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**The Stela of the Viceroy Usersatet (Boston MFA 25.632),  
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# The Stela of the Viceroy Usersatet (Boston MFA 25.632), his Shrine at Qasr Ibrim, and the Festival of Nubian Tribute under Amenhotep II

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**I**N SPITE OF the surviving epigraphic and archaeological evidence concerning the Egyptian administration of Nubia during the New Kingdom, the personal aspects of colonial rule are at best shadows behind the more prosaic evidence of prosopography and titles, architectural history and burial practices, that force etic analysis to march ahead of emic understanding of Egyptian and Nubian interactions.<sup>1</sup> When any archaeological or epigraphic light shines on personal relationships within the administration, at least suggesting, if not revealing, the attitudes of various members of the colonial administration, and hinting at interactions between social strata in Nubia and Egypt, those who would understand Egyptian and Nubian culture may be expected to show interest. The stela of the Viceroy Usersatet from Semna,<sup>2</sup> recording Amenhotep II's personal transcription of his own royal decree to Usersatet, offering advice regarding interactions of Egyptians and Nubians within the viceregal administration, indeed casts some light on the interactions of king, viceroy, and Nubian members of the Egyptian bureaucracy in the south [fig. 1]. The seeming obscurity of the king's advice, and the lack of transparency regarding the situation about which Amenhotep II offers that advice, have resulted in considerable modern attention to the text, but a certain looseness of interpretation has bedeviled many examinations of the inscription.

Defining exactly what the Usersatet stela illuminates has proved to be elusive. Several Egyptological discussions of the inscription have fostered florid descriptions of the personality and character of Amenhotep II, in spite of the remaining uncertainties in properly

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<sup>1</sup> So S.T. SMITH, *Wretched Kush, Ethnic Identities and Boundaries in Egypt's Nubian Empire*, London, New York, 2003, p. 202, regarding how: "The individual actor is lost in the search for ethnic groups."

<sup>2</sup> D. DUNHAM, J.M.A. JANSSEN, *Second Cataract Forts I*, Boston, 1960, p. 17, pl. 82; W. HELCK, "Eine Stela des Vizekönigs Wsr-St.t.," *JNES* 14, 1955, pp. 22-31; *id.*, *Urk.* IV, 1343-1344; P. DER MANUELIAN, *Studies in the Reign of Amenophis II*, *HÄB* 26, 1987, pp. 155-158; P. BEYLAGE, *Aufbau der königlichen Stelentexte, vom Beginn der 18. Dynastie bis zur Amarnazeit*, *ÄAT* 54, 2002, pp. 417-419 and 751-752 (essentially following Helck); S. MORSCHAUSER, "Approbation or Disapproval? The Conclusion of the Letter of Amenophis II to Usersatet, Viceroy of Kush (*Urk.* IV, 1344. 10-20)," *SAK* 24, 1997, pp. 203-222, produces some untenable readings (G.J. SHAW, *Royal Authority in Egypt's Eighteenth Dynasty, BAR International Series* 1822, 2008, p. 59, appears to accept most of Morschauser's conclusions). A facsimile and a photograph of the stela, with brief commentary, is R. LEPROHON, *Corpus antiquitatum Aegyptiacarum: Museum of Fine Arts, Boston* 3, Mainz, 1991, pp. 1/4-4/4; see also the image at <http://www.mfa.org/collections/object/stele-of-usersatet-viceroy-of-nubia-146139>. The author thanks Dr. Lawrence Berman of the MFA for study scans of the photograph HU-MFA Expedition photograph A3310\_NS; Dr. Berman also facilitated an examination of the stela at the MFA. He and Ms. Emily Cole assisted the author in the examination of a number of questionable areas, and their observations contributed greatly to the improved copy of the stela accompanying this study. All epigraphic comments and explanations of changes to the earlier drawing appear in notes at the appropriate places.

interpreting the text. Recognition of the potential importance of the text – a personal address of the king to his viceroy – and a desire to understand the motivations of pharaonic administrators, has led sober Egyptologists in scholarly publications to develop imaginative interpretations of the text. Like the writings of many ancient historians and not a few of more modern times,<sup>3</sup> several discussions have departed from a firm basis in what we know and do not know, employing adjectives, adverbs, and carefully flavored synonyms – none present in the original text – to suggest a nuanced understanding of the thoughts and prejudices of Amenhotep II.

In some interpretations of the text on Usersatet's stela, Amenhotep II has not fared well, nor have the Asiatic women to whom he refers emerged unscathed. So the message of Amenhotep II to Usersatet within the main text of the stela becomes evidence of "a real racist jingoism."<sup>4</sup> Supposedly, "the imperial perspective of civil government is splendidly suggested" in the decree, cited in a brief discussion of "the maintenance of colonial dominion by soldiers and officials working without any sentimentality."<sup>5</sup> Terms for Asiatic women appearing in the king's decree for Usersatet, designations both straightforward and applicable to Egyptians as well as to foreigners, may summon uncommonly subjective and overwrought translations – in modern renderings of the text the older woman of Arrapkha may become a "crone," the *sdm.t-š*-servant of Byblos a "maid."<sup>6</sup> Amenhotep II's references to foreign women in the viceregal household even receive an interpretation as metaphors for the rape of the rulers whom they are assumed to represent.<sup>7</sup> Amenhotep II is said to recognize Nubian magical prowess "grudgingly," though no such qualification appears in the text.<sup>8</sup> The text of Usersatet's stela becomes the sole reference for the statement that Amenhotep II did not always approve of "the incorporation of locals into the imperial administration."<sup>9</sup> The passage referring more directly to the Nubians provides the follow-up to the statement that "even at the best of times Nubians were irresponsible and lazy but dangerous because of their ability in black magic."<sup>10</sup>

The stela's textual and visual references to the consumption of alcohol (an amphora in the lunette and one appearance of the verb *swri*, "to drink") have suggested to several translators of the stela that Amenhotep II was intoxicated at the time when he issued the decree, although

<sup>3</sup> Compare L. PITCHER, *Writing Ancient History*, London, New York, 2009, pp. 5-14.

<sup>4</sup> D.B. REDFORD, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel in Ancient Times*, Princeton, 1992, p. 230. Note the characterization of the stela's text in *id.*, *Akhenaten, the Heretic King*, Princeton, 1984, pp. 32-33: "Had the 'Horus-throne of the Living' been reduced to fit the rump of a macho, posturing pooh-bah?"

<sup>5</sup> L. TÖRÖK, *Between Two World: the Frontier Region between Ancient Nubia and Egypt, 3700 BC-500 AD*, PdÄ, Leiden, 2009, p. 170.

<sup>6</sup> REDFORD, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel in Ancient Times*, p. 230; similarly, MORSCHAUSER, *op. cit.*, p. 207, reads *iz(y).t* as "old (crone)," and renders *msh.t šri.t* as "foundling."

<sup>7</sup> D. O'CONNOR, "Egypt's Views of 'Others,'" in J. Tait (ed.), *"Never Had the Like Occurred": Egypt's View of its Past*, London, 2003, p. 156: "In one context, he [Amenhotep II] not only boasts of laying waste to Mitanni (northern Mesopotamia) and the Hittites of Anatolia – great powers of the day – but also of metaphorically raping the defeated kings of Babylon, Byblos, Alalakh and Arrapkha (both in Syria) who – no less disquieting – are respectively imagined as a 'woman, maiden, little girl and crone.'"

<sup>8</sup> SMITH, *op. cit.*, p. 202.

<sup>9</sup> A. GNIRS, "Coping with the Army: the Military and the State in the New Kingdom," in J.C. Moreno García (ed.), *Ancient Egyptian Administration, HdO 1/104*, 2013, p. 681.

<sup>10</sup> D. REDFORD, *From Slave to Pharaoh: the Black Experience of Ancient Egypt*, Baltimore, 2011, p. 6. Redford echoes not so much Egyptian sentiments as we know them, but the relationship of more recent colonial conquerors and native magicians, the latter both reviled and feared, turning their magic into something with which to establish a more formidable reputation with regard to their overlords – compare M. TAUSSIG, *Shamanism, Colonialism, and the Wild Man: a Study in Terror and Healing*, Chicago, London, 1987.

the grammar of the text indicates that the king was but commencing to drink at the time when he offered advice to the viceroy.<sup>11</sup> Another interpretation of the text has, to the contrary – and apparently more accurately – suggested that the king’s message “est toutefois d’une familiarité très mesurée.”<sup>12</sup> The content and context of Amenhotep II’s decree for Usersatet appear to have become less important than the value of the text in presentations of the presumed distasteful, bullying personality of the king.

The stela of Usersatet is indeed interesting, and the text unusual, providing a glimpse of interpersonal and cross-cultural attitudes during the reign of Amenhotep II, but a proper interpretation requires an appeal to other documentation. Another monument of Usersatet, his rock shrine at Ibrim, fits together with the stela to provide two different views of a royal ritual of southern tribute reception – from both atop and below the royal dais. Neglected in earlier studies of the stela, the Ibrim shrine and the event depicted there are key to understanding the royal decree on the stela of Usersatet.

The reign of Amenhotep II sees a number of innovations, both artistic and administrative.<sup>13</sup> The sensual nature of festival scenes in the private tombs of Thebes reaches a height in the productions of the reign of Amenhotep II.<sup>14</sup> Amenhotep II is the first ruler to appear wearing the solarizing *shebyou*-collar while seated within a kiosk,<sup>15</sup> and the first pharaoh whose mummy reveals pierced ears to accommodate more massive earrings.<sup>16</sup> From essentially the reign of Amenhotep II funerary art sees a relaxing of the use of grid lines for smaller figures in tomb decoration, and a resulting exchange of earlier formality for a new sense of fluid movement.<sup>17</sup> The more trusted administrators during the reign of Amenhotep II appear to have derived their association with the king not through importance of family or lineage of authority and service so much as through close personal association with the king from youth, especially through military training and activity<sup>18</sup> – efficient public servants under Thutmose III have become boon companions under Amenhotep II, equally trusted and, we may hope and presume, most at least equally efficient. Scenes of foreign tribute, echoed already during the time of Hatshepsut and Thutmose III, become a veritable icon of pharaonic universalism by the reign of Amenhotep II, a stress on a theater of power coinciding with the more athletic demonstrations of pharaonic physical power that replace to

<sup>11</sup> So A.H. GARDINER, *Egypt of the Pharaohs* 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., Oxford, 1966, p. 199; H. BRUNNER, *LÄ VI*, 1986, col. 774, s. v. “Trunkenheit;” REDFORD, *Akhenaten*, p. 32.

<sup>12</sup> Cl. VANDERSLEYEN, *L’Égypte et la vallée du Nil II. De la fin de l’Ancien Empire à la fin du Nouvel Empire*, Paris, 1995, p. 330.

<sup>13</sup> Laudatory but pertinent is P. DER MANUELIAN, “The End of the Reign and the Accession of Amenhotep II,” in E.H. Cline, D. O’Connor (eds.), *Thutmose III: a New Biography*, Ann Arbor, 2006, p. 426: “With the exception of some of Amenhotep II’s more unusual statements, none of Thutmose III’s successors could match him for innovation and originality on a number of fronts, not the least of which, it seems, was his personal energy and charisma.” See also the important remarks of St. PASQUALI, “Amenhotep II et les divinités du proche-orient en Égypte, quelques éléments historiques et culturels d’un règne atypique de la XVIII<sup>e</sup> Dynastie,” *Égypte, Afrique & Orient* 65, 2012, 11-24.

<sup>14</sup> See S. SCHOTT, *Das schöne Fest vom Wüstenale, Festbräuche einer Totenstadt*, AWL 11, 1953, pp. (66)-(67).

<sup>15</sup> M. HARTWIG, *Tomb Painting and Identity in Ancient Thebes, 1419-1372 BCE*, *MonAeg* 10, 2004, pp. 61 and 127, n. 35.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. C.H. ROHRIG, in *id.* (ed.), *Hatshepsut, from Queen to Pharaoh*, New York, 2005, p. 70.

<sup>17</sup> G. ROBINS, *The Art of Ancient Egypt*, Cambridge MA, 1997, pp. 141-42; on the art of the reign, see also VANDERSLEYEN, *op. cit.*, pp. 335-337.

<sup>18</sup> See the summary in B. BRYAN, “The Eighteenth Dynasty before the Amarna Period (c. 1550-1352 BC),” in I. Shaw (ed.), *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, Oxford, 2000, pp. 269-270; T. WILKINSON, *The Rise and Fall of Ancient Egypt*, New York, 2010, pp. 227-234; J.J. SHIRLEY, “Crisis and Restructuring of the State: from the Second Intermediate Period to the Advent of the Ramesses,” in Moreno García (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 586-589.

some extent the expanding militarism of the early Eighteenth Dynasty.<sup>19</sup> Periodic warfare and temporary cessations of hostilities give way to more stable and formal diplomatic arrangements under Amenhotep II.<sup>20</sup> Under Amenhotep II appear the first surviving images of a recognizable southern tribute festival, a *durbar* in which the ruler seated in state oversees and ritually enacts the Egyptian domination of Nubia.

A festival of Nubian tribute in the reign of Amenhotep II, depicted in the Qasr Ibrim shrine of the Nubian Viceroy Usersatet,<sup>21</sup> finds a more “sensual” expression in the stela of Usersatet from the fortress of Semna, recording a royal decree for the viceroy, apparently made during the very sort of festival depicted at Ibrim. The decree has been interpreted as a necessity due to the distant remove of the viceroy from the festival seating of the king, but the Ibrim shrine – apparently ignored in discussions of the stela and the royal decree recorded thereon – provides a background for the festival during which Amenhotep II appears to have prepared a copy of a special decree for his viceroy in the presence of the latter. While one publication has deemed the Ibrim shrine to be possibly “the most informative and important of Usersatet’s records in every respect,” another has concluded that “by far Usersatet’s most interesting and informative document is his stela from Semna fort.”<sup>22</sup> Without choosing one over the other, together the two monuments provide different views of the same event – the Ibrim shrine allowed the visitor to stand in the ranks of officials and offering bearers in a celebration of royal power in Nubia under Amenhotep II, and the stela from Semna reveals an aspect of the royal participation in that very event.

The first line indeed reveals that the stela of Usersatet is a copy of an *wḏ*-decree made by the royal hands themselves. A royal *wḏ*-decree might indeed appear in the form of an *whj*-rescript,<sup>23</sup> an example of which is P. Turin 1896, an *wḏ-nsw.t* taking the form of an *whj*-rescript sent by Ramesses XI to the Viceroy of Kush Panehesy. However, the designation of the copy of an *wḏ*-decree prepared by the king with his own hands does not necessarily indicate that the viceroy was not present, but simply indicates that the king acted as his own stenographer. Helck has suggested that the second line may have begun with a passage

<sup>19</sup> On mid-Eighteenth Dynasty scenes of foreign tribute, and the “power icon,” see D. PANAGIOTOPOULOS, “Foreigners in Egypt in the Time of Hatshepsut and Thutmose III,” in Cline, O’Connor (eds.), *op. cit.*, pp. 377-389 and 400-401; HARTWIG, *op. cit.*, pp. 73-76; B. BRYAN, “The Egyptian Perspective on Mitanni,” in R. Cohen, R. Westbrook (eds.), *Amarna Diplomacy: the Beginnings of International Relations*, Baltimore, London, 2000, p. 75. On the physical prowess of Amenhotep II and its Egyptian and Near Eastern contexts, see A. GNIRS, A. LOPRIENO, “Krieg und Literatur,” in R. Gundlach, C. Vogel (eds.), *Militärgeschichte des pharaonischen Ägypten: Altägypten und seine Nachbarkulturen im Spiegel aktueller Forschung, Krieg in der Geschichte* 34, 2009, pp. 270-279.

<sup>20</sup> See the overview in BRYAN, in Cohen, Westbrook (eds.), *op. cit.*, pp. 77-79.

<sup>21</sup> Shrine 4 in R.A. CAMINOS, *The Shrines and Rock-Inscriptions of Ibrim*, ASE 32, 1968, pp. 59-75 and pls. 23-35 (see also S. Hallmann, *Die Tributzszenen des Neuen Reiches*, ÄAT 66, 2006, pp. 64-69). For the monuments of Usersatet, see W.K. SIMPSON, LÄ VI, 1986, cols. 901-903, s. v. “Usersatet;” A. GASSE, V. RONDOT, “The Egyptian Conquest and Administration of Nubia during the New Kingdom: the Testimony of the Sehel rock-inscriptions,” *Sudan and Nubia* 7, 2003, pp. 42-44; A. GASSE, V. RONDOT, *Les inscriptions de Séhel*, MIFAO 126, 2007, pp. 147-154 (nos. SEH 253-260); M. HARTWIG, “The Tomb of a *hṯy-ꜥ*, Theban Tomb 116,” in S. D’Auria (ed.), *Offerings to the Discerning Eye*, CHANE 38, 2010, pp. 159-167. For thoughts on the career path of Usersatet, see J.J. SHIRLEY, “What’s in a Title? Military and Civil Officials in the Egyptian 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty Military Sphere,” in S. Bar, D. Kahn, J.J. Shirley (eds.), *Egypt, Canaan and Israel: History, Imperialism, Ideology and Literature*, CHANE 52, 2011, p. 292, n. 6, with references.

<sup>22</sup> Suggesting the primacy of the Ibrim shrine, CAMINOS, *op. cit.*, p. 75; opting for the Usersatet stela, DER MANUELIAN, *Studies in the Reign of Amenophis II*, p. 155.

<sup>23</sup> For the *whj*-document as a rescript, see A.el-M. BAKIR, *Egyptian Epistolography from the Eighteenth to the Twenty-First Dynasty*, BdE 48, 1970, pp. 15-17 (P. Turin 1896 is pl. 31).

parallel to a portion of the letter from Thutmose I to his viceroy,<sup>24</sup> and indeed such is possible, and probable if Usersatet were in Nubia, far from the presumed Theban or even Memphite location of the royal appearance. The Ibrim shrine reveals that at least on one occasion, however, Usersatet oversaw a presentation of southern tribute to the king in Thebes. The royal *wḏ*-decree, in spite of colloquialisms and intimacy of content and tone, would nevertheless be something that the viceroy would be expected to heed, and something that might well compare to law – just as the vizier is the one who “hears every decree” (*ntf sdm wḏ.t nb(.t)*) of the ruler, so too judges appointed by the king are “those who hear the words of the palace, and the laws of the court” (*sdmy.w md.wt pr-nsw.t hp.w nyw ‘ry.t*).<sup>25</sup>

### Lunette of the Stela

When complete, the lunette occupied approximately one-third of the height of the stela. The area is divided evenly between the enthroned ruler to the left, and the standing viceroy to the right. The only surviving text is above and behind the image of the viceroy. The lunette of the stela is in fact a syncopation of the more elaborate images in the Ibrim shrine – there a host of Nubians brings in an array of produce and products of the south, whereas on the stela those goods are condensed into collars and rings on the two baskets in the hands of Usersatet, who alone represents the officials and population of New Kingdom Egypt’s great southern dependency.

### Text in the Lunette

A broken text, restorable with reasonable confidence, occupies much of the right portion of the lunette, commencing above the depiction of Usersatet (ll. 1-3), and continuing in two longer columns behind the image of the viceroy (ll. 4-5):<sup>26</sup>

<sup>1</sup>[*st*]      <sup>2</sup>[*wsh.w ‘š*].*w* (a)  
                   [*‘n.wt*] [*nyw*]<sup>1</sup> (b) *ḏm* (c)  
<sup>3</sup>[*mḥ*] [*pr-ḥḏ*]<sup>1</sup> *m* <sup>4</sup>[*bḏkw*]<sup>1</sup> *ny Kš ḥsy.t* (d)  
                                   [*in*] [*sḏ-nsw.t*]<sup>1</sup> [*kn*]<sup>1</sup> (e) <sup>5</sup>*n ḥm=f Wst-St.t*  
 [Bringing:]      [collars of ]<sup>1</sup>[variegated colors]<sup>1</sup>/<sup>1</sup>[mixed stones]<sup>1</sup>,  
                                   [and rings of] *electrum*;  
 [filling] [<sup>1</sup>the treasury] with the [<sup>1</sup>*bḏkw*-tax]<sup>1</sup> of wretched Kush  
                                   by the king’s son, [<sup>1</sup>brave one]<sup>1</sup> of his majesty, Usersatet.

(a) The designation *wsh* (*n*) *‘š* (*Wb* I, 229, 5) may indicate “collar of mixed stones” and “collar of variegated colors;” depictions of such on Middle Kingdom coffins suggest the latter meaning (see

<sup>24</sup> HELCK, *JNES* 14, 1955, p. 26, n. e, citing *Urk.* IV, 80.

<sup>25</sup> G.P.F. VAN DEN BOORN, *The Duties of the Vizier, Civil Administration in the Early New Kingdom*, London, 1988, pp. 280-281.

<sup>26</sup> Compared to the published drawing, fewer portions of the signs writing the title and epithet of Usersatet survive; the traces indeed present do confirm, however, the reading presented here. The accompanying drawing of the stela was prepared by Mr. Alberto Urcia, on the basis of the earlier drawing by P. Der Manuelian, augmented by portions of the stela now missing (cross-hatched), with further collations by the author at the MFA, Boston.

P. Lacau, *Sarcophages antérieurs au Nouvel Empire*, CGC N<sup>os</sup> 28001-28086, Cairo, 1904, p. 159; compare also the collars *hkr.w šš.w* [p. 167], and *wsh m šbn* [p. 159]). As applied to precious stones, *šš* may connote “multicolored” – compare *š.t šš.t* and *š.t nb.t šš.t* (B. Letellier, “La cour à péristyle du Thoutmosis IV à Karnak (et la « cour des fêtes » de Thoutmosis II),” in *Hommages à la mémoire de Serge Sauneron 1927-1976 I. Égypte pharaonique*, *BdE* 81/1, 1979, p. 58). Such a use probably derives from *šš* as “mixed” (compare P. Posener-Krieger, *Les archives du temple funéraire de Néferirkarê-Kakaï (les papyrus d’Abousir)* 1, *BdE* 65/1, 1976, p. 261, n. 3). The terms *šš* and *hkr* acquire the meaning “multicolored” with reference to stones (*hkry.t* is used in a similar way to describe a menat – Harris, *Minerals*, p. 132). For multi-colored stones *inw.w / minw.w*, see Cl. Traunecker, *Coptos: hommes et dieux sur le parvis de Geb*, *OLA* 43, 1992, p. 81, n. f. According to a late description of a *wsh*-collar offered to the goddess Hathor, the collar is *nwb hr hsb.t šbn m š.t nb.w*, “gold and lapis lazuli, mixed with all precious stones” (É. Chassinat, *Le temple de Dendara III*, Cairo, 1935, p. 20, l. 7). Restoring *šš* on the Usersatet stela encapsulates the multiple materials and variegated colors of the collar. Also possible is *wsh.w šy.w* (P. Grandet, *Le Papyrus Harris I (BM 9999) II*, *BdE* 109/2, 1994, pl. 6, l. 3).

(b) The reading of *nyw*<sup>1</sup> appears to be certain, as the top of the *wšs*-scepter extends a bit higher, into the space a central stroke would have occupied.

(c) Helck, *JNES* 14, 1955, pp. 24-15 proposed: <sup>1</sup>[*stj mnw.w wr*].w <sup>2</sup>[*wsh.w nyw*] *d’m*, “[Vorführen von gross]en [Denkmälern (und) Halskragen au]s *d’m*-Gold.” Such a restoration fails to mention the rings, which appear in other scenes as objects made of gold (so N. de Garis Davies, A.H. Gardiner, *The Tomb of Huy, Viceroy of Nubia in the Reign of Tutankhamun (No. 40)*, TTS 4, 1926, pls. 16, 24, 27, 29; É. Naville, *The Temple of Deir el-Bahari III*, London, 1898, pl. 69; Hallmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-14 and 40) and electrum (N. de G. Davies, *The Tomb of Puyemrê at Thebes I. The Hall of Memories*, Robb De Peyster Tytus Memorial Series 2, 1922, pls. 32 and 36; Naville, *Deir el-Bahari III*, pls. 78 and 80-81; E. Feucht, *LÄ* 1, 1975, cols. 1216-1217, s. v. “Elektrum;” for *n.wt* of gold see also R. Drenkhahn, *Darstellungen von Negerin in Ägypten*, Hamburg, 1967, pp. 130-132). The plural pellets at the end of the first line support the reading *šš* (compare the orthography in *Wb* I, 229, 5); a description of the collars should detail the materials of which they are formed, only the contrepoids thereof likely to be exclusively of electrum – cf. Grandet, *op. cit.*, p. 206, n. 844.

(d) The *bškw* that Usersatet offers to Amenhotep II is the proper tax of Nubia, parallel to that of Egypt, as opposed to the *inw* of Western Asia. On the ubiquity of *bškw(t)* for Egypt and Nubia, and the relative paucity of the same for Western Asia, see S.T. Smith, *Askut in Nubia*, London, New York, 1995, pp. 181-183; on the differences between Nubian and Asiatic dependencies of Egypt during the New Kingdom see also W.J. Murnane, “Imperial Egypt and the Limits of Power,” in Cohen, Westbrook (eds.), *op. cit.*, pp. 103-104; A.J. Spalinger, “Covetous Eyes South: the Background to Egypt’s Domination over Nubia by the Reign of Thutmose III,” in Cline, O’Connor (eds.), *op. cit.*, pp. 358-362; J.C. Darnell, “The Eleventh Dynasty Royal Inscription from Deir el-Ballas,” *RdE* 59, 2008, pp. 98-102; *id.*, “A Bureaucratic Challenge? Archaeology and Administration in a Desert Environment (Second Millennium B.C.E.),” in Moreno García (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 791.

(e) Helck, *JNES* 14, 1955, p. 24, suggested *kn n hm=f*, “wenn auch die folgenden Spuren wenig dazu passen.” The first sign of *kn* is partially damaged, the sloping side coinciding with a long crack in the surface, and the following *n* is only partially preserved. Although *mḥ-ib n hm=f*, parallel to *mḥ-ib n ntr nfr* on the British Museum stela of Usersatet (H.R. Hall, *Hieroglyphic Texts from Egyptian Stelae in the British Museum*, London, 1925, pl. 34; A. el-H. Zayed, “La stèle du vice-roi de Nubie, Ousersatet, au British Museum,” *Memnonia* 10, 1999, pp. 213-233), would be a plausible epithet – Leprohon, *op. cit.*, p. 1/4, reads “king’s [son and confidant] of His Majesty” on the MFA stela – the traces are those of *kn* (note that traces of the determinative do not appear to be present) in the title augmentation *kn n hm=f* (cf. *Wb* V, 42, 8).

(f) The orthography of *irp*, upon examination of the stela, reveals an *r* over *p* and the twin vessels that determine the word. Identifiable traces of the *nfr*-sign are present.

### Depictions in the Lunette

The images on the lunette provide a number of clues to the meaning of the text that fills most of the surface of the stela. Stripped of unnecessary accoutrements and furniture, offerings pared down to the most symbolic, the image of the king assumes the position of a deity – the divine ruler – to whom the dedicator of the stela offers.

#### *King, Throne, and Lion*

In the stela lunette, and in the Ibrim shrine as well, the king sits enthroned beneath a baldachin atop a dais,<sup>27</sup> and adopts the same basic pose in each depiction – right proper arm lowered and forearm extended above his thigh, holding an *'nh*-sign, the lower horizontal of which extends above his knee; left proper arm bent at the elbow with the hand on the chest, holding a flail over the left shoulder in the stela lunette, and an axe in the shrine.<sup>28</sup>

A lion appears to stride to the right, next to the chair on which Amenhotep II sits.<sup>29</sup> The animal might be a “pet lion,”<sup>30</sup> or perhaps part of the tribute the viceroy presents – felines indeed appear in the tribute of the south in the Ibrim shrine. Becoming the side of the throne in the eyes of the viewer, a depiction of a living lion beside the throne could be a representation of the lion-throne come to life.<sup>31</sup> A close parallel to the depiction is, in fact, the lion throne of Ramesses III in the scenes of the Min Procession at Medinet Habu; on that throne, the lion is represented as though an element separate from and in front of the throne proper, within the shrine atop the sedan.<sup>32</sup> Lion-sided carrying chairs await Akhenaton and Nefertiti in the scenes of “universal” tribute (the Year 12 *durbar*) at Amarna, and Akhenaton rides in such a conveyance to receive tribute from Syria.<sup>33</sup> In the reception of tribute following his Nubian campaign, as depicted in the temple of Beit el-Wali, Ramesses II occupies a more subtle version of the lion throne, the feline element there limited to the heads of lions at the forward corners of the seat.<sup>34</sup> A surviving example of such a lion-throne is the

<sup>27</sup> The hand of the king held against the chest, and the end of the flail he holds, are present; the arm holding the *ankh* is more regularly shaped, as is the back of the ruler. The feet of the throne are complete

<sup>28</sup> The pose is well attested, in statuary (E.R. RUSSMANN, *Eternal Egypt: Masterworks of Ancient Art from the British Museum*, London, 2001, pp. 134-135) and in two-dimensional representations thereof (É. NAVILLE, *The Temple of Deir el Bahari V*, London, 1906, pl. 123; N. de G. DAVIES, *The Tomb of Ken-Amuīn at Thebes I*, New York, 1930, pls. 15-17; THE EPIGRAPHIC SURVEY, *Reliefs and Inscriptions at Luxor Temple I. The Festival procession of Opet in the Colonnade Hall*, OIP 112, 1994, pl. 78 and p. 29 [W.R. JOHNSON, “Honorific Figures of Amenhotep III in the Luxor Temple Colonnade Hall,” in Silverman (ed.), *For his Ka*, SAOC 55, Chicago, 1994, pp. 133-142; W. WAITKUS, *Untersuchungen zu Kult und Funktion des Luxortempels I*, *Aegyptiaca Hamburgensia* 2, 2008, pp. 232-233, 240-241, and 260]).

<sup>29</sup> The paws of the lion are a bit more regular, evincing three separate toes.

<sup>30</sup> So DER MANUELIAN, *Studies in the Reign of Amenophis II*, p. 157; R.M. and J.J. JANSSEN, *Growing Up and Getting Old in Ancient Egypt*, London, 2007, p. 123; see also Helck, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

<sup>31</sup> J. DORESSE, “Le dieu voilé dans sa chasse et la fête de la décade,” *RdE* 32, 1971, pp. 113-136; *RdE* 25, 1973, pp. 92-135; and *RdE* 31, 1977, pp. 36-65. MORSCHAUSER, *op. cit.*, p. 206, n. 15, takes this to be a representation of the lion-throne.

<sup>32</sup> EPIGRAPHIC SURVEY, *Medinet Habu IV. Festival Scenes of Ramses III*, OIP 51, 1940, pl. 197.

<sup>33</sup> N. De G. DAVIES, *Rock Tombs of El Amarna III*, ASE 15, 1905, pl. 13; *id.*, *The Rock Tombs of El Amarna II*, ASE 14, 1905, pls. 37 and 40.

<sup>34</sup> THE EPIGRAPHIC SURVEY, *The Beit el-Wali Temple of Ramesses II*, OINE 1, 1967, pl. 9.



gold throne of Tutankhamun. The lion is a well-attested and appropriate image of the king in Nubia, and the king of Egypt appears as “the lion” in the lamentations of Nubian enemies.<sup>35</sup>

Behind the king is a vertical object with rounded bottom, held above the base of the dais by a personified *nh*-sign. The raised arm is visible, with the vertical edge of the right tie of the *nh* appearing beneath the arm; the other arm was lower, and is lost in the damage near the bottom of the pole.<sup>36</sup>

### *Amphora*

The king is not yet intoxicated – the text (see below) states that he is “commencing to drink and make holiday;” the amphora on the stand before the king presumably contains the wine Amenhotep II is about to consume.<sup>37</sup> The vessel may represent an actual Canaanite import,<sup>38</sup> a visual evocation of the prominence accorded to Syro-Palestinian toponyms in the king’s statement on the stela. Wine from the northeast is not entirely out of keeping with the presentation of offering by the Viceroy of Kush: scenes of the presentation of southern offerings in the tomb of Huy are balanced by depictions of that viceroy also presenting the offerings of southwestern Asia. The great Year 12 *durbar* of Amarna – although universal in its inclusion of human representatives of the major nodes of the Egyptian cosmos – may ultimately have resulted from the Year 12 military action of Akhenaton, carried out by his viceroy Djehutymose in the Wadi Allaqi.<sup>39</sup> The prefacing of a discussion of southern

<sup>35</sup> For Nubian lamentations referring to the Egyptian ruler as a lion, see J.C. DARNELL, “A Stela of the Reign of Tutankhamun from the Region of Kurkur Oasis,” *SAK* 31, 2003, pp. 90-91, text n. e, with corrections in *id.*, “A Stela of Seti I from the Region of Kurkur Oasis,” in M. Collier, S. SNAPE (eds.), *Ramesside Studies in Honour of K.A. Kitchen*, Bolton, 2011, pp. 143-144.

<sup>36</sup> HELCK, *JNES* 14, 1955, p. 22, believed two arms were present, and suggested that the closeness of the hands to the top of the dais suggested an *nh*-sign and ruled out a human attendant; LEPROHON, *op. cit.*, p. 1/4, suggests that “behind the king is a servant holding a tall staff, which may be an ankh sign.” A close parallel to the position of the *nh*-arms, with the end of the tie touching the elbow of the raised arm, is a personified *nh* holding a *hw*-fan in A.M. CALVERLEY, M.F. BROOME, *The Temple of King Sethos I at Abydos II*, 1935, pl. 5.

<sup>37</sup> The stand is a bit better preserved than in the earlier drawing, and a portion of the left side of the neck of the amphora is present.

<sup>38</sup> R. AMIRAN, *Ancient Pottery of the Holy Land from its Beginnings in the Neolithic Period to the End of the Iron Age*, Jerusalem, 1969, p. 139; A. LEONARD Jr., “Canaanite Jars’ and the Late Bronze Age Aegeo-Levantine Wine Trade,” in P.E. McGovern, S.J. Fleming, and S.H. Katz (eds.), *The Origins and Ancient History of Wine*, Amsterdam, 1996, pp. 233-254, particularly the fig. 15.3 chart, p. 237; the amphora depicted on the Usersatet stela has steeply rounded shoulders, the typical LBIA form, in use ca. 1570-1482 BC. Depictions of amphorae similar to that on the Stela of Usersatet appear along with other items of Syro-Palestinian tribute in the tomb of the Vizier Rekhmire (late Thutmose III-early Amenhotep II – N. De Garis DAVIES, *The Tomb of Rekh-mi-Rē’ at Thebes*, *PMMA Expedition* 11, 1943, pls. 21-23); amphorae of the same general shape also appear in scenes of purely Egyptian production, however – *ibid.*, pls. 33 and 45-46. The relatively low placement of the handles of the amphora on the Usersatet stela supports a genuine Canaanite import – compare J. BOURRIAU, “The Beginnings of Amphora Production in Egypt,” in *id.* and J. Phillips (eds.), *Invention and Innovation: The Social Context of Technological Change II. Egypt, the Aegean and the Near East 1650-1150 BC*, Oxford, 2004, pp. 89-91.

<sup>39</sup> N. de G. DAVIES, *The Rock Tombs of El Amarna II. The Tombs of Panehesy and Meryra II*, *ASE* 14, 1905, pls. 37, 40; *id.*, *The Rock Tombs of El Amarna III. The Tombs of Huya and Ahmes*, *ASE* 15, 1905, pl. 13; for the relation of the scenes to the “King as Solar Priest” and human representatives of spiritual forces on the edges of creation, see J.C. DARNELL, “Supposed Depictions of Hittites in the Amarna Period,” *SAK* 18, 1991, p. 137, n. 82. For the Nubian war of Akhenaton see H.S. SMITH, *The Fortress of Buhen, the Inscriptions*, London, 1976, pp. 124-129 (no. 1595), pls. 29 and 75; A. SCHULMAN, “The Nubian War of Akhenaton,” in *L’Égyptologie en 1979*, Paris, 1982, pp. 299-316; W. HELCK, “Ein ‘Feldzug’ unter Amenophis IV. gegen Nubien,” *SAK* 8, 1980, pp. 117-126; W.J. MURNANE, *Texts from the Amarna Period in Egypt*, Atlanta, 1995, pp. 101-103. A

domination with a reference to Egyptian victories in the north – the order in which Amenhotep II discusses the foreigners with whom Usersatet must contend – appears in other Nubian monuments, such as the stela of Sety I's viceroy, Amenemipet, at Ibrim.<sup>40</sup>

### *Object behind Baldachin*

The personified 'nh behind the throne may support a fan, although in the scenes of southern tribute in the shrine of Usersatet at Ibrim, a more unusual object appears, and this may originally have been present on the stela of Usersatet. The object behind the throne of the king in the Ibrim shrine appears to be a lamp or incense burner atop a large tubular stand, with a sort of foot – or perhaps more likely bracket – for support. The foot support finds a close parallel in screens for the temple of Karnak in donation texts and representations of Thutmose III (*Urk.* IV, 629). A close parallel for such a lamp stand is the tall lamp from the Deir el-Medina tomb of the architect Kha, JdE 38642;<sup>41</sup> the foot suggests a possible parallel with X-shaped lamp bases attested for the New Kingdom.<sup>42</sup> Lamps and torches are associated with nocturnal festivals,<sup>43</sup> and as 'h.w intended for the presentation of incense and burnt offerings they could well be elements of temple furniture.<sup>44</sup> The apparent lamp occupies a place behind the king parallel to that of a fan, which would be appropriate to a deified image.<sup>45</sup> The brazier behind the head of the king might well provide beatifying light behind the royal head, evoking the concept of the divine ruler as solar giver of both light and shadow.<sup>46</sup>

### *Usersatet's Offerings*

The offering of collars and rings suggest that the lunette of Usersatet's stela presents a syncopated version of the offerings one might expect the king to receive during a southern tribute festival (see below). Amongst the objects may have been the elaborate "centerpieces" that depict the southern landscape, such as the complex depiction of southern plant and animal life that the tomb owner offers to Amenhotep II alongside the riot of other New Years

preliminary comparison of the Egyptian festival to the *darbar* of the British *Raj* appears in J.C. DARNELL, C. MANASSA, *Tutankhamun's Armies: Battle and Conquest during Ancient Egypt's Late 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty*, Hoboken, 2007, pp. 125-131; the author will develop this in a forthcoming study of Nubian self-representation, in which the Egyptian tribute festivals, the *darbars* of the *Raj*, and viceregal celebrations in New Spain (Cuzco and Mexico City) are compared.

<sup>40</sup> CAMINOS, *op. cit.*, pp. 83-90 and pls. 39-40.

<sup>41</sup> E. SCHIAPARELLI, *Tomba intatta dell'Architetto Cha*, Turin, 1927, pp. 144-145; compare also the bronze lamp in K. MICHALOWSKI, C. DESROCHES, J. DE LINAGE, J. MANTEUFFEL, M. ZEJMO-ZEJMIS, *Tell Edfou 1939*, *FFP* 3, Cairo, 1950, pl. 21, nos. 4, 7-9, 11-13, 14, and 18.

<sup>42</sup> See the description and references in *Egypt's Golden Age: the Art of Living in the New Kingdom, 1558-1085 B.C.*, Boston, 1982, pp. 65-66.

<sup>43</sup> See the references in J.C. DARNELL, *The Rock Shrine of Paḥu, Gebel Akhenaton, and Other Rock Inscriptions from the Western Hinterland of Qamūla, Theban Desert Road Survey 2*, *YEP* 1, 2013, p. 91.

<sup>44</sup> Compare A.H. GARDINER, "Davies's Copy of the Great Speos Artemidos Inscription," *JEA* 32, 1946, pl. 6, l. 4; *Urk.* IV, 634, silver 'h.w-stands of Thutmose III.

<sup>45</sup> See the discussion in L. BELL, "Aspects of the Cult of the Deified Tutankhamun," in P. Posener-Kriéger (ed.), *Mélanges Gamal Eddin Mokhtar I*, *BdE* 97/1, 1985, pp. 31-59.

<sup>46</sup> Compare the text of the small votive stela of Huy from the Karnak cachette (Cairo JdE 37463), in which the viceroy apparently prays to the divine, Amunized Tutankhamun to release the viceroy from the grip of the divinely inflicted blindness from which Huy suffered: *mꜣꜣꜣꜣ i hr.t-hrw kkw n ir.nꜣk šḥd nꜣ i mꜣꜣꜣ i tw*, "As I daily see the darkness you inflicted – shine for me, that I see you." (see A. ROWE, "Newly-Identified Monuments in the

gifts in the tomb of Qenamun.<sup>47</sup> Those baroquely elaborate and gilded objects project onto the ruler who receives them the aura of the god Shu,<sup>48</sup> and in a ritual setting the broad collars themselves have a solarizing influence on the royal person. An offering of collars in the Eastern High Gate at Medinet Habu has the effect of transforming the body of the king into the elements of the collars themselves, fossilizing the king into a solar statue like the ageing sun god himself.<sup>49</sup> In Late Period scenes of the king himself offering the *wsh*-collar to deities, the offering is associated with divine protection, particularly that offered by Atum and the ennead of Heliopolis, with the king compared to Shu, the child of Atum.<sup>50</sup>

### Main text

The main portion of the stela contains 14 horizontal lines of hieroglyphic text, written right to left; significant damage mars the ends of the first two lines of text, a portion near the end of line 3, and the openings of lines 1 through 9 (almost half of line 2, a bit more than half of line 3, again about half of line 4, and decreasing portions of lines 5 through 9). The inscription opens with the date – specified as the celebration of the king’s accession – and a description of the setting in which the king personally prepared a copy of the royal decree of which Usersatet’s stela presents a monumental copy. In the decree, the king alludes to populations to the northeast of Egypt by means of referencing humans who appear to belong to the household of his viceroy. The king expresses himself in a more colloquial grammatical register than one might expect for such a decree and the resulting monument memorializing it.<sup>51</sup> The text divides into three portions:

1. the introduction, providing the date and setting of the royal decree;
2. the first portion of the decree, consisting primarily of epithets of the viceroy, the second part of which details the northern captives who are members of the viceroy’s household;
3. the second and final portion of the decree, introduced with *ky ḏd*, referencing the Nubians with whom the viceroy is now primarily concerned.

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Egyptian Museum Showing the Deification of the Dead.” *ASAE* 40, 1940, pp. 47-49; *Urk.* IV, 2075, 14-2076, 8; BELL, *op. cit.*, pp. 37-38 [and n. 168, pp. 54-55, for parallels to the passage]; M.M. LUISELLI, *Die Suche nach Gottesnähe: Untersuchungen zur persönlichen Frömmigkeit in Ägypten von der Ersten Zwischenzeit bis zum Ende des Neuen Reiches*, *ÄAT* 73, 2011, pp. 347-348).

<sup>47</sup> DAVIES, *The Tomb of Ken-Amūn at Thebes* 1, pls. 13-14.

<sup>48</sup> S. DONNAT, “Les jardins d’orfèvrerie des tombes du Nouvel Empire: essai d’interprétation,” in S.H. Aufrère (ed.), *ERUV* 1, *OrMonsp* 10, Montpellier, 1999, pp. 209-218, discusses the elaborate centerpieces as representations of the Nubian landscape that is the home to Hathor-Tefnut, whom the golden metal itself evokes.

<sup>49</sup> THE EPIGRAPHIC SURVEY, *Medinet Habu VIII. The Eastern High Gate*, *OIP* 94, 1970, pl. 648, ll. 1-5; pl. 630 *et passim*; J.C. DARNELL, *Colours of the Uraei* (forthcoming).

<sup>50</sup> See R. BEAUD, “L’offrande du collier-*OUSEKH*,” in S. Israelit-Groll (ed.), *Studies in Egyptology Presented to Miriam Lichtheim* I, Jerusalem, 1990, pp. 46-62.

<sup>51</sup> Citing the Usersatet stela, L. POPKO, *Untersuchungen zur Geschichtsschreibung der Ahmosiden- und Thutmosidenzeit, Wahrnehmungen und Spuren Altägyptens* 2, 2006, p. 80, n. 86, notes that even the king in the early Eighteenth Dynasty spoke Late Egyptian. According to P. COLLOMBERT, L. COULON, “Les dieux contre le mer. Le début du ‘papyrus d’Astarté’ (pBN 202),” *BIFAO* 100, 2000, p. 225, the stela of Usersatet provides evidence that vernacular grammar – Late Egyptian – “imprégnait déjà la langue de chancellerie.”

## I. Introduction – Date and Setting

<sup>1</sup>*ḥsb.t 23 ʒbd 4 ʒḥ.t sw 1 hrw ny ḥb ḥ'.t-nsw.t* (a)

*mī.ty wḏ ḥr.n ḥm=f m 'wy=fy ds=f* (b)

*n [sḏ-nsw.t ny Kš Wsr-St.t]*

<sup>2</sup>*[ist* (c) *ḥ'.t ḥm=f ḥr tnt.t] [ʒ.t] n(y.t) pr-ʒ 'nh wḏ snb* (d)

*tī-sw m [ḥms] <ḥr> swri <ḥr> ḥri hrw[-nfr]* (e)

Year 23, month four of *akhet*, day 1 – day of the festival of the royal accession:

Copy of the decree that his majesty made with his own hands

for [the viceroy Usersatet],

[at the time of his majesty's glorious appearance upon the] <sup>1</sup>great<sup>1</sup> [dais] of pharaoh, l.p.h.,

when he was <sup>1</sup>commencing<sup>1</sup> to drink and celebrate <sup>1</sup>holiday.<sup>1</sup>

(a) For the accession date of Amenhotep II, and possible coregency with Thutmose III, see P. Der Manuelian, in Cline and O'Connor (eds.), *op. cit.*, pp. 420-421. The date is almost entirely intact in the original photograph (HU-MFA Expedition photograph A3310\_NS), although now most of the *rnp.t*-sign, all of the *t*-loaf, and the strokes beneath 20 are gone. The Object Register mentions only two fragments, and the MFA has only two pieces accessioned, so the missing area appears to have crumbled away before or during the transport of the object.

(b) The *wḏ* appears to belong to the category of the *wḏ-nsw.t* – P. Vernus, “Les ‘decrets’ royaux (*wḏ-nsw*): l'énoncé d'auctoritas comme genre,” in S. Schoske (ed.), *Akten des vierten internationalen Ägyptologen Kongresses, München 1985 IV*, BSAK 4, 1991, pp. 239-246; *id.*, “The Royal Command (*wḏ-nsw*): a Basic Deed of Executive Power,” in Moreno García (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 259-340 (refs. to Usersatet's stela pp. 260, 280, 292, 307, 314-315). What the king prepared with his own hands is the copy, of which Usersatet's stela is a tertiary, monumental version; the fact of setting down the *wḏ* in writing appears to ensure that the matter was indeed an *wḏ-nsw.t*. What the *wḏ* initially was – written or spoken – remains unstated, although the parallelism between the stela and the Ibrim shrine suggest that Amenhotep II may initially have spoken the *wḏ* (compare Vernus, in Moreno García (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 269-270 and 277 [citing Horemheb's *nsw.t ds=f dd m wḏ*, “it is the king himself who speaks as a command”], pp. 279-281 for writing the decree, even if not overtly labeled as an *wḏ-nsw.t*).

(c) Helck reasonably suggested parallels involving *ist* introducing the concomitant event. Usersatet employed *tī-sw* as a further embedded description in the following clause.

(d) Although Helck restored *kḏp*, “private apartments,” and in spite of the fact that subsequent translations have followed him (cf. E.F. Wente, *Letters from Ancient Egypt, Writings from the Ancient World* 1, 1990, p. 27: “the private apartment”), the apparent *kḏp*-sign (on the forms of which see H. Brunner, “Die Hieroglyphen für ‘räuchern’, ‘bedecken’, ‘Handfläche’ und die ihnen entsprechenden Wörter,” *NAWG* 1965 Nr. 3, 1965, p. 84-86) is not clearly preserved. As Helck recognized, the *kḏp* – associated with the “children of the *kḏp*” (cf. W. Helck, *Zur Verwaltung des Mittleren und Neuen Reichs, PdÄ* 3, 1958, pp. 252-254; A.-P. Zivie, “La Tombe d'un officier de la XVIII<sup>e</sup> dynastie à Saqqara,” *RdE* 31, 1979, pp. 140-141 and 144-151) – is not a usual area for celebration of a *hrw-nfr* in state (Helck's restoration leads to Redford, *Akhenaten*, p. 32; *id.*, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel in Ancient Times*, p. 230, suggesting that the king was in the “harem”). The stone to the right of the damaged *ny pr-ʒ*, visible in HU-MFA Expedition photograph A3310\_NS (published in Helck, *JNES* 14, 1955, pl. 2), was no longer present by the time of Dunham's publication, and no smaller fragments are mentioned in the Object Register or in the records of the MFA. What Helck interpreted as a down-turning element to the left of a horizontal sign in the early photograph is too deep and irregularly formed to be anything but damage. A doubled horizontal

line to the right, visible in the field photograph, may be carved, however, and is consistent with a horizontal ʿ3-sign. The location of the event is probably the same as that described in the shrine of Usersatet at Ibrim – *hʿy.t hmꜣf m-hnw Wꜣs.t hr tntꜣ.t ʿ3.t*, “glorious appearance of his majesty within Thebes upon the great dais” (Caminos, *Ibrim*, pl. 28, l. 2 of main horizontal text). On the *tntꜣ.t*, see V. Rondot, *La grande salle hypostyle de Karnak: les architraves*, Paris, 1997, p. 13, n. h to No. 3 upper; Grandet, *op. cit.*, p. 167, n. 676.

(e) The appearance of *m hms* (*m* + infinitive of a verb of posture) is an early attestation of *hmsi* as auxiliary verb (see J.-M. Kruchten, *Études de syntaxe néo-égyptienne*, *AIPHOS*, *Supplément* 1, 1982; *id.*, “*hʿ*, *hmsi* et *sdr* en néo-égyptien,” *GM* 84, 1985, pp. 33-40); the two adverbial adjuncts (for the auxiliary with two adverbial complements, see Kruchten, *Études de syntaxe néo-égyptienne*, pp. 74-76) are *hr* + infinitive, *hr* not unexpectedly omitted (cf. Fr. Junge, trans. D. Warburton, *Late Egyptian Grammar, an Introduction*, Oxford, 2001, p. 112) in a text revealing some early Late Egyptianisms. A parallel for *hr iri hrw nfr* as the second adjunct following *hmsi* appears in A.H. Gardiner, *Late-Egyptian Stories*, *BiAeg* 1, 1932, p. 94, ll. 8-9; for *hmsi* “to commence” with *hr ir.t hrw-nfr* as adjunct, compare *ibid.*, pp. 7 (l. 10), 25 (ll. 15-16), and 28 (l. 13). As the king is just commencing to drink, the suggestion of Redford, *Akhenaten*, p. 32, that the king “was drinking wine (which in part explains the tenor of the missive)”, is not entirely convincing – Amenhotep II was apparently not drunk either when he issued or copied the decree. Vernus, in Moreno Garcia (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 307, reads “when he was in the position of one who eats, who drinks, who spends a happy day”, interpreting the damaged seated man as Gardiner A2 for *wmm*. The traces suit a seated male figure with arm bent to left (contrast the lowered arm of the determinative to *hmsi* at the end of l. 4, with right forearm raised), and an abbreviated orthography is more appropriate to *hmsi* than to *wmm* (compare R. Hannig, *Ägyptisches Wörterbuch II. Mittleres Reich und Zweite Zwischenzeit*, Mainz, 2006, vol. 2, p. 1685; L.H. Lesko, with B.S. Lesko, *A Dictionary of Late Egyptian* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Providence, 2004, vol. 1, p. 314). A bit of the back of the head is present (that line is too far to the right and the angle of the arm too low and long for the sign to be a squatting figure wearing the *khat*-headdress), and the lower level of the toes to the rear – as in the determinative to *hmsi* in l. 4 – also supports reading *hmsi*. Drunkenness, myrrh, and *hrw nfr* are frequently associated, but eating is not stressed in festival descriptions of *hrw nfr* (see J.C. Darnell, *et al.*, *Theban Desert Road Survey* 1, *OIP* 119, 2004, pp. 130-132). The amphora directly represents the drinking that is about to commence, but no food is present; even when Akhenaton and Nefertiti appear at meal, they sit on light furniture in front of tables, not enthroned atop a dais (cf. N. de G. Davies, *The Rock Tombs of El Amarna III. The Tombs of Huya and Ahmes*, *ASE* 15, 1905, pl. 4 and 6).

## II. The Decree, Section 1 – Praise of King and Viceroy

<sup>3</sup>[...] [hwi<sup>1</sup>] [m] sh.t hpš (?) (a) nht[-ʿ kn] hr hpšꜣf wꜣf<sup>4</sup>[...] m s.wtꜣsn nb(t)  
nn rky m tꜣ nb (b)

hmsꜣk (c) <sup>5</sup>[...] kny kfꜣw hr hꜣs.wt nb(.wt) snn(y) šꜣw n hmꜣf (d) ’Imn-hꜣtp hꜣkꜣ-’Iwnw  
<sup>6</sup>[...] Nhrynꜣ dīw šꜣ(i) Pꜣhꜣty (e)

pꜣ <sup>7</sup>[nb hm.t] (f) m Sngr sdm.t-ʿš m Kbn msw.t <sup>8</sup>[šri.t] ny.t ’Irrh iꜣ(y).t ny.t ’Irph  
nꜣy Tihꜣsy <sup>9</sup>bn nk.t r drꜣw (g)  
iwꜣw r ih m kf(ꜣ).t (h)

[...] [who smites] [with] a blow of the scimitar(?), powerful of [arm, valiant]  
with his strong arm,  
who bends back [...] wherever they may be,

with the result that there is no rebel in any land.

You are taking up residence [...], brave one who captures in all foreign lands,  
 chariot warrior who fights for his majesty Amenhotep-Ruler-of-Heliopolis,  
 [the one who ...] Naharin, who arranged the destiny of Pakhaty.  
 Oh you [possessor of a] <sup>1</sup>female-servant<sup>1</sup> from Babylon, a female worker from Byblos,  
 a little girl of Alalakh, and an old woman of Arrapkha –  
 Those of Takhsy are entirely worthless;  
 what good are they at all?

(a) The now missing text following *hrw-nfr* probably contained the beginning of the royal decree. Helck suggested a restoration based on the letter of Thutmose I to his viceroy, *Urk.* IV, 80 (*mk in.tw n-k wd pn n nsw.t*); the content of an *wd-nsw.t* might indeed be similar to that of a letter (Vernus, in Moreno García (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 261 and 289-290). Even were this correct, the delivery would not confirm a long-distance letter. The surviving epithets relate entirely to the subjugation of foreigners, and one might expect the opening of the decree to have contained at least a brief reference to the king producing peace and quiescence in Egypt – compare the pair *mk Km.t w'f h3s.wt* (see Chr. Desroches-Noblecourt, Ch. Kuentz, *Le petit temple d'Abou Simbel I. Étude archéologique et épigraphique, essai d'interprétation*, Cairo, 1968, pp. 52-55). Just in front of *sh.t* is a trace that resembles the foot of a standing human figure, possibly the determinative of *hwi*; a horizontal sign must have occupied the available space in the text above *sh.t*, and with appeal to *Wb* III, 468, 3, the suggested *hwi m sh.t hpš* is possible. The element *sh.t hpš* does not appear to be common in military epithets, but does fall under *Wb* III, 467, 14 (blow of a sword); the *Zetteln* do not include an example with *hpš*, although they cite the *sh.wt n(y.wt) dm.wt* of the Great Karnak inscription of Merneptah (C. Manassa, *The Great Karnak Inscription of Merneptah*, *YES* 5, 2003, pl. 9, l. 38).

(b) Helck suggests a number of possible parallels for the missing text. The *kn* copied as present in Helck, *JNES* 14, 1955, p. 23 does not survive, and the field photograph shows that portion of the stela already to have disappeared. Surviving bits of *hpš=f* are visible. The syncopated royal eulogy is in keeping with the “decree” nature of the text (see Vernus, in Moreno García (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 302-304).

(c) The *sdm=f* of *hmsi* may be an example of the uncommon Late Egyptian use of the preterite *sdm=f* instead of the stative – cf. J. Černý, S.I. Groll, *A Late Egyptian Grammar*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., *Studia Pohl: Series Maior. Dissertationes scientificae de Rebus Orientis Antiqui* 4, 1984, pp. lxxxii and 211. The use of *hmsi* at the opening of Amenhotep II's message echoes, in the context of the stela, the description of Amenhotep II in l. 2, where *hmsi* is an auxiliary verb. Amenhotep II appears to make reference to the time when the viceroy took up residence in Nubia, as does a scene in the tomb of Huy (Davies, Gardiner, *op. cit.*, pl. 11).

(d) Helck observed the parallelism between *kny* and *sny*, and this in fact extends to the following participles: *kny kf'w* and *sny šf'w*.

(e) For *diw* as a Late Egyptian participial form, compare K. Sethe, *Das ägyptische Verbum* II, Leipzig, 1899, p. 368, § 862. For *š3i*, “destiny, disposition,” J. Quaegebeur, *Le dieu égyptien Shai dans la religion et l'onomastique*, *OLA* 2, 1975, particularly p. 62; for the use with *rdi*, *ibid.*, p. 109. The toponym *P3-H3ty* appears only here, a construction parallel to *P3-K3n'n'*. The latter toponym – in which some have seen a designation of Gaza – appears always to have referred to Canaan as a whole (M.G. Hasel, “Pa-Canaan in the Egyptian New Kingdom: Canaan or Gaza?,” *JAET* 1/1, 2009, pp. 8-17). Although Pakhaty might reference a “place of Hatti” as gateway to the region – perhaps Takhsy (area of Qadesh itself – Redford, *Wars in Syria and Palestine of*

*Thutmose III*, p. 244) – the parallelism of Pa-Canaan supports the interpretation of Pakhaty as an alternate designation of Hatti (so Vandersleyen, *op. cit.*, p. 331). Also possible is a reading “the Hittite” – compare the writing of the same with foreign land determinative in J.C. Darnell, R. Jasnow, “On the Moabite Inscriptions of Ramesses II at Luxor Temple,” *JNES* 52, 1993, pp. 271-273.

(f) Helck suggests *hnw.t*; a more neutral *hm.t* or *s.t* (or *s.t-hm.t*) is also possible; *hnw.t* designates the consort of the ruler of Joppa in the Taking of Joppa (cf. Gardiner, *Late-Egyptian Stories*, p. 84, l. 8). The geographic pairing of the first two toponyms on the one hand, and the third and fourth on the other (see below) suggests a similar parallelism for the labels of the women. With the second pair bearing designations relating to age, the first two should be similarly parallel; the surviving *sdm.t-š* suggests the broken word was a term for servant, and the space at the beginning of l. 7 allows for *nb* with a following *hm*-stick with feminine *t*. Vandersleyen, *op. cit.*, p. 331, suggests the seated figure at the end of the break at the beginning of the line is a seated male figure, Gardiner A 41, 42, or 49; how he would understand the text is unclear. The *p3* probably introduces a vocative (so Morschauser, *op. cit.*, p. 207, n. 19, although his suggested *p3 s3 nsw.t* neither fits the available space nor yields a good sense for the passage). Redford, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel*, p. 230, reads “viol[ator of the] Babylonian [woman],” without explanation. E. Hornung, “The Pharaoh,” in S. Donadoni (ed.), *The Egyptians*, Chicago, London, 1997, p. 291, suggests “wife.”

(g) The two statements regarding the people of Takhsy (for *n3y* + toponym see R.A. Caminos, *A Tale of Woe*, Oxford, 1977, p. 68, nn. 2 and 8) begin the second address to the viceroy in the first portion of the decree, following the lengthy direct address in which the viceroy appears as possessor of an array of Western Asiatic women. For the grammar, see P. Vernus, “Études de philologie et de linguistique (IV),” *RdE* 36, 1985, p. 164, an example of his “*bn* predicative + sujet indéfini en Néo-égyptien.” Vernus translates “Ceux de *Thsy* sont tous des moins que rien (lit. sans rien),” understanding: “Ici, *bn* + sujet indéfini se subsume en prédicat d’une phrase adverbiale dont *n3y Thsy* est le sujet, selon le principe déjà observé avec *bn* + sujet indéfini.” See also B. Kroeber, *Die Neuägyptizismen vor der Amarnazeit: Studien zur Entwicklung der ägyptischen Sprache vom Mittleren zum Neuen Reich*, unpublished PhD dissertation, Tübingen, 1970, pp. 40 (§ 21.12.2, ex. 13, and § 21.2, ex. 2) and 62 (§ 23.42, ex. 2), “Diese *Thsjw* sind ganz und gar nichts.”

(h) For *iw=w r ih m kf3.t*, see Kroeber, *op. cit.*, p. 38 (§ 21.12.2, ex. 5), “wozu sind sie denn gut?” For *iw=w r ih* as “Adverbialsatz des Futurums,” H. Satzinger, *Neuägyptische Studien*, Vienna, 1976, p. 201; see also S.I. Groll, *The Negative Verbal System of Late Egyptian*, London, New York, 1970, pp. 140-141; A. Shisha-Halevy, “Quelques thématizations marginales du verbe en Néo-Égyptien,” *OLP* 9, 1978, p. 60. Der Manuelian, *Studies in the Reign of Amenophis II*, p. 157, “of what are they trustworthy?,” confuses *m kf(3).t* with *kf3(-ib)*, and may have influenced the entry for *kft* (*kf3t*), “Vertrauenswürdigkeit,” in R. Hannig, *Grosses Handwörterbuch Ägyptisch-Deutsch (2800-950 v. Chr.)*, Mainz, 1997, p. 881. Morschauser, *op. cit.*, p. 207, n. 18, opts for “upon disclosure,” an unattested use of *kf3i* of *Wb* V, 119. The ending *m-kf3.t* normally appears with negatives, and is otherwise a rare element of more literary Late Egyptian – R.A. Caminos, *Late-Egyptian Miscellanies*, *BES* 1, 1954, p. 196, with references; H. Satzinger, “Der Leiter des Speicherwesens Si-êse Sohn des Qeni und seiner Wiener Statue,” *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen in Wien* 74, 1978, p. 16, n. r; Lesko and Lesko, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 173; B. Mathieu, *La poésie amoureuse de l’Égypte ancienne, recherches sur un genre littéraire au Nouvel Empire*, *BdE* 116, 1996, p. 40, n. 64; on the basis of orthography and use, *m kf3.t* probably corresponds in meaning to English “in the end.”

### III. The Decree, Section 2 – Advice to the Viceroy

*ky dd n p3 s3-nsw.t* (a)

*m n'.t* (b) <sup>10</sup>*n Nhsy(.w) m kf(3).t*

sꜣy tw (c) r nꜣyꜣsn rmt.w ḥnꜣ nꜣyꜣsn <sup>11</sup>ḥkꜣw.w (d)  
 ptr pꜣ bꜣk ny nmḥy.w (e) in.nꜣk (f) r di.tꜣf r sr

<sup>12</sup>iw bn sr pw n pꜣyꜣk smi.tꜣf n ḥmꜣf (g)  
 rꜣ-pw r di.t sdmꜣtw (h)

in-gꜣw (i) <sup>13</sup>ikhw m ḏꜣm  
 istnw m ḥsmn (j)  
 tiꜣw ḏri(w) (k) m s.t-n.t  
<sup>14</sup>pꜣ ky m bꜣr-šnd.t (l)

m-ir sdm n md.wtꜣsn m ḏꜣ wp.(w)tꜣsn (m)

A further statement for the viceroy:

Do not be lenient in the least toward the Nubian(s);

guard yourself against their people and their magicians.

Look after the bureaucratic outsider of a servant whom you recruited  
 in order to make into an official.

(though he is not an official of your reporting him to his majesty,  
 unless it is in order to cause one [scil. the king] to hear:

“For lack of a battle axe of fine gold,  
 the hafting of bronze,  
 the one *tiꜣw*-staff is reliable in the place of the flood,  
 the other (is reliable) in the *bꜣr*-water of acacia.”)

Do not heed their words in searching out their report(s).

(a) Following the eulogistic preamble, the royal *wḏ*-decree employs the *ky ḏḏ* “substitute” introductory formula of Bakir, *op. cit.*, pp. 52-54.

(b) For *m* + apparent infinitive *nꜣi.t*, Helck, *JNES* 14, 1955, p. 27, suggested a version of *nꜣi* of *Wb* II, 206, 4-6 (see also W. Vycichl, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue copte*, Leuven, 1983, p. 136; note also J. Osing, *Die Nominalbildung des Ägyptischen* 2, Mainz, 1976, pp. 439-440, on the occurrence of the variants **NA** and **NAE** [the latter from a form with final *t*] from *nꜣi.t* in Apokryphon II), with unusual determinative. According to Kroeber, *op. cit.*, p. 174 (§ 35.3, ex. 9), *nꜣi.t* in the Usersatet text is an early example of the infinitive replacing the negatival complement. A possible explanation of the bird determinative of *nꜣi.t* is that the *t* and bad-bird are a graphic corruption of the wakeful eye (compare M. Marciniak, *Les inscriptions hiératiques du temple de Thoutmosis III, Deir el-Bahari* 1, 1974, particularly 1, 29; 39, 4 examples), in which case this would be the more usual Middle Egyptian negatival complement. Morschauer, *op. cit.*, p. 208, n. 22, suggests “to be entangled with,” by unlikely argumentation associating *nꜣi* with *Wb* II, 201, 1, “Stricke drehen;” see also D. Meeks, *AnLex*, 78.1991.

(c) So Kroeber, *op. cit.*, p. 27 (§ 12.3).



(d) Morschauser, *op. cit.*, pp. 208-209, assumes Amenhotep II would not be concerned with magic or magicians, and without good parallel produces a rendering “demagogues” or “flatterers” for *hkꜣw.w*; his argument that a belief in magic would be contrary to the “rational” nature of the royal message ignores the Egyptian understanding of magic, as is well described in R.K. Ritner, *The Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice*, SAOC 54, Chicago, 1993. Nubia as the home of potentially dangerous magic is well attested in Egyptian documents – cf. Y. Koenig, “La Nubie dans les textes magiques, l’inquiétante étrangeté,” *RdE* 38, 1987, pp. 105-110; H.-J. Thissen, “Nubien in demotischen magischen Texten,” in D. Mendel, U. Claudi (eds.), *Ägypten im Afro-orientalischen Kontext (Gedenkschrift Peter Behrens)*, Cologne, 1991, pp. 369-376. The use of execration images as one means of countering such a threat (cf. G. Posener, *Cinq figurines d’envoûtement*, Cairo, 1987, pp. 17-34) was a case of fighting paranormal fire with paranormal fire, and Amenhotep II’s treatment of the rulers of Takhsy may represent a use of live captives for such a ritual (see below).

(e) The verb *ptr* need not have the cautionary sense of “keep an eye on, beware of,” but may take on a more benevolent, or at least proprietary, sense of “look after, have a look at” – compare R.J. Demarée, with B. Leach and P. Usick, *The Bankes Late Ramesside Papyri, British Museum Research Publication 155*, 2006, p. 12 (P. BM EA 75018 recto l. 10). The *bꜣk ny nmhy.w* involves an attributive genitive with the term *nmhy*, referring to people outside of the official service, not of the bureaucracy (see below). Redford, *Akhenaten*, p. 32: “See to the tax of the sharecroppers ...” (*id.*, *Slave to Pharaoh*, p. 6: “See to the labour-taxes of the peasants”), does not suit the orthography of *bꜣk*, or the lack of article to *nmhy.w*, nor does it reveal the best understanding of *nmh*. A.H. GARDINER, *Egypt of the Pharaohs*, Oxford, 1961, p. 199, interprets the text to mean that Amenhotep II urges Usersatet to “replace any objectionable chief by some man of humble birth.”

(f) For *ini*, “to recruit,” note Merikare E62 – W. Helck, *Die Lehre für König Merikare*, Wiesbaden, 1977, p. 36, § XXII (J.Fr. Quack, *Studien zur Lehre für König Merikare*, GOF IV/23, 1992, p. 176) – *m tn sꜣ s r [nds] in nꜣk s hr rꜣ-ꜣ.wyꜣfy*, “Do not distinguish between the son of a *s*-man over (the son of) a *nds*-man – recruit for yourself a man because of his deeds.” Compare also Tjehemau No. 3, ll. 15-19: *hd.n Thmꜣw nht mi mꜣw Sz-Rꜣ Bity hnꜣ mšꜣꜣf pn in.nꜣf*, “Tjehemau the victorious sailed north like the lion, the Son of Re, the *Bity*-king, together with this army of his which he recruited”). An official might relate his *ini r*-recruitment, without referencing the agent thereof – cf. J. Stauder-Porchet, *La préposition en égyptien de la première phase. Approche sémantique*, *AegHelv* 21, 2009, p. 116.

(g) For the grammar see Kroeber, *op. cit.*, pp. 62 (§ 23.42, ex. 3), 133 (§ 33.12.4, ex. 3), and 189 (§ 41.31, ex. 2); J.Fr. Quack, *Die Lehren des Ani*, OBO 141, 1994, p. 38; Darnell, *SAK* 31, 2003, p. 80, n. e. The reading of Der Manuelian, *Studies in the Reign of Amenophis II*, p. 158: “although he is not an official of your (stature?, nevertheless) let him be reported to his Majesty” is faulty (*ibid.*, n. 24 is more plausible); Redford, *Slave to Pharaoh*, p. 7, reads “if there is no officer of your own, let it be reported to His Majesty,” difficult to reconcile with the grammar. Morschauser, *op. cit.*, p. 212, “it is a matter (*rꜣ*) for one to pay attention to,” attempting to do away with *rꜣ-pw*, is untenable, both grammatically (preposition *r*) and lexically (*rꜣ* instead of *md.t*).

(h) For *rꜣ-pw*, see Junge, *op. cit.*, p. 87; also Kroeber, *op. cit.*, p. 55 (§ 23.1, ex. 3): “In diesem Beleg leitet das *rꜣ-pw* einen neuen Satz ein, der eine Alternative zum vorher Ausgesagten enthält.”

(i) For initial adverbials, see A.H. Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar* 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., Oxford, 1957, p. 117, § 153; A. Loprieno, “Focus, Mood, and Negative Forms: Middle Egyptian Syntactic Paradigms and Diachrony,” *LingAeg* 1, 1991, pp. 205-208, on leftward movement of focalized adverbial predicates. The closest parallel (already Gardiner, *Grammar*, pp. 115 [§ 148.5] and 134 [§ 178]) – a sentence beginning with *mk in-gꜣw* – is P. UC 32201 verso l. 8 (P. Kahun 31, verso 8-10/Letter VI.4 verso, l. 8): F.Ll. Griffith, *Hieratic Papyri from Kahun and Gurob (Principally of the Middle Kingdom)*, London, 1898, pls. 30-31; M. Collier, St. Quirke, *The UCL Lahun Papyri: Letters*, *BAR International Series* 1083, 2002, pp. 104-109, CD files UC32201-f-TO and BO, UC32201-b-TO

and BO (Wente, *Letters*, no. 99, p. 81; E. Oréal, *Les particules en Égyptien ancien, de l'Ancien Égyptien à l'Égyptien Classique*, BdE 152, 2011, p. 34). This might be a writing of *ngꜣw*, “to lack,” *Wb* III, 349, 8; D. Meeks, *AnLex*, 79.1648; or “one lacking,” *Wb* III, 349, 7; Meeks, *AnLex*, 79.1647 (on the ambiguity of *ngꜣ* or *n-gꜣw*, see Caminos, *Late Egyptian Miscellanies*, p. 128 [ref. to P. Anastasi IV 1b, 2]). Morschauser, *op. cit.*, pp. 212-213, wants to see here the verb *ngi* / *ngꜣ*, “to break,” *Wb* II, 348, 6-14, although the determinative is not appropriate; through improbable argumentation he derives a meaning of “lawbreaker,” ultimately “traitor,” for the word. Redford, *Slave to Pharaoh*, p. 7, reads “an axe of electrum with fixtures of bronze is missing, and the stout quarter-staff is in a water hole, and the other one is in the marsh(??),” taking *ngꜣ* as an initial verb. Theoretically *n gꜣw* could conclude the preceding clause, but this would leave the reference to the battle axe hanging, and its relation to the staves unclear.

(j) The *istnw* is the hafting of the blade, normally of leather; in parallel to the preceding (object + *m* + designation of material), *istnw* is a *nomen instrumentis*. For hafting see W.V. Davies, *Catalogue of Egyptian Antiquities in the British Museum VII. Tools and Weapons 1. Axes*, London, 1987, p. 69, with reference to *istnw* as leather bindings in P. Reisner II; *ibid.*, n. 7, Davies renders the Usersatet passage: “a battle-axe (*ikhw*) is described as being ‘bound with bronze’ (*istnw m ḥsmn*), probably referring to bronze wiring.” A. De Buck, A.H. Gardiner, in A.H. Gardiner, *Chester Beatty Gift, HPBM, Third Series*, London, 1935, p. 3, n. 3 already compared the Usersatet stela passage to a portion of the story of Truth and Falsehood (Gardiner, *Late-Egyptian Stories*, p. 35, ll. 12-16 [with the partially parallel but broken passage p. 30, ll. 9-12], discussed in Davis, *Axes*, p. 68) – “Is there an axe as big as you said, wherein is the mountain of El as a blade, the trees [?] of Coptos as a haft [*šꜣti*], the tomb of the god as a socket [?] [*mꜣyt*], and the cattle of Kar as a binding [*istnw*]?” For elaborate weapons as markers of office and favor, see the discussion below.

(k) The *tisw* cannot refer to the handle, the common term for which would be *št* / *šꜣti* – see Davies, *Axes*, pp. 69-70. Morschauser, *op. cit.*, pp. 215-216, notes the frequent occurrence of officials acting with the “firmness of bronze” (*dri mi biꜣ* – see the references in Caminos, *Late Egyptian Miscellanies*, p. 608).

(l) Der Manuelian, *Studies in the Reign of Amenophis II*, p. 158, reads “a staff from the canal bank is as good as one from acacia”. For unmarked “one” and article-introduced *pꜣ ky*, see *Wb* V, 113, 2. The Usersatet passage may reveal a chiasmic construction – a place of water, water of a place (see below). The description of each staff beginning with *m* might also indicate the places of origin of the staves – compare the description of the wood of a chariot in Davies, *Tomb of Ken-Amūn*, pl. 22 (*ḥ.tꜣs m tꜣ-ntr ḥr ḥꜣs.t ny.t Nhryn*). Morschauser’s proposed “let another fly away” (Morschauser, *op. cit.*, p. 216) for *pꜣ ky* might work in the context of a fleeing enemy compared to a bird, or one retreating quickly by ship, which may fly (see the references in J.C. Darnell, “Two Sieges in the Aethiopic Stelae,” in Mendel, Claudi (eds.), *op. cit.*, pp. 91-93 [with n. 80]), and have its oars compared to the feathers of the wing of a vulture (Caminos, *Late Egyptian Miscellanies*, p. 173 [P. Anastasi IV 10, 4]). No such imagery is apparent in the text of the Usersatet stela. The passage Morschauser cites from Medinet Habu (The Epigraphic Survey, *Medinet Habu I. Earlier Historical Records of Ramses III*, OIP 8, 1930, pl. 37, l. 16 [and pl. 79, l. 10, as cited in W. Edgerton, J.A. Wilson, *Historical Records of Ramses III*, SAOC 12, 1936, p. 41]) states that the *ba*-souls of the enemy have flown, expressly revealing the avian aspect of the flight, whereas *ky* is neither feathered nor particularly fowl. Morschauser also appeals to *Wb* I, 494, 11, which, however, cites only P. D’Orbiney 18, 4, a passage of the Tale of the Two Brothers in which a splinter from a tree being felled flies off into a lady’s mouth, not pertinent to some supposed and unnamed *ky* removing himself by his own volition.

(m) According to P. Vernus, “Du moyen égyptien au néo-égyptien, de *m* à *m-jr*: l’auxiliation de l’impératif à la dix-huitième dynastie,” in Z. Hawass, J.H. Wegner (eds.), *Millions of Jubilees: Studies in Honor of David P. Silverman*, Cairo, 2010, pp. 317 (ex. 5) and 328 (nn. 20-21) (so also Morschauser, *op. cit.*, pp. 218-219), the passage involves but one Late Egyptian negative

imperative – *m-ir* – with *m d'(r)* being *m* + infinitive. For Kroeber, *op. cit.*, p. 186 (§ 41.2, ex. 4), both a Late Egyptian negative imperative (*m-ir*) and a Middle Egyptian negative imperative (*m d'*) are present: “Die sprachliche und stilistische Unsicherheit dieser Zeit spiegelt sich eindrucksvoll in der Tatsache, dass gleich im nächsten Satz [after *m-ir sdm*] dieses Textes erneut ein Vetitiv auftritt, diesmal aber in der klassischen Form” (so already Helck, *JNES* 14, 1955, p. 25; also Der Manuelian, *Studies in the Reign of Amenophis II*, p. 158 and n. 26; WENTE, *Letters*, p. 28; Redford, *Slave to Pharaoh*, p. 7).

### The Literary Nature of the Royal Decree

Based on the grammar of line 2, Amenhotep II appears not to have been intoxicated, but rather just to have commenced to drink, at the time when he prepared the copy of his *wd*-decree for Usersatet – the king was apparently sufficiently in possession of his literary faculties to compose the well-constructed decree that he subsequently copied and that Usersatet preserved on his stela. The incipient drinking would affect only the king’s copying of the decree, not the prior issuing thereof. As a self-adulatory preamble, the king begins with a series of epithets that describe his prowess in subduing foreigners, setting the stage for the following epithets of the viceroy, and the advice that the king will offer to him. Though not so specific as the epithets of Amenhotep II that form a similar opening to the roughly contemporaneous story of Astarte and the Sea, the epithets of the king at the beginning of the decree for Usersatet also foreshadow topically what follows.<sup>52</sup> Amenhotep II’s self adulation provides a more florid introduction to the following message than one might expect in a letter, but a manner of opening that well suits the *wd-nsw.t* genre. That the king commits his own *wd*-decree to writing is also unusual, although in a literary context the event recalls Snofru writing down the wisdom of Neferti<sup>53</sup> – as in Neferti, by personally writing down an official pronouncement the ruler inextricably intertwines the formal and the informal.

The first half of Amenhotep II’s address to the viceroy is chiasitic in arrangement – a statement to the viceroy (*hms=k* [...]) plus laudatory direct address to the viceroy involving militaristic epithets; second laudatory direct address to the viceroy involving references to his possession of various Asiatic women plus a statement to the viceroy (*nꜣy Tihsy* and following). Within the first half of the address, the Asiatic women are listed in what appears to be two pairs – the first two probably labeled as servants (one specification is damaged), the second pair of women distinguished according to their ages. The toponyms whence the women come also occur in a chiasitic arrangement of east to west, west to east. First distant Babylon, then Byblos on the Mediterranean coast, form a pair bracketing the extent of the northern area from east to west along a southerly line. The following Alalakh, east of the western turn of the Orontes, and Arrapkha, east of Ashur, bracket from west to east an area in the north, defining a border between the Hittites and the northernmost Egyptian holdings, the western portion of this region encompassing the territory that would become Amurru. The people of Takhsy, inhabiting the northern Beqaa Valley,<sup>54</sup> appear outside the two pairs, and are dismissed as useless.

The second half of the decree involves four imperatives, broken only by the lengthy parenthetical passage following the third imperative. Again, as in the first portion of the

<sup>52</sup> See C. MANASSA, *Imagining the Past: Historical Fiction in New Kingdom Egypt*, Oxford, 2013, pp. 17, 127, and 210 (n. 103), with references.

<sup>53</sup> W. HELCK, *Die Prophezeiung des Nfr.tj*, Wiesbaden, 1970, pp. 12-13 (II<sub>n</sub>-II<sub>q</sub>).

<sup>54</sup> D.B. REDFORD, *The Wars in Syria and Palestine of Thutmose III*, *CHANE* 16, 2003, p. 169, n. 23.

message, Amenhotep II employs a chiasmic construction – negative imperative (*m n'.t*) + imperative (*s:y*); imperative (*ptr*) + negative imperative (*m-ir sdm*).

Amenhotep II's message is: "I, Amenhotep II, am a great conqueror, who has warred in Asia. You, Usersatet, have now taken up office in the south, and you have been quite a warrior, one who has fought for me, Amenhotep II, the one who has arranged the affairs of the lands of the far north. You have female household members from the full extent of the lands north of the Egyptian holdings in the Levant, and are therefore aware of the problems inherent in dealing with people to the northeast of Egypt. Look out for the Nubians, and take care of that man outside the bureaucracy whom you have elevated to *sr*-status – I suppose you want to remind me that in lieu of an elite official, two strong but unassuming civil servants are effective." At the heart of the message, taking the epithets and advice together, Amenhotep II reminds Usersatet that the latter has a wide experience of the world and its people, not incidentally through the patronage of his if anything more widely traveled royal friend and patron.

The text does not reveal any overt violence or disrespect toward any of the four foreign women to whom the king refers. Although Amenhotep II demonstrated what – in comparison to other Egyptian military accounts – appears to have been an uncommon brutality toward Takhsy, and he indeed inserts a disparaging parenthetical allusion to them into his decree for Usersatet, Amenhotep II did not disdain "foreignness" in general, to judge from the literary and artistic productions of his reign. Asiatic terms permeate literary texts of the time, and even in his decree to Usersatet, Amenhotep II refers to the foreign household members of his Nubian viceroy as evidence of Usersatet's broader than common knowledge of humanity.

Amenhotep II cautions Usersatet against the people and magicians of the Nubians. The term *bꜥk ny nmḥy.w* is not derogatory, however, nor is any term for the Nubians pejorative. The "servant outside of the bureaucracy" is not specified as being a Nubian, although the context supports such a view. This person is singled out from the people and magicians with respect to whom Usersatet should be on guard – the admonition to "look out for, look after" the person may indicate more benevolent attention than wariness.

Prominent in the decree are the staves of the "proverb," *ḥsw* probably being a Nubian term. The king himself was fond of the so-called Nubian wig,<sup>55</sup> and in the tomb of Qenamun, depictions of royal statues suggest that Amenhotep II enjoyed playing a sort of imperial "dress-up," creating an iconographic alchemy to blend expressions of Egyptian and Nubian military prowess.<sup>56</sup> In Qenamun's presentation of northern tribute, southern imagery is front and center – the expression of universal pharaonic rule is not achieved through demonstration of Egyptian cultural dominance, but rather through the importation, blending, and Egyptian adoption of foreign imagery.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>55</sup> So DRENKHAN, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

<sup>56</sup> This Egyptian participation – at the highest level – in the process of combining Egyptian and Nubian regalia reveals that Nubians engaging in similar displays, such as Heqanefer under Tutankhamun, were not being forced to wear Nubian costumes (DARNELL, MANASSA, *op. cit.*, pp. 128-130 and 134-135).

<sup>57</sup> On the question of acculturation, see Th. SCHNEIDER, "Akkulturation-Identität-Elitekultur. Eine Positionsbestimmung zur Frage der Existenz und des Status von Ausländern in der Elite des Neuen Reiches," in R. Gundlach, A. Klug (eds.), *Der ägyptische Hof des Neuen Reiches, seine Gesellschaft und Kultur im Spannungsfeld zwischen Innen- und Aussenpolitik, Königtum, Staat und Gesellschaft früher Hochkulturen 2*, 2006, pp. 201-216 (particularly pp. 210-211 for Amenhotep II and the Astarte text of P. BN 202).

### The Ibrim Shrine of Usersatet and the Usersatet Stela – Two Views of a Festival

The stela of Usersatet refers to a celebration of the anniversary of the royal accession, and the general scholarly consensus seems to be that the king was at the time of the celebration far removed from his viceroy.<sup>58</sup> The stela does not appear to have provided a geographic location for the royal celebration, merely specifying that the king was upon the *ḥntj.t*-dais. The depiction in the lunette of the Usersatet stela, showing the Nubian viceroy presenting products of the south to the king, the latter enthroned on the stepped dais, represents a syncopated summary of the decoration in Shrines 1 and 4 at Qasr Ibrim – Shrine 4 is that of Usersatet himself.<sup>59</sup>

Such an event as that which appears with much greater detail in Ibrim Shrine 4 may be the setting for the royal appearance and *wḏ*-decree of Amenhotep II. The Ibrim shrine and the tomb of Huy represent the southern tribute festival as an official participant might have viewed it, but they depict the king as an icon of divine royalty, apparently avoiding any reference to an intrusion of the mortal person – and personality – of the king. Just as P. Koller 3, 3-5, 4<sup>60</sup> presents such a festival as a terrified local official might have experienced it, so the stela of Usersatet provides a view of a Nubian tribute festival from the *ḥntj.t* itself.

In the Ibrim scene, the king sits in state atop the *ḥntj.t*-platform; the accompanying text locates that event in Thebes.<sup>61</sup> The horizontal lines of the annotation to the Ibrim scene record the nature of the royal appearance, and include a loyalist statement by the courtiers and army gathered before the royal platform:

*ḥ'y.t ḥm=f m-ḥnw Ws.t ḥr ḥntj.t 'ḥ.t r sr bš.t n mš'f [...]* 'ḥ' m skw  
*wḏy.t [...]* nb 'ḥ' [r] gs ḥm=f  
*msy inw ny ḥš.wt rsy.(wt) m-bšḥ ' ntr pn nfr*  
*šny.t ḥr rdi(.t) šw*  
*mš' pn ḥr dwš ḥm=f*  
*ḏḏ=sn*

*[wr<sup>1</sup> bšw=k [ntr pn nfr mnwy 'šš bš(y).t]*  
*wr inw pn r tš.w*  
*n mšw nn ḏr tpy.w-<sup>c</sup> n ḥr s.t ḥpr.w-ḥr-ḥ.t*  
*ḥpr s.t nb=n*

Glorious appearance of his majesty in Thebes, upon the stepped dais in order to  
 proclaim marvels to his [...] army, steadfast in combat.

As for the expedition, every [...] is standing [at] the side of his majesty,

<sup>58</sup> So HELCK, *JNES* 14, 1955, p. 28; DER MANUELIAN, *Studies in the Reign of Amenophis II*, p. 158.

<sup>59</sup> CAMINOS, *Ibrim*, pls. 10 (Shrine 1); 28 and 30 (Shrine 4); in Shrine 2 (pls. 14-15) the viceroy and officials offer to the enthroned king on the dais, but depictions of southern products are lacking.

<sup>60</sup> GARDINER, *Late-Egyptian Miscellanies*, pp. 118, l. 14-120, l. 8; CAMINOS, *Late-Egyptian Miscellanies*, pp. 437-446. Gardiner already suggested this text as a description of events such as those depicted in the tomb of Huy (DAVIES, GARDINER, *op. cit.*, p. 28).

<sup>61</sup> The uraeus as determinative (deriving from the word for “crown”) in *ḥ'.t-nsw.t* on the stela of Usersatet (a writing of *ḥ'(y).t* as “appearance” – cf. D. MEEKS, *AnLex*, 77.3011, 79.2160) also appears in the orthography of *ḥ'y.t* in the Ibrim text.

presenting tribute of the southern foreign lands before this good god,  
 the court giving praise,  
 this army adoring his majesty,  
 saying:

“[Great] is your power, [oh good god, man of monuments, rich in marvels];  
 greater is this tribute than (that of) the flat lands;  
 this has not been seen since the ancestors; those aforetime did not do it;  
 yet our lord is bringing it about.”

The remainder of the horizontal text lists the numbers of the bearers of the various items of tribute, thereby enumerating the products but emphasizing the bearers thereof. The reference to a *wḏy.t*-expedition may indeed allude to a military campaign, although the lack of any bound prisoners – such as those present in the scenes of festivals under Tutankhamun and Akhenaton – speaks against the tribute event depicted at Ibrim being a direct result of combat.<sup>62</sup> As *wḏy.t* may also refer to non-military expeditions,<sup>63</sup> the Ibrim shrine of Usersatet could commemorate a trading expedition, a military campaign, or some amalgamation of the two. The date of the great *durbar* of Akhenaton did not correspond to the most plausible date for the royal accession, but apparently occurred approximately 78 days after an actual battle in the south; the date of the festival of southern tribute under Tutankhamun remains unknown.<sup>64</sup> That Amenhotep II may have celebrated his own version of such a festival on the anniversary of the royal accession – if the events on the Usersatet stela and in the Usersatet Ibrim shrine indeed relate to a similar celebration – is consistent with the lack of appearance of prisoners relating to a specific event.<sup>65</sup>

The vertical lines in the lower register, beneath the horizontal text in the upper register, record a statement by Usersatet himself. The viceroy addresses Amenhotep II as the hypostasis of several deities – Re, Khnum, the demiurge itself as creator of provisions,<sup>66</sup> and apparently moves on to describe the power of the king extending over the southern regions. Although most of the final four lines of the text are heavily damaged, they provide a hint at the sort of eulogistic pronouncement that the viceroy may have made at the time of his formal presentation of the southern tribute:

<sup>62</sup> DER MANUELIAN, *Studies in the Reign of Amenophis II*, pp. 92-93 and 155, suggests that the Ibrim scene may relate to an actual campaign; E.F. MORRIS, *The Architecture of Imperialism: Military Bases and the Evolution of Foreign Policy in Egypt's New Kingdom*, *PdÄ* 22, 2005, p. 191, n. 257, interprets the scene as relating to the peaceful delivery of tribute.

<sup>63</sup> On *wḏy.t* see A.J. SPALINGER, *Aspects of the Military Documents of the Ancient Egyptians*, New Haven, London, 1982, pp. 227-228; REDFORD, *The Wars in Syria and Palestine of Thutmose III*, pp. 60-61. That *wḏy.t* may make reference to a festival is clear in KRUCHTEN, *Le décret d'Horemheb*, pl. 1 and p. 106 (l. 29), where *ṯ wḏy.t r niw.t* designates the royal procession to Thebes for the festival of Opet.

<sup>64</sup> M. GABOLDE, *D'Akhenaton à Toutânkhamon*, Lyon, Paris, 1998, pp. 14-16; DARNELL, MANASSA, *op. cit.*, pp. 125-131.

<sup>65</sup> If the scene in Theban Tomb 143 of an Egyptian expedition meeting Puntite boats, presumably on the Red Sea coast, occurred during the reign of Amenhotep II (see below), then the *wḏy.t*-expedition to which the Ibrim shrine of Usersatet refers might well be similar to – if not identical with – that reception of the products of the far southeast.

<sup>66</sup> N. GRIMAL, *Les termes de propagande royale égyptienne, de la XIX<sup>e</sup> Dynastie à la conquête d'Alexandre*, Paris, 1986, pp. 260-263.

<sup>1</sup>[...] *ny hꜣs.t rsy.t m pꜣ hpš kny ny* <sup>2</sup>[...]  
*sꜣ nsw.t* [...] *ddꜣf*

*ind* <sup>3</sup>*hrz*k <sup>1</sup>*ntr* / *nsw.t* <sup>1</sup>*pn špsy* [...] *ny wn.t sn.nwꜣf*  
*ntk Rꜥ hr-tp psd.t*  
<sup>4</sup>*Hnmw ir ntr.w nb*[.w... ] *nb kꜣ.w ꜣ df(ꜣ).w*  
<sup>5</sup>*k m rh mi Dhwtj* [...] *mi hnty-Hsr.t*  
*wr ph.ty* <sup>6</sup>*wsr* [...] *m Hnt-hn-nfr*  
 [...] *m bw nb* <sup>7</sup>*ny hꜣs.wt rsy.(w)t* <sup>7-10</sup>[...]

[...] of the southern foreign land by means of the brave strong arm of [...] king's son [...] says:

Greetings, oh august <sup>1</sup>god / king<sup>1</sup>, [...] without his equal.  
 You are Re, chief of the ennead;  
 Khnum, maker of all the gods [...] lord of provisions, great of food;  
 imbued with knowledge like Thoth [...] like the foremost of Heseret (Thoth);  
 great of might, powerful [...] in Khenthennofer  
 [...] in every place of the southern foreign lands [...]

The texts of the Ibrim shrine reference three pronouncements:

1. the royal statement or decree (attested through the phrase *sr bꜣꜣ*);
2. the statement of the expeditionary force;
3. the statement of the viceroy.

The royal proclamation does not, however, appear in the texts of the shrine; though the monument is damaged, no space was set aside for such a royal *sr*-proclamation. The *hꜣy.t-nsw.t* – the event depicted in the Ibrim shrine – was, however, a time for “the issuance of pharaonic reports and directives.”<sup>67</sup>

Similarly, in the depictions of the festival of Nubian tribute of the Viceroy Huy under Tutankhamun, the accompanying annotations record pronouncements of Egyptian and Nubian participants, but no speech of the king. Nevertheless, a parallel for the opening line of the label to the Ibrim image of southern tribute appears on two of the shields from the tomb of Tutankhamun (shields 350 and 488b):<sup>68</sup> “His majesty appearing in glory within Thebes upon the stepped dais for proclaiming marvels (*sr bꜣꜣy.t*)” (text common to both shields, with royal prenomen and nomen following in no. 350; epithet *nb hpš* with prenomen in no. 488b). In Huy's scenes of the presentation of southern tribute to Tutankhamun are depictions of shields that may represent at least some of those deposited in Tutankhamun's tomb.<sup>69</sup> The shields from the tomb, if not elements of the event Huy recorded in his own tomb, are nevertheless

<sup>67</sup> REDFORD, *The Wars in Syria and Palestine of Thutmose III*, p. 118.

<sup>68</sup> H. BEINLICH, M. SALEH, *Corpus der hieroglyphischen Inschriften aus dem Grab des Tutanchamun*, Oxford, 1989, pp. 172 and 193.

<sup>69</sup> DARNELL, MANASSA, *op. cit.*, pp. 128-129.

most likely all to have been part of the visual display of some such celebration of Egyptian dominion over Nubia. At the southern tribute festival of Usersatet, and possibly in Huy's celebration of the same under Tutankhamun, the ruler performed *sr bꜣy.t*, but no pronouncement that might accompany the royal seating has survived, except for Usersatet's copy of the rescript of Amenhotep II's *wꜥ*-decree.

Eulogistic texts from the New Kingdom, accompanying historical inscriptions, elements of literary texts, and central to many of the Late Egyptian Miscellanies, reveal a practice of public performance of eulogies.<sup>70</sup> The stela of Usersatet contains a royal decree with self-eulogizing preamble by Amenhotep II, followed by a direct address of the ruler to the viceroy – the entire text could well relate the specifics of a *sꜥꜥ* or *sr nꜥt.w*. In the Qasr Ibrim shrine of Usersatet, the king refers to “proclaiming / predicting marvels” (*sr bꜣ*) apparently a somewhat less militaristic version of the “proclaiming of victories” (*sr nꜥt.w*). In scenes of Asiatic tribute in the tomb of Huy, the northern rulers conclude their request for the breath of life with the promise that they will relate the *nꜥt.w* of the king.<sup>71</sup> The *bꜣy.t* of the successful ruler are deeds both peaceful and militaristic – a text in the temple of Medinet Habu presages an overview of the king as giver of food and peace to his people, bringer of war to ill-disposed foreigners, and receiver of tribute from properly submissive outsiders, with the words: “I have caused that all the plans that you have made should come about, and that your *bꜣ*-marvels take effect.”<sup>72</sup> As part of the self-adulatory pronouncements that the ruler was expected to make during an official appearance on the *ꜥꜥꜥ.t*-platform, Amenhotep II summarizes his career in a brief series of epithets, before engaging more directly with his Nubian viceroy.<sup>73</sup>

The Usersatet stela appears to record the more personal activities of the king during a festival appearance on the stepped dais. The event in which the decree of the stela was made may be the presentation and reception of southern tribute that appears in the shrine of Usersatet at Qasr Ibrim. The peculiarities of the Usersatet stela text result from the scarcity of other scenes and inscriptions recording or characterizing the “royal gaze” during a festival, for which other surviving documents preserve more of a visual overview, recording pronouncements of the other participants but avoiding the “proclaiming of marvels” that the king would have made in such a context.

### The Date of the Event

The Usersatet stela gives IV *ꜥꜥ.t* 1 (iv, 1) as the date of the festival of royal accession (*hrw ny ꜥꜥ ꜥꜥ.t-nsw.t*), during which Amenhotep II provided Usersatet with the decree the latter

<sup>70</sup> A.J. SPALINGER, “New Kingdom Eulogies of Power: a Preliminary Analysis,” in N. Kloth, K. Martin, E. Pardey (eds.), *Es werde niedergelegt als Schriftstück*, BSAK 9, 2003, pp. 415-428; see also *id.*, “Encomia and Papyrus Anastasi II,” in St. Quirke (ed.), *Discovering Egypt from the Neva: the Egyptological Legacy of Oleg D. Berlev*, Berlin, 2003, pp. 123-144.

<sup>71</sup> DAVIES, GARDINER, *op. cit.*, pl. 19.

<sup>72</sup> THE EPIGRAPHIC SURVEY, *Medinet Habu IV. Festival Scenes of Ramses III*, OIP 51, 1940, pl. 231, ll. 4-5 (speech by Amun-Re). For “thaumaturgic” royal marvels, see epithets in GRIMAL, *op. cit.*, pp. 352-254 and 506-508.

<sup>73</sup> This self-eulogizing “autobiography,” with record of interaction with officials, real or imaginary, recalls the text of the self-eulogizing *sꜥꜥ*-reminiscence, with interjected passage by another reciter, at the time of a possible *ꜥꜥ.t-nsw.t*, on O. DeM 1610 – see H.W. FISCHER-ELFERT, “Ostrakon DeM 1610 «Autobiographie d'un roi divin?»,” in J. Assmann, E. Blumenthal (eds.), *Literatur und Politik im pharaonischen und ptolemäischen Ägypten*, BdE 127, 1999, pp. 197-208.



monumentalized at Semna. The date on the Usersatet stela differs from the IV *pr.t* 1 (viii, 1) date that one may assume for the royal accession following the death of Thutmose III on III *pr.t* 30 (vii, 30). The IV *ḏh.t* 1 date could represent the date of the inception of a proposed coregency between Thutmose III and Amenhotep II, or simply be an error for IV *pr.t* 1.<sup>74</sup> Amenhotep II is not, however, the only ruler for whom two accession dates are attested, and he appears rather to be the first of two New Kingdom rulers whom surviving documents reveal to have celebrated their accession – at least on occasion – in conjunction with another festival. Although apparently thus far unrecognized, Ramesses III provides a parallel for the two accession dates of Amenhotep II.<sup>75</sup>

According to the lunar based<sup>76</sup> festival calendar at Medinet Habu, in addition to the celebration of what appears to have been the actual date of his accession to the throne on I *šmw* 26, Ramesses III also celebrated – on I *pr.t* 1 – the “day of the Nehebkau festival of the royal appearance of King Usermaatre-meriamun.”<sup>77</sup> The two dates for an accession celebration of Ramesses III – one the day of the event itself, the other a coupling of the accession with the Nehebkau festival – indicate that Ramesses III was able to celebrate his accession on both the chronologically significant, regnal-year-beginning date of the event, and on another day significant for the royal ideology.<sup>78</sup>

The Nehebkau festival occurred at the time of the second “opening of the year” on I *pr.t* 1. In the early Eighteenth Dynasty tomb of Paheri at Elkab, three events appear as though celebrated simultaneously on I *pr.t* 1: the festival of Nehebkau, the festival of *kꜣ-ḥr-kꜣ*, and the opening of the year. Due to the offset overlap of the lunar and civil calendars, the *kꜣ-ḥr-kꜣ* festival could be dated instead to the civil calendar date IV *ḏh.t* 1, the date of the celebration of the accession festival of Amunhotep II in the stela of Usersatet – the IV *ḏh.t* 1 festival date on the Usersatet stela could represent the civil calendar date that corresponds to the lunar calendar date of I *pr.t* 1, linking the *kꜣ-ḥr-kꜣ* festival and the second New Year.<sup>79</sup> Ramesses III deliberately attached his accession festival to the Nehebkau festival, while celebrating independently the day of his actual accession. Amunhotep II appears to have chosen the *kꜣ-ḥr-kꜣ* festival as his own significant date for a secondary accession celebration; with Amenhotep II utilizing the civil calendar and Ramesses III the lunar calendar, both rulers

<sup>74</sup> See the discussion of St. PASQUALI, “La date du Papyrus BM 10056, Thoutmosis III ou Amenhotep II?,” *RdE* 58 (2007): 71-86 (I thank the author for comments and for this reference). The date for the death of Thutmose III in the autobiographical text of Amenemhab is *Urk.* IV, 895, 16.

<sup>75</sup> W. BARTA, “Thronbesteigung und Krönungsfeier als unterschiedliche Zeugnisse königlicher Herrschaftsübernahme,” *SAK* 8 (1980): 48 *et passim*, discusses the dates of Amenhotep II and Ramesses III, but with a different understanding, believing that they provide evidence for separate accession and coronation dates.

<sup>76</sup> B.J.J. HARING, *Divine Households: Administrative and Economic Aspects of the New Kingdom Royal Memorial Temples in Western Thebes*, *EU* 12, 1997, p. 76.

<sup>77</sup> The accession festival on the actual accession day appears as *hrw* [ny] *ḥ'(t)-nswt ny nswt-bity Wsr-mꜣ'.t-r' mr(y)-Imn* (EPIGRAPHIC SURVEY, *Medinet Habu III. The Calendar, the “Slaughterhouse,” and Minor Records of Ramses III*, *OIP* 23, 1934, pl. 152, l. 601 [List 21]). The Nehebkau(u) festival with royal accession festival combined (*hrw ny nḥb-kꜣ ny ḥ'.t-nswt ny nswt Wsr-mꜣ'.t-r' mr(y)-Imn*) is *ibid.*, pl. 163, l. 1191 (List 52, the list recarved for the Meshwesh victory festival – HARING, *op. cit.*, pp. 82-84).

<sup>78</sup> P. GRANDET, *Ramsès III, histoire d'un règne*, Paris, 1993, pp. 47-48 (and p. 346, n. 9) recognizes both the actual accession date of Ramesses III, the celebration of the event in conjunction with the Nehebkau festival at Medinet Habu, and the ideological significance of the link; note, however, that his suggestion of a delay in celebrating the accession at the time of the actual event ignores the presence of two accession festivals in the Medinet Habu calendar. For Nehebkau, the second New Year, and Ramesses III, see also W. BARTA, *LÄ* VI, 1986, col. 389; H. ALTENMÜLLER, *LÄ* II, 1977, col. 176 and n. 96.

<sup>79</sup> A.J. SPALINGER, “The Date of Amunhotep II’s First Accession,” *SAK* 39 (2011): 385-397, suggested the significance of the Usersatet date, although he does not seem to have recognized the parallel for Ramesses III.

could celebrate an accession festival in conjunction with a marker of the second “opening of the year,” a sort of annual evocation of the Jubilee. Amenhotep II appears to have dated on the basis of his IV *pr.t* 1 accession, as the regnal years of Ramesses III date from his I *šmw* 26 accession; the IV *šh.t* 1 accession of Amenhotep II thus has no bearing on a proposed coregency.<sup>80</sup>

The bringing of Nubian tribute to Amenhotep II as it appears in the Ibrim shrine of Usersatet would correspond well to the bringing of New Year presents to the ruler. Indeed images of the king in Nubian garb, and an elaborate centerpiece representing the southern dominions of the ruler, appear amongst the gifts designated as New Year present for the king in scenes in the tomb of Qenamun.<sup>81</sup> The probable tall lamp behind the seated ruler in the Ibrim scene (see above) would be particularly appropriate for a celebration associated with the *kꜣ-ḥr-kꜣ* festival, evocative of the lighting of torches associated with New Year festivals.<sup>82</sup> IV *šh.t* 1 would be a date appropriate to both the celebration of a festival of southern tribute, and the issuing of royal a royal decree evocative of the inverted world of the New Year,<sup>83</sup> a world in which the Nubian viceroy had apparently taken it upon himself to appoint his own, Nubian, second in command.

## Two Staves, Two Biomes, and the Two Divisions of Nubia

In his decree, Amenhotep II quotes a saying that refers to two staves, each in a different place. Two compound terms designate these areas, each compound apparently employing a word for a type of water.<sup>84</sup> The first aquatic term, the *n.t*-water, refers to the surface water of the Nile or a canal,<sup>85</sup> relating specifically to surface water arising from the primeval waters.<sup>86</sup> The second term, the uncommon *bꜣr*, occurring on the stela of Usersatet and once in the Miscellanies, is of obscure origin and almost equally uncertain meaning.<sup>87</sup> The passage in the

<sup>80</sup> See the remarks of PASQUALI, *RdE* 58 (2007): 71-86, particularly his references to Vandersleyen’s discussions of the reign, and the improbable coregency (VANDERSLEYEN, *op. cit.*, pp. 319-324).

<sup>81</sup> DAVIES, *Tomb of Ken-Amun*, pls. 13-24.

<sup>82</sup> H.G. FISCHER, *LÄ* II, 1977, col. 80.

<sup>83</sup> See the comments of D. KESSLER, “Der satirisch-erotische Papyrus Turin 55001 und das ‘Verbringen des schönen Tages’,” *SAK* 15 (1988): 171-196.

<sup>84</sup> Compare the Coffin Text’s *mdw ny š* in Zaubersprüche für Mutter und Kind, 6, 8 (K. SETHE, *Hieratische Papyrus aus den Königlichen Museen zu Berlin III. Schriftstücke der VI. Dynastie aus Elephantine, Zaubersprüche für Mutter und Kind, Ostraka*, Leipzig, 1911, pl. 19; H. WILLEMS, *The Coffin of Heqata (Cairo JdE 36418)*, *OLA* 70, 1996, p. 77), as something carried by the officiating magician.

<sup>85</sup> Compare D. KLOTZ, *Adoration of the Ram: Five Hymns to Amun-Re from Hibis Temple*, *YES* 6, 2006, p. 103, n. c; P. WILSON, *A Ptolemaic Lexikon*, *OLA* 78, 1997, p. 554 (a reference to the floodwaters, and in the name of the temple canal); Fr.R. HERBIN, *Le livre de parcourir l’éternité*, *OLA* 58, 1994, p. 134 and pl. 2 (P. Leiden T 32 II, 18): *hrw pfy n sdꜣ n.t*, “on that day of crossing the water,” in which the *n.t* is the Nile, which Amun crosses during the Beautiful Festival of the Valley; the Great Abydos Inscription of Ramesses II, l. 33 (*KRI* II, p. 325, l. 12; A.J. SPALINGER, *The Great Dedicatory Inscription of Ramesses II, A Solar-Osirian Tractate at Abydos*, *CHANE* 33, 2009, p. 129, l. 33): the *n.t n(y.t) mr ny Tꜣ-wr* is “the water of the canal of Thisis” (so *ibid.*, p. 24) unless the *mr*-sign represents an attested variant for *š*, referring to that portion of the Nile flowing through the Thinite nome (cf. J.C. DARNELL, *The Enigmatic Netherworld Books of the Solar-Osirian Unity: Cryptographic Compositions in the Tombs of Tutankhamun, Ramesses VI, and Ramesses IX*, *OBO* 198, 2004, p. 53, n. 85).

<sup>86</sup> Compare the parallelism of *N.t-wr* and *Mh.t-wr.t* in the Litany of Re – E. HORNUNG, *Das Buch der Anbetung des Re im Westen*, *AegHelv* 2-3, 1975-1976, vol. 1, pp. 180-181; vol. 2, p. 138, n. 409.

<sup>87</sup> J.E. HOCH, *Semitic Words in Egyptian Texts of the New Kingdom and Third Intermediate Period*, Princeton, 1994, pp. 92-93; G. TAKÁCS, *Etymological Dictionary of Egyptian 2: b-, p-, f-*, *HdO* I 48/2, 2001, pp. 167-168, rejects various proposals for the etymology of *bꜣr*, including *bahr*, and suggests a possible association – although not as a borrowing – with “Geez ba‘ara ‘to dig, plough, break clods.’”

Miscellanies, however, reveals something of the aquatic nature of the word. In P. Anastasi III 2, 8, *bʿr* occurs in a description of the natural wealth of the Delta Residence, refers to the home of the *ʿdw*-mullet, *Mugil cephalus*, and relates as well to a fish associated with the mouth of the Nile:<sup>88</sup>

*ʿd.w n h[pw]*<sup>89</sup> *n bʿr*                      *hwtn n [ḥ3.t p3 d(3)b.w] ny ʿ3-nh.wt*

mullet of the [shore] of the *bʿr*,

*hwtn*-fish of the [river mouth (called) “the one of the figs] of Great-of-Victories (Piramesse)”

Mullet can live in waters both saline and fresh, although the fish appears to prefer coastal sea zones.<sup>90</sup> The direct association in the P. Anastasi III text between a coastal fish and another related to the mouth of the Pelusiac branch of the Nile supports a meaning of *bʿr* related to “saline water” in the coastal region of a sea.<sup>91</sup> This use of an uncommon word for a saline body of water near a Nile mouth, a home for an edible fish, calls to mind the brackish lagoons of the Delta – specifically (in the environs of Piramesse) the lakes Ballah, Timsah, and even Menzaleh<sup>92</sup> – and probably represents the Egyptian designation of a tidal lagoon.

The compound *bʿr-šnd.t*, the word for acacia in construct with a term that at least includes saline, coastal waters, appears to refer to a different biome from that of the “place of *n.t*-water.” As the proverb is associated with a decree for the viceroy of Nubia, and as the *tisw*-staves also appear to have a Nubian association, the *bʿr-šnd.t* most probably describes an area of Nubia. Although the region of Khartoum appears long to have marked the beginning of the great southern acacia forests to the south,<sup>93</sup> the word *bʿr*, designating a saline coastal water, does not easily relate to the far south of Upper Nubia.<sup>94</sup>

<sup>88</sup> A.H. GARDINER, *Late-Egyptian Miscellanies*, *BiAeg* 7, 1937, p 22, ll. 7-9.

<sup>89</sup> The word beginning *h-* is probably the *h3pw / hpw* of the Story of Anat: A. ROCCATI, “Une légende égyptienne d’Anat,” *RdE* 24, 1972, pl. 14, l. 2; see LESKO and LESKO, *op. cit.* 1, p. 348; HOCH, *op. cit.*, pp. 241-242 (no. 334). The term also appears in V. CONDON, *Seven Royal Hymns of the Ramesside Period: Papyrus Turin CG 54031*, *MÄS* 37, 1978, pl. 20, Column I, l. 7 (also p. 34; MEEKS, *AnLex* 2, 78.2942, the word of *Wb* III, 230), there a reference to the personified riverbank in joy at the royal arrival. See also Th. SCHNEIDER, “Nichtsemitische Lehnwörter im Ägyptischen. Umriß eines Forschungsgebietes,” in *id.* (ed.) *Das Ägyptische und die Sprachen Vorderasiens, Nordafrikas und der Ägäis*, *AOAT* 310, 2004, p. 24; F. BREYER, “Anatolisches Sprachmaterial in ägyptisch-hieroglyphischen Inschriften – ein Vorbericht,” in *ibid.*, p. 267.

<sup>90</sup> See [http://www.fao.org/fishery/culturedspecies/Mugil\\_cephalus/en](http://www.fao.org/fishery/culturedspecies/Mugil_cephalus/en).

<sup>91</sup> Reading the word in either occurrence as *Baal* (so CAMINOS, *Late Egyptian Miscellanies*, pp. 74 and 542; MORSCHAUSER, *op. cit.*, p. 217) is not the happiest solution, and Morschauser’s reading of *šnn.t* as an unattested term for “reed,” based on an assumed meaning “to be round” for *šni*, ignores the thumb of *d*.

<sup>92</sup> For mullet and those lakes, cf. <http://www.fao.org/fi/oldsite/FCP/en/EGY/profile.htm>.

<sup>93</sup> Compare A. GAFAAR, *Forest Plantations and Woodlots in Sudan*, *African Forest Forum Working Papers Series* 1/15, 2011, p. 15, fig. 1 (the range of the forests has changed somewhat through the course of the Holocene – compare the chapters in F.A. Hassan (ed.), *Droughts, Food and Culture: Ecological Change and Food Security in Africa’s Later Prehistory*, New York, 2002, and the map on p. 112). According to Gleichen (ed.), *The Anglo-Egyptian Sudan: a Compendium Prepared by Officers of the Sudan Government I*, London, 1905, pp. 12-13, early twentieth century Sudan was home to few forests north of Khartoum; south of Khartoum, bands of forests, as well as inland “open woods,” especially in Kordofan, on the White Nile as far as the Sudd, and to some extent in the Bahr el-Ghazal; see also P. OZENDA, *Flore du Sahara*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Paris, 1977, pp. 481-482 *et passim*.

<sup>94</sup> Tempting, but without support, might be an equation of the Arabic *sāḥil*, shore of a sea or river, with *bʿr*, the latter referring to the transitional area between the Sahara and the southern savanna – the Sahel.

Most probably Amenhotep II employs the term *bʿr* to describe the Nubian counterparts to the coastal waters that term designates in P. Anastasi III.<sup>95</sup> The *n.t*-waters in the proverb relate to the Nile and any canals branching off therefrom; the *bʿr-šnd.t* should reference a more distant region of Nubia, and one with brackish water – apparently coastal water, perhaps lagoon-like to judge from the P. Anastasi III attestation of *bʿr* – and acacias. For Nubia, the brackish water, aside from poor quality wells, would be most prominent as the Red Sea. The *bʿr-šnd.t* probably refers to temporary tidal lagoons (Arabic *sabkha*) or larger *mersa*-embayments that form along the Red Sea coast, low areas of littoral land filled with shallow, temporary, saline lakes, liable to be visited by mullet<sup>96</sup> and to be edged with acacia.<sup>97</sup> One staff is in the Nilotic, more “Egyptianized” part of Nubia, and the other out at the Red Sea fringe of the region.<sup>98</sup>

### Stick People

The axe and the two staves belong to a proverb that – at least in Amenhotep II’s use thereof – applies to members, and potential members, of the southern administration. The statements regarding people and their relative worth bracketing the proverb make this a reasonable conclusion, as does the personification of weapons and fortifications elsewhere in Egyptian texts.

The term “staff of old age” applies the imagery of a wooden staff more broadly to anyone acting as a proper descendent in the context of mortuary religion, and the *mdw*-staff appears metaphorically in several Old Kingdom and Middle Kingdom titles as well.<sup>99</sup> According to

<sup>95</sup> Amenhotep II might refer to Nubia and Egypt in the proverb, but as the juxtaposition he is discussing is the comparison of the ideal southern civil servant and the “new man” of Usersatet’s appointing, a reference to Lower Egypt would seem out of place.

<sup>96</sup> See U. ZAJONZ, M. BEECH, A.C. GILL, “Fishes of Sabkha-Related Habitats,” in H.J. Barth, B. Böer (eds.), *Sabkha Ecosystems I. The Arabian Peninsula and Adjacent Countries*, Dordrecht, Norwell, 2002, p. 287.

<sup>97</sup> O.O. KARRAR, “Overview of Halophytic Plants of the Sudanese Red Sea Salt March,” in M. Öztürk, B. Böer, H.-J. Barth, S.-W. Breckle, M. Clüsener-Godt, M.A. Khan (eds.), *Sabkha Ecosystems III. Africa and Southern Europe*, Dordrecht, Heidelberg, London, New York, 2011, p. 48 attests *Acacia tortilis*. See also A.G. FAHMY, B. BÖER, “Flora and Phytogeographical Aspect of the Red Sea Sabkhat in Egypt,” in Barth, Böer (eds.), *op. cit.*, pp. 161-170. Acacia would have been present in the wadis in the immediate environs of the Red Sea, in the Egyptian and Nubian Eastern Deserts – compare C. LE QUSENE, *Quseir: an Ottoman and Napoleonic Fortress on the Red Sea Coast of Egypt*, Cairo, 2007, p. 279. Mangroves would also occur, especially in the more southerly coastal regions, probably no farther north than near the modern border between Egypt and Sudan (cf. A.A. GABALLA, K.K. ISHRAK, M.M. WALEED, M.M. FOUHA, “Ecology of *Avicennia marina* Mangals along Gulf of Aqaba, South Sinai, Red Sea,” *Egyptian Journal of Aquatic Biology and Fisheries* 14, 2010, pp. 79-80; B.F. MOHAMED, “Ecological Observations on Mangroves of the Red Sea Shores of the Sudan,” *Hydrobiologia* 110, 1984, pp. 109-111). Note also the description of the region of Suakin and Port Sudan in B. ROBSON, *Fuzzy-Wuzzy: the Campaigns in the Eastern Sudan 1884-85*, Tunbridge Wells, 1993, p. 12.

<sup>98</sup> In his description of the annexation of Lower Nubia, Monthuhotep II also includes a reference to appointing someone (an agent?) to the shore of the Red Sea – see J.C. DARNELL, “The Eleventh Dynasty Royal Inscription from Deir el-Ballas,” *RdE* 59, 2008, pp. 90-91 and 97-98. The depictions in Theban Tomb 143 (time of Thutmose III / Amenhotep II) of Puntite vessels, and a group of Egyptians that received the Puntite products, suggests that expeditions to the Red Sea coast may have not have been infrequent during the time of Usersatet’s service as viceroy (see K.A. KITCHEN, “The Land of Punt,” in T. Shaw, P. Sinclair, B. Andah, A. Okpoko (eds.), *The Archaeology of Africa: Food, Metals and Towns*, London, New York, 1993, pp. 597-600; D. MEEKS, “Locating Punt,” in D. O’Connor, St. Quirke (eds.), *Mysterious Lands*, London, 2003, pp. 61-63; WACHSMANN, *Seagoing Ships and Seamanship in the Bronze Age Levant*, College Station, TX, London, 1998, pp. 32-33).

<sup>99</sup> See with caution MORSCHAUSER, *op. cit.*, pp. 214-215 (citing the *mdw* *šw* p. 215, n. 47); for the titles see *Wb* II, 178, 11-14; H.G. FISCHER, *LÄ* VI, cols. 50 and 56, n. 17, s. v. “Stöcke und Stäbe;” HANNIG, *Ägyptisches Wörterbuch* II, vol. 1, pp. 1160-1161. Rekhmire provides a literal description of his application of the term *mdw*

the autobiographical text of Rekhmire, Amenhotep II's father has made the vizier into a "proverbial" stick (*di.n=f wi m mdw n md.t*); Rekhmire describes himself in the same text as one who, in the exercise of his office, puts "stick to back" (*h.t hr psd*).<sup>100</sup> For Amenhotep II's official Qenamun as well, the staff is an image, as the king informs the newly appointed official that "your stick is upon the back(s) of the infantry" (*h.t=k hr psd(.w) nyw mnfy.t*).<sup>101</sup> The designation of the ushebti as a *mdw*-staff, in the sense of "substitute,"<sup>102</sup> clarifies the staff imagery for an official – the ruler may bestow staves on his loyal subordinates, who in turn act as staves, substitutes for the ruler. The official derives his authority from the ruler and represents that authority as the ushebti represents the deceased.

The two sticks are there in lieu of the presence of a very elaborate axe. As the sticks appear to represent people, so the elaborate axe could stand for a particularly important official, if not the king himself. A broader Egyptian and Near Eastern concept of a deity handing on a divine and divinizing panoply to a ruler appears under Amenhotep II, specifically in the tale of Astarte and the Sea.<sup>103</sup> A close parallel to the ornate axe to which Amenhotep II refers is the axe of Ahmose from the burial of Ahmose-Nefertary;<sup>104</sup> a slightly earlier golden axe occurs as an award from the Second Intermediate Period ruler Dedumose,<sup>105</sup> and a Western Asiatic version of the same appears in the Annals of Thutmose III.<sup>106</sup> The parade panoply of at least one military veteran contained several gilded axes – Ahmose Pennekhbet records his reception of two such weapons from Thutmose I, and a second pair from Thutmose II.<sup>107</sup> More contemporaneous with the stela of Usersatet are two-dimensional representations of elaborate axes with silvered blades in the tomb of Qenamun.<sup>108</sup> The royal quotation of a proverb concerning an axe, in the presence of the viceroy, would have a particular piquancy, as an axe and *hw*-fan together constituted part of the insignia of a number of officials, including the viceroy Usersatet.

On the basis of the scene of the festival of Nubian tribute in the Ibrim shrine, two axes as part of the viceregal insignia may well have been in the king's sight when he quoted the saying regarding the axe and two staves. In Usersatet's Ibrim shrine, two men stand before the king,

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*hw* when he describes how (A.H. GARDINER, "The Autobiography of Rekhmerē," ZÄS 60, 1925, p. 70): "I [cared for] the elderly man, giving [to him] my [staff]" (*iw [srwh].n=i hw di=i [n=f] [mdw]i*).

<sup>100</sup> DAVIES, *Tomb of Rekhmire*, p. 15; *Urk.* IV, 1075, l. 4, 1076, l. 4, and 1080, l. 14 (according to 1075, l. 2, the *knb.t* may collectively be a *h.t*-stick in the charge of the vizier); GARDINER, ZÄS 60, 1925, pp. 67 ("stick to the back") and 68 ([text switched h and n] vizier as *mdw*-staff); also HASSAN, *op. cit.*, p. 184.

<sup>101</sup> N. de G. DAVIES, *The Tomb of Ken-Amūn at Thebes* 1, pl. 8, l. 26 (end).

<sup>102</sup> MEEKS, *AnLex*, 77.1941.

<sup>103</sup> COLLOMBERT, COULON, *op. cit.*, pp. 221-222 *et passim*; GNIRS, LOPRIENO, *op. cit.*, pp. 261 (with n. 73) and 272 (with n. 124).

<sup>104</sup> See, from the numerous representations, A. Bongioanni, M.S. Cole, L. Accomazzo (eds.), *The Illustrated Guide to the Egyptian Museum in Cairo*, Cairo, 2001, pp. 368-369; on the nature of the weapons in the burial of Ahmose-Nefertary, see the remarks of A. GNIRS, "Ägyptische Militärgeschichte als Kultur- und Sozialgeschichte," in Gundlach, Vogel (eds.), *op. cit.*, pp. 99-109.

<sup>105</sup> W. HELCK, *Historisch-biographische Texte der 2. Zwischenzeit und neue Texte der 18. Dynastie*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., KÄT 6, 1, 2002, p. 43, l. 13 (ll. 8-9 of the stela).

<sup>106</sup> *Urk.* IV, 669, 15; see HOCH, *op. cit.*, pp. 303-304; W. WOLF, *Die Bewaffnung des altägyptischen Heeres*, Leipzig, 1926, p. 65.

<sup>107</sup> *Urk.* IV, 39, l. 1. Less ornate axes were presented as well – compare the bronze axe presented by Amenhotep II to the *w'w*-soldier Nehmem, of the vessel "Mery-Amun" (DAVIES, *Axes*, p. 51, pls. 27 and 32).

<sup>108</sup> DAVIES, *Tomb of Ken-Amūn*, p. 29. For weapons as rewards, with references to other elaborate versions thereof, see S. FOCKE, "'His Majesty Saw My Valour': Weapons as Rewards for Feats on the Battlefield," in S. O'Brien, D. Boatright (eds.), *Warfare and Society in the Ancient Eastern Mediterranean*, BAR International Series 2583, 2013, pp. 5-18 (with caution regarding the transliterations of texts).

each holding a short-handled battle axe and presenting a *hw*-fan to the royal visage; the image of Usersatet himself was destroyed before the recording of the shrine, but presumably once stood facing the platform, introducing the tribute bearers and the products they carry to the king.<sup>109</sup> Parallels for the two bearers of *hw*-fans standing before the king in his baldachin appear in scenes of presentation of foreign products in TT 90 and TT 91; in the former, the tomb of the ship's standard bearer Nebamun, the fan-bearers also carry battle axes, the blades of which they face toward themselves and away from the ruler.<sup>110</sup> As in the tomb of Nebamun, the two fan- and axe-bearers in the Ibrim shrine are at a scale larger than that of the foreign tribute bearers, and smaller than that of the king (and presumably the now-missing figure of the viceroy).<sup>111</sup>

The Nubian associations of the *tisw*-staff<sup>112</sup> belong to a broader association of Nubian soldiers with sticks and clubs, in both warfare and ritual.<sup>113</sup> In a scene of Qenamun offering an elaborate centerpiece to Amenhotep II – a three-dimensional manifestation of Nubia and the religious and economic significance of the south – *tisw*-staves appear several times.<sup>114</sup> In addition to the staves alone are three statues of Amenhotep II, in Nubian garb, each carrying a *tisw*-staff in one hand and a battleaxe in the other, evocative illustrations of the proverb on the stela of Usersatet.

Although the proverb does not refer to the construction of the staves, such objects could also be quite elaborate; even a simple reed might be mounted in gold.<sup>115</sup> Already during the Twelfth Dynasty, the warrior Khusobek received, amongst other rewards for valor, a *st*s-staff of electrum and a dagger of the same metal.<sup>116</sup> The official Ahmose-Ruru describes how he received two silver *'wn.t* staves, one from Hathshepsut and the other from Thutmose III, at least one of the staves having a golden pommel.<sup>117</sup> Gifts for Amenhotep II depicted in the tomb of Qenamun include a group of three *tisw*-staves, representing the total of 30 in a label accompanying the depiction. The rightmost staff receives two additional annotations, one describing the tip of the curved upper portion as *nbw*-gold, apparently referring to a metal cap

<sup>109</sup> CAMINOS, *Ibrim*, p. 66, notes that the name of Usersatet does not appear within the shrine.

<sup>110</sup> HARTWIG, *Tomb Painting and Identity in Ancient Thebes*, pp. 63, 225 (fig. 24), and 231 (fig. 30).

<sup>111</sup> CAMINOS, *Ibrim*, pp. 69-70, assumes the figure of Usersatet may have appeared in the lower register to the right of the lower text in front of the royal *int.t*.

<sup>112</sup> R. DRENKHAN, *op. cit.*, pp. 137-138.

<sup>113</sup> J.C. DARNELL, "Hathor Returns to Medamûd," *SAK* 22, 1995, p. 74 and n. 141. The appearance of two pairs of *tisw*-staves in scenes of a military guard of standard bearers in the tomb of Qenamun (DAVIES, *Tomb of Qenamun* I, pls. 20-21 and 23, and vol. 2 pl. 22 A) suggests that a pair of such staves, such as those to which Amenhotep II refers in the proverb, may have been familiar within a military context.

<sup>114</sup> DAVIES, *Tomb of Qenamun* I, pls. 16-17 (statues of Amenhotep II holding *tisw*-staves) and 18 (*tisw*-staves; on p. 26, n. 2, citing *id.*, *Tombs of Two Officials*, pl. 26), and W. WRESZINSKI, *Atlas zur altaegyptischen Kulturgeschichte* I, Leipzig, 1923, pls. 29a [tomb of Suemniut, statue of Amenhotep II in normal kilt, with short, "Nubian" wig, holding mace and *tisw*-staff] and 94a [Amenemheb, reign of Amenhotep II, holding a *tisw*-staff and overseeing the registration and provisioning of troops]; H.G. FISCHER, "Notes on Sticks and Staves in Ancient Egypt," *MMAJ* 13, 1979, pp. 13-14.

<sup>115</sup> Compare N. REEVES, *The Complete Tutankhamun: the King, the Tomb, the Royal Treasure*, London, New York, 1990, p. 178 (detail photograph of the gold mounted end in Z. HAWASS, *Discovering Tutankhamun: from Howard Carter to DNA*, Cairo, 2013, p. 158).

<sup>116</sup> J. BAINES, "The Stela of Khusobek: Private and Royal Military Narrative and Values," in J. Osing, G. DREYER (eds.), *Form und Mass, ÄAT* 12, 1987, pl. 1 (§ C 1. 5), with pp. 47 and 52 (nn. pp-rr).

<sup>117</sup> See MANASSA, *Imagining the Past*, p. 84, with references (comparing Ahmose-Ruru's staves to the *'wn.t*-staff of pharaoh with which General Djehuty dispatches the ruler of Joppa).

over the wood; the ferrule at the bottom is labeled as *ḥd*-silver.<sup>118</sup> Also in the tomb of Qenamun, depictions of *tisw*-staves in the hands of military standard bearers are almost equally elaborate and “expensive” in construction.<sup>119</sup> From the tomb of Tutankhamun, a *tisw*-staff ornamented with gold and marquetry inlay (no. 227a)<sup>120</sup> would not entirely pale into insignificance in the presence of the elaborate axe in the proverb. Some slightly elaborate staves might have gone into battle, at least in the hands of veterans and officers – so on the First Intermediate Period stela CG 20513, an official Ded claims: “I fought for my lord with a staff of copper” (*ḥ3.n(=i) ḥr nb=i m mdw / ḥd(?) ḥmt*).<sup>121</sup>

The saying in the royal decree recorded on the Usersatet stela indicates that one *tisw*-staff is in the area of Nilotic waters, the other in the *bʿr* of acacia. These staves fill the lack of an impressively elaborate battleaxe, all three weapons representing people in the southern administration, in a proverb providing a response to some initiative that Usersatet mounted in appointing some new and native official in the Nubian administration. The staves themselves may have been of acacia, and a surviving “illustration” of the proverb’s staves may be the staff of acacia from the tomb of Amenhotep II<sup>122</sup> with the text “the good god, aggressive leopard, Aakheperoure beloved of Monthu” (*ntr nfr ʒby šm-ib ʒ-ḥpr.w-Rʿ mry Mntw*) – a “militaristic” acacia staff that might well replace an elaborate axe. The elaborate axe would be intelligible to both king and viceroy as a royal object, a representation of the ruler himself, or at least of his supreme pleasure in the performance of a subordinate as a “parade” weapon. The staves are specified as *tisw*-staves, particularly appropriate for references to the Nubian milieu, and well known – in elaborate forms as well – to Amenhotep II. Just as an elaborate axe might refer to an object carried by the viceroy, or for the viceroy by one of his subordinates, so a staff might indicate the office of a local Nubian official, accompanying him on his tours of a district.<sup>123</sup>

## Foreigners and Amenhotep II

The texts accompanying the scenes of Nubian tribute in the Ibrim shrine of Usersatet interestingly and uncommonly record not the amount of materials delivered to the king, but

<sup>118</sup> DAVIES, *Tomb of Qenamun*, pl. 18 (according to Davies, p. 28, two of the three staves on pl. 18 are colored to correspond to the label, the third being red in color; three representing thirty, with two having precious metal tips, twenty of the staves may have been so capped, the rest lacking the tips and ferrules).

<sup>119</sup> Two pairs of *tisw*-staves appear in the procession of military insignia, *ibid.*, vol. 1, pls. 20-21 and 23; vol. 2, pl. 22 A), characterized by Davies (*ibid.*, p. 32) as “a pair of the curved staves which the officers of the Mezey mercenaries carried.” The insignia are (right to left) – royal name fan, flail ensign, two *tisw*-staves, royal name fan, two flail ensigns, royal name fan, two *tisw*-staves, and perhaps another, now missing element (considering the space, more probably a flail ensign than a royal name fan). According to Davies (*ibid.*, p. 32), the first pair are one of ebony inlaid with ivory, the other having “variegated bands,” tipped with silver (white) ferrules; the second pair comprises one *tisw* of ebony with gold ferrule, the other of a “banded” wood, the tip (white) apparently of silver. On the flail ensigns, first appearing in scenes in the temple of Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahari, and apparently no longer in use by the Ramesside Period – see the references in EPIGRAPHIC SURVEY, *Reliefs and Inscriptions at Luxor Temple I*, p. 8.

<sup>120</sup> REEVES, *op. cit.*, p. 178.

<sup>121</sup> H.G. FISCHER, *The Orientation of Hieroglyphs*, *Egyptian Studies* 2, 1977, pp. 143-146 (slightly different interpretation *id.*, *Dendera*, p. 145). Based on shape, the word for staff could be *ʒms* or *ḥ.t* (compare H. WILLEMS, *The Coffin of Heqata (Cairo JdE 36418)*, *OLA* 70, 1996, pp. 77-78).

<sup>122</sup> G. DARESSY, *Fouilles de la Vallée des Rois (1898-1899)*, CGC Nos. 24001-24990, Cairo, 1902, p. 66, no. 24113; see also HASSAN, *op. cit.*, p. 133.

<sup>123</sup> T. SÄVE-SÖDERBERGH, “The Paintings in the Tomb of Djehuty-hetep at Debeira,” *Kush* 8, 1960, pp. 41-42 and pl. 15c; *id.*, *New Kingdom Pharaonic Sites: the Finds and the Sites*, *SJE* 5/2, 1991, p. 199.

the numbers of the people making the deliveries. Similarly, the decree of Amenhotep II on the stela of Usersatet emphasizes not foreign goods and the values thereof, but foreign people and apparently the advantages they may bring (and in at least one case not bring) to Egyptian service. This stress on people, even when bringing prized foreign products, is in keeping with similarly interesting and unusual lists and tallies of people in military accounts from the reign of Amenhotep II.<sup>124</sup> As noted above, the listing of women belonging to Usersatet's house is ordered in such a way as to describe a roughly rectangular region north and east of areas of Egyptian hegemony in the Levant; not one of the toponyms relates to an object of Amenhotep II's aggression.

Usersatet does not appear to have anyone from Takhsy, so Amenhotep II apparently says this as a way of making light of the fact. The absence of anyone from Takhsy in Usersatet's household is probably a reflection of the fate of that region, located near Kadesh on the Orontes. According to the Amada Stela of Amenhotep II, the king personally dispatched by means of his mace seven rulers of the region of Takhsy. Their bodies were suspended upside-down from the prow of the royal falcon-bark (as Thutmose I had done with a Nubian leader earlier), with six finally hung from the wall of Thebes and one from the wall of Napata.<sup>125</sup> That Amenhotep II parenthetically alludes to the lack of anyone from Takhsy in the viceroy's "family" may represent an example of a brutal sort of humor.<sup>126</sup> That Usersatet has no human memento of the Takhsy campaign is interesting – only Takhsy might have yielded a person who could have entered Usersatet's household as a true spoil of battle.<sup>127</sup>

Some of the northern female members of Usersatet's household might have been acquired at the time of the campaigns during Amenhotep II's first decade of rule, but the girl of Alalakh at least must be a rather recent addition to Usersatet's entourage.<sup>128</sup> Even if several were encountered during Amenhotep II's northern campaigning, only if they were already in a land foreign to them could the women to whom Amenhotep II refers have been acquired as part of some campaign booty – Babylon, Byblos, and Arrapkha were never the objects of Egyptian military activity under Amenhotep II; Babylon was known only through diplomacy, Byblos was well established again as part of the Egyptian world after the disruptions of the Second Intermediate Period, and aside from the stela of Usersatet, distant Arrapkha, east of Ashur, is

<sup>124</sup> See the remarks of A.J. SPALINGER, *War in Ancient Egypt*, Oxford, 2005, pp. 140-145.

<sup>125</sup> For the Takhsy campaign see the summary in DER MANUELIAN, *Studies in the Reign of Amenophis II*, pp. 47-56; for the question of the relationship of the Takhsy campaign of Amenhotep II to activity in the area under Thutmose III, see D.B. REDFORD, "The Northern Wars of Thutmose III," in Cline, O'Connor (eds.), *op. cit.*, p. 335. For the texts detailing the executions see BEYLAGE, *op. cit.*, pp. 267-281 and 696-700; A. KLUG, *Königliche Stelen in der Zeit von Ahmose bis Amenophis III*, Brepols, 2002, pp. 278-292. For the solar imagery of the bark of the sun traveling over the body Apep as the prototype for Thutmose I, see DARNELL, MANASSA, *op. cit.*, pp. 18-19 (refs. pp. 218-219); the seven Takhsy rulers also evoke the seven neck vertebrae of Apep (references in DARNELL, *Enigmatic Netherworld Books*, pp. 304-305). See also KLUG, *op. cit.*, p. 292, for "netherworldly" aspects to the fate of the Takhsy prisoners.

<sup>126</sup> Perhaps an example of the "grotesque humor" that A.J. SPALINGER, *Icons of Power: a Strategy of Reinterpretation*, Prague, 2011, p. 123, sees in some of "the rather vicious war records" of Amenhotep II (*ibid.*, pp. 88-89 and 121). Note, however, that the executions and hangings of the bodies create "living" tableaux of execration ritual, for the elements of which in Amenhotep's treatment of the Takhsy rulers, see RITNER, *Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice*, pp. 170-171.

<sup>127</sup> For the Takhsy campaigns of Thutmose III and Amenhotep II, see the references in REDFORD, *Wars in Syria and Palestine of Thutmose III*, p. 171; VANDERSLEYEN, *op. cit.*, pp. 323-324.

<sup>128</sup> Conclusions such as that of JANSSEN and JANSSEN, *op. cit.*, p. 123 (the women are somehow related to "some Asiatics whom they [Usersatet and Amenhotep II] had once defeated as brothers-in-arms") and MORSCHAUER, *op. cit.*, p. 207, n. 19 (the women represent "a supposed reference to User-Satet having sacked the cities listed in the dispatch while campaigning earlier with Amenophis II") are not possible.



but a name in topographical lists.<sup>129</sup> Pakhaty as well, whether a reference to the Hittite homeland or some fringe area thereof, was not an area that Amenhotep II attacked, to judge from surviving records. The Hittites of *Ht3 3* in fact were disposed to send *inw* to Thutmosis III;<sup>130</sup> Alalakh delivered tribute, including people, to Thutmosis III, but does not appear to have been the object of any direct aggression under Amenhotep II.<sup>131</sup> All of the foreign women to whom Amenhotep II refers are natives of areas outside direct Egyptian political control or military action during the reign of Amenhotep II; they represent non-combatants of essentially friendly or neutral Near Eastern powers. Only a female from Takhsy might have been captured directly, and such a woman or girl is pointedly absent.

Amenhotep II says nothing derogatory about the female dependents, and does not criticize Usersatet for having acquired them; the women and girls in question are likely to have been presented to the viceroy by the king himself; they are further likely to have been presented to the king as part of the tribute of the foreign states whence they came.<sup>132</sup> Nothing in the text suggests that the women of different ages from the various northern sites represent the rulers of those areas, and they belong not to Amenhotep II's household but to that of Usersatet. Certainly they feminize those lands within the king's message, but they are not the objects of any violence or scorn on the part of the king – that is reserved for Takhsy. Texts of the time reveal a relatively multilingual, “Asiatic” milieu in which Amenhotep II and many of his close associates may have spent much time in their younger days, and the use of Western Asiatic loan words and introduction of divine cults of Western Asiatic origin during the reign of Amenhotep II suggest that the ruler was not inalterably opposed to Asiatic culture or people.<sup>133</sup> The only Western Asiatics of whom Amenhotep II has anything derogatory to say are the people of Takhsy, and they are inhabitants of the only one of the Asiatic toponyms he mentions against which Amenhotep II campaigned militarily. The people of Takhsy are also the only Asiatics not feminized in the text, so the concept that the reference to foreign women is intended to demean the lands whence they came is without basis – the women are more likely actual members of Usersatet's household than some odd metaphors. Foreign women, in Egyptian depictions and accounts of military conflict, can in fact be more active and potent than foreign men.<sup>134</sup>

<sup>129</sup> The importance of an allied Byblos for the early Eighteenth Dynasty is discussed in SPALINGER, *War in Ancient Egypt*, pp. 52-58. For Arrapkha, see W. HELCK, *LÄ I*, 1975, col. 450, s. v. “Arrapha,” but note also VANDERSLEYEN, *op. cit.*, p. 331 and n. 2.

<sup>130</sup> *Urk.* IV, 701, ll. 10-14.

<sup>131</sup> *Urk.* IV, 719, 16-720, 4. For Alalakh as essentially a fringe state of the Mitanni hegemony, see REDFORD, *Wars in Syria and Palestine of Thutmose III*, pp. 199 and 231.

<sup>132</sup> On foreign children in Egypt, see E. FEUCHT, “Kinder fremder Völker in Ägypten I,” in A. Eggebrecht, B. Schmitz (eds.), *Festschrift Jürgen von Beckerath, HÄB 30*, 1990, pp. 29-48; *id.*, “Kinder fremder Völker in Ägypten II,” *SAK 17*, 1990, pp. 177-204. According to SMITH, *Wretched Kush*, p. 202, “Amenhotep II clearly was a bit worried about Usersatet's view of foreigners, however, acknowledging that even key members of the Egyptian elite did not necessarily buy into the foreigner *topos*. Usersatet's acquisition of women from Egyptian-controlled Syro-Palestine, and even exotic Babylon, apparently made Pharaoh question whether his new viceroy took a proper view of foreigners.” Such an interpretation is unlikely – any Babylonian servant would probably have been presented to the king as part of a diplomatic mission, and would be unlikely to have entered Usersatet's household without the knowledge if not active donation of Amenhotep II himself.

<sup>133</sup> See COLLOMBERT, COULON, *op. cit.*, pp. 217-219; M. BIETAK, “Egypt and the Levant,” in T. Wilkinson (ed.), *The Egyptian World*, London, New York, 2007, p. 436; PASQUALI, *Égypte, Afrique & Orient 65*, 2012, 11-24; also BRYAN, in Shaw (ed.), *Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, pp. 252-253.

<sup>134</sup> MANASSA, *Imagining the Past*, pp. 91-94. The king may be said to see foreign troops “as women” (cf. THE EPIGRAPHIC SURVEY, *Medinet Habu I. Earlier Historical Records of Ramses III, OIP 8*, 1930, pl. 9, ll. 5-7), but foreign troops never appear in military scenes or texts as though they actually were women.

Amenhotep II is not averse to the definite article in his decree (cf. *p3 s3-nsw.t* and *p3 b3k n nmhy.w*), so the studious avoidance of *t3* in the list of women suggests that each is indeed “a” rather than “the;” the women are perhaps a sampling of those in Usersatet’s household, chosen to recall the diplomatic and military exploits of the viceroy and the king and to fit the chiasmatically constructed allusion to the far reaches of the area of Egyptian control and adventure in Western Asia, members of an essentially extended family, like those listed in the tomb of Ahmose son of Ibana at Elkab.<sup>135</sup> Rather than being exotic aspects of Usersatet’s household that might have seemed uncommon to those who would read the text of his stela, many officials during the middle of the Eighteenth Dynasty probably had members of their household who came to them ultimately as the result of Egyptian diplomatic and military activities in foreign lands. So the chief of the Medjoy-police and governor of the Theban Western Desert, Dedu, who served under Thutmose III and Amenhotep II, wrote a peremptorily worded letter to a subordinate regarding some improper handling of a girl named Hupat, probably another foreign, perhaps Asiatic, servant in Egypt.<sup>136</sup>

Amenhotep II’s final admonishing of Usersatet is not a remarkable suggestion that an official not hear subordinates, at odds with the Egyptian concept of the proper official as an administrator of *maat*.<sup>137</sup> The king does not say that Usersatet should not hear the words (*sdm* + direct object), but that the viceroy should not harken to those words (*sdm* + *n* and indirect object), should not heed them as a matter of course. In some ways Amenhotep II describes a scenario similar – in extreme syncopation – to that of the Eloquent Peasant: an official brings in a “lowly” potential official (someone from outside of Nilotic Egyptian society, if the *b3k ny nmhy.w* is a Nubian) with the result that the ruler hears a metaphoric saying. The saying that Amenhotep II quotes apparently advises that two more workmanlike weapons / officials are worth a ceremonial weapon / official, and the king admonishes not heeding “them,” the Nubians from whom the possibly eloquent official is apparently drawn.

Nubians participated in Egyptian society, as soldiers already during the Old Kingdom, as important elements of the Theban military during the time of Monthuhotep II, as members of at least the lower elements of the pharaonic state during the early Twelfth Dynasty, to name but a few. The Nubians to whom a Twelfth Dynasty text in the Wadi el-Hudi addresses itself are offered *hm*-servant status in the pharaonic world if they will but enter into *b3k*-servant status.<sup>138</sup>

Amenhotep II discusses people and the values and problems thereof as objects of trust for the viceroy; he then goes on to offer advice by means of a saying in which weapons represent people. If the staves indeed refer to two people, doing the duty of the one “fancy” official whom the axe represents, then the saying is particularly appropriate for the viceregal administration of Usersatet. The administration of Nubia prior to the reign of Amenhotep II was under the control of the viceroy, but no evidence for a well-developed system of deputies

<sup>135</sup> *Urk.* IV, 11, 3-14.

<sup>136</sup> R.J. DEMARÉE, “A Letter of Reproach,” in E. Teeter, J.A. Larson (eds.), *Gold of Praise*, SAOC 58, Chicago, 1999, pp. 75-82 (and p. 79, n. h on the name).

<sup>137</sup> Note the remarks of A. DAVID, “The *nmh* and the Paradox of the Voiceless in the Eloquent Peasant,” *JEA* 97, 2011, pp. 80-81.

<sup>138</sup> DARNELL, in Moreno García (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 791-792 with nn. 31-32. This need not be necessarily high-minded and un-exploitative; a concept of working into a civilized state, predicated on an assumption of a “native” idleness, figures in arguments for forced labor in viceregal Mexico (see A. CAÑEQUE, *The King’s Living Image: The Culture and Politics of Viceregal Power in Colonial Mexico*, New York, London, 2004, pp. 201-212).

is in evidence prior to the Amarna Period. Nevertheless, Usersatet's time as Viceroy witnessed the installation of a powerful second-in-command, a native Nubian deputy who may have carried out the functions later divided between the deputies of Wawat and Kush. The fact that Amenhotep II warns Usersatet to take care around magically powerful Nubians, and be suspect of local reports, indicates that some incorporation of Nubians within the viceregal administration was already an accepted practice.<sup>139</sup>

### The Possible Identity of the Bureaucratic Outsider

Rather than bearing a derogatory designation,<sup>140</sup> the person to whom Amenhotep II refers as “the bureaucratic outsider of a servant” (*p3 b3k ny nmhy.w*), is simply a *b3k*-servant from the group of people not part of *sr*-officialdom, the *nmhy.w* in the Decree of Horemheb directly corresponding to “every soldier of the army and every person in the entire land” (*nh nb ny ms'c rmt nb nty m t3 r-dr=f*).<sup>141</sup> The designation *b3k* is one that even the viceroy might modestly apply to himself – in the shrine of Nehy at Ibrim, the viceroy states “I am an effective *b3k*-servant for his lord” (*ink b3k 3h n nb=f*).<sup>142</sup> The advancement of a person of *nmh*-status into the bureaucracy may not have been an uncommon occurrence, and the claim of presentation for elevation from the state of a *nmh* to the rank of an administrator is a *topos* that not infrequently appears in the tomb inscriptions of Amarna.<sup>143</sup> Even the royal lady Ahmose-Nefertary herself might claim to have been raised from *nmh*-status: “he caused that I become powerful, while I was yet of *nmh*-status” (*rdi=f wsr=i iw nmh.kw*).<sup>144</sup>

Following the reconquest of Nubia under Kamose, the chief Egyptian administrator may have been the commander of Buhen, although already under Kamose and Ahmose, officials bearing the court title *s3-nsw.t* appear in rock inscriptions at Toshka.<sup>145</sup> The title of the chief Egyptian administrator in Nubia evolved relatively quickly through the reigns of the first

<sup>139</sup> So M. FITZENREITER, “Identität als Bekenntnis und Anspruch – Notizen zum Grab des Pennut (Teil IV),” *Der antike Sudan MittSAG* 15, 2004, pp. 182-183.

<sup>140</sup> As translators have generally assumed – cf. WENTE's “that servant of nobodies;” also MORSCHAUSER, *op. cit.*, pp. 210-211. LEPROHON, *op. cit.*, p. 1/4, “the servant of private people,” is closer to the meaning; so also DER MANUELIAN, *Studies in the Reign of Amenophis II*, p. 158: “the servant of private citizens.”

<sup>141</sup> J.-M. KRUCHTEN, *Le décret d'Horemheb: traduction, commentaire épigraphique, philologique et institutionnel*, Brussels, 1981, pp. 31-33; for the economic aspect of *nmh* – “without superior control,” and “no required or forced ‘Zwangsarbeit,’” see SPALINGER, *Great Dedicatory Inscription of Ramesses II*, p. 30, n. 91; H.-J. THISSEN, *Die demotischen Graffiti von Medinet Habu: Zeugnisse zu Tempel und Kult in ptolemäischen Ägypten*, *DemStud* 10, 1989, pp. 39-40. S.L.D. KATARY, “The Administration of Institutional Agriculture in the New Kingdom,” in Moreno García (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 750-752, discusses *3h.t-nmh*, the land of socially inferior smallholders. For D.A. WARBURTON, *State and Economy in Ancient Egypt: Fiscal Vocabulary of the New Kingdom*, *OBO* 151, 1997, pp. 20, 253, 338, *et passim*, the *nmh.w* were “private people,” whom changing economic conditions at the end of the New Kingdom forced increasingly from the position of land owner to that of tenant.

<sup>142</sup> CAMINOS, *Ibrim*, pl. 10, second line of text above the viceroy and offering bearers.

<sup>143</sup> Compare the examples in DAVID, *op. cit.*, pp. 73-85.

<sup>144</sup> HELCK, *Historisch-biographische Texte*, p. 102, l. 15 (stela l. 20); Cf. VANDERSLEYEN, *Les guerres d'Amosis*, *MRE* 1, 1971, p. 195, n. 5 (reading “alors que je n'étais qu'une simple citoyenne”).

<sup>145</sup> For the administration of Nubia see the forthcoming study of M. BROWN, *Keeping Enemies Closer*; GNIRS, in Moreno García (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 676-686; R. MORKOT, “From Conquered to Conqueror: the Organization of Nubia in the New Kingdom and the Kushite Administration of Egypt,” in Moreno García (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 911-963. The Toshka inscriptions are A.E.P. WEIGALL, *A Report on the Antiquities of Lower Nubia (the First Cataract to the Sudan Frontier) and their Condition in 1906-7*, Oxford, 1907, p. 127 and pl. 65; W.K. SIMPSON, *Heka-Nefer and the Dynastic Material from Toshka and Arminna*, New Haven, Philadelphia, 1963, p. 34, fig. 27, pl 17b; L. HABACHI, “The First Two Viceroys of Kush and their Family,” *Kush* 7, 1959, pp. 45-62.

three rulers of the Eighteenth Dynasty. Turo, appointed “Commander of Buhen” (*tsw ny Bhn*) under Ahmose, became “Overseer of the Southern Foreign Lands” (*imy-rꜥ ḥꜣs.wt rsy.wt*) under Amenhotep I, and “King’s Son and Overseer of the Southern Foreign Lands” (*sꜣ-nsw.t imy-rꜥ ḥꜣs.wt rsy.wt*) under Thutmose I.<sup>146</sup> The standard title “King’s son of Kush” (*sꜣ nsw.t ny Kš*) appears by the reign of Thutmose IV, by which time the officers who will become the twin deputies of the viceroy have begun to appear in the epigraphic record.<sup>147</sup>

The offices of “Deputy of Wawat” and “Deputy of Kush” appear both to have been firmly in place by the reign of Tutankhamun, probably originating during the reign of Akhenaton, if not late in the reign of Amenhotep III.<sup>148</sup> Those twin assistants represent a division of the earlier office of “deputy of the Viceroy”<sup>149</sup> that appears to have witnessed some administrative foreshadowing during the reign of Amenhotep II, under the auspices of Usersatet. The time of Amenhotep II through Thutmose IV also appears to see the creation of a chief of Nubian military forces under the viceroy,<sup>150</sup> an additional example of a multiplication of specific “cabinet overseers” as under-administrators for the viceroy, and an administrative reflection of the shift in the administrative focus of the viceroy from military occupation to civil administration. Usersatet had two deputies, Sennefer and Meh, attested in rock inscriptions at Aswan (with one attested in the Eastern Desert);<sup>151</sup> if both served together and not in succession, they might presage the later deputies for Wawat and Kush.

Under Usersatet, a second southern overseer appears, a member of a newly dual governorship, in which pair Usersatet remained *primus inter pares*. The other “Overseer of Southern Foreign Lands,” (Pa)heqaemsasen,<sup>152</sup> may have been a Nubian, and is accorded equal iconographic status with Usersatet in a rock stela at Tombos. According to the editor of the Tombos stela:<sup>153</sup> “It is clear that the rock-monuments at Tombos commemorate victory and appropriation. This stela, with its unusual double scene, may symbolize the integration of the indigenous elite into the Egyptian governance of Kush, a process known to have formed a

<sup>146</sup> For Turo see BROWN, *op. cit.*; L. HABACHI, *LÄ III*, 1979, cols. 630-631, s. v. “Königsson Von Kusch;” on the title see DARNELL, MANASSA, *op. cit.*, pp. 106-107; B. SCHMITZ, *Untersuchungen Zum Titel Sa-Njswt “Königsson”*, Bonn, 1976, pp. 267-268; A. GNIRS, *Militär und Gesellschaft: ein Beitrag Zur Sozialgeschichte Des Neuen Reiches*, Heidelberg, 1996, pp. 35-36 and 134-141.

<sup>147</sup> GNIRS, in Moreno García (ed.), *Ancient Egyptian Administration*, p. 677, n. 156.

<sup>148</sup> DARNELL, *SAK* 31, 2003, pp. 73-91 (esp. 78-79); D. Klotz (in press) presents the first proper reading of a cryptographic inscription on the statue MFA 24.743 (G.A. REISNER, D. DUNHAM, J.M.A. JANSSEN, *Semna Kumba*, Boston, 1960, pp. 33-43 [title at top of p. 37]).

<sup>149</sup> For the *idnw* see conveniently MORKOT, *op. cit.*, pp. 936-937.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 941 (p. 936 on transformation of the office of deputy into deputies of Wawat and Kush as part of a “formalization or restructuring of the [deputies] system in the period of Amenhotep II-Amenhotep III”); for an *idnw* of Thutmose III, see DARNELL, in Moreno García (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 825, n. 179.

<sup>151</sup> See BROWN, *op. cit.*, citing four inscriptions in the Wadi Dunqash (R.D. ROTHE, W.K. MILLER, G. RAPP, *Pharaonic Inscriptions from the Southern Eastern Desert of Egypt*, Winona Lake, 2008, pp. 288 and 290-292) naming a deputy Seninefer, perhaps identical with the man of the same name who was a deputy of Usersatet, mentioned in a rock inscription on the island of Sahel (J. DE MORGAN, *et al.*, *Catalogue des monuments et inscriptions de l’Égypte antique I. Haute Égypte 1, de la frontière de Nubie à Kom Ombos*, Vienna, 1894, p. 91, no. 106; GASSE, RONDOT, *Sudan and Nubia* 7, 2003, p. 43; *id.*, *Les inscriptions de Séhel*, pp. 153-154 [no. SEH 259]). A second deputy of Usersatet, Mehu, appears in an inscription at Gebel Tingar – L. HABACHI, *Sixteen Studies on Lower Nubia*, *SASAE* 23, 1981, pp. 41-42.

<sup>152</sup> M. DEWACHTER, “Un fonctionnaire préposé aux marches méridionales à l’époque d’Aménophis II: (Pa)-Heka-emsasen,” *CRIPÉL* 4, 1976, pp. 55-60; DER MANUELIAN, *Studies in the Reign of Amenophis II*, pp. 93-94 and 111-112; GASSE, RONDOT, *Les inscriptions de Séhel*, p. 155 (no. SEH 261); MORKOT, *op. cit.*, p. 949.

<sup>153</sup> W.V. DAVIES, “The British Museum Epigraphic Survey at Tombos: the Stela of Usersatet and Hekaemsasen,” *British Museum Studies in Ancient Egypt and Sudan* 14, 2009, pp. 25-50 (quotation p. 29).

significant element of colonial strategy in the south.” Nothing suggests that (Pa)heqaemsasen was an *idnw* of Usersatet, but the geographical locations of (Pa)heqaemsasen’s surviving memorials – particularly Gebel Barkal and Tombos – imply that he was particularly associated with the southern portion of Nubia.<sup>154</sup> (Pa)heqaemsasen’s loyalist name, referring to the punitive and compelling nature of Egyptian rule – “the ruler is after/makes a claim against them” – is appropriate to a role focused on the southern frontier zones.<sup>155</sup> Amenhotep II may have known (Pa)heqaemsasen personally, to judge from the latter’s titles “overseer of the portal” (*imy-r(ḥ) rwy.t*) and “fan bearer” (*ḥy hw*).<sup>156</sup>

Usersatet had a viceregal scribe with the name Nehesy,<sup>157</sup> probably an Egyptianized Nubian in the southern administration, an indication that Usersatet may indeed have taken at least one Nubian into his confidence. The appointment of (Pa)heqaemsasen as a secondary southern overseer may have been an initiative of Usersatet himself. Usersatet was an important administrative official as Viceroy, and appears to have had a particularly close relationship with the king,<sup>158</sup> because of which Amenhotep II may have offered him advice in what to us seems a somewhat off-hand and informal manner. The reference in the proverb to two staves standing for one fancy axe probably refers – in Amenhotep II’s use of the saying – to the viceroy and his Nubian counterpart. Amenhotep’s concern does not appear to arise from the potential appointment of a Nubian, but from the appointment of someone from outside the accepted candidates. Rather than making the apparently more usual choice of a native administrator from amongst children sent to Egypt to study and achieve an early acculturation, Usersatet has looked to someone entirely outside of the bureaucracy.<sup>159</sup>

Usersatet apparently set up his stela near the area of the Thutmoside temple in Semna fortress, to judge from the find spots of the two fragments into which the monument was broken, both near the bottom of the stair at the east end of the River Corridor.<sup>160</sup> Usersatet may have wished to publicize the decree of Amenhotep II in order to make clear to the officials of New Kingdom Nubia – Egyptian as well as Nubian – that he had gone somewhat out on a limb in looking beyond the usual candidates for advancement to high office. The apparent association of the stela with the river access of the fortress would have provided a resonance of the landscape with the content of the proverb that Amenhotep II quoted – the stela of Usersatet indeed stood at a place of *n.t*-waters, the place of the staff that may have represented Usersatet himself. The prominence of (Pa)heqaemsasen in the rock inscription he shares with Usersatet at Tombos indicates the importance of (Pa)heqaemsasen in the distant marches of Nubia; (Pa)heqaemsasen would well suit the embodiment of the second staff in the saying that Amenhotep memorialized in his decree to Usersatet.

The Harvard-MFA excavation discovered the stela of Usersatet on January 24, 1924. In his excellent overview of the stela two weeks later, in an entry for Thursday, February 7, 1924,

<sup>154</sup> See DEWACHTER, *op. cit.*, p. 60, n. 19; MORKOT, *op. cit.*, p. 949.

<sup>155</sup> For (Pa)heqaemsasen’s name compare the Year 11 Poem on the Second Libyan War of Ramesses III – Libyans hurry to seek peace, “as if there were a stick at their back(s)” (*mi nty mdw m-sḥsn*, KRI V, 68, 12); for *m-sḥ* as “make a claim against,” see the references in QUACK, *Lehren des Ani*, p. 101, n. 60.

<sup>156</sup> DAVIES, *British Museum Studies in Ancient Egypt and Sudan* 14, 2009, p. 28; MORKOT, *op. cit.*, p. 949.

<sup>157</sup> Graffito SHE 258 at Sehel – GASSE, RONDOT, *Les inscriptions de Séhel*, p. 153.

<sup>158</sup> Usersatet was also “great chief spokesman in the entire land” (*rḥ hry wr m tḥ r-drḥf* – GNIRS, *Militär und Gesellschaft*, p. 106, n. 566), a designation uncommon for the Eighteenth Dynasty and later associated with the second most powerful administrator in Egypt (*ibid.*, pp. 105-106).

<sup>159</sup> So also K. ZIBELIUS-CHEN, *Die ägyptische Expansion nach Nubien, eine Darlegung der Grundfaktoren*, BTAVO B 78, 1988, p. 121.

<sup>160</sup> DUNHAM, JANSSEN, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

George Andrew Reisner summarized his initial and percipient though brief analysis of the stela with the words: “The whole text is new.”<sup>161</sup> In the sense Reisner clearly intended – unique and otherwise unparalleled – the stela of Usersatet remains as “new” now as it was in 1924.

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<sup>161</sup> G.A. REISNER, *Harvard University – Museum of Fine Arts, Expedition Diary XII. Sudan 8. Semna, Kumma*, p. 21 (again I thank Dr. Lawrence Berman for permission to cite the document, and Ms. Emily Cole for providing me with copies of pertinent portions of Reisner’s manuscript).

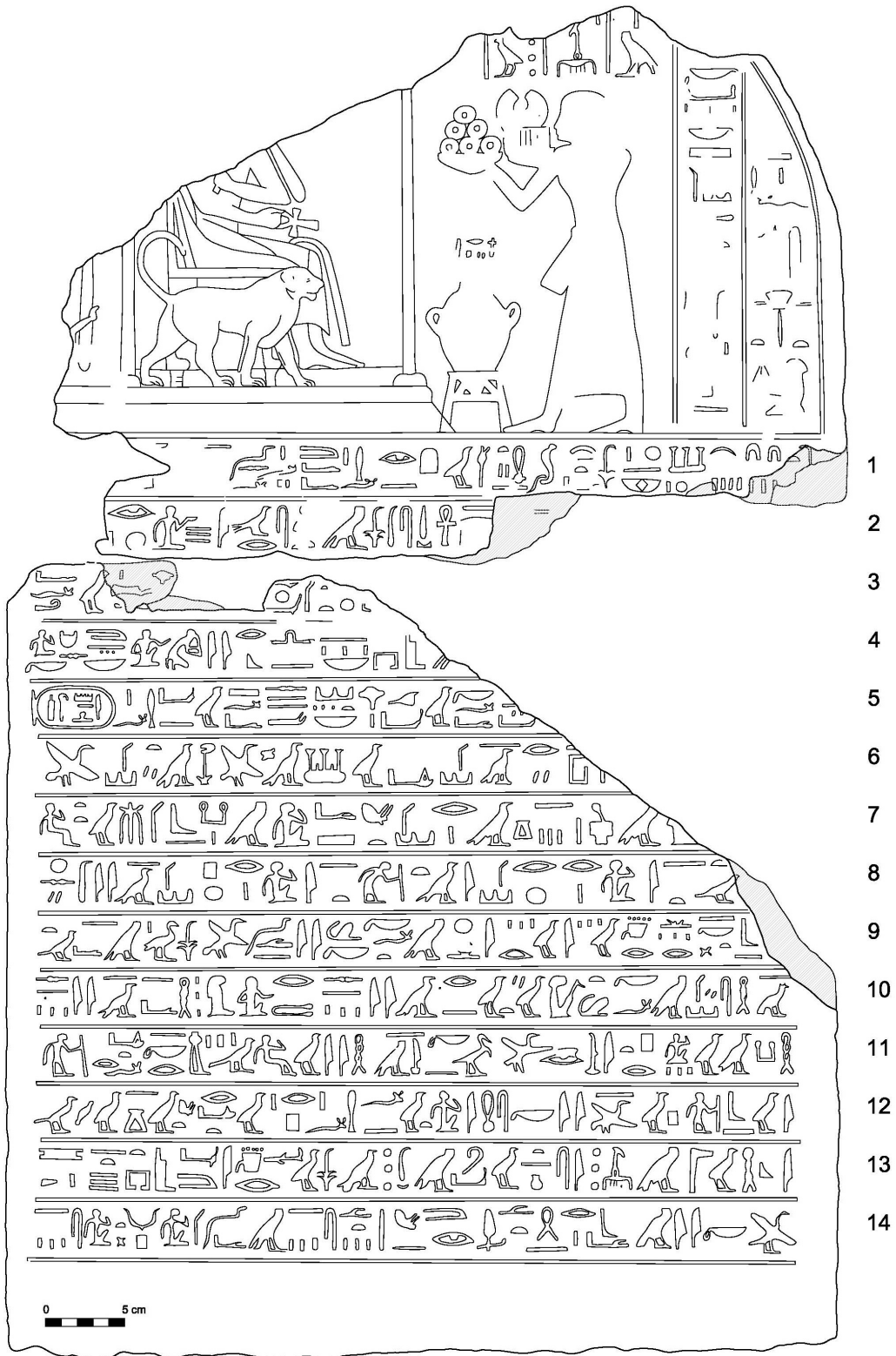


Fig. 1. The Stela of the Viceroy Usersatet (Boston MFA 25.632). Drawing based on the copy by P. Der Manuelian, with some adjustments by A. Urcia on the basis of a collation of J.C. Darnell.

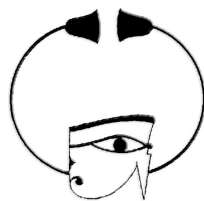
## Résumé :

La stèle de Semna, du vice-roi de Nubie de la XVIII<sup>e</sup> dynastie, Ousersatet, consigne un conseil donné par Amenhotep II à son vice-roi sous la forme d'une copie monumentale de la transcription personnelle du roi de son propre décret royal à Ousersatet. Le décret fut promulgué durant une fête célébrant l'accession royale, à une date secondaire, apparemment pour lier l'accession royale à la fête *kꜣ-hr-kꜣ*, à l'image de Ramsès III qui, plus tard, célébrera à la fois son accession et une fête de l'accession royale associée à la fête de Néhebkaou. Dans ce texte, Amenhotep II conseille Ousersatet quant aux interactions des Égyptiens et Nubiens avec l'administration du vice-roi et éclaire un peu les relations entre le roi, le vice-roi et les membres nubiens de la bureaucratie égyptienne du sud. La nature apparemment obscure et poétique du conseil royal et le manque de clarté quant à la situation d'Amenhotep II lorsqu'il le prodigue expliquent l'attention portée à ce texte, mais un certain manque de rigueur dans l'interprétation a obscurci plusieurs analyses de l'inscription. Un nouveau collationnement et un examen du texte de la stèle révèlent qu'Amenhotep II aborde apparemment la question de l'intégration croissante, par le vice-roi, de Nubiens dans les niveaux les plus élevés de l'administration du sud. Amenhotep II utilise une formule apparemment proverbiale qui fait référence à la transmission de l'autorité plus ancienne du vice-roi aux plus grandes divisions de la bureaucratie, et à la création d'un équivalent nubien du vice-roi, ce dernier restant néanmoins le *primus inter pares* de l'administration.

## Abstract:

The Semna stela of the Eighteenth Dynasty Viceroy of Nubia, Usersatet, records Amenhotep II's advice to his viceroy in the form of a monumental copy of the king's personal transcription of his own royal decree to Usersatet. The decree was issued during a festival celebrating the royal accession on a secondary date, apparently in order to link the king's accession to the *kꜣ-hr-kꜣ* festival, just as Ramesses III later would celebrate both his actual accession and a festival of royal accession associated with the Nehebkau festival. Amenhotep II offers advice to Usersatet regarding interactions of Egyptians and Nubians within the viceregal administration, and shed some light on the interactions of king, viceroy, and Nubian members of the Egyptian bureaucracy in the south. The seemingly obscure and poetic nature of the king's advice, and the lack of clarity regarding the situation about which Amenhotep II offers his advice, have led to considerable modern attention to the text, but a certain looseness of interpretation has plagued many examinations of the inscription. A new collation of the stela, and an examination of the text, reveal that Amenhotep II was apparently addressing the viceroy's increasing integration of Nubians into the higher levels of the southern administration. Amenhotep II quotes an apparently proverbial saying that refers to a devolution of earlier viceregal authority into greater divisions of bureaucracy, and the creation of a Nubian counterpart to the viceroy, the latter remaining nevertheless the *primus inter pares* of the administration.

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