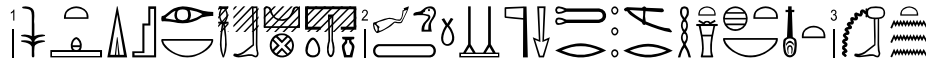


The Stela of Khu-Sobek¹ (Manchester Museum)

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.² It is of poor quality but important since it records an early of war of Egypt with its northern enemies.



ḥtp-di-(n)swt wsir nb 3bdw (di.f) prt-ḥrw t ḥnkt ḥpš 3pdw šsr³ mnḥt sntr mrḥt ḥt nb(t) nfr(t) w^cb(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 k3 n (i)r(i)-p^c(t) ḥ3t(i)-^c dd nfrt, whm mrrt⁴ m ḥr(t)-ḥrw⁵ nt r^c nb, w^crtw⁶ ʕ n nwt, ḥw-(wi)-sbkw⁷ rn.f nfr d33⁸

for the ka of the member of the elite, high official, who has said good things, repeated /proclaimed⁹ what was desired during the course of every day, great district official of the town, Khu-Sobek whose good name is Djaa,



ir.n it3¹⁰ w^crtw tfnwt,¹¹ nbt im3h,

¹ 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 Literatur, Sprache und Kunst des alten Ägypten, Otto Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden, pp. 43-61.

² See J. Garstang, *El Arábah*, Quaritch, London, 1901, Pls. IV, V; P. Newberry, *ibid*, 32-33, W. H. Müller, *Orientalische Literaturzeitung*, 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.

³ Alternatively, *šs* “alabaster, calcite.”

⁴ *nfrt* is an adjective used as a noun and *mrrt* is imperfective passive participle; see Allen (23.12)

⁵ Lit. “what belongs to the day.”

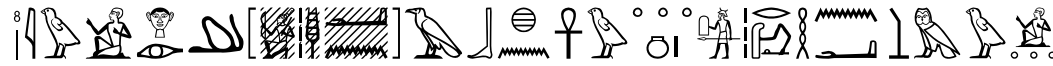
⁶ Baines reads this as *3tw*; for the justification see his article, *loc. cit.*

⁷ Lit. “Sobek protects me,” *ḥwi* “protect” is circumstantial/imperfective *sdm.f*. The god’s name *sbkw* 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 4th Dynasty pharaoh Khufu’s full name *ḥnmw ḥw.f wi* “Khnum protects me,” a subject + circumstantial/imperfective *sdm.f* construction. Alternative, but less likely, Sobek-khu may be a subject + stative construction *sbk ḥw(.w)* “Sobek is protected.”

⁸ 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.

⁹ See Baines, *loc. cit.*

*rdit*²² *hm.f tp nfr m wd3 n hnw n ḥnh(.w) (w)d3(.w) s(nb.w), ḥḥ.n skmm hr.s*²³ *hnḥ rtnw hzt*
 (It was just when) his majesty was making a good beginning to return to the royal residence (lit. of Iph), the Sekmem and the wretched Retjenu fell (descended?),²⁴



*iw.i hr ir(t)*²⁵ *ph mšḥ, ḥḥ.n 3bh.n*²⁶ *ḥnhw nw mšḥ r ḥ3 hnḥ 3mw*

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



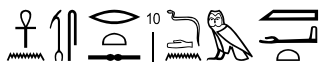
*ḥḥ.n sh.n.i 3m, ḥḥ.n rdi.n.i it.tw ḥḥ.w.f in ḥnh 2 n mšḥ, nn tšt*²⁷ *hr ḥ3*

Then, I struck the²⁸ Asiatic, and I had his weapons to be taken by two soldiers of the army²⁹ without (me) stopping (lit. missing from) fighting,



*hr.i ḥz(.w),*³⁰ *n(i) rdi.i s3.i n*³¹ *3m*

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



*ḥnh n(i) z(i)-(n)-wsrt,*³² *dd.n(i) m m3ḥt*³³

As Senwosret lives for me, I spoke in truth!



²² Narrative infinitive.

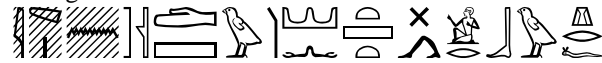
²³ Because of the introductory word *ḥḥ.n* and the long topicalized subject (and the clauses that follow) one would expect here a circumstantial *sdm.n.f*/perfect instead of the rare indicative/perfective *sdm.f* (Gardiner (§480)).

²⁴ For the possible different interpretations, see the discussion in Baines, loc. cit.

²⁵ Typical unmarked adverb clause with pseudoverbal predicate. Note that *iri* can mean “serve” a god or a superior.

²⁶ For similar meaning, see Les. 83, 11.

²⁷ Negated infinitive. Baines cites a similar line from the biography of Amenemhab:



, see Urk. IV, 892, 8-9.

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

²⁹ As Baines notes: “This means that he did not yield the temptation to plunder...”

³⁰ 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.”

³¹ See GNS 34-5; negated indicative/perfective *sdm.f*

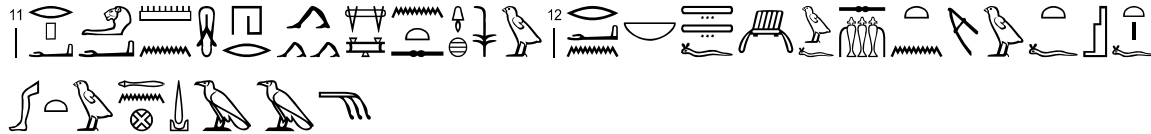
³² The goddess *Wosret* is in honorific transposition.

³³ Typical emphatic construction using the nonattributive relative form of *dd* and with the prepositional phrase *m m3ḥt* 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*.



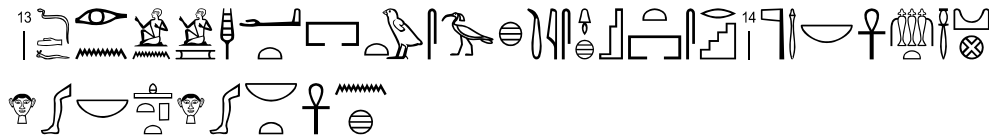
ḥ^c.n di.n.f n.i ḥ^mᶜẓt/ẓt³⁴ m ḏ^cm r drt.i, mtpnt³⁵ ḥn^c b3ksw b3k(.w) m ḏ^cm ḥn^c ḥf^c³⁶

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.




(i)r(i)-p^c(t), ḥ3t(i)-^c, mn tbt, hr nmtt,³⁷ mdd-w3t nt smnh^c sw,³⁸ rdi.n nb t3wi f3wf,³⁹ shnt mrwt.f st.f, w^crt ʕ3 n nwt, ḏ33

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.



dd.f ir.n.i n.i miḥ^ct tw s3h.ti,⁴⁰ smnh^c⁴¹ st.s r rwd^c⁴² ntr ʕ3, nb ʕnh, hnt (i) 3bdw ḥr w^crt nb(t) ḥpt^c⁴³ ḥr nbt ʕnh

³⁴ Peet, following Newberry and Golenischeff, renders this as  *st̄s* "staff."

³⁵ According to Wörterbuch II, 170, this word is related to the obsolete *tp* "dagger" using the formative *m*.

³⁶ The 18th Dynasty pharaohs rewarded bravery by giving the weapons of the vanquished. Based on this Breasted conjectured the word in the lacuna to be *ḥ^cw̄w.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 *ḥf^c* and conjectures this as "handle," related to the verb and noun *ḥf^c*, "grasp." The two signs at the end are probably birds.

³⁷ 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*.

³⁸ Janssen, loc.cit. II, Bc 10-25.

³⁹ 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.

⁴⁰ Stative used as expression of state.

⁴¹ 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^c* is (emphatic) passive *sḏmw.f*. A similar passage is in BM 575: *ir.n.i grt mḥ^ct tn r r(w)d n ntr ʕ3... n mrwt šzp ʕ3bwt...* "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^crtw 3, d33

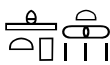
(so that) I may smell the incense that came forth, (and) I may be provided with the divine censuring, the great district official, Djaa.



dd.f msy[.i]⁴⁶ rnpt 27 hr hm.f(n)swt-bit(i) NBW-K3W-R^c 47 m^{3c} hrw,
h⁴⁸ hm.f(n)swt-bit(i) H^c-K^cW-R^c 49 m^{3c} hrw m shmti hr st hrw nt ⁵⁰nhw,
rdit⁵⁰ hm.f.ir.i⁵¹ k3t m ^ch3 m ht r gs hm.f m z(i) 6⁵² 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 crown⁵³ 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.

⁴² According to Peet’s this refers to the terraced hillside surrounding the burial site at Abydos. Gardiner, however, interprets *rwḏ* as the staircase leading to the tomb (replacing the earlier shaft construction), and renders the phrase *rwḏ ntr 3* as the “tomb of Osiris.”

⁴³ Usually written with the plural strokes as .

⁴⁴ Sethe, loc. cit. p. 133.

⁴⁵ 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.

⁴⁶ 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*.

⁴⁷ Throne name of Amenemhat II.

⁴⁸ A perfect relative form as it is the predicate of an emphasized adverb clause; see Allen (25.11.2).

⁴⁹ Throne name of Senwosret III.

⁵⁰ Narrative infinitive.

⁵¹ *rdi* + prospective/subjunctive *sdm.f* construction.

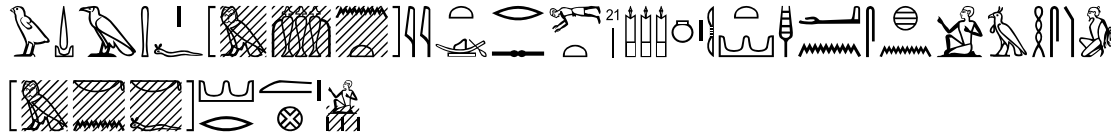
⁵² Not seven as in line 22. One stroke is for the seated man.

⁵³ We follow here Sethe’s rendering. Baines interprets the two crowns as synonym for *nswt-biti*.



ḥꜥ.n spd.n.i⁵⁴ r gs.f, rdi⁵⁵ ḥm.f di.t(w)⁵⁶ (w)i r šmsw n ḥk3, 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.



wḏ3 ḥm.f m ḥntyt r shrt iwntiw nw pḏt, ḥꜥ.n sh.n.i nḥsi [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.



ḥꜥ.n.i ḥd.kw⁵⁹ ḥr šms m 6 n ḥnw

ḥꜥ.n rdi.n.f (wi) r shḏ šmsw, rdi(w) n.i tp 100 m kf3

Then I proceeded downstream in attendance (lit. following) with six men⁶⁰ of the Residence.

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

⁵⁴ *spd* is an adjective-verb “sharp, skilful, effective.”

⁵⁵ Narrative infinitive.

⁵⁶ Prospective/subjunctive *sdm.f*.

⁵⁷ Passive.

⁵⁸ Peet’s conjectural rendering. Baines notes that this geographical name is not attested but it is probably around the Second Cataract region.

⁵⁹ Subject-stative construction.

⁶⁰ Wilson’s rendering. Baines translates this passage as: “And then I went north, performing service, in a 6-ship of the Residence.” 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].