#### The Stela of Khu-Sobek<sup>1</sup> (Manchester Museum)

This limestone stela of the Manchester Museum (measured 16.5 cm wide and 28 cm high) was found in Abydos in 1901 by J. Garstang.<sup>2</sup> It is of poor quality but important since it records an early of war of Egypt with its northern enemies.

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htp-di-(n)swt wsir nb 3bdw (di.f) prt-hrw t hnkt hpš 3pdw šsr<sup>3</sup> mnht sntr mrht ht nb(t) nfr(t) w<sup>c</sup>b(t)
A royal offering of Osiris, lord of Abydos, (giving) an invocation offering of bread and beer,

foreleg (of an ox) and fowl, linen and clothing, incense and oil, every good and pure thing

 $n k_3 n (i)r(i)-p^{\circ}(t) h_3t(i)-{}^{\circ} dd nfrt, whm mrrt^4 m hr(t)-hrw^5 nt r^{\circ} nb, w^{\circ}rtw^6 {}^{\circ}3 n nwt, hw-(wi)-sbkw^7 rn.f nfr d33^8$ 

for the ka of the member of the elite, high official, who has said good things, repeated /proclaimed<sup>9</sup> what was desired during the course of every day, great district official of the town, Khu-Sobek whose good name is Djaa,

Orientalische Litteraturzeitung, VI, 1903, 448-449, K. Sethe, Lesestücke, pp. 82-3 no. 22; ID., Erläuterungen zu den ägyptischen Lesestücken, Leipzig, 1927, pp. 133-6; J. A. Wilson, ANET 230; J. H. Breasted, Ancient Records of Egypt, Vol. I, pp. 302-306, and Baines, loc. cit., with further references therein.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The principal references for these notes are T. Eric Peet, The Stela of Sebek-khu, Manchester Museum Handbooks 75 (1914), and J. Baines, The Stela of Khusobek: Private and Royal Military Narrative and Values, in Form und Mass, Beiträge zur Literartur, Sprache und Kunst des alten Ägypten, Otto Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden, pp. 43-61.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> See J. Garstang, El Arábah, Quaritch, London, 1901, Pls. IV, V; P. Newberry, ibid, 32-33, W. H. Müller,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Alternatively, *šs* "alabaster, calcite."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> nfrt is an adjective used as a noun and mrrt is imperfective passive participle; see Allen (23.12)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Lit. "what belongs to the day."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Baines reads this as  $\exists tw$ ; for the justification se his article, loc. cit.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Lit. "Sobek protects me," <u>h</u>wi "protect" is circumstantial/imperfective <u>sdm.f.</u> The god's name <u>sbkw</u> is in honorific transposition and the pronominal subject wi is suppressed because of the multiple w's; see Ranke, Personennamen, I, p. 266, and footnote 1) therein. Compare also this with the 4<sup>th</sup> Dynasty pharaoh Khufu's full name <u>hnmw hw.f wi</u> "Khnum protects me," a subject + circumstantial/imperfective <u>sdm.f</u> construction. Alternative, but less likely, Sobek-khu may be a subject + stative construction <u>sbk hw(.w)</u> "Sobek is protected."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> See Wörterbuch V, 520. As noted by Peet this name also appears in the Cairo Stela 20586, and in British Museum, Hieroglyphic texts from Stelae, II, 6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> See Baines, loc. cit.

begotten of Ita (mother) of the district of Tefnut, possessor of honor.

<sup>52.e</sup> <sup>52.e</sup>

His daughter, his beloved, Gebu, begotten of ... His 'brother,' Dedu, begotten of Meret-iti-es.

Overseer of the chamber, Kheru, begotten of Khaseti. The nurse of his heart, Renef-ankh,

begotten of [Dedi]. Iubu, begotten of Meret-iti-es. Nebet-Iunet, begotten of Iubu.

His majesty proceeded downstream to overthrow the Bedouins of Asia.<sup>21</sup> His majesty arrived at the district named Sekmem.

Here after the name *it3* the feminine m3<sup>ct</sup> hrw "justified" proves that Ita is the name of a woman, therefore she is the mother of Khu-Sobek.

<sup>14</sup> Not Mert-itfes as *mrt-iti.s* means "beloved of her father."

<sup>15</sup> Conjectural.

<sup>16</sup> Typical graphic transposition with the phonetic complement; see also line 6. Baines reads this as *zmit*.

<sup>17</sup> Lit. "his name is life."

<sup>18</sup> Newberry's reading.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> As noted by Peet, a rock inscription at Semna with precise date, the 9<sup>th</sup> regnal year of Ni-Maat-Re (throne name of Amenemhat III), also mentions Khu-Sobek as:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Probably not Meret-iti-es (see next) as the name has been intentionally erased (noted by Peet), and Meter-iti-es was the mother of two children, at least one from Khu-Sobek.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Narrative infinitive, see the Bull Hunt Scarab (line 6): *n<sup>c</sup>t hm.f m hd.* 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Usually identified with the biblical Shechem. In the spelling, the phonetic complement is in graphic transposition, see a variant writing (without transposition) in the next line.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> As noted by Breasted, this campaign belongs to the latter part of Khu-Sobek's career. The anachronism here is due to Khu-Sobek attaching importance to this event. Based on context, grammar, and style, Baines actually places the horizontal lines 6-10 to the very end of the stela.

 $rdit^{22}$  hm.f tp nfr m wd3 n hnw n 'nh(.w) (w)d3(.w) s(nb.w), 'h'.n skmm hr.s^{23} hn' rtnw hzt

(It was just when) his majesty was making a good beginning to return to the royal residence (lit. of lph), the Sekmem and the wretched Retjenu fell (descended?),<sup>24</sup>

iw.i hr  $ir(t)^{25}$  ph mš<sup>c</sup>, <sup>c</sup>h<sup>c</sup>.n 3bh.n<sup>26</sup> <sup>c</sup>nhw nw mš<sup>c</sup> r <sup>c</sup>h3 hn<sup>c</sup> <sup>c</sup>3mw

(while) I was serving (at) the rear of the army. Then the (foot) soldiers of the army engaged to fight with the Asiatics.

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'h'.n sh.n.i '3m, 'h'.n rdi.n.i it.tw h'w.f in 'nh 2 n mš', nn tšt<sup>27</sup> hr 'h'3

Then, I struck the<sup>28</sup> Asiatic, and I had his weapons to be taken by two soldiers of the army<sup>29</sup> without (me) stopping (lit. missing from) fighting,

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hr.i hz(.w), <sup>30</sup>  $n(i) rdi.i s3.i n^{31} \Im m$ 

I was brave, I did not turn my back on (lit. to) the Asiatic.

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As Senwosret lives for me, I spoke in truth!

- <sup>25</sup> Typical unmarked adverb clause with pseudoverbal predicate. Note that *iri* can mean "serve" a god or a superior.
- <sup>26</sup> For similar meaning, see Les. 83, 11.

<sup>27</sup> Negated infinitive. Baines cites a similar line from the biography of Amenemhab:

<sup>28</sup> The definite article is suggested by the context; it most probably refers to the chief, see Sethe, loc. cit., p. 134.

- <sup>29</sup> As Baines notes: "This means that he did not yield the temptation to plunder..."
- <sup>30</sup> Subject + stative construction, lit. "my sight is blessed," an Egyptian idiom for "being brave;" see Wörterbuch, II, 59. Baines translates this as: "my face looked forward," i.e. "confronting."
- <sup>31</sup> See GNS 34-5; negated indicative/perfective *sdm.f*
- <sup>32</sup> The goddess Wosret is in honorific transposition.
- <sup>33</sup> Typical emphatic construction using the nonattributive relative form of dd and with the prepositional phrase m*m*<sup>3</sup><sup>*c*</sup>*t* emphasized; lit. "It is in truth that I spoke! See Allen (25.11.4). Note that the Semna stela has *dd.i* while the nearly identical Uronarti stela has dd.n.i.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Narrative infinitive.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Because of the introductory word  $h^{c}$ . *n* and the long topicalized subject (and the clauses that follow) one would expect here a circumstantial sdm.n.f/perfect instead of the rare indicative/perfective sdm.f (Gardiner (§480)).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> For the possible different interpretations, see the discussion in Baines, loc. cit.

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#### 'h'.n di.n.f n.i 'm'3t/ztz<sup>34</sup> m d'm r drt.i, mtpnt<sup>35</sup> hn' b3ksw b3k(.w) m d'm hn' hf' <sup>36</sup>

Then he gave me a throw-stick/staff of electrum, to my hand, a sheath and a dagger wrought (lit. worked) with electrum together with handle.

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 $(i)r(i)-p^{c}(t)$ ,  $h3t(i)-c^{c}$ , mn tbt, hr nmtt, <sup>37</sup> mdd-w3t nt smnh sw, <sup>38</sup> rdi.n nb t3wi f 3w.f, <sup>39</sup> shnt mrwt.f st.f, w<sup>c</sup>rt <sup>c</sup>3 n nwt, d33

Member of the elite, high official, steadfast (lit. firm of sandal), easy of bearing, loyal (lit. one who adheres to the path) to (lit. of) the one who makes him advance, one to whom the lord of the Two Lands gave his splendor, one whose position his love promoted, the great district official of the town, Djaa.



 $\underline{d}d.f$  ir.n.i n.i mih<sup>c</sup>t tw s3h.ti,<sup>40</sup> smnh<sup>41</sup> st.s r rw $\underline{d}^{42}$  ntr <sup>3</sup>, nb <sup>c</sup>nh, hnt (i) 3bdw hr w<sup>c</sup>rt nb(t) htpt<sup>43</sup> hr nbt <sup>c</sup>nh

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> Peet, following Newberry and Golenischeff, renders this as  $\sum_{sts}$  "staff."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> According to Wörterbuch II, 170, this word is related to the obsolete tp "dagger" using the formative m.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> The18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty pharaohs rewarded bravery by giving the weapons of the vanquished. Based on this Breasted conjectured the word in the lacuna to be h<sup>c</sup>ww.f "his weapons." As noted by Peet this does not fit into the outline and he believed that the missing word stands for a type of material complementing electrum. Baines gives the partial reading hf<sup>e</sup> and conjectures this as "handle," related to the verb and noun hf<sup>e</sup>, "grasp." The two signs at the end are probably birds.  $37 \circ$ 

See H. Polotsky, Zu den Inschriften der II. Dynastie, 3-8, and J. M. A. Janssen, De Traditioneele Egyptische Autobiografie vóór het Nieuwe Rijk, I, Z and I, Ak. <sup>38</sup> Janssen, loc.cit. II, Bc 10-25.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> Compare this with the passage in the stela of Mentuhotep (UC14333) in this web site: *rdi.n nb.f mrwt.f* "one to whom his lord gave his love," where the coreferent *n*.*f* is also suppressed. <sup>40</sup> Stative used as expression of state.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> This passage is an example of an emphatic construction; see H. Polotsky, Egyptian Tenses, The Israeli Academy of Sciences and Humanities, Proceedings, Vol. II, 5 (1965). The theme (the given information) is the first clause "I have made for myself..." and the rheme (the new information) is in the adverbial comment "once its position has been efficiently established..." The verb form of *smnh* is (emphatic) passive *sdmw.f.* A similar passage is in BM 575: ir.n.i grt m<sup>c</sup>h<sup>c</sup>t tn r r(w)d n ntr 3... n mrwt šzp 3bwt... "I have made this tomb at the staircase of the Great God...for the sake of receiving provisions..." Here the adverbial comment is visibly introduced by *n mrwt*; for further details on this and an analogous construction in Louvre C 179, see Polotsky loc. cit. p. 18-19. For a detailed discussion of the present passage, see A. Loprieno, Ancient Egyptian, Cambridge University Press (2000), p. 195.

He says: I have made for myself this tomb, beautified, once its position had been efficiently established at the staircase of the Great God/the tomb of Osiris, Lord of Life, Foremost of Abydos in the district "Mistress of Offerings" and in the district "Mistress of Life,"

 $sn < n > (.i)^{44}$  sntr pr m hnt, h[tm.n.]tw(.i)^{45} idt ntr, w<sup>c</sup>rtw <sup>(3)</sup>, d33

(so that) I may smell the incense that came forth, (and) I may be provided with the divine censing, the great district official, Djaa.

 $dd.fmsv[.i]^{46} rnpt 27 hr hm.f(n)swt-bit(i) NBW-K3W-R^{c}^{47}m3^{c} hrw,$  $h^{c48}$  hm.f (n)swt-bit(i) H<sup>c</sup>-K<sup>c</sup>W-R<sup>c49</sup> m<sup>3</sup><sup>c</sup> hrw m shmti hr st hrw nt <sup>c</sup>nhw,  $rdit^{50}$  hm.f ir.i<sup>51</sup> k3t m <sup>6</sup>h3 m ht r gs hm.f m z(i) 6<sup>52</sup> n hnw

He says: I was born in year 27 during the incarnation of the King of Upper and Lower Egypt. Nebkaura, justified. So, when his majesty of the King of Upper and Lower Egypt Khakaura, justified, wearing (lit. in) the double crown<sup>53</sup> mounted on the Horus throne of the living, his majesty made me adopt the profession as a weapon trainer (lit. fighter of stick) beside his majesty along with six men of the Residence.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> According to Peet's this refers to the terraced hillside surrounding the burial site at Abydos. Gardiner, however, interprets rwd as the staircase leading to the tomb (replacing the earlier shaft construction), and renders the phrase rwd ntr 3 as the "tomb of Osiris."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> Usually written with the plural strokes as  $1^{43}$  South 1

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>44</sup> Sethe, loc. cit. p. 133.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup> Peet restores this as *htm.tw.i.* Incense burning and smelling the incense, however, seem to be connected, and in an circumstantial clause of causality, the circumstantial *sdm.n.f*/perfect verb form is used. Alternatively, the scribe may omit the suffix n as it is present in the main clause.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>46</sup> It is unlikely that the verb *msi* has here transitive meaning "give birth, bear" as it has pronominal subject; see Allen (21.9). As Peet noted (JEA, Vol. 1, No. 3 (Jul., 1914), p. 210), the only other possibility is that msi has intransitive meaning "to be born" and as such it has the peculiar ending y.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> Throne name of Amenemhat II.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup> A perfect relative form as it is the predicate of an emphasized adverb clause; see Allen (25.11.2).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> Throne name of Senwosret III.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup> Narrative infinitive.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup> rdi + prospective/subjunctive *sdm.f* construction.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>52</sup> Not seven as in line 22. One stroke is for the seated man.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>53</sup> We follow here Sethe's rendering. Baines interprets the two crowns as synonym for *nswt-biti*.

#### <sup>c</sup>h<sup>c</sup>.n spd.n.i<sup>54</sup> r gs.f, $rdit^{55}$ hm.f di.t(w)<sup>56</sup> (w)i r šmsw n hk3, $rdi(w)^{57}$ n.i tp 60

I have become effective at his side, and his majesty caused that I be appointed to be a "Follower of the Ruler." Sixty men have been given to me.

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wd3 hm.f m hntyt r shrt iwntiw nw pdt, <sup>c</sup>h<sup>c</sup>.n sh.n.i nhsi  $[m knkf]^{58}$ r gs nwtiw

His majesty proceeded upstream to overthrow the desert Nubians (lit. tribesmen of the bow).

Then I smote a Nubian [at Kenekef] in the presence of the/my townsmen.

 $h^{\circ}.n.i hd.kw^{\circ}$  hr sms m 6 n hnw

<sup>c</sup>h<sup>c</sup>.n rdi.n.f (wi) r shd šmsw, rdi(w) n.i tp 100 m kf3

Then I proceeded downstream in attendance (lit. following) with six men<sup>60</sup> of the Residence.

Then he appointed me to "Inspector of the Followers." One hundred men have been given to me as a reward.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>54</sup> spd is an adjective-verb "sharp, skilful, effective."
<sup>55</sup> Narrative infinitive.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>56</sup> Prospective/subjunctive *sdm.f.* 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>57</sup> Passive.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>58</sup> Peet's conjectural rendering. Baines notes that this geographical name is not attested but it is probably around the Second Cataract region.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>59</sup> Subject-stative construction.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>60</sup> Wilson's rendering. Baines translates this passage as: "And then I went north, performing service, in a 6-ship of the Resudence." His "6-ship" is known from the Old Kingdom title "overseer of F6-ships;" and the so-called analogous "8-ships" are well attested, e. g. [Urk. IV, 1237, 1].