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**THE RED SEA**  
and its Hinterland  
**in Antiquity**

The author  
3/6/93

A collection of papers  
Published in the Arabic and  
European periodicals

By

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*Daar al-Ma<sup>c</sup>rifah  
al-Gam<sup>c</sup>iyah  
Alexandria*

January  
1993

1120

To my country, Egypt  
Cradle of the earliest  
cultural achievements.  
I dedicate these papers  
on its cultural legacy  
in the Red sea regions.

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## Preface

by

Prof. Dr. Mohammad Hassan el-Zayaat  
Former Minister of Foreign Affairs  
A. R. Egypt

In 1960 I wrote the preface (in Arabic) of the first book issued by Mr. Abdel Monem Abdel Haliem Sayed (Teacher of Social Studies at Mogadishu (Magadiscio) at that time) on the geography and history of Somalia<sup>1</sup>.

I considered this work a pioneer one, for it was then the first book in Arabic on the geography and history of Somalia which has acquired its independence on the first of July, 1960<sup>2</sup>.

Now, after more than thirty years, I have the pleasure of introducing the present book by Prof. Dr. Abdel Monem Abdel Haliem Sayed, who has become now Prof. of Ancient History and Archaeology at the Faculty of Arts, University of Alexandria. In his book he compiled the papers and contributions on Somaliland and other Red sea regions (on both African and Asiatic sides) which he wrote during his long career in this field.

It is astonishing to say that the beginning of his interest in Red sea studies was a lecture on the ancient relationships between Pharaonic Egypt and Somaliland which he delivered during February 1958 in the Islamic Cultural Center at Magadiscio. It gained great success which may have been the impulse which urged him to choose the Red sea studies as his career.

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<sup>1</sup>The following is an English translation of the title of this book. "The Somali Republic (Somalia), A study of its physical environment, its economic possibilities, the Somali social systems, and their relationship with Egypt through the ages. 1000 Books series, No. 291, Cairo, 1960.

<sup>2</sup>At that time Prof. Dr. Mohammad Hassan el-Zayaat was the Egyptian Delegate at the consultative council of Somalia under U.N. Tutorship. He played an eminent role for accelerating the declaration of Somalia independence on July 1960 (the author).

His thesis for M.A. was on the subject of the Pharaonic Activity in the Red sea, and his thesis for the Ph.D. was on the cultural influences of Pharaonic Egypt on Red sea countries.<sup>3</sup>

After he was appointed as member of the teaching staff of the History Department, Alexandria University, he started on excavation project on the Egyptian Red sea shore where he discovered the site of the Pharaonic port from which the Ancient Egyptians used to set sail on their journeys in the Red sea.<sup>4</sup>

He acquired practical experience of the Asiatic countries of the Red sea through his teaching work in San<sup>c</sup>aa (North Yemen) and Jeddah (Saudi Arabia). This enabled him to write some contributions on the ancient history and archaeology of Pre-Islamic Arabia<sup>5</sup>

These two-sided fields of specialization, i.e., the African and Asiatic sides of the Red sea, were the subjects of comparative studies<sup>6</sup>.

The following papers are the fruit of his long career in Red sea studies.

Mohammad Hassan el-Zayaat

December 1992

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<sup>3</sup>Of the summary of the M.A. thesis see paper no. 1 and of the Ph.D. one see paper no.2.

<sup>4</sup>His papers nos. 4,5,6 and 7.

<sup>5</sup>His papers nos. 10 and 11.

<sup>6</sup>His papers nos. 12 and 13.

## Introduction and Acknowledgement by the Author

During the fifties, when I was still a youth working as teacher of geography and history in the schools of Mogadishu (Magadiscio) in Somalia (Somali Republic now), I had the happy chance to contact Prof. Dr. Mohammad Hassan el-Zayaat, the Egyptian Delegate of the U.N. Consultative Council for the independence of Somalia.

I enjoyed his support and encouragement when he knew about my project of writing a book (in Arabic) on the geography and history of Somalia, for the Arabic Library lacked such a book at that time.

He kindly provided me with the references, facilitate my journeys all over the provinces of Somalia to collect the necessary data, and continuously gave me the push until I finished the book which appeared on the first of July 1960 coinciding with the declaration of Somalia independence.

This success urged me to continue my higher studies in the Egyptian Universities, choosing the studies on Somaliland and other Red sea regions to be the subject of my M.A. and Ph.D. dissertations.

My deep thanks and gratitude are due to him for this initial push of my career.

The second push came from Prof. Dr. Rasheed Salem Al-Nadoury, Prof. of Ancient History at the Faculty of Arts University of Alexandria, under whose supervision I obtained my M.A. and Ph.D. degrees. I am indebted to him for his kind spirit which encouraged me to persevere.

As a result of these pushes, the Red sea studies became the pivot of my papers and contributions published in this book.

Of the system of this book, the papers are arranged according to the correlation of their subjects (regardless of the chronology of their publishing date). After dealing with the geography of the Red sea and its effect on the cultural relationships between the inhabitants of its

hinterland, and with the ancient nomenclature of the Red sea, the papers are grouped under four headings. Part I introduces summaries of the M.A. and Ph.D. dissertations. Under part II are the papers which deal with the African side of the Red sea (Pharaonic Egypt and its southern neighbours). Part III is assigned to the studies of the Asiatic countries (Pre-Islamic Arabia). Part IV consists of the comparative study of the cultures of the African and Asiatic countries.

At the end, an index is annexed for tracing the individual subject all over the papers.

Abdel Monem Abdel Haliem Sayed  
Alexandria,  
January, 1993



## A Geographical Introduction

## A Geographical Introduction

## The Physical and human geography of the Red-Sea and its effect on the cultural relationships between its inhabitants

### (a) The physical geography of the Red Sea

The Red Sea extends from the ports of Suez and Aqaba in the north, to Bab-el Mandab strait in the south. This strait separates the Red Sea from the Gulf of Aden. The latter is flanked by the Somali coast in the south and the Yemeni coast in the north.

The origin of the nomenclature "Red" sea is obscure. It may be due either to the reddish colour of the mountains which extend along its shores or to a kind of a free floating form of blue-green algae (*Trichodesmium erythraeum*) which has a red accessory pigment giving the reddish colour to the water of its shores (1).

No rivers flow into the Red Sea, and its northern half is rainless.

The land adjacent to the Red Sea is generally mountainous, but the shores are mostly low and sandy, the sea is like the bottom of a valley on the eastern side of which is the high tableland of Arabia, and on the western side a range of mountains ca. 1200 to 1800 m high.

The Red Sea, though, generally speaking, of considerable depth, is encumbered in places with rocky islets and coral reefs, which extend far into the central or main channel. The reefs, generally, extend in long strips parallel with the coast, with which many are connected (2).

The islands and reefs in the Red Sea divide it into a central and two inshore channels. The inner channel on the Arabian side is of considerable width. The inner channel of the African side is similar in character to that on the Arabian, but much narrower. Both of these inshore channels are connected with the central channel by openings in the reefs, some of which especially those northward of latitude  $17^{\circ}$  N., are of great width (3).

The meteorology of the Red Sea varies according to the latitudes. In the northern part, down to almost  $19^{\circ}$  N., the prevailing winds are north and northwest. The middle region, to  $14^{\circ}$ - $16^{\circ}$  N. has variable winds, while in the southern Red Sea, southeast and east winds prevail. From June to August the northwest wind blows over the entire area; in September it retreats again as far as  $16^{\circ}$  N south of which the winds are for a time variable. In the Gulf of Suez the prevailing wind is northerly or northwesterly, but the westerly or "Egyptian" wind occurs occasionally during winter, sometimes blowing with violence, and generally accompanied by fog and clouds of dust. Strong north-north east winds prevail in the Gulf of Aqaba during the greater part of the year, they are weakest in April and May, sometimes giving place at that season to southerly breezes (4). The mean monthly air temperature ranges from  $71^{\circ}$  F, at Suez to  $86^{\circ}$  at Massawa. Rainfall is light.

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(1) Encyclopaedia Britannica (1964) Vol. 19 P. 26.

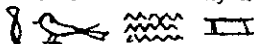
(2) British Admiralty, Red Sea and Gulf of Aden Pilot, (1944) P. 10.

(3) Op. Cit., P. 11.

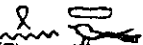
(4) Encyclop. Britannica, op.cit, P. 27.


less than an inch a year along the northern shores, and nowhere exceeding about ten inches. At some points, a year may pass without a trace of rain. The high temperature and great relative humidity in summer (5) make it a difficult region for active life.

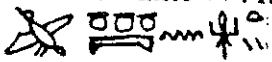
(b) The ancient names of the Red Sea

The earliest recorded name of the Red sea in antiquity was naturally the Egyptian one. The ancient Egyptians at first called it "The great Green"  (waadj-wer). It occurred in the pyramid Texts (Pyr. § 628, 1022-a, 802-b) in the Old kingdom (ca. 2500 B.C) then in the inscriptions of Wadi Hammamat (5) (Middle Kingdom ca 2100 B.C.) then on the walls of the temple of Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahary (6) (New Kingdom ca. 1450 B.C.).


There are other terms in the Egyptian texts which include the Red Sea:

1. "The Great circle of Water" or "The Great Ocean"  Shen-Wer". It included the Red Sea together with the eastern branches of the Nile (7) (in the Eastern Delta).

2. "The Ocean" (  Nwn) It generally occurred in the religious texts denoting the "Celestial Ocean" upon which the bark of the blessed sail (8).

It was used as specific name of the Red Sea for the first time in a recently discovered text of the Middle Kingdom on the Egyptian Red Sea shore (9). This name became in Ptolemaic texts "The Ocean of the East"  Pa-nwn-n-Itjabyt), which probably denote at that time the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean (10) it may be equivalent with the Greek nomenclature "Maris Erythraei" or the Erythraean sea.

3. "The inverted water" or "The great sea of the inverted water"

 (Pa - Ym

<sup>e</sup>aa - en - mw - qdy) (11). It was given this name because its summer currents (bearing navigators

(5) Couyant et Montet, *Les inscriptions hiéroglyphiques et hiératiques de Ouadi Hammamat*, MIFAO, T. 34 (1912) No 114 L. 15.

(6) Naville, *Deir el-Bahari*, Vol. III pl. 73.

(7) Gauthier, *Dict. des noms geogr. contenus dans les textes hieroglyph.* (1925-31) Vol. III P. 74.

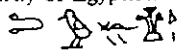
(8) Gauthier, *Dict. geogr.* III P. 74.

(9) Sayed, Abdel Monem, *Discovery of the site of the 12d dynasty port on the Red Sea shore.* RdE T. 29 (1977) P. 161-162.

(10) Gauthier, *op.cit.* III P. 74.

(11) *Op. Cit.*, III 33.

to the Land of Punt) flow opposite the Nile (12) .

The Hebrews gave the Red Sea the name "Yam Suph" (Ex. 15:22) which was partly of Egyptian origin. The word "sūph" is a derivation of the hieroglyphic word "Thwf" or "Thwfy"  which was given by the Egyptians to the reed swamps extending between lake Timsah and the Isthmus of Suz (13). The Hebrew name "Yam Sūph" has the same meaning, i.e. "The sea of reeds", and denotes the same place where the Hebrews led by Moses, crossed during the Exodus.

**(c) The ethnic and human relationships between the Inhabitants of the Red Sea**

The ethnic relationships of the inhabitants of the Red Sea is characterised by a phenomenon which began in prehistoric times and persisted all over historical times, i.e. the successive migrations from the Asian coast to the African one. Some scholars assume that these migrations began in the upper palaeolithic times, when the ancestral stock of the Hamites began to appear in Africa coming from Arabia, others hold the opinion that the Hamitic immigrants entered East Africa in three main waves: The first wave consists of Proto-Hamites (A-Hamites) perhaps represented today by the Barya of northern and eastern Ethiopia. The second wave (B-Hamites) is represented by the Beja, Agaw and Sidama. The third wave (C-Hamites) comprises the Galla, who were followed by the Somali and Af ar<sup>(14)</sup> .

When the Semites migrated from Yemen they intermingled with the Hamites, and it became difficult to separate them into two independent ethnic groups, because the Semitic and Hamitic languages belong to the same family. Therefore some scholars call them "Hamito-Semitic" (15) while others prefer "Afro-Asiatic" (16) .

**(d) The effect of these factors on the cultural relationships of the inhabitants**

Despite the arid nature of the coasts of the Red Sea, they were the source of products much-prized by the Ancients, i.e. the luxuries and the incense. These precious commodities attracted the immigrant semites, particularly from Yemen. They settled in coastal colonies trading with the autoctones. To consolidate their relations with these autoctones, they married African women probably the daughters of the tribal chiefs. The earliest incident of this kind is represented on the

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(12) Kitchen, "Punt and how to get there, *Orientalia* Vol. 40 (1971) P. 189 note 23.

(13) Gauthier, *op.cit.*, III P. 43.

(14) *Ibid.*

(15) R. Oliver (ed.) *History of East Africa, the early period*, London (1967) P. 65.

(16) *Op. Cit.*, P. 59.

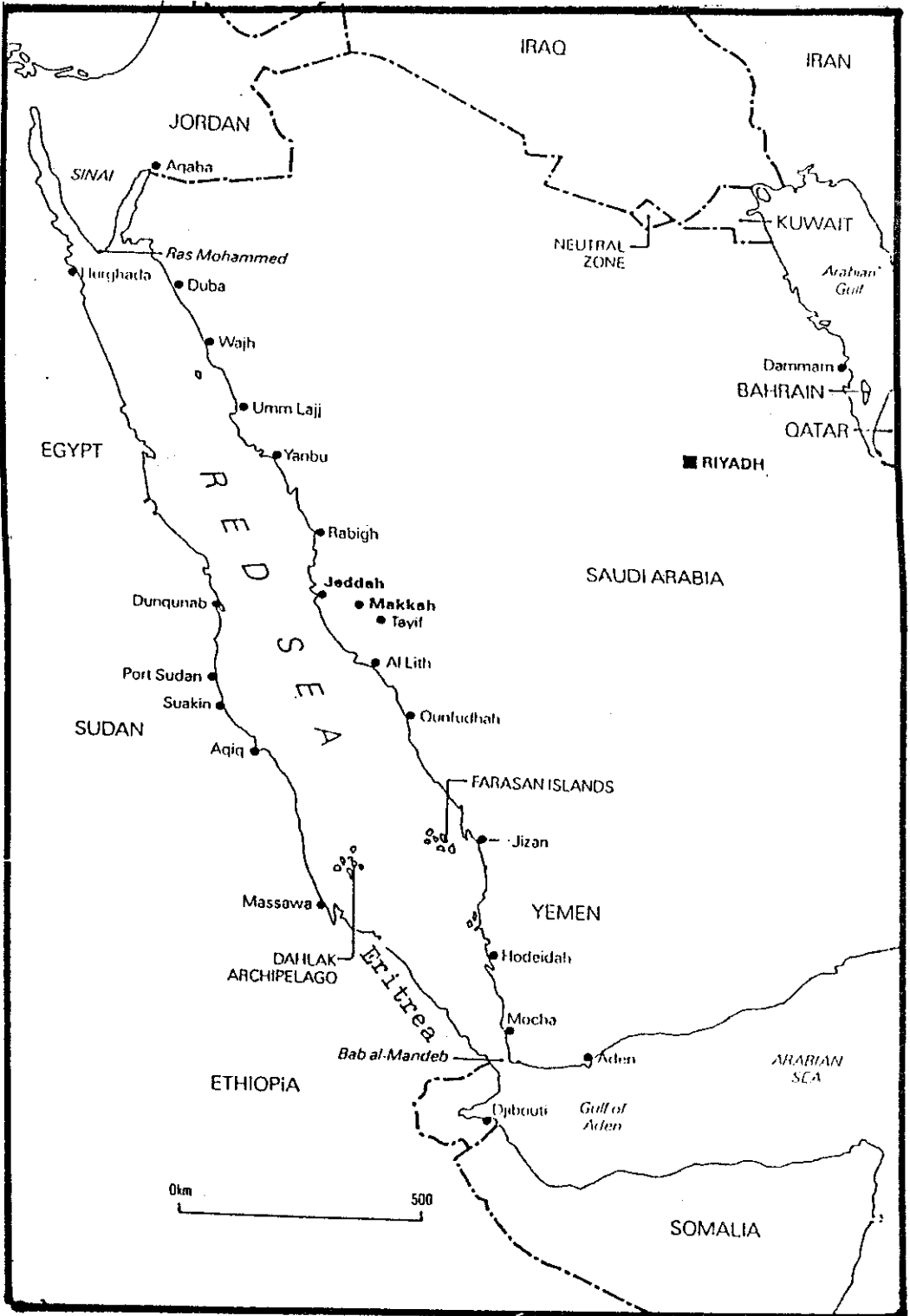
walls of the temple of Queen Hatshepsut at Thebes (ca. 1450 B.C.). The chief of the African settlement (in the Land of Punt) has clear Hamito-Semitic features, while his wife is characterised by the "racial steatopaegia", the most conspicuous feminine African feature. Contrary to the assumption of some scholars who assume that it is the symptoms of the Dercum's disease (17) there are several examples from Ancient Africa, which prove that it is the racial steatopaegia which characterises African women, the clearest of which is the representation of a Meroitic queen in the temple of Nagaa (North Sudan) (18).

The intermingling process of the Asiatic immigrants and the African autoctones persisted down to Islamic times, but in a new attire. The Moslem leaders from South Arabia migrate to the African coast to preach Islam. They married the daughters of the African tribal chiefs. Their sons in turn became the religious leaders of the African communities. Therefore, human relationships are modelled to adapt geographical factors.

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(17) P. Ghalioungui, *Health and Healing in Ancient Egypt*, Cairo (1965) P. 17.

(18) Stevenson Smith, *The Art and Architecture of Ancient Egypt* (1965) pl. 192.



Map of the Red sea and its modern site names

Part I

Summaries of the M.A. and

Ph.D. dissertations



## " A Study of Relationship between Egypt and the land of Punt and the Egyptian activity in the Red Sea" (\*)

1

There is no problem in Egyptological research which has been subjected to controversy as difference in viewpoints as that of the subject of Punt. Despite its great value to the Egyptians, and the veneration that they showed towards it, their reference to the nature and characteristics of the land were so vague and scanty that it became so difficult to us to define its precise location.

The importance of the land of Punt to the Egyptians was due to its role as the source of the "cnyw" or frankincense, that valuable material used in religious ceremonies and funeral rites, in addition to the Egyptian conception, that the Puntites were related to the same race from which the Egyptians themselves originally descended, a conception which manifested itself through the representation of the Puntites on the Egyptian monuments, with the same physical characteristics and features of the Egyptian themselves.

In my study of Punt in this dissertation, I divided it in three parts:

a. Firstly I tried to define the geographical location of Punt by a comprehensive displaying of the essential views concerning this problem and by finding out the physical peculiarities of the land of Punt from its representations on the walls of Hatshepsut's temple at Deir El Bahary, and by comparing these peculiarities with the descriptions of classical writers concerning the coastal region of the Red sea and the gulf of Aden on one side, and the modern information regarding these regions on the other side.

b - Secondly I traced the various stages of Egypto-Puntite relationships through Pharaonic history, trying to concentrate on the characteristics and nature of these relationships, mostly economic and cultural ones.

c. Thirdly I mentioned some of the similar cultural characteristics, especially the cultural and anthropological ones among the ancient Egyptians and the modern inhabitants of Eritrea and somaliland regions, in order to illustrate its extent and how far such relationships can go back.

Concerning the first part i.e. the definition of the geographical location of Punt, I summarized the studies of the Egyptologists regarding this problem. These studies can be summed up in two trends:

1. Studies of the location of Punt in its general understanding i.e. that vast region which the ancient Egyptians frequented throughout the various stages of Pharaonic history.

2. Studies of the location of Punt in its specific understanding i.e. Punt which was represented on the walls of Hatshepsut's temple at Deir El Bahary, or the "Frankincense places" as it was called by the ancient Egyptians themselves. For facilitating its study in this thesis I gave it the nomenclature of "Punt of Deir El Bahary".

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(\*) Summary of the dissertation of the M.A. degree. Presented to the History Department Faculty of Arts, University of Alexandria on 18 Sept. 1968 and obtained "Excellent".

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Concerning Punt in its general understanding, Brugsch, the German Egyptologist was the first who tried to locate its situation in South Arabia. But A. Mariette, the French Egyptologist who discovered the temple of Hatshepsut at Deir El Bahari, declared that Punt is more rightly to be located on Somaliland. Then Dümichen had the view of locating it on both sides of the Red sea around the district of Bal-el-mandab, and G. Lieblein adopted the same view. Ed. Naville, despite his adoption of this view, modified it by saying that Punt was not a name of a defined land but a name of a race.

Other Egyptologists held the view that Punt extended only on the African Coast of the Red Sea. The pioneer among them was the German Krall; in his studies, he stated that Punt extended towards the coast from Sawakin to Massawa. Maspero, trying to conciliate between these different viewpoints, said that Punt was that vast area on the African coast of the Red Sea from Egypt in the north to cape Guardafui towards the south. Erman was convinced that Punt was the African coastal area of the Red Sea in the equatorial region especially Somaliland.

The last of these views is that of H. Gauthier, he held the opinion that the designation of Punt varied from time to time. First of all it was confined to the African coast of the Red Sea opposite Kena-Asswan, then it gradually extended towards the south according to the extension of the Egyptian geographical exploration towards the south, until at last it included the whole African coast of the Red Sea to cape Guardafui.

T. Save-Soderbergh held nearly the same opinion except his modification that the northern limit of Punt may coincide with that of the growing of frankincense trees.

As to the various views about the location of "Punt of Deir El Bahari" we find that these views confined its location to the coasts of Eritrea and Somaliland. Maspero located the point at which the fleet of Hatshepsut moored at the river that was called "Elephas River" in classical times on the north eastern coast of Somaliland or with another river in the neighbourhood.

Hilzheimer said that this point (at which the fleet of Hatshepsut landed) may be in a place between Jibuti and Berbera, while Admiral Ballard declared that it may be in Tajura Bay. C. Solver had the opinion that it may be at the Zula or Annesley bay in Eritrea where the ancient classical city of Adulis flourished.

To discuss the views concerning the location of Punt of Deir El Bahari I adopted a method that depends chiefly on the study of the characteristics of Punt as it was represented on the walls of Deir-El Bahary temple. I can summarize these characteristics as following:

(1) It must be a coastal region lying directly on the coast or on the mouth of a river near the sea-shore where ebony trees, date or dum palm-trees and frankincense trees grow, Concerning the latter, it may be as close as possible to the sea-shore.

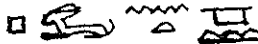
(2) Giraffes and baboons are expected to be found in that specific region or in its neighbourhood.

(3) In its water, there are kinds of sea creatures which characterise the Red sea and the Indian Ocean, especially the lobster which is called the "Panulirus".

(4) Its inhabitants are of different races; the Ruling race or the Puntites who resembled the Ancient Egyptians in physical characteristics and features, the negroes, and a third race which was called "Irem" on the Egyptian monuments, this race may be the Galla who resembled the Puntites to a great extent as they descended from the Hamitic race and for this reason they can be hardly discerned from the Puntites.

Now we advance to discuss the various places assumed to be the geographical location of Punt:

1- As for Southern Arabia it is improbable because it can be deduced from the descriptions of classical writers that frankincense trees does not grow on the shores of Yemen, but in the far hinterland. In addition, the giraffe which was represented in its natural habitat in the Egyptian scenes is a pure African animal, not attested in an Asiatic country either in the past or at present.

(2) As to "both sides of the straits of Bab el Mandab", the phrase "hr gs wy wādw" does not mean "on both sides" but "on the side" of (the Red Sea) and the form  which Lieblein translated, "the Land of the Gate" was never found in Egyptian texts.

(3) Concerning the African coast north of Bab-El Mandab Strait, the descriptions of classical writers does not mention anything about incense till the bay of Assab where they mentioned myrrh and not frankincense.

### Definition of the location of Punt on the Northern Shore of Somaliland

After I have excluded the regions north of Bab-el-mandab straits to be the location of Punt, I now advance to discuss its location on the coasts of Somaliland south of the straits.

The only place which Maspero referred to and I agree with, concerning the landing place of Hatshepsut's fleet, is the regions around the modern town of Alula about 40 miles west of cape Guardafui.

This opinion can be traced through a number of evidences which can be summarized as follows:

(1) It is deduced from the descriptions of classical writers of the coast of Somaliland that frankincense is produced in that region with plentiful quantities and of the best kind. The town of Alula still export frankincense, ivory and shells till now.

(2) There is a lagoon near Alula which is called nowadays "Galwein", a Somali phrase meaning the great swamp this name reminds us with the nature of the frankincense region depicted on the walls of Deir el Bahari where the inhabitants built their huts on poles probably to avoid the swamps on one hand and to take refuge from wild animals on the other hand. This lagoon may offer a suitable harbour for the Egyptian fleet. There is a small river called Elephas River, by classical authors, which poured in that lagoon. This River is called now "khor-gal wein" and is navigable to a distance of 4 miles. That enables the Egyptians to penetrate in the interior to be as near as possible to the frankincense trees. Moreover, the word "Elephant" is used till now as a name of a huge rock

penetrating into the sea adjacent to Alūla. The Somalis call it "Fil-Ka" which means "the elephant" because it resembles a recumbant elephant.

(3) The arrival of the Egyptians took place during the spring as the nests of birds among the trees are full of eggs. This season coincide with the natural conditions in North East Somaliland, it is the rain season, the small rivers are flooded with water, a condition which allow the ships to moor safely in the lagoons such as the "Galwein" lagoon, boats can penetrate more easily by means of these rivers into the interior. Spring is also the season of the incision and collecting of incense trees in these regions, the Egyptians are pictured in the representations of Deir El Bahari carrying small baskets in which they collect the sap of the frankincense trees (nhwt nt c ntyw).

The Egyptian texts appreciated greatly "fresh frankincense" (cntyw w3d), the texts of Deir el Bahary tell as that they obtained "the first harvest".

(4) Concerning the animals which Hatshepsut's mission brought from Punt, baboons (cynocephali) most probably lived in these places in ancient times as it is a mountainous place which suited these animals, especially there is a place, close to Alūla which was called "cynocephalus" in classical times. According to Strabo the giraffe was "bred" in the north coast of Somaliland and this illustrates the way by which the ancients overcame the hardship of bringing this lowland animal across the coastal highlands of Somaliland.

(5) The mentioning of Greco-Egyptian names of places and gods by classical authors as place-names in the region which extends from Botiala to Alūla may denote Greek Egyptian commercial settlements in these places such as Daphnon, Isis, Nilus, Cynocephalus. These settlements may reflect Pharaonic pre-activity in the vicinity.

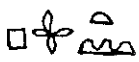


(6) The Panulirus together with the sea creatures depicted on the walls of Deir El-Bahary still live in great numbers in the waters of Alūla.

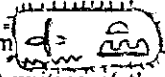
For the reasons mentioned above, the district which extends from Botiala to Alūla on north Somaliland may be the place called by the Egyptians "Frankincense terraces of Punt" and the harbour where Hatshepsut's fleet moored, may be situated in the small bay of Galwein close to Alūla.

### **Definition of the Geographical Extension of Punt in its General Understanding**

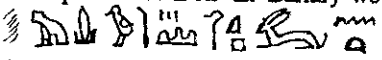
From the remotest times, the incense trade flourished on the Red sea coasts, probably because of the proximity of the greatest market of this trade i.e. Egypt.

Immigrants from Arabia to Africa crossed the Bab-el-mandab straits and settled on the coast of Somaliland where they exploited this profitable incense trade. As Egypt was the greatest markets for this article, it may be inferred that these immigrants established fortified commercial settlements or colonies along the coast of the Red sea towards the borders of Egypt. Perhaps the inhabitants of these fortified settlements were the intermediaries referred to by the inscriptions of Deir el Bahary who monopolized, the incense trade, and raised its price. When we try to trace the word Punt, we find that it occurred for the first time on the Palermo stone, in the rare form

 (written with the flower  instead of the hare ).

There is a hieroglyphic word which was written by the form  (wnt) and means "Castle, fortification", a form which resembles, that of the first writing of the word Punt (on the Palermo stone).

May we infer from these contexts that the name "wnt" was applied by the Egyptians to the commercial fortified settlements extending on the shores of the Red sea, and trading chiefly in incense; then the word was modified to Punt? The word Punt does not occur in any of the ancient Near East texts, neither the Babylonians, the Persians, the Assyrians, the Hebrews knew this word nor it occurred in the texts of Ancient Arabia. This may denote that the name is pure Egyptian. It may be used by the Egyptians only to designate the Puntite commercial fortified settlements which were scattered on the Red-Sea shore from the south of Egypt to Somaliland (?). If we examine the scene of the reception of the Puntites represented on the walls of the tomb no 143 at Thebes, we can recognize two small Puntite (?) ships whose hulls closely resemble rafts. A fact which makes these ships, more relevant for short local voyages between the Puntite settlements on the Red sea shore adjacent to Egypt more than long journeys to the far Straits of Bab-El Mandab.

I now proceed to discuss the extension of the term Punt on the African coast of the Red-sea. When we examine the sculptures of Deir El Bahary we find the remains of an inscription on a fragment which reads  it may be a phrase from a familiar hymn to Re in which the god was called "Lord of Md 3 Governer of Punt". This may suggest that there was a kind of relationship between the terms md 3 and Punt. Regarding Md3 the latest view points to define it by the land of Beja tribes on the Red sea regions southeast to Egypt. Consequently the term Punt may be applied to the stretch of land south of it. The men of Hatshepsut in their way to Somaliland may traditionally pray to the God Re to bless their voyage while they were sailing along the coast of Md3 and Punt. Some scholars say that Md3 extended in the eastern desert north of Berenice-korsko (Gauth./ III/ P. 26).

Whether Md3 is the land of Beja or it extended north of Berenice, the important fact is that the land of Punt extended south of the land of Md3. So we may define the general geographical extension of Punt, from the southern coast of Egypt in the north to cape Guardafui in the south. And I agree with H. Gauthier in his interpretation that the term was firstly applied to the shore south of Egypt, then it extended gradually southwards according to the extent of the Egyptian geographical exploration towards the south, till at last it included the whole African coast of the Red sea to cape Guardafui. I see that the extension of the term Punt was the result of the Egyptian efforts to avoid the numerous intermediaries of incense trade in the fortified settlements along the Red Sea shore, in their attempt to reach the homeland of the frankincense trees, but I think that they did not succeed to fulfill their aim till the time of Queen Hatshepsut.

Concerning the second part of this dissertation, i.e. the nature of Egypto-Puntite relationships throughout Pharaonic history, I divided the various stages of these relationships into three main divisions.

**First Stage:** from the remotest periods of Egyptian history till the accession of queen Hatshepsut.

Through this stage the Egyptians had not yet discovered the frankincense-terraces in Punt, they obtained incense through intermediaries (if we use Hatshepsut's term) either by the inland road through Nubia and the Sudan or by sea route along the Red sea coast.

The Egyptian information about Punt was vague and hazy, it seems that the intermediaries and commissioners of the incense trade propagated fanciful stories and superstitions about Punt in order to frighten intruders to keep them away and to raise the price of its main article (incense), this is reflected in the tale of the shipwrecked sailor.

**2nd Stage:** This stage is represented by Hatshepsut's expedition to the frankincense-terraces in Punt. The Egyptians explored these terraces and began to obtain frankincense directly from its productive region. They succeeded in liberating its trade from the intermediaries and commissioners, they brought frankincense trees in order to transplant them in the Egyptian soil.

During this stage also the Egyptian knowledge about Punt may be realistic to a certain extent, after they had obtained the true information about it.

**3rd Stage:** From the end of Hatshepsut's reign till the final decline of the New Kingdom.

During this stage the Egyptian journeys to the frankincense terraces in Somaliland became regular. Transplanting frankincense trees in the garden's of the Egyptian temples became a customary procedure. Occasionally the Puntites sailed to Egypt with their ships carrying their merchandises. Egyptian officials used to receive them on the Red sea shore.

Concerning the extension of the term Punt, it seems that the Pharaohs who succeeded Hatshepsut tried to excel the achievement of the queen, they may have reached cape Guardafui itself. It may be inferred from the text of the expedition of Ramses III that the large fleet which he sent to Punt, might circumnavigate the cape of Guardafui and the peninsula of Hafun on the eastern coast of Somaliland.

Concerning the third part of this dissertation, i.e., the similarity of some cultural anthropological aspects of the ancient Egyptians and the modern inhabitants of Eritrea, and Somaliland. I mentioned some resemblances between the ancient Egyptian language and the modern somali language with regard to the independent pronouns, the demonstrative adjective and the plural endings of nouns. I also mentioned the similarity between the ancient Egyptian and modern Somali-Eritrean headrest, the lyre, the tom-om, the sandals, the spear-heads, and the curved bow. This similarity may be due either to the process called by anthropologists the "cultural diffusion" or to the common hamitic origin of both the Ancient Egyptians and the inhabitants of Eritrea and Somaliland, later accentuated in Pharaonic times by the regular relationships and contacts between Egypt and these regions.

**Abdel Monem Abdel Haleem Sayed**

## A historical study of cultural relationships and influences between Pharaonic Egypt and the ancient civilizations of the Red Sea (\*)

2

The researcher began in the first part of his dissertation by studying the physical geography of the Red Sea and its effects on the cultural relations between its various regions. He has demonstrated that the Red Sea is characterised by a special nature that has two contradicting sides; for, while this sea separates both the inhabitants of its Asiatic and African coasts in most of its parts, especially the middle parts, it correlates them in its northern and southern extremities. This nature had its effect on the transmission of the cultural influences between its coasts; for, while the main trend of these influences took the eastern direction in its northern extremities, i.e. from Egypt to Sinai; it took the western direction in its southern extremities, i.e. from Yemen to Eritrea and Abyssinia through Bab el-Mandab strait.

In fact, the Asiatic regions of the Red Sea, were the source of migrations to the African continent since the remotest periods, this phenomenon began with the Hamitic migrations in prehistoric times and continued during the historical periods in the form of the establishment of commercial settlements on the African coast, where the immigrants intermingled with the natives. It frequented all over the periods to the extent that it became the prominent phenomenon of human relations between the two coasts of the Red Sea. It was represented on the Egyptian monuments in the temple of Queen Hatshepsut at Deir el Bahari, and was recorded by some classical writers.

This phenomenon had very important cultural results because it subjected the eastern African coast and its hinterland to the cultural influences that came from the Asiatic coast which was so strong that it shaded and nearly obliterated the other influences. This may be the reason that the Egyptian cultural influences which affected the African regions, were those which were transmitted among the South Arabian influences that the immigrants carried from the Asiatic Side of the Red Sea.

In the second part of the dissertation, the researcher dealt with the Egyptian relationships with the Red Sea regions and their effect on the human activity on the coast of the Red Sea. He came to the conclusion that the Egyptians laid the basis of that kind of economic activity traditions in the Red Sea which the other nations adopted later, an evidence of this was the use of the Egyptian names of some of the Red Sea articles by some of these nations. The Egyptian relations with the African coast of the Red Sea were characterised by regularity and continuation, a fact which may be deduced from Egyptian and classical references to the erection of Egyptian monuments by the Pharaohs on these coasts and from the frequent mention of the names of the African harbours and sites on the Egyptian monuments; such as the suggested names of some places near the harbours of Sawakin, Massawa, Adulis, Zeila, Berbera, Mait, Hais, Ras Amtara, Jula, and Cape Guardafui.

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(\*) Summary of the Ph. D. dissertation presented to the History Department, Faculty of Arts, University of Alexandria, on 20 Oct. 1973 and obtained "First Grade of Honour".

This cape was the extreme southern point which the Egyptians reached in their direct relations with the African coast of the Red Sea (Punt).

The Egyptian relationships with the African coast was so close to the extent that in the Ptolemaic period the Egyptianized - Greek traders established commercial settlements on the northern coast of Somaliland for the exploitation of the valuable frankincense trade and other rich articles, a fact which may be ascertained by giving Egyptian-Greek names to some places on this coast. This context may refer to the existence of Egyptian and other monuments in these regions.

Contrary to this direct and continuous relationships with the African coast, the Egyptians had no direct relationships with the southern Asiatic coast of the Red Sea. This fact is ascertained by the absence of South Arabian geographical names on the Egyptian monuments (in contrast with the numerous names of African sites on these monuments), a fact which coincides with the absence of any reference to Pharaonic Egypt on the South Arabian monuments.

In the third part of the dissertation, the researcher studied the Egyptian cultural influences on the Red Sea civilizations. He adopted a method that depends upon analyzing the South Arabian and Abyssinian cultural aspects that may bear Egyptian influences, in order to trace back their evolution from the remote Egyptian prototypes, taking into consideration the different grades of change to which these cultural aspects and elements were submitted and which depended upon the span of time and range of space as well as the different types of environment through which the cultural aspects or elements passed, (according to the phenomenon called by anthropologists<sup>2</sup> the cultural diffusion<sup>3</sup>).

By adopting this method, the researcher discerned three main grades of change: the first and smallest grade may be called "adaptation", the second "modification", the third "transformation". This latter is the deepest change.

To apply this method, the researcher chose the cultural aspects and elements that their stages of evolution can be traced in the regions which extend between Egypt, South Arabia and Abyssinia, such as the script. He observed that when the Egyptian hieroglyphic script was submitted to the influence of the desert environment of Sinai where simplification and abstraction prevailed, its complicated syllabic signs were simplified into alphabetic signs into the Proto - Sinitic script.

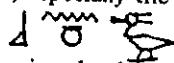
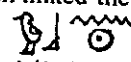
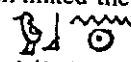
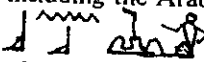
Similarly, when the Proto - Sinitic script was exposed to more simplification and abstraction in its way to south Arabia along the desert coast of the Red Sea, its signs completely lost the pictographic trait and drew nearer to the linear forms which characterised the South Semitic script. Finally, when the South semitic script passed through the Red Sea to Eritrea and Abyssinia, it was subjected to other deep changes, which characterised the Ethiopian script, such as; the addition of the vowels and the direction of writing from left to right (undenying the Greek influence) in addition to the changes in the forms of the letters. Thus the Egyptian hieroglyphic script was subjected to the three grades of change, i.e adaptation, modification and transformation respectively.

After dealing with the script, the researcher studied the other cultural aspects using the same method, such as the Axumite obelisks. He analysed them into their elements, such as the pointed summit and the architectural decoration, and traced back the Egyptian and South Arabian origin of these elements.



Similarly, the researcher applied this method to some other cultural aspects, such as offering tables and altars, censers and incense altars, basins of ablution in temples, some works of art and architectural decorations, Cippi of Horus, and finally, the Egyptian cultural influences on the ships of the Red Sea and Indian Ocean.

In other words, the researcher traced the "cultural diffusion" of the Pharaonic civilisation in the lands of the Red Sea.

In the fourth part of the dissertation the researcher studied the activity of the other peoples and nations in the Red Sea, such as the Puntites and Phoenicians, together with the derivation of their names in both the Egyptian and Greek languages, especially the different meanings of the Greek name "Phoenix" and the Egyptian name "Bnw" . The researcher observed that the name "Bnw" was given by the Egyptians to the sites and places on the eastern bank of the Nile at the end of the roads which linked the Nile Valley with the Red Sea. By comparing this name with the Egyptian word "Wbn"  which means "to shine", the researcher suggests that the Egyptians gave the name  to the regions which extended at the east of Egypt including the Arabian peninsula. The word was transformed in the Ptolemaic period to the name  bnb which meant "a man from the frankincense country". Such country included South Arabia in the Ptolemaic period. This nomenclature may be the origin of the story mentioned by Herodotus about the connection between the Phoenix bird (which was the Egyptian Bnw) and Arabia. Within the scope of study of the resemblance between the Hebrew- Phoenician, the Puntite, and the Egyptian activities in the Red Sea, the researcher studied the resemblance between Punt and Ophir through the comparison between the Egyptian texts and the texts of the Bible. He came to the conclusion that Ophir was not an Asiatic region, but an African one, and he defined its location near the gulf of Tadjura. Concerning the role of the Puntites and the Phoenicians as carriers of cultural influences in the Red Sea, the researcher reviewed some possible aspects of this activity such as the spread of the raft-like boats among other peoples of the Red Sea, the probable appearance of the figure of the god Bes on the south Arabian monuments and the representation of the disk and the crescent design on these monuments.

As the god Bes has triple relations with the Egyptians, the Puntites, and the Phoenicians, the researcher studied the origin of this god and proved that he was of pure African origin. He suggested that the Phoenicians adopted his cult either from the Red Sea regions or from the Egyptians through their contacts with them especially after the establishment of the Phoenician commercial settlement in the city of Memphis.

In the fifth part of the dissertation the researcher traced back the cultural influences that entered Egypt in prehistoric times from the Red Sea regions by way of Wadi Hammamat and the Eastern desert. He studied the manifestations and aspects of these influences in the traits of Horus, Min and Hathor; the Egyptian gods that were related to Punt (the African coast of the Red Sea).

In dealing with that complicated problem about the probable inclusion of Mesopotamian influences into Egypt by way of Wadi Hammamat and the Eastern desert in proto-dynastic times, the researcher observed some contexts concerning this subject as the following:-

I- The Mesopotamian Influences were found in some places near the end of the desert roads which linked Egypt with the Red Sea, especially Wadi Hammamat and Wadi Abbad; these places

were in the same time the early cult centres of the Egyptian gods which were ascribed to Punt, (the African coast of the Red Sea) i.e. Horus, Hathor and Min. For example, the Gebel El Araki Knife was found near "H̄W" the early cult center of Hathor; the ships of probable Mesopotamian type were depicted on the rocks of Wadi Hammamat near Koptos, the cult centre of the God Min; the recesses appeared in the royal tomb at Naqqada, the early cult centre of the God Horus; the tomb of Elkab is situated near Edfu, the cult centre of the God Horus also. All these places are situated near the end of Wadi Hammamat except Edfu which is situated at the end of Wadi Abbad, not very far from Wadi Hammamat.

2- In addition to the ascription of these three Egyptian Gods to Punt, there was another correlation between them; they (or their symbols) appeared side by side on the early Egyptian monuments which may be roughly contemporary with the inclusion of Mesopotamian influences, such as, Narmer palette and the palette of the Bull. Moreover, some of these monuments like Narmer palette was found near Edfou (at Hierakonpolis), the cult centre of the God Horus.

3- There was a kind of similarity between these Egyptian gods and some South Arabian and Mesopotamian gods, such as the similarity between the goddess Hathor and the Sumerian goddess Ninhursag, the similarity between the god Min and the Sabaean god Ilmukah. As for the god Horus, he may have a counterpart in the Red Sea regions, as the origin of his name may denote (according to some scholars) and his nature as a desert god, in addition to the red tint which was given to the colour of his figure on the Egyptian monuments.

Moreover, there may be some resemblances between Horus as a falcon and the falcon figure, which may be represented on the so-called Mesopotamian ships on the Gebel el Arak handle.

Judging from all these contexts, it seems that the transmission process of the Mesopotamian influences from Iraq to Egypt had some relation with the cult centres of the Egyptian gods who were ascribed to Punt, and consequently with Punt itself on the African coast of the Red Sea.

It seems also that the line of this transmission passed through Asian and African regions.

A fact which suggests that the influences were transmitted by means of another people who might inhabit some land between Egypt and Iraq, and who played the role of intermediation between the two countries. They may be commercial intermediaries who dealt chiefly with the valuable frankincense trade from their commercial settlements which they established on the African and Asiatic coasts of the Red Sea.

The intermediaries who inhabited the African coast of the Red Sea (The Puntites or Proto-Puntites), were the direct transmitters of the Mesopotamian influences to Egypt where these influences were installed in the early cult centers of the Egyptian gods who were ascribed to Punt (Horus, Min, Hathor), presumably as a result of the correlation between these Puntites (or Proto-Puntites) and those gods. Such correlation can be discerned clearly during the historical times, when the Puntites used to participate in the festivals of the god Min. A prominent personality called by the texts "Neh̄si Punt" played a principal role in this festival, also some foreigners, presumably Puntites, shared in the festival by climbing a high mast called by the texts the "Sh̄nt" which was also the name of the early temple of the God Min.

From the correlation between the Egyptian gods who were ascribed to Punt and their occurrence side by side on the early Egyptian monuments, which were found in Upper Egypt, such as the Narmer palette and the palette of the Bull, and from the extension of this correlation to other places in Egypt, such as the correlation between the gods Horus and Min in Koptos, and the striking similarity between their symbols and rites in both Koptos and Letopolis, then from the strong correlation between Horus and Hathor; from all these contexts, the researcher deduced that the strong correlation between these gods may have roots in a common origin of these gods which would be due in turn to that far common origin of the Egyptians and Puntites and other Hamito-Semitic inhabitants of the coasts of the Red Sea. This fact expresses itself in the well-known custom of the Egyptians by representing the Puntites exactly as themselves in features and skin-colour and by ascribing their ancestors to Punt. Such correlation increased gradually since the predynastic period and through dynastic times, until it was crystallized in that strong relation between the Egyptian gods and the Red Sea regions (Punt).

From the study of the foreign influence which entered Egypt at the dawn of the Egyptian history, it is clear that these influences were exposed to change, then absorbed in the Egyptian ecology, such trait characterised the Egyptian vital force through the subsequent periods. Egypt became famous for its great absorbing power of the foreign influences, and of melting them in the Egyptian crucible. Thus the Mesopotamian influences soon disappeared, leaving only their far memory in the ascription of some of the Egyptian gods to Punt, and in some faded stamps such as those modified forms of the recesses in buildings.

At the end of the dissertation the researcher brought forth the evidences of the authenticity and deep-rootness which characterised the Egyptian civilization, such were the traits which gave the Egyptian civilization, its characterized strong influence upon other civilizations, despite the lack of direct relations with these civilizations. The most important results of this indirect influence was the spread of the Egyptian script in South Arabia, Which in its turn led to the rise of the south Arabian civilizations. Similarly a great progress took place in Abyssinia as a result of the inclusion of the South Arabian script which was a transformed form of the far-off Egyptian hieroglyphic script.

Thus Egypt has an enormous legacy among the Red Sea civilizations contrary to the views of some scholars who denied any Egyptian cultural influence on these civilizations.

**Abdel Monem Abdel Haleem Sayed**

Part II

Studies of the ancient history and  
archaeology of the African countries  
of the Red sea.

# An attempt at the identification of the transmitters of the Mesopotamian Cultural influences to Upper Egypt in protodynastic times (\*)

3

by

Dr. ABDEL MONEM ABDEL HALIM SAYED

The problem of defining the means by which the Mesopotamian cultural influences were transmitted to Egypt by way of the Red Sea in protodynastic times is still a controversial problem. There are various contradicting viewpoints towards its solution. Some Scholars assign these influences to invasions or migrations, (1) others consider them to be a result of infiltration of Mesopotamian craftsmen into Egypt. (2) A third group of scholars tried to define more precisely the means and places of contact between the Egyptians and the Mesopotamians ; They hold the opinion that these influences were borrowed by the Egyptians from the Mesopotamians either through direct relations between the two peoples in the frankincense producing regions in Somaliland and South Arabia, or by means of middlemen. (3)

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1. Mercer, Samuel, A,B; *Horus, Royal God of Egypt* (1942) p. 36. cf, Winkler, Hans, A; *Rock drawings of Southern Upper Egypt* (1938) vol. I p. 38. Petrie, M.F. ; *The making of Egypt* (1939) p. 77. Baumgartel, Elise, *The cultures of Prehistoric Egypt.* (1955) Vol I pp. 50-51.
  2. Gardiner, A; *Egypt of the Pharaohs.* (1961) p. 397.
  3. Frankfort, H; *The birth of civilization in the Near East,* (1951) p. III

(\*) Published in the "Magazine of Faculty of Archaeology, Cairo University, Gizah no.1, 1976 pp. 5-18.

In an attempt to find out a solution for this complicated problem, I firstly exclude the transmission of these Mesopotamian cultural influences by means of migrations or invasions, or by any other military means. The reason for this exclusion is the arid nature of the Red Sea shores which were not able to provide the necessary fresh water and food supplies for large numbers of people through such a long distance.

I also exclude the transmission of these influences by means of any direct relations between the Egyptians and the Mesopotamians, the reason is the incapacity of the Egyptian naval possibilities in this early period of Egyptian history, for sailing so far in the Red Sea was and still is famous for its dangers and hardships that confront the sailing ships. Similarly, these dangers and hardships may curb any intention from the Mesopotamians to sail through the Red Sea, For, despite the relative wide naval relations of the Mesopotamians, especially during the Gam det Nasr period, it is improbable that they tried to sail beyond the South Arabian coast which they may frequent in search for the valuable incense. Even if they tried to cross the Bab-el-Mandab strait, it would be a great risk for them to sail to Egypt between two arid shores deprived of fresh water and food supplies, in addition to the great dangers that confronted their ships.

As a result of these naval hardships which might confront both the Egyptians and the Mesopotamians if they tried any direct relations between each other, I am convinced that the Mesopotamian cultural influences had to be transmitted through indirect relations between Egypt and Mesopotamia, that is, through some sort of intermediaries.

Before trying to define the ethnic group of these intermediaries and the activity which they exercised, the researcher observed some contexts which he epitomizes in the following points :

1. The Mesopotamian influences were found in some places near the end of the desert roads which linked Egypt with the Red Sea, especially Waddi Hammamat and Waddi Abbad, these places were in the same time the early cult centres of the Egyptian gods which were ascribed to Punt (the African coast of the Red Sea); they were the goddess Hathor (4) and the gods Horus (5) and Min (6); For example the Gebel E lArak Knife was found near «Hew», the early cult centre of Hathor; the ships of probable Mesopotamian type were depicted on the rocks of Wadi Hammamat near Koptos, the cult centre of the God Min; the recesses appeared in the royal tomb at Naqqada, the early cult centre of the God Horus (7); the tomb of Hieraconpolis is situated near Edfu, the cult

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4. Mercer, Samuel, A.B; The religion of Ancient Egypt (1949) p. 204.
  5. Ruentz, Ch; Autour d'une conception Egyptienne méconnue, le pays du Dieu. BIFAO. Tome XVII (1914) p.
  6. Gauthier, H; Les Fêtes du Dieu Min, Pub. JFAO Tome II (1931) p. 99, 142 & 249.
  7. Junker, H; Die Onurislegende ( 917) S. 32 cf. Pyr. 242.

centre of the God Horus also. All these places are situated near the end of Wadi Hammamat except Edfu which is situated at the end of Wadi Abbad, not very Far From Wadi Hammamat.

2. In addition to the ascription of these three Egyptian Gods to Punt, there was another correlation between them; they were among the earliest Egyptian gods. They (or their symbols) appeared side by side on the early Egyptian monuments which may be roughly contemporary with the inclusion of the Mesopotamian influences, such as, the Narmer palette (Fig. 5) and the palette of the Bull, (Fig 6). Moreover, some of these monuments were found within the same area where the Mesopotamian influences were found such as the Narmer Palette which was found at Hierakonpolis near Edfou, the cult centre of the god Horus.

Mesopotamian and

3. There was Kind of similarity between these Egyptian gods and some South Arabian gods, such as the similarity between the goddess Hathor and the Sumerian goddess Ninhursag in various qualities (8); both of them were mother goddesses who supplied the King with milk, their symbol was a cow. Also the similarity between the god An and the South Arabian god Ilmukah in some respects, especially as moon gods who had a symbol in the form of a crescent-like horned bull (Figs 7 & 8). Concerning the god Horus, he may have a counterpart in the Red Sea regions, as the origin of his name may denote (the word Hr in both the Ancient Egyptian and the Arabic languages) (9); and his nature as a desert bird, in addition to the red tint which was given to the colour of his Figure on the Egyptian monuments (10). Moreover, there may be a similarity between Horus as a Falcon, and the Falcon Figure which might have been represented on the so-called Mesopotamian ships on the Gebel el Arak Handle (11) (Figs 1 & 3).

Judging from all these contexts, it seems it seems that the transmitters of the Mesopotamian influences to Egypt may have some relations with the cult centres of the Egyptian gods which were connected with Punt, and consequently with Punt itself on the African coast of the Red Sea. They also had relations with South Arabia and Iraq, these contexts may guide us towards the definition of the ethnic group and activity of these transmitters.

To attain this purpose, I resort to the ancient Egyptian representations and texts which dealt with Punt on the Egyptian monuments of the dynastic times. These representations showed the Puntites exactly like the Egyptian themselves in features and physical characteristics (fig. 11), moreover the Egyptian texts assigned the origin of the Egyptians and their ancestors to Punt. These documentary evidences proves that both the Egyptians and the

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8. Hornblower, G. D; Some Predynastic carvings, JEA XIII (1927) p. 245.

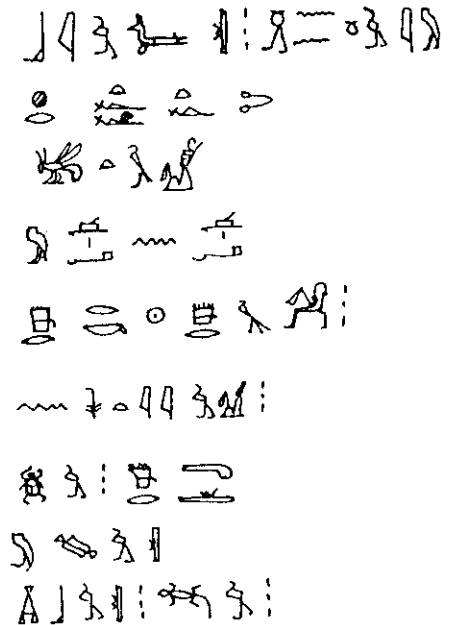
9. Loret, V; Horus le faucon, BIFAO III (1903) p. 15.

10. Ibid p. 16. It is noteworthy that the red tint characterises both the Egyptians and the Puntites on the Egyptian monuments.

11. Weill, R; Recherches Sur la 1<sup>re</sup> dynastic et les temps Prepharaonique II p. 279 ff.

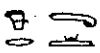
Puntites descended from the same race. A fact which coincides with the ethnological history of the African coast of the Red Sea. The successive migrations from South Arabia by way of the Bab-el-Mandab strait since the Hamitic migrations, gave the inhabitants of the African coast of the Red Sea as well as the Ancient Egyptians — the same racial characteristics. These migrational movements continued nearly throughout all historical periods, but in a different shape, such as the exercising of commercial activity through establishing commercial settlements on the African coast of the Red Sea; which traded in its valuable articles especially the much-prized frankincense. It is evident from an Egyptian text that the inhabitants of these settlements or the Puntites, played the role of commercial intermediaries between Egypt and the Frankincense-producing regions. It denotes also that they exercised this role from a very remote period. The text occurred in the inscriptions which described the expedition of queen Hatshepsut to Punt. After relating how the god Amon facilitated the hardships for the Queen expedition and how such hardships confronted the previous expeditions to the frankincense terraces in Punt, this text goes further in the form of a speech of the God Amon to the Queen enumerating his grants to her expedition, he addressed her saying:-

«the marvels brought there»  
 under thy fathers  
 the kings of Lower Egypt  
 ( were brought )  
 from one to another  
 ( intermediaries )  
 (and) since the time of  
 the ancestors  
 of the kings of Upper  
 Egypt  
 who were of old  
 as a return of  
 many payments» (12)

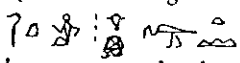


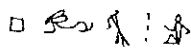
Here we have a clear reference to the remoteness of the frankincense trade and its intermediaries. «The Kings of Lower Egypt» mentioned in the text and identified as the «fathers of the Queen» may be the Pharaohs of the Old Kingdom who ruled at Memphis. When we compare this phrase with the other phrase which qualifies the «ancestors of the king of Upper Egypt» as «who were of old» i.e. who lived in a very remote period, we may conclude from this comparison that «the kings of Upper Egypt» were much prior in time to the kings of



Lower Egypt which were qualified only as the «fathers» of the queen. If we add to our conclusion that the ancient Egyptian expression  was used in the texts to denote the remotest periods of the Egyptian civilization when the Egyptians were ruled by Gods or demi-gods according to the Egyptian conception, we may finally conclude that the phrase (since the time of the ancestors of the kings of Upper Egypt» may denote the time which precedes the beginning of the Egyptian history or the proto-dynastic period. It was nearly the same period at which the Mesopotamian influences entered Upper Egypt by way of Wadi Hammamat and the Red Sea.

In addition to this direct reference to the intermediaries of the frankincense trade, there is an indirect reference from the Middle Kingdom. The official Henw informs us that he sent a ship to Punt to get Frankincense from « the chiefs over the Red Land»

 (13) The word «dšrt<sup>h</sup>» is used in the Egyptian texts to denote «desert» or «red colour». It reminds us with the red colour of the Puntites on the Egyptian monuments; moreover, the text does not mention the land itself but the «chiefs», a fact which may bear witness that the Egyptians in the Middle Kingdom had, yet reached the Frankincense producing region, but still obtain its Frankincense through intermediaries.

From these texts we may deduce that the Red Sea coast was inhabited by commercial intermediaries whom the Egyptians called «the Puntites» 

From the name «Punt» which the Egyptians gave at first to the nearest shores south of Egypt, on which the intermediaries of the incense trade used to deal with the Egyptians to supply them with this valuable material. The term then extended gradually southwards with the extension of the Egyptian geographical exploration in their persevering efforts to lessen the intermediaries of the Frankincense trade and to reach its producing region itself, in order to diminish the very costly price of the article, until at last they succeeded in reaching the Frankincense producing region on the Somali coast in the time of Hatshepsut. Thus the term «Punt» included the whole African coast of the Red Sea from the borders of Egypt to Cape Guardafui on the Somali coast (14).

As to the identity of these Puntite intermediaries, if we judge from their representations on the Egyptian monuments, they were Hamito-Semites or Afro-Asiatics (fig 11), and this race relation correlated them with the Asiatics who inhabited South Arabia and exercised the same activity and traded in the same main article (frankincense). But as stated above, only the inhabitants of the African coast who were known to the Egyptians and given by them the term «Puntites».

It may be of great probability that the ancestors of these Puntites exercised the same activity as the text of Hatshepsut may denote, these ancestors and their brethren who inhabited the South Arabian coasts were in great probability the transmitters of the Mesopota-

13. Couyant et Montet; Les inscriptions hiéroglyphiques et hiérotiques du Ouadi Hammamat, MIFAO Tome 34 (1912) No 114 pp. 80-81 & BAR I 423-433.

14. Gauthier, H; Dictionnaire des noms géographiques contenus dans les textes hiéroglyphiques (1925-1931) Tome II p. 45.

mian cultural influences to Egypt. Thus, these influences were not transmitted to Egypt by direct ways i.e. by means of the Egyptians or the Mesopotamians themselves, but by indirect means, i.e. the Afro-Asiatic intermediaries carried the Mesopotamian influences from Mesopotamia to Egypt through their frankincense trade with the two countries.

The indirect transmission of the Mesopotamian cultural influences to Egypt may be traced in the difference between the Egyptian patterns and their Mesopotamian prototypes. Such difference may be a kind of modification which occur as a result of indirect cultural contacts between peoples and nations. Modification of the figures of the ships represented on the Gebel el Araq handle can be discerned when such ships are compared with the Mesopotamian prototypes, such as the ships of Uruk (fig 3), the latter has a long hull and a rectangular cabin, while the hull of the Gebel el Arak ship is relatively short and the roof of the cabin is vaulted. The Egyptian modification appear clearly in the crutches which characterised the Egyptian ships in the dynastic times (fig 4). Another difference between the Egyptian patterns and the Mesopotamian prototypes appears in the forms of the recesses. Under the influence of the Egyptian environment which is characterised by a strict regularity, the Mesopotamian irregular recesses that were built from both outside and inside the walls (15) were modified to the strikingly regular recesses built from outside the walls only (16).

A third example of this process of modification can be traced in the development of the Egyptian cylinder seals from the Mesopotamian prototypes. The overwhelming mortuary spirit of the Egyptians had its influence on these seals. They were incised with mortuary inscriptions (17) instead of the secular inscriptions which characterised the Mesopotamian cylindrical seals. (18)

This modification process may be also discerned in the similarity between the Egyptian gods who were ascribed to Punt ( the African coast) and the Asiatic gods; such as the similarity between the god Min and the Sabaean god Ilmukah (\*) (as previously stated) (figs 7 & 8) and between the goddess Hathor and the Sumerian goddess Ninhursag. Moreover, the similarity may have roots in the common origin between the ethnic groups who inhabited South Arabia, the African coast of the Red Sea (the Puntites) and the ancient Egyptians, especially when we know that the three Egyptian gods which were related with Punt (Min, Horus and Hathor) were the earliest gods in Upper Egypt, (if we exclude the god Seth who was an indigenous god), and were closely correlated with each others not only on the early Egyptian monuments (as stated above) (figs 5 & 6), but also throughout the dynastic times. An example is the strong correlation between Horus and Min in Koptos. (19) and between Horus and Hathor in many places and nomes in Egypt.

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15. Frankfort, H; The art and architecture of the Ancient Orient. (1954) fig. 2.
  16. Smith, W.S; The art and architecture of Ancient Egypt (1965) fig. 7.
  17. Frankfort, H; Birth of civilization pl. 31 figs 38-39.
  18. Ibid pl. 22 figs 42, 44.
  19. Petric, M.F. Koptos (1896) pl. XXI figs. 4-6. cf. Mercer; Horus p. 90. Wainwright, B.G.A; The Emblem of Min, JEA XVII (1931) p. 191.

\* An objection may arise against this hypothesis due to the great lapse of time between the rise of the worship of the two gods, but can be assumed that the worship of the Sabaean god was exercised since a remote period while it was not recorded until the invention of the South Semitic script at a relatively later date.

From all these contexts which point to a strong relation between some cultural aspects in Mesopotamia, South Arabia, and the Egyptian regions which extended at the end of the Wadi Hammamat and Wadi Abbad roads, we can come to the conclusion that the Afro-Asiatic intermediaries of the frankincense trade were responsible for the transmission of these cultural aspects to Egypt.

The nearest groups of these intermediaries who settled on the African coast of the Red Sea and to whom we can give the name Proto-Puntites, in this early period, played the direct role of transmitting these cultural influences to Egypt, presumably to the Egyptian centres which they frequented much as a result of their proximity to their commercial settlements on the African coast of the Red Sea and at which (the Egyptian centres) the proto-dynastic Egyptians worshipped gods who were related with the African coast of the Red Sea (Punt), and who had certain similarity with some Asiatic gods, as a result of the common far origin of both on one hand, and the modification process (stated above) on the other hand.

There is an evidence from the dynastic times about the strong relations between the inhabitants of the African coast of the Red Sea (the Puntites), and the Egyptian gods who were related to Punt. The Puntites used to share in the festivals of these gods. The Egyptian texts which describe the Festival of the god Min in the New Kingdom, refers to an eminent personality as «Nehsi Punt», (20) who always had a leading part in this festival. Also some foreigners used to share in a kind of competition on an apparatus called by the Egyptians «the Shnt» (fig. 9). Its relation with the god Min (fig. 10) and the foreign features of the competitioners, suggest to some scholars that the competitioners were Puntites who used to visit Egypt during the festivals of the god Min, to share in these festivals (21), as an aspect of the ancient relation between their ancestors and the Egypto-Puntite god.

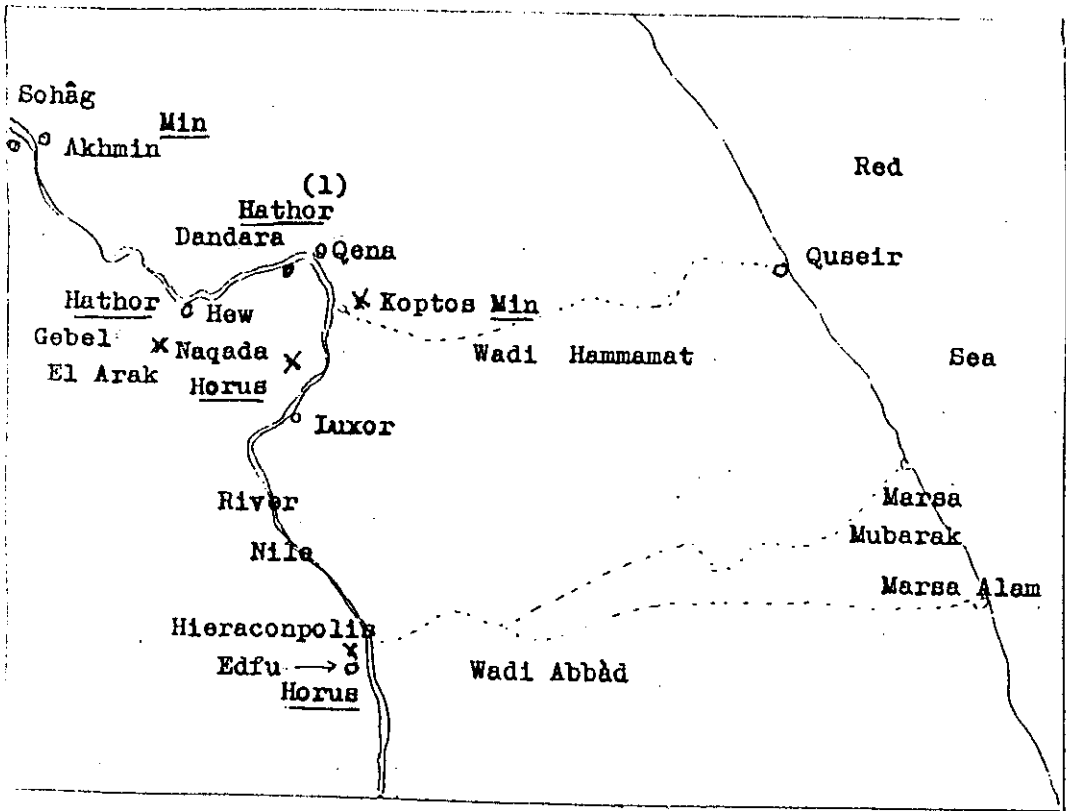
To conclude this article, it is clear that the foreign influences which entered Egypt at the dawn of the Egyptian history, although consolidated by the common origin of their Afro-Asiatic transmitters with the ancient Egyptians; soon disappeared leaving only its stamps or its far memory in the modified forms of recesses, and in some features of the Egyptian gods who were ascribed to Punt. Such cultural phenomena characterised Egypt throughout the different stages of its history. All the foreign influences which entered Egypt always melted in the Egyptian crucible, leaving some traces which may be discerned with difficulty among the pure Egyptian cultural aspects and elements.

Dr. Abdel Monem Abdel Halim Sayed.  
Faculty of Arts — Alexandria

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20. Gauthier, H; Les Fêtes du Dieu Min. T. II p. 99.

21. Ibid. p. 149. cL Max Muller, Egyptological Researches (1905) vol. I p. 35.



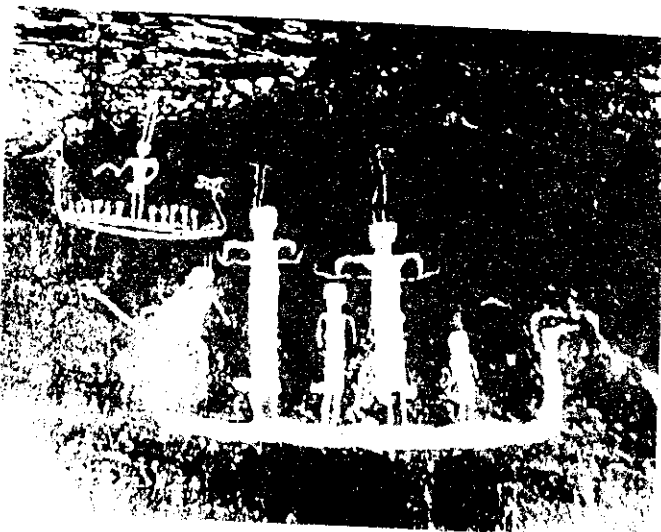
A sketch map to show the striking coincidence between the early cult centres of the gods whom the Ancient Egyptians in dynastic times ascribed to Punt (Horus, Hathor and Min), and the places where the Mesopotamian influences were found. (Marked With x)

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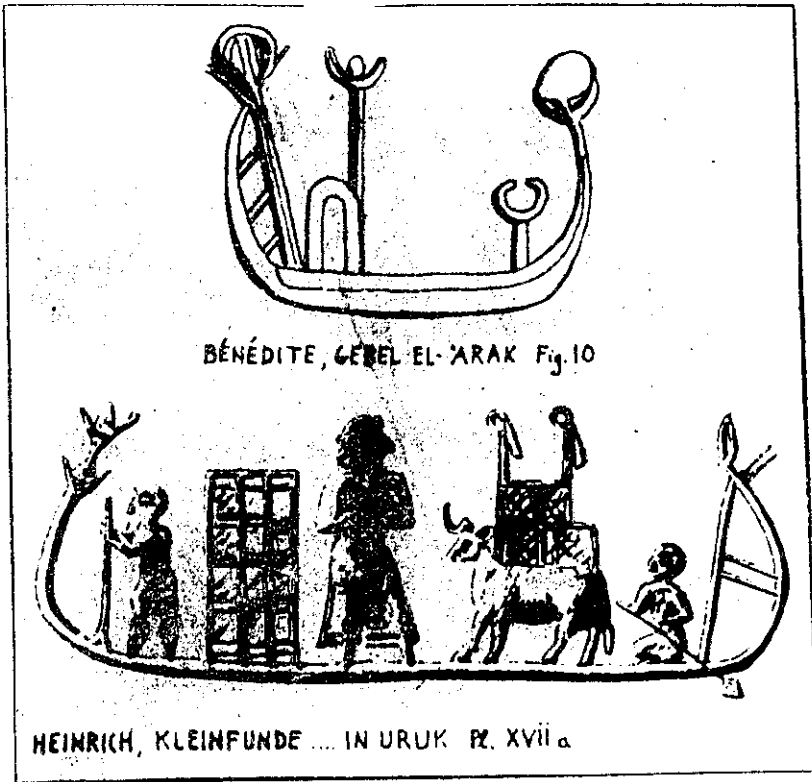
(1) The worship of Hathor started of Dendera at a relatively later date .



(fig.1) The Gebel el'Arak Handle, on which are engraved the Mesopotamian influences. The representation of ships among The figures may bear witness that these influences were transmitted by way of The sea, apparently The Red Sea.

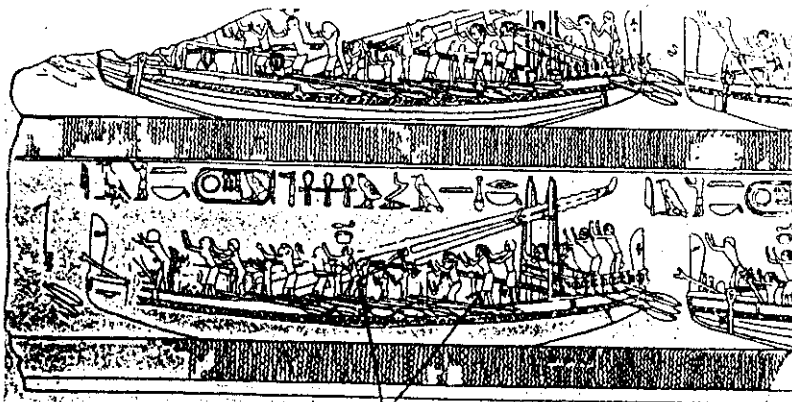


2) Representation of early ships on the rocks of wadi 'Abbad'. The ships with Their characteristic high stern and prow are to be compared with the foreign ships represented on The Gebel el Arak handle (above).

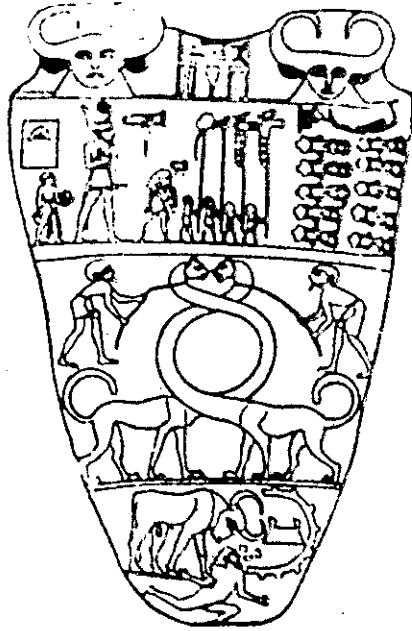


3) Details of The Gebel el Arak ship (above) showing the close similarity with a Mesopotamian ship from Uruk (below) A characterized feature of the Gebel el Arak ship is the crutch which appears later in The Egyptian sea-going ships in dynastic times, its use was to hold the hogging truss rope which keeps the tension of the ship, and prevent it from untwisting.

4) Representation of an Egyptian Sea-going ship from the Time of Sahure (5th dynasty) to show the crutches (marked with two arrows).



crutches



(شكل ٤-ب) لوحة نعرمر (من الخلف) ٤٢٥

5) The Narmer palette, showing in relative large size the symbols of the three deities who were related with Hunt. Hathor is symbolized by a horned cow at the top, Min by a crescent — like horned bull at the bottom (the bull in the same time may symbolize the victorious king) and Horus (in large size) on the back of the palette.



6) The palette of the bull on which the symbols of the early gods are represented. Among them are the symbols of Min and Horus.

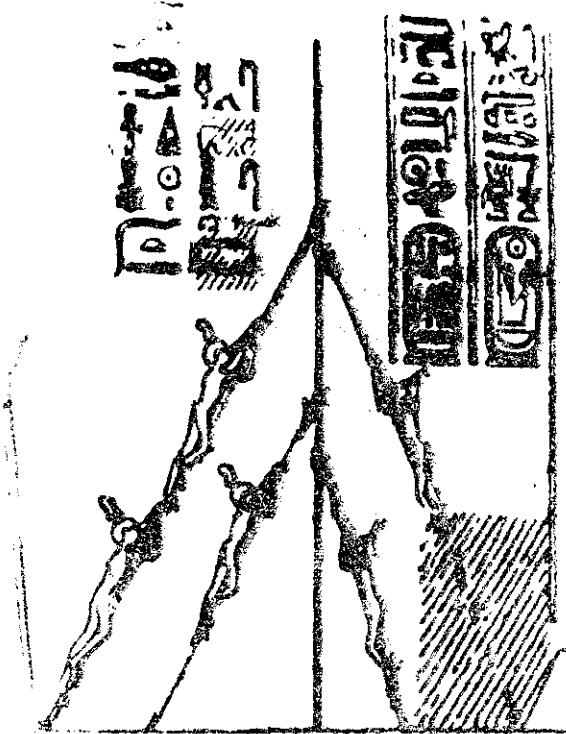
7) The crescent like horned bull, the symbol of the god Min as represented on the early statues of the god found near koptos.



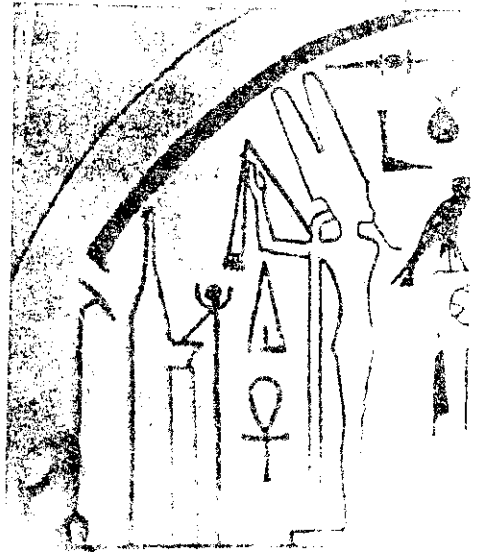
8) The crescent — like horned bull, the symbol of the south Arabian moon god Ilmukah.



- 9) The «shnt» or the apparatus upon which, presumable foreigners exercised a kind of competition during the festival of the god Min.



- 10) The early temple of the god Min called also «shnt», the pole in front of the temple may be the origin of the competition apparatus represented in the above figure (No. 9) as both bear the same name.





- 11) A scene from the Punt reliefs of Queen Hatshepsut's Temple representing the Puntites in their original home in Punt which was described by the texts as «The terraces of the frankincense in Punt.»

Their features reveal Afro-Asiatic characteristics which may be compared with the physical characteristics of the Ancient Egyptians.

# DISCOVERY OF THE SITE OF THE 12TH DYNASTY PORT AT WADI GAWASIS ON THE RED SEA SHORE (\*)

(Preliminary report on the excavations of the Faculty of Arts,  
University of Alexandria, in the Eastern Desert of Egypt — March 1976)

[PLANCHES 8-16]

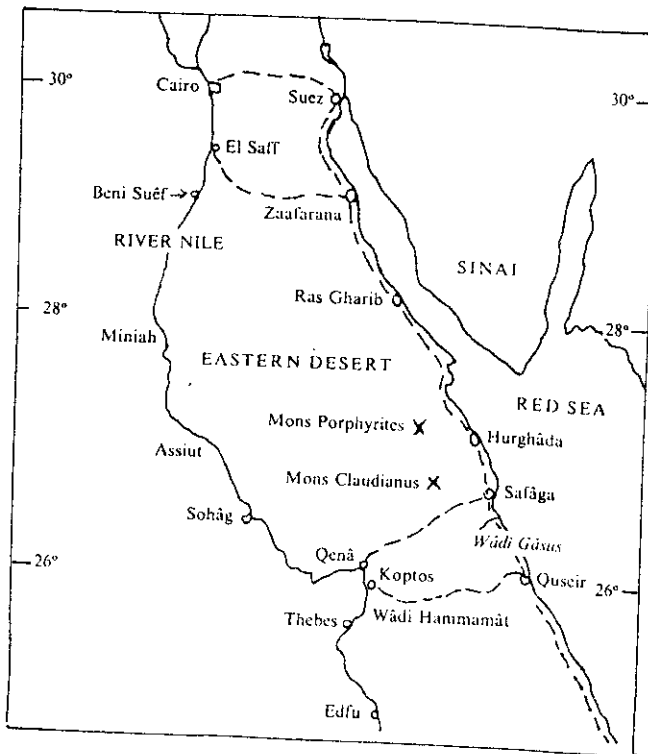
BY

ABDEL MONEM A. H. SAYED

4

## A. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

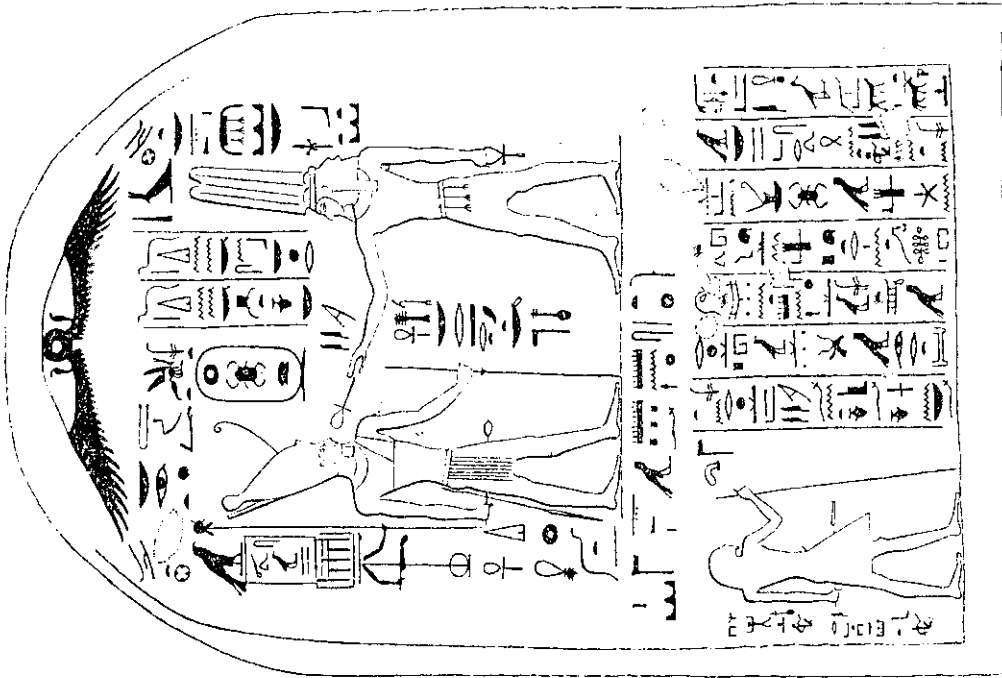
One hundred and fifty years ago, almost at the beginning of Egyptology, when two of its pioneers, namely Sir Gardiner Wilkinson and Mr. James Burton were wandering in the Eastern desert of Egypt, looking for Graeco-Roman remains, they came across



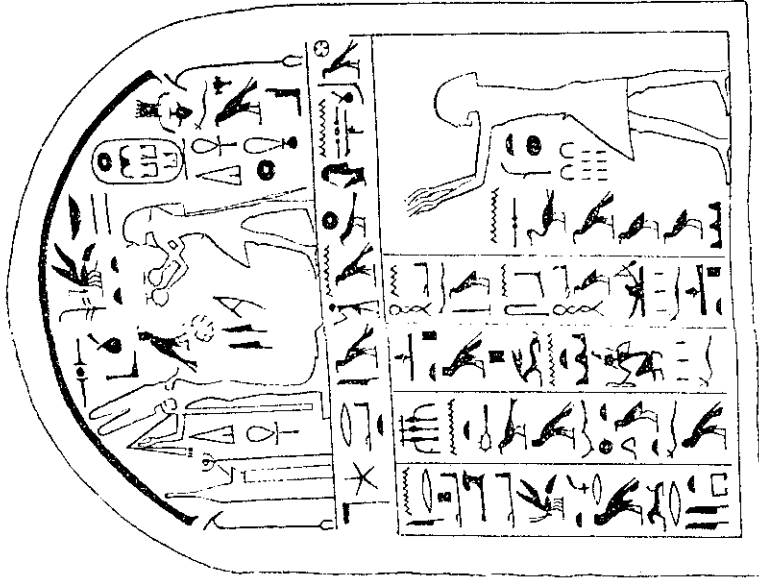
Map 1

Roads through the Eastern Desert to the site of the excavations at the two valleys of Wádi Gásús and Wádi Gawásis  
Scale 1:4,250,000

(\*) Published in "Revue d'Égyptologie, Paris, Tome  
29, (1977) pp. 140-178.



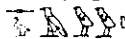
a Stela of Khnemhoitpe  
(Birch, *Catal. of the Collection of Egyptian Antiq. at Alnwick Castle*, pl. 4 et 3)



b Stela of Khentekhtay-wer

a group of small buildings in a valley which is called Wâdi Gâsûs; it is situated about 60 kilometers north of the port of Quseir (map 1 p. 138).

At different times during the 19th century, they discovered two small tablets or stelae<sup>1</sup> inscribed with hieroglyphs in one of the buildings. One of them, which Wilkinson discovered<sup>2</sup>, is a lava stela measuring about 66 × 35 cm. It belonged to a high official called Khnemhotpe. It records the first year of the reign of Sesostriis II. On his stela Khnemhotpe enumerated his titles and he mentioned how the Pharaoh established his monuments in the region of *T3-ntr* or God's Land (pl. 8 a).

The other stela, which Burton discovered, is a basalt one measuring about 52 × 30 cm. It records the 28th year of king Ammenemes II. It belongs to a ship-captain called Khentekhtay-wer (pl. 8 b). Its text has special importance because it mentions how Khentekhtay-wer returned safely with his expedition from a sea voyage to Punt and how his ships landed at a port which the text of the stela called  S3ww.

Although the stela of Khentekhtay-wer was not found on the Red Sea shore itself, but at about 7 km from it, its importance lies in the mention of the name of the Egyptian port from which ships sailed to Red Sea regions.

Because the stela was found in the valley of Wâdi Gâsûs, most Egyptologists are of the opinion that the port of S3ww may be identified with the present small dhow harbour of Mersa Gâsûs which lies at the mouth of the valley. Although such an identification is but a mere supposition, yet it has gained popularity to the extent that it nearly has become an established fact<sup>3</sup>.

#### B. PROJECT AND PLAN OF THE EXCAVATIONS

The site of the excavations at Wâdi Gâsûs is remote from the Valley of the Nile. It is situated at about 830 km from Alexandria (about 600 km from Cairo). Although the roads leading to it are paved and fit for motors, yet many parts of them are rough so that it takes about 10 hours (from Cairo) by car to reach it. Such remoteness and difficulty of communications, in addition to the lack of living possibilities in the far barren desert, were disappointing factors against any excavation project, particularly when we know that prospecting results of finding Pharaonic monuments in the Eastern Desert near the Red Sea shore are too scanty, a fact which discourages any attempts

<sup>1</sup> The stelae were first published in Birch, *Catalogue of the Ashmolean Castle Collection* (1880), pl. 3, 4 and p. 267 ff. They were recently studied by Nibbi, *JEA* 62, 45-56. I am indebted to Miss Alessandra Nibbi for providing me with a proof copy of her valuable article before its publishing.

<sup>2</sup> As shown on one of the charts which Wilkinson had drawn of the valley in a manuscript kept in the Griffith Institute, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, and numbered «Wilkinson xlv D. 13». My thanks are due to Miss Helen Murray of the Griffith Institute for providing me with a copy of the chart.

<sup>3</sup> For example: Kees, *Ancient Egypt, A cultural Topography*, translated by Morrow, p. 111.

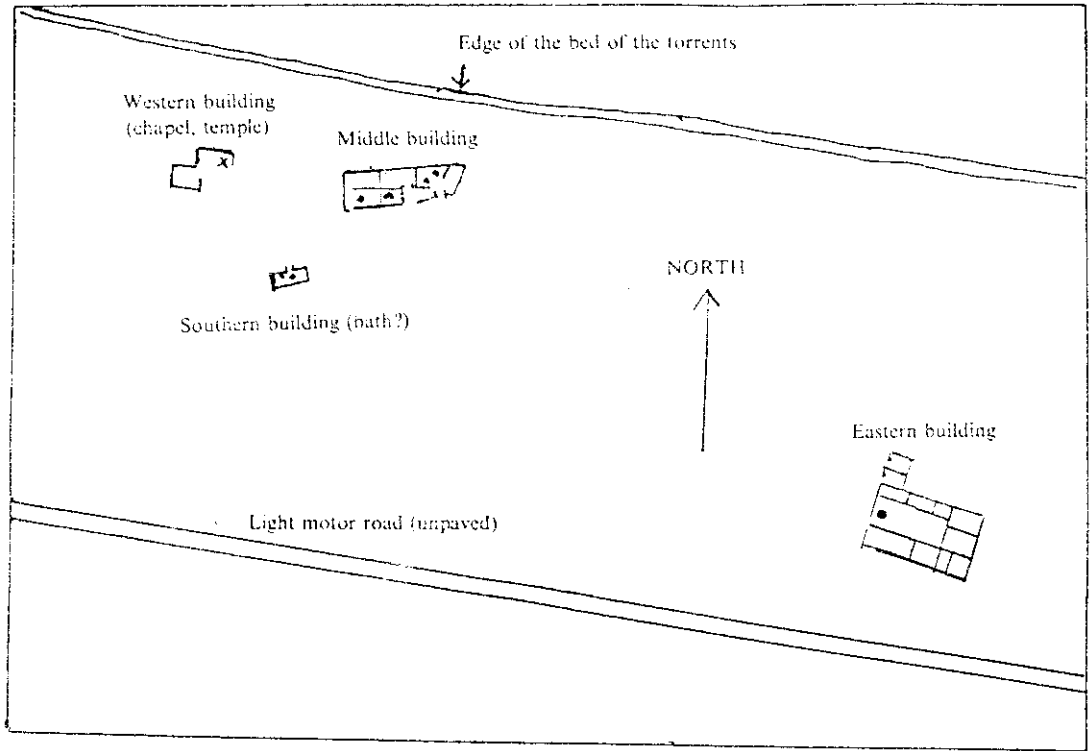


Fig. 1. -- Plan of the Graeco-Roman Station of Wādī Gāsūs

- • sites of big jars full of ashes
- × position of the stela found by Wilkinson in the chapel (western building) as marked by him on his manuscript (see footnote 2).

*Remarks*

1. *Dimensions of the buildings (in metres)*

Western building (chapel)	length 11	breadth 6
Middle building	length 20	breadth 8
Southern building	length 6	breadth 4
Eastern building	length 18	breadth 12

2. *Building material*

Rubble and irregular igneous stones from the natural rock of the vicinity (basalt, diorite, pink granite) and limestone. The Western building (chapel) is characterized by a somewhat regular layers of limestone.

3. The actual plans of the buildings differ to some extent from the previous plans drawn by Schweinfurth (*Alte Baureste*, p. 7) and Wilkinson (in his manuscript).

Could this difference be due to modifications carried out by Beduins who may have used the buildings as dwellings or shelters?



b

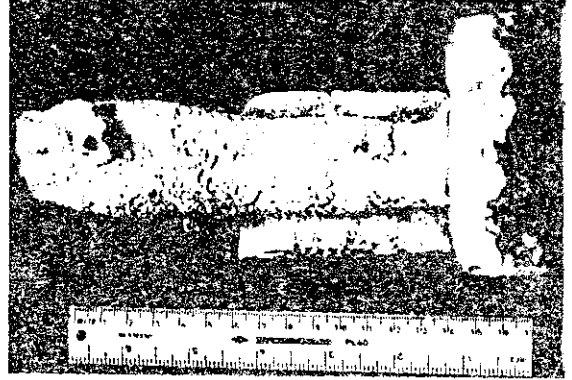


a

a-b. The chapel where the two stelae were found.  
 c: The place where Wilkinson found the stela of Kamenhotep.



c  
Front and back views of the hemaphysadine statuette.



d



e  
The greek ostracoon (11 x 8 cm)

Abdel Monem A. H. SAYED, *Discovery of the 12th dynasty port at Wadi Gawasis*

towards searching for such monuments. Consequently, most of the excavations undertaken in the Eastern Desert were for Graeco-Roman remains which are abundant, especially in the watering stations (Hydreumi) and quarry settlements which are scattered all over the desert.

In my opinion, these circumstances explain why the problem of Punt has remained unsolved. As far as I know no Egyptologists undertook excavations on the Eastern Desert coast with the aim of looking for Pharaonic remains so as to solve this problem.

Thus, when I introduced the plan of the excavations to the Department of History at the Faculty, my actual aim was not confined to search for the site of the port of *Saw* for itself, but as a step towards resolving the problem of the location of Punt.

The plan of our excavations was naturally to excavate at first the small building at Wādī Gāsūs where Wilkinson and Burton found the stelae of Khentekhtay-wer and Khnemhotpe. This building is a small chapel which Wilkinson called «a small temple». It is included within a group of four buildings (fig. 1). Early Egyptologists differed about their identification<sup>4</sup>. But Schweinfurth was the first one of the 19th century researchers who identified them with a Graeco-Roman Hydreuma<sup>5</sup>. Researches and investigations carried out in the 20th century, such as those of Murray<sup>6</sup> and Tregenza<sup>7</sup>, identified it with the classical settlement of «Aenum».

Our plan included, as a second stage of work at the Graeco-Roman station, the excavation of its other buildings, searching for Pharaonic remains or inscriptions. We thought that if we should find such remains, then the site ought to be the original place of the two stelae. If the result was negative, the two stelae would have been consequently transferred from another place, probably from the Red Sea shore where the port of *Saw* should exist. In such case, we ought to shift the work to the sea shore.

### C. WORK AT THE GRAECO-ROMAN STATION

Such was our plan, on which we carried on the work. We cleared away the debris from the small chapel (pl. 9 a-b). But all what we found were of Graeco-Roman period, such as a Greek ostrakon (pl. 9 c), a broken offering table and a small statuette made of gypsum (anhydrite). Its head has disappeared and the remaining figure measures about 20 cm high. It is shaped in a special hermaphrodite form with the body

<sup>4</sup> Wilkinson, *The Manners and Customs* ..., 2nd ed. (1878), I, p. 252. cf. *id.*, *Topography of Thebes* (1835), p. 364; *ibid.*, ZfS 20, 203-4.

<sup>5</sup> Schweinfurth, *Alte Baureste und hieroglyphische Inschriften im Wadi Gasūs* (1885), S. 8.

<sup>6</sup> But he confounded it with «Philoteris»: G. W. Murray in John Ball, *Egypt in the Classical Geographers* (1942), p. 185.

<sup>7</sup> He also confounded it with the name of the Pharaonic port «Sewew» (Saw). L. A. Tregenza, *Egyptian Years* (1958), p. 176, 181.



of a woman and the hand gesture of the ithyphallic god Min, with a hole in the place of the phallus (pl. 9 d-e). A vulture or a falcon with double crown spreads its wings behind the figure. Although the statue does not bear any inscription, yet, in most probability, it is of Graeco-Roman time, as such extraordinary figures were frequent during that time.

We turned to the other buildings of the Roman station, but similarly all the findings were of Graeco-Roman date, such as demotic and greek ostraca (pl. 10 a and b), sherds of jars with incised marks, terra-cotta lamps, most of them in the usual frog-shape of Graeco-Roman times (pl. 10 c).

There we noticed a detail which may be a characteristic feature of the buildings of the Roman station (except the chapel pl. 9). It is the existence of some big jars which we found full of ashes. They measure from 40 to 50 cm in height and some of them have a side hole at the base (pl. 10 d).

Although we excavated all the buildings of the Graeco-Roman station to their very foundations<sup>8</sup>, the work did not reveal any single fragment or inscription of Pharaonic date.

Considering this result, we came to the conclusion that the Graeco-Roman station of Wādi Gāsūs — or its foundation — was not the original place of the stelae of Khentekhtay-wer and Khnemhotpe; they must have been transferred at a later date from another place, which ought to be the sea shore, at least concerning the stela of Khentekhtay-wer, inasmuch as it records an event related to a port.

Consequently, we had to shift the work to the sea shore.

#### D. WORK ON RED SEA SHORE, DISCOVERY OF THE SITE OF THE PORT

Of course, we had to begin with the nearest site to the Graeco-Roman station of Wādi Gāsūs (map 2). It is a small dhow harbour called Mersa Gāsūs. Its situation at the mouth of Wadi Gāsūs was the reason that most Egyptologists identified it with the port of *S31rw*.

But another site on the sea shore drew my attention for it was the supposed site among Archaeologists of the Graeco-Roman port of «Philoteris». It is also a dhow harbour called «Mersa Gawāsis»<sup>9</sup> which lies at about 2 km south of Mersa Gāsūs.

We worked simultaneously on the two sites. But after digging some trial-trenches

<sup>8</sup> The expedition drew plans for all the buildings of the Graeco-Roman station and photographed all the findings, particularly the Demotic and Greek ostraca. The plans and photographs are kept in the Museum of the Faculty of Arts at Alexandria. They are at the disposal of specialists in Graeco-Roman Archaeology.

<sup>9</sup> «Mersa» is an Arabic word for «small harbour». «Gāsūs» is the Arabic word for «spy». But here it designates a kind of boat used in Islamic times to detect the movements of the enemy's ships, the Gāsūs-boat usually sailed at night only and without light. «Gawāsis» is the plural of the word «gāsūs».

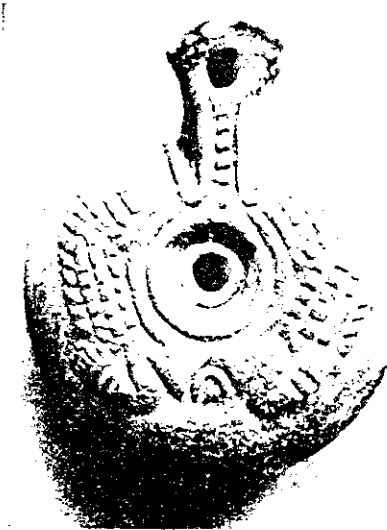


a



b

Demotic and greek ostraca of red pottery found in the middle building (7 × 12 cm and 11 × 12 cm).



c

Lamp in frog-shape (9 × 10 cm)



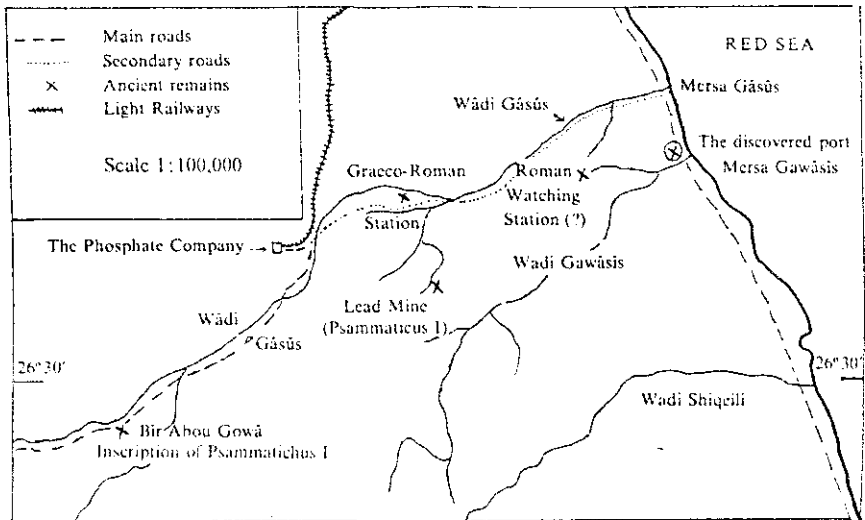
d

Jar originally filled with ashes (height about 50 cm)

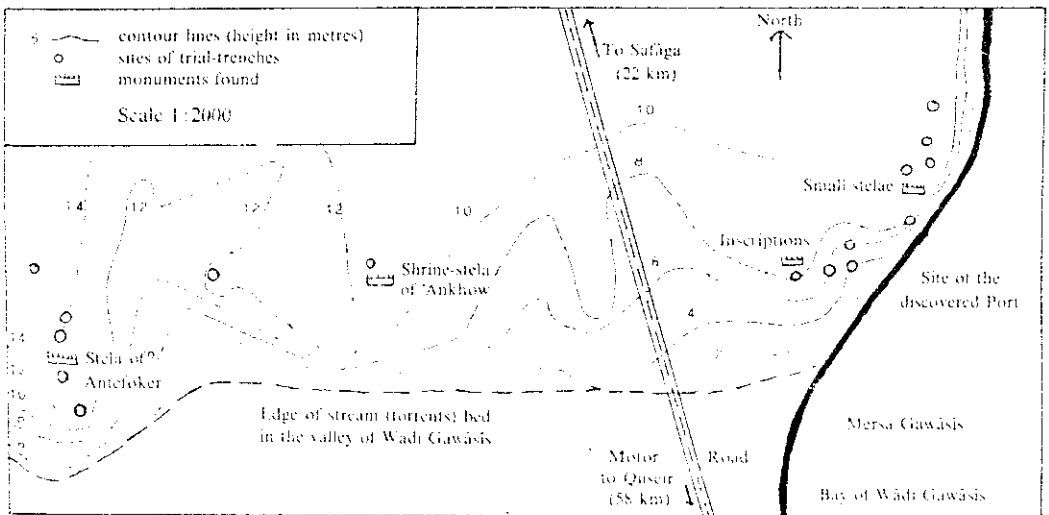
DISCOVERY OF THE SITE OF THE 12TH DYNASTY PORT

in the site of Mersa Gâsûs and, in the same time, after examining the strata at the sides of some deep trenches which we had already found there, apparently a remnant of military operations, we found no sign which may denote the existence of ancient remains.

We then concentrated the work on the site of Mersa Gawâsîs. Its harbour is overlooked by a small plateau which rises to about 10 metres above sea level (pl. 11 a-b). On the plateau I noticed small scattered mounds and some shallow pits whose foundations were made of a sort of conglomerate stone. I directed the work towards some of them.



Map 2 Area of the two valleys of Wâdi Gâsûs and Wâdi Gawâsîs and various Ancient remains



Map 3 Contoured Map of the Mouth of Wâdi Gawâsîs (northern side - excavations site)

Fortunately the first hieroglyphic inscription since the beginning of our excavations in the area appeared (pl. 12 a). It is a circular piece of limestone measuring about 10 cm in diameter. It has the shape of a jar stopper, but originally it might be part of a stela and someone at a later period (maybe in Graeco-Roman times), carved it to be used as a jar stopper.

Shortly after this discovery, we found in the same place, a small limestone chip, bearing two half mutilated cartouches of king Sesostris I (pl. 12 b), a document which enabled me to define the date of the port.

We surveyed the whole plateau of Mersa Gawâsis by digging several trenches (map 3) during the following days. We found five small round topped stelae measuring from 10 to 32 cm in height (pl. 12 c-d and 13 a-c). Unfortunately, they are badly eroded and nearly all their representations and inscriptions were destroyed, but there are still traces of standing figures in the attitude of adoration which is similar to the attitude of Khentekhtay-wer (pl. 8 b).

If we add to these characteristics of the discovered stelae that the geographical term Bia-Punt<sup>10</sup> (or speaking precisely *Bib-n-Pwnt*) occurred on one of them which belonged to a man called 'I-mrw (pl. 13 b-c), we can come to the conclusion that these small stelae were memorial ones and that their owners — who might be sailors or soldiers — set them up in the port to thank the gods for their safe return after a voyage to the region of Bia-Punt or other Red Sea regions.

#### E. TRACING THE ROUTE INLAND, DISCOVERY OF THE SHRINE-STELA OF ANKHOW

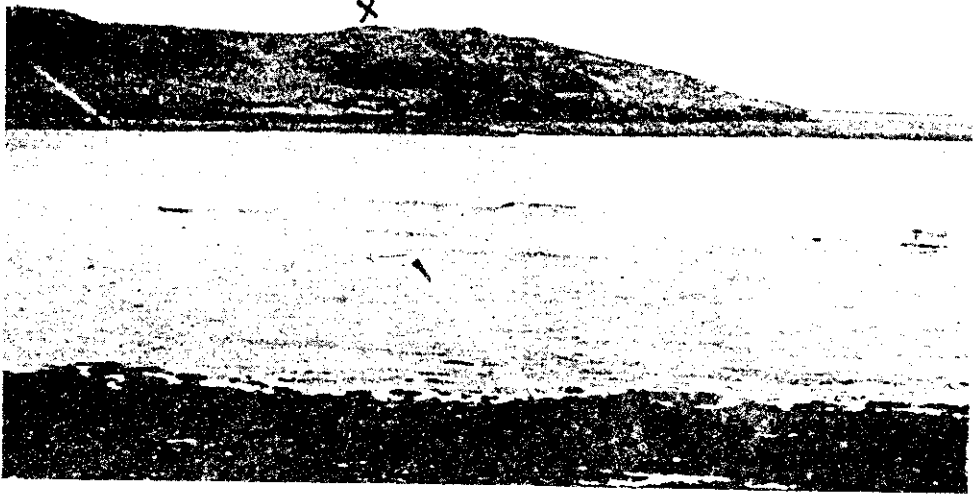
After identifying the site of the port, we shifted the work towards the west to trace the route which led from the port to the Nile Valley. We noticed a group of scattered mounds (larger in size than those of the port), extending to the west along the edge of the valley of Wâdi Gawâsis. By digging trial-trenches on the top and around them, we found a limestone shrine inscribed with hieroglyphs in the mound nearest to the sea (which lies at about 250 m from the port, map 3). After clearing out the debris around it, we found it to be a memorial stela in the form of a shrine (fig. 2) composed of three blocks of limestone (their dimensions are shown in fig. 2), but it can be noticed that the eastern block (or jamb) is higher (61 cm) than the western one (55 cm), so there was a small block on the western jamb, apparently to heighten it to the plane of the eastern jamb, but unfortunately it became very fragile by the effect of humidity

<sup>10</sup> The word *bi* is usually transliterated by Egyptologists *bi* because it often occurs with three strokes (𓂏𓂐𓂑) and because it usually designates «mines». But we shall see in our discovered texts (𓂏𓂐𓂑𓂒𓂓𓂔) that it occurs with no strokes and that it designates «mine», so we may be justified if we transliterate it without the plural ending.



a

General view of the dhow harbour of Mersa Gwâsis (northern side).



b

Close up view showing the plateau where the stelae were found (marked with x).



a



b

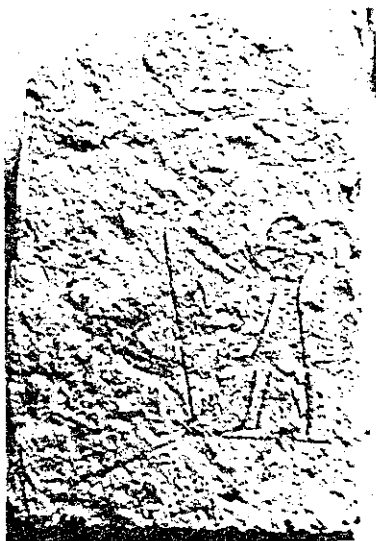


c



d

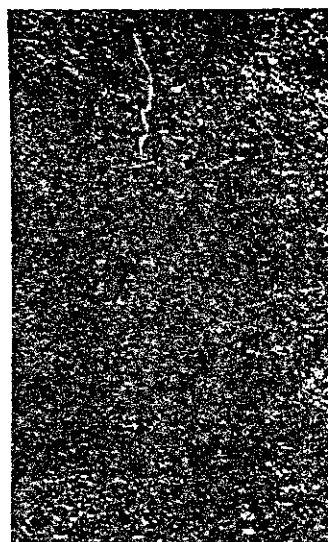
- a. The first hieroglyphic inscription found on the site.
- b. The second hieroglyphic inscription with the mutilated cartouches of Sesostris I.
- c. The group of the small limestone stelae.
- d. Detail of one of the stelae.



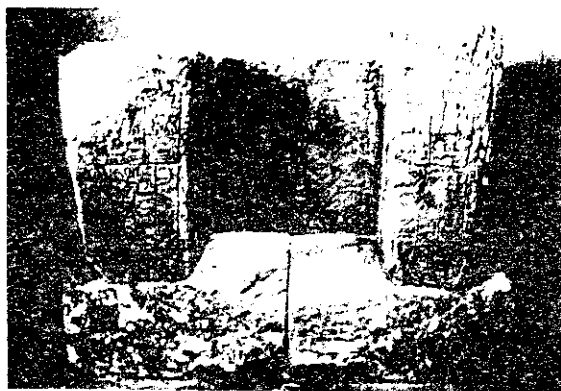
a



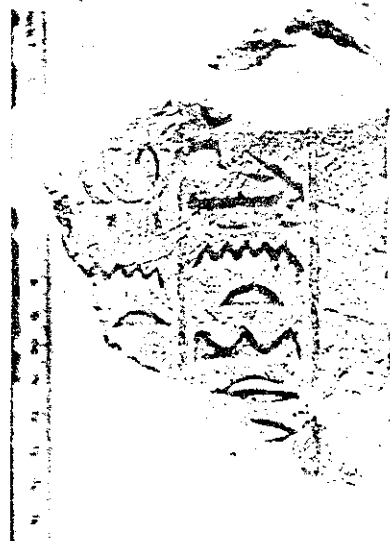
b



c



d



e

- a. One of the limestone stelae.
- b. Stela of *T-mrw*.
- c. Detail of its inscription.
- d. Shrine-stela of Ankhaw after restoration.  
(Alexandria, Museum of the Faculty of Arts).
- e. Inscription on the upper part of the shrine of Ankhaw.

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and most of it tumbled down; remains of it can be seen on the jamb (pl. 14 b), where we found an inscribed fragment with some hieroglyphic signs in a fine sunk relief, among which the word «Punt» is clear (pl. 13 e).

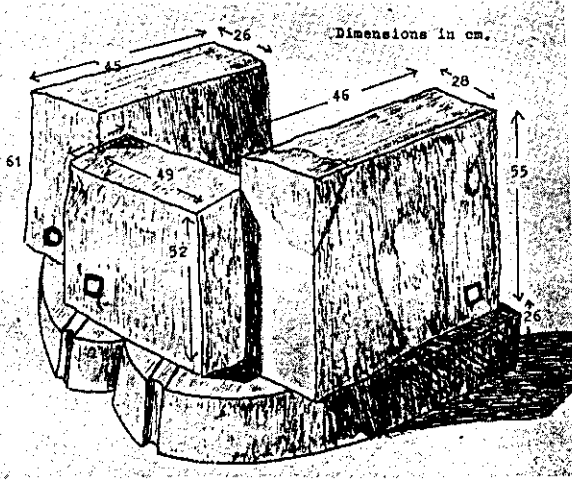
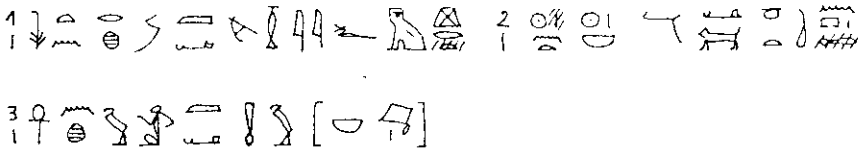


Fig. 2. — Back view of the shrine of Ankhaw showing the holes of the jambs, originally anchors. The fluted grooves of the pedestal were intended to hold firmly the rope of the anchor.

The stela belonged to a high official who held the office of «overseer of the audience-chamber» (Chamberlain) in the court of king Sesostris I. His name was *'nhw* («The living one»).

The outer faces of the shrine (the front of the jambs) face the south; they are divided in two registers; the upper western one apparently bears an inscription which includes an invocation for the sake of the king of which only the words *mry dt 'nh dt* remain (fig. 3).

The lower register of the western jamb still retains the titles and name of Ankhaw as follows :



«Real king's acquaintance, (whom) he loves (and) praises daily, overseer of the audience-chamber of the Great House, Ankhaw justified, lord of veneration».

The inner face of the shrine is inscribed with vertical lines of hieroglyphs (on the side blocks or jambs) and horizontal lines (on the middle block) (fig. 4). The hieroglyphic signs are engraved in a slightly sunk relief originally filled with a blue pigment, remains



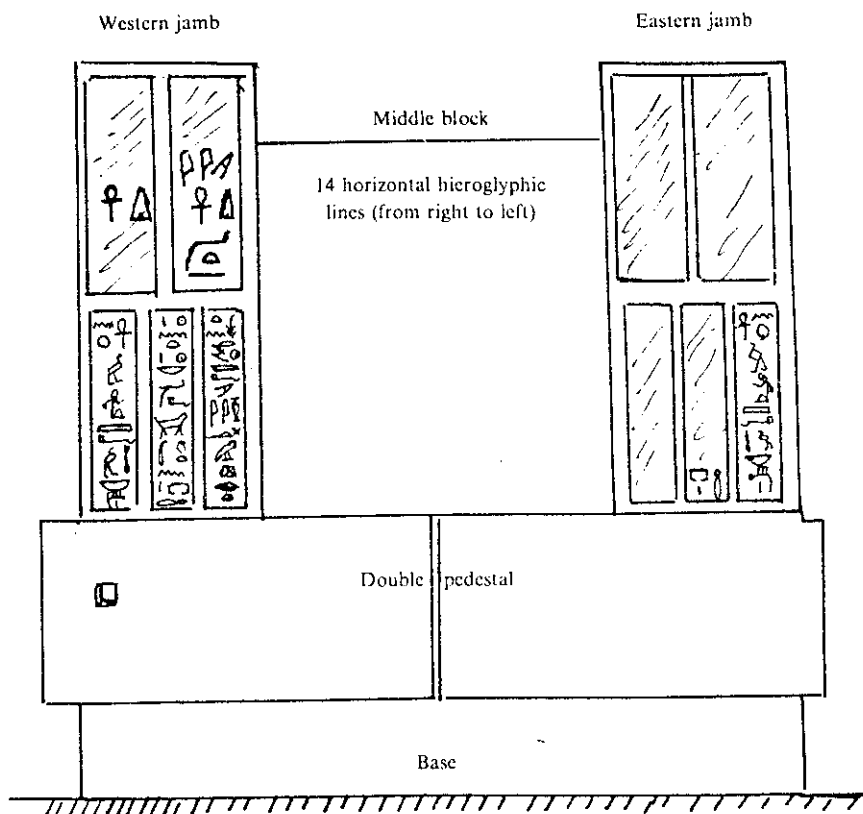


Fig. 3. — Front-view of the stela of Ankhow showing its pedestal and base, the texts on its outer face and the middle block.

of which can still be discerned in a few signs. Unfortunately at least half of the inscriptions are either obliterated or hidden under a solid mixture of earth and sand<sup>11</sup>.

From the remaining legible words, we know that the stela records an expedition to

<sup>11</sup> I publish here the parts of the texts which became legible after a limited restoration of the discovered stelae. Our archaeological chemists did their best to restore the stelae and clear the texts, either at Qena in Upper Egypt where the stelae were transported to be treated with chemical materials to stop decay, or at Alexandria where they are kept in the Museum of the Faculty of Arts. But their limited means are too short to clear the inscriptions. Actually, the stelae need a high standard of restoration experience, and we wait for experts to help us in solving this problem.

Until this is done, or if it cannot be done for any reason, or if the final restoration of the stelae takes a long time, I believe that a reservation procedure is necessary, so I transcribe here the legible signs and translate the complete sentences, with the purpose of inviting Egyptologists to cooperate with me in the completion of the missing words. I also take this opportunity to invite Egyptologists who are interested, or who are also specialized in «Red Sea Archaeology», to cooperate with me in the study of the discovered monuments in particular and in the problem of Punt in general. I welcome all their remarks and suggestions which will be published in the final report about the discovery.

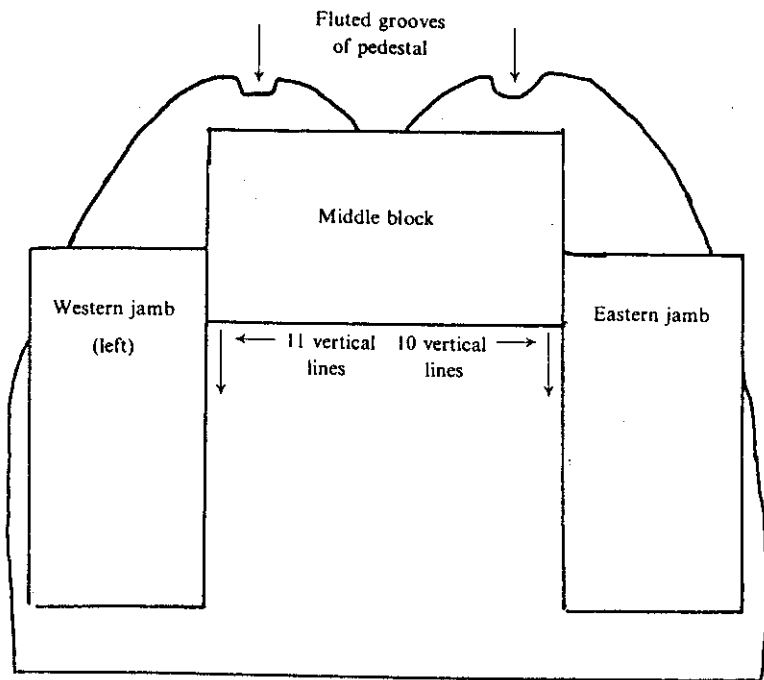
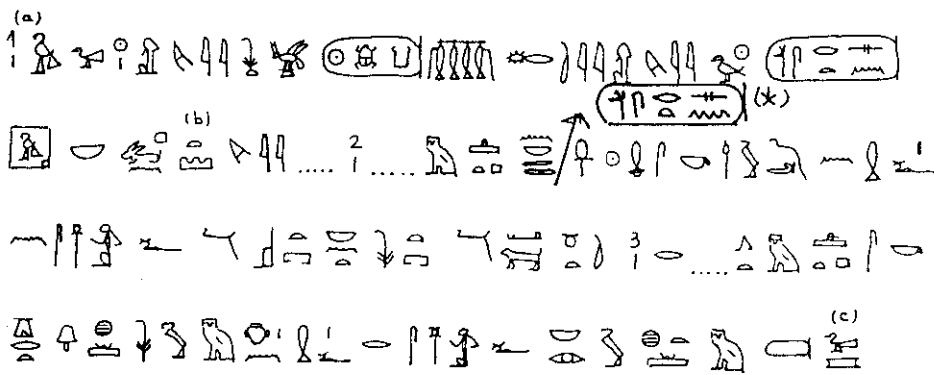


Fig. 4. — Shrine-stela of Ankhaw as seen from above, showing the texts on its inner face.

the region of Bia-Punt. Its text tells how king Sesostris I ordered his chamberlain Ankhaw to lead or to send an expedition to the land of Bia-Punt.

The text of the stela begins on the eastern jamb with the usual invocation in the name of the king to the gods among whom Hathor is mentioned as goddess of Punt; then comes the command of the king with the titles and offices of Ankhaw as follows :



(1) «Beloved of Horoeris-Re', King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Kheperkare', beloved of Khentekhtay, son of Re', Senwsre', beloved of Hathor, mistress of Punt, (2) ... in peace, for the

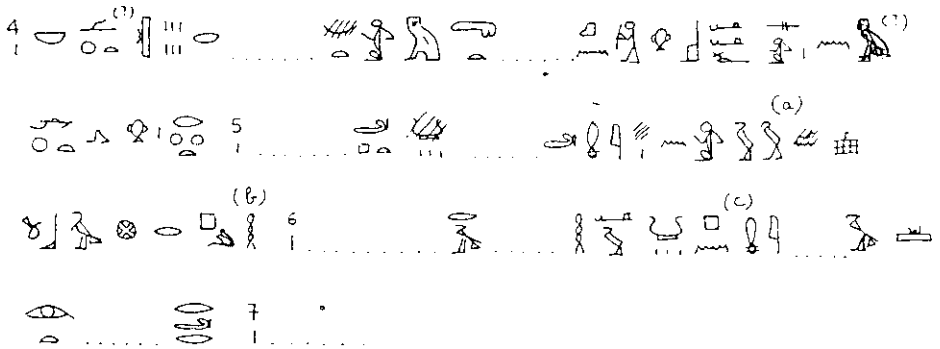
(\*) Unfortunately, this cartouche was dropped in the first edition.

Lord of the Two Lands, may he live like Re'. Lo, a decree (litt. «command») which His Majesty issued (litt. «said») to his friend, overseer of every chamber of the King's palace, overseer of the audience-chamber, (3) to ... come in peace, but lo, he is excellent in the heart of His Majesty more than any of his friends who operated in the sea».

NOTES ON THE TEXT :

- a. — In the first line the signs face the right, while they face the left in the rest of the lines.
- b. — It is remarkable that the word *Pwnt* is written on both the stelae of Ankhaw and Atefoker (pl. 16 b) with the letter *p* upon the rear part of the hare and not in front of it when written horizontally, or upon its middle when written vertically, as usual on Egyptian monuments and as on the stela of *'I-mrw* (pl. 13 c).
- c. — The ocean (*šn wr*) may be the Red Sea. It is noteworthy that some of the titles of Ankhaw are connected with the sea.

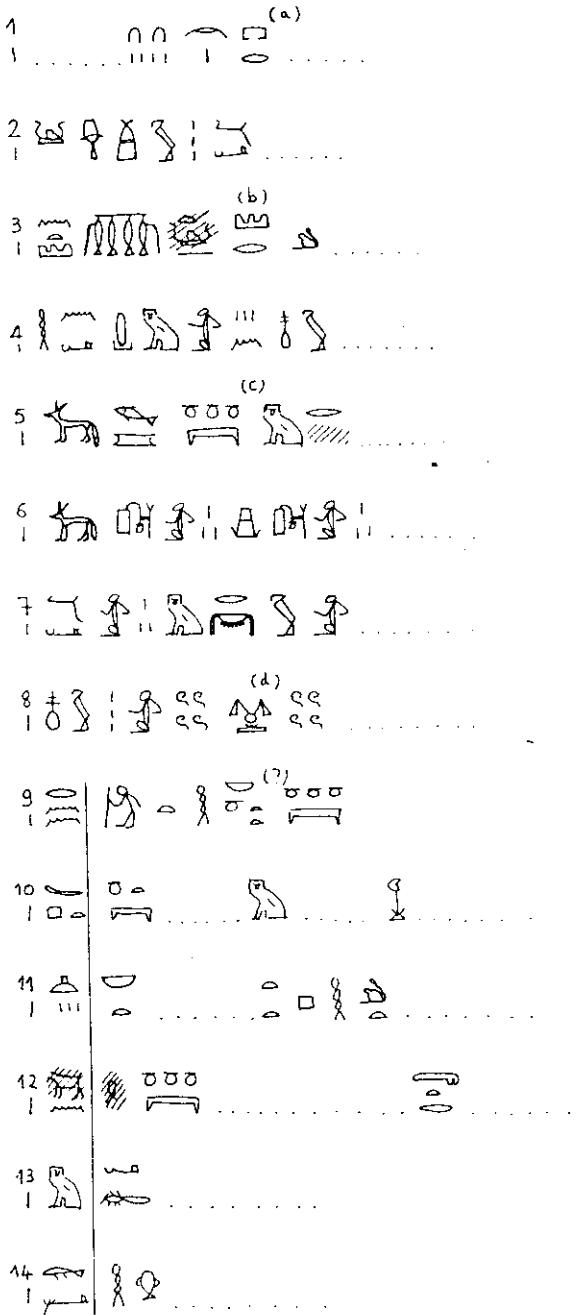
The rest of the text (on the eastern jamb) is too fragmentary to be translated, but there are some words which attract our attention for their special significance; I shall deal with them in the following notes. The legible parts of the text are :



NOTES ON THE TEXT :

- a. — This word may be read *Sww*; it attracts our attention, particularly when it is read within the phrase : *dpwt ... dmi n Sww spit Gbtw*. I shall deal with it later.
- b and c. — We shall see on the stela of Antefoker that these words are used in combination with the term *Bis-Pwnt*.

The central block of the stela of Ankhaw is inscribed with 14 horizontal lines from right (east) to left (west). The inscription records the troops and various officials who belonged to the expedition or who organised and prepared it. Unfortunately, most of the left half of the lines are defaced. The legible phrases on the right portion are :



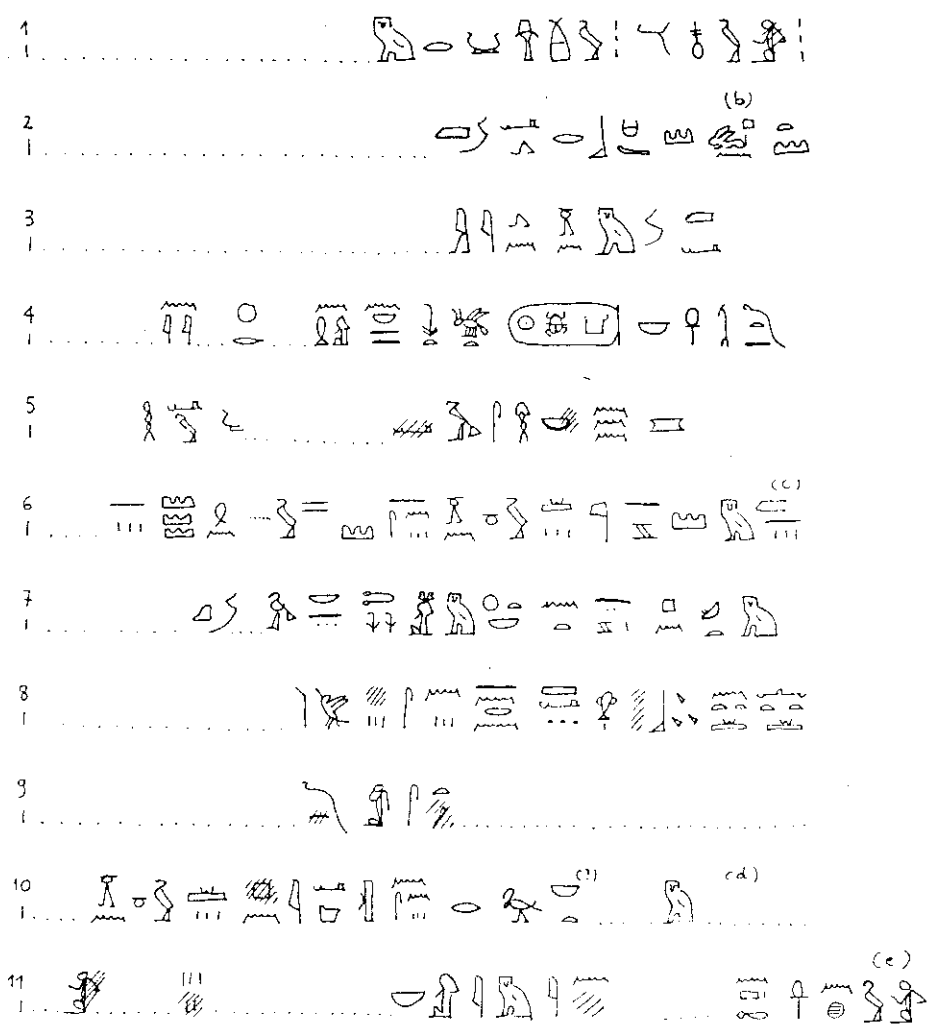
NOTES ON THE TEXT :

- a. — It may be the date of the departure of the expedition.
- b. — This word may refer to the southward voyage.

c. — A title which has special significance; it can be translated «Administrator ('*d-mr*) of the Ocean». The ocean may be the Red Sea as stated above.

d. — The word *dmf* may refer to the total number of the troops and officials who are mentioned in the lines above. The partly mutilated signs of number 9 make a total number of 400 only. This denotes that the original total number was bigger.

The western jamb (left) is inscribed with 11 vertical lines. It seems that the text records the tribute brought from the land of Bia-Punt and also from the God's Land. Most of the upper part of the inscription is damaged. The text runs from right (north) to left (south) as follows<sup>a</sup> :



NOTES ON THE TEXT :

a. — I arranged the text approximately according to the relative length of both the extant and the missing words to give the reader an idea about the length of the missing words because the photographs are not clear enough.

b. — The occurrence of the term *Bj3-Pwnt* here with the word *m3'* «to lead, to despatch», may refer to the role of Ankhaw.

c. — The text can be read here : ... *sn imw T3-nfr m-gs 3w (?)* which may be translated : «... they (brought) the gifts of the God's Land (which) is at the side of ...». Could it be a definition of the location of God's Land? (If the word *m-gs* may be equivalent to *hr-gs* or *r-gs* «at the side of»). Anyhow, the rest of the text, on the beginning of the next line, is illegible.

d. — This sentence can be read : *3'(b).n.sn r B3k(?)t* which can be translated «they united at Bakt». The context denotes that the word *B3kt* is a geographical nomenclature; it may be the name of a port between Quseir and Mersa Gawasis, as the same word is mentioned in the lists of the conquered peoples of both Tuthmosis III and Ramesses III at Thebes (*GDG* II, p. 7; cf. Schiaparelli, *Geografia*, p. 119, 168, 262).

e. — The only legible occurrence of the name of Ankhaw on the inner face of his stela.

The shrine-stela of Ankhaw is characterized by a curious shaped pedestal (pl. 14c). It forms a double oval, each one shaped with a fluted groove at the back (fig. 2 and 4). It is a pair of limestone anchors<sup>12</sup> (pl. 14c and fig. 5 and 6). Each one has a rounded upper hole and a square lower hole, the latter smaller than the former. The average dimensions of these anchors and of their holes are shown in fig. 6. They seem to be the anchors of the ships which navigated to the land of Bia-Punt, a fact which explains the holes of the jambs and the central block of the shrine-stela (fig. 2 and pl. 14b).

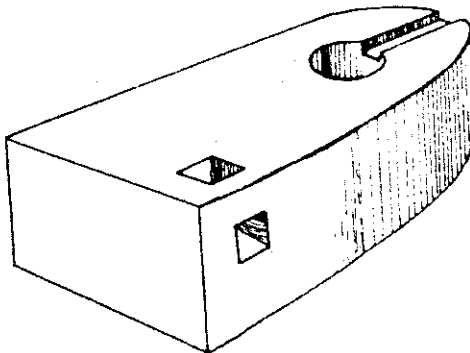


Fig. 5. — Diagram of the eastern anchor shown in pl. 14d, showing the upper hole and the lower square holes.

<sup>12</sup> As I was kindly informed during the First International Congress of Egyptology in Cairo by Mrs. Alessandra Nibi; cf. *JEA* 61, 38-41. In the second season (Jan. 1977), I found that they are four anchors in two rows.

Apparently these blocks were similar anchors<sup>13</sup>. After the return of the ships, the upper holes were trimmed off, their surfaces smoothed and carved with the hieroglyph signs.

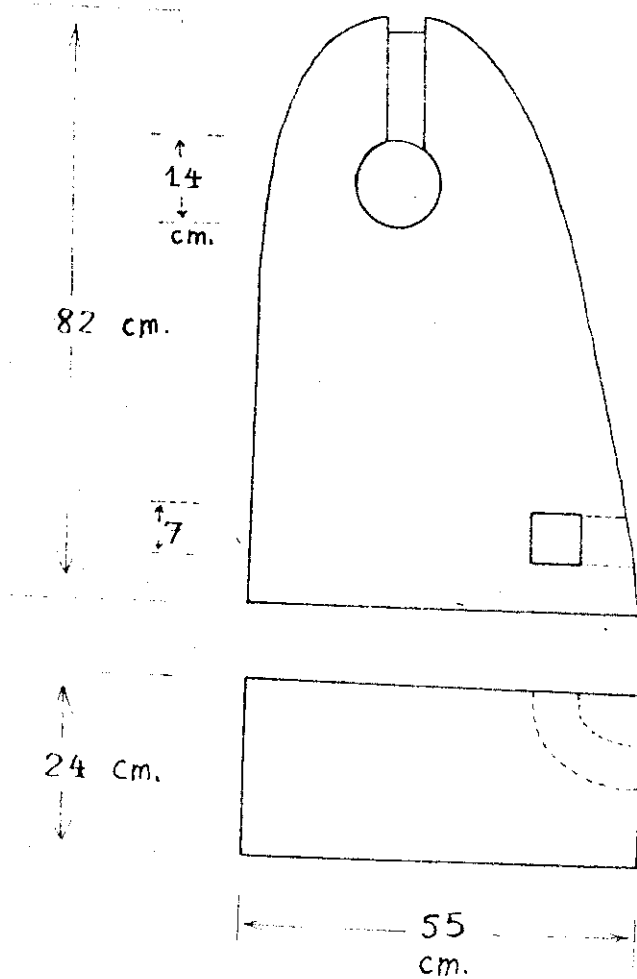


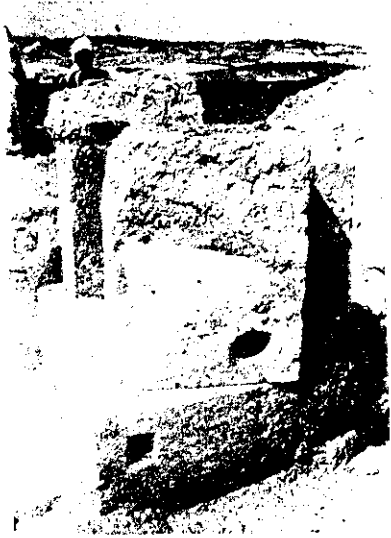
Fig. 6. Section of the same anchor showing its dimensions.

Although the stela of Ankhaw had a unique shape, yet its representations and ornamentations were the same as the other stelae which were previously found at Wâdi Gâsûs, particularly the stela of Khentekhtay-wer. The fragments which we found in the debris around the stela of Ankhaw confirmed this conclusion; for example a fragment

<sup>13</sup> A kind suggestion by Miss Honor Frost, Director of the «Punic Ship Excavation» through a letter to me.



a



b



c

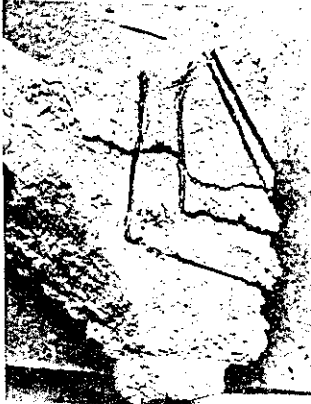


d

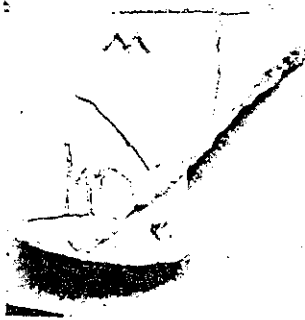
- a. Front-view of the shrine-stela of Ankhaw showing remains of the decayed upper part on the western jamb.
- b. Side-view of the same stela showing the holes in both the jamb and pedestal.
- c. The double pedestal after the removal of the jamba.
- d. The western anchor showing the upper hole and the groove. It rests on the lower part of anchors.

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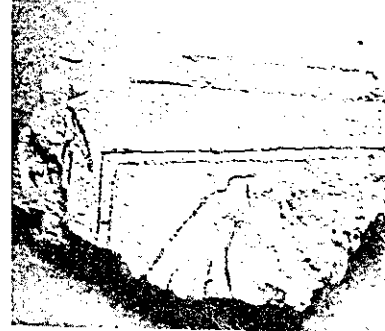




a



b



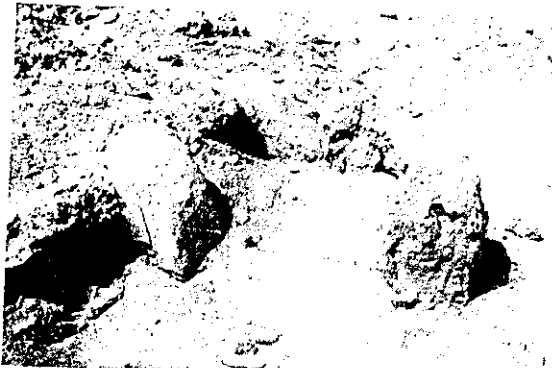
c



d



e



f

- a. — Limestone fragment with the arm of Min (10 × 12 cm).
- b. — Limestone fragment with a vulture (10 × 15 cm).
- c. — Limestone fragment with a falcon (10 × 15 cm).
- d. — Limestone stela of Antefoker.
- e. — Side-view of the base of the stela.
- f. — The two flanking stones of the stela.

showing the arm of the god Min (pl. 15 a) and two other fragments, one with a falcon and the other a vulture (pl. 15 b and c).

It can be a matter of interest to mention other findings discovered deeply around the pedestal of the shrine-stela of Ankhaw. Therefore they were in most probability contemporary with the erection of the stela. These findings are : a dum-palm nut, a reed, presumably used in the decoration of the stela or in writing the hieroglyphs, pieces of linen, pieces of fibre ropes and a piece of mat. We delivered them to the laboratory of the Antiquities Department in Cairo for chemical analysis, and we are waiting for the result.

#### F. MORE TRACING OF THE ROAD INLAND; DISCOVERY OF THE STELA OF ANTEFOKER

At about 200 metres to the west of the shrine-stela of Ankhaw (450 metres from the port), on the edge of the valley of Wâdi Gawâsis, we found another stela, made of limestone. Although its top had completely fallen down, due to erosion, it seems that it was originally a round topped stela, measuring approximately 50 × 45 cm. It is flanked by two irregular blocks of stone (pl. 15 d-f). The stela is inscribed with 10 lines of hieroglyphs in sunk relief (pl. 16 a). Its signs are larger than those of the stela of Ankhaw, but there is no trace of colour.

When the stela was uncovered and exposed to the open air, its inscription began to crumble and it was dangerous to take a rubbing for the text. We hurried to transcribe the text in our note-book<sup>14</sup>. This proved to be of great value, for a few words in the upper lines became illegible the next day.

The stela belonged to a man called *'Intf-ikr*; among his titles are «Vizier» and «Governor of the Town». As the cartouche (prenomen) of king Sesostris I occurs on the stela, he is the same Antefoker owner of the famous 12th dynasty tomb at El Qurna in Western Thebes<sup>15</sup>, for Antefoker of Thebes held the same titles during the reign of king Sesostris I and was buried at Lisht near his pyramid.

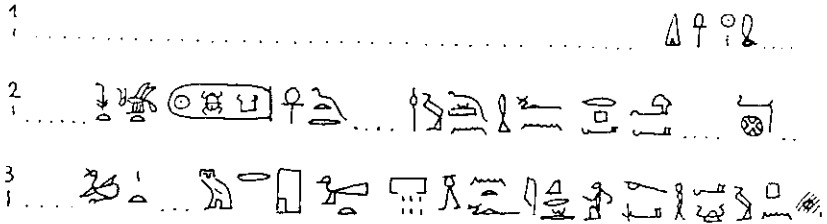
The titles of Antefoker occupied parts of the second and third lines which became

<sup>14</sup> I have pleasure in acknowledging here the efforts of Mr. Munir Basta, Director of the Archaeological Documentation of the Department of Egyptian Antiquities, who worked with the expedition as an archaeological delegate of the Department and head of the staff of technicians (a draftsman, a surveyor) which the Antiquities Department shared with in the staff of the expedition. Mr. Munir Basta cooperation had great value for transcribing the text instantly before its crumbling and to come into contact quickly with the Archaeological Inspectorate at Qena, for sending us an archaeological chemist, who arrived within two days despite the difficulty of communication with our isolated site, and immediately strengthened the stela by impregnating it with chemical substances. Therefore, the crumbling was stopped and the text was saved except a few signs at the upper lines.

<sup>15</sup> Davies-Gardiner, *The Tomb of Antefoker*....

<sup>16</sup> The crumbling signs have great value, for they record, in addition to the titles of Antefoker, the decree which the king issued to his vizier.

illegible<sup>16</sup> and could not be traced in the drawing copy (published in pl. 16 b), so I here transcribe them from my notebook :



The following text is a complete translation of the whole text of the stela<sup>17</sup> :

(1) ... given life like Re' ... (2) ... King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Kheperkare', may he live forever ... His Majesty ordered to the hereditary prince, mayor ... governor of the town ... (3) ... vizier ... overseer of the six law courts, 'Intf-ikr, (to) build these ships of (?) (4) the dockyards<sup>18</sup> of Koptos, to travel (or «to send (them)») to «the Mine of Punt», in order to reach (it) in peace (and) to return in peace, (5) to provide all their workmanship in order that (it) may be excellent and firm more than anything done in this land before. (6) He ('Intf-ikr) accomplished his task (litt. «acted») very magnificently, as it was ordered (to him) in the Majesty of the palace. Lo, the herald (7) Ameni, son of Menthotpe was on the shore of the Great Green building these ships (8) together with the magistrates of the Thinite nome of the south. There were (litt. «being») with him the persons (litt. «living ones») who were on the Great Green shore (9) ... the soldiers together with the heralds.

(10) Followers of the king (litt. «the lord») <sup>19</sup> L.P.H. ....	50 men
Overseer of the house of the magistrates .....	1 man
Sailors of the Lord L.P.H. <sup>20</sup> .....	500 men
Scribes of the great council of magistrates .....	5 men
Soldiers <sup>21</sup> .....	3200 men»

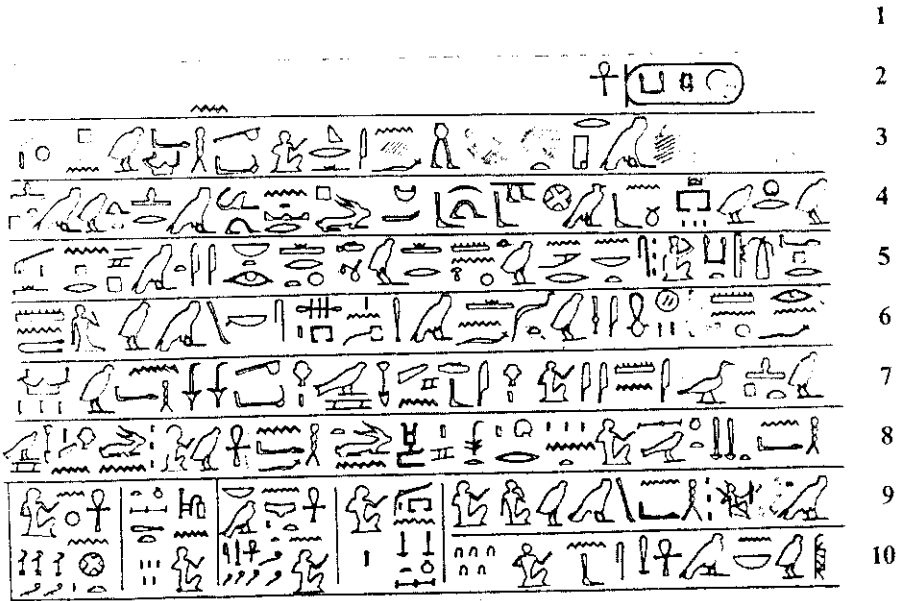
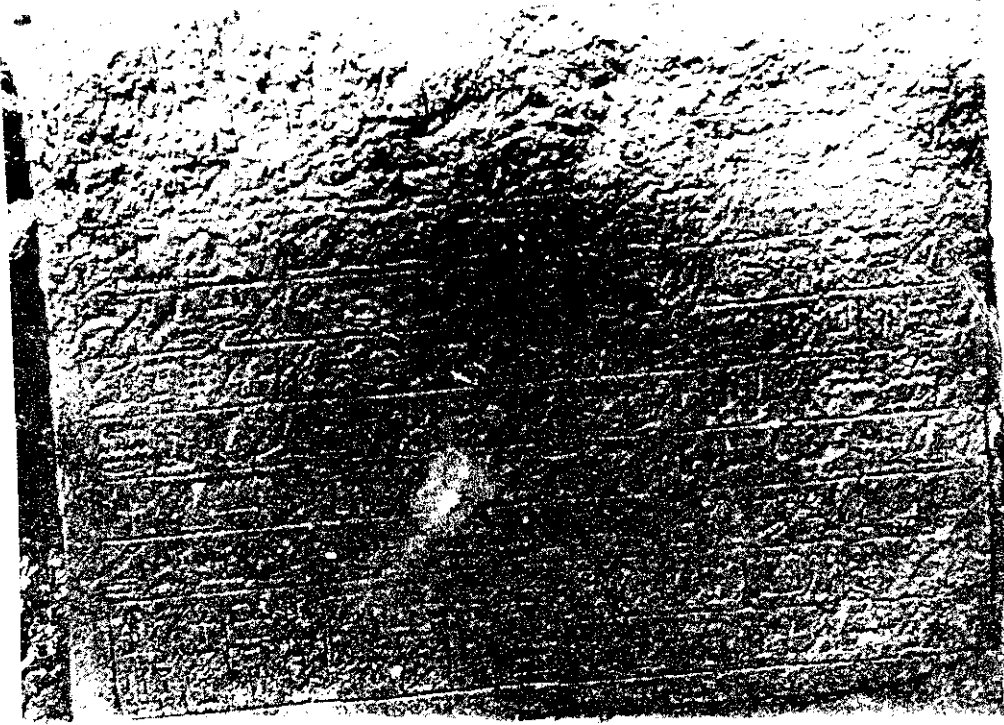
<sup>17</sup> In the present preliminary report, I consider this translation a preliminary one, and as I have stated above (n. 11). I welcome every remarks and suggestions about this translation; they will be published in the final report.

<sup>18</sup> The reading of this word (*wjrw(t)*) and its meaning («dockyards») were kindly suggested to me by Dr. William Kelly Simpson during the First International Congress in Cairo. He also drew my attention to a similar ship-building operation undertaken by the same Antefoker in the dockyards of Thinis (cf. his book: *Papyrus Reisner II*, p. 27 and pl. 4A). Consequently, the sentence «(to) build these ships of (?) the dockyards of Koptos» can mean that the ships were built in the dockyards of Koptos on the Nile, then dismantled, and carried in sections through the desert road to the Red Sea shore where they were reassembled. After the return voyage from the land of Bia-Punt and the landing at the port of Mersa Gawäsis, the ships were dismantled again, and carried back in sections through the desert road to the Nile Valley. The evidence of such a deduction is that the stone anchors of the ships were used as jambs, rear block and pedestal of the shrine-stela of Ankhow. This may be due to the fact that these huge stone anchors were fit for sea-going ships and had-little use (or no use at all) for the lighter Nile vessels. Moreover, their heavy weight would have been an overload through the difficult long desert-road journey. Therefore, they were left behind near the shore of Mersa Gawäsis where three of them were modified by craftsmen into an inscribed shrine-stela, while the rest were used without essential modification as its pedestal.

<sup>19</sup> They may be the royal guards.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Berlev, *Recueil palestinien* 17, 6-20 (en russe): *nḥw n ft ḥk* «amatelot militaire».

<sup>21</sup> Berlev, *RdE* 23, 23-48.



b

Stela of Antefoker.

It is evident, from this translation, that Antefoker was ordered by king Sesostris I to build ships to be sent to the region of Bia-Punt. Apparently the same king and the same region are mentioned on both the shrine-stela of Ankhaw and the monuments discovered in the site of the proper port (pl. 12b and 13b).

Consequently, the ships which Antefoker was commanded to build were, in all probability, the ships which carried the expedition that Ankhaw sent or led to the region of Bia-Punt. Such an interdependence between the two stelae can be traced in the similarity between them in some respects<sup>21\*</sup>, as far as the mutilated and defaced text of the stela of Ankhaw enables us to infer this conclusion. The stela of Antefoker — as we have seen from the translation of its text — enumerates the various officials who were concerned with the building of the ship to be sent to the land of Bia-Punt. The text of Ankhaw did the same concerning the expedition to this land (p. 161).

The similarity between the two stelae can also be proved by the special writing of the word *Pwnt*. As I have stated above (p. 160, n. b), the word is written with letter *p* upon the rear part of the hare on both stelae of Ankhaw and Antefoker (pl. 13e and 16b), but not on the stela of *I-mrw* (pl. 13c), a fact which could denote that the two stelae were a reproduction of one master craftsman, who might be the official craftsman of the State or of the court of king Sesostris I, as the two stelae belonged to two of his great officials, his chamberlain and his vizier.

#### HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DISCOVERY

At the end of this review of the excavations and of their results, I here summarize the historical significance of these results in the following points:

##### 1. — *Definition of the site of the 12th dynasty port*

We can say now that the site of the 12th dynasty port (or at least of the early 12th dynasty) is decisively defined at Mersa Gawâsîs. This conclusion is due — as we have seen — to the existence of the discovered stelae in their original places, particularly that of Ankhaw, which has a pedestal and a base deeply built in the ground (the four anchors pl. 14c, d). They were fixed to the ground with irregular blocks of stone which encircled them firmly and it was not an easy job to remove them out.

This fact, in addition to the absence of any monument at Mersa Gâsûs, refutes the prevailing assumption among Egyptologists that Mersa Gâsûs is the site of the 12th dynasty port.

##### 2. — *The link between the stela of Khentekhtay-wer and the port*

The close resemblance between the stela of Khentekhtay-wer, which was found in the Roman station, and the discovered stelae makes it most probable that the stela of

<sup>21\*</sup> The stela of Antefoker similarly rests on a limestone anchor which resembles the anchors of Ankhaw's shrine in many respects.

Khentekhtay-wer was originally set up at Mersa Gawâsis, whence it was transferred to the Roman station at a later date, probably during Roman times when the inclination for transferring Egyptian monuments to Roman buildings nearly became a kind of tradition.

The resemblance between the stela of Khentekhtay-wer and the discovered stelae can be discerned in the following aspects :

a) The attitude of adoration is apparent on some of the small memorial stelae found in the site of the port (pl. 12 d and 13 a). This suggests that the owners of these stelae set them up to thank the gods for their safe return, as Khentekhtay-wer represented himself on his stela (pl. 8 b) and recorded on it the prayers formula for thanking the gods: *dwj ntr, rdit iw ...*

b) The stela of Ankhow begins with an invocation addressed to the god Haroeris-Re' for the sake of the king as in the case of the stela of Khentekhtay-wer.

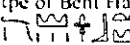
c) As stated above, some of the fragments found in the port and around the stela of Ankhow give clear evidence that the upper representations and side ornamentations of these stelae (pl. 15 a-c), resemble those of the stela of Khentekhtay-wer.

### 3. — *The date of the port*

If we bear in mind that the stela of Khentekhtay-wer goes back to the time of king Ammenemes II, the direct successor of Sesostris I, we can conclude that the port was in use under Sesostris I and continued to be used during the reign of Ammenemes II (i.e. during a period of time that lasts about 75 years : 1971-1895 B.C.).

The stela of Khnemhotpe, which is dated from the first year of the reign of king Sesostris II, may also be taken as indication of an activity in the port during the reign of this king. It can be considered as a record of activity of some kind in the Eastern Desert, particularly when we know that its relief represents the god Soped, god of the East (Sinai and the Eastern Desert) as the chief deity. There is another record from the reign of Sesostris II which refers to activity in the desert and relationship with foreigners. It is the representation, in the tomb of Khnemhotpe II at Beni Hassan, in which 37 of the *imw* are figured bringing eye-paint to this prince<sup>22</sup>. The scene dates from the 6th year of the reign of king Sesostris II.

All these evidences refer to a kind of activity in the Eastern Desert, in the time

<sup>22</sup> This Khnemhotpe of Beni Hassan may be the same Khnemhotpe of Wâdi Gâsûs stela, as the name of the scribe who introduced the 37 *imw* to him at Beni Hassan is Neferhotpe (Newberry, *Beni Hassan*, I, pl. 30). The same name (Neferhotpe) occurs on the stela of Wâdi Gâsûs (pl. 8 a, vertical small line on the extreme left). Moreover, Khnemhotpe of Beni Hassan was concerned with the Eastern Desert, for he held the title of «Administrator of the Eastern Desert»:  (cf. Newberry, *o.c.*, p. 41 and pl. 24).




<sup>22\*</sup> During the second season of excavations in the same site (Jan. 1977), we found hieratic sherds which may indicate such activity. They are being studied by Prof. G. Posener and will be published by him.


## DISCOVERY OF THE SITE OF THE 12TH DYNASTY PORT

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of Sesostris II, they may also be taken as indications of a naval activity<sup>22\*</sup> in the port during his reign although the text of the stela of Khnemhotpe does not refer directly to such activity (pl. 8 a).

4. — *The name of the port*

As to the name of the port which is written, on the stela of Khentekhtay-wer.  S3ww, it was not found till now in this form in the legible texts of the stelae. But in fact, the name S3ww is not mentioned elsewhere on Egyptian monuments except in a single case, it is in the list of the conquered peoples of Thutmosis III on the walls of Karnak<sup>23</sup>, where the name is written <sup>24</sup> or <sup>25</sup> which is transliterated Sw.

On the stela of Ankhaw (as mentioned above p. 160, n. a), the word  (?)<sup>26</sup> Sww, which is nearly similar in writing and transliteration (pronunciation) to the above-mentioned word Sw occurred within the phrase: ... dpwt ... dmi n Sww sp3t Gbtiw which can be translated: «... the vessels ... the quay of Sww of the Koptite nome».

If this deduction is right, then we can say that the word Sww is another form of the name of the port of S3ww as mentioned on the stela of Khentekhtay-wer. Such a form was used again (or a similar form) in the New Kingdom in the list of Thutmosis III.

But, on the other hand, I must admit that there is a difficulty which rises against my suggestion: the difficulty of chronology. One could ask why did the writing of the name change from Sww (stela of Ankhaw) to S3ww (stela of Khentekhtay-wer) in a short period (about 75 years) during the two successive reigns of Sesostris I and Ammenemes II, and then returned to the older form, or to a form similar to it, after about five centuries in the time of Thutmosis III.






Unless we suppose that the ancient Egyptians used two different forms for the name of the port (which in its turn seems to be unlikely), we shall not find a convincing answer to this question. Thus, I consider my deduction as only a suggestion towards searching for the name of the port of Mersa Gawâsis. I hope that after a high standard restoration of the stela of Ankhaw, we should find the name S3ww which occurred on the stela of Khentekhtay-wer.

But on the other hand, if it does not happen because of the weathered condition of the stela of Ankhaw, or for any other reason, I think that all the above-mentioned

<sup>23</sup> There is a doubtful occurrence of the word in the list of Ramesses III at Medinet Habu (Schiaparelli, *Geografia dell'Africa orientale secondo le indicazioni dei Monumenti Egiziani*, p. 119).

<sup>24</sup> *L.c.*

<sup>25</sup> *GDG V*, p. 16.


<sup>26</sup> The form  can be pronounced *s* as in  (Hb. III, 404) and the form  is not the familiar word for «district», because in the Middle Kingdom the word «district» is written  (with a single ): Hb. I, 243, 289.

contexts — which point to the port of Mersa Gawâsis as the original place of the stela of Khentekhtay-wer — favour our view that the name *S-w-w* was the name of the port of Mersa Gawâsis.

5. — *The problem of Bia-Punt*

As for the problem of the location of Punt, which is the principal aim of our excavations, either the present or the future ones, we have not yet completely solved it. We may find such a solution if the experts succeed in clearing the whole text of the stela of Ankhow, or if we find other documents which throw light on this problem during our next excavations.

But with the present available material, we can say that the discovery has illuminated our way towards the solution of one of the problems related to the location of Punt, i.e. the location of the region of Bia-Punt.

The frequent occurrence of the term Bia-Punt on the discovered monuments is exceptional on Egyptian monuments in general. As far as I know, the term occurred only one time throughout Pharaonic history, that was in the autobiographical inscription of Harkhuf, when the youthful king Pepi II sent a message to Harkhuf asking him to give the utmost care for watching the dancing pygmy which he had brought to the king. He said to Harkhuf that he desired to see the pygmy  <sup>27</sup> «more than (all) the supplies of the mine of Punt». -

Previous studies of the term of Bia-Punt suggested that it denotes *two* regions. Professor Breasted considered them «Sinai and Punt» <sup>28</sup>; Professor Gardiner considered it denoting two regions also, but he gave the word *Biḥ*, which he transliterated *Biḥw*, a more comprehensive designation. He translated it «the Mineral-land» which included — in his opinion — the mine regions in Sinai, Egypt and Sudan <sup>29</sup>. In a relatively recent work, Prof. Gardiner was still in the same opinion, he translated the above mentioned text: «The tribute of the Mine-land and of Pwēne» <sup>30</sup>.

Golenischeff, on the other hand, held a different opinion; he considered the term Bia-Punt as a designation of *one* region only and he translated it «la mine de Pount» <sup>31</sup>.

The discovered stelae at Wâdî Gawâsis prove that Golenischeff was right. The word is written on the stelae with the same signs as in the inscription of Harkhuf. In all these examples, the word is used in a context that gives it the significance of *one* region situated in the south on the Red Sea coast.

<sup>27</sup> *Urk.* I, 130.

<sup>28</sup> *BAR*, §353.

<sup>29</sup> Gardiner, *JEA* 4, 36, n. 4. Cf. *GDG* II, p. 12.

<sup>30</sup> *Egypt of the Pharaohs*, p. 59. Cf. Černý, *Inscr. of Sinai*, II, 1-2.

<sup>31</sup> Golenischeff, *Le conte du Naufragé*, p. 61.



Moreover, there is a decisive evidence which proves that the word denotes *one* geographical region. I have already mentioned (p. 150) that the stela of 'I-mrw which was found in the port, is inscribed with the term *Bi3-n-Pwnt* (pl. 13c). This writing is unique because it occurs with the genitival adjective *n*. Thus the term must denote only one region and consequently is to be translated «the mine of Punt».

The discovered monuments, together with the inscription of Harkhuf, help us to define the location of that land more precisely than before. From the inscription of Harkhuf it may be inferred that the region can be reached, or traded with, by land through Nile regions across the Sudan, where Harkhuf travelled and traded. But the discovered stelae prove that it was a coastal region situated somewhere on the Red Sea shore. This may ~~be~~ denote that it was not too far to the south, since the Egyptians were able to obtain its commercial articles by land.

These contexts may guide us towards the conclusion that the land of «the Mine of Punt» may be the nearest mineral region to the borders of Egypt, i.e. in the Abtai desert which extends from the borders of Egypt towards the south nearly to Port-Sudân and Sawâkin in the Sudân.

In fact, the Red Sea hills along the Abtai desert, particularly at its extreme end between Port-Sudân and Sawâkin, were famous throughout history, for the rich amount of gold which they yielded, a fact which is attested by numerous ancient and medieval gold workings scattered all over the area which extends from the Red Sea coast inland.

The proximity of the land of Bia-Punt to the borders of Egypt, in consequence, locates Punt itself — which may be an equivalent of Bia-Punt during the Middle Kingdom, or may include it — not very far from Egypt, during the Middle Kingdom at least. This conclusion refutes the allegation of some scholars who define the location of Punt and its related designations during the Middle Kingdom, far away towards the south, to the extent that some of them locate the island of the Shipwrecked Sailor in the Indian Ocean!

#### 6. — *The problem of Egyptian anchors*

Among the important results of the discovery, is the finding of the first examples of Egyptian anchors on the Egyptian shore itself. Previously no anchor from Ancient Egypt had ever been found<sup>32</sup>. Stone anchors were only represented in some scenes above ships<sup>32</sup>, but scholars generally interpreted them as offering bread<sup>34</sup>! Mr. Björn

<sup>32</sup> B. Landström, *Ships of the Pharaohs* (1970), p. 69.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 64 and fig. 189, 192.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 65.

Landström interpreted them rightly<sup>35</sup>. The discovery confirms his interpretation. Therefore, one of the ancient Egyptian maritime problems is solved<sup>36</sup>.

At the end of this report, I think that there is an insisting question about the route which the Egyptians followed in their way between the Nile Valley and the port of Mersa Gawâsis. Why did the ancient Egyptians, during the 12th dynasty, prefer the valley of Wâdi Gawâsis to the valley of Wâdi Hammamât in their journeys to the Red Sea shore, despite the proximity of the latter to Koptos, the starting point (in most probability) for such journeys?

In fact, there are three answers to this question; one of them depends upon the convenience of the harbour — which lies at the end of each valley — as a suitable shelter against navigation dangers which characterise the Red Sea. The other takes into account the possible part of the feudal princes of Upper Egyptian nomes in the Red Sea activities. The third answer tries to connect the Punt expeditions route towards the Red Sea shore with the proximity of the gold mines in the Eastern Desert.

The preference of one of these answers or solutions to the others, undoubtedly, depends upon tracing the route between the port of Mersa Gawâsis and the Nile Valley.

This will be one of the aims of my future excavations.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> A comparative study of these anchors together with others of the same shape (found outside Egypt) will be issued by Miss Honor Frost, the specialist in this field.

## THE RECENTLY DISCOVERED PORT ON THE RED SEA SHORE<sup>(\*)</sup>

5

By ABDEL MONEM A. H. SAYED

IN an article published in this periodical, Mrs. Nibbi<sup>1</sup> assumed that the ancient Egyptians were far from being seafarers and that the lack of 'Egyptian anchors' confirms her view. In another article in a subsequent volume,<sup>2</sup> she insisted on the maritime inefficiency of the ancient Egyptians, assuming that it was unlikely that they used any port along the Red Sea coast. In the same article she excluded the possibility that the ancient Egyptians carried their boats through the mountainous terrain between the Nile and the Red Sea.<sup>3</sup>

The discovery of the site of the Twelfth-Dynasty port at Wâdi Gawâsis on the Red Sea shore and the monuments found there have produced significant new evidence. In addition, they cast light on some ancient Egyptian maritime problems. The discovery was achieved by an archaeological expedition started by the History Department, Faculty of Arts, University of Alexandria, under the direction of the writer. The work began on March 1976 and lasted for two seasons of excavations (March 1976, Jan.-Feb. 1977).<sup>4</sup>

The expedition began the work within the valley of Wâdi Gâsûs in a Roman station (Hydreuma) which lies at about 7 km. from the Red Sea shore, following previous discoveries by J. Burton and Sir Gardner Wilkinson in its temple of two Twelfth Dynasty stelae. We discovered in the Roman station a number of various monuments of Graeco-Roman type, but no Pharaonic monument or inscription was found, although we excavated the station to its very foundations. The stela of Khentekhtaywer (at least) was transferred to the Roman station in Graeco-Roman times from a place on the Red Sea shore (the port of Sawu). Therefore I shifted the work to the sea shore.

On the sea shore we worked at two sites:

1. At the mouth of the valley of Wâdi Gâsûs there is a small dhow harbour called Mersa Gâsûs. It lies at about 20 km. south of the modern port of Safâgâ. We did not find any monument there.

<sup>1</sup> 'Egyptian anchors', *JEA* 61 (1975), 41 ff.

<sup>2</sup> 'Remarks on the two Stelae from the Wâdi Gâsûs', *JEA* 62 (1976), 47 ff.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 45. She states that we have no inscription in Wâdi Gâsûs before the Ptolemaic period (p. 49). On the contrary, we do have *two* inscriptions before the Ptolemaic period, namely from the time of Psammetichus I of the 26th Dynasty. The two inscriptions are discussed by Vikentiev, in *Ann. Serv.* 52 (1952), 151 ff. and 54 (1956), 180 ff.

<sup>4</sup> The full report on the excavations of the first season (1976) is forthcoming in the *Revue d'Égyptologie* 29. A summary had been published in the 'Abstracts Book' of the 'First International Congress of Egyptology, Cairo, Oct. 1976' (pp. 105-7).

(\*) Published in "The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology, London, Vol. 64 (1978) pp. 69-71, Pl. XI.

2. At the mouth of another valley called Wâdi Gawâsis there is another dhow harbour called Mersa Gawâsis.<sup>5</sup> It lies at about 2 km. south of Mersa Gâsûs. It is the suggested site of the Ptolemaic port of 'Philoteras'. Here we discovered the site of the Twelfth-Dynasty port.

In the site of the port proper, i.e. at Mersa Gawâsis, we discovered some small stelae and parts of stelae, in addition to two small inscriptions. All of them are made of limestone and are badly weathered. But one of the stelae still retains a hieroglyphic inscription which has great importance because it mentions the name Bia-Punt in a new form, that is with the genitival adjective 'n' (Bia-n-Punt). One of the two inscriptions which we discovered has also special importance, because it bears the cartouches of King Sesostris I; therefore it gives us the clue to define the time of the port. At about 250 m. to the west of the port proper on the northern edge of the valley of Wâdi Gawâsis, we found a small shrine facing the south. Its façade is inscribed in hieroglyphs with the name and titles of a man called 'Ankhow who held the office of 'Chamberlain' of King Sesostris I. Therefore it is contemporary with the monuments of the port proper.

The shrine of 'Ankhow has a pedestal consisting of four limestone anchors arranged in two rows.<sup>6</sup> The shrine itself was similarly made of three anchors after cutting off their upper holes; see Pl. XI, 1. At about 200 m. west of the shrine of 'Ankhow we found a limestone stela measuring about 45 cm. (h.), 50 (br.), 15 cm. (th.). Its upper part is badly weathered and the inscriptions of the first line had fallen down. It is inscribed with a hieroglyphic text recording an order issued by King Sesostris I to his vizier Antefoķer to build ships to be sent to the region of Bia-Punt. Therefore all the monuments found in the site of the port proper and in its vicinity (at the entrance of Wâdi Gawâsis), are contemporaneous. The stela of Antefoķer stood on a limestone anchor which formed its base. A small channel was engraved on the face of the anchor to hold the stela.

During the second season (Jan.-Feb. 1977) we completed the excavations on the sites of the first season, where we found the two lower anchors under the shrine of 'Ankhow, and the anchor of Antefoķer. In the meantime we worked on the slope at the northern edge of Wâdi Gawâsis, near the stela of Antefoķer. Here we found various remains, the most important of which are the following:

- a. Potsherds inscribed with hieratic in black.
- b. Potsherds incised with hieroglyphic and hieratic signs and other signs.
- c. Two unfinished limestone anchors. They are smaller in size than those of Antefoķer and 'Ankhow (approx. height 71 cm.).

<sup>5</sup> *Mersa* is an Arabic word for 'small harbour'. *Wâdi* means in Arabic 'valley'. *Gâsûs* is the Arabic word for 'spy'. But here it designates a kind of boat which was used in Islamic times to detect the movements of the enemy's ships. The *Gâsûs*-boat usually sailed at night only and without light. *Gawâsis* is the plural of the word *gâsûs*.

<sup>6</sup> My thanks are due to Mrs. Nibbi for drawing my attention during the meeting of the First I.C.E. (Cairo Oct. 1976) to the possibility that the pedestal of 'Ankhow's shrine is composed of two anchors. When I returned to the site in the second season (Jan. 1977), to carry on the excavations, I found that the pedestal is composed of four anchors.

RECENTLY DISCOVERED PORT ON THE RED SEA SHORE 71

- d. A small limestone anchor, perhaps for a rescue boat.
- e. Many regular pieces of wood with mortises.
- f. A small copper or bronze chisel and some broken chisel heads.

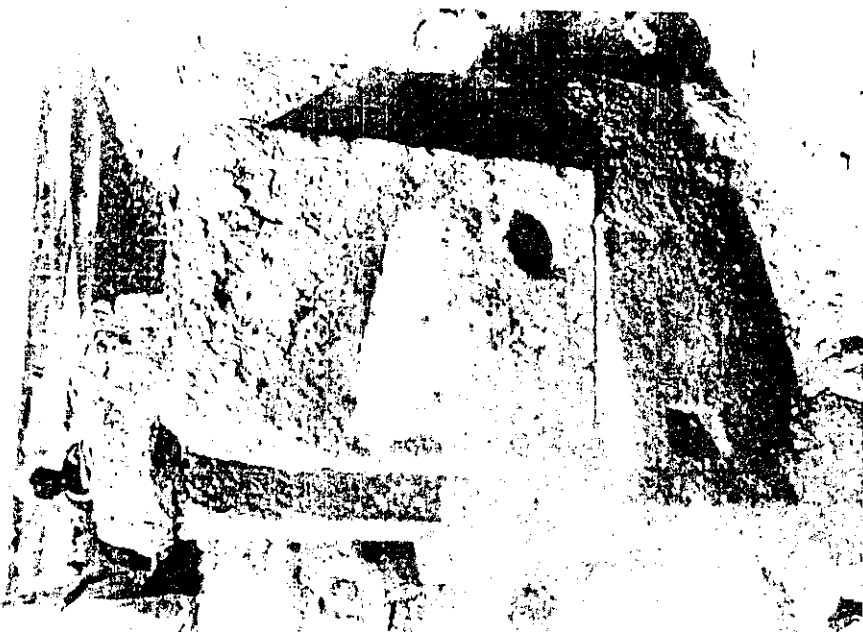
The site in which most of these monuments were found is sheltered by a huge rock and traces of ashes and food remains are abundant under the rock. These indications suggest that it was a dwelling-place of a group of people, most likely the craftsmen and labourers who made the anchors of the ships and engraved the shrine of 'Ankhow (and may be the stela of Antefoker also) with hieroglyphic signs.

The finding of the monuments in their original places, as attested by the pedestal of 'Ankhow's shrine which was deeply embedded in the ground, decisively identified the site of the Twelfth-Dynasty port. It is in all probability the port named Sawu on the stela of Khentekhtay-wer although we did not find this name on the discovered monuments written with the same signs. In fact, we found a somewhat similar name. It reads *Sww* and occurred on the eastern jamb of the shrine of 'Ankhow (pl. XI, 2, line 5). It is mentioned in a context which denotes a port, for the phrase reads: . . . *dpt(w)* . . . *(d?)mi n SWW* . . . *sp:t Gbtyw*. Its translation may be: '. . . boats . . . (of) the quay of *Sww* . . . the Coptite nome.'

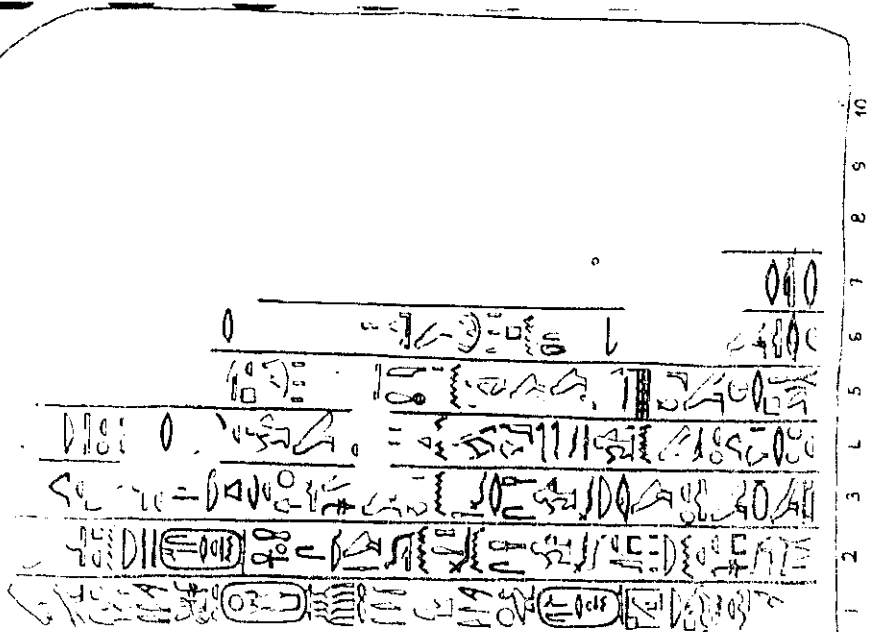
While the monuments, found in their original places on the site of the port, are sufficient evidence of Egyptian naval activity in the Red Sea (contrary to Mrs. Nibbi's assumption), some of the discovered texts confirm this fact; for example, a text on the eastern jamb of the shrine of 'Ankhow (pl. XI, 2) qualifies him as follows: 'He is excellent in the heart of his majesty more than any of his friends who operated in the sea.' We also find among the titles of the officials who shared in the expedition to Bia-Punt this unique title 'Administrator of the ocean' (*ꜥd-mr nww*). Furthermore, the ships which were sent to Bia-Punt are called on the stela of Antefoker 'Ships of the Dockyards of Koptos' (*hꜥw nꜥw whrw(t) n Gbtyw*). This nomenclature means that they were of pure Egyptian workmanship.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> It also refutes the view that the name *kpnt*, given to the ships which were used in Egyptian voyages in the Red sea to Punt (inscriptions of Pepi-Nakht, Henu, and Hatshepsut), denotes Byblite workmanship.

On the other hand, this nomenclature, in combination with the existence of the anchors in the vicinity of the port, suggests that the ships were built at Koptos and were then dismantled and carried in sections by land to the Red Sea shore where they were reassembled. After the return voyage the same process occurred, i.e. the ships were dismantled again and carried with their cargo to the Nile valley. The heavy stone anchors (250 kg. each) would have meant a difficult trip on the rough desert road, and this explains the making of the anchors on the site of the port, as proved by the finding of the unfinished ones; they were left behind on the site of the port and set up with the other monuments as a memorial of the maritime expedition to the land of Bia-Punt.



1. The lower holes of the former anchors used for building the shrine of Ankhaw



2. The inscription of the eastern jamb of the shrine of Ankhaw. The blank lines and spaces indicate badly weathered or completely obliterated hieroglyphs

THE RECENTLY DISCOVERED PORT ON THE RED SEA SHORE

Abdel Monem A.H Sayed

Observations on recent discoveries at Wādī Gawāsis (X)

6

I

The stone anchors

In an article published in this periodical<sup>2</sup> and in another one published elsewhere,<sup>3</sup> I dealt briefly with the anchors which I had discovered at Wādī Gawāsis on the Red Sea shore during two seasons of excavations (March 1976, Jan.-Feb. 1977). These brief accounts aroused the interest of scholars, particularly those concerned with marine archaeology.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, I propose to deal here with the whole matter in a more comprehensive study describing all the anchors which I had found.

It is noteworthy that all the discovered anchors are made of the same material (limestone) and are nearly identical in their general features. They are triangular in shape and have an upper large hole. A channel (groove) runs from the upper hole to the apex on both sides of the anchor. Apparently the function of the upper hole and channel was to make it possible to hang the anchor when dipped in water. The difference between these anchors is confined to the existence, shape, and position of the lower small hole. The anchors can be classified according to their find-spots as follows:

(a) On the site of the port proper, i.e. at Mersa Gawāsis, we found a broken anchor (see pl. XXI, 1), nearly similar in shape to, but smaller in dimensions than, the other anchors. It measures 60 cm in length, whilst its breadth at the upper hole is about 30 cm. It has an upper round hole, and a lower square one.

(b) Under the shrine of Ankhaw (which lies at about 250 m to the west of the port proper), anchors were found constituting the pedestal of the shrine. Although the shrine itself is composed of three other anchors, I shall deal only with the anchors of the pedestal because they were left intact (unlike the anchors of the shrine which were cut off and converted into stelae).<sup>6</sup>

The anchors of the pedestal of Ankhaw's shrine are four in number and are arranged in two rows (fig. 1). They are nearly identical in dimensions (length, 82-4; breadth, 52-4; thickness, 24-6 cm

<sup>1</sup> Cf. W. Wright, *A Grammar of the Arabic Language*, I (1955), §§ 183, 306.

<sup>2</sup> Abdel Monem A. H. Sayed, 'The recently discovered port on the Red Sea shore', *JEA* 64 (1978), 69-71

<sup>3</sup> Id. 'Discovery of the site of the 12th Dynasty port at Wādī Gawāsis on the Red Sea shore', *RdE* 29 (1977) 140-78. The reader is advised to check these articles with the present one.

<sup>4</sup> An excellent article on these anchors in relation to comparable material was published by Miss Honor Frost in *Mariner's Mirror* 65 (1979), 137-60. Miss Frost ascribed to me the assumption that the seven anchors of the shrine of Ankhaw were the complement of a single ship (p. 154). I did not assume that, nor do the hieroglyphic texts which I translated mention the word 'ship' in the singular form (cf. *RdE* 29, 170 and n. 18. *JEA* 64, 71 n. 7).

<sup>5</sup> *RdE* 29, map 3, p. 149.

<sup>6</sup> Op. cit. fig. 2, p. 157.

(\*) Published in "The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology, London, Vol. 66(1980) pp. 154-157 and pls XX1-XX11.

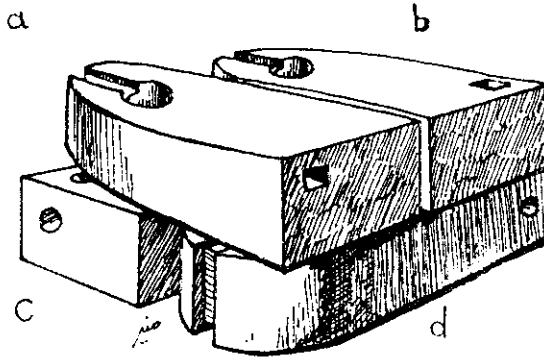


FIG. 1. Diagram of the anchors which formed the pedestal of the shrine of Ankhaw showing their original position (viewed from the west)

diameter of the upper hole, 13-14 cm). They only differ in the shape and position of the lower hole. The upper pair of anchors have square lower holes (fig. 1, a-b and pl. XXI, 2). One of them is pierced through one corner by an L-shaped cavity (pl. XXI, 2-XXII, 1); the other has a blind hole (fig. 1 a). The lower pair of anchors have round lower holes (fig. 1, c-d, and pl. XXII, 2). Both are pierced with an L-shaped cavity, but one of them is pierced through the base (fig. 1, c), while the other is pierced through the side (fig. 1, d). The use of these cavities is apparently to facilitate the fastening of a supplementary cord to help disengage the anchor from the bottom of the sea,<sup>1</sup> while the blind hole of the other anchor may be intended to hold a wooden fluke.

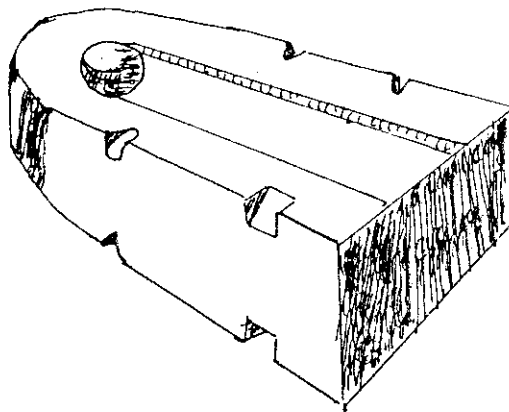


FIG. 2. The anchor which formed the pedestal of the stela of Antefoker showing the incisions and the channel (groove) cut to fit the stela

<sup>1</sup> A. Nibbi, 'Egyptian anchors', *JEA* 61 (1975), 39.



(c) The third place where we found anchors is under the stela of Antefoker (at about 200 m west of the shrine of Ankhaw), where an anchor was used as a pedestal of the stela. This anchor has no lower hole. Instead, eight small incisions were cut in two rows on the four edges of the anchor (fig. 2). Apparently, these incisions were intended to hold the supplementary rope. It is clear that the groove or channel cut across the anchor's upper face was a later modification to hold the stela firmly; for it fits exactly its base (50 × 15 cm). Another exceptional feature characterizes this anchor in that it lacks the apical groove which is dominant in all the other anchors.

(d) The last place where we found anchors was under the huge rock which is situated on the slope at the northern edge of Wādī Gawāsis, on a nearly direct cross-line with the stela of Antefoker. The shelter under this rock furnished us with the two unfinished anchors and the small one. The latter is partly broken and measures about 20 cm in width (pl. XXII, 3). As I suggested elsewhere, it may have been used for a rescue boat. The two unfinished anchors are smaller in size than the other specimens. Their measurements are as follows: height, 70-1 cm; breadth, 51 cm; thickness, 16 cm; diameter of the hole, 11 cm. Both of the anchors show coarse workmanship; for they were not dressed. There are no lower holes and the upper hole of one of them is still blind (pl. XXII, 4). The finding of these unfinished anchors is significant; for they are clear evidence that the anchors were made on the site of the port, unlike the ships which were built on the Nile bank.<sup>3</sup>

As I stated in the afore-mentioned articles, these specimens of anchors which were found for the first time on an Egyptian sea-shore, helped us to identify the triangular shapes represented on Egyptian shipping scenes. The most conspicuous of these shapes is that which occurs on the wall of the causeway of King Unas, where we can see an anchor with an upper hole exactly like the newly discovered anchors.<sup>4</sup>

## II

### The mortised blocks

Another find relating to marine archaeology has aroused the interest of specialists in this field. It consists of the 'regular pieces of wood with mortises' to which I referred in one of the afore-mentioned articles. Some have wondered whether these pieces could have been part of a ship. I here publish the pictures of the most substantial of these pieces in which the mortises are very clear. As we see, it is a cubic block measuring 38 cm in length, 14 cm in breadth, and 12 cm in thickness. It has three rectangular mortises measuring 6 cm long, 2.5 cm wide and 4 cm deep (see pl. XXII, 5 and fig. 3). Unfortunately, we have not yet received the result of the analysis of the wood from the laboratory of the Department of Egyptian Antiquities to define its age, but when we consider that these pieces were found in the same levels as the inscribed sherds which mention names of places and buildings connected with kings of the Twelfth Dynasty,<sup>6</sup> we can conclude that the wooden pieces go back to the same period, i.e. to the time of the port. I suggest that these pieces of wood were among the remains which were left over after the ship-assembling operation had taken place in the port. For some reason they were dispensed with and used as fuel by the workmen who took shelter under the huge rock and around it, some of the pieces even retaining traces of burning.

<sup>1</sup> *JEA* 64, 70-1.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.* 71.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* n. 7.

<sup>4</sup> B. Landström, *Ships of the Pharaohs* (London, 1970), 64, fig. 192.

<sup>5</sup> Frost, *op. cit.* 152.

<sup>6</sup> The preliminary reading of the hieratic inscriptions which occur on the sherds found under the huge rock and around it (i.e. together with the pieces of wood) suggests the occurrence of the name of the mortuary temple of Sesostris II and the name of an official who lived in the time of Sesostris III. I hope that the final reading of these inscriptions will be published soon by Professor G. Posener.

BRIEF COMMUNICATIONS

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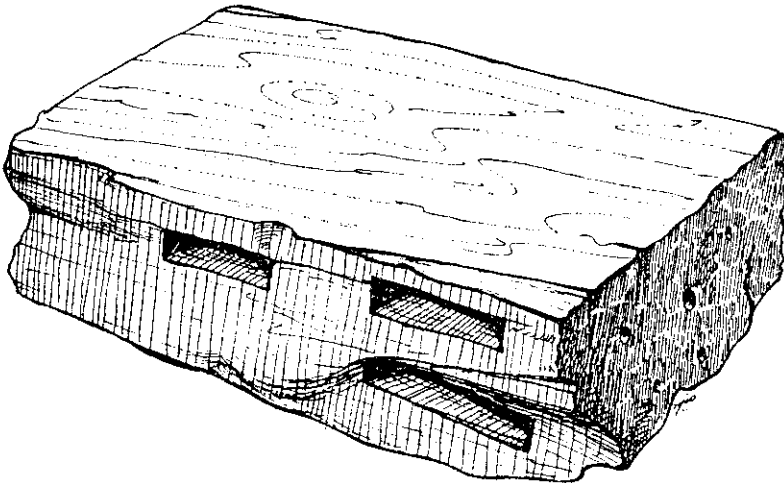


FIG. 3. Line-drawing of piece of wood showing mortises

ABDEL MONEM A. H. SAYED

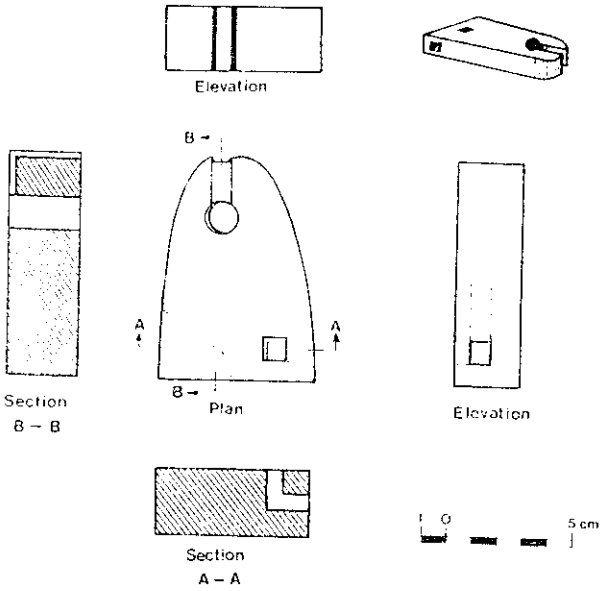


1. The broken anchor found on the port proper

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2. One of the pair of anchors which formed the upper row of the pedestal of Ankhaw's shrine



2. One of the pair of anchors which formed the lower row of the pedestal of Anklow's shrine

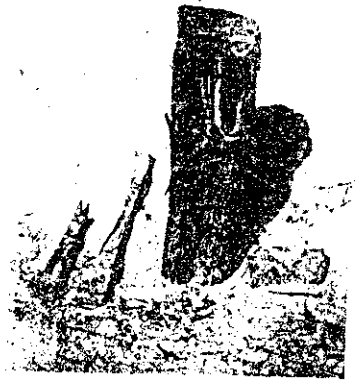
1. Diagram of the anchor of Pl. XXI, 2 showing the L-piercing



3. The small anchor



4. One of the two unfinished anchors



5. One of the pieces of wood with mortises

## New Light on the Recently Discovered Port on the Red Sea Shore<sup>(\*\*)</sup> 7

*An account and a preliminary study of the monuments discovered in the second season of the University of Alexandria excavations, on the site of the 12th dynasty port (Jan.-Feb. 1977)*

**I**N the first ICE in Cairo (October 1976), I delivered a lecture on the discovery of the site of the 12th dynasty port at Wâdi Gawâsis on the Red Sea shore. Afterwards, I published, in the *Revue d'Égyptologie*, a report on the excavations which led to the discoveries of the first season (March 1976) (1).

In the *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, I dealt in brief with the most important finds of the second season (Jan.-Feb. 1977) (2). A subsequent article was published in the same periodical (3).

From the preliminary study of the discovered monuments in the first season, I came to some conclusions which I summarize as follows :

1. The 12th dynasty port is decisively situated at Mersa Gawâsis.
2. The use of this port began in the reign of Sesostri I and continued during the time of his successor Ammenemes II and probably Sesostri II.
3. The land which the Egyptians called «Bia Punt» was a coastal region situated on the Sudanese coast.
4. The triangular figures represented on ships in Egyptian maritime scenes are stone anchors.
5. The ships which the Egyptians used in the Red Sea were built on the Nile bank, then dismantled and reassembled on the Red Sea shore.

(\*) A lecture delivered at the 2nd International Congress of Egyptology at Grenoble, Sept. 1979.

(1) Abdel Monem A. H. SAYED, *Discovery of the Site of the 12th Dynasty Port at Wâdi Gawâsis on the Red Sea Shore*, in *RdE* 29 (1977), p. 140-178.

(2) *Id.*, *The Recently Discovered Port on the Red Sea Shore*, in *JEA* 61 (1978), p. 69-71.

(3) *Id.*, *Observations on Recent Discoveries at Wâdi Gawâsis*, in *JEA* 66 (1980), p. 151-157.

(\*) Published in "Chronique d'Égypte", Bruxelles, Tome LVIII, No. 115-116, 1983, pp. 23-37.

Since the publication of these articles I received valuable suggestions from eminent Egyptologists as Prof. Elmar Edel and Dr. Alan Lloyd, to whom I owe many thanks.

In addition to these kind suggestions, a more extensive study of the discovered monuments which I conducted in comparison with monuments found elsewhere, and a close examination of the data supplied by the monuments discovered in the second season produced decisive evidence which confirmed my former conclusions and led to new ones.

The confirmed conclusions are :

1. The ship-dismantling operation which I suggested on the grounds of archaeological evidence (the use of the anchors for building the shrine of Anchow and the finding of the unfinished anchors) <sup>(1)</sup>, is strengthened by the philological context. This resulted from a reconsideration of the hieroglyphic text of the stela of Antefoker in comparison with other texts at Wâdi Hammamât.
2. The port was decisively used in the time of Sesostris II ; it was also the starting point of the journeys to Sinai, a fact which explains the occurrence of naval titles among the titles of some officials connected with expeditions to Sinai.

The new conclusions are :

1. The port was used sometime during the reign of Sesostris III.
2. The Red Sea canal did not exist during the first half of the 12th dynasty ; its existence during the reign of Sesostris III is still in doubt.
3. The fabulous deeds which classical writers attributed to the Pharaoh whom they called « Sesostris » or « Sesosis » embody some historical facts.

Before discussing these conclusions, it is necessary to describe the new finds of the second season, particularly those which I discussed briefly in the above mentioned articles.

Most of the discoveries in the second season were made on the northern edge of Wâdi Gawâsis :

a. A group of 25 potsherds inscribed with hieratic in black. They were parts of jars intended to contain provisions. One of these jars was found intact (height 56 cm., circumference 130 cm.). The hieratic

(1) *Id.*, *RdE* 29 (1977), p. 157, fig. 2 & pl. 14 ; *JEA* 64 (1978), p. 71, n. 7.

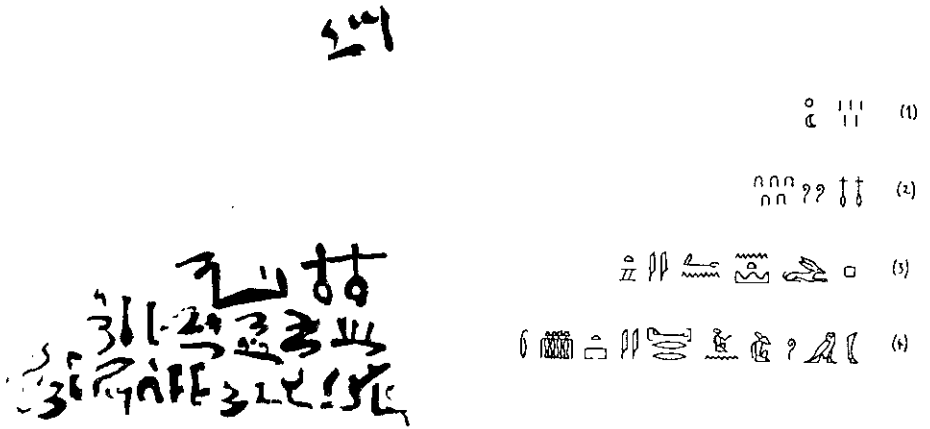


FIG. 1. — Hieratic inscription which mentions the name « Punt » and its hieroglyphic transcription

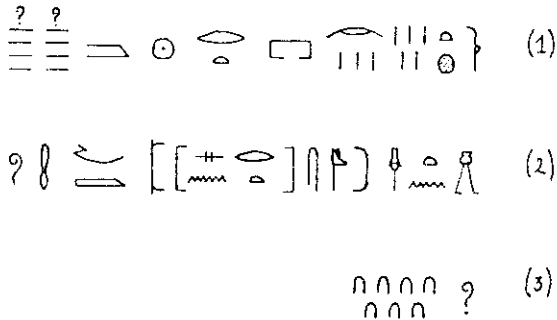
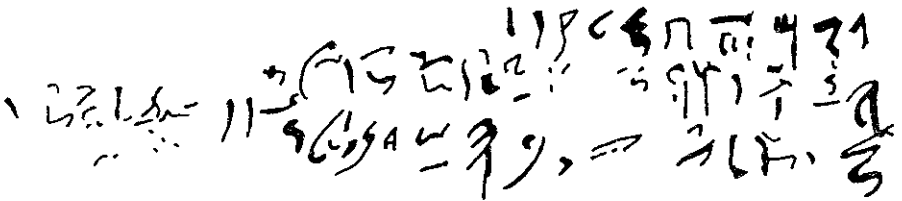


FIG. 2. — Hieratic text and its hieroglyphic transcription which mentions the name of the funerary temple of Sesostriis II and records the fifth year

writings vary from one line to four. I am grateful to Prof. G. Posener for providing me with the preliminary reading of some of these hieratic texts. According to him, they record some dates omitting the name of the Pharaoh. The type of the writing is that of the 12th dynasty subsequent to the reign of Sesostris I. They go back to nearly the second half of the 12th dynasty. They indicate that there were at least two expeditions to Punt beside the well-known expeditions of Sesostris I and Ammenemes II. The jars originally contained food among which was dried fish. It seems that the food was assigned to the people who worked in the preparation of the ships and possibly also the craftsmen who made the monuments and engraved the inscriptions, as broken chisel heads were found with these potsherds (1).

An example of these writings is the one which includes the name « Punt ». It is composed of four lines. The upper line records the capacity of the jar. The second one mentions the kind and amount of food which the jar contained. The third and fourth lines refer to both the destination of the jar (which is « Punt » in this case), and to the source of the food which is called « The establishment of the herald of the portal, Khenty » (Fig. 1).

More than one of these hieratic inscriptions mention the place name *Shm-S-n-wsrt-mꜣꜥ-hrw* which was the name of the funerary temple of Sesostris II at Illâhûn (Fig. 2). In another inscription the phrase *hꜣty-ꜥ Rꜥ-nwb-kꜣw* occurs, which, according to Prof. Posener, is the title and name of an official whom the Papyri of Kahun date to the time of Sesostris III (Fig. 3).

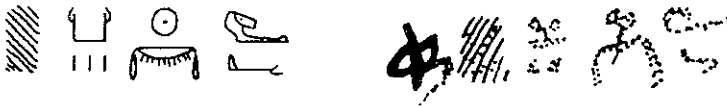


FIG. 3. — Hieratic inscription and its hieroglyphic transcription which mentions the name and title of an official supposed to have lived in the time of Sesostris III

b. A group of 15 potsherds incised with hieroglyphic and other undefined signs, the latter of which may refer to the owner of the pot or its maker. Among the hieroglyphs, the sign *dd* is clearly drawn on one sherd.

(1) *Ib.*, *JEA* 64 (1978), p. 71.



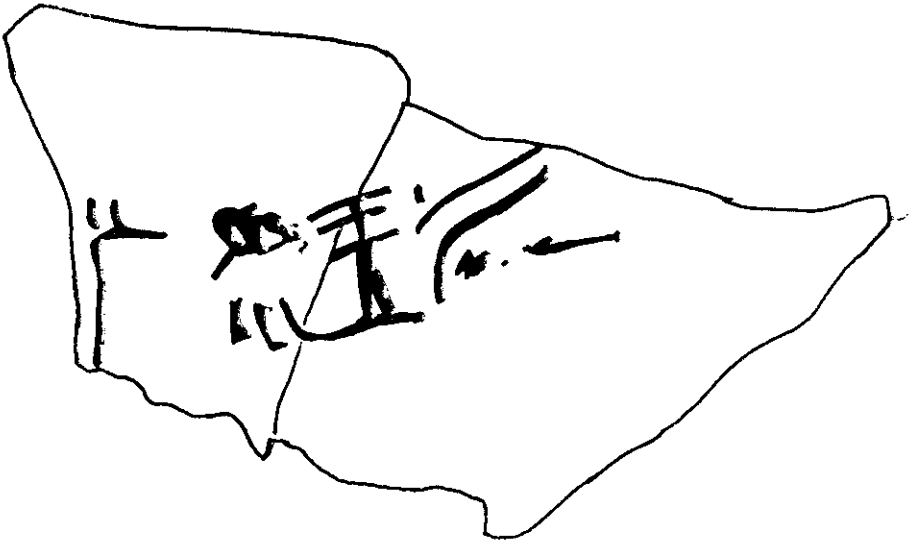


FIG. 4. -- The cursive hieroglyphs which occur on two potsherds

c. Two sherds inscribed with cursive hieroglyphs in black. The writing is the same and may read *wr dd byw wsr* (Fig. 4).

d. Two unfinished stone anchors; a small one in limestone, partly broken; regular pieces of wood with mortises (1).

e. A small copper (or bronze) chisel, 10 cm. in length, and some broken chisel heads.

f. A group of terra-cotta pipes measuring from 7.5 to 14 cm. in length, 5.5 to 6 cm. in diameter. They may have been used for blowing fire.

g. A bowl made of quartz, measuring 40 cm. in length, 29 cm. in breadth and 12 cm. in height. It resembles the mortars found in the ancient gold mines in the Eastern Desert.

These different types of artifacts, in addition to the traces of ashes and food remains which we found with them in various sites on the slope at the northern edge of Wâdi Gawâsis, suggest that these sites

(1) In the subsequent article published in the *JEA* 66 (1980), I dealt in detail with these finds. See p. 156 & pl. XXII, 4; p. 151 & pl. XXII, 3; p. 156, fig. 3 & pl. XXII, 5.

were the dwelling places of a group or groups of people who took shelter on the slope against the wind. One of these sites is protected by a huge rock under which we found most of the abovementioned documents, particularly the hieratic sherds. The unfinished anchors and the broken chisel heads suggest that the inhabitants of these sites were mostly the craftsmen and labourers who made the anchors of the ships and engraved the monuments with hieroglyphic inscriptions. The traces of burning which are still clear on the wooden pieces with mortises suggest that these people lighted fires by using the wooden remains which were left behind after the ship assembling operation had taken place in the port.

The strata of the slope are apparent from layers of pure sand, free of any artifact and separated from layers containing artifacts. This feature suggests that there were intervals in the use of the port. According to the monuments found on the site and elsewhere, the port was active :

1. In the 24th (?) year of Sesostriis I, i.e. c. 1947 B.C. (Rear block of the shrine of Anchow, line 1) (1).
2. In the 28th year of Ammenemes II, i.e. c. 1900 B.C. (Stela of Khent-khtay-wer) (2).

Between these two dates, there was an interval of nearly 50 years.

3. In the 1st year of Sesostriis II, i.e. c. 1897 B.C. (Stela of Khnum-hotpe) (3).
4. In the 5th year of Sesostriis II, i.e. c. 1892 B.C. (Hieratic sherd).
5. In the 6th year of Sesostriis II, i.e. c. 1891 B.C. (The scene of the 37 Asiatics in the tomb of Khnumhotpe II at Beni Hassan, as we shall prove later).

These successive close dates denote that the port was at its utmost activity during the reign of Sesostriis II.

6. Sometime during the reign of Sesostriis III, i.e. between 1878-43 B.C. (Hieratic potsherd).

Here is another interval of not less than 13 years.

Naturally, the dates given by the hieratic sherds are mere assumptions ; they will not be definite until the final reading of these sherds is published by Prof. G. Posener.

(1) *Io.*, *RdE* 29 (1977), p. 161.

(2) *Ibid.*, pl. 8, b.

(3) *Ibid.*, pl. 8, a.

## A. MORE EVIDENCE OF SHIP-DISMANTLING

A reconsideration of the hieroglyphic text of the stela of Antefoker<sup>(1)</sup> and its comparison with other texts from the schist quarries of Wâdi Hammamât confirm the double process of ship building.

The text of Antefoker's stela refers to two tasks, one undertaken by the vizier Antefoker and the other by the herald Ameni. In my translation of the text published in the *Revue d'Égyptologie* (2), I connected the verb *ir.n.f.*, at the beginning of line 6, with the work of Antefoker. However, a note which I received from Dr. Alan Lloyd suggests that this verb is connected with the subsequent sentence as the particle *sk* denotes. This means that the sentence which begins with this verb refers to the task of the herald Ameni and consequently the rest of the text of the stela (lines 6-10) describes the work undertaken only by him. When we notice that the word *wꜣꜥꜣ wr* is repeated several times within the text relating the work of the herald Ameni, while it does not occur in connection with the work of the vizier Antefoker, we are entitled to conclude that the herald Ameni alone was charged with the work which took place on the shore of *wꜣꜥꜣ wr* or « The Great Green ». That the Great Green means here « The Red Sea » is beyond discussion. Another fact related to the same herald Ameni confirms it. It attests that his sphere of activity was within the Eastern Desert. An inscription engraved on the schist rocks of Wâdi Hammamât tells that he was charged with a great quarrying project in the time of Sesostri I (3). Line 16 of this inscription refers to one of his titles as *shꜣꜥꜣ shꜣꜥꜣw ꜥꜣrw nꜣrw* « General Inspector of the Troops of Marine Recruits » (4). This shows that he combined quarrying and maritime activities in the Eastern Desert. It seems that it was the custom during the Middle Kingdom that officials concerned with work in the Eastern Desert held both the offices

(1) *Ibid.*, pl. 16, b ; cf. *Acts, 1st ICE*, pl. LXXI, 11.

(2) *Id.*, *RdE* 29 (1977), p. 170.

(3) G. Goyon, *Nouvelles inscriptions rupestres du Wâdi Hammamât*, p. 17, 82, no. 61. There are other points of similarity between this inscription and that which refers to the work of the herald Ameni on Antefoker's stela. For example, the titles of some of the officials who helped Ameni in his work are nearly the same, compare lines 3, 4 and 6 of this inscription with lines 9-10 on Antefoker's stela (*RdE* 29 [1977], pl. 16, b ; cf. *Acts, 1st ICE*, pl. LXXI, 11).

(4) G. Goyon, *op. cit.*, p. 18, 81.

of quarrying and building Punt ships on the Red Sea shore. An example is the inscription of Henu dated to the time of king Mentuhotpe-Sankhkare of the eleventh dynasty. Henu mentions in his inscription, which is similarly engraved in the schist quarries of Wâdi Hammanât, how he reached the Great Green and built the ship or ships (*ḥrw*) which he sent to Punt (1). Here we notice the use of the same terms as in the text of Antefoker's stela (*ḥrw* and *wꜥꜥ wr*).

From all the above mentioned pieces of evidence we can conclude that the text of Antefoker's stela refers to two ship building operations, one undertaken by the vizier Antefoker himself in the dockyards of Koptos, i.e. on the Nile bank, the other by the herald Ameni on the Red Sea shore. The only explanation is that the first one is the actual building operation, while the second one is the reassembling of the ships on the Red Sea shore, after they had been dismantled and carried in sections from the dockyards of Koptos to the port of Mersa Gawâsis.

This conclusion in its turn presents a solution to a puzzling problem in the text. It is the reference to the participation of the magistrates of the Thinite nome in the ship building (reassembling), operation which took place on the « Great Green » according to line 8 of the text. It cannot be admitted that these magistrates helped the herald Ameni in his work if such work took place in the dockyards of Koptos, for there was a famous dockyard at Thinis directed by the same vizier Antefoker in the time of Sesostri I himself, as Papyrus Reisner II indicates (2). The reasonable solution for this problem is that the magistrates of Thinis helped the herald Ameni in the reassembling operation on the Red Sea shore owing to their experience in ship-building, in addition to the relative proximity of their nome (more than Koptos) to Mersa Gawâsis.

### B. THE PORT AS A STARTING POINT OF THE VOYAGES TO SINAI

In the inscriptions found at Serabit el-Khâdim in Sinai, several naval titles are mentioned among the titles of the officials who were charged with the expeditions to the mines of Sinai, such as *imy-r ḥrw* « Overseer of transport-ships » and *imy-r rprw ḥrw* « Overseer of the ships' crews ».

(1) J. COUYAT - P. MONTEF, *Les inscriptions hiéroglyphiques et hiératiques du Ouâdi Hammâmât*, p. 83, no. 114 ; J. H. BREASTED, *Ancient Records*, I, § 432.

(2) W. K. SIMPSON, *Papyrus Reisner II*, p. 27.

Both titles occur on monuments which go back to the time of Ammenemes II (1). In an attempt to resolve this problem, the authors of « The Inscriptions of Sinai » assumed that either the expeditions crossed to Sinai from some point on the Red Sea shore, probably Kossèr, or else there was a through waterway from Egypt to the Gulf of Suez (2).

Concerning the « through waterway » we shall see that it cannot have existed before the reign of Sesostris III. But, as to the first assumption, they come nearer to the truth, for the point which they postulated to be Kossèr is Mersa Gawâsis.

The link between the port of Mersa Gawâsis and Sinai can be deduced from the stelae and inscription which go back to the time of Sesostris II. In the article which I published in the *Revue d'Égyptologie*, I suggested that Khnumhotpe of Beni Hassan in whose tomb the famous scene of the 37 Asiatics is found, was the same Khnumhotpe of the stela discovered by Wilkinson at Wâdi Gâsûs (3). Moreover, among the representations on the stela, the god Sopdu is shown with the title of *nb t3 šsmll* « Lord of the Land of eye-paint » (4). The Land of eye-paint or *t3 šsmll* is an ancient name of Sinai (5). The reference to eye-paint appears again in the tomb of Khnumhotpe in the scene of the 37 Asiatics. Above this scene a hieroglyphic inscription records that the Asiatics bring a gift of eye-paint (*nusdmt*) to the prince (Khnumhotpe). The scene is dated in the 6th year of the reign of Sesostris II.

Including one of the hieratic sherds which mentions the name of the funerary temple of Sesostris II in the 5th year (Fig. 2), these close dates (1st, 5th and 6th years of Sesostris II) show that the activity at the port during the reign of this king was not confined to the journeys to Punt, but comprised another country at least. The reference to Sinai on the stela of Khnumhotpe suggests that Sinai was this country, and the reference to the eye-paint on this stela and in the scene of the 37 Asiatics suggests a link between these Asiatics and Sinai.

It seems that the active traffic at the port in the time of Sesostris II and the continuous relationship with foreign countries encouraged

(1) Alan H. GARDINER - T. ERIC PEET - J. ČERNÝ, *The Inscriptions of Sinai*, II, p. 77-78, nos. 47, 48 ; p. 89, no. 77.

(2) *Ibid.*, p. 12.

(3) Abdel Monem A. H. SAYED, *RdE* 29 (1977), p. 174, n. 22.

(4) *Ibid.*, pl. 1, a.

(5) Alan H. GARDINER - T. ERIC PEET - J. ČERNÝ, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

foreign traders to trade with Egypt through the port. Among these were the 37 Asiatics who brought the eye-paint, the product of Sinai. They presented their article to the prince in whose domain the port lay, for Khnumhotpe held the title of « Administrator of the Eastern Desert ». It seems that his scribe Neferhotpe, who is represented in the scene of his tomb introducing the 37 Asiatics to him (1), was at the same time his representative in the port or in the Eastern Desert, for his name is mentioned on Khnumhotpe's stela of Wâdi Gâsûs, which, I suggest, was originally set up at the port and transferred to the Roman Station of Wâdi Gâsûs at a later date, as was the case with the stela of Khent-khtay-wer (2).

In conclusion, there was a continuous traffic between the port and Sinai, and this fact explains the occurrence of naval titles among the titles of the officials in the inscriptions of Serabit el-Khâdim at Sinai (3).

#### C. THE HISTORICAL ROOTS IN THE TRADITIONS OF CLASSICAL WRITERS ABOUT SESOSTRIS

Classical writers attributed legendary and fabulous deeds to the pharaoh whom they called « Sesostris ». Most Egyptologists identify this Greek name with the Egyptian name « Senwosret ». Among these legendary deeds are his naval campaigns in the Red Sea. No archaeological interpretation has ever been offered for this problem. The monuments found elsewhere from the time of the kings who bore the name « Senwosret » did not imply any allusion to such campaigns or to any other activity in the Red Sea.

Some scholars assume that the Egyptians devised traditions during the Persian domination about their native kings as a kind of national

(1) P. E. NEWBERRY, *Beni Hasan*, I, pl. 30.

(2) Abdel Monem A. H. SAYED, *RdE* 29 (1977), p. 173.

(3) Prof. E. Edel kindly has informed me that by joining two fragments of inscriptions on stone found in Sinai, he found a reference to a combined journey to Punt and Sinai. Afterwards he delivered a lecture on this subject at the 2nd ICE at Grenoble in which he observed that the Egyptians exerted great effort to prepare the ships which they used on the Red Sea. Therefore they exploited them as far as possible. In his opinion it is a kind of « saving expenses and work ». My conclusions concerning the difficult ship-dismantling and transporting operations fully confirm his opinion.

propaganda to rival or eclipse the achievement of the Persian kings in the Red Sea. « The Sesostris Legend developed to a point where the Egyptian's Asiatic conquests and his hegemony in the Red Sea far outstripped even those of the great Darius himself » (1). This interpretation is reasonable, but it does not explain why the Egyptians chose a Sesostris in particular as the king to whom they attributed legendary deeds in the Red Sea.

The discovered monuments provide us with a clue to this problem. They are the first monuments found on the Red Sea shore which bear the name « Senwosret » and record his activity in the Red Sea. Moreover, some words among the weathered texts refer to a kind of naval campaigns as, for example, the repetition of the words *dr* which means « to subdue » (2) and *nfrw 400* which means « 400 persons of young recruits » (3). Furthermore, some points in the classical stories may reflect the military expressions used in the hieroglyphic texts, for one of the fabulous deeds which Diodorus ascribed to Sesostris (whom he called « Sesoosis »), is that he invaded the Red Sea regions in a fleet of 400 ships (4). May we advocate, in this incredible number of ships, a misinterpretation and confusion of the number of 400 young recruits mentioned in the hieroglyphic text?

Similarly, an account in Strabo's story about Sesostris may coincide with our identification of the land of « Bia Punt » with a part of the Sudanese coast (5). The Greek author relates that Sesostris built a

(1) Alan B. LLOYD, *Necho and the Red Sea : Some Considerations*, in *JEA* 63 (1977), p. 152.

(2) Abdel Monem A. H. SAYED, *RdE* 29 (1977), pl. 13, c ; p. 161, l. 6.

(3) *Ibid.*, p. 161, l. 8.

(4) Diodorus, I, 102.

(5) Abdel Monem A. H. SAYED, *RdE* 29 (1977), p. 178. This was the location of Punt during the Middle Kingdom as the discovered monuments demonstrate. But, concerning its location in general, I advocate H. Gauthier's view (*Dict. géogr.*, II, 45) that the geographical designation of Punt, in the minds of the Egyptians, shifted gradually southwards on the African shore of the Red Sea, until it embodied the Somali coast in the New Kingdom. In my opinion, the reason for such shifting was the Egyptian's endeavour to liberate the frankincense trade from the hands of the intermediaries, as the Egyptian texts inform us (*J. U. BRAYNE, Ancient Records*, II, § 287), by reaching its producing area, i.e. where the frankincense trees grow. They realised their aim under Hatshepsut's reign. The landing place of Hatshepsut's ships was where the frankincense trees grow, nearest to the sea shore. This situation applies to the north-eastern coast of Somaliland where frankincense of the best grade

temple for the goddess Isis on a mountain near the port which was called in classical times « Ptolemais Theron » or « Ptolemais Épitheras » (1). This port is located by modern writers somewhere near Sawákin on the Sudanese coast. Therefore, the account of Strabo about Sesostris' activity in the Red Sea points clearly to the place which we suggested as the location of the land of Bia Punt, the destination of the expedition sent by Sesostris I and recorded in the discovered hieroglyphic inscriptions.

All the above mentioned indications point to the fact that the choice of Sesostris by the Egyptians as a national hero around whom they made up their legends to rival or eclipse the achievements of the Persian kings in the Red Sea was not a random choice, but rested on historical roots.

The legends about Sesostris may have been reinforced in the minds of both the Egyptians and the Greeks through the establishment of the port of « Philoteris » by Ptolemy II at the site of the 12th dynasty port at Mersa Gawásis. The pharaonic monuments may have been unearthed — if they were buried by any means such as sandy winds — as a result of the establishing of the Ptolemaic port. The Greek inscriptions found by some modern travellers (2) at Mersa Gawásis attest the use of the port in Graeco-Roman times. The monuments of the 12th dynasty and the hieroglyphic inscriptions depicted on them may have been the subject of the stories related — after their distortion — by Diodorus and Strabo.

An indication that the port was frequented sometime during the Roman period, is the transference of the stelae, which had been set up there, to the Roman buildings. A clear and direct example is the discovery of the stela of Khent-khtay-wer in the Roman station of Wádi Gásús (3).

The distortion and exaggeration of the contents of the hieroglyphic inscriptions as reflected in the above mentioned stories by Diodorus and Strabo about Sesostris, may be due to the lack of knowledge of

grew in abundance in ancient times, as the author of the *Periplus* ascertains (W. H. SCHOFF, *The Periplus of the Erythrean Sea*, chap. 11) and as it is also the case nowadays (F. N. HEPPER, *JEA* 55 [1969], p. 68 & pl. XV).

(1) STRABO, XVI, 770.

(2) G. SCHWEINFURTH, *Alle Baureste und hieroglyphische Inschriften im Uadi Gasús*, p. 4.

(3) Abdel Monem A. H. SAYED, *RdE* 29 (1977), p. 141.



hieroglyphs among the Greek and Roman travellers (and even Egyptians during this late period) who visited the remote and isolated port of « Philoteris ». This exaggeration found an echo in the national traditions about Sesostris. They resulted in the fabulous and legendary stories recorded by classical writers.

#### D. THE NON-EXISTENCE OF THE RED SEA CANAL DURING THE USE OF THE PORT

The historical facts embodied in the stories of the classical writers about the activity of Sesostris in the Red Sea point — as we have seen — to Sesostris I. But, as to their story about the Red Sea canal of which they attributed the first digging to Sesostris, it is obvious that the intended Sesostris was not Sesostris I, because the existence of the port is clear evidence of the non-existence of the Red Sea canal. If it had existed, the Egyptians would certainly not have ignored its facilities particularly its proximity to the capital of Egypt at Lisht, instead of going to and fro between the Nile valley and the isolated port through a mountainous terrain, carrying their ships and provisions, in addition to the difficult process of dismantling and reassembling the ships and loading and unloading their cargo. Moreover, the use of the anchors of the ships as stelae and pedestals for both the shrine of Anchow and stela of Antefoker attests the non-existence of the canal in the time of Sesostris I. Anchors might not have been abandoned on the Red Sea shore at the port of Mersa Gawâsis if ships were able to sail directly through the canal from the Red Sea to the Nile. Could they indeed have dispensed with their anchors during the rest of the sea voyage to the apex of the Gulf of Suez where the canal was suggested to pour?

Similarly, the canal did not exist in the time of Ammenemes II as attested by the stela of Khent-khtay-wer which mentioned the name of the port and the landing of the ships there. The same can be said about the reign of Sesostris II to which belong the hieratic potsherd, the stela of Khnumhotpe, and the scene of the 37 Asiatics at Beni Hassan. Therefore, the Red Sea canal did not exist during the reigns of these three successive kings of the 12th dynasty.

When we come to the next reign, i.e. that of Sesostris III, we cannot give a definite answer to the question, even if the reading of the hieratic potsherd which goes back to the time of this king is confirmed, for till

now we have no monuments from the time of his successor among those which we found on the site of the port.

#### POSTSCRIPT

I have recently received the results of the chemical analysis and radiocarbon dating of some of the organic materials which I had found with the discovered monuments. Among these organic materials is a piece of wood which was anatomically identified as cedar (*Cedrus sp.*) (1) and dated by radiocarbon to circa 1975 B.C. at the time of use (2). This date may be approximately incorporated within the reign of Sesostris I. Such results suggest that the ships referred to on the discovered monuments were made of cedar wood, presumably imported from the Phoenician coast. Their building may have taken place during the first half of the reign of Sesostris I.

These new and important results confirm my former conclusion concerning the adoption of two ship making processes by the Egyptians: the first actual ship-building, which took place on the Nile bank, and the second reassembling process on the Red Sea shore. Furthermore, they also add new evidence to my suggestion that the ships which were given the term *kpnt* by the Egyptians (which means Byblite ships) were of pure Egyptian workmanship (3).

As to the ship-building place, it was easier for the Egyptians to transport the cedar logs from the Phoenician coast directly to Koptos (where the actual ship-building took place according to the nomenclature « Ships of the Dockyards of Koptos » which occurs on one of the discovered monuments) (4) by one direct way, i.e. by water on the Mediterranean Sea and on the Nile, than to achieve this transportation by land

(1) This analysis was achieved by Jodrell Laboratory, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew Richmond, Surrey, through the kind co-operation of Miss Honor Frost, Director of « Punic Ship Excavations », London. Ref.: No. QJ1 A/11/253/80/PR. Date: 11.2.1980.

(2) The radiocarbon dating was achieved by the Research Laboratory of the British Museum, through the kind co-operation of both Dr. T. G. Harry James, Keeper of Egyptian Antiquities, and Mr. Richard Burleigh, Member of the Laboratory, who kindly provided me with the above-mentioned information in a letter dated 5.10.1981.

(3) Abdel Monem A. H. SAYED, *JEA* 64 (1978), p. 71, n. 7.

(4) *Ibid.*, p. 71 & pl. XI, 2.

and water, i.e. by land across the isthmus of Suez, then by water from the apex of the Suez gulf along the Red Sea coast to the lonely and arid site of Mersa Gawâsis. In the latter case, the voyage would have been nearly 400 km. long, a distance through which the cargo ships laden with the heavy cedar logs were liable to break against the coral reefs which extended along this arid coast. Logically, if the Egyptians had to use the Suez isthmus route, they would have chosen a port nearer to the apex of the Suez gulf and had no need to confront endless hardships during the difficult sea voyage to the far and arid spot of Mersa Gawâsis!

As to the other conclusion, it is now proved that the ships which the discovered monuments call *ḥꜥw* were made of cedar. A fact which denotes that they were equivalent (concerning the building material at least) with the ships termed by the Egyptians *kpnt* (= Byblite). This equivalence allows the use of the two terms side by side to designate the same ships sent to Punt, in both the texts of I Ienu<sup>(1)</sup> and I Iatshepsut<sup>(2)</sup>. Furthermore, this equivalence attests my above mentioned conclusion, that the *kpnt* (or *kbnl*) ships were built locally as well as the *ḥꜥw* (or *ḥꜥꜣw*) ships, i.e. they were of pure Egyptian workmanship. Both ships were built of cedar wood imported from the Phoenician coast.

Abdel Monem A. H. SAYED

(1) J. COUAT - P. MONTET, *op. cit.*, p. 83, l. 11, 14.

(2) Éd. NAVILLE, *Deir el-Bahari*, III, pls. 72, 78.

ON THE GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION OF THE LAND OF PUNT\*

by

Dr. Abdel Monem Abdel Halim Sayed

8

Since the discovery of the Punt reliefs in the temple of Queen Hatshepswt at Deir el-Bahary, by A. Mariette in 1877, there have been different views about the geographical location of Punt.<sup>1</sup>

Before proceeding to discuss this problem, it is necessary to distinguish between two trends in studying the location of Punt:-

- 1- Studies of the location of Punt in its general understanding, i.e. that vast area which the ancient Egyptians frequented throughout the various stages of Pharaonic history.
- 2- Studies of the location of Punt in its specific understanding, i.e. that part of Punt which Hatshepswt's fleet visited (c. 1480 B.C.) and is represented on the walls of the Queen's temple at Deir el Bahary. To facilitate its study in this article, I call it "Punt of Deir el Bahary".

As the space assigned to the article in this periodical is too small for the enormous subject of the location of Punt in both its general and specific understandings, and the different views about its location, I shall confine this article to discuss the latest views about the location of "Punt of Deir el-Bahary".

But, before proceeding to discuss these views, it is relevant to give an idea about the most reasonable views concerning the location of Punt in its general understanding, as it is related with our discussion.

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\*Presented to the "History Department, Faculty of Arts nearly ten years ago, to be published in the "Bulletin of the Faculty of Arts", Alexandria University, but as a result of the suspension of this Bulletin for many years, the paper has not yet been published.

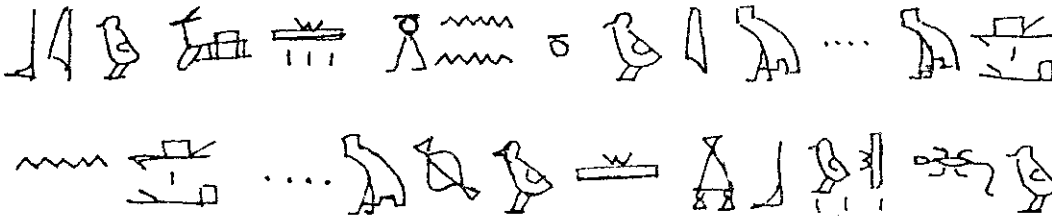
<sup>1</sup>It is well-known that the pronunciation "Punt" was changed by A. Gardiner to "Pwēnē" (Egypt of the Pharaohs, Oxford, 1961, p.37 note 1), but I here adopt the pronunciation "Punt" because of its popularity.

In this respect I agree with H. Gauthier's view that the geographical designation of Punt in the minds of the Egyptians shifted southwards on the African coast of the Red sea, with the extension of the Egyptian knowledge about its regions, until it embodied the Somali coast as far as Cape Guardafui.<sup>2</sup>

In my opinion, the Egyptians gave the term "Punt" at first to the nearest coastal regions to the southern borders of Egypt (or even to the southern borders themselves) from which they obtained incense, particularly that kind of incense which they called "Antyw" which was greatly appreciated by the Egyptians and which they obtained from the Red sea regions throughout the whole history of Pharaonic Egypt. At the end of the old kingdom and during the Middle kingdom the term Punt extended more to the South to embody the Sudanese coast. The specific term Bia-Punt was occasionally given to this region during these periods. It is noteworthy that this term did not occur in the texts of the New kingdom. This point will be dealt with later.

In the new kingdom the term "Punt" extended southward until it embodied the Somali coast on the southern shore of the gulf of Aden.

The reason for this extension, in my opinion also, is the continual persevering efforts by the Egyptians in their attempt to reduce the prices of the much-prized "Antyw", through avoiding -as much as they could- the intermediaries of the Antyw trade (and other commercial articles). A text in the inscriptions of Hatshepsut's expedition to Punt refers clearly to this trade and to its intermediaries as follows:-



Its translation is :-

"The marvels (i.e. the commercial articles of Punt) brought here (to Egypt) .... through intermediaries (lit:

<sup>2</sup>Gauthier, H; Dictionnaire des noms géographiques contenus dans les textes hiéroglyphiques, Le Caire, (1925) vol. II 45.

<sup>3</sup>Naville, E; The Temple of Deir el-Bahari (1898), vol.III pl.84 1.12.

from one to another) .... as a return of expensive (lit: many) payments".<sup>4</sup>

Another reason for these Egyptian efforts, was to obtain the 'Antyw-incense in a fresh condition. The Egyptian texts appreciate fresh incense which they called "Antyw w3d". To reach this aim, the Egyptians tried to draw as nearer as possible to the 'Antyw-incense producing region i.e. where its trees grow, until they reached it in the New Kingdom in the time of Hatshepswt. This point will be the basis of our discussion of the views about the location of "Punt of Deir el-Bahary".

Among the recent views about the location of Punt of "Deir el-Bahary are two main views: the first by Rolf Hetzog<sup>5</sup> and the other by Kenneth A. Kitchen<sup>6</sup>.

Rolf Herzog holds the opinion that the Egyptians reached Punt by navigation up the Nile, not by the Red sea, and so he located Punt in the Eastern Sudan bordering on Ethiopia, from the White and Blue Niles eastward to the Eritrean Highlands, and north-south between Berber and Roseires. He based his view on two principle hypotheses; firstly, that the Egyptian word "w3d-wer" did not denote the "Red sea" but "the River Nile"; secondly, that the pile-dwellings -one of the unique features of the Deir el-Bahari scenes (Fig 11) are well known chiefly among the Nilotic peoples in Southern Sūdān (Fig 13) more than elsewhere.

Kenneth A. Kitchen rejected Herzog's interpretation of the word "w3d-wr" as the River Nile,<sup>7</sup> and confirmed the general opinion among Egyptologists that the Egyptians reached Punt by way of the Red sea.

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<sup>4</sup>Breasted, J.H; Ancient Records vol. II §287.

<sup>5</sup>Herzog, Rolf; Punt, Abh. Deut. Arch. Inst. Kairo; Band 6 (1968).

<sup>6</sup>Kitchen, K.A.; "Punt and how to get there" Orientalia, vol. 40 (1971) p. 184f. My thanks are due to Prof. Keneth Kitchen for kindly providing me with a copy of his valuable article.

This view is most recently adopted also by :

a. O'Conner, David "The location of Irem" JEA 73 (1978) p. 101.

b. Fattovitch, R; "In search of Punt" Ligabue Magazine (1987) vol.3 p. 104.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid p.152

On the other hand, Kitchen accepted Herzog's view concerning the extension of Punt to the Nile Regions (the White and Blue Niles and River Atbara). But he added a modification to Herzog's view: that Punt should extend from the Nile regions to the Red sea coast (between Port-Sūdān and North Eritrea), so, in his opinion, the Egyptians used to reach it by way of the Red sea.

A recent archaeological discovery on the Red sea shore proper, refuted decisively Herzog's view and confirmed the general view among Egyptologists -and consequently Kitchen's view- that the ancient Egyptians used the Red sea in their journeys to Punt. It is the discovery of the site of the 12th dynasty port in a place called "Mersa Gawasis" at the mouth of Wādī Gawāsīs which lies at about 22 km south of the modern town of Safaga, (or about 58 km north of Quseir).

The discovery was achieved in March 1976 by an archaeological expedition started by the Faculty of Arts, University of Alexandria under the direction of the writer of this article.<sup>8</sup> In the site, the expedition found a shrine (Fig 1) and a small stela (Fig 3) inscribed with hieroglyphs recording a maritime expedition sent by Pharaoh Sesostri I (c. 1950 B.C.) to a region which the inscriptions calls "Bia-Punt" (i.e. "The Mine of Punt") which is situated on the Sudanese coast.<sup>9</sup>

The expedition found also the anchors of the ships which sailed to this region (Fig 2). It is a matter of interest that these anchors which are made of limestone, were transformed to stelae, inscribed with hieroglyphs recording the expedition to the land of "Bia-Punt", and used for building up the shrine. The holes of the anchors which served for fastening the ropes are still apparent (Fig 1c, d, e). Other anchors were used, with no change as the pedestal of the shrine (Fig. 1,2). Their channels in which the ropes were fitted were not cut off (Fig 1a, b).

The small stela (Fig 3) was not originally an anchor, it is made of limestone in the form of the normal Egyptian

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<sup>8</sup>Sayed, Abdel Monem, A.H; Discovery of the site of the 12th dynasty port at Wādī Gawāsīs on the Red shore RdE29 (1977) 140f. Also JEA 64 (1978)69f., 66(1980) 154f, and CdE 58 (1983) 23f.

<sup>9</sup>I discussed this term in one of the above-mentioned reports about the discovery (RdE 29 Pl40f) and identified it with the southern part of the Atbai desert around the modern Sawākin and Port-Sūdān.

stela, but it rested on a pedestal which was formerly an anchor.

The existence of the anchors in the site of the port, in addition to its value as a decisive evidence of a naval journey by way of the Red sea, denotes a kind of ship-dismantling. If the ships were kept in the port, their anchors might not be dispensed with immediately after their return voyage, as the anchors which formed the shrine of Ankhw denote. Therefore, the reasonable interpretation of this problem, is that, after the return of the ships from the region of Bia-Punt, they were dismantled or stripped down at the port of Mersa Gawāsīā, carried in sections with their cargo through the desert road to the Nile Valley, where they were reassembled probably to be used as Nile boats.

But the heavy limestone anchors of the ships (each anchor weighs about 250 Kg.) which were more suitable for sea-going ships than Nile boats (because of the rocky nature of the sea bed and shores), were left behind in the port where they were used in the building of a memorial shrine recording the event of the expedition to the region of Bia-Punt.

Proceeding now to discuss Kitchen's view, we find that he went too far in locating Punt in the vast area which extended from the Red sea shore to the Nile regions. A matter which induces us to demand: if Punt extended to the Nile regions in the Sūdān, and therefore, if the Egyptians could obtain its precious products (especially the much-prized cntyw or Antyw-incense) from the regions near the Nile waterways (Kassala or otherwise), what compelled them to run the risk and try to reach such regions through the farthest way, i.e. from the Red sea coast across the vast area of the Eastern Sūdān towards the Nile regions, a route that takes 25 days march to cover 250 miles (according to Kitchen himself)<sup>10</sup> through dangerous regions infested with wild beasts and primitive tribes?

The main goal of this long and dangerous trip was to bring 31 incense trees, a hardship that is added to the other difficulties, for such a heavy load required about 180 men to carry the trees along the 250 miles to the Red sea coast (about 6 men for every tree as the representations show, fig. 4). The texts inform us that it was a heavy task, for one of the Puntites carriers is represented (fig. 4 upper register, left side) looking behind towards his fellows and addressing them (in Egyptian?):-

"rdwy rḥw mk 3tp dns wr.t"

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<sup>10</sup>Kitchen, op. cit., p. 203

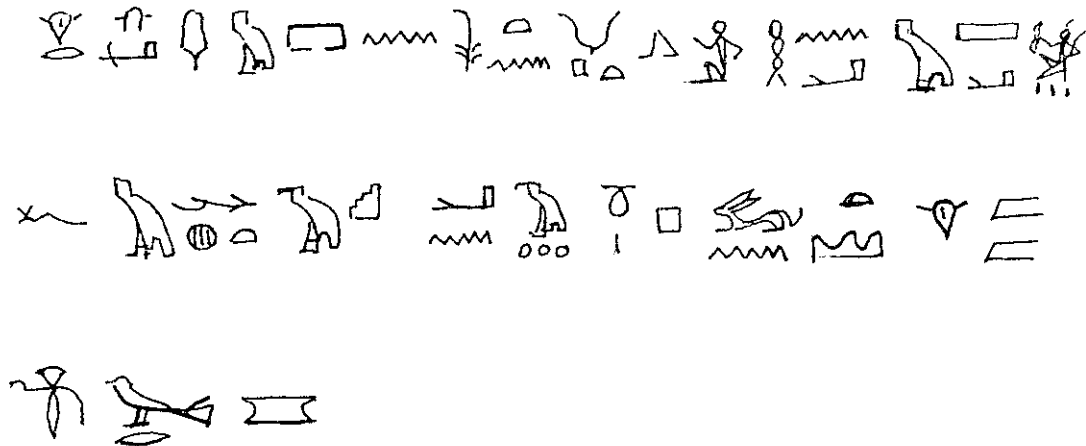


= (mind) your feet ye people the load is very heavy!<sup>11</sup>

Moreover, we know that the African regions were considered till recent times dangerous places, to the extent that foreign merchants could not penetrate too far from the shore for more than two or three days march. If they wanted to procure precious articles that are not obtainable on the shore, they depended on the natives for this purpose. If that was the case till the beginning of the present century, despite the efficiency of modern weapons, we can imagine the dangers which confronted the Egyptians in their penetration through the extensive mountainous and wooded regions in those early days.

Such difficulties which hindered the transportation process of 31 frankincense trees on one hand, and the dangers that confronted the Egyptians on the other hand, made it necessary for the Egyptians to choose the Puntite region, from which Hatshepswt's mission obtained 31 incense trees, as near to the sea shore as possible.

This essential point in the matter of the location of Punt is not a mere deduction, for the representation and the texts themselves refer clearly to the proximity of the frankincense trees to the sea shore. Thus we read in the texts of the traffic scene between the Egyptians and the Puntites "hr (w) i3 mw n wpt nsw hn<sup>c</sup> ms<sup>vc</sup>.f m htyw cntyw nw pwnt hr gs(wy) w3d-wr". "The erection of the Royal Messenger's tent and his army among the incense terraces of Punt on the sea shore".<sup>12</sup>



Here, the proximity of the incense trees to the sea shore

<sup>11</sup>Breasted, op. cit. II §264

<sup>12</sup>Ibid. II §260

is very clear.

Another evidence about this proximity can be deduced from the scene which represents the collecting of the resin from the incense trees, (fig. 4 - middle register, left side). A living incense tree is represented clearly near the sea shore, and a man collects the incense sap from it.

For all these contexts, the essential basis for defining the location of Punt is to define the region on which incense trees grow as close to the sea shore as possible.

But to attain this aim, we must firstly tackle two problems :

- 1- The kind or species of incense trees which Hatshepswt's expedition transplanted, and its present and ancient distribution around the Red Sea shore.
- 2- The extent of change of the distribution of such trees in the Red Sea regions through the span of 3500 years that elapsed from the time of Hatshepswt till nowadays.

Concerning the first point, i.e, the kind of incense trees for which we must look around the Red Sea shores, it is that kind known to the Egyptians as the <sup>c</sup>ntyw or <sup>c</sup>nty. It was mentioned in the Egyptian texts as a white incense. Lucas says that it is the white incense known at present as frankincense<sup>13</sup> (in Arabic Lubān dakar). It is a kind of fragrant resin known scientifically as "Boswellia". Its trees grow nowadays in Somaliland and southern Arabia<sup>14</sup>

It was known to the classical writers as "lebanos"<sup>15</sup> its colour may sometimes have a greenish tint. This may be the reason that Egyptians called it "<sup>c</sup>ntyw w3d" i.e. "green frankincense" or "fresh frankincense".

The botanist N. Hepper studied the distribution of Boswellia trees around the coasts of the Red Sea.<sup>16</sup> From his study (see map 1) we can deduce that the only place where Boswellia trees grow nearer to the Sea is the north eastern coast of Somaliland (Somalia) where two kinds of frankincense

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<sup>13</sup>Lucas, A; Ancient Egyptian materials and industries, London, (1926), p. 111.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid. p.112

<sup>15</sup>Mullero, A.Carlo; Geographi Graeci Minores. Parisiis, (1855) vol. 1 pp.264-265.

<sup>16</sup>Hepper, F; Nigel; "Arabian and African Frankincense Trees", JEA 55 (1969) p. 69ff.

of high quality grow. They are known scientifically as "Boswellia frereana" and "Boswellia bhau-dajia. Thus, we have come to the conclusion that the north-eastern coast of Somaliland is the most probable place on the whole coast of the Red Sea from which Hatshepswt's expedition obtained the 31 frankincense trees.

Concerning the second problem, i.e. the extent of change that may have taken place in the growing regions of the frankincense trees around the coasts of the Red Sea - especially the African coast from the time of Hatshepswt till now, it is a much difficult matter, owing to the absence of a detailed geological study of the Red Sea shores. But to attain this aim as closely as we can, we adopt a historical comparative study which is based upon tracing the descriptions of the classical writers of the incense exporting and producing regions on the African Red Sea shore, comparing these descriptions with the present distribution of incense trees on these shores. By this method much light can be thrown on the distribution of frankincense trees in ancient times. Fortunately, the descriptions of some classical writers of the incense trade on the Red Sea coasts furnish us with enough information to help us in our study. We have three main books which dealt with this matter in a more or less detailed description. These are the Geography of Strabo<sup>17</sup>. The Periplus of the Erythraean sea<sup>18</sup>, and the Natural History of Pliny<sup>19</sup>. These books go back to the period which extended from the 1st century B.C. to the 1st century A.D. Thus they describe the physical conditions nearly in the middle of the period of 3500 years which elapsed from the time of Hatshepswt till now. Therefore, these books tell us about the extent of change that occurred in the incense growing regions, especially frankincense, through a period of 2000 years that separates the time of these classical books from our time.

If we can infer from the study of these books that no essential change took place through this 2000 years, then we can take this deduction as a basis for a similar conclusion i.e. that no essential change had taken place in the incense growing regions around the coasts of the Red Sea through the period of 1500 years which separated the time of these

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<sup>17</sup>Strabo; Geography, Book XVI, Loeb Classic. Lib (1889) vol.III.

<sup>18</sup>Schoff, W; The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea, London, 1912.

<sup>19</sup>Pliny; The Natural History, trans. by G.Bostack and H.T. Riley, London 1875.

classical books from the time of Hatshepswt.

On this basis, we proceed now to follow the descriptions of the classical writers of the incense trade on the coasts of the Red Sea, north and south of Bab-Mandab strait, to trace the existence or non-existence of frankincense trees.

As for Strabo, he does not refer to the existence of frankincense either north of the strait or directly south of it, but he mentions other kinds of incense such as styrax and myrrh. He says that styrax grew in the regions that extended from Eumenes (near Assab in S. Eritrea), to Deire (on the northern coast of Tajura Bay<sup>20</sup>). About myrrh he says that it was produced in the region which lay south of Deire<sup>21</sup>. Both styrax and myrrh are not of the kinds of incense which are called Boswellia, i.e. the frankincense which the texts of Deir-el-Bahari call 'ntyw-w3d. Myrrh is known scientifically as "Commiphora". It is found in the form of reddish flakes with a yellowish tint. It has never a white or green colour, for this reason it is not the white or green incense mentioned in the Ancient Egyptian texts<sup>22</sup>.

Some scholars translated the word 'ntyw w3d as "myrrh"<sup>23</sup> a mistranslation which led to the confusion between myrrh and frankincense.

For these reasons, the myrrh mentioned by Strabo is not the frankincense, such fact is clear from his description in which he distinguishes between the two plants, when he says : "Frankincense is produced in the region that comes next to the region which produces myrrh"<sup>24</sup>.

Such description suits exactly the present distribution of myrrh and frankincense trees on the northern coast of Somaliland, where myrrh trees are more abundant than frankincense trees on the western part of this coast, while the matter on the eastern part is contrariwise (map. 1).

As for Pliny, his description is similar to Strabos, for he says that the Troglodytes brought myrrh to the port of

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<sup>20</sup>Mullero, op. cit. vol. III (Tabulae), pl. VIII.

<sup>21</sup>Strabo, op. cit. p. 199.

<sup>22</sup>Lucas; op.cit. p.154.

<sup>23</sup>Breasted; op.cit. IIS264.

<sup>24</sup>Strabo; op.cit.p.199.

Isis which was ten days rowing from the town of Adulis<sup>2</sup>. Scholars define the location of the port of Isis on the Bay of Assab in South Eritrea<sup>26</sup>.

However, the most precise and detailed description of the incense exporting and producing regions, is the description of the "Periplus of the Erythraean Sea", it conforms to a great extent with the descriptions of Strabo and Pliny. The Periplus says that Myrrh was exported from the port of Avalites<sup>27</sup>, presumably the present Zeila<sup>28</sup>. It is the same place which Strabo included in the region where myrrh grows. Similarly, the Periplus mentions myrrh and frankincense together among the articles exported from the port that lay on the Southern Somali coast next to Avalites. He says that the port of Malao (presumably Berbera) exported myrrh and little frankincense. About the next port of Mundu (presumably Hais, see map 1) he says that it exported frankincense and a kind of incense which he called "Mocrutu"<sup>29</sup> (it may be that kind of frankincense which the Somalis call "Moḥor"<sup>30</sup> known scientifically as "Boswellia"). It is a good-grade of frankincense and its tree grows in the plains in northern Somali land, relatively far from the sea shore; (see map 1). Finally the Periplus says that the port of Mosyllum (presumably Ras Amtara, see map 1) exports "Mocrutu" and frankincense.

Then an important paragraph in the Periplus draws our attention as it describes the physical features of North Eastern Somaliland as follows: "Sailing along the coast beyond Mosyllum after a two days course, you come to the so-called Little Nile River, and a fine spring, and a small laurel-grove, and Cape-Elephant. Then the shore recedes into a bay, and has a river, called Elephant, and a large laurel-grove called Acannae"<sup>31</sup>.

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<sup>25</sup>Pliny; op.cit.; Book VI, ch.34.

<sup>26</sup>MULLERO; op.cit.; pl.VIIIb.

<sup>27</sup>Schoff; op.cit; §7.

<sup>28</sup>Mullero; op.cit; pl.VIII.

<sup>29</sup>Schoff; Periplus, §9.

<sup>30</sup>Sayed, Abdel Monem A.H; The Somali Republic, Somali (in Arabic: Al Goumhouriah Al-Somaliah, Somalia). Cairo, 100 Books Series, 1960, p.373 note 2.

<sup>31</sup>Schoff; op.cit. §11.

The importance of this paragraph is due to the fact that the place names mentioned in it conform to a great extent with the present names. The region which the Periplus calls "Cape-Elephante" is called by the same name till the present time, for the Somalis call it Cape "Filuk", a word that has two syllables, the first one is the Arabic word "Fil" which means "elephant", the second syllable is the Somali definite article "k" (shortened from Ka) which is used with singular masculine names. This similarity between the ancient and the modern names of this cape may be due to its shape which looks like a recumbent elephant when it is seen from a distance, (fig 5). Beyond Cape Filuk or recumbent Cape Elephante (or Elephas) there is really-as the Periplus mentioned<sup>32</sup> -a little bay and a small river, the Somalis call both of them "Gal-Wein" which means "the great swamp" or "the great lagoon" (see map 2).

However, the most important phrase in the description of the Periplus is that which comes next to the above-mentioned phrase, for it leads us to define the extension of frankincense trees on the Somali coast in the first century, A.D. (The time of the Periplus). It describes this extension as follows : where alone (in the region of Elephas and Acannae) is produced the "far-side" frankincense (i.e. of the Somali coast) in great quantity and of the best grade"<sup>33</sup>.

This description makes it very clear that the north-eastern coast of Somaliland (or Somalia) was in the first century A.D. the only region on the African coast of the Red sea which was famous for producing the best grade of frankincense in great quantities. It is the same condition which prevails till now in this region. Moreover, the expressions which are used in the Periplus to refer to the existence of frankincense along the north coast of Somaliland, suggest that frankincense trees did not exist near the sea-shore on any other part except on its eastern part, for the Periplus used the expression "is produced" **ΥΙΒΕΤΑΙ** when he referred to the existence of frankincense on this part of the coast (the region of River Elephas and Acannae), while he used the expression "is exported" **ΕΧΦΕΡΕΤΑΙ**<sup>34</sup> when he referred to such existence in the ports of the western part of the Somali coast.

The use of these two different expressions by the same

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<sup>32</sup>Mullero; op.cit. pl. XII.

<sup>33</sup>Schoff; op.cit. §11.

<sup>34</sup>Mullero; op.cit; vol. I.p.266; cf.pp. 264-265.

author may denote different conditions. A fact which suggests that the word "is produced" *YIVETXL* refers to the existence of the productive source of frankincense, i.e. to the growing of frankincense trees on the coastal region which the Periplus mentioned, (river Elephas and Acannae), i.e. near the sea shore; particularly when the Periplus added that frankincense is produced "in great quantity". Such circumstances are the same at present in this region (compare map 1). These evidences suggest that the distribution of frankincense trees on the African coast of the Red Sea did not change during the period of 2000 years which extends from the 1st century A.D. till now. On this basis we can conclude that similarly no essential change took place of such distribution throughout the period of the 1500 years which elapsed from the time of Hatshepsut till the 1st century A.D.; consequently we can come to the final conclusion that such distribution has not changed since the time of Hatshepsut till now i.e., the existence of the frankincense trees is nearly the same when Hatshepsut's fleet visited the north-eastern coast of Somaliland and transhipped the 3000 frankincense trees to Egypt.

In addition to the principal evidence which we have deduced from the distribution of frankincense trees, the physical features and aquatic creatures may be secondary but important evidences. The eastern part of the northern Somaliland coast is distinguished from the western part by a conspicuous aspect, that the mountain ranges of the eastern part are nearer to the sea than the mountains of the western part. From Ras Amtara eastward these ranges are covered with frankincense trees<sup>35</sup> in a terraced-like scenery which recalls to our minds the Egyptian term "htyw 'ntyw nw Pwnt" i.e. "The frankincense-terraces of Punt" (figs 8, 9).

The existence of a river mouth in this region especially the river known at present as "Gal-Wein" and which is known in classical times as "River Elephante or Elephas", and the fame of this region in classical times as the productive region of most abundant and best grade of frankincense, all these suggest that the mouth of this river is the landing place of Hatshepsut's fleet<sup>36</sup>. The kinds of freshwater fishes among marine fishes represented in the scenes of the harbour of Punt in the Deir El Bahry reliefs, may confirm the riverine nature of the place. An example of the scenes that

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<sup>35</sup>British Admiralty; Red Sea and Gulf of Aden Pilot. 9th ed. London (1944), p.462.

<sup>36</sup>Cf G. Maspero; "De quelques navigations des Egyptiens sur les côtes de la Mer Erythréenne, Et. Myth. et Arch. Eg. Tom. IV (1900) p.99-100.

shows the marine and freshwater creatures side by side<sup>37</sup> is the scene which represents the Egyptian ships while they were entering the Puntite harbour<sup>38</sup> (fig. 8). We can discern a freshwater catfish (the second fish from the left) under the boat which the Egyptian ships sent to the shore. There may be a kind of contrast between this freshwater fish which is the nearest fish to the shore (i.e. to the mouth of the river); and the Panulirus represented at the farthest point from the shore (i.e. from the river mouth and the harbour), as the still mantled sail of the ship denotes. The contrast is evident from the fact that while the freshwater catfish is represented close to the shore (the second fish from the left, for the first one is undefined) where the mouth of the river lay, the Panulirus which may represent the pure marine creature that characterises the waters of the Red Sea and Indian ocean is represented at the farthest point from the mouth of the river, an indication which may reveal the intention of the artist to denote pure sea water.

To complete the discussion concerning the evidences about the location of Punt of Deir El Bahary on the north-eastern coast of Somaliland, the writer deals here with other evidences which some researchers have excluded from being in Somaliland. These evidences are :

1. Palm trees and pile-dwellings.
2. Baboons.
3. Cinnamon.

#### Palm trees and pile-dwellings

Palm trees were represented in front of the Puntite pile-dwellings<sup>39</sup> (fig 9). Herzog says that they are dom-palm and not date-palm, on the wrong assumption that dom-palm does not grow at the present time on the coasts of Somaliland except in the extreme south of the eastern coast near the mouth of River Juba<sup>40</sup>. Kitchen adopted Herzog's view<sup>41</sup>.

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<sup>37</sup>Danelius, Eva; and Steinitz, H; "The Fishes and other Aquatic animals on Punt reliefs at Deir el-Bahri", JEA, 53 (1967) p. 15-24.

<sup>38</sup>Neville, E; The Temple of Deir el Bahari, London (1898), vol.III pls. 72,73.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid; pl. 69.

<sup>40</sup>Herzog; op. cit; S.66.

<sup>41</sup>Kitchen, op.cit; P. 186.



In fact dom-palm grows in the valleys which extend in the north and north east of Somaliland<sup>42</sup>. The Somalis who inhabit these regions call it by the name "Qumbah". Moreover the features of the palm trees represented in the Deir e Bahari scenes (Figs 4,11) suggest that they are date-palm and not dom-palm, for the tree is represented with the bifurcation of the trunk near the ground, a feature which characterizes the date-palm tree (fig 9) more than the dom palm tree which grow on the Red Sea shore and which has the bifurcation in the middle of the trunk (fig 10).

Anyhow, whether the palm trees represented in the Deir e Bahari scenes were date-palm or dom-palm, both species grow near the shores of North Somaliland.

The Puntite dwellings are represented in the form of semi-circular pile huts, (fig 11) a feature which Herzog relies on to suggest the White and Blue Nile regions as a location of Punt, and to exclude Somaliland. In fact pile-dwellings are not found in Somaliland to-day, but on the other hand, the Puntite semi-circular huts are more similar in shape to the modern Somali huts (fig. 12) than to the conical huts of the Nilotic peoples on which Herzog based his view (fig. 13)<sup>43</sup>. As for the poles on which the huts are set, they cannot be taken as a basis of any solid view, for it is not a permanent characteristic or feature. Its existence depends more or less on climatic and zoological circumstances, and their change throughout the ages. The regions of north-eastern Somaliland may have been infested in ancient times with wild beasts and dangerous reptiles, a circumstance which compelled the dwellers of the place to build their huts on poles.

An evidence for the dangerous reptiles which infested the place in ancient times occurs in Strabo's writings. He mentions the existence of serpents of thirty cubits in length in the region extending from Deire to Cape Guardafui<sup>44</sup>.

Therefore, the poles of the Puntite huts may be for protection against these dangerous creatures and carnivorous beasts which may have been abundant in North Somaliland in those remote periods, before the prevailing of desiccation and the retreat of flora towards the south which led to the migration of vegetarian animals and consequently carnivorous beasts. Both live in Southern Somalia to-day,. Therefore such retreat of plant and animal life towards the south may

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<sup>42</sup>Sayed, Abdel Monem; op.cit; p.22.

<sup>43</sup>Herzog; op.cit;s.67 and Tafeln 3-6.

<sup>44</sup>Strabo; op.cit; §16.

be reason for the absence of poles from the huts of the modern Somalis who inhabit Northern Somaliland nowadays.

### Baboons

Herzog assumed<sup>45</sup> (quoting Hilzeimer)<sup>46</sup> that the baboon is not an inhabitant of Somaliland,. In fact, the baboon inhabits to-day the hills that extend on the north eastern coast of the Republic of Somalia, where the Somalis call it "Danyeer". The official report of the Government of Somalia mentioend this animal in the zoological life in Somalia<sup>47</sup>. Moreover, classical records refer to the existence of this animal on the north eastern coast of Somaliland, for Strabo mentioned the Greek name of this animal (Cynocephalus) as a name of a watering-place on this coast<sup>48</sup>. The location of this place conforms with the eastern end of the small bay into which pours the little river known in classical times as "Elephas" (see map 2). It is the river at the mouth of which Hatshepswt's fleet is suggested to have moored.

### 3- Cinnamon

The Egyptian texts which were recorded above the scene of loading the Egyptian ships with Puntite commodities<sup>49</sup>, mentioned cinnamon among these commodities by the name "teshpes". The researchers, who are against locating Punt in Northern Somaliland, declare that the physical circumstances do not permit the growing of cinnamon in Northern Somaliland. In fact, their view is right. But the evidences from classical times denote that cinnamon was a commercial article on the north-eastern coast of Somaliland and not a product of that region.

North-eastern Somaliland was famous for its trade of cinnamon in classical times, it was given the nomenclature "the Region of cinnamon" (Cinnamomifera regio)<sup>50</sup>. Some classical writers describe how cinnamon was brought to the Somali coast from other regions. Pliny says that it was

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<sup>45</sup>Herzog; op.cit. S.66 cf. kitchen; op.cit; p.188.

<sup>46</sup>Hizheimer, Max; "Zur Geographischen Lokalisierung von Punt", A.Z. 68 (1932), S. 113.

<sup>47</sup>Somali Republic; Somalia to-day (1970), p.234.

<sup>48</sup>Strabo; op.cit; §14; cf. Mullero; op.cit, pl.XII.

<sup>49</sup>Naville, Bd; op.cit., pl. 74.

<sup>50</sup>Mullero; op.cit., pl.XIIA.

merely transhipped there<sup>51</sup>. The Periplus says that the port of Mosyllum (Ras <sup>c</sup>Amtara) shipped such a great quantity of cinnamon, that that market-town required ships of larger size<sup>52</sup>. Strabo says that cinnamon came from the "far interior" to this region<sup>53</sup>.

Some researchers tried to solve this problem by assuming that cinnamon was brought in Graeco-Roman times from its producing regions to the Somali coast where it was mixed with bark from the laurel-groves mentioned by Strabo (as mentioned above) and taken thence to Arabia and Egypt.<sup>54</sup>

From these evidences, we can deduce that the region of north-eastern Somaliland despite its non-production of cinnamon (as a result of the absence of physical conditions favourable for growing cinnamon), played a great role in the trade of this important article in classical times. Accordingly, it is not improbable that the cinnamon trade was a continuous process which goes back to older times such as the time of Hatshepswt, like other articles in this region which did not change throughout the centuries that elapsed between the time of Hatshepsut and the classical times.

From all the above mentioned evidences, it is clear that the location of "Punt of Deir el Bahari" i.e. that part of Punt which the Egyptian texts of Hatshepswt expedition called "ḥtyw <sup>c</sup>ntyw nw Punt" or "the frankincense terraces of Punt" can be located on the coastal region in North-eastern Somaliland (or Somalia) between Ras <sup>c</sup>Amtara and Cape Guardafui. The point at which Hatshepswt's fleet landed is probably in the small bay which extends east of the town now called Alula, where a small river pours. The Somalis call this river together with the bay "Gal-Wein" (see map 2) and the river was known in classical times as River Elephant (or Elephas).

The location of "Punt of Deir El Bahari" on the north-eastern coast of Somaliland may be strengthened by the fact that some of the sites in its vicinity bear modern or classical names which approach the pronunciation of the word "Punt". Such as the cape known to-day as "Ras Binnah" which is situated to the south of cape Gurdafui. Ras Binnah was called "Panon" in classical times. Similarly, Ras Hafun which

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<sup>51</sup>Pliny; op.cit., VI §29.

<sup>52</sup>Schoff; op.cit., §10.

<sup>53</sup>Strabo; op.cit. §11,14.

<sup>54</sup>Schoff; op.cit. p.83-84.

is situated south of Ras Binnah, was called in classical times "Opone".

The names Binnah, Panon and Opone may be derived from the same root which was the origin of the Egyptian word "Punt"<sup>55</sup>.

From all the above mentioned indications and evidences, it is clear that kitchen view together with the other Egyptologists who locate Punt of the New Kingdom (Punt of Deir El Bahary) in the Eastern Sudan (see note no. 6), must be modified to be in the Old and Middle Kingdoms when the geographical terms Punt and Bia Punt were equivalent, or the latter was at least the eastern part of "Punt" where the Etbai desert is situated. I give here fresh evidence from the Egyptian texts in addition to that which I had mentioned in another paper<sup>56</sup> to confirm that the term "Bia Punt" was that of the Etbai desert (which extends from the Southern part of the Eastern Desert of Egypt to the North Eastern Sudan) through laying stress on two facts :

1. That the words "Bia" and its plural form "Biaw" refer in the Egyptian texts to the gold mines which lay at the Southern part of the Eastern Desert of Egypt and consequently embodies the adjacent desert in the North Eastern Sudan, which was of similar nature to that of Egypt, i.e. it yields gold.
2. That the land of "Bia Punt" was in close proximity to the South-Eastern Desert of Egypt according to these texts.

Of the first point, a hieroglyphic inscription on the rocks of Wadi Abu Mo'awaad which branches off the Wadi cAbbād (east to the city of Edfu in Upper Egypt) records a visit to the site by an official who says that he came to the place which he calls "The Mines (Biaw)", "for mining gold"<sup>57</sup>.

Further south, about 100 km, south west of the port of Berenice, another official called Dhuthotpe from the Middle Kingdom, left a graffito on the rocks of a watering place called "Abraq", giving his titles among which is "Reckoner of

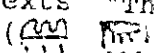
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<sup>55</sup>Meinhof, C; "Pwani", Zeitschrift für Eingeborenen Sprachen, 32 (1942), S. 300-302.

<sup>56</sup>Sayed, Abdel Monem A.H., Discovery of the site of the 12th dynasty port" RdE 29(1977) p.177.

<sup>57</sup>Green, F.w, "Notes on some inscriptions in the Etabi District" P.S.B.A. (1909) p.XXXII.

Gold" (sÿ hsb nbw),<sup>58</sup> a clear indication of gold mines in the vicinity.

In congruity of these documents, the South Eastern Desert of Egypt was called in numerous hieroglyphic texts "The Desert of Gold" or "The Foreign country of Gold" ( h3st nbw).<sup>59</sup>

Of the second point, that the land of "Bia Punt" was in close proximity to Egypt according to the texts of the Old and Middle Kingdoms, the reference in the inscription of Herkhuf to the land of "Bia Punt" denotes that during the Old Kingdom, it can be reached or traded with by land through Nile regions across the Sudan<sup>60</sup>.

The discovered monuments in the site of the port of Mersa Gawāsis attest two facts, firstly, the land of Bia-Punt can be reached by sea, secondly, the Egyptians obtained gold from it. These facts confirms the conclusion that the Etbai desert was the eastern (coastal) part of the land of Bia Punt during the Old Kingdom.

Another document from the Middle Kingdom attests that the term Punt was equivalent to Bia Punt during this kingdom, it is the inscription of Henu of the eleventh dynasty. He records that he dispatched a ship to Punt to bring fresh frankincense from the chiefs of the Red Land<sup>61</sup>. The combination here between "the Red Land" (a desert) and Punt indicates that Bia Punt, which is the Egyptian name of the Etbai desert is meant. Another phrase in the same inscription attests the close proximity of this part of Punt (Bia Punt) to Egypt. It is when Henu states that he sent the ship and waited until its return<sup>62</sup>.

Moreover from the Middle Kingdom, the story of the shipwrecked sailor confirmed also the proximity of the part of Punt (where the ship sank) to Egypt, the sailor stated

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<sup>58</sup>De Bruyn, P. "A graffito of the scribe Dhuthotpe, Reckoner of gold in the South-Eastern Desert of Egypt", JEA 42 (1956) p. 121-122.

<sup>59</sup>Gauthier, op.cit. IV p.163.

<sup>60</sup>Sayed, op.cit. p.177.

<sup>61</sup>BAR I §429.

<sup>62</sup>op. cit., §433.

that he reached the residence in Egypt in two months<sup>63</sup>. It is a short time for such a long journey if Punt was far away (for example, in Somaliland). It fits better the proximity of the land of Bia-Punt i.e. the Etbai desert on the Eastern coast of the Sudan, or an island against this coast.

Trying to define the exact landing point at which the Egyptian fleet, particularly that of Senwsert I (from whose region most of the monuments found at the port of Mersa Gawasis go back) on the coast of Bia Punt (the Eastern Sudan), a comparative method between the classical and Egyptian nomenclatures is adopted.

An account in Strabo's description of the Sudanese coast runs: "... then follows another mountain on which a temple of Isis, built by Sesostris, then an island planted with olive trees and at times overflowed<sup>64</sup>. This is followed by the city Ptolemais near the hunting-grounds of the elephants, founded by Eumedes who was sent by Philadelphus to the hunting ground ..." (Strabo, Book XVI, 8)<sup>65</sup>.

Scholars locate this city of Ptolemais (of the Hunts) on the site of the modern small harbour called 'Agiq (map. 4) about fifty miles south of Port Sudan<sup>66</sup>. If Sesostris was the name of one of the Pharaohs who were called Senwsert, (s-n-wsrt), then the Pharaoh meant is in most probability Senwsert I. His name which means "man(s) of (n) the mighty (wsrt) (goddess)", refers to the goddess Isis, for she is who bears the epithet "wsrt", or the mighty one". Here is a striking congruity to the tradition related by Strabo.

If we bear in mind the custom adopted by the Ptolemies for establishing ports on the African coast of the Red Sea in place of ancient ones, the example, of which is Philoteris on the site of the Pharaonic port Sww-(Mersa Gawasis), it can be concluded that the port of "Ptolemais of the Hunts" was founded on the site of the port frequented by the Egyptians on the Sudanese coast (Bia Punt) where a temple of Isis had been built probably in the time of Senwsert I. Its memory echoed down the centuries to the time of Strabo. If this

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<sup>63</sup>Golenischeff, m.w; Le Conte de Nafragé (1912) p.61.

<sup>64</sup>This description conforms with that of the Island of the Shipwrecked sailor.

<sup>65</sup>H. Hamilton and W. Falkner the geography of Strabo, Bohn's classical library Vol. III.

<sup>66</sup>Burstein, Stanely, m., Agatharchides of Chidus, London, 1989, p.7 and p. 144 n.2.

suggestion is right, the landing point of Senwsert I fleet may have been at 'Aqiq or in its vicinity.

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Fig.1 Back view of the shrine found at Wadi Gawasis on the Red sea shore, showing the anchors which form the pedestal (a,b). The jambs and rear block still retain the holes (c,d,e), which denote that the blocks were originally anchors.

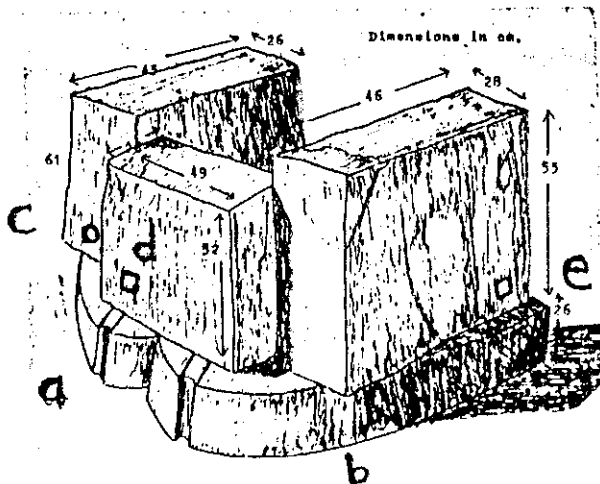


Fig.2 One of the anchors which formed the pedestal of the shrine shown in fig.1. The upper hole and channel served to hold the rope by which the anchor is lowered or lifted from the water. The lower hole was for a supplementary cord to help disengage the anchor from the bottom.



Fig.3. Inscriptions of the Stela of Antefoker which records the ship building process on the Nile bank (lines 3-4) and the reassembling one on the Red sea shore (L.7).

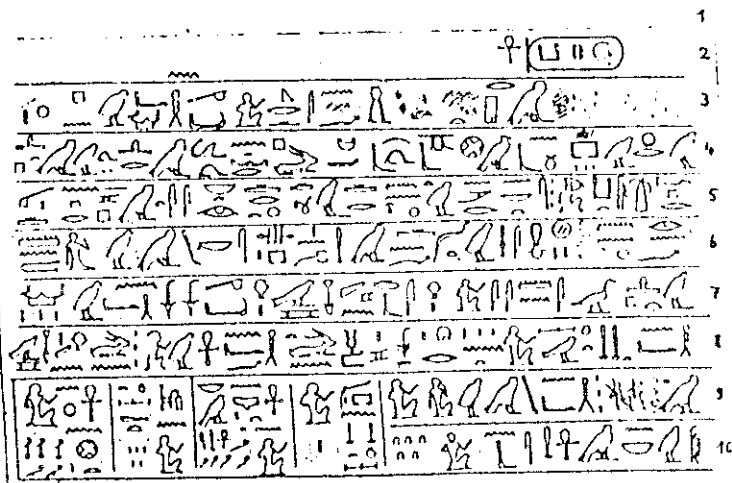




Fig.4. Representation of the Puntite scenes on the walls of the Temple of Hatshepswt at Deir el Bahari, recording the Queen's expedition to Punt. (Neville, Deir el Bahari III pl. LXIX).

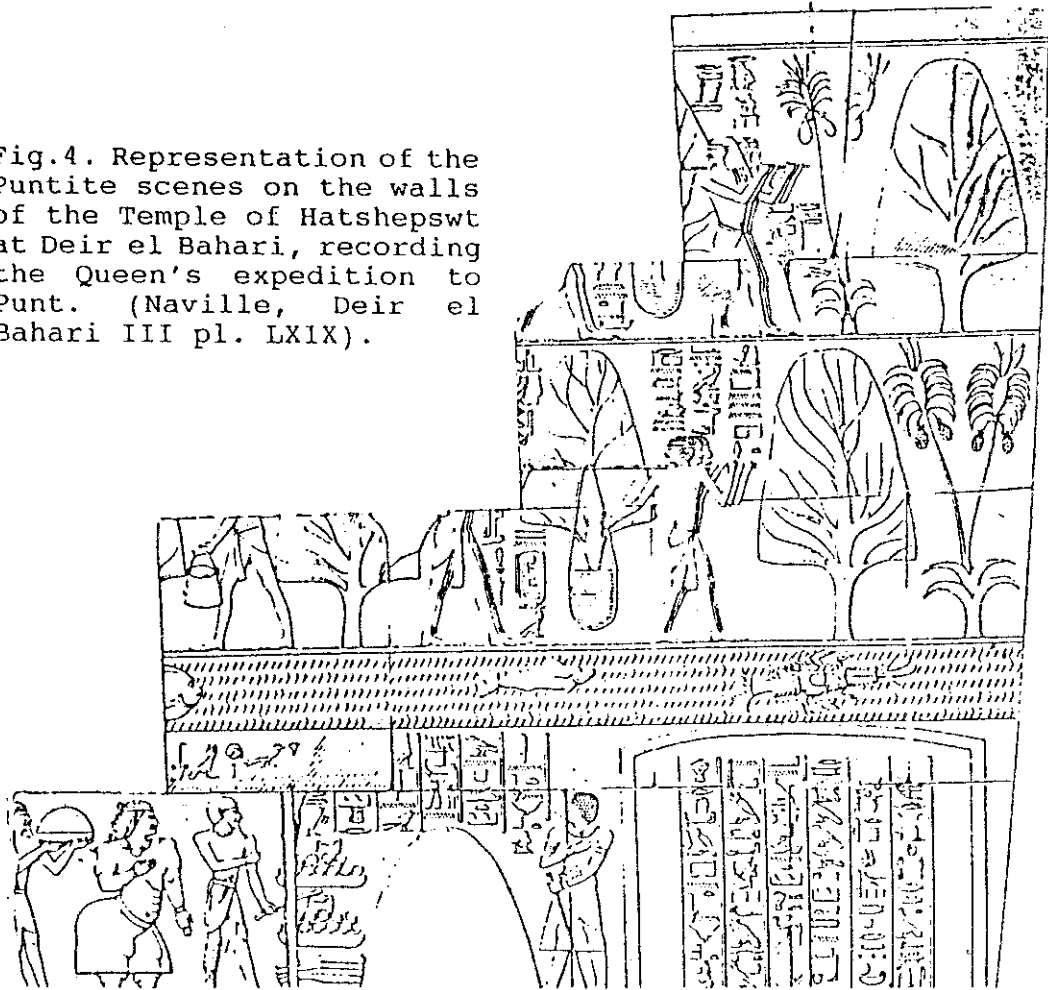


Fig.5 View of the rock of Cape Filuk seen from the bay of Alula (at the end of which the writer stands). The rock appears in the shape of a recumbent elephant, a feature which gave it the name "Cape Elephante" in classical times, and "Fil-ka" (the elephant) in the modern Somali language.

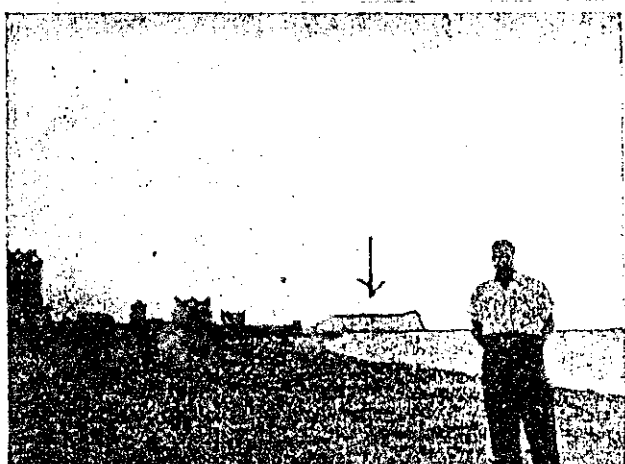


Fig 6. Part of the prevailing scenery which characterises the maritime mountain ranges extending between Ras 'Amtara and Cape Guardafui in N.E. Somaliland. The mountains are covered with frankincense trees which grow in the rock and gives the impression of the Egyptian term "The frankincense Terraces of Punt".



Fig.7 Detail of the trunk of a B. Frereana Frankincense tree showing the bulb clearly. (at the hand of the colleague represented in the picture). The use of the bulb is to store water in those arid regions, and to hold the tree firmly on the rock.

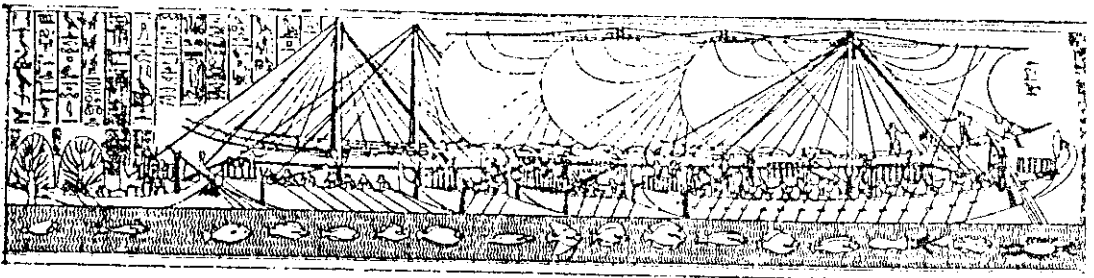


Fig.8 Representation of the fleet which Queen Hatshepswt sent to Punt, entering the Puntite harbour. The figures of freshwater fishes (the two catfishes on the extreme left), among marine creatures (particularly the panulirus on the extreme right), may point to the mouth of a river. (Naville; Deir el Bahari III pls. LXXII, LXXIII).

Fig.9 View of a date-palm tree on the Red sea shore. It can be noticed that the bifurcation of the tree is nearer to the ground than the dom-palm trees shown in Fig.10 This feature conforms the trees represented in the scenes of



Deir el Bahari (Fig.11). An indication which suggests that these trees were date-palm trees and not dom-palm trees. the (writer stands at a distance of 30 ft. from the tree).

Fig.10 The kind of the dom-palm trees which grow on the Red sea shore. The bifurcation of the tree is nearly at the middle of the trunk. (the writer stands at a distance of 60 ft. from the trees)



Fig. 11 The Puntite pile-hut as represented in the scenes of Deir el Bahari. Its poles resemble those of the Nilotic huts (Fig.12) But there is close resemblance between its semicircular shape and the semi-circular Somali hut (Fig.12).

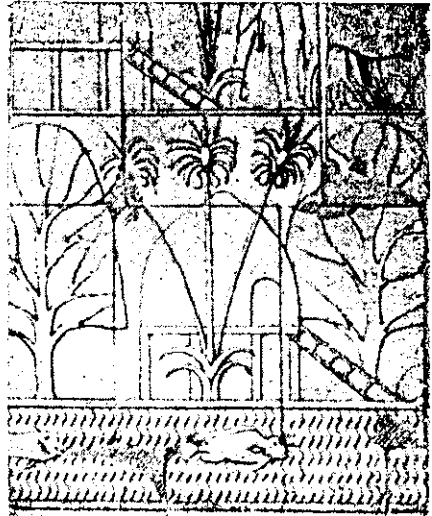


Fig.12. The semi-circular Somali hut of the pastoralists in northern Somaliland (Photograph by the writer).

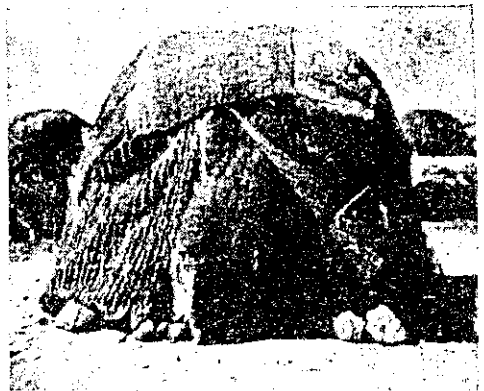
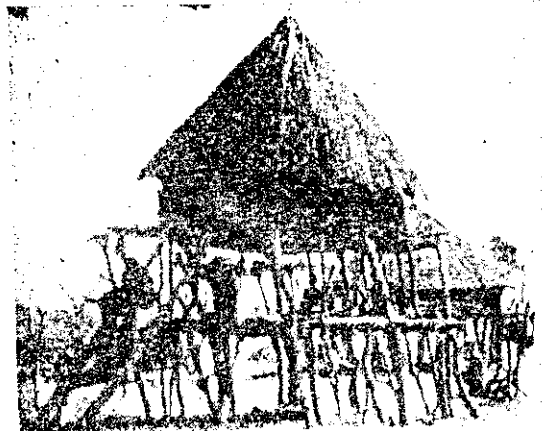
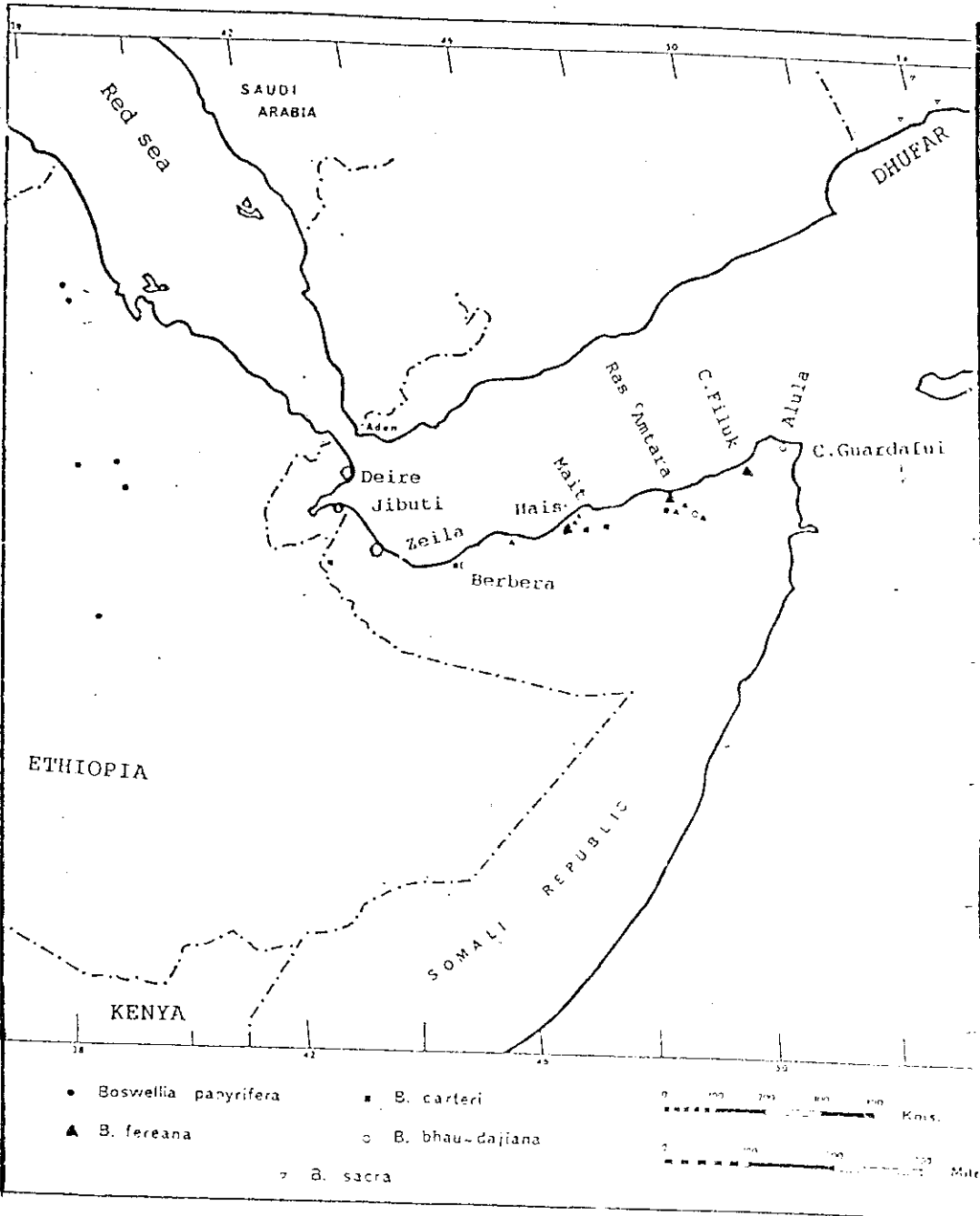
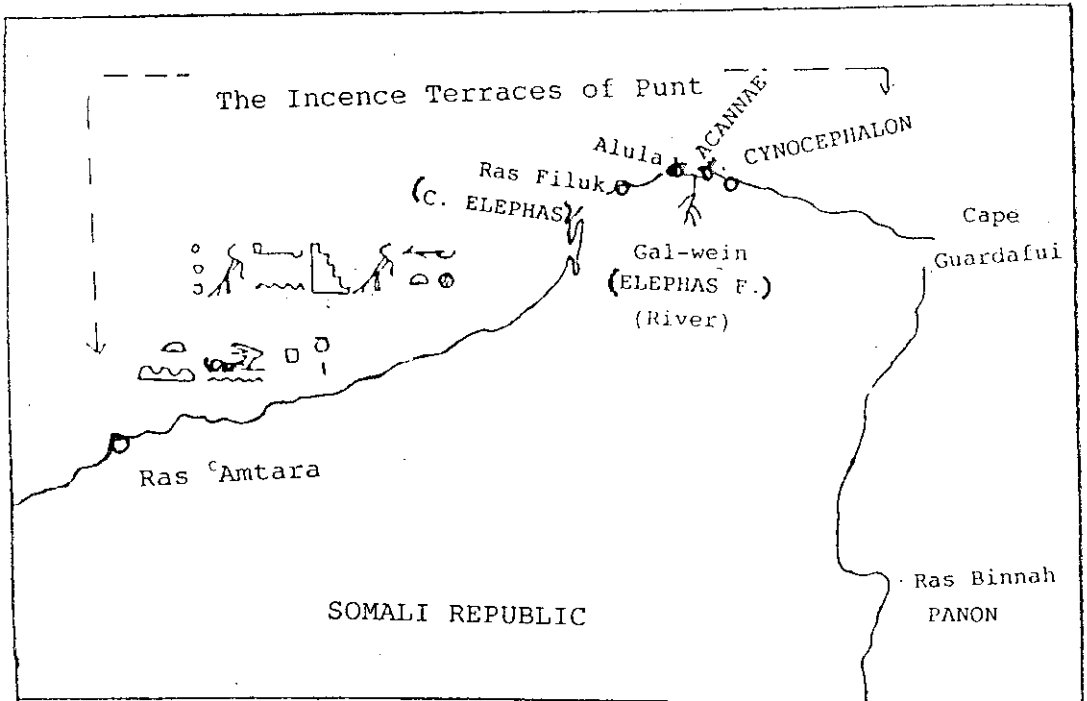


Fig.13. The Nilotic pile-hut (from : Herzog; Punt, Taf.5).

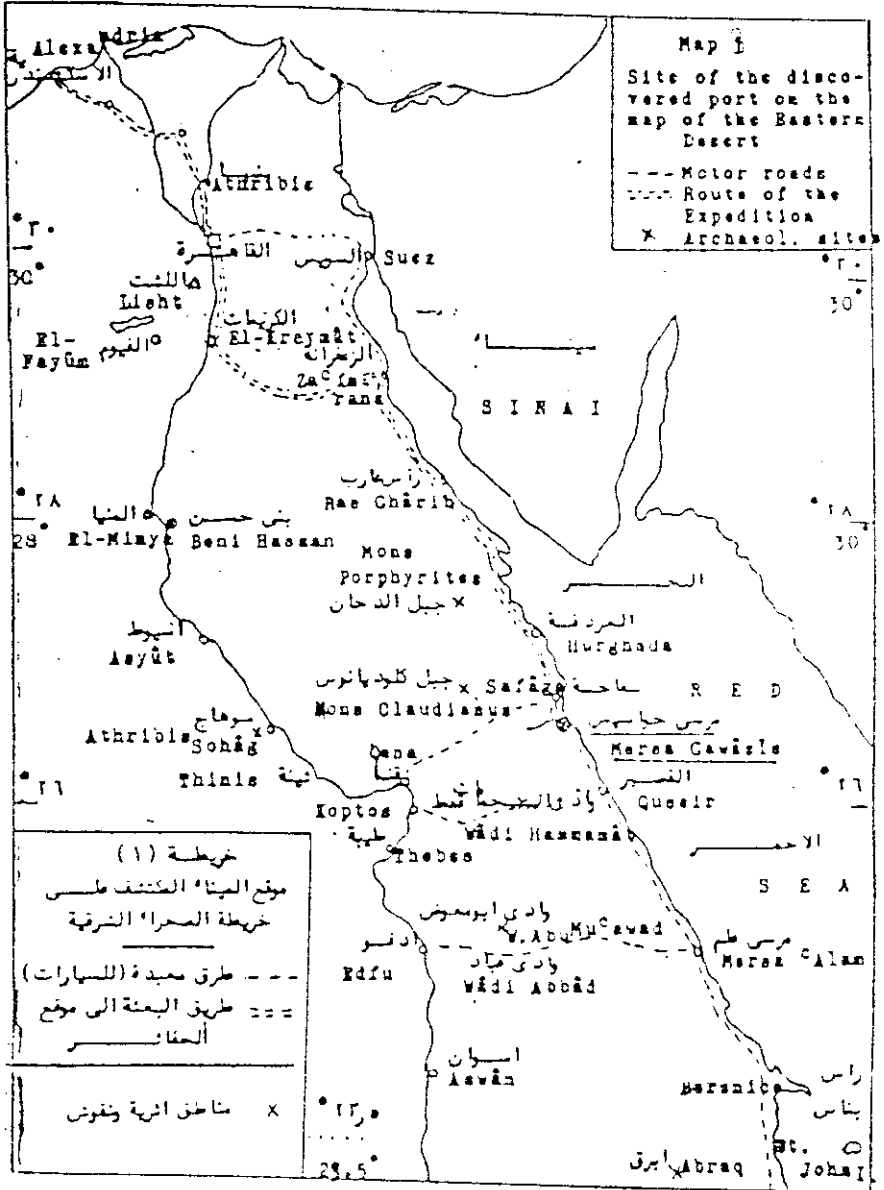




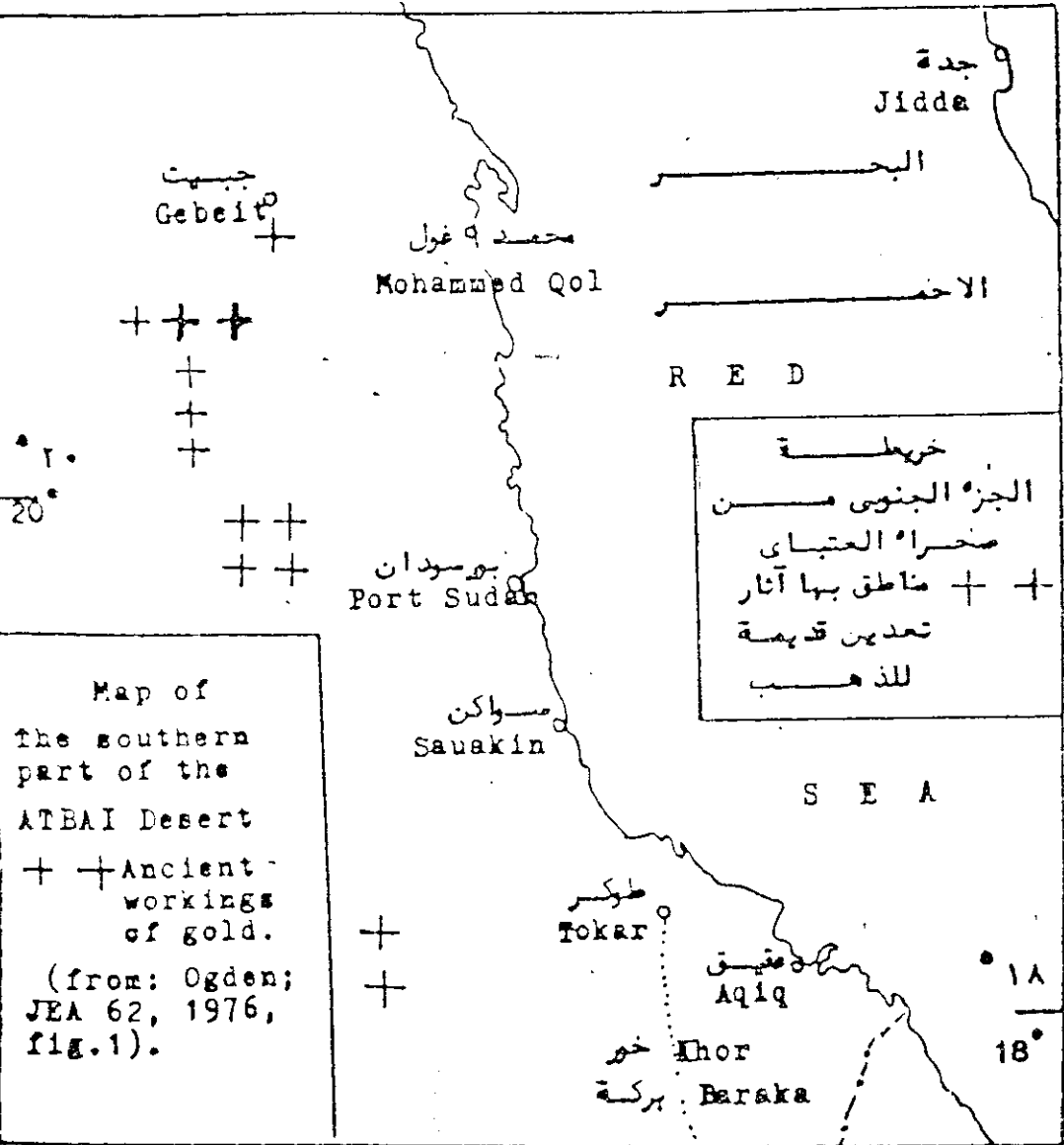
Map 1. Distribution of *Boswellia* Trees around the coasts of the Red Sea (according to Hepper).



Map 2. Map of North-eastern Somaliland  
(Classical names are written in CAPITAL letters)  
(ex. ACANNAE)



Map 3



Map 4



On the non-existence of the Nile-Red Sea canal  
(so called Canal of Sesostris)  
during the Pharaonic times\*

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Dr. Abdel Monem A.H.Sayed

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In an article published in this periodical, Louise Bradbury assumed that the Nile-Red Sea canal<sup>1</sup> was dug during the 12th dynasty and was in use during the New Kingdom until the reign of Ramses III<sup>2</sup>.

I here deal with this subject attesting that this canal didn't exist throughout the whole Pharaonic history.

Initially, from the study of the discovered monuments on the site of the 12th dynasty port at Wadi Gawasis on the Red sea shore and within the valley of Wadi Gawasis connected to it, I came to the conclusion that this canal which classical writers attributed its first digging to the Pharaoh whom they called "Sesostris", did not exist during the 12th dynasty from the times of Senwstet I, Amenemmes II, Senwsret II<sup>3</sup> and

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\*Forthcoming in the "Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt" Vol.

<sup>1</sup>This nomenclature is more precise than that of the "Red sea canal" which may be confounded with the modern Red sea canal i.e., the Suez canal.

<sup>2</sup>Louise Bradbury "Reflections on travelling to God's Land and Punt in the Middle Kingdom" - JARCE XXV (1988) p.144 n.87.

<sup>3</sup>L.Bradbury (op.cit. 144) refuted my conclusion that there are three recorded dates for using the port during the reign of Senwsret II assuming that no expedition to Punt was sent during the reign of this King. In the same time she contradicts herself by suggesting that the herald Khenty, which she erroneously read Khety, is the same Khety the overseer of hunters depicted in the tomb of Khnwmhotep II from the time of Senwsret II. She also erred when she assumed that some of the potsherds found at Wadi Gawasis are with the cartouche of Senwsret III (Ibid), while no cartouche of this King occurs on the potsherds, and the sole reference to him was an indirect one through mentioning the name of an official (h3ty<sup>c</sup> - Rc nwb K3w) who lived=

Senwsret III<sup>4</sup>.

The evidence of my conclusion is the change of the anchors of the ships to stelae used for building the shrine of ,Ankhow, the leader of the naval expedition to the Land of Bia-Punt. This indicates that the ships ended their return voyage at the port of Mersa Gawāsis and did<sup>7,8</sup> continue sailing to the apex of the gulf of Suez where<sup>5</sup> the assumed Sesostris canal was suggested to pour.<sup>5</sup>

A line in the text of the stela of Antefoker indicates that the ships were able to be dismantled and carried in sections across the land road between Coptos on the Nile bank and Mersa Gawāsis on the Red sea shore<sup>6</sup>.

In the present study I go further to prove that the Nile-Red sea canal did not exist during the New Kingdom.

In this connection, I depend partly on a result of calibrated radio-carbon dating of the organic material which I had found with the discovered monuments. I have very recently received this result from the British

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=in his time (according to Prof. Posener who had told me in a letter before his death that it is a final reading) (Abdel Monem A.H.Sayed, "New light on the recently discovered port on the Red sea shore" (CdE 58(1988) p.26).

<sup>4</sup>Sayed, CdE pp. 28 and 35

To avoid confusion we shall use the Egyptian form "Senwsret" instead of the Greek form "Sesostris". The latter will be used only when dealing with the Greek tradition about him.

<sup>5</sup>Recent investigations revealed traces of an ancient canal which extended across the northern half of the Isthmus of Suez between lakes al-Ballāḥ and al-Ṭinah (ancient Pelusium). It is suggested that it was dug during the Middle Kingdom for defensive purpose. (W.H. Shea, "A date for the recently discovered Eastern canal of Egypt". BASOR 226(1977) p.297.

<sup>6</sup>Abdel Monem A.H.Sayed, "Discovery of the site of the 12th dynasty port at Wadi Gawāsis on the Red sea shore" Rde, 29(1977) p.170 n.18 and CdE 58(1983) p.29.

Museum Laboratory (fig 1)<sup>7</sup>

Despite the very wide range of time which the calibrated radio carbon dating gives, it covers the time of both the Middle Kingdom (BM 1845 R, which is a piece of cedar wood) and the New Kingdom (BM 1844 and 1846 which are rope and "Ḥalfa" grass respectively).

This denotes that the port was in use during the New Kingdom also, although no monuments or artifacts were found on the site of the port or its vicinity from this time.

Indeed, this result cannot be relied on alone for solving the intricate problem of the non-existence of the Nile-Red sea canal during the New Kingdom. For this reason it is necessary to search for its solution among the Egyptian monuments themselves.

The indication which urged Scholars to suggest the existence of the Nile-Red sea canal during the New Kingdom in general and the time of Queen Ḥatshepswt in particular, is a scene among the reliefs of the expedition to Punt. Two vessels are represented stern to stern. One in the Puntite harbour with dismantled sail, and the other under full sail (fig 2)<sup>8</sup>. Above the latter an inscription says "Sailing, arriving in peace journeying to Thebes...."<sup>9</sup>.

Scholars consider the inscription recording the arrival of the vessels to Thebes and consequently the scene is upon the Nile<sup>10</sup>. As there is no reference to land transport they suggest that the vessels crossed the Eastern Delta through a canal which connected the Red sea with the Nile<sup>11</sup>. They recall the classical writers statement which attributed the first digging of this

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<sup>7</sup>My thanks are due to Dr. Janet Ambers of the Department of Scientific Research of the British Museum for furnishing me with this fresh calibrated result.

<sup>8</sup>Naville, The Temple of Deir el Bahary III pl 74.

<sup>9</sup>J.H., Breasted ARE II §266.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid. n.d.

<sup>11</sup>J.H. Breasted, A history of Egypt (1906) p.276.

canal to the Pharaoh whom they called Sesostris<sup>12</sup> which they identified with one of the Senwsrets.

But when the aforementioned scene is examined, the vessel over which the inscription mentioning Thebes is depicted, (fig.2 right), bears witness that it is still in the Red sea. The species of fishes represented under it are the same as those under the vessel mooring in the Puntite harbour (fig 2. left) i.e. none of them are fresh water species. Therefore, the ship is still in the Red sea and the inscription above it indicates the setting out on the journey from the Puntite harbour towards Thebes (lit: journeying to Thebes), it may have been an optative form of safe return.

Furthermore, there are several firm rooted evidences for the non-existence of this canal in the same period, for they indicate a land traffic of the Puntite merchandise from a port on the Red sea shore to the Nile valley.

The earliest of these land traffic indications is from the time of Amenophis II (in most probability), it is a scene in the tomb no 143 at Thebes which represents the unloading of the Puntite merchandise in the Egyptian port (fig 3) and the departure and return march through the desert. The Egyptian official concerned with the Punt trade is represented with his chariot receiving the Puntite products apparently on the Red sea shore. His men are depicted driving asses loaded with the goods received. An incense tree is carried on a yoke by two men<sup>13</sup>. The Puntite traders or sailors are shown steering their raft like sailing boats. Some scholars suggest that they carried their goods in these raft-like boats from Punt<sup>14</sup>, but it is impossible for such raft-like boats to sail for so long a distance from Punt

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<sup>12</sup>Strabo, Book 17. I.25

In fact, Aristotle was the earliest classical writer to attribute this first digging to Sesostris, but he stated that he did not complete it. (Meteorologica, I chap. XIV §27), But strabo was the earliest one to attribute the first digging of the canal together with its completion to Sesostris and to define his time before the Trojan war (op. cit.).

<sup>13</sup>T. Save Söderbergh, The Navy of the 18th Egyptian Dynasty, Uppsala, 1946 p.23.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

(Somaliland at the time of the New Kingdom)<sup>15</sup> to Egypt. I suggest that these Puntites use their raft-like boats either for going to and fro between the shore and their larger cargo ships which lay anchor in the open sea to avoid the shoals, or for sailing between the Egyptian port and the near-by commercial settlements of the intermediaries who imported the Puntite products from the far off land of Punt as deduced from the inscriptions of Queen Hatshepsut<sup>16</sup>.

The second indication of land traffic of the Puntite merchandise occurs in the tomb of Amenmose at Thebes, from the reign of Tuthmosis IV. It is of much the same character. There are shown the asses laden with the Puntite merchandise in their way from the Egyptian port to the Nile Valley (fig. 4).

The Third indication of land traffic of the Puntite merchandise between the Red sea shore and the Nile Valley is an inscriptional one. It records a return voyage from Punt in the time of Ramses III<sup>17</sup> (fig 5). It is of utmost importance, for despite the location of the Royal Residence (Pi-Ramses) in the Eastern Delta, i.e. at the end of the assumed Nile-Red sea canal (if it existed), the Puntite merchandise was unloaded on the shore of the desert of upper Egypt and laden on asses and men through the difficult terrain to Coptos on the Nile bank where it was transshipped northwards to the Eastern Delta, a definite evidence of the non-existence of the Nile-Red sea canal at that period<sup>18</sup>.

The conclusion concerning the non-existence of this canal during Pharaonic times was nearly attained by the most comprehensive study of the subject published long

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<sup>15</sup>Sayed, CdE 58(1983) p 33 n.5.

<sup>16</sup>Breasted, ARE II §287.

<sup>17</sup>W. Erichsen, Bibliotheca Aegyptiaca, Papyrus Harris I (1933) pl. 77-8, 78 and Breasted ARE IV §407.

<sup>18</sup>Despite this direct and clear evidence of the non-existence of the canal, some scholars assume, with no documental foundation, that the canal did exist in the time of Ramses III and that this King reintroduced the old custom of loading and unloading Egyptian barges at the Highlands of Coptos!! (Bradbury, op. cit. p.144 n.87).

ago by the late Prof. G. Posener<sup>19</sup>. The same is reiterated in later works<sup>20</sup>.

The sole attested fact of the existence of the canal is that it was dug (and completed) by Darius I (521-486 B.C.). This was firstly related by Herodotus (Book II, 158).

Despite the contradicting statements of subsequent classical writers that Darius I gave up the work before its completion for fear of submerging Egypt, (Diodorus I §53, Strabo 17, I 25), the authenticity of Herodotus statement is attested by inscriptional evidence<sup>21</sup>.

Darius I erected several tablets along the Southern bank of the canal which he dug (map 1). The tablets are inscribed in hieroglyphs and cuneiform. On one of the hieroglyphic tablet (at Kabrit), Darius I declares "The canal was dug to carry water to the sands .... I equipped 24 (or 32) ships carrying ... towards Persia<sup>22</sup>.

In the cuneiform text on one of the other tablets (at Tell al-Maskhuta) he confirms his achievement declaring "I ordered to dig a canal (lit: river) from the river of Egypt "Piru" is his name to river Amer (the bitter lakes) ... It was dug according to my command and the vessels sailed on this canal (lit: river) from Egypt to

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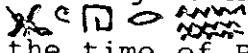
<sup>19</sup>G. Posener, "Le canal du Nil à la Mer Rouge avant les Ptolémées" CdE No 26(1938) pp. 269 and 271.

<sup>20</sup>A. Gardiner, E. Peet, and J. Cerny, The inscriptions of Sinai (1955) Vol. II p. 12-13. They stated that it is better to leave the matter in suspense.

<sup>21</sup>This authenticity may be due to his nearly contemporary visit (ca. 448 B.C.) to Egypt with the digging of the canal by Darius I and this may be also the reason that Herodotus did not mention Sesostris as the first digger of the canal. (Book II 158), while Strabo who lived nearly 400 years after the time of Herodotus was the first classical writer to attribute the digging and completion of the canal to Sesostris (Strabo 17, I 25). An indication which points out to the fabrication of the tradition.

<sup>22</sup>André Servin, "Stèles de l'Isthme de Suez" BSEIS T. III (1949 - 1950) p.81.

Persia".<sup>23</sup>.

The Persian name "Piru" which occurs in the text mentioned above is - according to André Servin - the Egyptian name "Pwhr",  which occurs<sup>24</sup> in an inscription from the time of Ramses II found at Serapeum (map 1) and kept in the Museum of Ismailia<sup>25</sup>. Servin translates the text as follows: (I "Ramses" have dug) the river Pwhr of Thekou in order that the inundation may come according to my power"<sup>26</sup>. Servin concluded that Ramses II carried out the digging of the canal (which began in the New Kingdom in his opinion) to Thekou, then Necho extended it to the Saba-byar and Gabal Maryam. At last Darius continued the work to the Bitter lakes<sup>27</sup>.

Whatever Servin's view of the digging of the canal may be, it points out to the fact that the canal as a continuous waterway was not completed during the Pharaonic times. In my opinion, the work of Ramses II was for supplying the religious centres in Wadi Tumilat, particularly the Temples of Atum at Thekou and Pi-Atum (Tell el-Maskhouta), with the necessary freshwater for irrigation, more than digging a continuous water way between the Nile and the Red sea.

The reference to Ramses II as a digger of a canal may present a clue to the problem of attributing the digging of the Nile-Red sea canal to Pharaoh Sesostris by classical writers.

In a previous work I dealt with the legendary and fabulous deeds in the Red sea, which the classical writers attributed to the Pharaoh whom they called Sesostris<sup>28</sup>.

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<sup>23</sup>M.V. Scheil "Inscription de Darius à Suez" BIFAO, T. XXX (1930) p.293.

<sup>24</sup>op. cit. 94-95.

<sup>25</sup>A. Bruyère "Un monument de Ramses II à Serapeum" BSEIS Tome III (1949 - 1950) p.57-74.

<sup>26</sup>op. cit. p. 95.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid.

<sup>28</sup>Sayed, CdE 58(1983) p.32-33.

I had admitted the interpretation of some scholars at these legends were devised by the Egyptians during the Persian dominion about their native Kings as a kind of national propaganda to rival or eclipse the achievement of the Persian kings in the Red sea<sup>29</sup>. But I had added a modification to this view, that these legends had some historical roots which are reflected by the choice of Sesostris (Senwsret I) because of his naval activity in the Red sea<sup>30</sup>.

In fact, the identity of Sesostris in classical writers traditions is very complex. A group of these traditions reflect the deeds of Senwsret I in the Red sea as mentioned above, another group mirror the wars of Senwsret III in Nubia<sup>31</sup>, a third group points out to the building activities of Ramses II at Memphis<sup>32</sup>.

Of these three Pharaohs, Ramses II is that to whom the digging of the Nile-Red sea canal can be attributed, for this deed rests on a historical root, it is the inscription found in the Isthmus of Suez (at Serapeum) which refers, as I stated above, to his digging of a canal to carry freshwater to the region of Pi-Atum and Thekou in the Wadi Tumailat. Similar to that of the Red sea tradition (mentioned above), the tradition of digging the Nile-Red sea canal was fabricated by the Egyptians to found this fact to rival or eclipse the achievement of the Persian King in the Eastern Delta and Isthmus of Suez.

Having excluded the existence of the Nile-Red sea canal during the New Kingdom, it is necessary to search for the port from which the Egyptians set sail on their journeys in the Red sea at that time.

The reference in the Papyrus Harris to the place at which the ships of Ramses III landed as "of the highlands (or desert) of Coptos (h3st Gbtyw)" may help us to identify this place with the port of Mersa Gawasis,

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<sup>29</sup>Alan B. Lloyd, "Necho and the Red sea, some considerations - JEA 63(1977) p.152.

<sup>30</sup>His expedition to the Land of Bia Punt, Sayed op. cit. p.32.

<sup>31</sup>Diodorus I 55 (called by him Sesöosis).

<sup>32</sup>The building of the huge temple of Ptah at Memphis and erecting enormous statues in front of its Pylon (Herodotus II 108, 110 and Diodorus I 58).



for the name of this port (sww) occurs in an inscription found at Wadi Gawāsis followed by "(of) the quay of the Coptite nome"<sup>33</sup>.

But an objection may arise against this conclusion, that "ḥ3st Gbtyw" may also refer to the port of Quseir (ca. 60 Km south of Mersa Gawāsis).

In fact, the extensive excavations carried out in the port of Quseir (el Qadim) by the expedition of the University of Chicago for three seasons did not reveal a single Pharaonic monument<sup>34</sup>.

Similarly, the city of Quseir itself did not yield any monument from the Pharaonic period. In fact, Weigall found among its houses some hieroglyphic fragments, but they are of Ptolemaic date<sup>35</sup>.

But a question may be raised, why did the Egyptians prefer the port of Mersa Gawasis despite its difficult and long road to Coptos, to the easy and relative short road of Wadi Hammamāt which leads from Coptos to Quseir?

The Turin Papyrus Map (map. 2a) may present an answer to this question. It depicts the roads from the Nile valley to the Red sea (called Yam on the map)<sup>36</sup>. Around

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<sup>33</sup>Sayed, RdE 29(1977) p.160 and 175.

<sup>34</sup>D.S. Whitecomb and J. Johnson, Quseir al-Qadim, 1978, 1980 ARCE. cf. Abdel Monem A.H. Sayed, "Review of "Quseir al-Qadim 1980" Cde Tome 59 (1984) p.293-294.

<sup>35</sup>A. Weigall, Travels in the upper Egyptian Deserts (1913) p.81 and pl.X.

Although the Egyptian nomenclature "ḥ3st Gbtyw" cannot be applied to the sites of the two other ports on the Red sea shore, i.e. Clysma-Suez and Berenice-Ras Banās, because of their remoteness, archaeological investigations did not reveal on these sites any monument or artifact which refers to Pharaonic naval activity (B. Bruyère, Fouilles de Clysma-Qolzom (Suez) 1930-2 IFAOC, 1966; Golenischeff, une excursion à Berenice", Rec de Trav. XIII (1913) p.8/f cf. PM VII p.326.

<sup>36</sup>This rendering is adopted by most Egyptologists and geologists, but G. Goyon rendered it "The Nile" which led him to identify the well on the map with "Bir Hammamāt" instead of "Bir Fawakhir" which lies amid the gold mines. He also applied the map to the area south =

the main road on the map (see map 2a) (which is identified by scholars with Wadi Fawakhir<sup>37</sup>) and the valleys branching off it, are scattered gold mines and schist (greywacke) quarries.

While the map was chiefly intended to be a guide to the gold mines and schist quarries at Wadi Fawakhir and its surroundings, (nearly at the middle of Wadi Hammamat)<sup>38</sup>, the three roads depicted on it are marked with labels which denote that they lead to the (Red) sea and to a port on its shore<sup>39</sup>.

The reason for this combination is the Egyptian way of organizing manpower in Eastern Desert projects.

They usually combine two projects to exploit, as much as can be, the manpower within their reach. Examples of this are building (or more precisely "assembling") ships for Punt expeditions on the Red sea shore together with cutting schist blocks from the quarries of Wadi Fawakhir (the inscriptions of Henu<sup>40</sup> and Ameni<sup>41</sup>) or extracting gold from the gold mines on the roads leading to the port on the Red sea shore (the expedition of Ramses III to Punt<sup>42</sup>).

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= of Wadi Hammamat adjacent to Bir Hammamat with its rough roads leading to Luxor (in his opinion) and scarcity of gold mines, while he ignored the area north of Wadi Hammamat adjacent to Bir Fawakhir and Wadi Atalla which is pierced by relatively easier roads flanked by numerous gold mines. (G. Goyon "Le papyrus de Turin dit" Des Mines d'or" et le Wadi Hammamat ASAE. t. XLIX(1949) p.337-392.

<sup>37</sup>G.W. Murray, "The gold-mines of the Turin Papyrus" in John Ball, Egypt in the classical geographers (1942) p.180-2.

<sup>38</sup>Wadi is an Arabic word for "valley", Fawakhir for "potsherds." Hammamat for "baths", the last name is given to the unfinished sarcophagi (cut by the ancients from the schist quarries) because they resemble the basins used for bathing.

<sup>39</sup>Bradbury, op. cit. p 150.

<sup>40</sup>Breasted ARE I § 432.

<sup>41</sup>Sayed, CdE 58 p.27-28.

<sup>42</sup>Breasted ARE IV § 228. This matter will be dealt=

The first of the roads which leads to the (Red) sea shore is labelled on the map "the road which leads to the, sea (Yam)". According to Murray's identification<sup>43</sup>, this road conforms to the part of Wadi Hammamāt extending from Bir Fawakhir to the north east towards Quseir on the Red sea shore (maps 2a and b).

The second road (map 2a.) is labelled "another road to the (Red) sea" identified by Murray with the Wadi Um cEsh al-Zarqa which is a tributary of Wadi cAtallah. The third road (map. 2a) is labelled the "road of Tent-pa-mer". It was a problem for which Egyptologists could not find a reasonable rendering<sup>44</sup> until Bradbury ingeniously translated it "The Road belonging to the Harbour"<sup>45</sup> which she identified with the harbour of Sww

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= with below in detail.

<sup>43</sup>I adopt here this identification because it is still the most logic and reasonable, although it is the oldest one (1942). Goyon's identification has defects as we have stated above. In the last few years another ingenious identification of the map by Louise Bradbury, would have been accepted, but unfortunately it did not present a convincing conformity of the gold mine map (the small one) to the schist quarries map (the larger one). This conformity must bring the two variegated roads on the two maps side by side to denote the continuation of Wadi Fawakhir (or Wadi Hammamāt) which is flanked by the Bekhen (schist) stone hills. Thus the schist quarries map must conform to the area extending south west of Wadi cAtallah to Bir Hammamāt where hundreds of inscriptions were engraved on the rocks, most of which record the working of the schist quarries by the Egyptians. Contrary to this fact, Bradbury shifted the variegated road flanked by these hills to the north, identifying them with the black dolemite rocks of Wadi Hamāmah (the name means "valley of the pigeon, not to be confounded with Wadi Hammamāt) which lies at about 50 Km north of Wadi Hammamāt (Bradbury, op. cit. p.154) despite the absence of inscriptions referring to schist working by the Egyptians at Wadi Hamāmah.

<sup>44</sup>A. Gardiner translated it as "Road of the Treasurer?". While Goyon left it with no translation doubting Gardiner's translation (Goyon, op.cit. p.379 n.2).

<sup>45</sup>Bradbury, op. cit. p. 150.

- Mersa Gawasis. According to Murray, it is Wadi cAtallah itself<sup>46</sup>. It leads also to Wadi Saqi and Wadi Gawasis.

Therefore, there are two roads which lead to Mersa Gawasis passing by the numerous gold mines.

The exploitation of these mines by the expeditions sent to Punt was attested by inscriptions bearing the names of the Kings during whose reigns these expeditions were sent. At the junction of Wadi cAallah and Wadi Saqi, the cartouches of both Senwsret I and Ramses III are depicted<sup>47</sup>. As mentioned above, these two Kings sent expeditions to Punt. (the former to Bia Punt).

Similarly, among the representations of the tomb no 143 of the time of Amenophis II (mentioned above p. ), the scene of receivin, the products of Punt contains an inscription recording that the products brought by the official included gold which was called "gold of the highland (desert) of Coptos"<sup>48</sup> an allusion to gold working combined with the Punt project.

To some similar extent, a text of Hatshepswt's inscriptions mentions "the electrum of the best of highlands" being weighed with the products of Punt"<sup>49</sup>.

Although the word "Coptos" did not occur in this text, yet the reference to "electrum of the highlands" denotes that of Coptos, for the two words usually occur with each others.

From the various data mentioned above, it can be concluded that the land traffic of Punt merchandise was the prevailing custom during the Middle and New Kingdoms and that the Port of Sww-Mersa Gawāsis was in use during these times as the starting point and landing place of

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<sup>46</sup>Murray, op. cit. p. 182.

<sup>47</sup>Green "Notes on some inscriptions in the Ethbai district" PSBA 31(1909) pl. LIV no.4.

<sup>48</sup>Cumming, Egyptian historical records of the later Eighteenth dynasty, Fasc. 2 (1984) no 1473.

<sup>49</sup>Breasted, ARE II 373.

the ships destined for the land of Punt<sup>50</sup>. This fact refutes the assumption that the Nile-Red sea canal existed during both the Middle and New Kingdoms.

Although this paper is chiefly assigned to the problem of the Nile-Red sea canal during the New Kingdom, it is relevant to discuss this problem during the Old kingdom for the data are nearly the same.

The recorded expeditions to Punt during the Old kingdom were at the times of Saḥure<sup>51</sup> (5th dynasty) and Pepi II<sup>52</sup> (6th dynasty). It is not improbable that the expeditions to Punt at these times used the port of Mersa Gawasis, for as we have proved above, it was the sole port on the Red sea frequented by the Ancient Egyptians. There is a northern road which the ancient Egyptians could follow from the Nile Valley to this port. It crosses the valley of Wadi Hamāmah<sup>53</sup> to the valley of Wadi Gidami and take an eastward direction to Semna and Wadi Saqi whence to Wadi Gawāsis. A road which

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<sup>50</sup>On my papers published in RdE 29(1977) p.174 and CdE 58(1983) p.31, I suggested that the port of Mersa Gawasis was also used for the journeys to Sinai. I came to this conclusion through a comparative study between the scene of the 37 Asiatics in the tomb of Khnumhotep II at Beni Hassan and the stela of Khnumhotep found at Wadi Gasus (2 Km north of Wadi Gawasis). My conclusion was in some respects attained by H. Goedicke (the relationship with Sinai) sever years later (Goedicke JARCE 21, (1984) p. 204).

Strangely enough, L. Bradbury assumed that Goedicke's contribution was not available for me (Ibid n. 78) ignoring the precedence of my papers!! She also assumed that Khnumhotep III not Khnumhotep II was the owner of the stela of Wadi Gasus, an assumption which has no root, for both the scribe Neferhotep and the 37 Asiatics are represented in the tomb of Khnumhotep II not in the IIIrd. Also, another rootless assumption by her, is that the Egyptians used the land route through the Wadi Araba to Zaafrāna on the Red sea shore for their journeys to Sinai (p. 143) while the port of Zaaferāna did not yield any Pharaonic monument or artifact!!.

<sup>51</sup>Breasted ARE I § 161.

<sup>52</sup>Breasted ARE I § 360.

<sup>53</sup>As we have stated above (p. ) this valley must not be confounded with the valley of Wadi Hammamāt.

was flanked by numerous gold mines. That the Egyptians frequented this road during the time of Sahure is attested by the cartouche of this King which is engraved on the rocks of Wadi Hamamah<sup>54</sup>.

Although the name of Pepi II was not engraved in this vicinity (as far as I know), yet the reference to building a ship on the sea shore, to be sent to the Land of Punt which occurs in the tomb of Pepi-nakht at Aswan<sup>55</sup>, may point to the port of Mersa Gawasis, as it is the sole port on the Red sea shore attested by Pharaonic monuments, contrary to the port of Quseir suggested by some scholars<sup>56</sup>) which lacks Pharaonic data as we have stated above (p ).

Therefore, as a result of the nearly continuous use of the port of Mersa Gawasis throughout the principal periods of Pharaonic history (Old Kingdom, M. Kingd. and New Kingd.) it can be attested that the Nile-Red sea canal did not exist all over the Pharaonic times.

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<sup>54</sup>Green, op. cit. p. 321 no. 34.

<sup>55</sup>Breasted ARE § 360.

<sup>56</sup>J.H. Breasted, A History of Egypt (1906) p.142.

Abbreviations

ASAE	Annales du Service des Antiquités de l'Égypte.
BASOR	Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research.
BIFAO	Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'archéologie orientale.
BSEIS	Bulletin de la Société d'études historiques et géographiques de l'Isthme de Suez.
CdE	Chronique d'Égypte.
JARCE	Jorunal of the American Research center in Egypt.
JEA	Journal of Egyptian Archaeology.
P.M.	B. Porter, R.Moss, Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Reliefs and Paintings.
PSBA	Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology.
RdE	Revue d'égyptologie.
Rec de Trav.	Recueil de travaux relatifs à la philologie et à l'archéologie égyptiennes et assyriennes.

# THE BRITISH MUSEUM

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22 October 1992

## Calibrated Radiocarbon Results for Gawsis samples

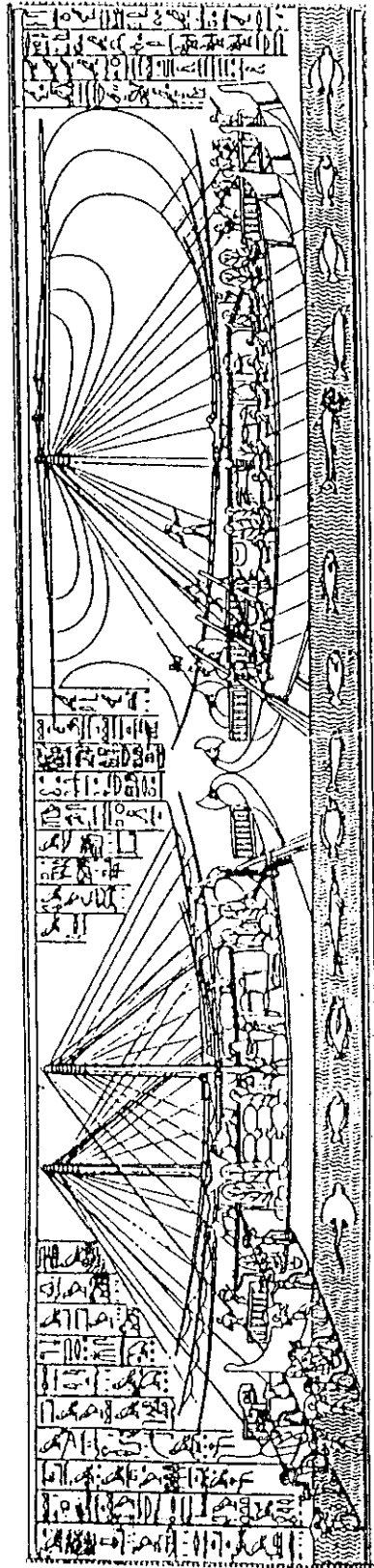
Lab no	radiocarbon result (BP)	calibrated age range in calendar years BC (Pearson & Stuiver, 1986) 68% probability
BM-1844R	3310 ± 100	1735 to 1510
BM-1845R	3650 ± 100	2190 to 2160 or 2145 to 1890
BM-1846R	3080 ± 160	1520 to 1105

*J. A. ...*

at Ambers

1) The calibrated radio carbon dating of the organic materials with the monuments at Wadi Gawasis.  
BM-1844R is a piece of rope      BM-1845R is a piece of cedar wood  
BM-1846R is a piece of Halfa grass





(fig.2) A scene from Hatshepsut's reliefs of her expedition to Punt (reproduced from Söderbergh, op. cit. fig.1). Above the vessel under full sail (right), is the inscription which scholars considered recording the arrival of the vessels to Thebes and landing on the Nile bank, i.e., on freshwater. But the fishes represented under this vessel which are of the same species like those represented under the vessel mooring in the Puntite harbour (left), i.e., salt water fishes, refutes this assumption.

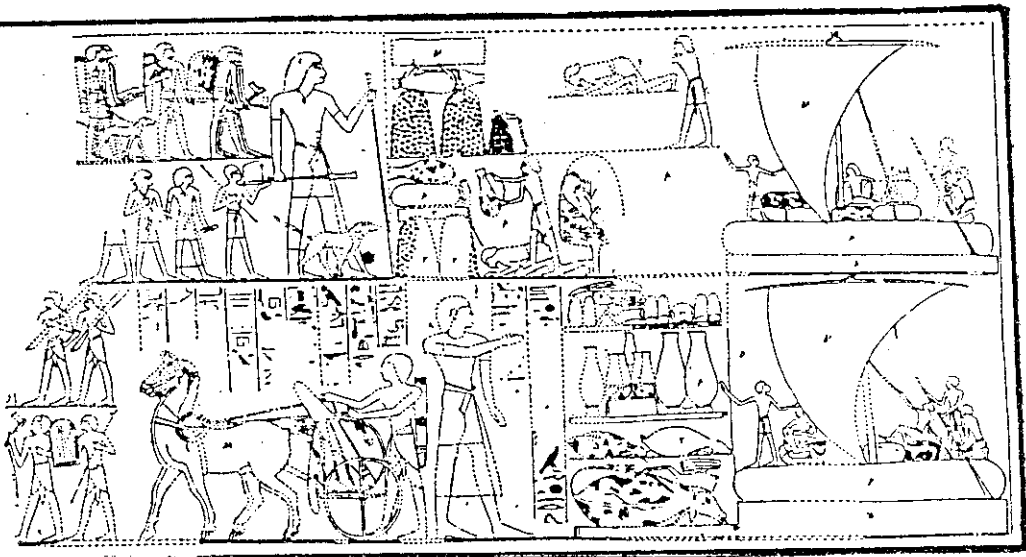
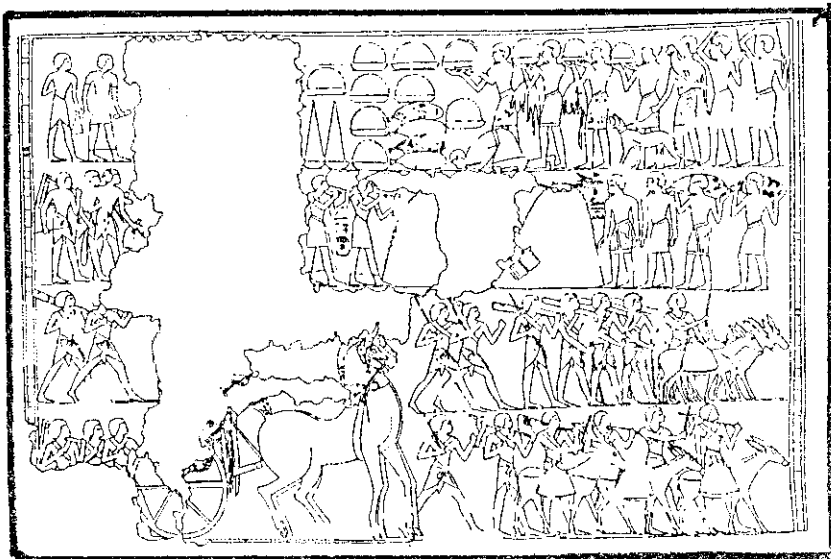


fig.3) A scene from the tomb no.143 at Thebes (reproduced from Söderbergh, op.cit., fig.6), from the time of Amenophis II (in most probability) which represents the unloading of the Puntite merchandise in the Egyptian port on the Red sea shore and the return march through the desert, an indirect evidence of the non-existence of the Nile-Red sea canal during this period.



(fig.4) A scene in the tomb of Amenmose at Thebes (reproduced from Soderbergh, op. cit., fig.7), from the reign of Tuthmosis IV showing the asses laden with the Puntite merchandise in their way from the Egyptian port on the Red sea shore to the Nile Valley, another indirect evidence of the non-existence of the Nile-Red sea canal.

They arrived in safety at the highland (desert)

of Copton they landed

in safety bearing the things which they brought

They were loaded on the land journey upon asses and

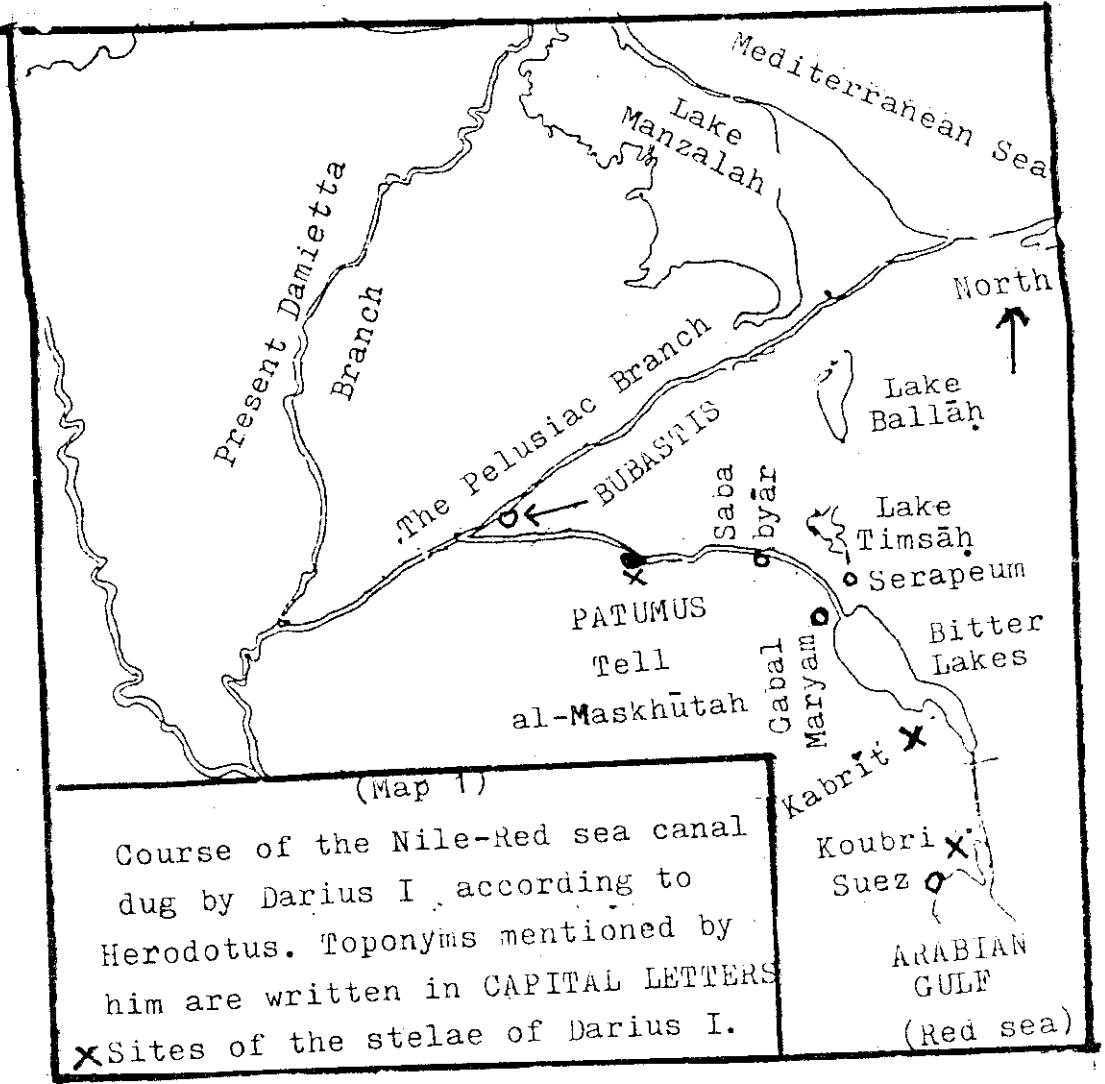
up on men and loaded into vessels upon

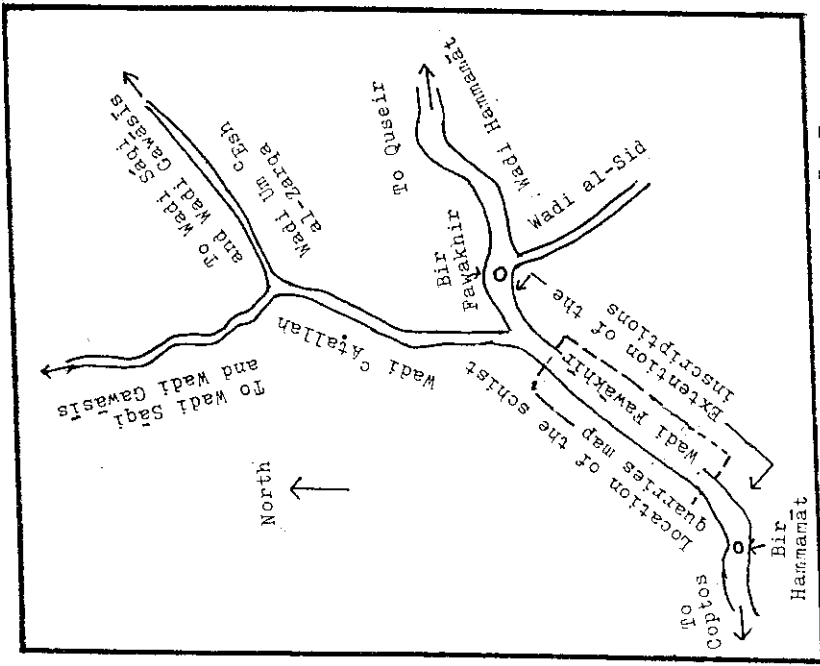
the Nile (at) the haven of Copton

They were sent downstream forward and they arrived amid festivity

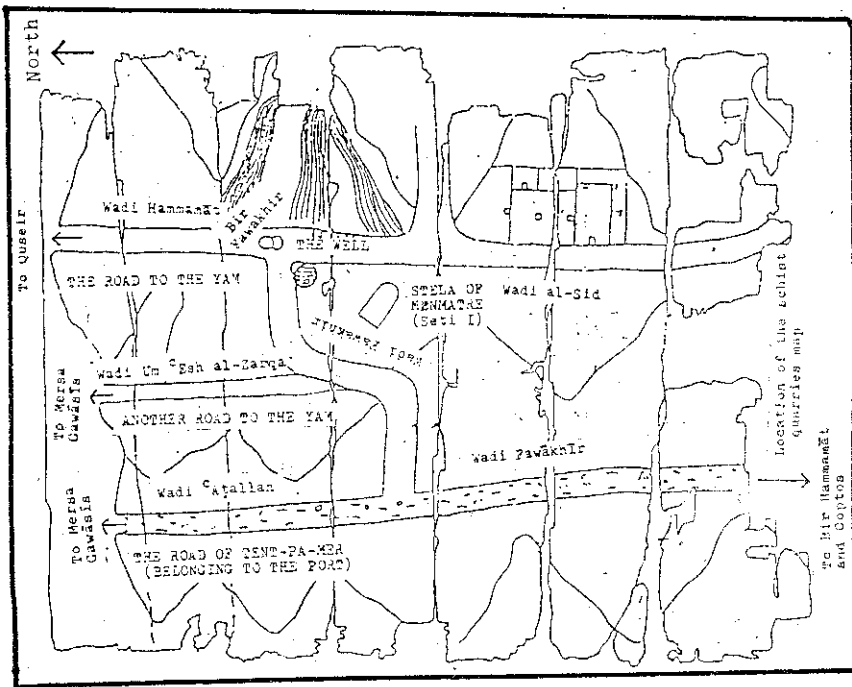
and brought the tribute into the (royal) presence like marvels

(fig.5) The text of the Papyrus Harris which records the unloading of the Puntite merchandise on the Egyptian shore and its transport to Coptos where it was transshipped on the Nile to the Residence (Pi-Ramses) in the Eastern Delta, a definite evidence of the non-existence of the Nile-Red sea canal during the 20th dynasty.





(Map2b) The modern map of Wadi Fawakhir area extracted from the 100,000 map of the Egyptian Survey Department.



(Map2a.) The Turin Papyrus map turned clockwise at 90° to be adapted to the modern map of the area of Wadi Fawakhir (according to C. Murray). Egyptian labels are written in capital letters.

It can be noticed that there are two defects of Murray's identification, 1. Wadi Um Esh al-Zarqa must branch off Wadi Fawakhir, and not Wadi Atallah, 2. The difference of colouring of Wadi Fawakhir (variegated and blank). However, these defects are less serious than those of Goyon and Bradbury's identification (see notes 26 and 43). They may be due to drawing the Turin map from memory or else.

Part III

Studies of the ancient history and  
archaeology of the Asiatic countries  
of the Red sea

# A new Minaean Inscription From al-Ola(\*)

by

10

Dr. Abdul Monem Abdul Haleem Sayyed

## Abstract :

The inscription was recently acquired by the Municipality of al-Ola from an old house and kept in the antiquities storehouse . It has some importance, firstly for the occurrence of the word "olt" ( علت ) in an intact state for the first time together with a certain formula. Such occurrence denotes that this Minaean word was not the specified ancient name of al-Ola.

This conclusion gives the priority to another similar name as the ancient name of al-Ola. It occurred in the Lihyanite inscriptions as Oly ( على ) . This name fits the present name of the Oasis which is occasionally written al-Oly ( العلى ) (with the ending - y) on some modern maps.

The context of the inscription also indicates that the term Dedan had a more comprehensive geographical designation than the term Main. The former was the name of the site of the Dedanite and the Lihyanite Kingdoms at al-Ola while the latter was the name of the Minaean commercial settlement there. This may denote that the Minaeans coexisted with the Dedanites and the Lihyanites, at least during the second half of the 2nd century B.C., i.e. the period during which the palaeographical characteristics of the inscription suggest that it was engraved.

(\*) Published in "Journal of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities", King Abdul Aziz Univerity, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, Vol.2, 1402/1982, pp. 51-67

During a visit to al-Ḍā (arranged by the Faculty of Arts), Mr. Ahmed Abdul Karim, Chief of the Municipality of al-Ḍā,<sup>1</sup> kindly showed me some ancient Arabian monuments stored in a room annexed to the Municipality building. Most of the monuments there were well-known to semitists, and had been already published. But a Minaean inscription engraved on a sandstone block drew by attention, because of the occurrence of the word *ع ل ت* instead of the word *ت ل ي* in the familiar formulae *ع ن ن / ع ل ي ت / ذ ت / ص ح ف ت ن*. Such occurrence suggested to my mind the idea that it might be a hitherto unpublished Minaean inscription. This was attested after I had examined the various works where the Minaean inscriptions of al-Ḍā were published.<sup>2</sup>

According to Mr. Ahmed Abdul Karim, the inscription was found among the ruins of an old house, recently demolished by the Municipality to extend the street of Mousa Ibn Nusair, its site may correspond roughly to the "Citadelle Um Naser" on JS map of al-Ḍā (II Atlas pl. XVIII).

The limestone block on which the inscription is engraved measures approximately 75 cm. in breadth, 50cm. in height and 25 cm. in thickness. The text is nearly intact on both the left and the lower sides. This may have been also the case on the upper side. It is cut off on the right side, but the context arouses the possibility that the missing parts at the beginning of every line had no more than five letters, as I shall show later.

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1. My thanks are also due to Mr. Ahmed Abdul Karim for sending me the photograph of the inscription after I had returned to Jiddah without a clear picture owing to the absence of a close-up camera.

2. These works are :

- a. JS II pp. 236-263 and Atlas pls. LXXII-CLII
- b. RES T.V-VIII. (see Abbreviations' list below).
- c. Garbini, G ; *Iscrizioni Mincee*, Napoli, 1974.

At this point, I wish to acknowledge the kindness and co-operation of both Prof. Abdul Rahman al-Ansary, Head of the Department of Archaeology at the Univ. of Riyadh, and Prof. Giovanni Garbini of the Univ. of Pisa, Italy. Prof. al-Ansary provided me with a xerox copy of the Minaean texts published in JS book, while Prof. Garbini presented me with a copy of his valuable book (mentioned above) during my visit to Italy (Oct. 1981).



Anew Minaean Inscription

The workmanship of the inscription is crude, it may have been engraved by an inferior craftsman. The letters are not uniform, their height varies between 30-35 mm. and they have irregular spaces between them.

The letters are lightly incised on the stone, most of them are either destroyed or illegible, this fact made my job a difficult one, for I had to examine all the published Minaean texts of al-Ola, in addition to similar Minaean texts from South Arabia, to restore the missing letters and complete the missing parts of the destroyed words, by a comparative study of these texts with this new discovery.

The following work is the result of this study.

A. Transliteration<sup>3</sup>

- 1... [bn][t] hyw/wwld [s] / [wy] qns/[k] wd/kr 's/ṣdq/w[y]
- 2... 'l/ws<sup>c</sup>d'l/<sup>c</sup>nn/<sup>c</sup>lt/dt/ṣḥftn/wrh/ṣḥftn/
- 3... [qn]yn/kls/sm<sup>c</sup>m/ysm<sup>c</sup>'l/bn/mrd/dzlym/
- 4... thyw/drt<sup>c</sup>/sl'[s] / [wsq] nyts/w' [s]
5. [ṭrn/b]n/kl/dysnkrs/[w]mśr/bn/mqmh [s]m/[b]y[m]
- 6... [ṣ]ws'l/dyf<sup>c</sup>n/kbrh/m<sup>c</sup>n/bddn

---

3. Owing to the absence of the transliterating latin letters at the Press, I use the Arabic letters instead. But for greater clarity I present here a full latin transliteration of the text reproduced through an engraving.

To mark the restored letters and the kind of restoration, the restored letters are flanked by two shapes of square brackets ; the normal ones [ ] for the completely destroyed letters, and the broken square brackets [ ] for letters partly destroyed or illegible.

(۱) [ت] [بن] [ت] ح ی و / وول د [س] / [وی] ق ن س / [ك] [ود] / ك راس /  
ص د ق / و [ی] ۰۰۰۰

(۲) ال ۰۰۰ / وسع د ال / ع ن ن / ع ل ت / ذت / ص ح فتن / ورخ /  
ص ح فتن

(۳) [تی] [ن] [ی] ن / ك ل س / س م ع م / ی س م ع ال / بن م م ر د /  
ذ ظ ل ی م /

(۴) ۰۰۰ ستح ی و / ذ ر ت ع / س ل أ [س] / [وس] ق ن ی ت س / وأ [س]

(۵) [ط] ر ن / ب [ن] / ك ل / ذ ی س ن ك ر س / [و] م ت ر ر / بن /

م ق م ه [س] م / [ب] ی [م]

(۶) ۰۰۰ [أ] و س ال / ذ ی ف ع ن / ك ب ر ه / م ع ن / ب د د ن

## B. Translation

1. .... (Son of) Tahayw and his sons and his properties (were dedicated) to (the god) Wadd, (and also) Kares Sadiq and .....
2. .... 'Il and Saad' il according to the notification on this document in the month of Sahfatan,
3. .... all his properties, the Auditor Yasma'il son of Marid of the clan Zulaym,
4. .... Tahayw of the clan Rata, consecrated his (lit : and his) dedications and the inscrip-
5. tions against anyone who may change them and may remove them from their places, at the time (lit . the day) of,

6. .... Aws'il of the clan Yafan, the Kabir of Main at Dedan.

C. Commentary

Line 1 : There is a lacuna at the beginning of the line preceding the name Tahayw the missing word may be ب ن this restoration may be justified by the occurrence of the name Tahayw at the beginning of 1. 4.

ت ح ي و Tahayw: a personal name which occurred in a Lihyanite graffito at al-Ola (JSII, 306). In South Arabia it occurred in a Minaean text (Harding, Index, p. 130). A somewhat similar form of this name ت ح ي i.e. without the ending -و occurred also in a Minaean text (RES 2929, 1.1). The name may be a variant of the famous ancient Arabian name ح ي و which may be the prototype of the Arabic name ( حسى )

4 The missing letters are restored from the two parallel texts of RES 3348, 1.5 and RES 3708 1.4 (cf. JS II no. 33).

The phrase و و ل د can be compared with the Arabic ( ولد ) and ق ن with ( قن )  
[ ك ] و : "to (the god) Wadd", cf. JS II no. 17 1.2

ك ر اس / ص ر د ق may be a compound personal name, its owner may have shared in the above-mentioned endowment for the god 'Wadd. The name can be compared with the Arabic name ( كراس صادق )

.. [ ي ] : The missing words may be the rest of a proper name which begins with ي and fits the lacuna such as Yehem'il and similar names.

Line 2 : ... ا ل : May be the suffix of a personal name as the one above.

---

4. The broken square brackets which flank the partly destroyed letters on the engraving reproduced above, cannot be used individually through the commentary because the press lacks such brackets. Therefore, the normal square brackets are used instead and the reader can check the "Transliteration" engraving on page 3 to mark the two kinds of restoration.

وس ع د ا ل : "and Saad-if": A personal name which occurred frequently on the graffiti of al-Ḍā (cf. RES 3738 and JS II no. 64) Ar. (سعد)

This formula is familiar among the al-Ḍā inscriptions, but with one exception, i. e. the occurrence of the word ع ل ت here, instead of the current word ع ل ي ت . The only occurrence of the former in the Minaean inscriptions of al-Ḍā is on the inscription no. 26 of JS (1.4)<sup>5</sup>, but it is used there in a different context which induced JS to suggest (with uncertainty because of the fragmentary state of the text) that it may have been the ancient name of al-Ḍā (Ibid. P.292<sup>6</sup>.) The context in our inscription suggests that the word ع ل ت is an equivalent of the word ع ل ي ت . The meaning of the latter, together with the whole phrase ع ن ن / ع ل ي ت / ذ ت / ص ر ح ف ت ن were given different interpretations, not only by different semitists, but also by the same semitist. For example, JS rendered it "La construction (le toit ?) de la chambre haute de cette plateforme" (JS II no. 17 I.6). Elsewhere in the same work they rendered the word ع ل ي ت "l'étage supérieur" (JS II no. 26 I.2 and no. 27 I.6) and the word ص ر ح ف ت ن "tour" (JS II no. 27 I.6). Ryckmans in his translation of the same inscription, rendered the phrase, "conformément a la teneur de ce document écrit" (RES 3346). Elsewhere in the same work, he rendered the word ع ل ي ت "notification", and the word ص ر ح ف ت ن "décret" (RES 3341, I.1). In a third place of the same work, Ryckmans discussed the etymology of the word ع ل ي ت and rendered it "élever", and translated the phrase ع ن ن / ع ل ي ت "contenu de la proclamation, la teneur du protocole" (RES 3283 P. 76). Grimme (quoted by Ryckmans, RES 3697, I.6) rendered the phrase ع ن ن / ع ل ي ت / ذ ت / ص ر ح ف ت ن "welcher vermerkt ist über diese Urkunde".

Therefore, while the rendering of both Ryckmans and Grimme are nearly identical, that of JS is completely different. JS in their translation of the word ع ل ي ت as

---

5. The word ع ل ت occurs elsewhere preceded by the word ع ن ن but the rest of the inscription is destroyed (Müller, Ar.p. 38 no. XIII I.6, cf. RES 3348)

6. While JS, Müller (Ar. p. 31), and Ryckmans (N. Pr.p.357) were doubtful about ع ل ت as the ancient name of al-Ḍā, Grohman (Ar.p.26) mentioned the name in a context which suggests that it was an established fact, although it has not yet been attested in the Minaean texts of al-Ḍā, as we have stated above. On the contrary, its name in the Lihyanite texts as ع ل ي is more confirmed, (cf. JS II no. 124 and Ry. N. Pr. 1,357).

“high chamber”, partially depended on the classical Arabic word (علية) which really has such meaning (Ibn Manzour, Lisan, Vol. 15 p.86). Moreover, in a Sabaeen inscription, the word occurs in the phrase *ع ل ت ه م و* i.e. prefixed to the possessive pronoun *ه م و*. The phrase is translated by Avanzini “their high lands” (leurs terres hautes; Avanzini, Glossaire, Tome II pp. 92—93). Therefore, the word signifies also a high place. But, JS rendering of *ص ح ف ت ن* as “plate-forme” of “surface unie” (Ibid.) has no sound basis, for in this connection, the word signifies in classical Arabic “the earth’s surface” (Ibn Manzour, Lisan, Vol. 9 p. 186), therefore it has nothing to do with a “tower” or a “platform”. On the contrary, the rendering of both Ryckmans and Grimme as “written document” is justifiable, for it rests on the basic meaning of this word in classical Arabic (Ibidem.).

Concerning the word *ع ن ن* the rendering of JS “construire” is far from its original meaning, they imposed the meaning on the context after a long discussion of the etymology of the Arabic word (عنان) which they considered as one of its derivatives (JS II p. 257). On the contrary, Ryckmans rendering of the word *ع ن* “according to” is nearer to the meaning of the Arabic word (عن) “about”, and consequently, it is more justifiable.

*ن و ر خ / ص ح ف ت ن* A name of a month which I did not find anywhere in the RES. In the Minaean inscriptions of al-Ḍā, some names of months are mentioned and are unknown elsewhere such as *ن و ر خ / ذ ط ن ف ت* (JS II no. 23 1.3 and p. 284, cf. RES 3608).

**Line 3:** *ق ن ي* [ *ق ن* ] The last two legible letters may justify my restoration which is the plural form of *ق ن ي*: “properties”. The word occurs with the same meaning in JS II no. 19 1.12 (cf. RES 3700).

*س* and *ك* [ *ل* ] “all his (properties)”. The intervening letter between *ك* and *س* is somewhat illegible. It looks like *ب* but the context makes it justifiable to restore *ل* instead of *ب*, thus the word reads “all”, cf. Ar. (كل)

cf. Ar. (سامع، سميع): In RES 3341, Ryckmans rendered this word “notaire”, but JS rendered it (in the same inscription) “auditeur” (JS II no. 11 1.6 and p. 260). As the word precedes a personal name, it is more plausible to be considered an epithet. Therefore, its rendering as an official title fits the context. Moreover, the official title “auditor” is well-known in the South Arabian texts, particularly the Minaean ones. It was held by a dignitary charged with responsibilities

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for "Audience Chamber" or the "Protocol minutes". The last rendering was suggested by Rhodokanakis (Protokollführer, cf. RES 2726).

س م ع ا ل : a personal name which occurs in the graffiti of al-Ḷla. (ex. RES 3829, cf. JS II,185). Apparently it is the prototype of the common Arabic name (اسماعيل). Yasma'il was the holder of the title س م ع م "son of Maarid":

Maarid is a personal name which is frequent in the inscriptions and graffiti of al-Ḷla. JS read the name "Muraad" (II,no.111) and "Marad" (Ibid.no. 160). But it is better to read it "Maarid" as this name is still given to an ancient fortress at al-Jouf (formerly Domat al-Jandal) in Northern Arabia (Dept. Antiq., Introduction, P.97)

ظ ل ي م : "of (the clan) ظ ل ي م : Zulaym is a name of an illustrious clan in al-Ḷla, it occurs frequently in its graffiti. Ryckmans read the name "Zalwaman" (RES 3708,1.4), but it is better to read it "Zulaym" according to the present pronunciation of the name in Arabic, (ظليم)

Line 4: ت ح ي و Tahayw: see Line 1

ذ ر ت ع : "of (the clan of) Rata : A south Arabian clan name which occurs in the Minaean texts (RES 2773, 1.8, 14, 15) and in the Sabaeen texts (RES 4940, 1.2). Its occurrence in our inscription is unique, for it is not mentioned in the Min. inscriptions and graffiti of al-Ḷla. Instead, the somewhat similar clan name ع م ر ت ع is mentioned very frequently. The name ذ ر ت ع may be a shortened form of the latter.

ت م ل ا س "he endowed or he consecrated": A well-known verb in the Sabaeen and Minaean texts in South Arabia (cf. RES, T.8 Index p: 248).

[ و س ر ق ] ن ي ت س : "and that which he dedicated": I restored this phrase from the inscription no. 11, 1.2 of Js II. (cf. RES 3341)

[ س ط ر ن ] : "and the inscriptions" (or writings, cf. Ar. اسطر . سطور); I also restored this phrase from the afore-mentioned inscription, 1.2

Line 5: [ ب ] ن / ن كل "against anyone" (cf.Ar. كل ) It is a usual formula in the Minaean texts of al-Ḷla, (ex.RES 3350, 1.2, JS II no. 8). The missing letter ب of the word ب ن together with the missing last three letters ط ر ن of the word اس ط ر ن , in addition to the vertical stroke supposed to have taken place between the two words, all these constitute — in my opinion — the only missing letters at the beginning of line 5. Such a conclusion is justified as we have seen, by the complete form of both the divided word اس ط ر ن (between lines 4 and 5 ) and the formula

Anew Minaean Inscription

According to this conclusion, the missing part of the stone at the right side did not contain more than five letters at the beginning of each line.

“who may change them”: This phrase is also frequent in the inscriptions of al-ʿOla. (ex RES 3697, 1.10, cf. JS II no. 12)

“and (who) may remove them from their original places” (cf. Ar. *بمقامهم*). This formula occurs also in the Minaean inscriptions of al-ʿOla (ex. RES 3342, 1.4 and 3346, 1.4, cf. JS II no. 17 1.4).

“at the day (s) of”: *ي م* is the shortened form of *يوم* (cf. Ar. *يوم*), (RES 4963 1.2).

**Line 6:** *اوس* : A personal name which is very common in the ancient Arabian inscriptions, and occurs frequently in the inscriptions and graffiti of al-ʿOla (ex. RES 3608, 1.1, cf. JS II no.23). Its prefix (AʿVS) was a common name among the classical Arabic names (*أوس*). In a graffito at al-ʿOla, (RES 3813, no.152), the name Aws occurs with the initial *ت*, i.e. “Tws”. This form is parallel to the name *ت ح ي و* in our inscription (1.1,4), which is similarly formed by adding the initial *ت* to the common name Hayw.

“of (the clan) Yafan”: Yafan was the name of an eminent and illustrious clan at al-ʿOla, the name is very common in its inscriptions and graffiti (ex. JS II no 48 and 142)

“The Kabir of Ma in” is the title of the chief of the Minaean settlement at al-ʿOla (cf. Ar. *كبير*). His name at the time of our inscription is — as we have already seen — “... Aws’ il”, and the name of his clan is “Yafan”. The title “Kabir” was originally given to a high dignitary at the royal court of the kingdom of Ma in in South Arabia.

at Dedan: The use of this name attached to the phrase *كبير* denotes that the Minaean settlement had been incorporated in Dedan, which may have been the capital of the Dedanite, then the Lihyanite kingdoms. A similar formulae with the same clan name Yafan *كبير* occurred in another Minaean inscription from al-ʿOla. (RES 3346, 1.8 but the line is badly mutilated (cf. JS II no.17 and Atlas pl. XCLX), while this formula

our inscription is nearly intact, a unique feature which gives it more value.

### Date

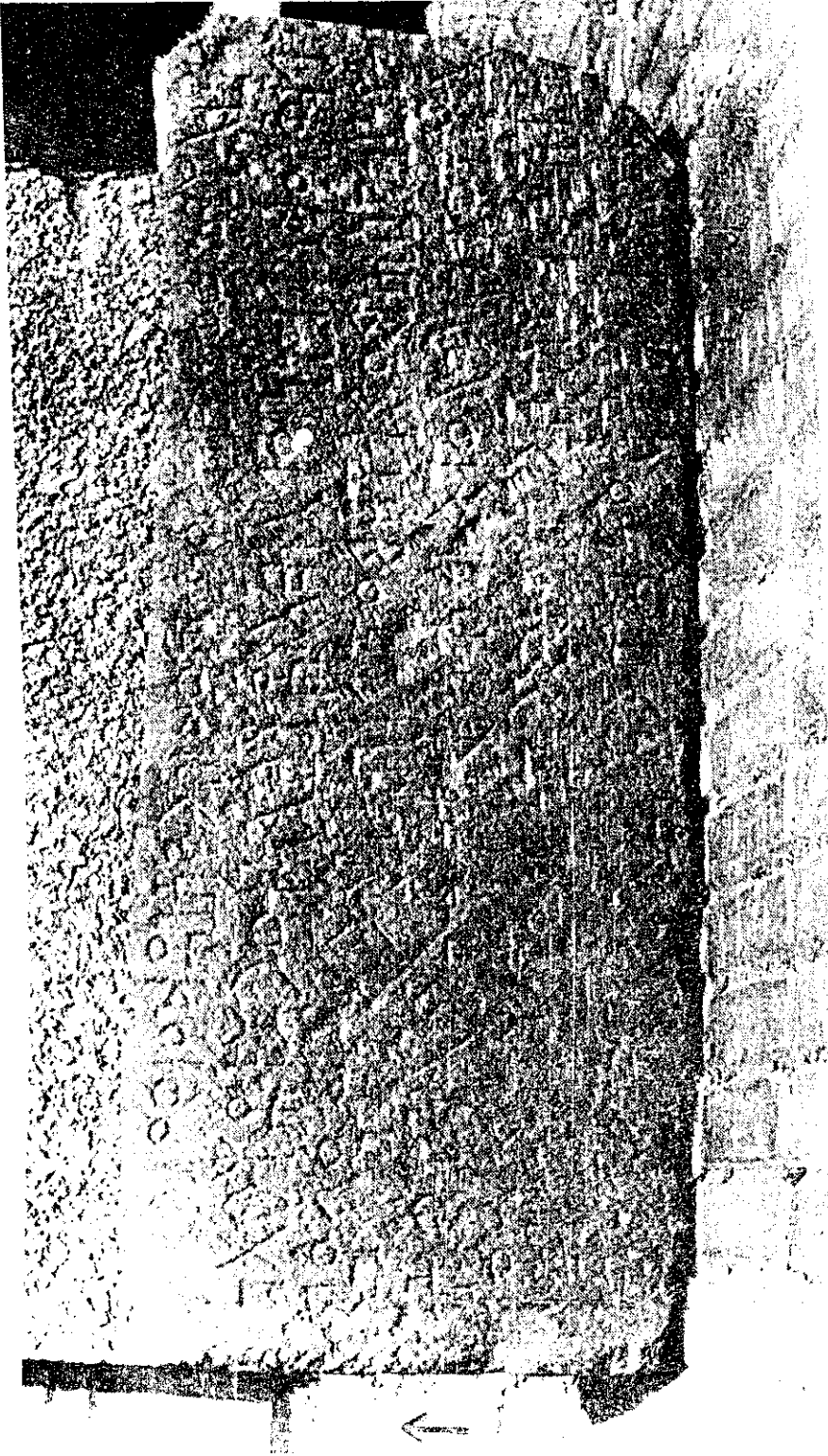
To define the date of the inscription, naturally we shall use the widely-adopted palaeographical system of J. Pirenne, but only as a secondary device, for we have enough data to enable us to use the more firmly based comparative method. This method depends on the similarity of the inscription in various respects to the above-mentioned inscription (JS no.17) which ends with the same formula "... Yafan, Kabir of Main at Dedan" as the case of our inscription. The former is dated in the time of the Minaean king Waqah'il Sadiq and his son 'Abikarib Yatha who reigned around 150 B.C. according to Albright (BASOR, no. 129, p. 22f.). The similarity between the two inscriptions is not confined to the occurrence of the aforementioned formula at the end of both of them, nor to the mention of the same clan name (Yafan) or the name of the Kabir of the Minaean settlement of al-ʿOla, but it extends to their palaeographical characteristics. This can be shown by comparing the points of similarity between some letters on the two inscriptions (see pl. III a), where we can discern the following: The concave shapes of letters  $\text{𐩦}$  and  $\text{𐩧}$ , the slight acute angle of letter  $\text{𐩨}$ , the somewhat angular middle of letter  $\text{𐩩}$ , this feature is unique among the other inscriptions of al-ʿOla, where letter  $\text{𐩩}$  is conspicuously curved, (JS II Atlas, pls XCV—CIII), and finally the excessive obtuse angle of letter  $\text{𐩪}$  which causes its projections to appear relatively distant from each other. This revolutionary characteristic of the letter  $\text{𐩪}$  is used by J. Pirenne, within her comprehensive palaeographical system, as a basis to classify one of the Minaean inscriptions of al-ʿOla under the stage D3 of her sequence dating of the South Arabian inscriptions. This inscription records the name of the Minaean King Ilyafa Yashur (Pirenne, *Paleographie*, P. 171 and pl. XXXVII, Tab.6) who was the direct predecessor of king 'Abikarib Yatha (recorded on the above-mentioned inscription, no. 17 of JS) according to Albright (op. cit.).

In all these pieces of evidence, we can conclude that our inscription came to light in the time which covered the reign of the three successive Minaean kings: Waqah'il Sadiq, 'Abikarib Yatha and Ilyafa Yashur, i.e. from the middle to the end of the 2nd century B.C.

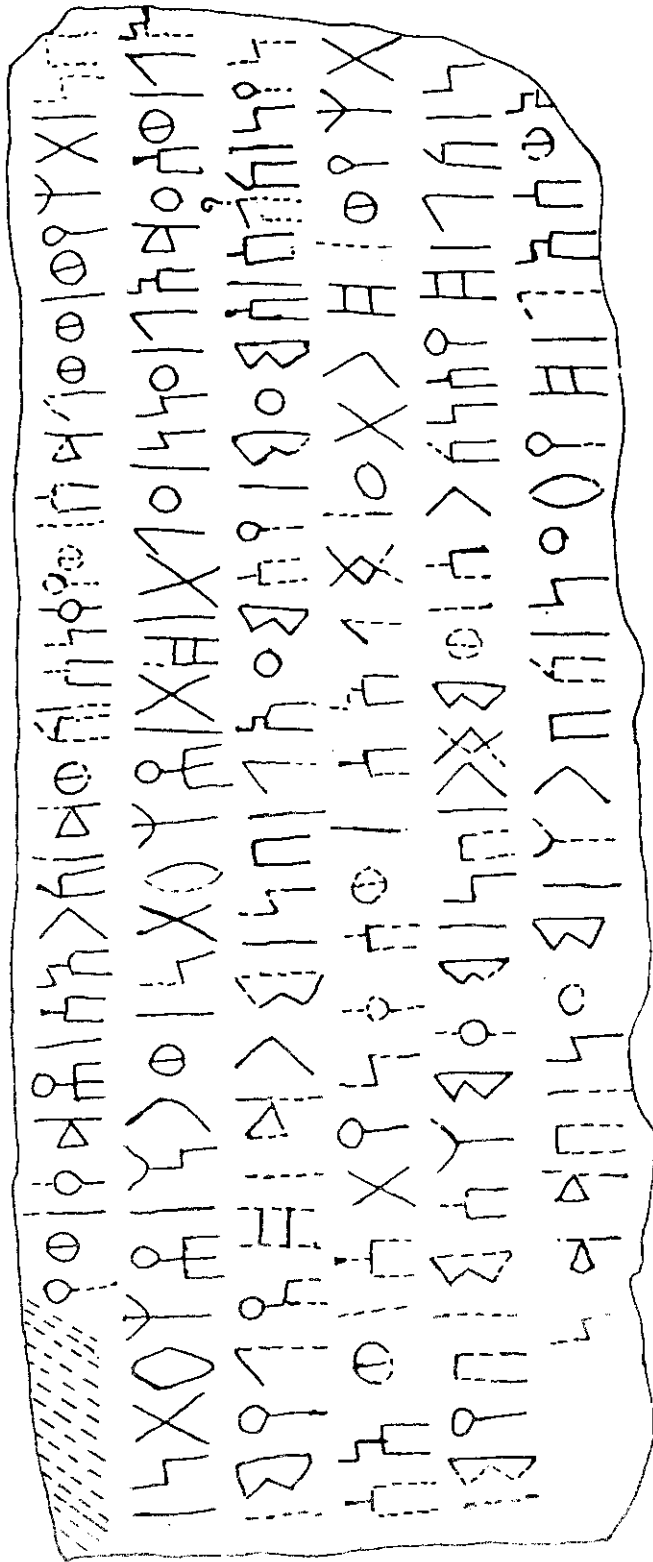


## Abbreviations

- Albright, BASOR : Albright, W.F.; "The Chronology of the Minaean Kings of Arabia" in Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research, no, 129, February 1953.
- Avanzini, Glossaire : Avanzini, Alessandra; Glossaire des Inscriptions de L'Arabie du Sud, 2 Tomes, Firenze, 1980
- Dept. Antiq., Introduction : The Department of Antiquities; An Introduction to the Antiquities of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Riyadh, 1975
- Grohman, Ar. : Grohman, A; Arabien, München, 1963
- Harding, Index : Harding, G. Lankester; An Index and Concordance of Pre-Islamic Arabian Names and Inscriptions, Toronto, 1971
- Ibn Manzour, Lisan : Ibn Manzour al-Masry; . Lisan al-Arab, Beirut, 1956
- JS II : Jaussen and Savignac (RR. PP.); Mission Archéologique en Arabie, Tome II, Texte et Atlas, Paris, 1914
- Müller, Ar. : Müller, D,H; Epigraphische Denkmäler aus Arabien, 'Vien, 1889
- Pirenne, Paléographie : Pirenne, Jacqueline; Paléographie des Inscriptions Sud-Arabes. Tome I, Des origines jusqu' à l'époque himyarite, Brussel, 1956
- RÉS : Répertoire D'Épigraphie Sémitique rédigé par G. Ryckmans, Tomes V-VII, Paris, 1929 — 1950 and Tome VIII (Tables et Index), rédigé par J. Pirenne, 1968
- RY. N. Pr. — Ryckmans. G; Les Noms Propres Sud-Sémitiques, Tomes I—III Louvain. 1934 — 1935



Pl. I Photograph of the Inscription



PIII — Facsimile of the inscription with my restoration and completion  
(in dotted lines)

a. Palaeographic comparison of the three inscriptions

letter	The new inscription	Inscrip. recording Waqab'ill Sadiq's.n. (JSno.17 RES 3346)	Inscrip. recording Ilyafa Yar's name (JS no.11 RES 3341)
line	5 6	4 7	4 6
line	1 2	3 5	1 5
line	2 3	3 4	4 6
line	1 2	2 3	4
line	3 5	1 2	3 4

b. System of Transliteration

ق	ك	ل	ر	ن	م	و	ي
q	k	l	m	n	h	w	y
ق	ك	ل	ر	ن	م	و	ي
س	ض	ط	ظ	ع	غ	ز	
s	d	t	z	c	g	f	
س	ض	ط	ظ	ع	غ	ز	
d	ḍ	r	z	s	ʒ	ʃ	
d	ḍ	r	z	s	ʒ	ʃ	
د	ذ	ر	ز	س	ج	ش	
i	j	t	t̄	s	h	h̄	
i	j	t	t̄	s	h	h̄	
ا	ب	ت	ث	ج	ح	خ	
ا	ب	ت	ث	ج	ح	خ	
ا	ب	ت	ث	ج	ح	خ	

## « نقش معيني جديد من العلا »

الدكتور / عبد المنعم عبد الحليم

ملخص : -

أثناء رحلة الكلية إلى منطقة العلا في العام الماضي ، شاهدت في مخزن الآثار التابع لبلدية العلا (١) ، كتلة من الحجر الرملي محفور عليها نقش بالخط المسند المعيني ، وردت به عبارة رجحت من قراءتها أن النقش جديد ولم يسبق نشره .. وفعلا تبين لي ذلك بعد مراجعة المؤلفات التي نشرت بها النقوش المعينية .

وترجع أهمية النقش إلى ورود عبارة هامة بصورة كاملة لأول مرة ( أى لم يتهشم الحجر عندها كما حدث في النقوش الأخرى المشابهة ) وهذه العبارة تدل على أن كلمة « علت » استخدمت في النقوش المعينية في معنى آخر لا يدل على اسم العلا القديم . وهذه النتيجة تعطى الإفضلية لاسم مشابه آخر كاسم قديم للেলা ، هو الاسم « على » الذي ورد في النقوش اللحيانية في سياق يجعله أكثر توكيدا كاسم قديم للেলা من الكلمة المعينية « علت » . ويلاحظ أن الاسم « على » يطابق تقريبا اسمها الحالي الذي يكتب أحيانا على الخرائط « العلي » ( إذا استبعدنا أداة التعريف العربية ) كما ترجع أهمية النقش أيضا إلى أن كلمة « دادان » التي كانت تطلق في النقوش المعينية واللحيانية على العلا ، وردت فيه بمدلول جغرافي شامل يندرج تحته المدلول الجغرافي لكلمة « معين » التي كانت تطلق على المستوطنة المعينية في العلا ، أى أن هذه المستوطنة كانت جزءا من دادان التي كانت مقرا لأقدم دولة قامت في واحة العلا وهي الدولة الدادانية التي خلفتها الدولة اللحيانية . وهذا دليل على أن المعينيين سكان هذه المستوطنة تعايشوا في واحة العلا جنبا إلى جنب مع الدادانيين واللحيانيين ، على الأقل إبان النصف الثاني من القرن الثاني قبل الميلاد ، وهو الزمن الذي نحت النقش خلاله كما يستدل من طراز كتابته .

ويمكننا أن نستخلص مما قدمه لنا هذا النقش ، بالاضافة إلى ما لدينا من معلومات عن أسماء العلاء القديمة ، أن العلاء كانت لها ثلاثة أسماء تشير إلى الدول والجماعات التي عاشت فيها ، أحدها هو الاسم « دادان » الذى أطلق عليها نسبة للدولة الدادانية ، وهو الاسم الأعم والأشمل . ثم الاسم المعينى « معين » أو « معين مصرن » الذى أطلقه عليها التجار المعينيون الذين هاجروا إليها من منطقة معين فى شمال اليمن ، وكونوا فيها مستوطنة تجارية وكانوا أحيانا يميزونها عن دولتهم الأصلية « معين » باضافة كلمة « مصرن » إليها أى معين الأقرب إلى مصر . ثم الاسم اللحيانى « على » الذى بقى حتى اليوم من دون هذه الأسماء القديمة ربما لأنه قريب جدا من اللهجة العربية الشمالية ( عربية القران الكريم ) التى حلت محل اللهجة اللحيانية بعد انتشار الاسلام .

( ١ ) انتهز هذه المناسبة لأعبر عن شكرى وتقديرى للأستاذ أحمد محمد عبد الكريم مدير بلدية العلاء فقد يسر لى مهمة نسخ النقش على الورق الشفاف ثم أرسل لى صورة فوتوغرافية واضحة للنقش ( هى المنشورة مع هذا البحث ) بعد أن عدت إلى جدة بدون الحصول على مثل هذه الصورة لعدم وجود آلة للتصوير القريب معى أثناء وجودى فى العلاء . أجزاء الله عن هذا التعاون العلمى المثمر خير الجزاء .

EMENDATIONS TO THE BIR MURAYGHAN INSCRIPTION  
Ry 506 AND A NEW MINOR INSCRIPTION FROM THERE (\*)

11

<sup>c</sup>Abdel Monem A.H.Sayed (Jeddah)

The problems which the Murayghan inscription Ry 506 arouse are still controversial, particularly the names of the tribes and sites mentioned in the text and their locations, in addition to the assumption by some scholars that the inscription records the "Expedition of the Elephant". As most of these problems are due to the illegible letters in the first copy of the text, published by the late G.Ryckmans<sup>(1)</sup>, I visited the site to check the inscription in an attempt to identify these letters. My journey to Bir Murayghan was less difficult than that of the Ryckmans-Philby-Lippens expedition in the fifties of this century, for a good road now leads from the airport at Abha via Khamis Mushayt to Tathlith (ca. 225 km), and only the short distance from Tathlith to Bir Murayghan (ca. 20 km) is still a sandy road. By the aid of a map which J.Ryckmans kindly sent me, I found the inscription easily and took clear photographs.<sup>(2)</sup>

The illegible letters are concentrated in six places in G.Ryckmans' copy (fig.1). By comparing the photographs with tracings of the illegible letters, combined with the study of the genealogies of the tribes mentioned and their locations at the time of the inscription, I was able to restore most of the letters, and present a rendering which differs to some extent from previous renderings.

The following is Beeston's rendering as published in 1954<sup>(3)</sup> of the whole text, except in the italicised words which represent his later views; where my rendering differs from that, it is set off in the right hand column (against Beeston's on left)

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| 1 | By the power of the Merciful One and His Messiah   |   |
| 2 | the king Abraha (etc)  | the king Abraha Zyban, king of Saba and Dhu Raydan and Hadramaut and Yamnat and their Arabs of the highlands and coastal plains |
| 3 | wrote this inscription when he had raided Ma <sup>c</sup> add in the fourth razzia in the month <sup>ḥ</sup> ḤḤḤḤḤḤ {April}, (and) when all the Bani <sup>c</sup> Amir had revolted. |   |
| 4 | Now the king sent 'BGBR with the Kindites and <sup>c</sup> Alites, and BSR son of ḤḤḤḤḤḤ with  | And the king appointed 'BGBR with Kinda and <sup>c</sup> Alā, and (appointed) Bishr son of ḤḤḤḤḤḤ with                          |

(\*) Published in "Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian studies", London, Vol. 18 (1988) pp. 131-144.



5 the Sa<sup>c</sup>dites, and these two commanders (qdm̄y) of the army did battle and fought, Sa<sup>c</sup>d (al-<sup>c</sup>Ashīrah) and Murād, and they. (i.e. the two commanders) presented themselves [read wḥḍrw for wḍrw] in front (qdm̄y) of the main army [i.e. to pay homage to Aḅyaha, see comm. below]. Against Bani <sup>c</sup>Amir were Kindah and <sup>c</sup>Alī in the valley of Dhū Markh, and Murād and Sa<sup>c</sup>d in a valley

6 (name<sup>y</sup>) the Kindite column against the Bani <sup>c</sup>Amir, and the Muradite and Sa<sup>c</sup>dite column against ... on the TRBN route, and they slew and made captive (the enemy) and took booty in great quantity. The king on the other hand did battle at Ḥalibān and (the troops of Ma<sup>c</sup>add?) were defeated pursued Ma<sup>c</sup>add like their shadow and were forced forced them:

7 to give hostages. After all this, <sup>c</sup>Amr son of al-Mundhir negotiated: (with: Abraha)

8 and agreed to give hostages to Abraha from al-Mundhir, for al-Mundhir had invested him (<sup>c</sup>Amr) with the governorship over Ma<sup>c</sup>add. So Abraha returned from Ḥalibān

9 by the power of the Merciful One

10 ... in the month d-<sup>c</sup>LN (September), year 662.

COMMENTARY

As we see, the inscription mentions three place names and six tribal names; the place names are Ḥalibān, TRBN and Dhū Markh; the tribal ones are Ma<sup>c</sup>add, Banū <sup>c</sup>Amir, Kindah, <sup>c</sup>Alī (or something similar), Sa<sup>c</sup>d and Murād. It is of significance that Ma<sup>c</sup>add and Banū <sup>c</sup>Amir were related to the <sup>c</sup>Adnanite tribal group, i.e. northerners (fig.2a), while Kindah and Murād were Qahtanites, i.e. southerners (fig.2b). The other two were probably also Qahtanites, since they associated with Kindah and Murād in the conflict with the northerners, Ma<sup>c</sup>add and Banū <sup>c</sup>Amir. Sa<sup>c</sup>d could have been Sa<sup>c</sup>d-Khawlan or Sa<sup>c</sup>d al-<sup>c</sup>Ashīrah (fig.2b), but is more likely to have been the latter who figured prominently in military activity in the tribal history of Arabia. We must equally search for "<sup>c</sup>Al-" among Qahtanite tribes for a similar name to this. There are: <sup>c</sup>Illah (4), <sup>c</sup>Ulay (5), <sup>c</sup>Alā (6) and <sup>c</sup>Alī (7) (fig.2b). Among these, the most probable are <sup>c</sup>Alī, descended from Sa<sup>c</sup>d al-<sup>c</sup>Ashīrah and famous in antiquity; or <sup>c</sup>Alī descended from Ḥarb, whose descendants still live in Najd (the scene of one of the battles of the inscription), and counting among their descendants al-Qurūn, al-Nāmī and al-Karashīf (9). The conflict recorded in the inscription between the two tribal groups is a phase of the perennial rivalry between <sup>c</sup>Adnan and Qaḥṭān which attained its climax later, in the time of the Umayyad Caliphs. Was Abrahah the first recorded ruler to exploit this tribal feud?

The geographical location of the places mentioned in the text fits to a great extent the territories of these tribes a century later, at the rise of Islam, and no doubt already at the time of the inscriptions (map 1). Ḥalibān lies within the territory of Ma<sup>c</sup>add in Najd; Turabah (TRBN) is east of Ṭā'if, the summer resort of the Bani <sup>c</sup>Amir, while the latter had their original homeland in an area of Najd including the valley of Dhū Markh. These two locations may explain the word "all" which occurs in the text only with the name of the Bani <sup>c</sup>Amir. The period of the expedition lasting from April to September, coincides with the summer time which they spent at Ṭā'if.

The locations of the settlement areas of the tribes concerned reveal the strategic plan of Abrahah to subdue his enemies, the <sup>c</sup>Adnanite Bani <sup>c</sup>Amir and Ma<sup>c</sup>add, by exploiting their rivalry with the Qahtanite groups; and he profited from the relative situations of their territories. At the time, Kindah (or a section of them) were settled to the north of the Najdi territory of Bani <sup>c</sup>Amir (map 1). So Kindah and <sup>c</sup>Alī (on whom see above) were charged with the attack on Bani <sup>c</sup>Amir from the north through Najd, and defeated them at the battle of Dhū Markh, situated to the east of the modern town of al-Zilfī (map 1). At the same time, the rest of the Bani <sup>c</sup>Amir

those who were summering at Tā'if) were attacked from the south by Sa<sup>c</sup>d and Murād and defeated "in a valley on the TRBN route": this TRBN must be modern Turabah, about 70 km east of Tā'if; the 'valley' may have been that of Bīshah, which is on a route leading from Turabah to Bir Murayghan. A Sa<sup>c</sup>d section of Qahtān still lives around Ḥalībān Kilāb, on the southeast side of and close to Bir Murayghan (10).

While the subduing of Banī 'Amir in their double territory (Najd and Tā'if) was the task of the auxiliary forces (Kindah, 'Alī, Sa<sup>c</sup>d, Murād) under the leadership of the two commanders appointed by Abrahah ('Abdgabr and Bishr son of Ḥiṣn), the attack on Ma<sup>c</sup>add was the task of the main army led by Abrahah himself. Simultaneously with 'Abdgabr's attack on Banī 'Amir from the north, Abrahah attacked Ma<sup>c</sup>add from the south and defeated them decisively at Ḥalībān: "he pursued (lit. came close) like their shadow", i.e. followed on their heels deep into their territory. That the Ḥalībān area was in Ma<sup>c</sup>add territory is attested by the inscription Ry 509 in the 'Adī Māsīl, 100 km northeast of Ḥalībān (11).

Banū 'Amir were caught between two armies, the auxiliary forces from the north and the main army from the south; but the former directed their attack against them alone, while the main army under Abrahah confined itself to Ma<sup>c</sup>add. This is seen from the new minor inscriptions (below) recording that the author "accompanied his lord king Abrahah in his raid against Ma<sup>c</sup>add".

The tribal and place names in the inscription are decisive against any assumption that it records the "Expedition of the Elephant" directed against Makkah by Abrahah according to the north Arabian tradition. Not only does the inscription fail to mention Makkah and the Holy Mosque, or al-Mughmmas (the camping field of the expedition near Makkah), while the place names in the inscription are too far away, the closest being Turabah nearly 300 km east of Makkah; but also, the inscription lacks mention of the tribal and personal names found in the Arabian traditions, e.g. Khath'am, the tribe of Abrahah's guide Nufayl b. Ḥabīb, and Muhammad al-Khuẓā'ī and Abū Righāl, the other two guides. Moreover, the name of the author of the new inscription from Murayghan is never mentioned in connection with the Expedition of the Elephant, though his clan Dhirniḥ is well attested in the South Arabian inscriptions (CIH 541/83, RES 4707, 4708, Ja 629/40, Ir 5/1).

Those who advocate the view that Ry 506 records the Expedition of the Elephant have tried to find support in the Arabian traditions about the date of the Prophet Muḥammad's birth (12). One of these states that he was born 23 years after the Year of the Elephant: as the Prophet was born in 570 CE, and the inscription Ry 507 has a date regarded by some as equivalent to 547 CE (13), it has been inferred that the inscription records the Expedition of the Elephant.

However, this tradition is only one out of several contradictory ones, and all are generally regarded by Arab scholars as 'weak': they give the period elapsed from the Year of the Elephant to the birth of the Prophet variously as 10, 15, 30 and 40, as well as 23, years. Out of these the figure 23 has been selected because it seemed to provide a dating for the Year of the Elephant coincident with that of the inscription Ry 506. This ignores the consensus opinion of Arab writers, identifying the Year of the Elephant with the year of the Prophet's birth, 570 CE (14).

In the last two decades, a view advanced by M.J.Kister (15) has gained some popularity. Kister adduces a tradition ascribed to al-Zuhri and quoted by al-Zubayr b. Bakkar (16) in his *Nasab Quraysh*, stating that Quraysh listed the major events before the Hijrah as follows:

from the Year of the Elephant to the Fijār war	40 years
from the Fijār war to the death of Ḥishām b. al-Mughīrah	6 -
from the death of Ḥishām to the building of the Ka <sup>c</sup> bah	9 -
from the building of the Ka <sup>c</sup> bah to the Hijrah	15 -
Total	70

This sets the Year of the Elephant in 552 CE, and thus coincident with the alternative date for Ry 506 (17).

There are some drawbacks to Kister's view. The tradition to which appeal is made is a 'weak' one, not popular among Arab traditionists; and it extends the age of the Prophet to 80 years, which is hardly credible, compared with the more reasonable life span of 62 years allotted by the consensus tradition. (17a)

The many attempts made by Western Orientalist to define the birth-date of the Prophet (18) depend on internal Arab traditions or external non-Arab ones.

Interestingly, an Egyptian astronomer, Maḥmūd al-Falakī, found a tradition which fixed the birth of the Prophet "shortly after a conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter in Scorpio" (19); and he worked out that on 1 April 571 CE Jupiter was at 15° 2' within the constellation Scorpio, and Saturn at 15° 17' within the same constellation, and the motion of both planets was retrograde; he further calculated the beginning of the lunar month to Sunday 12 April 571 CE. Since according to a tradition of the Prophet himself, he was born on a Monday, Maḥmūd al-Falakī concluded that his birth-day was Monday, 9 Rabi' al-Awwal / 20 April 571 CE.

On the basis of all these data it must be concluded that the Murayghān expedition was not in the Year of the Elephant, a conclusion according with many good traditions particularly the early ones, which equate the year of the Prophet's birth with (20) Year of the Elephant; the earliest and most trustworthy of these is Ibn Hishām (died 223 AH), quoting the earliest writer of the Prophet's Sīrah, Ibn Ishāq (died 150 AH). This was repeated by another trustworthy traditionist, al-Tabarī (21).

The Quranic evidence of *Sūrat al-Fīl* is equally definite: it states that the 'People of the Elephant' perished and 'were turned into broken straw'. Our inscription, on the contrary, makes it clear that Abrahah returned from the battle of Ḥalībān triumphant and alive. The Murayghān expedition was an earlier one than that of the Elephant, and may have been a preliminary to it, as Caskeel suggests (22).

A final point concerns some verses ascribed to an early poet (of pre-Islamic and early Islamic times), al-Mukhabbal al-Sa'dī, in which he boasted that his folk helped Abrahah in the battle of Ḥalībān. But these verses must be regarded as of doubtful authenticity. The poet's tribe Sa'd was not the Qahtanite Sa'd al-Ashīrah, which was among Abrahah's allies, but the Adnanite Sa'd Tamīm, and as we have seen, Abrahah's campaign was directed against the Adnanite groups. Secondly, the verses are cited for the first time by the Qahtanite writer al-Hamdānī (died 344 AH), three centuries later. Thirdly, the Ḥalībān mentioned in the verses was, according to al-Hamdānī himself (23) situated in Yemen, 'in the land of Ḥaḍūr', southeast of Ṣan'ā', and by no means in Najd where the Murayghān campaigns took place. These verses were probably fabricated by the Qahtanites at a later date, and ascribed to a poet from an Adnanite tribe Sa'd Tamīm (homonymous with the Qahtanite Sa'd al-Ashīrah, and thus giving the verses a spurious appearance of authenticity), perhaps in order to put the Adnanites on a level with the Qahtanites in respect of the sin of serving the cause of Abrahah, who later, in the expedition of the Elephant, planned to demolish the Holy Mosque.

#### TEXTUAL NOTES

Line 5: at the beginning, the reading *wmḥḍw [w]ḍrw* was proposed by G. Ryckmans with the rendering "et ils combattirent et ils frappèrent (?)". But the letter *ḥ* in the first of these words is not visible: instead, the photograph (fig. 4) shows clearly the upper part of *r*; and the emendation *wmr[dm]* is indicated by the fact that elsewhere in the text (see end of this line) Murād is associated with Sa'd. The triangle of the *d* can be identified, although it is somewhat elongated because of an irregularity in the rock. The tip of the letter *m* seems to be connected to the dividing vertical stroke by a horizontal dash. This is a distinctive feature of the inscription, which may be due either to intentional incisions or to random shifts caused by the coarse nature of the rock. A similar case seems to be intentional in the word 'bgbr in line 4 (immediately above *mr dm*), where an upper dash connects the *alif* to the dividing vertical line (fig. 4). The other case is exemplified in the words *ymnt* and 'rbhmw in line 2, where two random incisions connect the tips of some of the letters (fig. 5a, b).

The word *[w]ḍrw* as read by G. Ryckmans does not exist. There is a space between the *w* and the *d*, where traces of three vertical strokes can be discerned in the photograph (fig. 4), suggesting the existence of *ḥ*; the tips of the two flanking vertical lines of the letter seem to be connected by a horizontal dash, a phenomenon which characterizes some of the letters of the inscription with similar shape, such as the letter *ḥ* in the word *wḥhw* in line 9 (fig. 10).

The resulting reading *wḥḍrw* may have the more general meaning of Arabic *hadarū* "they were present", or some more specific implication (cf the specialised uses of this verb in Sabaeen for "hold a festival" or "perform a pilgrimage" (24)) of coming to

do homage or to give assurance of submission. Thus the expression "they [the two commanders Abgabr and Hisn] presented themselves in front of the main army" can be taken as implying that the two commanders, after being appointed by Abrahah, presented themselves before him - or 'before the army' - to signify their consent and submission and as a prelude to their military tasks, of leading the auxiliary forces.

In the expression (line 4) *kdt w<sup>l</sup>*, Caskel<sup>(25)</sup> regarded the second word as the name of a mountain from which a section of Kindah was designated, and rendered "Kiddat von Wa<sup>c</sup>l", contrary to the previously published rendering of G.Ryckmans "Kiddat et <sup>c</sup>Al". The end of line 5 shows that G.Ryckmans was right on this point; and Caskel's proposal must be abandoned.

At the end of line 5, G.Ryckmans in his South Arabian script text read *kdt/w<sup>c</sup>ly/wd.<sup>c</sup>/zrn..mrdm/ws<sup>c</sup>dm/bwd* (by an unfortunate misprint his transliterated Latin script text omits the letters *wd.<sup>c</sup>/*). But in fact his letter *y* is the dividing line, and this is followed by *b* (fig.6); the correct reading is thus *kdt/w<sup>c</sup>l/bwd/* "Kindah and <sup>c</sup>Al in the valley of ...". On the disposition of forces thus implied, see above in the Commentary.

In parallel to what has been deduced from the text about the battle of Sa<sup>c</sup>d and Murad against Bani <sup>c</sup>Amir "in a valley on the Turabah route", we must search for the name of a valley within the territory of both Kindah and Bani <sup>c</sup>Amir in Najd, where the northern wing Kindah and <sup>c</sup>Alī fought.

In the photograph (fig.6), the letters after the word "in the valley of ..." are nearly effaced, though a vertical line can be traced which may be the word-divider. Then there is a lacuna, after which another vertical line is fairly clear, which must be part of a letter. Then comes *m* which is clear (though G.Ryckmans read it as *z*). After that, G.Ryckmans correctly read *r*, but restored the following letter as *n*, but the photograph (fig.7) shows clearly *h*. The name of the valley is hence *mhr*. The valley of Markh (see above in the Commentary) is described as "one of the most famous valleys of Tuwayq; it flows into Rawḍat al-Sabla<sup>(26)</sup>". Yaḳut<sup>(27)</sup> mentions it as Markh and Dhū Markh and locates it in al-Yamamah. Hence the vertical line just before the lacuna must belong to the letter *d*.

The two dots which follow *n* in G.Ryckmans' copy (*h* according to my emendation) can be replaced by the word-divider, which is fairly clear in the photograph (fig.7), and by a *w*. The latter is difficult to discern, but the size of the lacuna suggests a rounded letter i.e. *w* or <sup>c</sup>, and in the context *w* is preferable.

Dhū Markh is mentioned in Arabic literature from the time of the Caliph <sup>c</sup>Umar b. al-Khattāb, in verses ascribed to the famous poet al-Hutay'ah, imploring the Caliph to release him "for the sake of his children residing at Dhū Markh". Though some<sup>(28)</sup> writers have located this place near al-Madīnah where the poet's tribe <sup>c</sup>Abs lived, others take it to be the valley in Najd, on the ground that he had abandoned his own tribe and taken refuge with Tamīm in Najd<sup>(29)</sup>; if the latter be so, then the name Dhū Markh for the valley in Najd is attested already quite soon after the time of our inscription.

Line 6. In the middle, the word read by G.Ryckmans as *wmmw* was correctly emended by J.Ryckmans to *wgnmw* (see Beeston's translation above). The letter *g* is clear (fig.8).

Line 7. G.Ryckmans' reading at the beginning of the line *kz̄l* is correct (fig.9). The doubts about the *z̄* expressed by Caskel, and Beeston's emendation to *h̄yl*, must both be dismissed.

Line 9. The name of the month in the dating has been dropped from G.Ryckmans' copy. The photograph (fig.10) shows it clearly: *d<sup>c</sup>In*.

A last word may be added on the controversy about the *q* in the word *kqsdw* in line 3, thus read by G.Ryckmans and J.Ryckmans<sup>(30)</sup>. Caskel read it as *kfsdw*, but the Ryckmans' reading is confirmed by the photographs, which show a distinction between the *q* here and *k* of the word *schlfw*.

THE NEW MINOR INSCRIPTION  
(fig.3a,b)

This is located about 2 metres to the east of Ry 506, and at the same level (nearly 7 m above the ground). It measures 20 cm in breadth and 25 cm in height, and comprises six lines. The letters (approximately 3 cm high) are roughly incised.

qyIn/m	The qayl
ns/d <sup>c</sup> drnh	MNS Dhu Dhirniḥ
gzy/m/m	raided with
r'hw/mik	his lord king
/brh/	Abraham
m <sup>c</sup> dm/	Ma <sup>c</sup> add

As mentioned above, Dhirniḥ is a well known clan-name; the writer's personal name MNS occurs here for the first time. In my opinion, this should represent the biblical name Manasseh<sup>(31)</sup>. But whatever the origin of this name, it is certain that the qayls of Dhirniḥ belonged to one of the most ancient and illustrious families of South Arabia.

\* \* \* \* \*

NOTES

- 1) *Mus.* 66, 1953, p.277. All subsequent references to 'G.Ryckmans' are to this.
- 2) I wish to express my gratitude to Professor J.Ryckmans for his help; also to Professor Beeston for revising my English, and Professor Jamme for his generosity in supplying me with photostats of the relevant literature.
- 3) 'Notes on the Mureighan inscription', *BSOAS* 16, 1954, pp.391-2.
- 4) Qalqashandī, *Nihāyat al-ʿarib*, Cairo 1959, p.368; *id.*, *Ṣubḥ al-a<sup>c</sup>shā*, Cairo 1913, vol.1, p.326; Zubaydī, *Tāj al-ʿArūs*, Cairo 1306/1886, vol.2, p.815.
- 5) al-Ḥusayn al-Maghribi, *al-Īnās*, Riyadh, p.219.
- 6) O.R.Kaḥālāh, *Mu<sup>c</sup>jam Qabā'il al-ʿArab*, Beirut, 1968, vol.2, p.805.
- 7) al-Balādī, *Nasab Harb*, Makkah, 1984, pp.28,55; Kaḥālāh, *op.cit.*, p.811.
- 8) see below.
- 9) Kaḥālāh, *op.cit.* p.811; al-Balādī, *op.cit.* p.55.
- 10) H.St J.B.Philby, *Arabian Highlands*, Ithaca, 1952, p.25.
- 11) G.Ryckmans, p.303 f.; J.Ryckmans, *BiOr* 14, 1957, p.93.
- 12) F.Altheim, R.Stiehl, 'Muḥammad's Geburtsjahr', *Edwin Redfisch zum 70.Geburtstag*, 1954, pp.200-7; N.J.Kister, 'The Campaign of Hulubān', *Mus.* 78, 1956, p.428.
- 13) The beginning of the Himyarite era has been variously set at 115 or 110 BC; the equivalence represents the former view. See below.
- 14) *op.cit.*, pp.425-6; see also L.Conrad, 'Abrāma and Muḥammad', *BSOAS* 50, 1987, pp.228, 238.
- 15) The reference given in Kister's published article is to a ms in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, but without the shelfmark of the ms. However, I have since ascertained from him that the correct reference is (Bodleian) Ms Marsh 384, f.120.
- 16) assuming a starting date of 110 BC for the Himyarite era.

The tradition was partly related by al-Azraqī (died 223 AH), but without the number of years between the events. He states that, "The Arabs and Quraysh in Makkah began to use the Hijrah for their chronology" (*Akhbār Makkah*, Makkah, 1385/1965, p.4). The text runs:

فكانوا يورخون في كتبهم ويورخون من سنة الفيل، وقبلها ولد رسول الله (ص) فلم تزل قرينين والعرب بمكة تورخ بعام الفيل، ثم أرخت بعام الفجار، ثم أرخت ببنيان الكعبة فلم تزل تورخ به حتى جاء الله بالاسلام فأرخ المسلمون من عام الهجرة.

The author's earlier date than Ibn Bakkār (died 256 AH) casts some doubt on the precise figures quoted by the latter.

Conrad, *op.cit.*, works listed on p.225.

1) Maḥmūd al-Falākī, *al-Taqwīm al-ʿArabī qabl al-Islām wa tārīkh mīlād al-Rasūl wa tārīkh al-ʿArabī*, Cairo, 1969, pp.40-1. The tradition was reported by Yahyā b. Muḥammad b. Abī al-ʿAṣ̄r al-Maghribī al-Andalusī, in a ms in the Paris Bibliothèque Nationale (arabe 2581, formerly 1161, p.15); in a different form by Aḥmad b. ʿAbd al-Jalīl al-Shajarī (arabe 2581, formerly 1131, p.8).

2) *Sīrah*, p.175.

3) *Tārīkh al-rusul wa l-mulūk*, Cairo, 1961, vol.2, p.155.

4) W.Caskel, *Entdeckungen in Arabien*, Köln-Opladen, 1954, p.30.

5) *al-Ikhlāṣ*, Cairo, 1966, vol.2, p.157.

6) *Sabaic Dictionary*, ed. Beeston, Ghul, Müller, Ryckmans. Louvain & Sanaa, 1982.

7) *op.cit.* p.28.

8) ʿA. Ibn Khamīs, *Muʿjam al-Yamāmah*, Riyadh, 1978, pp.18.332.

9) *Buldān*, Beirut, 1977, vol.5, p.103.

10) M. Ibn Balḥīd, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-akhbār*, Riyadh, 1972, vol.2, p.88.

11) Ibn Khamīs, *op.cit.*, p.332.

12) The latter lays stress on the correctness of this reading.

13) J.Ryckmans, in a personal communication, objects that this name is spelt in Arabic with a final -y, and suggests that the inscriptional name may represent orthographically an Ethiopic form Mēnasi or Minas or Mennas. This is difficult to accept, in view of the pure South Arabian origin of the Dhiriṣ family.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY NOTE BY A.F.L.BEESTON

Professor Abdel Monem Sayed has made an important contribution to our understanding of Ry 506. But there is one feature of his translation in line 5 which I find difficult. He renders the pericope  $\text{w}^{\text{h}}\text{d}^{\text{r}}\text{w}/\text{q}^{\text{d}}\text{m}^{\text{y}}/\text{g}^{\text{y}}\text{s}^{\text{2}}\text{n}/\text{c}^{\text{1}}\text{y}/\text{b}^{\text{n}}\text{y}/\text{m}^{\text{r}}\text{m}/\text{k}^{\text{d}}\text{l}$  as two separate sentences, "they (the two commanders) presented themselves in front of the main army" and "Against the Bani ʿAmir were Kindah ...". But lack of a coordinating particle *w* between them (no matter whether the second be regarded as an *ibtidāʿ* or as a *ḥāl*) is an exceptionally rare phenomenon in Sabaic (where it does occur, it is almost always before the verb *ʾlḏ*). Hence I feel it virtually obligatory to construe the whole pericope as a single sentence: "Kindah and ʿAli were present in advance of (or, in the vanguard of) the army, (operating) against the Bani ʿAmir in the valley of Dhu Markh ...".

In connection with the name of the qayl who wrote the new minor inscription, I would remark that none of the three names suggested by Professor Ryckmans is strictly speaking 'Ethiopic'. The first is simply the way in which the Biblical name Manasseh is represented in Ethiopic script (which notes all the vowels, including the final one, by modifications of the three consonants, and not by the addition of a consonantal y symbol). In view of the very close relationship between South Arabian and Old Geez scripts, it does not seem to me that the North Arabian spelling (with four consonantal letters) is a relevant objection to identifying the qayl's name as Manasseh. (Tangentially, I would further remark that this identification would provide another instance of North Semitic  $\aleph$  being noted in South Semitic scrip- ture by  $\aleph$ , along with Syriac  $ܩܝܫܝܐ$  >  $qiss$ ). Since the Christian Ethiopian king Kaleb used an Old Testament name, I cannot see any reason why a Yemenite qayl, who must almost certainly have been, like his lord Abraham, a Christian, should not also have done so.

The other two forms quoted by Professor Ryckmans are variant spellings of the name of a Coptic saint with a considerable reputation in the Eastern Churches; it was moreover the name of a Patriarch of Constantinople who reigned at precisely the period of our inscription. Here again, I see no reason why it should not have been used by a Yemenite Christian. The virtue of Professor Ryckmans' observation is to have called attention to this name as a possible alternative to the Manasseh identification, without however excluding the latter.

X•D̄D̄P̄P̄ • | K̄K̄ȲP̄H̄ • | ĀĀĀ | ĀĀĀ | K̄ĀĀ | K̄ĀĀĀ | ȲP̄ĀĀ | K̄ĀĀĀ | •ȲP̄ĀĀ • | K̄K̄ȲP̄P̄ | 77ȲĀ+ 1

•ȲP̄ĀĀ | K̄ĀĀĀ | K̄ĀĀ | •P̄ĀĀ | X̄ȲP̄Ā • | D̄ĀĀ • | •ȲP̄ĀĀ • ĀĀ • | X̄ȲĀĀ • 2

D̄D̄P̄P̄ȲĀ | ĀĀ | •K̄ĀĀĀĀ | K̄ĀĀĀĀ | K̄ĀĀĀĀ | K̄ĀĀĀĀ | K̄ĀĀĀĀ | D̄ĀĀĀ • 3

D̄ĀĀ | D̄K̄ĀP̄ȲĀ | D̄D̄ĀĀ • | ĀĀ • | X̄ȲĀĀ | D̄ĀĀ | ĀĀĀĀĀ | K̄ĀĀĀ | ȲĀĀĀ • 4

| D̄ĀĀĀ • | K̄ĀĀĀĀ | • ȲĀĀ • | ȲĀĀ • | X̄ȲĀĀ | D̄D̄ĀĀĀ | ȲĀĀĀĀ | •ȲĀĀĀ • | •ȲĀĀĀ • | D̄ĀĀĀĀ 5

•K̄Ā • | K̄ĀĀĀĀĀ | K̄ĀĀĀĀ | ȲĀĀĀ • | ĀĀĀĀ • | •ȲĀĀĀ • | •ȲĀĀĀ • | •ȲĀĀĀ • | K̄ĀĀĀĀ | ĀĀĀĀĀĀĀĀĀ • 6

K̄ĀĀĀĀ | K̄ĀĀ | D̄D̄ĀĀ • | •ȲĀĀĀ • | •ȲĀĀĀĀ • | •ȲĀĀĀ • | D̄ĀĀĀĀ ĀĀĀ 7

ĀĀ | K̄ĀĀĀĀĀĀĀĀ • | D̄ĀĀĀĀĀ • | ȲĀĀĀĀĀĀ • | •ȲĀĀĀĀ • | •ȲĀĀĀĀĀ • 8

ĀĀ • | ȲĀĀĀ • | ȲĀĀĀĀĀĀĀ | •ȲĀĀĀĀ • | K̄ĀĀĀĀĀĀĀĀĀĀĀĀ | ĀĀĀĀĀĀ • 9

D̄ĀĀĀĀ | 3 10

Fig. 1: G. Ryckmans' copy of Ry506. The squares show the words subjected to emendat

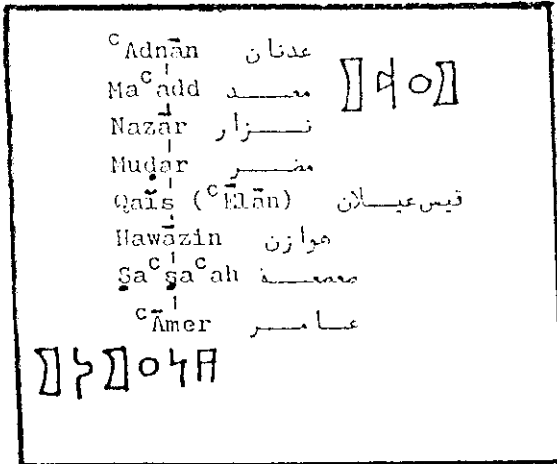
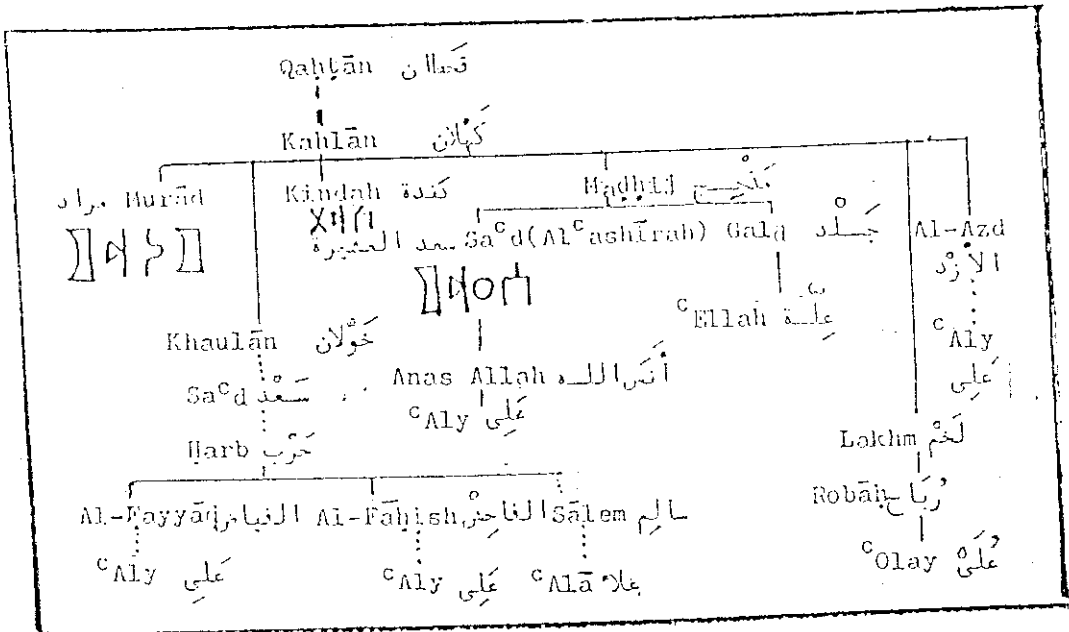


Fig. 2a: Genealogical tree of the 'Albanite tribes.

Fig. 2b: Genealogical tree of the Qahtanite tribes.



... This dotted line denotes that a generation or more separates the progenitor or ancestor from his descendants.



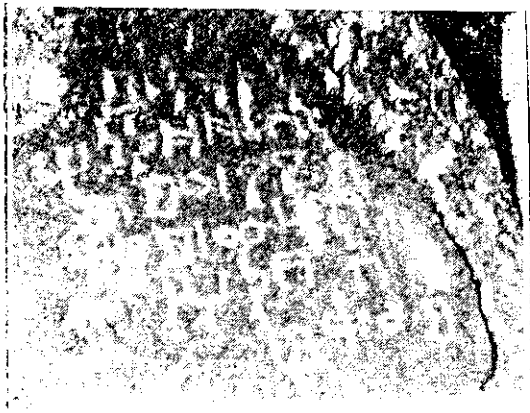


Fig. 3a: Photograph of the minor inscription.

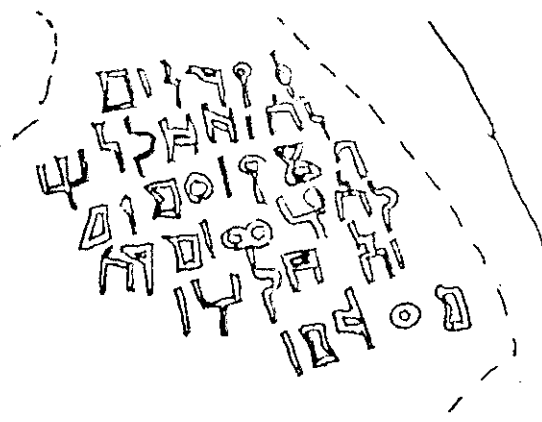


Fig. 3b: Line-tracing of the same photograph.

Fig. 4: Beginning of lines 4 and 5 of Ry506.

Tracing of 1.4 ———  
Showing the upper dash

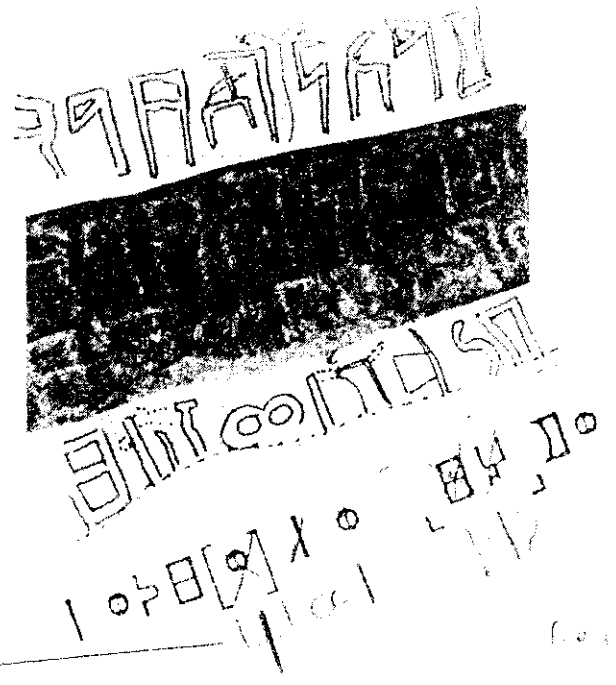
Photograph of 1.4 ———

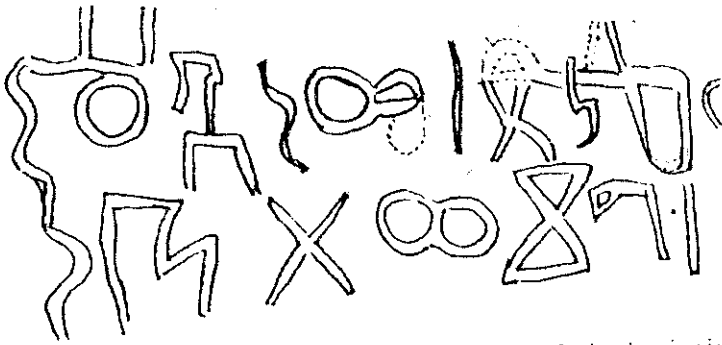
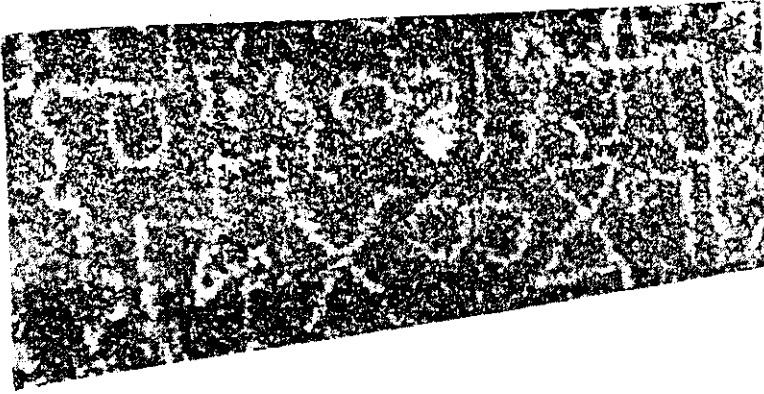
Photograph of 1.5 ———

Tracing of 1.5 ———

1.5 in G. Ryckmans' copy ———

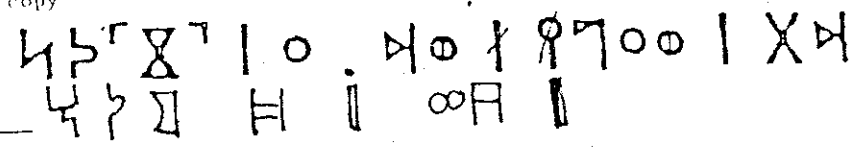
Emendation of 1.5 ———





Figs. 5a & b: Photograph and line-tracing of the beginning of lines 2 & 3 of Ry506 showing  
a) In line 2, the random shifts which connect the tips of the letters of the words "Ynat" and "w(r?)"r(blw)".  
b) In line 3, the intentional incision connecting the tip of letter "n" with the dividing vertical line in the word "gzwa".

G. Ryckmans' copy



endation of the letters

otograph of 1.5



tracing of the photograph

Fig 6

Fig. 6: End of line 5 of Ry506.

In G. Ryckmaus \_\_\_\_\_

Emendation \_\_\_\_\_

Photograph \_\_\_\_\_

Line tracing \_\_\_\_\_

| ] 4 5 ] . . 4 5 7 8 9

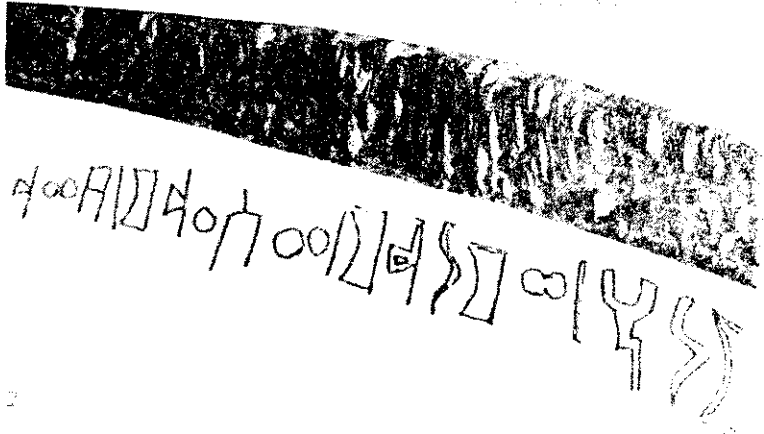


Fig. 7: End of line 5 of Ry506 (continued).

G. Ryckmaus' copy \_\_\_\_\_

4 5 6 | 7 8 9 | 10

Photograph \_\_\_\_\_

Line tracing \_\_\_\_\_

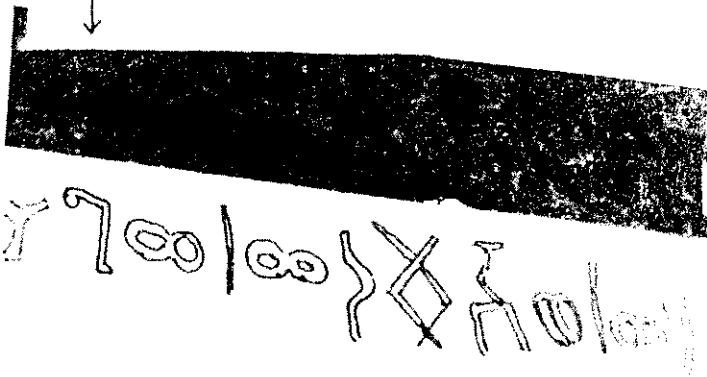


Fig. 8: Restoration of letter "g" in the word "agnw" in line

Fig. 9

Ryckmans —

ᐱ ᐱᐱᐱᐱ ᐱ ᐱᐱᐱ 7

The photograph —



Line tracing —

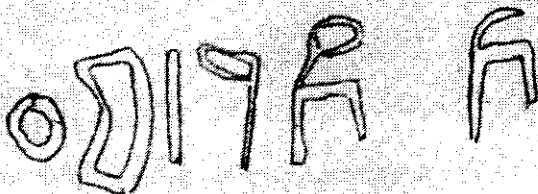


Fig. 9: Confirmation of the letter "k" in the word "kz1" in line 7.

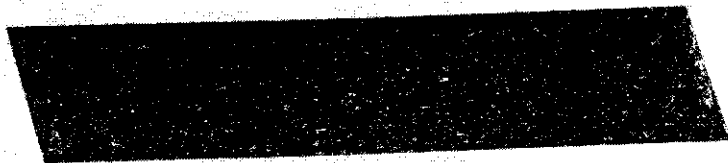
Position of the name —

ᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱ

G. Ryckmans —

ᐱ ᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱ ᐱ ᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱ

The photograph —



Line tracing —

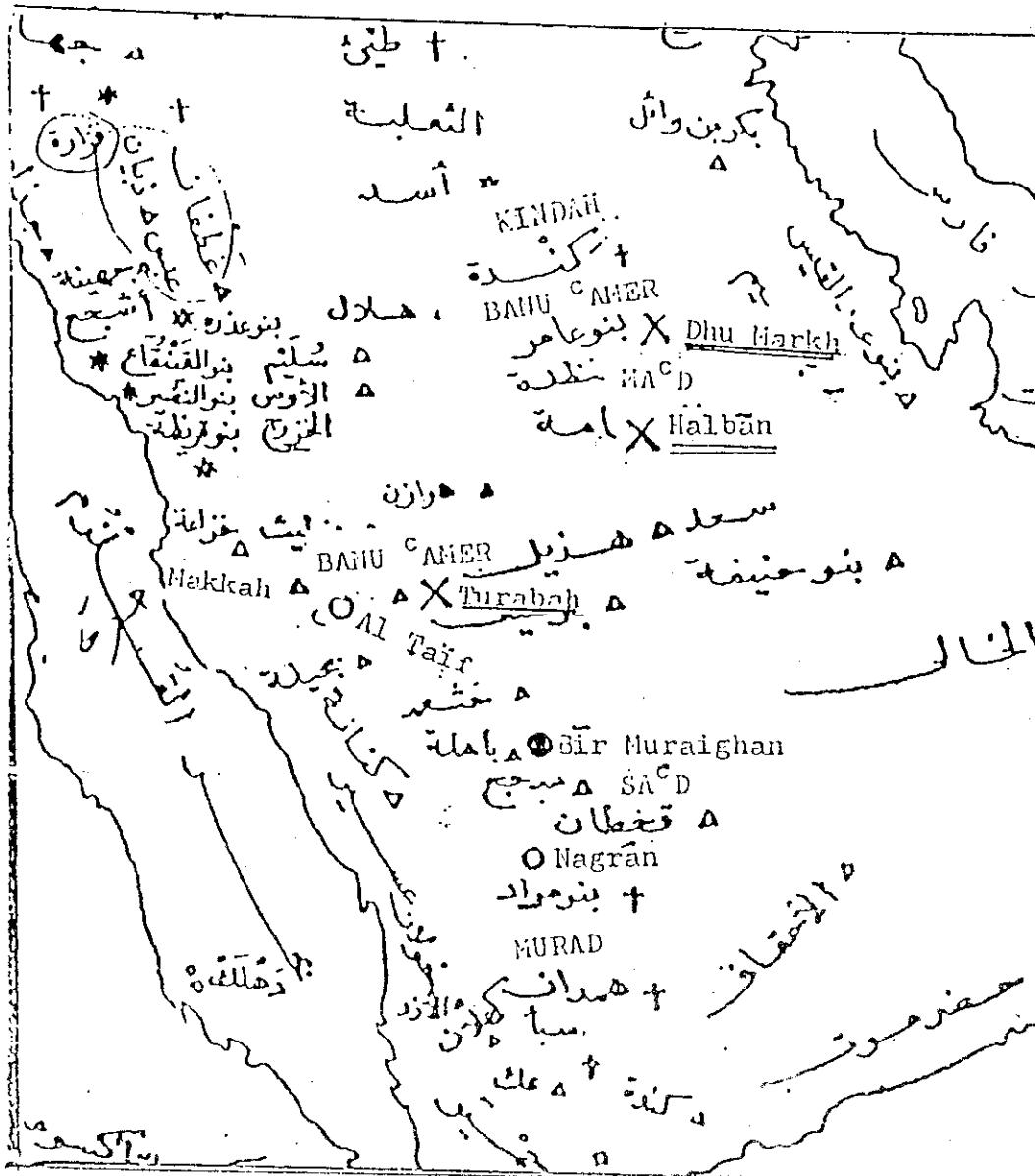


Fig. 10: Restoration of the dropped month-name "d<sup>c</sup>ln" in line 9.



Fig. 11: Confirmation of the letter "q" in the word "kqsdw" in line 3. Photograph and line tracing of the words "kqsdw" and "stqifhw" showing the difference between the letter "q" and letter "f" in the same inscription.

(Map 1)



Distribution of the Arab Tribes at the Time of Islam  
 (From: Waged, A.H., Atlas of the History of Islam, map 2)

(دكتور عبد المنعم ماجد، اطلس التاريخ الاسلامي، القاهرة، ١٩٦٨)

Part IV

Comparative studies of the ancient history  
and archaeology of the African and  
Asiatic countries of the Red sea

WERE THERE DIRECT RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PHARAONIC EGYPT AND ARABIA? (\*)

Abqdl Monem A.H.Sayed (Jeddah)

12

The paper which my colleague in Egyptology Dr Uphill presented to the Seminar last year about the maritime link between Egypt and Arabia (Uphill 1988, 163ff) has suggested to my mind the subject of this paper; for as far as I know there was neither link nor relationship between Pharaonic Egypt and Arabia, and the monuments found in Yemen which bear resemblance to Egyptian antiquities, like the scarab to which Dr Uphill has referred, were due to indirect contact between the two nations, through a third nation.

There is no evidence throughout Pharaonic history for any direct maritime relationship (meaning that either the Egyptians sailed across the Red Sea to contact the Arabians, or vice versa) before the Ptolemaic period. On the contrary, we have many evidences of its absence.

The subject was discussed long ago by Carlo A.Nallino (1931, 465ff) who, after studying it through inscriptional material both in South Arabia and in Persian Egypt, came to the same conclusion. The reason, in his opinion, for the absence of such links was the monopolising of the lucrative incense trade by the South Arabians, who strained every nerve to keep Egyptian ships from their harbours, while the Egyptians adopted a corresponding policy in reverse (ib.475).

As an Egyptologist, I shall deal with the subject from the Egyptiological sources, under ~~four~~ <sup>Five</sup> headings.

1. Absence of names of Arabia proper, its regions and sites, from Egyptian monuments of the Pharaonic period.

The Egyptians gave names to the Semites and bedouin who dwelt in North-West Arabia and Sinai, but neither the designation 'Arabian nor the toponym 'Arabia' occurs among those names. The first occurrence of the name Arabia (in the Assyrian form *Aribi*) is in a Demotic text from the Ptolemaic period relating a legend about Pharaoh Pedibast as a national hero (Revillout 1907, 26). It seems that this legend was composed under the foreign rule of Egypt, to remind the Egyptians of their great past and revive their national feeling. Thus the name *Aribi* does not necessarily go back to the actual time of Pedibast, who reigned before the Persian conquest, before Egypt had fallen under foreign occupation.

Another toponym seems to relate to South Arabia: 'Shabat'. occurring on a stela erected by the Persian king Darius I at Tell el-Maskhuta in the eastern Delta (Servin 1949, pl.8, ll. 10 and 17), to commemorate the digging of the Nile - Red Sea canal. The discoverer of the stela assumed that it is the name of the South Arabian kingdom of Saba (Golenischeff 1890, 108), but others have considered it to be the modern Massawa in Eritrea, a port on the Gulf of Adulis, on the ground that it is most probably there that the classical authors have located 'Portus Saba' (Artemidorus), and 'Sabat polis' (Ptolemy) (Brugsch, Schiaparelli, Conti-Rossini, in Gauthier 1975 V.100).

Dr Uphill's paper has revived Golenischeff's hypothesis with some modification, suggesting that the name may have applied to a calling place in South Arabia on the voyage from Egypt to Persia (Uphill 1988, 167). But there are several arguments against his view.

Firstly, one adduced long ago by Nallino against Golenischeff's hypotheses: namely the absence, in the form Shabat. of the *hamzah* which characterizes the

(\*) Published in "Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian studies, London, Vol. 19 (1989) pp. 155-166.

name of the kingdom of Saba' in all Semitic languages (Akkadian, Ethiopic and Arabic) (Nallino 1931, 464).

Secondly, Strabo's clear account of the toponym 'Saba' and its derivatives, according to which (XVI.4-14) it was given to three towns on the Eritrean shore. One is the 'port of Saba' which he associates with the elephant hunt, thus manifestly implying an African location; this has been identified by Huntingford (1980, 170) with Adulis. The second is described by Strabo as 'the Sabaeen town of Berenike' which may have been a town on the way to Assab; the nomenclature refers clearly to a South Arabian settlement on the western Red Sea shore, established by Sabaeen immigrants. The third he describes as 'a large town called Sabai', which has been identified with Assab (Huntingford 1980, 170, n.4).

Thirdly, the abovementioned steale of Darius I. He had erected several stelae, though only the remains of three (or four) still exist, at Tell el-Maskhutah, Kabrit (or Shaloufah), and Koubri (Suez). Both the Tell el-Maskhutah and the Kabrit tablets record the countries subject to Darius in the Egyptian fashion, the name of each country being written in a cartouche surmounted by the depiction of a prisoner. The names on the Tell el-Maskhutah tablet are for the countries to the east of a line running from the Persian Gulf to the lake of Urmia, beginning with Medi. and ending with Scythia. Those on the Kibrit tablet are countries west of that line, beginning with Babylon and ending with Oman (and India?). The name of Arabia has unfortunately disappeared because of the fragmentary state of the monument. But judging from similar inscriptions in cuneiform Arabia should have been mentioned between Libya and Nubia (*ta-tmh* and *ta-nhs* respectively on the stela) (Posener 1936, 187). Consequently, the Kabrit stela, and not the Tell el-Maskhutah one, is concerned with Arabia. Hence, if 'Shabat' was a South Arabian site, it should have been mentioned on the Kabrit stela and not at Tell el-Maskhutah. The name 'Shabat' on the latter ought to refer to a place outside Arabia, on the Gulf of Adulis, according to the foregoing evidence.

Lack of Arabian toponyms on Pharaonic monuments was not confined to the broader terms like Arabia and Saba', but extended to regional and site names. Not a single toponym on the east coast of the Red Sea, from the Gulf of Aqaba to Bab al-Mandab straits, occurs on Egyptian monuments of the Pharaonic period, or on those of the Persian period, apart from a dubious reference to Ezion Geber (Gauthier 1975, IV.23).

Dr Kamal Salibi's extraordinary claim (1985, 133-42) that Sheshonq I (ca. 920 B.C.) crossed the Red Sea and invaded <sup>C</sup>Asir in southwest Saudi Arabia, rests on untenable identifications of the hieroglyphic toponyms listed by that pharaoh on the walls of the Karnak temple in western Thebes with modern toponyms in <sup>C</sup>Asir. In addition to the fact that the same hieroglyphic toponyms occur in similar lists of eight pharaohs among Sheshonq's predecessors, beginning with Thutmose III (1450 B.C.), there are many other hieroglyphic documents contradicting Salibi's assumption; these will be dealt with in a forthcoming paper by the present writer, to appear in vol.7 of the Journal of the Faculty of Arts, Jeddah.

## 2. Frequent occurrence of names of regions and sites of the African Red Sea coast in the Pharaonic monuments.

This can be traced in the lists of conquered peoples, which the pharaohs recorded on the walls of Egyptian temples, particularly at Karnak. The first lists of this kind, and the most comprehensive, are those of Thutmose III, where the regional and site names are arranged in a manner coinciding with their geographical locations.



The list of toponyms of the African side of the Red Sea begins with the heading Kush, the Egyptian name for Upper Nubia. Under this heading are recorded 22 toponyms. Then comes the regional name *Wawat* or Lower Nubia, with 24 toponyms listed under it. After that, the list begins again from the south, recording regional and site names closer to the Red Sea shore. The regional name Punt is mentioned as a heading for 30 toponyms. After Punt comes *Mejay* as a heading of 17 toponyms. Lastly comes the regional name *Khaskhet* extending along the Red Sea shore of Egypt, with 22 toponyms listed (Schiaparelli 1916, 115-9).

This clear hieroglyphic account allows the following important deductions:

- Profuse occurrence of toponyms on the African side of the Red Sea, in strong contrast with non-occurrence of any toponym on its Arabian side, supports the conclusion about absence of relationships between Egypt and Arabia.
- The relation between Punt and the other regional names in the list (*Kush*, *Wawat*, *Mejay* and some of the toponyms under the heading *Khaskhet*), of which the African locations are agreed among Egyptologists, shows clearly that in the time of Thutmoses III Punt was the most southerly region and adjacent to the Red Sea coast. This is of great value for locating Punt during the New Kingdom in general, and the time of Queen Hatshepsut in particular, with which I deal later.

### 3. The role of the incense trade and production areas in defining the location of the 'Land of Punt'.

Punt was the name given by the Egyptians to the land from which they obtained luxuries in general, and the much prized incense in particular. Throughout Pharaonic history, it was not - as appears from their inscriptions - a rigidly defined area: its boundaries extended gradually in step with the increase of their activity in that direction. During the end of the Old Kingdom (ca. 2470-2161 B.C.) and the beginning of the Middle Kingdom (ca. 2000-1900 B.C.), its geographical application extended from the Nilotic regions to the Sudanese coast, as evidenced by the data of two inscriptions.

The first is ascribed to an Egyptian traveller named Herkhuf (ca. 2250 B.C.), who states that he brought back products of Punt, 'Bia Punt', meaning the (gold) mines of Punt (Breasted 1927 §353). It is clear that his journey was by land through the Nilotic regions.

The second inscription occurs on a stela found on a 12th dynasty (Middle Kingdom) site discovered recently by the University of Alexandria expedition at Wadi Gawasis on the Red Sea shore, 60 km. north of the port of Quseir. It records a royal decree issued by Sesostris I (ca. 1950 B.C.) instructing his vizier to build ships for an expedition to the land of 'Bia Punt' (Sayed 1977, 70 and pl.16). The discoverer of the port suggested, from the study of the inscriptional material found there, that 'Bia Punt', the gold-mines of Punt mentioned in both inscriptions was the name of the <sup>C</sup>Atbai desert, famous throughout history for its gold mines, and extending from the southern borders of Egypt to the Sudanese coast: thus it can be reached by land from the Nilotic regions (*ibid.* 177).

This evidence refers clearly to the Sudanese coast and its hinterland and the possible location of Punt and its gold mines during the Old and Middle Kingdoms. From succeeding periods we have unfortunately no clear indication about the location of Punt until we reach the reign of Queen Hatshepsut (ca. 1480 B.C.), when we have an unprecedentedly minute account, through inscriptions and pictorial representations, of life in the land of Punt and the traffic and relationships between Puntites and Egyptians. The pictures engraved on the walls of the funerary temple of Queen Hatshepsut at Deir el Bahari in western Thebes (Luxor). The texts speak of a maritime trading expedition sent by the queen in five ships to the land of Punt, to fetch (as the texts say) 'fresh incense', and 'frankincense living trees' from 'the

frankincense terraces of Punt'. This new designation of the area shows that the frankincense trees grew in a hilly country.

From the texts of this expedition we can infer that the applicability of the term Punt had shifted southwards on the African coast through successive periods after the time of the Middle Kingdom, reaching its furthest extent under Queen Hatshepsut. The reason for the shift was the Egyptian attempt at avoiding the intermediaries of the incense and luxury trade in order to lessen its expensive prices: they also hoped to produce home-grown incense by fetching living incense trees for transplantation in Egypt. In a speech addressed by the god Amon to the queen, he says,

"No one trod the myrrh (frankincense) terraces, which the Egyptians knew not. It was heard from mouth to mouth ... the marvels brought thence under thy predecessors were brought from one to one (i.e. through intermediaries) ... as a return for many payments, none reaching them except by carriers ... I have led them on water and on land" (Breasted 1927 II. §287-8)

From this we learn that the frankincense production area, called in the hieroglyphic texts 'the frankincense terraces of Punt' (*khetyw<sup>c</sup> antiyw nw pwnt*), occurring here for the first time (x) had been unknown to the Egyptians previously to the reign of Hatshepsut; an achievement which was considered a favour of the god for the queen' (y) Crauthier, (1975 IV 189)

The scenes show the Egyptians carrying the frankincense trees in pots to be loaded on the ships, side by side with other trees still in the soil close to the shore (fig.1). This representation is of special importance for locating the 'frankincense terraces of Punt' where Hatshepsut's ships landed. To define this frankincense production area we must (a) specify the kind of incense that the Egyptians imported from Punt, and (b) trace the distribution of this species of tree on the African side of the Red Sea now (and, if possible, in antiquity) in order to find the production area of this species closest to the sea shore.

Concerning point (a), the Egyptians differentiated between two kinds of incense, one called *sntr* and the other *nty* or *ntiyw*. The former was of lower grade and imported from the Nilotic regions, or from Punt by land through the Nilotic regions, according to the inscriptions of the travellers Harkhuf (Breasted 1927 I, §339; Sethe 1904 I, 128) and Sebni (Breasted I, §§369 and 135)<sup>1</sup>. Both of these two travellers belong to the end of the 6th dynasty (ca. 2250 B.C.). The other type, called *ntiyw*, is of the best grade and was usually imported by sea from the land of Punt. Botanists have identified it with frankincense of the species named *Boswellia Frereana* (Hepper 1969, 70). In the scenes on the walls of Hatshepsut's temple which represent the transportation of the living trees from their soil into the ships, the water is the sea, as shown by the inclusion of pictures of salt-water aquatic creatures such as the *palinurus* or lobster, and is very close to the dry land where the trees grow (fig.1; Naville 1898 pl.LXIX). Each tree needs six (or four in other scenes) carriers. In the texts the number of the frankincense trees<sup>2</sup> is 31 (Breasted 1927 I, 272); so the loading of these heavy trees needed in all from 124 to 186 carriers. If we realise that the total number of Egyptians was only about 150 (five ships each manned by 30 men), it can be seen that, even with help from the Puntites as shown in the upper register of fig.2, they could not have transported the 31 trees unless the place where they grew was close to the shore, as shown in the scene.

This clue may guide us to locating the landing place of the ships: we must trace the distribution of *Boswellia Frereana* around the African coast of the Red Sea. The Sudanese, Eritrean and Tajura coasts must be excluded, for in these the frankincense trees grow not less than 100 km from the sea shore, and are of a different species from *Boswellia Frereana*<sup>3</sup>.

According to Hepper (*loc.cit.*) the only regions where *B.Frereana* grows closer to the sea shore are those on the southern side of the Gulf of Aden, the northern coast of Somaliland. The frankincense trees there grow on the sides of rocky hills, a fact reflected in the Egyptian expression 'frankincense terraces of Punt (*khetiyw<sup>c</sup> antiyw nw pwnt*). This renders one of those regions the most probable landing place of Hatshepsut's fleet.

But, one may ask, are the regions in northern Somaliland where the incense tree grow the same now as they were thirty-five centuries ago? Have they not changed since the time of queen Hatshepsut ca. 1480 B.C.?

Fortunately, we have several accounts from antiquity about the incense trade and production areas. The foremost of these accounts is the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*, which according to Huntingford (1980, 11) 'goes back to the period between the end of the first and the beginning of the second centuries' (A.D.). Then comes the account of Strabo, although this is shortened and confused. So we depend mainly on the *Periplus* account; on Strabo's only in so far as it conforms with that of the *Periplus*.

The *Periplus* gives the name 'incense from beyond the straits (*libanos peratikos*)' to a top grade of incense, which is most probably that which grows in northern Somaliland beyond the straits of Bab el-Mandab. The author locates four centres of its export:

- |                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| 1. Malao                | most probably modern Berbera                          |
| 2. Moundou (or Mundus)  | " " " Hais or Mait (Mayd)                             |
| 3. Mosoullon (Mosyllum) | " " " Bandar Qasim (or Ras <sup>c</sup> Amtara)       |
| 4. Akannai (Acannai)    | " " " <sup>c</sup> Alula or Bandar <sup>c</sup> Alula |
- (Huntingford, *op.cit.* ch.9-11 and p.17); cf. map 1<sup>4</sup>.

Comparing these locations with Hepper's (*op.cit.* pl.XV) distribution of frankincense trees in north Somaliland today, we find an astonishingly close congruity. The areas where *B.Frereana* (the best grade incense in Somaliland according to Hepper) grows actually concentrated in those four locations, or at least - in the case of Malao - very near (map 1).

In a unique description of the incense of Akannai (<sup>c</sup>Alula), the author of the *Periplus* says "In Akannai alone is produced the greatest quantity of the best incense from beyond the straits" (Huntingford, ch.11). The phrase 'in Akannai is produced' suggests close proximity of the production area to the port of Akannai; this fits very well with the role of <sup>c</sup>Alula today, close to the border of the frankincense production area, as a centre in north Somaliland for collecting and exporting incense to Aden, whence it is re-exported to the world markets<sup>5</sup>.

Moreover, the *Periplus* description of the physical features of Akannai and its vicinity is very reminiscent of the features of <sup>c</sup>Alula today. The description runs,

"From Mosoullon, after sailing two courses, are what they call Neiloptolemaion and Tapatege and the Little Laurel Grove, and the headland Elephas, and a large laurel grove called Akannai ... (Huntingford *ibid.*). The headland Elephas has preserved its name until today, with only the slight difference that the Arabic word *fil* "elephant" has acquired the Somali masc. sing. definite article, an affixed (as is the case with the Old South Arabia definite article) *-ka*; though it is written on maps as Filak or Filuk. The headland derives its name, both anciently and now, from its shape, which resembles a recumbent elephant, when viewed from <sup>c</sup>Alula (fig.2)<sup>6</sup>. This headland is described also by Strabo, in a way compatible with the *Periplus*; he says, "After this is mount Elephas, which juts out into the sea, and a channel a large harbour of Psegmos, ..." (Huntingford, *op.cit.*, 169). From this comparison between the accounts of the physical features of the frankincense regions of the north-eastern Somali coast in the first-second centuries A.D. and nowadays, we can infer that those features have hardly changed in the course of those twenty centuries; and hence to suppose that they similarly did not change during the fifteen centuries before that, back to Hatshepsut

From all the foregoing data, it is clear that Egyptian activity on the African shore of the Red Sea, reflected by an abundance of information in the hieroglyphic texts, is in strong contrast with the complete absence, in those texts, of any information about the Arabian coast. The contrast is due, in my opinion, to the kind of ships used by the Egyptians on the Red Sea.

#### 4. The role of Egyptian 'sewn ships' in relation to contacts or lack of contacts with the Red Sea coasts.

The Egyptians used, for their journeys in the Red Sea, a type of ship that we call 'sewn' or 'sewn plank' ships; the planks are not fastened with metal nails, but with cords. An example of these is the so-called 'Cheops boat', discovered in 1954 near the south side of the Great Pyramid (Nour 1960). The Egyptian word for this type of boat is *kbnt* meaning 'Byblite', connecting it with Byblos whence they got the cedar wood for its building, although the boats were of purely Egyptian workmanship (Sayed 1978, 71 n.7; 1983, 29).

The sewn ship has an advantage when used in the Red Sea, in its ability to absorb the shocks of running on coral reefs; whereas the nailed ship may easily break up in similar circumstances. This advantage made the sewn ship popular with other peoples whose shores are beset by coral reefs; and the Egyptian model was probably the prototype of the sewn ships adopted by other peoples. The *Periplus* calls the type *rhapta*, and says that it was adopted by the inhabitants of Azania who were immigrant Arabs (Huntingford ch.16). The use of such ships has persisted in the Red Sea and Indian Ocean into the Islamic period, and with relics in East Africa up to today (Huntingford 158 f). The Arab travellers Ibn Jubair and Ibn Battuta refer to the advantages of these ships, which they term *galabah*.

The use of the *kbnt* sewn ships on the Red Sea is demonstrated in hieroglyphic texts and in representations. An inscription by a ship captain named Pepi Nakht states that another ship captain named <sup>c</sup><sub>n</sub>-<sup>c</sup><sub>nkhet</sub> was killed by bedouin "while he was building (*spt*) a *kbnt* which was to be sent to the land of Punt" (Breasted 1927 I. 360; Sethe 1904 I.134). The word *spt* with the meaning "to stitch or fasten the ship's planks together with cords" is attested by scenes on Egyptian monuments of the Old Kingdom, which represent two sailors sitting in a boat and holding a cord with which they fasten the planks; above the scene is written the hieroglyphic word *spt* to denote the operation, according to the Egyptian convention of scene description (fig.4; Harpur 1987, fig.1). The same word, pronounced *sabat*, is still used in Egyptian colloquial Arabic for a "basket", apparently because of the stitching used in making it.

The word *kbnt* occurs in nearly all the records of expeditions on the Red Sea, to denote the type of ships employed in the expeditions, even after pharaonic times, it occurs on the above-mentioned stela of Darius at Tell el-Maskhutih (Servin 1949, 78 line 17), and on the 'stone of Pithom' erected by Ptolemy II (Neville 1903, pl.10, line 22).

On the other hand, sewn ships have a disadvantage: they cannot resist fierce winds or strong currents, and are liable to get broken if a Red Sea crossing is attempted. For this reason, the Egyptians did not sail across the Red Sea to make direct contact with South Arabia and obtain its precious commodities (incense and luxury items); they could obtain them safely from the African coast by coastwise sailing, and there was no need for them to cross over, and expose their sewn ships to risk of damage.

#### 5. Origin of the so-called Egyptian artifacts found in Yemen.

Uphill considered the finding of Egyptian objects in Yemen as evidence

for trading connections between Egypt and South Arabia. He suggests that these objects go back to the Saïte period from the 26th Dynasty onwards, and arrived through Egyptian trading expeditions of that period (*op.cit.*163).

On the latter of these two arguments, we have from the 26th Dynasty itself a piece of evidence that excludes any direct connections between Egypt and South Arabia. It is an inscription on a tablet found at an ancient site named Dafnah, in the north-east of the Delta, and the text states that "when rain falls on the mountain of Punt, the Nile floods" (Petrie 1888, 107). This 'mountain of Punt' can only be the Ethiopian highlands.

Concerning Uphill's first argument, the scarabs and other objects found in Yemen did not necessarily arrive through Egyptian trading expeditions there, by direct contacts, they may have been the result of both Phoenician trading activity in the Red Sea and the strong maritime connections between Phoenicia and Egypt, which reached their zenith during the Saïte period, as can be gathered from the story of Phoenician co-operation with Pharaoh Necho for the circumnavigation of Africa, recorded by Herodotus, Book IV, §42.

Moreover, the Phoenicians used to imitate Egyptian workmanship: the evidence for this being another artifact found by A.Fakhry in Yemen. This is also in the Egyptian style, like the scarab bearing the name of Amenhotep III which Uphill adduces as evidence for Egyptian trading expeditions to South Arabia; but it is a small tablet of glazed steatite bearing the name of Thutmosis III who was a predecessor of Amenhotep III in the same 18th Dynasty. I give below (fig.5, no.2) a figure of this object (Fakhry 1952, 136 no.3), side by side with the scarab referred to by Uphill (fig.5, no.1; Fakhry 136-7, no.1). The Phoenician imitation is clear in the motif composed of the disc and crescent. Although the hieroglyphic signs on the tablet look like pure Egyptian workmanship, the separation between crescent and disc betrays the Phoenician imitation; this is not an Egyptian style of design, but Phoenician or South Arabian. In the Egyptian version of this motif (fig.5, no.3; Rossiter 1984, 21, no.17) the disc and crescent are contiguous and not separated as they are in the South Arabian version. It seems that the Phoenicians, in their imitation of the Egyptian artifacts, modified their motifs in accordance with South Arabian religious symbols, in order that their commerce might be more acceptable and consequently more lucrative in South Arabian markets<sup>7</sup>.

From all that has been said above, we can conclude that there was no direct relationship between South Arabians and Pharaonic or Persian Egypt, and the artifacts of Egyptian type found in South Arabia were transmitted by the Phoenicians.

\*\*\*\*\*

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> N.Groom's statement (*Frankincense and Myrrh*, 1981, 27) that Sabni (Sebni) brought <sup>C</sup>antyw is incorrect; it must be emended to *sntr*, according to the hieroglyphic text (Sethe 1904 I, 135; De Morgan 1894, 147 line 7). This was during the Old Kingdom, but later on *sntr* was imported from the land of Punt by sea, as well as <sup>N</sup>ntiyw (Naville 1898, pl.LXXIV, line 7).

<sup>2</sup> This frankincense is confused with myrrh by some authors, e.g. Breasted cited above; myrrh is of less value than frankincense, particularly the species *B. Frereana* (Jéquier 1922, 142).

<sup>3</sup> The Sudanese coast has been suggested as the landing place of Hatshepsut's fleet by recent Egyptologists (Kitchen 1971, 196; Fattowitch 1984, 107), but this is unlikely for the reasons I have exposed.

<sup>4</sup> The toponyms on this map, and those in brackets, are according to Schoff (1912, 82 f), which differ somewhat in spelling from those of Huntingford.

<sup>5</sup> This was the case in 1958 when I visited the place during my teaching work in Somaliland.

<sup>6</sup> A photograph by the author in the same year.

<sup>7</sup> An alternative interpretation of the separated crescent and disc symbol is that it may be a Phoenician fashion of representing it, resembling that of the South Arabians. Perhaps the Phoenicians carried these small objects along with their merchandise, to express their own beliefs. Besides the crescent and disc motif, there is a statue of the god Bes (Fakhry *op.cit.*136-7): he is an Egyptian god worshipped by the Phoenicians, but not in South Arabia.

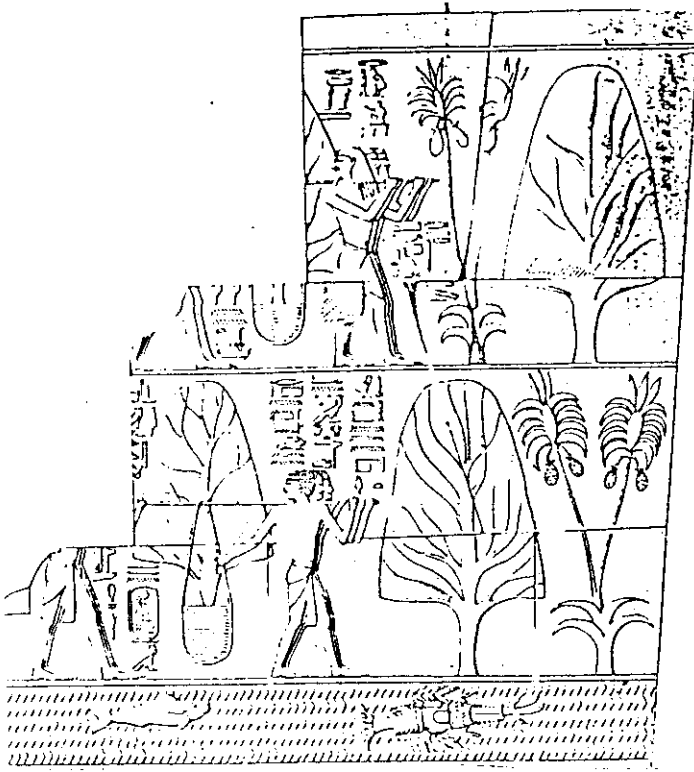


Fig.1: The transportation of frankincense trees to the sea shore in reliefs of Queen Hatshepsut's temple by the Egyptians (lower register) and the Puntites (upper register).

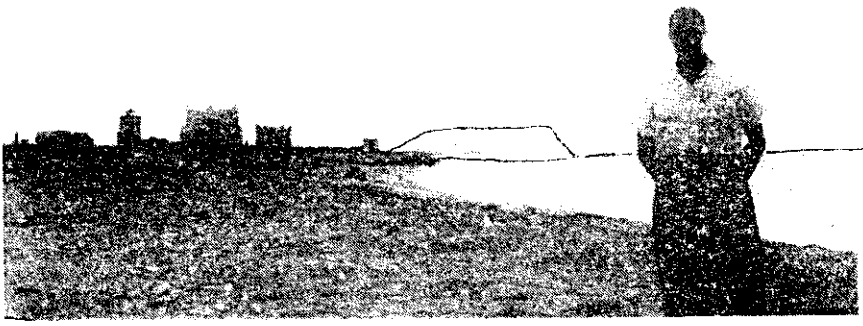


Fig.2: View of Ras Filuk (Cape Elephas) from the harbour of Akannai-Alula, where it looks like a cumbent elephant. (Photographed by the writer in 1958).



Fig.3: The steep hills in the neighbourhood of <sup>C</sup>Alula with frankincense trees growing on their flanks. A scene which recalls the Egyptian phrase "The frankincense terraces of Punt".

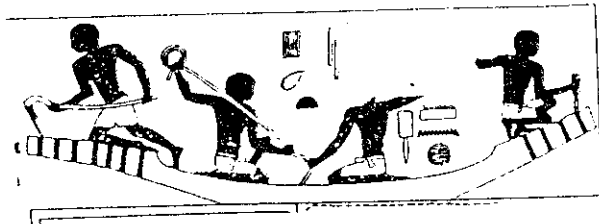


Fig.4: Representation of the stitching process and the word "spt" above the sailors. A scene from the tomb of R<sup>C</sup>-htp (beginning of the IVth Dynasty - Old Kingdom).

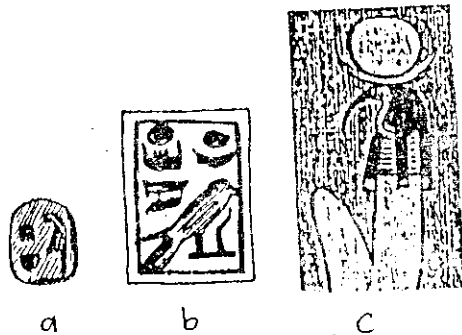
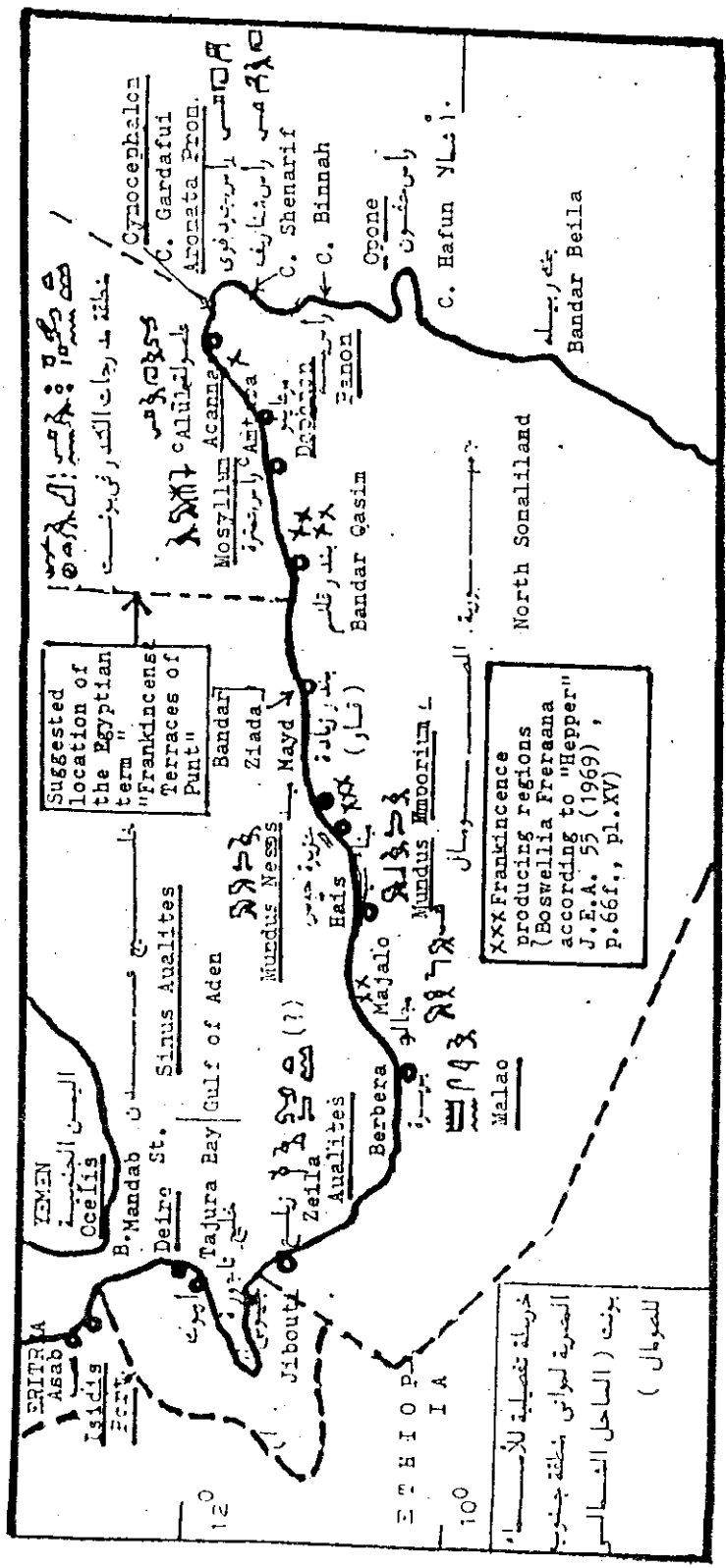


Fig.5: a) The scarab bearing the name of King Amenhotep III.

b) The steatite tablet with the name of King Thutmosis III showing the Phoenician style of imitative Egyptian designs.

c) The moon god Thut with the moon disc and crescent on his head.



Map 1: North Somaliland showing the frankincense-growing regions, the hieroglyphic, classical and modern toponyms.

The hieroglyphic toponyms on this map are adapted from Marietta 1875:62ff. & Atlas, and Schiaparelli 1916:181-247. The orthography of the classical toponyms is according to Schoff 1912:82ff.



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## RECONSIDERATION OF THE MINAEAN INSCRIPTION

OF ZAYD'IL BIN ZAYD (\*)

Abdel Monem A.H. Sayed (Jeddah)

13

The inscription is engraved on the left side of a sycamore wood sarcophagus, now in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo (no. SS 27/B 4); the dimensions are 200 cm long, 60 cm broad, 39 cm high, and the thickness of the wood varies between 16 cm at the head and 14.5 cm at the foot. Eleven slots are hewn around the edge (six at the right and five at the left (Pl.1), apparently to hold the lid which had been lost before purchase. The exterior is rectangular while the interior is roughly shaped to a human body outline. It is void of any decorations and the workmanship is coarse.

I take this opportunity of expressing my thanks to Dr M.Saleh, Director General of the Museum for allowing me to view the sarcophagus and for providing the services of a photographer. I also thank Dr Dia Abu Ghazi, Director General of the Antiquities and Libraries Section of the Department of Antiquities, for sending me photostats of studies by early Egyptologists. Above all, I should like to express my sincerest gratitude to Professor A.Jammec for making available to me the recent studies of the inscription; without this kind help I would have been unable to complete this study.

The text of the inscription was published first by Golenischeff [1893], and at once attracted the attention of semitists. The nature of the text has been recognised as funerary by all researchers, with the exception of Rhodokanakis [1924], who tried to interpret it as dealing with financial affairs; and it was his version that was reprinted in *Répertoire d'Epigraphie Sémitique* 3427 (simply because it was at that time the latest published). As an Egyptologist, I find myself in agreement with the majority view (against Rhodokanakis), and have depended on the funerary hieroglyphic texts in my study, using Coptic sources insofar as they conform with the hieroglyphic ones.

The text reads as follows (Fig.3):

- 1 ... .. *nfqn/kzyd'1/bn/zyd/dzyrn/dwb/ds<sup>c</sup>rb/'mrrn/wqlymtn/k'bytth/'1'lt/mṣr/bywmhy/tlmyt/bn/tlmyt*  
 2 ... .. *wyfqz/zyd'1/bwrhh/hṭhr/wyfnw/kb/bn/kl/'bytth/'1'lt/mṣr/tmhsm/kśw/bwṣ/kṣyhs/wys<sup>c</sup>lyns*  
 3 .. *b'hs<sup>c</sup>/d/mn/byt/'lhn/'trhf/bwrhh/kyhk/hrf/tny/w<sup>c</sup>šry/ktlmyt/mlkn/wrt/d/zydl/gmns/wnfqs/'trhf/w'1'lt/ms/bmḥrms*

The following translation is the result of my study:

(1) ... This is the sarcophagus of Zayd'il son of Zayd of the clan Zyrrn, the purified one, who imported myrrh and calamus for the temples of the gods of Egypt in the days of Ptolemy son of Ptolemy

(2) ... and Zayd'il died in the month Ḥathūr, and was sent *kouphi* from all the temples of the gods of Egypt, and was presented with linen coverings for his (funerary) boat, and he was raised up

(3) by his mourners to the port of the temple of the god Osiris-Apis in the month Kayḥak (Choiak) of the 22nd year of Ptolemy the king; and Zayd'il consecrated his mummy and his sarcophagus to Osiris-Apis and his associated gods (or, goddesses) in his sanctuary.

As can be seen, the inscription records some features of ancient Egyptian funerary beliefs, particularly the resurrection concept connected with the cult of Osiris, or an Osirid god who is here the bull-god Osiris-Apis residing in the Serapeum of Memphis. According to this belief, the deceased is identified with Osiris, and what was done for Osiris must be done for the deceased.

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COMMENTARY

Line 1. *dwb*: Rhodokanakis' view that this means "one of the *w<sup>c</sup>b* (priests)" is very dubious. A document from the Serapeum [Wilcken 1927.142,177] tells us that a Greek priest named Ptolemaios son of Glaukias submitted complaints to the king against the racial prejudice of the Egyptian priests in the Serapeum; if this was the attitude of the latter towards a Greek priest (connected by race with the ruling dynasty), it is highly improbable that they should have accepted a Semite as priest among them, particularly since we know that during the Pharaonic period the Semites had been considered an abomination by the Egyptians because of their continuous raids on the Egyptian frontier. Beeston's [1937.60] suggestion, on the other hand, that *dwb* is a second element of the clan-designation, can hardly be accepted, for while a clan-name *gyrn* is frequently attested in the Minaean inscriptions, neither *wb* nor *dwb* occurs. This fact raises the possibility that it is a loan-word, but not one meaning any sort of priest. The word *w<sup>c</sup>b* has another sense, of a funerary character, referring to the 'purification' of the corpse from earthly defilements in order to prepare the deceased for resurrection, by a ritual including pouring sacred water on the corpse (see Wb. I.282).

Line 2. *kb*: Beeston took this as the object of the verb *yfnnw*, and compared Coptic *κῆμ*; this is derived from hieroglyphic *k3pt* (not *k3p*) "piece of linen" (Wb. V.104), but there is an hieroglyphic word *k3p* with a different meaning, which fits the context well. It is a compound aromatic (consisting according to Plutarch of sixteen ingredients) which became popular in Egypt in the Greco-Roman period, and was known to the classical writers in the form *κουφι*. It seems to have been prepared locally, and would thus be more abundant and less expensive than imported myrrh.

That Zayd'il was presented aromatics by the temples of Egypt appears more reasonable than that he should have been presented with linen wrappings for his mummy, because this present was only the privilege of the dead bull-god Osiris - Apis, and it is unbelievable that a foreigner belonging (from the Egyptian point of view) to a lower caste, should acquire the privilege of an Egyptian god. Zayd'il had during his lifetime supplied the temples with myrrh and calamus, and in return the temples sent presents of aromatics for his funerary rites on his death.

*tmhh-sm*: most scholars have rendered the noun by some word such as "cloth, garments", and in fact the hieroglyphic *mnxt* or *mnx* has such meanings (Wb. II.87). But I agree with Derenbourg [1895.22] that it should be regarded as Semitic, comparable with Ar *tamniḥ* "presentation (of a gift)"; hence one can render, "they presented (him) with" or simply "he was presented with".

*ksw*: understood by previous scholars as the common Semitic word meaning "covering, garment". Ritual associations have persisted to the present day in Arabic *kiswah*, applied to the richly embroidered coverings sent annually for the 'clothing' of the Kaabah at the time of the pilgrimage.

*bwgs*: Greek *βύσσος*, Arabic *buzz*, both meaning "fine linen"; *βύσσινον* is the fine-linen tax paid by Egyptian temples to the royal treasury [Budge 1922.16]. Herodotus (II.86) uses *βύσσος* in the sense of "mummy wrappings". The rendering "mummy wrappings" here is no doubt plausible, but there is a difficulty in this rendering, as we shall see in the following note.

*ksyh*s: Derenbourg "vers son bateau"<sup>2</sup>, with *sy* for Egyptian *d'y* "boat" (Coptic *ⲥⲁ*); there is no Egyptian (or Coptic) letter corresponding to Semitic *ṣ*, and *d* is the convention employed by Egyptologists for a sound *ṣ* or *ṣ̣*. The majority of scholars has accepted this rendering.

Ancient Egyptian funerary scenes always show the coffin placed in a boat-cabin covered with embroidered linen hangings, on a waterway. In the early period, the Pharaoh's mummy was taken in funeral procession to the cult centres of the god Osiris (god of the Hereafter) at Busiris or Abydos. This privilege was adopted by the nobles in the later periods, as the representations in Middle Kingdom tombs at Beni Hassan show. As a result of the gradual increasing 'democraticisation', ordinary folk began

to adopt this custom, though in most cases it was beyond the means of the ordinary man. Consequently, it changed into a symbolic ritual performed on the Nile or on any other sacred waterway to the residence of an Osiris god: the custom of funerary pilgrimage persisted in theory, while its practice changed. It was combined with the burial rites, for the destination of the funerary pilgrimage was on the west bank of the Nile where the residence of the god lay, the same destination as that of the funeral procession to where the cemetery lay.

In this context, therefore, *kšw* suggests the embroidered coverings of the cabin of the funerary boat used to carry Zayd'il's mummy to the temple of Osiris-Apis. The costly nature of these rich linen coverings may have been beyond the means of the simple foreign merchant; so the Egyptian temples, which he had during his lifetime provided with nyrh and calamus, presented him with these expensive funerary items.

*wys<sup>c</sup>lyns*: Derenbourg recognised here the causative verb "faire monter", but thought that it might refer to the journey of the funeral boat up the Nile, 'la barque funéraire remonte le Nil pour se diriger de la ville où Zaydil a été embarqué jusqu'à la nécropole où la momie sera déposé'. But "to sail upstream" is expressed in hieroglyphic by the verb *xnty* (Wb. III.309), whereas the verb *s<sup>c</sup>r<sup>3</sup>* has the meaning "to raise somebody up". See further the following note.

Line 3. b'hs: since previous scholars have felt uncertainty about the reading, I examined the sarcophagus carefully, and obtained some close-up photographs of the portion where the word occurs, and also copied it on tracing paper (fig.2). The result is to confirm fully this reading.

Grammatically analysed, the word consists of the preposition *b-*, the noun 'h, and the suffix pronoun *-s*. I suggest that the noun is of Egyptian origin, being hieroglyphic *šhw* "mourners" (Wb. I.12). The mummy was carried in a boat across the lake to the Serapeum in a mourning procession [Vercoutter 1962.xiii]. We know from Egyptian funerary scenes that the majority of the mourners were women, led by two professional mourning-women impersonating the two goddesses Isis and Nephthys, sisters of the god Osiris. In the Serapeum of Memphis, two sisters called *Θαυνο* and *Ταουνο* were the professional mourners of the bull-god Osiris-Apis, as a Greek document from the Serapeum tells us [Wiicken 1927.I,177].

Now the phrase *wys<sup>c</sup>lyns/b'hs* can be rendered "and they raised him up, (namely) his mourners", or simply "he was raised up by his mourners". It was a ritual 'raising up' symbolizing the 'raising up' of Osiris from water to land by his mourning sisters Isis and Nephthys, after his wicked brother Typhon had drowned him; the sisters were given the epithet *mnyt* "those who caused (their brother) to land" (Wb. II.72).

*mn*: a hieroglyphic word which closely resembles this is *mny* "port, anchorage" (Wb. II.74), Coptic *μνε*. It may have been the anchorage of the temple of Osiris-Apis, where the funerary boat of Zayd'il came to land and his mummy was raised up by his mourners in funeral procession to the temple. The evidence of performing the water journey and the mourning ritual in the vicinity of the Memphis Serapeum is recorded on the stelae found by Mariette and studied by Vercoutter [1962.xii-xiv, 125 ff].

*gmns*: thus read by those who studied the text before Rhodokanakis, though the latter read the first letter as *l*. Max Müller [1894.359] proposed an Egyptian origin, analysing the word as *gi-n-mone* and rendered it "Landen, Begrabenswerden, Bestattung". Derenbourg proposed a Semitic interpretation, relating the word to the root *gmn*, with its Arabic derivatives *ġanan* "grave; shroud", *ġanin* "buried". Derenbourg's interpretation is a convincing one, but I suggest that the word can be better identified with Arabic *ġutmān* "body, corpse"; the engraver may have inadvertently omitted the letter *t*, exactly as he has omitted the *alif* in the preceding word *zyd1* (for *zyd'1*).<sup>5</sup>

*'1'lt<sup>c</sup>ms*: the phrase is linguistically Minaean, but may have an Egyptian allusion, either to Isis and Nephthys (on whom see above, and who are always represented on the sides of sarcophagi spreading their wings in a protective attitude around the

mummy, and the sentence here begins with the protection formula *rtd* "placed under the protection of (a deity)"; or alternatively, the two other members of the triad of the Memphis Serapeum, namely Isis and the god *Ḥr-p3-χrd* "Horus the Child", whom the Greeks called Harpocrates, respectively sister-wife and son of Osiris - Apis.

Provenance

When the sarcophagus was first acquired by the Cairo Museum, its provenance was given as 'probably the Fayyum', and this has found its way into later literature without the cautionary word 'probably' (e.g. in the Index of the *Répertoire d'épigraphie sémitique*).

In my opinion, the original provenance is most probably the neighbourhood of the Serapeum of Memphis. Apart from the textual references to Osiris-Apis and his temple, there are some pieces of evidence which point to this. Firstly, a Semitic cemetery arose at the south of the Serapeum nearly a century before the Ptolemaic period, and Aramaean sarcophagi inscribed with the names of Aramaeans have been found there [Jéquier 1929.160-1]. Secondly, the Aramaic funerary inscriptions have a great resemblance to the Zayd'il text. One, found within the Serapeum, is addressed to Osiris-Apis spelt *'wsry ḥfy* [Cooke 1903.201-2], closely comparable with the Minaean spelling *'trḥf*; others use expressions of Egyptian origin, such as *ḥsyh* [Cooke 1903.205], derived from the hieroglyphic term *ḥsy* "the blessed one" (Wb. III. 156) as an epithet of the deceased<sup>6</sup>. Thirdly, Greek documents refer to an Arab settlement in the Memphite nome in the Ptolemaic period, whose inhabitants retained their Semitic names [Wilcken 1927.340-3].

NOTES

- 1 Although admittedly "priest" is one of the meanings of the Egyptian word.
- 2 His full rendering runs, "et l'on a envoyé des étoffes de byssus vers son bateau" with the explanation that the 'étoffes de byssus' were 'les bandelettes fabriquées dans les temples pour servir de linuels aux momies'. This implies that the voyage to the necropolis took place before the mummification process, which is absolutely against the funerary customs of the ancient Egyptians.
- 3 During the later periods of Egyptian, the sound *r* was replaced by *l*, as is shown by the Coptic form of the base-stem of this word, which is *ale*.
- 4 There is a specific word for "mourners" in the hieroglyphic texts, namely *ḥ3w* (Wb. III.6), but this is less concordant with the Minaean *'h* than the word I have quoted (unless the Minaean loanword has been subjected to metathesis).
- 5 Despite Professor Jamme's objection (in a private communication) to this suggestion, I present it here as a mere hypothesis submitted for discussion.
- 6 The use of *ḥsyh* in the Aramaic inscriptions as the equivalent of Egyptian *ḥsy* has called to my mind another possible analysis of *b'hs* in our text, namely as the Egyptian definite article *p3* with a noun *hs* representing hieroglyphic *ḥsy*. A possible (though still uncertain) parallel might be an Aramaic inscription [Cooke 1903. 202] where the proper name *Bnt* might perhaps stand for Egyptian *p3-Neit*.  
On the basis of this, the sentence *wys<sup>l</sup> l'yns b'hs* might be, "they raised him up, the blessed one"; but there are two difficulties:  
(a) the possibility of replacing the sound *p* by *b* is doubtful;  
(b) one might query whether Minaean admitted the substitution (*badal*) of such an expression for a pronoun.

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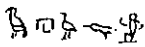

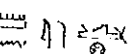


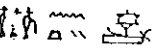




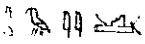
- |            |   |  |                  |
|------------|---|--|------------------|
| Wb I.12    |    | der Bekümmerte (MR)  | 'hw              |
| Wb I.282   |    | der Reine (d.h. der ritual oder moralisch einwandfrei)             | w <sup>c</sup> b |
| Wb II.74   |    | Hafen, Hafenstadt  | mnyw.t           |
| Wb II.87   |    | Kleid, Gewand (von den Gewändern die dem Toten dargebracht werden) | mnx.t            |
| Wb II.156  |    | der Gelobter ... als Prädikat des selig verstorbenen               | hsy              |
| Wb III.309 |    | segelnd stromauf fahren  | xnty             |
| Wb IV.32   |    | jemanden zu einen Höheren emporführen (Gr)                         | s <sup>c</sup> r |
| Wb V.104   |   | Stück Leinen   | k'p.t            |
| Wb V.104   |  | Räucherwerk (Gr)   | k'p.t            |
| Wb V.104   |  | Räucherwerk (Gr)   | k'p              |
| Wb V.515   |  | Flussschiff  | d'y              |

Fig.1 Hieroglyphs (MR = attestation from the Middle Kingdom; Gr = form attested for the Greco-Roman period)

\*\*\*\*\*



Fig.2: Line tracing of the word b'hs (original size)

1  
 2  
 3

Right half of the inscription

1  
 2  
 3

Left half of the inscription

Fig.3 Line-tracing of the inscription of Zayd-il to show its palaeographic characteristics (traced from a recent photograph).





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Plate 1. Bird's-eye view of the sarcophagus of Zaydil showing its coarse workmanship, irregular outline, the slots which held the (lost) lid, and its size relative to the size of a man.

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INDEX

The following abbreviations are used only for unfamiliar words. Af. = African; An. = Ancient; Ar. = Arabian, Arabic; As. = Asiatic; Cl. = Classic, Classical; Cun. = Cuneiform; Eg. = Egyptian; Egypt. = Egyptologist; ex. = expression; g. = god; Heb. = Hebrew; Is. = Islamic; Mes. = Mesopotomian; n. = Name; Nub. = Nubian; pl. = place; pr. = proper; Sem. = Semitist; Som. = Somali, Somalian; tr. = tribe, tribal, w. = word; wr. = writer.

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