

The Acephalous Stela JdE28569¹

(Cairo Museum of Antiquities)

The owner of this stela is an unnamed official. The language, context and orthography points to the 18th Dynasty.



ms.w(i)^a m sšmw sip.n z3... nb t3wi h^c^b hr nst.f

... they were fashioned as statues (lit. divine shapes) (that) ...son inspected, the lord of the Two Lands who appears on his throne.

- a. Although the stela starts in mid-sentence it is clear that the verb form of *msi* is either passive with omitted subject or (with the transitive use of *msi*) the stative *ms.wi* with passive meaning. The translation does not bring out the difference. One may lean towards the second alternative since it is probable that the missing part of the stela specifies the subject.
- b. The verb form of the 3ae-inf. verb *h^ci* is MS active participle (since the infinitive would be *h^ct*).



di.f iwt^c n.f h^cpiw wrw r^d s^cš3 w3h(y)t m t3 pn

He makes great inundations come to him to propagate grain in this land,



r sdf3(y) htpw.sn r smnh^c wt

to endow their offerings, to swell the flock.



km3.n.f^e rhwt prt^f m irt.f

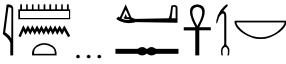
He created the people who came out of his eye.


¹ The principal reference to these notes is G. A. Gaballa's article JEA, 63 (1977), pp. 122-126.

² The upper part of the stela is lost. We start the numbering beginning from the extant part.

c. This and the next passage below are introduced by the phrase *di.f iwt...* Among the six *s_{dm}.f* forms only two uses the base stem *di* of the verb *rdi*: the circumstantial /imperfective *s_{dm}.f*³ and the prospective/subjunctive *s_{dm}.f*. As it is clear from the end of this passage, the 3MS suffixed pronoun refers to the sun-god Re. The context then clearly indicates the sense of imperfect (e.g. the yearly inundation of the Nile) so that *di.f* is circumstantial/imperfective. A further obvious example to this construction is the

recurring phrase  *di.i* “I let...” in the Poetical Stela of Thutmose III⁴ and the lesser

known caption:  *imnt ...di.s ʕnh w3s nb*⁵ (with Nanuet instead of

Re). Note, however, that in case of prophecy such as  *di.i n.k t3 m zni-mn(t)* “I show you the land in turmoil...”⁶ [Neferti 38] *di.i* is prospective

/subjunctive *s_{dm}.f*. The whole phrase *di.f iwt* is a well-known *rdi* + prospective/subjunctive construction⁷ showing also that the prospective/subjunctive of the anom. verb *iw* receives a *t* ending.

d. Three identical *r* + infinitive (of a causative verb) constructions describe the purpose of the inundations.

e. The verb form suddenly changes to circumstantial *s_{dm}.n.f* /perfect. This verb form is usually tenseless, and here it is used to emphasize completed action. The suffix pronoun *.f* refers to the sun-god Re who, according to Egyptian mythology, created mankind through tears.

f. *p_{rt}* is the feminine perfective active participle of the 3ae-inf. verb *p_{ri}*. For further justification that this passage points to Re, see the references in Gaballa’s article.⁸



di.f iwt n.f iwntiw inw.sn m nbw hr d't.f

He makes the desert Nubians come to him. Their tribute is gold (in its vein of) ore,



hbni 3bw snmt nšmt inmw 3byw

ebony, ivory, red jasper, green feldspar, panther skins

³ We use the terminology of Standard Theory as well as Allen’s.

⁴ Amun-Re speaks to the pharaoh; for details, see this web site.

⁵ Lacau and Chevrier, Une chapelle d’Hatshepsout, 291 and pl. 14 (55).

⁶ Lichtheim’s translation.

⁷ See Allen (19.10).

⁸ Op. cit.



r sš3 mnw^g m r-prw^h n ntrw nbw

(in order) to increase the objects in the temples of all the gods.

g. It is clear from the context that *mnw* does not mean “monuments” but “portable objects.”

h. *r-pr* is the Egyptian expression for “temple, chapel, shrine.”



iwⁱ n.f sttiw m hnt(y)t inw.sn mh.n.f t3 pn hd hr^j h3swt.f hsbdt m3^c

As the Beduins in going south (upstream) have come to him, their tribute has filled the land, silver from its foreign lands, true lapis-lazuli,



mfh(3)t^k 3w(t) nbt špst hmt dht(y)¹ mi cš3.sn

turquoise, all (kinds of) precious stones, copper and lead in (lit. according to) their abundance,



ssmwt.sn wrrywt.sn hmw hmwt m msw wrw

their horses, their chariots, male and female servants (along) with the children of foreign rulers,



irp sntr b3k^m w3d cš mrhw(t)ⁿ n tpw htiw... ssndm⁹

wine, incense, fresh moringa-oil, cedar, the best of unguents of the hillsides...*ssndm* (precious) wood⁹



h3w nb ndm sti ibr^p n psdt⁹

all (kinds of) plants of pleasant fragrance, (and) ladanum for the Ennead.




h3s(w)t nbt hr inw.sn r štp m kmt n nb.s

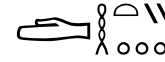
All foreign countries having (lit. under) their tribute to pacify Egypt for its lord.


- i. *iw n.f sttiw m hnt* is an initial subordinate clause with *iw* a nonattributive imperfective relative form expressing initial condition.¹⁰
- j. The preposition *hr* indicates here physical origin.

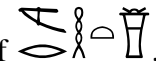
⁹ Also mentioned in [Kamose Stela 2, 14].


¹⁰ See Allen (25.11.1).

k. Variant writing of 



l. Variant writing of  “copper, bronze.” Note that in ancient Egypt lead was added to copper to form a copper-lead alloy. Many so-called bronze weapons (axes) were actually made of an alloy of this type (and not copper and tin).¹¹

m. Variant writing of  ¹² moringa-oil (made from seeds of the moringa-tree).

n. Variant spelling of 

o. Variant spelling of 

p. Cistus ladanum, a shrub yielding fragrant oleoresin used to make perfumes.¹³

q. Gaballa¹⁴ states ‘The identity of the circular sign and the reading and interpretation of this group alike remain an enigma.’ The group of signs  (which differs from the one in the text only by honorific transposition and the missing plural strokes) is however attested¹⁵ as a variant writing of  *psdt* “Ennead.” The association of ladanum with Osiris (a member of the Ennead) is well-known,¹⁶ and in the Story of the Shipwrecked Sailor the protagonist promises the snake-god that he will bring ‘la(u)danum...which pleases all the gods.’¹⁷ The phrase “ladanum for the Ennead” remains somewhat conjectural.



ntk ntr ir tm(w) nh.sn m rwd wi.ki ...

You are the god who made all (men), it is by the strength of your arms that they live...



h3t.i b.s m t3 izi.i(s)mn hr rn.i tp-t3

My corpse united with the ground, my tomb enduring with my name surviving.



¹¹ A. Lucas, Ancient Egyptian materials and Industries, Courier Dover (1999), p. 223.

¹² See [Kamose Stela 2, 14].

¹³ For more details on ladanum, its variants and harvest, see the P. E. Newberry’s article JEA 15 (1929), p. 94, and Lucas, op. cit. pp. 94-95.

¹⁴ Op. cit.

¹⁵ See [Urk. IV, 146, 6].



¹⁶ Newberry, op. cit.

¹⁷ Lichtheim’s translation.

ḥm-k3 ḥr drp n.i mi irrwt^t (n) ḥzy iwti wn.f

The *k3*-priest has been making offerings for me as it has been done (for) the favored and the blameless (lit. who his blame is not).

- r. Emphatic construction using the nonattributive relative form *ḥnḥ.sn*. The adverbial adjunct *m rwd ḥwi.ki* is the rheme of the sentence.
- s. *3b.s* is a relative form modifying *ḥ3ti.i*. (The lacuna prevents establishing the likely emphatic construction.) The phrase *ḥbt ḥ3ti.i m t3* occurs in the Story of Sinuhe.¹⁸ For the

meaning of the whole sentence, a good comparison is: 
¹⁹

- t. Feminine imperfective passive participle.

¹⁸ See Gardiner, Notes on the Story of Sinuhe (1916), p. 59.

¹⁹ [Urk. IV, 64, 16].