poor],” or similar terms. 117

k. “He who repels the enemies (\(\text{hnb nrg.w}\))” was one of the guardians of Osiris in Book of the Dead 145. 118 The statue owner thus mythologizes his own work restoring the temples of Osiris in Busiris and Abydos, and possibly also expelling Persians from Egypt.

l. Reading \(\text{z}\text{tr} = \text{btr}\), “to tie up (birds),”119 possibly referring to the act of binding prisoners’ arms behind their backs like pinioned fowl.120 The term \(\text{t}\text{r}\), “thief,” can also refer to demonic enemies.121

m. On the statue Louvre A. 88, the General Hor claims to be one “who repels the opponents (\(\text{bsf nst}.\text{w}\)),” apparently also in reference to the Persians.122 This specific term is common among gargoyle texts, where the lion repels (\(\text{sn}.\text{w}\)) the enemies (\(\text{sn}.\text{w}\)) and storm clouds (\(\text{sn}.\text{w}\)).123 The present example might allude to the title “priest of the door-bolt (\(\text{hkn}.\text{t}\))” mentioned later (cf. infra), for which one might compare a doorway inscription from the Opet Temple: “I am the lion-shaped door-bolt of the great portal (\(\text{ink hkn}.\text{t nt sb\text{\`}} v\text{r}\) (...), who repels the enemy (\(\text{sn} \text{sn}\))” (Opet I, 6, 1-3).

n. Despite the unconventional orthography of \(\text{ḥḥn t}=\text{spd}, “sharp,”124 this group is recognizable as the classical epithet “sharper than a grain (of wheat),” attested already in the First Intermediate Period.125 As in the present example, this phrase usually qualifies a statement about “performing Maat (\(\text{ḥḥn m}(\text{n}).t\))”126

o. Reading \(\text{ḥḥn t}=\text{nty}(\text{w}),127 following the pattern of similar epithets,128 especially Petosiris, No. 82, 103: \(\text{stp}(\text{w})\ n \text{iniy.w ntwt}=\text{f}, “chosen among those in his city.”129

117 For many epithets beginning with \(\text{mwnf}, “protector,” see De Meulenaere, BIFAO 61, 1962, p. 36, n. (k); Heise, Erinnern und Gedenken, 2007, p. 316.

118 IGG V, OLA 114, 2002, p. 219 (noting the variants \(\text{b} \text{nrg.w} \text{nt} \text{bnt} \text{nrg.w} \text{ibid.,} p. 158 and 229); for the various meanings of \(\text{hnb}\) and related words, see A. Egberts, In Quest of Meaning: A Study of the Ancient Egyptian Rites of Consecrating the Meret-chests and Driving the Calves, Egypt 8, 1995, I, p. 320, n. 5; another General from the late Ptolemaic Period mentions driving away “rebels (\(\text{nrg.w}\)),” see Lemke, Vittmann, MDAIK 55, 2000, p. 311, n. 1.

119 Wb. III, 202, 2-3: “(gefangene Vögel) zusammenbinden” (I thank John C. Darnell for this suggestion); for the orthography, see Val. Phon. II, p. 311-312 (especially No. 779); Dendara XII, 14, 18.


121 Cf. IGG 1, OLA 110, 2002, p. 627a, 639a.


123 P. Wilson, A Ptolemaic Lexikon, OLA 78, 1997, p. 1018-9; Dendara XII, 321, 10;

124 Other examples of \(\text{spd}\) written as \(\text{sbd}\) occur in inscriptions from the Twenty-Sixth and Twenty-Seventh Dynasties; see G. Poseen, La première domination perse en Égypte, BdE II, 1936, p. 90, n. (b), who already noted the descendants in Demotic (\(\text{sb}\)) and Coptic (\(\text{cobr}^\text{c} \text{t}\)).


127 For Thirtieth Dynasty parallels, see Naucratis Stela, col. 13; Roeder, ASAÉ 52, 1954, p. 421.


129 Compare also JE 36665, ll. 9–10: \(\text{stp n ntwy.w}=\text{f, “one chosen by his fellow citizens”} (H. De Meulenaere, “Une famille sacerdotale thébaine,” BIFAO 86, 1986, p. 139, 140, n. d, and pl. VI).
Alternatively, this word could be an abbreviated form of $nṯ(r)$, and thus one could read “chosen by the god within his city,” i.e. “his local god.” The latter option would find a close parallel in another Thirtieth Dynasty biography: “whom god distinguished because of what his heart created for him ($tni\ nṯr\ hr\ qmː\ n=fib=f$).”

The value $ḥd = dd$, “to say,” is common in this period.

For similar orthographies of $(îmy)-r₂\ ms$, see Chevereau, *Prosopographie des cadres militaires égyptiens de la Basal Époque*, p. 261-262. The full title, “Great generalissimo in chief of his majesty $(îmy-r₂\ ms\ wr\ wty\ n\ hm=f)$” was quite common in the Thirtieth Dynasty (cf. Chevereau, *op. cit.*, p. 205) and thus it is impossible to identify the owner of the statue based on his titles alone.

Door bolts on Late Period temples were sometimes shaped like lions $ḏw$, as with the present determinative for the word $ḥkn(.t)$. A similar title appears on the Ptolemaic Period sarcophagus of Panehemise (Vienna ÂS 4), who was “priest of the Mound of Shena’, priest of the gods and goddesses united within it, priest of its portal, priest of its door bolts ($ḏw$), priest of its trees, and priest of its water.”

### B. Restorations in Busiris (col. 3)

\[\text{[...]}\ nṯr\ dm=tn\ rr=tn\ nṯr\ ṣ\ \text{[...]}\]

\[\text{hr\ nty\ fr.}\ n=tn\ ȝh\ w\ n/m\ Pr-Wsir\ m\ s\ t\ wr.t\ n\ nṯr\ ṣ\]

\[\text{rdi.}\ n=tn\ wțz-nty\ n\ Wsir\ nb-Ddw}\]

\[\text{ḥd-īps}\ n\ Wsir\ ḫs-t-wr.t}\]

\[\text{m\ ḫd\ mk}(w)\ m\ nbw\]

---


r̄d.n=ỉ mitt n ḫw.t-Ỉnpw
r ī r(․t) ʿȝ.t [..] d

[3] [. . .] god,
may you pronounce my name beside the great god,
because I performed benefactions for/in Busiris,
 renovating the great seat of the Great God.

Just as I donated the processionary bark for Osiris Lord of Busiris,
 and the august shrine for Osiris upon the Great Throne,
 (made) from silver and covered with gold,
 so I donated the same to Anubis within Cynopolis,
 in order to protect [. . .]

a. The phrase r-ġs nṯr ʿȝ.t appears with an identical orthography on a Memphite relief from the reign of Nectanebo I (Brooklyn 56.152).135
b. Although the term ḫḏ šps, “august shrine,” often refers to the sanctuary or a free-standing naos, the presence of silver and gold suggests this object was a small portable naos intended to hold a statuette of Osiris.136
c. The present “house of Anubis (Ḥw.t-Ỉnpw)” is most likely Cynopolis of the Busirite nome (modern Abusir Bana) well known in Greco-Roman sources, but heretofore never attested in hieroglyphic or demotic texts.137

Building inscriptions frequently state that temple renovations are intended to protect or hide the divine statues from harm.138


136 See already Wb. III, 209, 2; Wilson, A Ptolemaic Lexikon, 1997, p. 692; S. Cauville renders all examples of this word as “reliquaire” (Dendara I, p. 394; Dendara III, p. 536; Dendara IV, p. 761; Dendara V-VI, 2, pp. 354-5). Note that Pfeuaneith also dedicated “one august shrine of electrum (ʿw ḫḏ šps m ḥḏ)” for the Osiris temple at Abydos, and that it also contained “divine amulets, all ritual requirements made from gold, silver, and all types of precious stones (.bb ḫw.t-Ỉnpw, ḫḏ-ỉ nb)” (Louvre A 93, cols. 3-4 = Jelínková-Reymond, ASAE 54, 1956-57, p. 276); for a similar shrine built for Osiris in Libya, see A. Rowe, A History of Ancient Egypt, 1948, p. 74, col. 3. Cf. also JE 67093 (Che. Zivie-Coche, Tanis: travaux récents sur le Tell Sân El-Hagar, 3, Statues et autobiographies de dignitaires: Tanis à l’époque ptolémaïque, 2004, p. 271, col. 8): “I renewed the august shrine in electrum, filled with all precious stones, so that the statue of the Lord of Mesen (Horus) might appear in procession within it (srnp=ỉ ḫḏ šps m ḥḏ, nb(.w) m “. . . nb, ḫḏ ōt nb-Msn m ḫḏ-ỉ nb=”).”


C. Restorations in Abydos (col. 4)

''...[4] mitt m Nïw.t-hprr\textsuperscript{a}
m $\dddot{\text{h}}$ rt.n $\text{h}$$\text{st}$$\text{yn}$.$w^b$
d$\dddot{\text{r}}$=i $\dddot{\text{h}}$.w n rm$t$.w=s\textsuperscript{c}

sh$^f$=i Wsir hnty-$\text{I}$$\text{m}$$\text{nt}$$y$.w...j\textsuperscript{d} [nb? $\dddot{\text{b}}$]$\text{dw}$ m $\text{bdw}.t=f$$\text{wr}$.t\textsuperscript{e}
r shr $\text{sm}$$\text{y}$.w$^f$ r p(c) tp $\text{sp}$\textsuperscript{8}

rdi.n(=i) bd n Skr m $\text{bdw}$.h
r di.(t) rnp ntr 'r r tr=f\textsuperscript{1}
'pr=i pr=k m $\text{dbh}$.w
shpr.n(=i) w$\text{hy}$.t(=i) m [...]

[...] [4] the like in Nïw.t-hprr (Abydos),
from the anguish which the foreigners had caused,
skilling out benefactions for its people.

within his great Abydene standard,
was in order to drive away wandering spirits from the august head (of Osiris).

That I donated a mummy-shaped mold for Sokar in Abydos,
was in order to allow the Great God to rejuvenate at his time;
I equipped your temple with necessary implements,
having created abundance/grain in [...]

a. Nïw.t-hprr (lit. “City of the Scarab”) is a surprisingly well-attested designation of Abydos
in the Late Period,\textsuperscript{139} and an identical orthography occurs in Philî I, 49, 18. The present
example complements the use of Nïw.t-rn=s for Mostai in column 1 (supra, n. b).

\textsuperscript{139} H. GAUTHIER, DG III, 1926, p. 80; P. MONTEY, Géographie II, 1961, p. 101
(arguing it was actually Thinis); LGIII, 522-3; H. BEINLICH, Die „Osisreligioen“
Zum Motiv der Körpergliederung in der alägptischen Religion, ÄgAb 42, 1984,
p. 113, n. 5, 223-224, 279, n. 59; and recently M. STADLER, „Der Skarabäus
als osirianisches Symbol vornehmlich nach späterezeitlichen Quellen,“ ZAS 128,
2001, p. 75, 77-78. Examples include: Bénédicte, Philae, 90, 15; Philî I, 49, 18;
Dendara I, 95, 7; Dendara II, 133, 4; 142, 4; Dendara V, 73, 8; Dendara X, 52, 4; 76, 1; 116, 3; 200, 3; 232, 3;
325, 7; Dendara XI, 60, 8; Dendara XII, 66, 11-12; Dendara XIII, 27, 14; Opêt I,
213, n. 8; Tod I, 89, 4; Edfou I, 108, 2; Edfou III, 247, 14-15; Edfou V, 97, 4;
293, 14-15; Edfou VI, 229, 14; LD IV, 62d (Armant). For another occurrence
in a private inscription, see H. DE MEULENAERE, “Un prêtre d’Akhmim
b. Reading $\frac{\text{ḥḥỉ-ȝḥ.w}}{\text{ḥḥỉ-ȝḥ.w}}$, “foreigners,” which in the present context should refer to the Persians (cf. infra). The same expression occurs in the Mendes Stela, line 9 (Urk. II, 38, 7-8), in which Ptolemy II visits the local temple and oversees restoration work in order to “remove the damage which the evil foreigners had inflicted against it ($\text{ruw ȝḥ hr ḥḥỉ-ȝḥ.w bdš.w r=f}$”).

c. The phrase $\frac{\text{ḥḥỉ-ȝḥ.w}}{\text{ḥḥỉ-ȝḥ.w}}$, “to seek benefactions,” is common in other auto-biographies. The orthography $\frac{\text{ḥḥỉ-ȝḥ.w}}{\text{ḥḥỉ-ȝḥ.w}}$ appears to be unique, although the sportive value of the second animal for ‘$\text{ḥḥỉ}$ (< “goat,” “horned animal”)’ is attested already in a private inscription of the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty. A similar example might occur in the biography of the General Hor, who claimed to be “one who restores what is missing in the temples, who elevates (sʿr = $\frac{\text{ḥḥỉ-ȝḥ.w}}{\text{ḥḥỉ-ȝḥ.w}}$) their magnificence to the god upon the throne (viz. the King) (mḥ gm-wš m gs.w-pr.w, sʿr bs.w=sn n nṯr ḥr ns.t).” As in other inscriptions, this official seeks benefactions ($\frac{\text{ḥḥỉ-ȝḥ.w}}{\text{ḥḥỉ-ȝḥ.w}}$) for the population of Busiris (col. 3) and Abydos, not just for the gods.

d. The lacuna is definitely large enough to restore Khenty[imentiu], and this would fit the general Abydene context.

e. The Abydene standard ($\frac{\text{ḥḥỉ-ȝḥ.w}}{\text{ḥḥỉ-ȝḥ.w}}$) was the most sacred object of Abydos, since it was supposed to contain and protect the head of Osiris (cf. infra).
f. Protective deities are usually the ones who “drive away errant spirits (šḥr šmȝy.w).” In a geographically-structured hymn from Edfu, Horus in Abydos is specifically “he who drives away wandering spirits (šhr šmȝy.w)” from the tomb of his father, Osiris (Edfu VIII, 6, 12). This term might be another reference to the Persians (cf. supra, b.), and this text recalls the Speos Artemidos inscription of Hatshepsut in which she blames wandering nomad elements (also šmȝy.w) among the foreign Hyksos for destruction to Egyptian temples during the Second Intermediate Period.148

g. The “august head” belongs to Osiris,149 and was traditionally preserved within the Abydene standard. The ability of this relic to ward off enemies from Osiris’s head is further described in a caption from Dendera (Dendara X, 229, 9-10):

\[ \text{ḥbdw ṣḥy wḥḥ.t m ḥbdw ph.n=ḥḥ.t sḥr sbḥ.w r=f} \]

The august Abydos-standard which protects the “divine head” in Abydos, it is in order to repel enemies from it (viz. the head) that it reached the sky.

h. According to a famous inscription from Dendera, two bd-molds were used to fashion mummy-shaped effigies of Osiris-Khentyamenty and Sokar from grain, sand, aromatics and water during the Khoiak festival.150

i. This phrase finds a direct parallel in CG 297, col. 3, where the priest Hor claims to have renovated the temple of Osiris “in order to rejuvenate the Great God at his time (r sṛnp ntr ḱ ṭ r tr=f).” 151

j. These actions echo a passage in the Naucratis Stela, column 6, where Nectanebo I is said to be “one who increases necessary objects (šʾw ḥbd.w), and creates abundance in everything (šḥpr ṭḥyḥt mḥt nb).” 152 The ḥbd.w could refer to generic ritual implements for the temple.153

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149 For the specific term “august head (tp ḥḥḥ.t)” in similar contexts, see Herrbin, Le Livre de parcourir l’éternité, 1994, p. 110; Meeks, Mythes et légendes du Delta, p. 44, n. 15; Chr. Leitz, “Les trois premiers versets de la litanie d’Osiris à Esna (Esna 217) » RdE 59, 2008, p. 261; cf. also Dendara X, 36, 14, and compare the similar “divine head (tp nṯ ḥḥḥ.t)” of Osiris mentioned in Dendara X, 229, 9 and 401, 14.


152 For the term ṭḥyḥt, “grain; harvest; abundance,” in similar inscriptions, see Vercoutter, BIFAO 49, 1950, p. 106, n. (i); cf. also Wilson, A Ptolemaic Lexikon, 1997, p. 197; Egberts, In Quest of Meaning, 1995, p. 290, n. 15.

Alternatively, if the author is still speaking about the mold of Sokar, the *dbḥ.w* and *wȝḥy.t*, “grain,” may refer specifically to the special objects necessary for creating the grain mummy. Note that one section of the Khoiak inscription from Dendera lists “the objects necessary for the mold of Sokar (*nȝ dbḥ.w n pȝ bd n Skr*).”

**Summary**

The owner of the statue held the important military position of chief Generalissimo (*ỉmy-rȝ mšʿ wr*), and his administrative and sacerdotal titles connect him to Busiris and Mostai in the Delta. He presents himself using a series of traditional idealizing epithets, with a particular focus on his education, eloquence, and his efforts in defending Egypt from its enemies (viz. the Persians).

Art historical and epigraphic considerations support dating the statue to the fourth century BCE, perhaps more precisely to the reign of Nectanebo I (cf. *supra*). The fact that Nectanebo I and II also funded building projects at Abydos further argues in favor of this conclusion. As Neal Spencer has noted, high-ranking officials were responsible for much of the temple reconstruction in the Thirtieth Dynasty, and private restoration texts often accompany royal inscriptions, as with Peftuaneith and Amasis (cf. *supra*, Section 1).

As noted above (section A, text note q), the sole title of Generalissimo is not sufficient to identify the statue’s owner. Nonetheless, the object bears a number of artistic and textual similarities to the monuments of another Generalissimo, Hor (Louvre A. 88 = A, and Alexandria, w/o # = B). Textually, these include the mention of expelling “opponents (*šnʿ.w*)” (A, col. 1), the gazelle to write ʿr (B, col. 2), and the epithets involving *ḥm* and *fqȝ* (B, col. 2). Like the owner of the MMA 1996.91, Hor was also in charge of Mostai (*Nỉw.t-rn=r*), (A, col. 2), defended Egypt against foreigners (A, col. 1), and financed temple renovations and administrative changes (A, cols. 2-4, B, cols. 3-4). Artistically, the statues are all similar sizes and modeled in the same striding pose, although the kilts are quite different. In addition, the inscriptions are strikingly similar in layout as all three statues have four columns, the signs are carved in the same style, and the spacing is almost identical. It is tempting to suggest that MMA 1996.91 represents another statue of the general Hor, erected in Busiris or Abydos to commemorate his local euergetism, while the other statues celebrating benefactions to Harsaphes, Heneb, and other deities would come from Herakleopolis; at the very least, it is not unimaginable...
that all three statues are products of the same Lower Egyptian atelier. Nonetheless, this statue could have easily belonged to another member of the burgeoning military elite of the Thirtieth Dynasty with ties to Nectanebo, an indistinct social class responsible for a renascence of archaizing inscriptions, temple reconstruction, and religious scholarship.160

The General first mentions benefactions he performed for the temples in his hometown of Busiris. He renovated the sanctuary (s.t wrt) of the local Osiris temple, and donated a new processional bark (wzt-nfrw) and portable shrine (ḥḏ šps) to carry the divine statue. He performed similar works for the god Anubis in the nearby town of Cynopolis. In the final column, the General speaks of similar temple benefactions he performed in Abydos, here called Scarab City (Nỉw.t-hpr). Abydos had traditionally been a popular pilgrimage destination, as followers wished to erect their own stelae and private shrines as close as possible to the tomb of Osiris.161 Since this official was also a priest of Osiris in Lower Egypt (Busiris), his munificence towards Abydos reflects particularly pious devotion to his local god by restoring his ancient temple in Upper Egypt. The same type of euergetism was performed by the high-ranking official Nestaisous (most likely from the Thirtieth Dynasty), a priest of Amun in Xois (Lower Egypt) who commissioned an impressive group statue for the temple of Amun at Karnak and noted that he “placed his arms around the priests of Thebes, after the City had fallen into <dis>order (rdỉ ʿ.wy=f hoghỉa wṯw ṯ ʿ.wy=f ḥȝ ḥm.w-nṯr.w Wȝỉ N(ỉw).t m <ẖ> nnw).”162

The anonymous General’s gifts at Abydos are relatively modest compared to his contributions in the Busirite nome, consisting primarily of cult objects: a silver mold to fashion grain-mummies of Sokar during the annual Khoiak festival, restoration of the Abydene standard, and additional small objects used for temple services (dbh.w). The most interesting detail is that these donations were necessary to undo “the damage inflicted by the foreigners (ȝhỉr.n hȝsty.w).” Because of the statue’s Thirtieth Dynasty date, this phrase can only refer to the Persians,163 implying they had confiscated these valuable ritual objects or even damaged the temples. The fact that the General does not mention similar damage at Busiris or Cynopolis supports the veracity of these claims, suggesting that like in the Ptolemaic Period, Abydos or even Upper Egypt as a whole may have suffered from Persian attacks again anti-Persian rebels.164

160 See in general N. Spencer, op. cit., p. 47-52; Manassa, The Late Egyptian Underworld, 2007.
161 Cf. the Saite statues of Petuaaneth and Neshor from Abydos (supra), just two of the many private monuments these prominent officials dedicated throughout Egypt.
162 Guermeur, BIFAO 104, 2004, p. 271, 278-279, n. v; Guermeur noted additional examples of priests of Amun in Balamun (Lower Egypt) who also donated statues at Karnak (ibid, p. 246, n. 4).
The Sebennytic Renaissance and the Persians

This brief phrase about the “foreigners” adds a compelling new perspective on the transitional fourth century BCE, the religious policies of the Persian Empire, and the responses of the indigenous elite. A group of autobiographies from the late Thirtieth Dynasty, Second Persian Domination, and reign of Alexander (primarily Petosiris, Djedhor the Savior, the general Hor, Onnephris, Somtoutefnakht), have long served as the primary sources for this turbulent period of Egyptian history. The inscription on MMA 1996.91 differs from these well-known texts in two critical regards.

The anonymous general specifies that the damage was caused by “foreigners.” Restoration inscriptions traditionally explain previous temple destruction as the result of human negligence or natural disasters such as floods. Contemporaneous autobiographies generally evoke the former topos, making oblique references to a period of chaos, ignorance, or neglect, particularly in reference to temples and religious activities. According to Petosiris, all of Egypt was in turmoil and “the priests had gone away, ignorant of what was happening therein (w b w ḫr.(w) m nn ṛh ḫpr tm).” Wennefer, another official from Hermopolis, built a new sacred lake at the Thoth temple in order to carry out purification rituals, decrying that the temple had “been damaged for ages (wn(.w) wȝsy ḏr ḥn.ty)” and that “there were no longer any priests inside (nī wn wʾb nb m-ḥnt=s),” so that he was moved to perform a thorough purification of fourteen days before resuming temple services. Somtoutefnakht commented that his local god, Harsaphes, had “turned his back on Egypt.”

Unlike his peers, the anonymous General names the agent of destruction, namely the “foreigners.” If the statue truly dates to the reign of Nectanebo I, or even to the reigns of Teos or Nectanebo II (cf. supra), this passage is one of the earliest allegations of Persians molesting Egyptian temples. Most sacerdotal decrees of the Ptolemaic Period celebrate the Lagide reclamation of Egyptian statues purportedly carried away by the Persians. Skeptical historians

167 Lefebvre, Le tombeau de Pétosiris II, 1923 (2nd ed. 2007), p. 54, n° 81, 32-33.
169 Urk. II, 3, 15; Perdi, RdE 36, 1985, p. 105, n. g.
170 When Cambyses arrived in Egypt, the Saite official Udjahorresne complained of “foreigners” (probably from the Persian military) who had taken up residence within the temple of Neith, but he made no allegations of destruction or stolen property; Posener, La première domination perse en Égypte, p. 14-17; Chr. Thiers, “Civils et militaires dans les temples. Occupation illicite et expulsion,” BIFAO 95, 1995, p. 498-499.
171 See most recently Thiers, Ptolémée Philadelphie et les prêtres d’Atoum de Tjéhous, p. 100-106. Some historians have suggested that it was actually the Assyrians (also designated as “the foreigners”) who deported the statues during their Egyptian invasion in the seventh century BCE, and traces of this action might be found in the Demotic story “The Quest for the Divine Limbs,” where Imhotep and Djoser travel to Assyria to recover the sacred relics of Osiris (cf. K. Ryholt, “The Life of Imhotep (P. Carlsberg 8)”, in G. Widmer, D. Devauchelle (eds.), Actes du IXe congrès international des études
have tried to dismiss these episodes as fictitious propaganda, a literary *topos* devised to legitimize Ptolemaic rule in Egypt as guardians of Pharaonic religion and culture.\(^{172}\) However, the Thirtieth Dynasty testimony of our anonymous General demonstrates that Egyptians were accusing the Persians of raiding temple treasuries before Ptolemy I and even before the second Persian invasion of Artaxerxes III Ochus.

Additional early references to such deportations may occur on the naos of Nectanebo I from Saft el-Henna (CG 70021).\(^{173}\) The dedicatory inscriptions celebrate how Nectanebo discovered the divine statues depicted on the naos and allude several times that these objects had been missing for a period of time. One passage mentions that these gods had been "hidden since the time of the ancestors, when turmoil had come to pass in Egypt (\(\text{imn}(.)\text{w} d\text{r} rk \text{drt}y\text{w}, m w\text{t} h\text{rw} r bpr b\text{r} B\text{q}q\text{t})),"\(^{174}\) while another excerpt notes that Nectanebo restored the statues to their proper place "after an extended period of time (in which) they had wandered off to foreign lands (\(m-ht\ \text{phry}t\ z\text{w}(.)\text{t}\ s(n)\ \text{hr\ phbr}\ r\ \text{hgb}w\))."\(^{175}\) According to the most detailed portion, the chief local god Sopdu chose to reveal himself to Nectanebo I "after a great many years (\(m-s\text{t} n\text{np}w\text{t} qn\text{w}\))."\(^{176}\)

\[
\begin{align*}
sk\ s w\ \text{hr\ nb}t\ \text{zh}w=f \\
tw\ ntr\ pn\ m s t\ s\text{t}c\ t \\
nn\ rh\ s\text{t}n\ h\text{r}w-s\text{tjt}w\ w \\
ps\text{t}c\ t\ nb\ nw\ sp\text{t} c\ t\ tn\ m\ \text{imn}\ d\text{t}=\text{sn}
\end{align*}
\]
\[
\begin{align*}
r\text{di}n\ s\text{t}\ ntr\ m\ \text{tb}\ n\ nb-t\text{c}w\ wy \\
(r)\ \text{ir}t\ c\ n\ m\text{z}z\ \text{nfrw}\ \text{bm}=f[\ldots] \\
[\ldots]\ \text{mp}w\text{t}\ \text{qw}\text{w}\ \text{nn}\ \text{rth}\ \text{bpfr}\ \text{im}
\end{align*}
\]
\[
\begin{align*}
\text{fw}t\text{w}\ \text{hr}\ \text{m}\text{z}z\ \text{s(w)}\ \text{m}\ \text{ggb}2 \\
\text{hr}\ \text{sr}=s\ m\ \text{mr}\text{t}\ \text{m}\ \text{h}c\ c\ m\ \text{dd} \\
\text{hq}2\ \text{pr}\text{n}=f\ \text{hr}\ \text{iz}t\text{c}\ t \\
\text{sbn}\text{n}=f\ \text{t}\ \text{zh}\ \text{w}=f
\end{align*}
\]

\(\text{démotiques, BdE} \ 147, 2009, \ p. \ 308-310\). While this is possible, one should note that there are few if any references to stolen statues in royal and private inscriptions of the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty, after the expulsion of the Assyrians, compared with the multiple allusions to this *topos* in the Thirtieth Dynasty and early Ptolemaic Period.


\(^{174}\) ROEDER, *CGC Naos*, 1914, p. 94, § 144.


\(^{176}\) ROEDER, *CGC Naos*, 1914, p. 63, §295c-e; SCHUMACHER, *op. cit.*, p. 164. The personal connection between Sopdu and Nektanebo I is emphasized throughout the inscription, especially in the following excerpt: "(Sopdu) desired (to return) to his proper throne (specifically) during the reign of Kheperkare (Nectanebo I), his beloved son (\(\text{ȝb}=\text{f}\ \text{st}=\text{mr}\ \text{khr}\ \text{hbr} \text{r} \text{bq}t\))." (ROEDER, *CGC Naos*, 1914, p. 79, § 321c).
He (Nectanebo I) was requesting (to see) his radiance, while this god was in a remote location, which was unknown even by those charged with secrets, as the entire Ennead of this district were hiding their bodies.

The god put it in the mind of the Lord of the Two Lands, to make an effort to see the perfection of his majesty [...]

[...after] many years when nobody knew what was happening.

One (Nectanebo I) suddenly saw him in astonishment, jubilantly proclaiming it in the streets, saying:

“The Ruler has returned from the East!
He has illumined the earth with his radiance.”

In this official account, the gods went into hiding during the Persian Period, and Sopdu only returned once Nectanebo took control of Egypt. While it is possible that priests had carefully concealed the statues for safekeeping, the narrative might simply justify how the divine objects left the country, much like the pseudo-historic Bentresh Stela.

Returning to MMA 1996.91, the main crime against Abydos was apparently related to the valuable ritual equipment. Unfortunately, our anonymous General does not specify which Persian ruler was responsible, although one thinks first of Cambyses or Xerxes I, the Great Kings with the worst reputations with regards to Egyptian temples and cults. One might even postulate that there was one memorable disaster in Abydos, when the cartouches of Amasis were erased (cf. supra, Section 1) and the temple stripped of its precious relics. Only new evidence from Abydos, Sohag, or some unexpected source can clarify this matter.

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177 In another text, Nectanebo I brings Sopdu back to his throne “after many years during which they had been requesting to see him” (Roeder, CGC Naos, 1914, p. 79, § 321c).

178 Elsewhere the gods are said to have been “found in another remote location” (Roeder, CGC Naos, 1914, p. 69 and 71, § 305 and 308).


FIG. 1 a-b.
a. Partially mutilated cartouche of Amasis (Sohag, White Monastery Church, west staircase).
b. Hapi figures, with mutilated cartouches of Amasis (Sohag, White Monastery Church, northeast staircase).
FIG. 2 a-b. Two blocks with various divinities (Sohag, White Monastery Church, west staircase).
FIG. 3 a-c.

a. Archaizing offering list (Sohag, White Monastery Church, south portal of west exterior wall).
b. Sed-Festival Scene (Sohag, White Monastery Church, loose block along north wall of Nave).
c. Sed-Festival Scene (Sohag, White Monastery Church, east portal of Long Hall).
FIG. 4 a-b.

a. Sed-Festival scene (*Ruderlauf*)
(Sohag, White Monastery Church, west staircase, upper gallery).

b. Amasis in Sed-Festival robe (Sohag, White Monastery Church, north portal, interior).
FIG. 5 a-c.
a. Relief of Osiris “[Lord of Aby]dos” (Sohag, White Monastery Church, window between Nave and Long Hall).
b. Relief of enthroned Osiris (Sohag, White Monastery Church, west staircase).
c. Relief with mumiform figures (Sohag, White Monastery Church, window in north exterior wall).
Fig. 6 a-b.
a. Cartouche of Amasis “son of Osiris” (White Monastery Church, north portal, east interior jamb).
b. Relief with King and Iunmuef priest before a divinity (Sohag, White Monastery Church, east portal of south wall).
FIG. 7. Statue MMA 1996.91, front and back.
Fig. 8 a-b.

a. Statue MMA 1996.91, detail of kilt.
b. Statue MMA 1996.91, left profile.
Two Studies on the Late Period Temples at Abydos
