

The Second Stela of Kamose

Part I

smi hz m hnw dmi.k tw.k tf.ti r-gs mšc.k

r.k hns m ir.k wi m wr iw.k m hk3 r dbh n.k t3 nmt hrt.k n.s

m3 s3.k bin mšci m s3.k

nn iwr hmwt hwt-wrt nn zn ib.sn m hnw ht.sn

sdm.t(w) hmhmt nt p3y.i mšc

iw.i mn.kw r pr-dd-ḳn ib.i 3w(w)

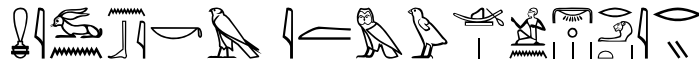
di.i m3 ippi 3t hwrt

wr n rtnw hz wi hmt ḳnw m ib.f n(i) hpr.sn n.f

spr.kw r inyt-nt-hnt tw.i d3.kw n.sn r wšd st

ir.n.i p3 h'w s'c(w) w'c m-s3 w'c

di.i h3t hr hmw m n3y.i n ḳnyt hr ht hr irrw



mi wnn bik imw.i n nbw r ḥ3t iri



iw(.i) mi bik iri r ḥ3t.sn



di.i p3 mk kn ḥr ḥ3(t) r ʿd



t3 d3t m s3.f mi wnn drtyw ḥr htt ḥr dʿt hwt-wʿrt



gmḥ.n.i ḥmwt.f ḥr tp ḥwt.f ḥr nw3 m ššdw.sn r mryt



nn zn ḥwt.sn m3.sn wi nw3.sn m šrwt iri ḥr inb.sn



mi t3w n inḥw m ḥnw b3b(3)w.sn m dd ḥn pw



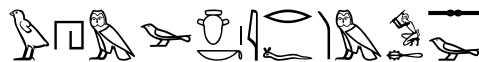
m.k wi ii.kw mʿr zp(y)t m ʿ.i mnḥ zp.i



w3ḥ imm kn, nn w3ḥ.i tw



nn di.i dgs.k 3ḥt iw nn wi ḥr.k



wh m/wh3 ib.k ir.f ʿ3m ḥz



m.k swri.i m irp n k3mw.k m ʿtḥ n.i ʿ3mw n ḥ3k.i

















































ḥb(3).i st.k ḥmst šʿ.i mnw.k





grm.n.i ḥmw̄t.k r w̄ndwt nḥm.i t3 nt ḥtri [...]

Vocabulary

 <i>smi</i> report	 <i>d/ḏ</i> desert edge, margin of cultivation
 <i>tʿfi</i> move/force away, drive back, expel	 <i>dʿbt</i> remainder
 <i>ḥns</i> narrow	 <i>dryt</i> bird of prey, kite, sparrow-hawk
 <i>dbḥ</i> ask for, beg	 <i>htt</i> uproot/pluck plants
 <i>nm</i> rob, steal, seize wrongly	 <i>gmḥ</i> catch sight of
 <i>nmt</i> butcher block	 <i>nw3</i> ,  <i>nw</i> peek, glimpse, peer
 <i>iwr</i> conceive (child)	 <i>sšd</i> window, opening
 <i>zn</i> open, stir	 <i>ḥwt</i> enclosure
 <i>mn</i> remain	 <i>mryt</i> bank, shore
 <i>ippi</i> Apophis (Hyksos ruler)	 <i>šrt</i> nose, nostril
 <i>ʿt</i> moment	 <i>inb</i> wall
 <i>ḥwrrw</i> wretched, miserable, poor	 <i>tʿb</i> young, nestling
 <i>ḥmt</i> think	 <i>ḥn</i> attack
 <i>ḥʿw</i> ships; <i>pʿ</i> <i>ḥʿw</i> the fleet	 <i>zpyt</i> remainder, remnant
 <i>sʿb</i> equip (ship with weapons)	 <i>dgs</i> walk, tread
 <i>ʿb3</i> command (ship)	 <i>whi</i> fail, miss, escape
 <i>ḥ3t</i> front, prow (of a ship)	 <i>wh3 ib</i> heartless, cruel
 <i>ḥmw</i> steering-oar, rudder	 <i>irp</i> wine
 <i>ʿḥi</i> fly	 <i>k3mw</i> vineyard, orchard
 <i>imw</i> ship	 <i>ʿth</i> strain mash, press wine
 <i>ḥ3i</i> measure, probe	 <i>ḥb3</i> destroy, lay waste, ravage

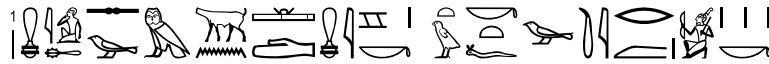
 *st hmst* rest house
 *sꜥ* cut off, cut down (trees)
 *mnw* trees, plantation

 *wndwt* hold (of ship)
 *htr* (span of) horses

Grammar Points

The second stela of Kamose, recording his northern campaign, was discovered in 1954 in Karnak. It was used as the base of a statue of Ramesses II.

One of the principal issues that a translator of the stela faces is the identification of the various verb forms used in the text.¹ In particular, at many instances the translator needs to carefully evaluate whether Kamose refers to the past, narrates the present, or makes future threats or prophecies. To attain this goal it is important to distinguish which part of the text is Kamose's own speech and which is his narrative of the events.



smi hz m hnw dmi.k tw.k tf.ti r-gs mšc.k

The stela starts with an adverbial sentence setting the scene in Avaris. Depending on interpretation, the noun *smi* can mean “report” and also “reputation.” The Hyksos capital is referred to as *dmi* “town” and the attached suffix pronoun *.k* “your” refers to the Hyksos ruler, Aauserra Apophis.

The abrupt beginning (which may actually be an incomplete sentence) points to the fact that this stela is the continuation of a previous yet undiscovered stela.²

In the next sentence the subject form of the 2MS personal pronoun *tw.k* is the topicalized subject of a subject-stative construction involving the verb *tfi* “move/force away, driven back, expel.” Since this is a transitive verb, the stative expresses passive voice. The usual meaning of the compound preposition *r-gs* “beside,” lit. “at the side of,” needs to be mildly upgraded to “in the company/presence of.”



r.k hns m ir.k wi m wr iw.k m hk3 r dbh n.k t3 nmt hrt.k n.s

The noun phrase *r.k hns* is usually translated as “mean/despicable speech.” (*r* “speech, utterance” can also be interpreted as “authority (through the mouth)” and so this phrase

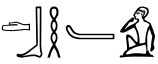
¹ For a very detailed account, see Smith and Smith (III. The Tenses in the Kamose Texts) in the Bibliography and Abbreviations.


² See Habachi in the Bibliography and Abbreviations.


may express restricted authority.) This is the subject of the first adverbial sentence. In the adverbial predicate the object of the preposition *m* is the perfective relative form of *iri* “make” (and not the infinitive *ir(t)*) with suffixed pronominal subject *.k* and object *wi* “me.” The preposition *m* itself here carries the meaning “with, through, by” and the literal meaning is: “through which you make me.”

Note that Habachi³ translates *r.k ḥns* as an AB nominal sentence: “Your speech is mean” and continues with a circumstantial clause: “when you make me as...” But the use of the AB nominal construction is very restricted in Middle Egyptian and does not fit in this situation.

Kamose’s first resentment is that Apophis (probably in a previous correspondence) refers to him as *wr* “chief(tain)” (using an *m* of predication), while he calls himself *ḥk3* “ruler” (introduced by the marker *iw* and followed by another *m* of predication). The contrast can be brought out in translation by inserting “while” between the two clauses. In the unmarked relative clause that follows the introductory *iw.k* is omitted either because it has just been spelled out or because the clause immediately follows the antecedent *ḥk3*.⁴

A purpose clause is introduced by an *r* + infinitive construction using the verb  *dbḥ* “ask for, beg” expressing the future fate of the ruler of Avaris.

The object (following the dative *n.k* “for you/yourself”) is the noun phrase *t3 nmt*. Clearly, *nmt* is a noun here; its meaning, however, is subject to two interpretations. First, it could be a perfective passive participle derived from the verb  *nm* “rob, steal, seize wrongly,” lit. “what is (wrongly) seized.” This would emphasize that Apophis is an aggressor of a foreign land.

Second, with the right determinative  it can simply mean the “butcher block” awaiting for the Hyksos ruler.

In either case, *t3 nmt* is the antecedent of the following clause which contains the (feminine) perfective relative form of *ḥr* “fall.” The preposition *n* (with suffix *.s* referring back to the antecedent) can be translated as “because of” or “through.”

³ Op. cit.

⁴ See Allen (15.10.2).

An example to this situation is in Spell 277 of the Coffin Texts:



*hr.f n nmt*⁵ “He will fall to the butcher block.”



m3 s3.k bin mš.c i m s3.k

The prospective/subjunctive *sdm.f* of the verb *m33* with subject *s3.k* and object *bin* expresses another future threat of Kamose.

Since the spelling of *bin* as a noun and as an adjective-verb is the same, less likely and with quite different meaning, *bin* can also be viewed as an adjective modifying *s3.k*: “your evil back.” In this case, it is the object of the passive verb form *m3*. In either case, the second clause describes the corresponding adverbial circumstance, it can be introduced by “when” or “since.”⁶



nn iwr hmwt hwt-w^ᶜrt nn zn ib.sn m hnw ht.sn

The two clauses here contain the most typical negation of the prospective/subjunctive *sdm.f* and should be translated as future “will not.” The rope determinative is usually re-

placed by the door determinative in the usual spelling of the verb *zn* “open,”

and this is the first part of the phrase *zn ib* “open the heart” with a clear sensual rather than

physical meaning. It is interesting to compare this sentence with the following:



*wp.t(w).sn m msit.*⁷



sdm.t(w) hmhmt nt p3y.i mš.c

This is an adverb clause employing the passive form of the concomitant circumstantial/imperfective of the verb *sdm* “hear” followed by a long object. It provides the reason why the women of Avaris will not be able to conceive, and can be introduced by “when.” Note

⁵ [CT IV 19d].

⁶ For a more detailed account on this sentence, see (IV.4) in my ‘Introduction to Middle Egyptian Grammar through Ancient Writings.’


⁷ [Westcar, 5, 9, f].

the late form of the possessive pronoun.



iw.i mn.kw r pr-dd-kn ib.i 3w(.w)

This is a turning point in the text and Kamose’s narrative starts. The threats suddenly stop, and in two clauses both with subject-stative constructions describe Kamose’s whereabouts


(in the unfortunately unknown location *pr-dd-kn*⁸) and his state of mind. The verb  *mn* “remain” should be translated as “moor.” The second (adverb) clause is subordinate to the first.




di.i m3 ippi 3t hwrt




wr n rtnw hz ʿwi hmt knw m ib.f n(i) hpr.sn n.f

A *rdi* + prospective/subjunctive *sdm.f* construction is employed here (with *rdi* in indicative/perfective form using the base stem *di*) to turn Kamose’s attention back to  *ippi* “Apophis,” lit. I caused Apophis see...” (Note that Hyksos ruler is referred here in 3MS as opposed to the previous 2MS.)

In the following AB apposition A is the indirect genitive *wr n rtnw* once again pointing out that the Apophis does not belong to Egypt,⁹ and B is *nfr hr* construction *hz ʿwi* “weak/feeble of arms” stating that he unable to govern. These are the antecedents of

the following active participle of the 3-lit. verb  *hmt* “think” with object *knw m*

ib.f. In the latter the determinative  for abstract concepts indicates that the adjective-verb *kni* is used as a noun. In plural it should mean “brave things/deeds.”

Finally, in the last unmarked relative clause the suffix pronoun *.sn* of the negated indicative/perfective *sdm.f* (the negative counterpart of the circumstantial *sdm.n.f*/perfect) of the verb *hpr* refers to the plural *knw* and the clause be translated using the word “never.”



⁸ Smith and Smith take the literal meaning and translate this as the “House of the Braggart.”

⁹ Retjenu is the present-day Lebanon.




spr.kw r inyt-nt-ḥnt tw.i d3.kw n.sn r wšd st

In the two clauses here the stative of the verb *spr* “arrive” and the following subject-stative construction once again bring the narrative back to Kamose’s whereabouts.


Although the determinative of *inyt* is the sun  not the town  *inyt-nt-ḥnt* must be a locality. As the name suggests it may be a well-frequented depot/landing place to sail upstream.¹⁰

The subject-stative construction has topicalized subject form of the 1MS personal pronoun *tw.i*. Due to the lack of an antecedent of the prepositional phrase *n.sn* the suffix pronoun *.sn* may refer to the inhabitants of the town, Kamose’s own navy, or the people in Avaris.


Finally a clause of purpose contains an *r* + infinitive construction with the infinitive of the 3-lit. verb *wšd* and object, the dependent pronoun *st*. Once again due to the lack of an antecedent we can just guess that it either refers to the town-folks again or to the subject of Kamose’s investigation/questioning in general.



ir.n.i p3 ḥw s^c(b.w) w^c m-s3 w^c



di.i ḥ3t ḥr ḥmw m n3y.i n knyt ḥr ḥt ḥr irrw






mi wnn bik imw.i n nbw r ḥ3t iri






iw(.i) mi bik iri r ḥ3t.sn

This passage describes the battle-array of Kamose’s navy. In the first sentence the object of the circumstantial *s_{dm}.n.f*/perfect of the verb *iri* “make, put” is the entire subject-stative construction (a noun clause) that follows. Note that ḥw “ship(s)” with the definite article *p3* means “fleet.” The difficulty comes here in interpreting the verb in 3MS stative

¹⁰ Once again, this is the Ferry-of-Going-Upstream of Smith and Smith.


s^cb(.w). On the one hand, assigning only *b* to the jabiru (in group writing  *b3* can stand only for *b*) it can be the verb  *s^cb* “deploy, equip (ship with weapons).” Less likely, it can also be the (not attested) causative of the verb  *‘b3* “command (ship).” The phrase *w^c m-s3 w^c* clearly indicates that Kamose lined up his ships one after the other.

In the next sentence the resulting prow (*h3t*) to steering-oar formation is expressed by the concomitant circumstantial/imperfective *s_{dm}.f* of the verb *rdi*.

The preposition *m* “with” governs a noun clause which itself has a *hr* + infinitive predicate. The subject is the collective noun (phrase) *knyt (nsw)* “the braves (of the king)” referring to the king’s body-guard or the group of most valiant warriors, the king’s elite force to spearhead the attack. Note that the predicate is the infinitive of the verb  *‘hi* “fly” (in a figurative sense), and  *irrw* is a well-attested form of the usual spelling of  *itrw* “river.”

Apart from the topicalized metaphoric adverbial phrase *mi wnn bik* the next sentence has adverbial predicate: *imw.i n nbw r h3t iri* in which the subject is a phrase that can be rendered as “flagship of gold.” This sentence itself is the theme (since the flagship must be at the head of the fleet). In the topicalization (which should normally be at the end) the object of the preposition *mi* is the noun clause *wnn bik*. The latter is the rheme with the non-attributive imperfective relative form of *wnn*, thereby emphatic. The cleft sentence construction: “(It was) like a falcon (that) my flagship of gold...” can bring out the emphasis.

The last simple adverbial sentence reiterates that Kamose is spearheading the battle formation with the last metaphor repeated. The scroll determinative in the otherwise doubtful reading of *iri* makes Smith and Smith¹¹ suggest that this is the second part of the well known epithet for a king: *bik ntri* “divine falcon”




di.i p3 mk kn hr h3(t) r ‘d

¹¹ Op. cit.






t3 d3t m s3.f mi wnn drtyw hr htt hr d'rt hwt-w'rt

As its context indicates, this sentence can still be considered as part of the previous passage, therefore the verb *rdi* is in concomitant circumstantial/imperfective *sdm.f*. Its object, the “*mk*-ship” (introduced by the definite article *p3*), is not attested before the linguistic evolution of the Amarna Period¹²; in any case, the attached adjective *kn* claims it to be a “mighty, valiant” (possibly a transport) ship.

The *hr* + infinitive construction (in an unmarked adverb clause) describes the (continual) task of this ship. The object  *d'rt* of the verb  *h3i* “measure” means “desert edge, margin of cultivation” so that the phrase in question can be interpreted to sound/probe/investigate or even thrust the desert edge.

The next adverb clause (with adverbial predicate) specifies that *d3t* “the remainder” of the fleet (indicated by the ship determinative) is behind the *mk*-ship, the latter being referred to by the suffix pronoun *.f*.

Based on the parallel between *mi wnn bik* above and *mi wnn drtiw*, the noun  *drtyw* is probably a variant spelling of  *dryt* “bird of prey, carrion bird,” a carnivorous, scavenger bird in general.

The 2ae-gem. verb  *htt* “uproot/pluck plants,” or “prey” is in a *hr* + infinitive construction (once again in an unmarked adverb clause). Finally the locality, the *d'rt* of Avaris, at which this is happening can be the “plateau, district” in the area surrounding Avaris.



gmh.n.i hmwt.f hr tp hwt.f hr nw3 m ššdw.sn r mryt



nn zn hwt.sn m3.sn wi








nw3.sn m šrw't iri hr inb.sn

¹² [Davies, Amarna VI, 21, 12].




mi t3w n inhw m hnw b3b(3)w.sn m dd hn pw

This passage describes how Kamose with pride and the women of Apophis with awe were watching each other with the fleet passing by.

The action starts with the circumstantial *sdm.n.f*/perfect of the verb   *gmh* “catch sight of.” The masculine singular suffix pronouns *.f* refers to Apophis. The *hr* + infinitive construction (in an unmarked adverb clause) is used to describe the corresponding action (in progress) of the women, where the verb  *nw3* is an earlier form of  *nw* having various meanings connected to “see, look” such as “peek, glimpse, peer.” The noun *ššd* is in a somewhat unusual spelling of  *ššd* “window, opening” or “embrasure.”¹³

As opposed to the previous appearance of the verb *zn* “open” in his threats and boasts, here Kamose describes the real situation. Therefore the verbs that follow should refer to the past. Accepting this, in the following the adverb clause *nn zn* is a negated infinitive “not stirring” (less likely, negated indicative/perfective *sdm.f* “did not stir” with *nn* playing the role of *ni*).

Although it uses the base stem, *m3.sn* is probably the infinitive of the verb *m33* with the suffix pronoun *.sn* as its subject.

The description of the frightened Avaris women is made quite vivid using the expression *nw3 m šrt* “peeking with the nose/nostril,” and one may well imagine them in a prostrated position on the roof having their noses on the same level as their eyes. The animal  *inh* living in a hole is unknown, probably a kind of lizard or mouse. Habachi¹⁴ interpreted the subject of the *m* + infinitive construction as the women who in an *Apw* nominal sentence acknowledge Kamose’s presence as being an attack. In view of the fact that the next passage is clearly Kamose’s speech, Smith and Smith¹⁵ argued that Habachi’s view would result in an abrupt change in the flow of the text and therefore they

¹³ For an explanation and detailed analysis of this term see Smith and Smith, op. cit.

¹⁴ Op. cit.



¹⁵ Op. cit.

interpret *m dd* as Kamose's own with (dependent pronominal) subject *wi* (actually appearing a bit before): "as I said: This is the attack." This requires interpreting *nw3.sn* as an initial (thereby emphasized) adverb clause: "as they were looking out..."

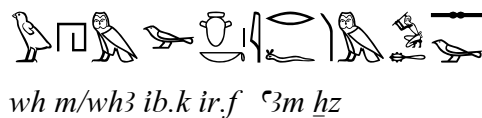
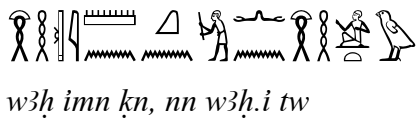


In the first of this sequence of four clauses the subject-stative construction with the verb *ii* "come" is used to call Apophis' attention to Kamose's presence.

The adjective *m^r* here carries the seated man determinative, so it must be used as a noun "successful man." Adjectival quality with first person pronominal subject is expressed by a nominal construction *ink m^r*, so may assume that here the subject, Kamose himself, being the same as in the previous clause, is suppressed.

In the third, adverbial sentence  is a variant spelling of  *zpyt* "remainder, remnant." What is left over is a reference to the part of Egypt that Kamose rules over.

Finally, the last clause has an adjectival predicate *mn^h*, and *zp* should be understood as "situation, condition, venture."



This sentence contains a typical oath expressed by the initial non-attributive relative form of *w3^h* "endure." As such it is usually followed by a god's or a king's name. In our case it is Amun with the attached adjective *kn* used as a noun. In this construction a main clause always follows, which, in our case, contains the negated prospective/subjunctive *s^dm.f* of *w3^h* "leave (alone), set aside, ignore" expressing negated future.

Another main clause further details this. It also contains the negated prospective/subjunctive of *r^di* "let." This, in turn, is part of a causative *r^di s^dm.f* construction with

the verb *dgs* “walk, tread” also in the prospective/subjunctive. This along with the attached negated adverb clause (which can be translated using “unless”) challenges Apophis to come out to the open and face him.

There is a scribal error in the phrase *whm ib.k*, and it can be corrected in two ways. First, if *m* is swapped with the evil bird determinative, the new reading is *wh m ib.k*, with the verb *whi* meaning “fail.” In this case the sentence has an omitted subject *.k* (Apophis, repeated several times previously), and his “epithet” *ʿ3m hz* is repeated at the end of the sentence for emphasis. The verb form of *whi* is subject to interpretation. It can be indicative/perfective *sdm.f* (instead of transitive circumstantial *sdm.n.f*/perfect) concluding the failure of Apophis, or prospective/subjunctive *sdm.f*, expressing Kamose’s wish that the vile Asiatic will fail. (An emphatic construction involving a non-attributive relative form does not sound probable since it would emphasize the adverbial phrase *m ib.k*: “it is in your heart/mind that you failed.) Second, less likely (since this error is repeated below), *wh3 ib* is a well-known phrase meaning “heartless, cruel,” lit. “wicked of heart” and it may be possible that the scribe (or the stone carver) accidentally replaced 3 with *m*. In this case this clause is adverbial with the adverb *ir.f* also playing a role of emphasis.



m.k swri.i m irp n k3mw.k m ʿth n.i ʿ3mw n h3k.i

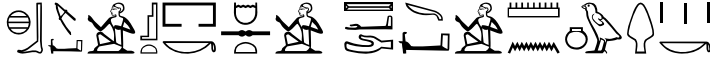
Allen interprets the verb form of *swri* “drink” (introduced here with the particle *m.k* with meaning of intention) as prospective/subjunctive *sdm.f*, lit. “I intend to drink...”¹⁶ Due to the unusual details Kamose provides, however, here and below it is equally likely that the indicative/perfective *sdm.f* is used. This verb form plays the role of the transitive circumstantial *sdm.n.f*/perfect, and describes actual events. This choice of the verb form decides whether this passage is part of Kamose’s speech or his narrative.¹⁷

The preposition *m* governs a noun clause containing the non-attributive relative form of the verb *ʿth* “press (wine).”

Finally, the subject is the indirect genitive *ʿ3mw n h3k.i* “my captured prisoners” in which *h3k* is a noun meaning “plunder.”

¹⁶ Allen (19.6).

¹⁷ Once again, see the discussion in Smith and Smith, op. cit.



hb(3).i st.k hmst šc.i mnw.k



grm.n.i hmwt.k r wndwt nhm.i t3 nt htri [...]

Following the previous passage, *hb3* “destroy, lay waste” and *šc* “cut down” are interpreted as indicative/perfective or intentional prospective/subjunctive *sdm.f*.

The verb form then suddenly changes to circumstantial *sdm.n.f*/perfect meaning concrete completed action. Unfortunately the word *grm* is attested only here. Based on the essence of the whole clause a good guess would be “deposit, assign.” With this, *nhm* “take away, carry off” is indicative/perfective *sdm.f* (instead of the previous transitive circumstantial *sdm.n.f*/perfect).

Finally, *t3 nt htri* could mean “horses” or “chariotry” doubtless related to



htr “(span of) horses.”