

Middle Kingdom Studies 12

The World of Middle Kingdom Egypt (2000-1550 BC)

*Contributions on Archaeology, Art,
Religion, and Written Sources*

vol. III



Gianluca Miniaci, Wolfram Grajetzki (eds)



GHP

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Religion, and Written Sources

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Middle Kingdom Studies 12

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Abbreviations

Ä&L/ÄuL/ÄgLev = *Ägypten und Levante: Zeitschrift für ägyptische Archäologie und deren Nachbargebiete* (Vienna)

ÄA = *Ägyptologische Abhandlungen* (Wiesbaden)

ÄAT = *Ägypten und Altes Testament* (Wiesbaden)

Abgadiyat = *Abgadiyat: Scientific Refereed Journal by the Bibliotheca Alexandrina Calligraphy Center* (Alexandria)

Achet = *Achet Schriften zur Ägyptologie* (Berlin)

ACER = *Australian Centre for Egyptology. Reports* (Sydney)

AegMonast = *Aegyptiaca Monasteriensia* (Aachen)

AfO = *Archiv für Orientforschung* (Berlin/Graz/Vienna)

AHL = *Archaeology & History in Lebanon* (London)

AION = *Annali dell'Istituto Orientale di Napoli* (Napoli)

ÄMP = *Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung in Berlin*

Ann CdF = *Annuaire du Collège de France* (Paris)

Ann. Rev. Anthropol = *Annual Review of Anthropology* (Palo Alto)

AnOr = *Analecta Orientalia: Commentationes scientificae de Rebus Orientis Antiqui* (Rome)

AntOr = *Antiguo Oriente* (Seminario de Historia Antigua II, Universidad de Alcalá)

AOS = *American Oriental Series* (New Haven)

ASAE = *Annales du Service des Antiquités de l'Égypte* (Cairo)

ASE = *Archaeological Survey of Egypt* (London)

ASEM (EES) = *Archaeological Survey of Egypt. Memoirs* (London)

ASOR = *American Schools of Oriental Research* (Alexandria, VA)

AV = *Archäologische Veröffentlichungen, Deutschen Archäologisches Institut, Abteilung Kairo* (Berlin / Mainz am Rhein)

AVDAIK = *Archäologische Veröffentlichungen, Deutschen Archäologisches Institut. Abteilung Kairo* (Berlin/ Mainz am Rhein)

BABELAO = *Bulletin de l'Académie Belge pour l'Etude des Langues Anciennes et Orientales* (Louvain)

BACE = *Bulletin of the Australian Centre for Egyptology* (North Ryde)

BaE = *Bibliotheca Aegyptiaca* (Brussels)

BAR = *British Archaeological Reports* (Oxford)

BAR IS = *British Archaeological Reports International Series* (Oxford)

BASOR = *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* (Alexandria, VA)

BCE = *Bulletin de la céramique égyptienne* (IFAO, Cairo)

BdE = *Bibliothèque d'Étude* (IFAO, Cairo)

BEC = *British Egyptology Congress* (EES, London)

BEM = *Bulletin of the Egyptian Museum* (Cairo)

BES = *Bulletin of the Egyptological Seminar* (New York)

BH = Beni Hassan, Egypt

BIFAO = *Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale* (Cairo)

BiOr = *Bibliotheca Orientalis* (Leiden)

BM = *British Museum*, London

BMPES = *British Museum Publications on Egypt and Sudan* (London)

BMSAES = *British Museum Studies in Ancient Egypt and Sudan* (London)

BMRAH = *Bulletin des Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire* (Brussels)

BODO = *BIBEL und ORIENT Museum* (Fribourg) online database

BOLMG = *Bolton Museum and Art Gallery*, Bolton, UK

BOREAS = *Uppsala Studies in Ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern* (Uppsala)

BOS NS = *Bonnener Orientalische Studien. Neue Serie* (Stuttgart/Bonn/Wiesbaden)

BSAE/ERA = *British School of Archeology in Egypt/ Egyptian Research Account* (London)

BSAE = *British School of Archaeology in Egypt* (London)

BSEG = *Bulletin de la Société d'Égyptologie Genève* (Geneva)

BZÄ = *Beiträge zur Ägyptologie* (Vienna)

CAENL = *Contributions to the Archaeology of Egypt, Nubia and the Levant* (Vienna)

CASAE = *Cahiers supplémentaires des ASAE* (Cairo)

CCEM = *Contributions to the Chronology of the Eastern Mediterranean* (Vienna)

CdE = *Chronique d'Égypte. Bulletin périodique de la Fondation Égyptologique Reine Élisabeth, Bruxelles* (Brussels)

CG/CGC = *Catalogue General du Musée du Caire* (Cairo)

CHANE = *Culture and History of the Ancient Near East* (Leiden)

CNMAL = *Catalogue of the National Museum of Antiquities at Leiden* (Leiden)

CRAIBL = *Comptes rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-lettres* (Paris)

CRIPEL = *Cahier de Recherches de l'Institut de Papyrologie et d'Égyptologie de Lille* (Paris/Lille)

CSIC = *Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas* (Spanish National Research Council)

CT = *Coffin Texts*

DAIK = *Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo*

DE = *Discussions in Egyptology* (Oxford)

DFIFAO = *Documents de fouilles de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale du Caire* (Cairo)

DGÖAW = *Denkschriften der Gesamtakademie, Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften* (Vienna)

EA = *Egyptian Archaeology* (London)

EEF = *Egypt Exploration Fund* (London)

EES = *Egypt Exploration Society* (London)

- EES EM = Egypt Exploration Society Excavation Memoirs (London)
- EES OP = Egypt Exploration Society, Occasional Publications (London)
- EgUit = Egyptologische Uitgaven (Leiden)
- EJARS = *Egyptian Journal of Archaeological and Restoration Studies* (Sohag)
- ENiM = *Cahiers Égypte Nilotique et méditerranéenne* (Montpellier)
- EU = Egyptologische Uitgaven (Leiden)
- EVO = *Egitto e Vicino Oriente* (Pisa)
- FIFAO = Fouilles de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale (IFAO) du Caire. Rapports préliminaires (Cairo)
- FIP = First Intermediate Period (2160–2055 BC).
- GHPE = Golden House Publications Egyptology (London)
- GM = *Göttinger Miszellen* (Göttingen)
- GOF = Göttinger Orientforschungen I V. Reihe, Ägypten (Wiesbaden)
- GSL = Gardiner's Sign List (in A.H. GARDINER: *Egyptian Grammar. Being an Introduction to the Study of Hieroglyphs*, 3rd ed., Oxford 1957)
- HÄB = Hildesheimer Ägyptologische Beiträge (Hildesheim)
- HES = Harvard Egyptological Studies (Leiden/Boston)
- IAA = Israel Antiquities Authority
- IBAES = Internet-Beitraege zur Aegyptologie und Sudanarchaeologie (Berlin/London)
- IEJ = *Israel Exploration Journal* (Jerusalem)
- IFAO = Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale (Cairo)
- IJCP = *International Journal of Cultural Property* (Cambridge)
- IJHS = *International Journal of Heritage Studies* (Taylor & Francis online)
- IRSR = *International Regional Science Review* (Los Angeles/London/New Delhi/Singapore/Washington DC/Melbourne)
- JAEA = *Journal of Ancient Egyptian Architecture* (online)
- JAIE = *Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections* (Tucson)
- JAR = *Journal of Anthropological Research* (Chicago)
- JARCE = *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* (Boston/Princeton/New York/Cairo)
- JEA = *Journal of Egyptian Archeology* (London)
- JEH/JEgH = *Journal of Egyptian History* (Leiden)
- JESHO = *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* (Leiden)
- JNES = *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* (Chicago)
- JSA = *Journal of Social Archaeology* (United Kingdom)
- JSem = *Journal for Semitics* (South Africa, SASSEM)
- JSSEA = *Journal of the Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities* (Toronto)
- KASKAL = *Kaskal. Journal History, Environment, and Cultures of the Ancient Near East* (Venezia)
- KAW = Kulturgeschichte der Antiken Welt (Mainz am Rhein)
- Kush = *Kush: Journal of the Sudan Antiquities Service/ Journal of the National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums (NCAM)* (Khartoum)
- LÄ = W. HELCK, E. OTTO, W. WESTENDORF (eds), *Lexikon der Ägyptologie*, 7 vols, 1972–75 (Wiesbaden)
- LAAA = *Liverpool Annals of Archaeology & Anthropology* (Liverpool)
- LingAeg StudMon = *Linguae Aegyptia. Studia Monographica* (Göttingen)
- MÄS = Münchner Ägyptologische Studien (Berlin/Munich/Mainz am Rhein)
- MÄSB = *Mitteilungen aus der Ägyptischen Sammlung, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin* (Berlin)
- MDAIK = *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo* (Mainz/Cairo/Berlin/Wiesbaden)
- MEEF = EEF Excavation Memoirs (London)
- MET = Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York
- MFA = Museum of Fine Arts in Boston
- MIFAO = Mémoires publiés par les membres de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale du Caire (Paris/Cairo)
- MK = Middle Kingdom (2055–1650 BC).
- MKS = Middle Kingdom Studies (London/Pisa)
- MMA = Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York
- MMJ = *Metropolitan Museum Journal* (New York)
- MRAH = Musées royaux d'Art et d'Histoire, Brussels
- MRE = Monographies Reine Élisabeth (Brussels/Turnhout)
- MVEOL = Mededelingen en Verhandelingen Ex Oriente Lux (Leiden)
- NCM = Nottingham City Museums and Galleries
- NEA = *Near Eastern Archaeology* (Alexandria, VA)
- OBO = Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis (Freiburg/Göttingen)
- OBOSA = Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis. Series Archaeologica (Freiburg/Göttingen)
- OIP = Oriental Institute Publications (Chicago)
- OIMP = Oriental Institute Museum Publications (Chicago)
- OLA = Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta (Leuven)
- OM = Orient & Méditerranée (Paris)
- PdÄ = Probleme der Ägyptologie (Leiden/Boston/Köln)
- PEF = Palestine Exploration Fund (London)
- PEFQS = Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly Statement (London)
- PIHANS = PIHANS, Egyptologische Uitgaven, Achaemenid History (Leuven)
- PM = B. PORTER, R. MOSS, *Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Reliefs and Paintings*, 7 vols., 1927–1951 (1960–), (Oxford)
- PMAG = Perth Museum and Art Gallery, Perth, UK
- PMMA = Publications of the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Egyptian Expedition) (New York)

- PPYE = Publications of the Pennsylvania-Yale Expedition to Egypt (New Haven)
- PT = Pyramid Texts
- QDAP = *Quarterly of the Department of Antiquities in Palestine* (Jerusalem)
- PN = H. RANKE, *Die altägyptischen Personennamen*, 2 vols. (Glückstadt, 1935, 1952)
- RACE = *Reports of the Australian Centre for Egyptology* (Sydney)
- RdE = *Revue d'Égyptologie* (Paris)
- REAC = *Ricerche di Egittologia e di Antichità Copte* (Bologna)
- RecTrav/RT = *Recueil de travaux relatifs à la philologie et à l'archéologie égyptiennes et assyriennes* (Paris)
- Rime = *Rivista del Museo Egizio* (Turin)
- Rives = *Rives méditerranéennes* (Marseille)
- RMO = Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden
- ROM = Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto, Canada
- ROSAPAT = Rome «La Sapienza» Studies on the Archaeology of Palestine & Transjordan (Rome)
- SACOS = School of Archaeology, Classic and Oriental Studies
- SAGA = Studien zur Archäologie und Geschichte Altägyptens (Heidelberg)
- SAHL = Studies in the Archaeology and History of the Levant (Winona Lake)
- SAK = *Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur* (Hamburg)
- SAK Bh = Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur. Beihefte (Hamburg)
- SANER = Studies in Ancient Near Eastern Records (Berlin)
- SAOC = Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilisation (Chicago)
- SASAE = Supplément aux Annales du Service des antiquités de l'Égypte (Cairo)
- SDAIK = Sonderschrift des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo (Wiesbaden)
- Shedet = *Shedet. Annual Peer-reviewed Journal of the Faculty of Archaeology – Fayoum University* (Fayoum)
- SIP = Second Intermediate Period (1650–1550 BC)
- SMC = Studies in Manuscript Cultures (Berlin)
- TdE = *Trabajos de Egiptología. Papers on Ancient Egypt* (Puerto de la Cruz, Tenerife)
- TLA = Thesaurus Linguae Aegyptiae (Berlin)
- TPPI = J.J. CLÈRE, J. VANDIER, *Textes de la Première Période Intermédiaire et de la XI^{ème} Dynastie*, (Bibliotheca Aegyptiaca 10, Brussels 1948)
- TT = Theban Tomb
- UC = Petrie Museum, University College London, Inventory Number
- UCL = University College London
- UGAÄ = Untersuchungen zur Geschichte und Altertumskunde Ägyptens (Hildesheim/Leipzig/Berlin)
- UMM = University Museum Monograph (Philadelphia)
- Urk. = K. SETHE, W. HELCK, H. SCHÄFER, H. GRAPOW, O. FIRCHOW (eds), *Urkunden des ägyptischen Altertums*, 8 vols., 1903–57 (Leipzig/Berlin)
- UZK = Untersuchungen der Zweigstelle Kairo des Österreichischen Archäologischen Instituts, herausgegeben in Verbindung mit der Ägyptischen Kommission der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (Vienna)
- VDI = *Vestnik Drevnei Istorii* (Revue d'Histoire ancienne), (Moscow/Leningrad)
- WA = Writings from the Ancient World. Society of Biblical Literature (Atlanta)
- Wb = A. ERMAN, W. GRAPOW, *Wörterbuch der ägyptische Sprache*, 7 vols, 1926–61 (Berlin)
- WZKM = *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* (Vienna)
- ZÄS = *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde* (Berlin/Leipzig)
- ZDPV = *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins* (Wiesbaden)

An Unusual Mutilation of the Crocodile Hieroglyphic Sign in an Early Middle Kingdom Stela from the Sanctuary II of Heqaib at Elephantine

Gianluca Miniaci, Cornelius von Pilgrim

Abstract

The article presents the stela of Jj, which is the only inscribed object found in the older sanctuary (II) of Heqaib in Elephantine. While the find context can be firmly dated to the time of Senwosret I, stylistic and epigraphic features give rise to a discussion about the date of the stela's manufacture, as these initially suggest a date in the late Eleventh Dynasty. Particularly remarkable is the mutilation of the crocodile sign in the hieroglyphic inscription, which is a unique feature. The attestation of a mutilated sign during the early Middle Kingdom at a peripheral site like Elephantine, suggests the phenomenon of the manipulation of hieroglyphic signs, as attested in the Pyramid Texts and late Old Kingdom private funerary contexts, might have continued for a longer time in a cultural level largely invisible in the archaeological record.

The Stela of Jj

Exc. No.: 24607F-6

SCA No.: 4216

Provenance: Elephantine,¹ Heqaib Sanctuary II

Material: Limestone; no traces of colour

Measurements: h: 47 cm; w: 48 cm, d: 18.5-19.5 cm

See Figs 1-2; Pl. LXI

Description of the Stela

The almost square stela is carved in sunk relief. The right side is well smoothed with some vertical scratches made by smoothing tools; the smoothed surface of the left side is much eroded whereas the uppermost part

was not smoothed and slightly protrudes. The back is only roughly worked and shows a horizontal softer vein with a higher proportion of clay in the composition of the limestone. Similar soft zones with natural defects in the material are evident in the left side and in both upper corners of the front side as well as in the centre of the wings of the goose above the offering table.

Most of the stela is taken up with a depiction of the owner seated on a chair in front of an offering table. The man wears a shoulder-length wig, which leaves the ears uncovered: the short curls are carefully carved. He wears a broad collar divided into three registers and a kilt reaching his knees. Bracelets on both arms are indicated by simple lines without interior detailing. The right hand is slightly extended forward above his knees, palm down. His left hand is bent towards his face, bringing a *mrht*-type jar to his mouth. The chair has a low backrest and leonine legs on high drums. The offering table has eight reed leaves on its top, above which is a goose with vertically spread wings and a cow leg. Below the table is a *hs*- and a *mrht*-jar.

¹ The stela was found in the Sanctuary of Heqaib during excavations which occupied the 24th to 28th seasons of joint work by the German Archaeological Institute and the Schweizer Institut für Ägyptische Bauforschung und Altertumskunde in Kairo under the direction of the late Werner Kaiser and the supervision in the field by the co-author of this article.

The inscription runs from right to left and is organised in two sections: two horizontal lines in the upper part, and two vertical columns at the right of the scene. The horizontal inscription is framed by broad lines running above and below; the vertical columns are separated by thin lines. The inscription begins with the *hṯp-di-nswt* formula, and the last column bears the names of the venerated one (Jj) and his loving daughter (Sobekhotep). The style of the hieroglyphs in the horizontal lines is different from that used in the vertical columns: most of the vertical signs in the horizontal lines are slightly inclined to the left whereas the register lines of the vertical columns are inclined to the right. The signs in the last section of the first vertical column, starting from the *im3ḥw Jj* part, are clearly produced in a different manner, hastier, with less regard to balance and proportion, and with the inclusion of a hieratic sign, a non-mutilated viper and a backbone sign with the attached spinal cord.² This part could have been added secondarily after the stela was assigned/sold to a person, which is something not uncommon for stela production.

The state of preservation is very good. The only noticeable damage is a hole in the upper left corner and a break in the upper right side, both of which are due to natural defects in the limestone. Apart from minor chips, the inscription and the representations are well preserved and readable.

Inscription

(1) *Hṯp-dj-nswt* ^(a) *Wsjr nb Ddw* ^(b) *hntj-jmn.tjw nb 3bdw*

(2) *m js.wt=f* ^(c) *nb(.wt)* ^(d) *w'b(.wt) nfr:(w)t* ^(e) *pr.t-hrw n* ^(e) *jm3ḥw hr* ^(f) *ntr- '3 nb p.t* ⁽³⁾ *h3 m t3 hnq.t jh(.w) 3pd(.w) šs mnḥ.t* ^(g) *n jm3ḥw* ^(h) *Jj* ⁽ⁱ⁾ *jr.t.n z3.t=f* ⁽ⁱ⁾ *mry(.t) Sbk-hṯp* ^(k)

(1) An offering ^(a) that the king gives (and) Osiris, lord of Busiris ^(b), foremost of the westerners, lord of Abydos,

(2) at all his pure and beautiful ^(c) places ^(d), an invocation-offering for ^(e) the venerated one before ^(f) the Great God, lord of heaven, ⁽³⁾ 1000 of bread, beer, beef, fowl, (oil in) alabaster (vessels) and linen ^(g) for the venerated

^(h) Jj ⁽ⁱ⁾, ⁽⁴⁾ made by his ⁽ⁱ⁾ loving daughter Sobekhotep ^(k)

Textual notes

- (a) The arrangement of the *hṯp-di-nswt* formula is typical of the First Intermediate Period (BROVARSKI, *Naga ed-Dêr*, 130) and early Middle Kingdom (cf. SIMPSON, *The Terrace*, ANOC 30.1, temp. of Senwosret I).
 (b) The toponym *ddw* is written with the anticipation of both the phonetic complement *d* (GSL D46) and the town determinative (GSL O49). The use of the anticipated phonetic complement in this toponym is diagnostic of the First Intermediate Period (SPANEL,

Beni Hasan, 81; cf. LUTZ, *Egyptian Tomb Steles*, pl. 11, no. 20; SHALABY, *Shedet* 3, fig. 1). However, the inversion of the sign *d* is a feature also attested in the early Twelfth Dynasty in tombs at Beni Hasan (WILLEMS, *Chests of Life*, 67). The anticipation of the phonetic complement *d* and the town determinative are both attested in the stela of Inyotef, dated to the Eleventh Dynasty (MFA 54.66; see SPANEL, in DER MANUELIAN (ed.), *Studies in Honor of William Kelly Simpson*, vol. II, 775, fig. 3).

- (c) Mutilated horned viper, attested from the late Old Kingdom to the end of the Eleventh Dynasty (see discussion below, especially § *The mutilation of signs in the stela of Jj*).
 (d) The expression *m js.wt=f nb(.wt)* is characteristic of the Eleventh Dynasty, and seems to fall out of use from the reign of Senwosret I onwards (BENNETT, *JEA* 27, 80).
 (e) The expression *pr.t-hrw n* is usually a feature of stela inscriptions of the Old Kingdom–Eleventh Dynasty (DAOUD, *Necropoles Memphiticae: Inscriptions*, 43-6), while it is gradually replaced by *di.f pr.t-hrw* in the Twelfth Dynasty (BENNETT, *JEA* 27, 77-8). The absence of the prospective *dj.f* is still attested in the early Twelfth Dynasty (SPANEL, in DER MANUELIAN (ed.), *Studies in Honor of William Kelly Simpson*, vol. II, 768-9, esp. n. 13; see also OBSOMER, in CANNUYER, KRUCHTEN (eds), *Individu, société et spiritualité*, 169-70, 196-8).
 (f) The detachment of the pendant end of the spinal cord in the *im3ḥw* sign (GSL F39) is a feature typical of the First Intermediate Period, appearing from at least the Herakleopolitan Period, and not documented after the Eleventh Dynasty (BROVARSKI, *Naga ed-Dêr*, 122, n. 177; SCHENKEL, *Frühmittelägyptische Studien*, 107; FISCHER, *Dendera*, 89 (13), 197; FISCHER, *Inscriptions from the Coptite Nome*, 84-5; PITKIN, *New Perspectives for Dating Egyptian False Doors*, § 9.5).
 (g) The offering formula mentions only beer, oxen, fowl, (oil in) alabaster (vessels), and linen, consistent with stelae inscriptions dating from before the Twelfth Dynasty; on stelae of the early Middle Kingdom, incense and oil are often added to the list (BENNETT, *JEA*, 79; SPANEL, in DER MANUELIAN (ed.), *Studies in Honor of William Kelly Simpson*, vol. II, 770).
 (h) The introduction of the recipient by *n jm3ḥ* instead of *n k3 n* is attested from the Eleventh Dynasty until the late first decade of Senwosret I, (BENNETT, *JEA* 27, 79; FRANKE, *JEA* 89, 54).
 (i) For Jj as a personal name cf. RANKE, *Personennamen* I, 5.2. Noteworthy is the hieratic form of the sign GSL A2. The same type of spelling (without the hieratic sign) is documented on a coffin from Asyut, dated to

² See comments below *Textual notes* (c), (f), and (i).

the Eleventh Dynasty-time of Senwosret I (ZITMAN, *The necropolis of Assiut*, vol. II, 150-1, S42X; see also <<https://pnm.uni-mainz.de/inscription/16758>>, accessed 31.05.2022).

⁽ⁱ⁾ The horned viper is not mutilated (see discussion below,

especially § *The mutilation of signs in the stela of Jj*).

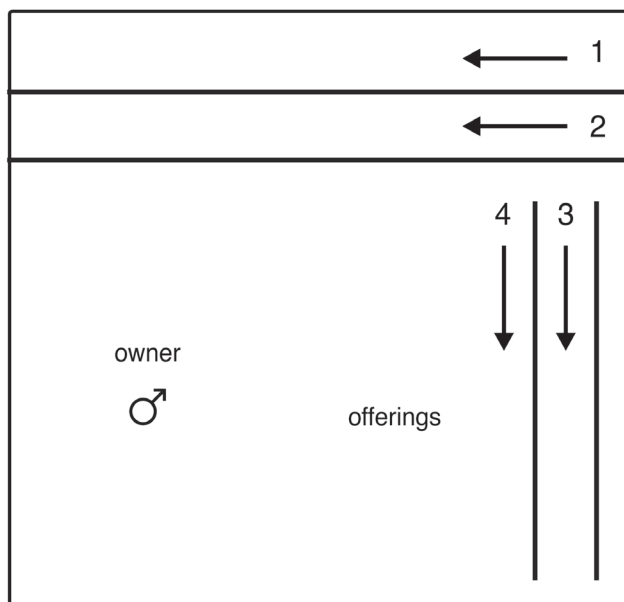
^(k) The crocodile sign (GSL I5) is mutilated (see discussion below). For Sobekhotep as a common female name cf. RANKE, *PN I*, 305.6 (see also <<https://pnm.uni-mainz.de/name/2#1247>>, accessed 31.05.2022).



Fig. 1 – Stela of Jj, Elephantine 24607F-6 © photo: C. von Pilgrim



Fig. 2 – Stela of Jj, Elephantine 24607F-6 © drawing: P. Collet



Graph 1 – Scheme of the stela with the arrangement of hieroglyphs and figures © drawing: G. Miniaci

Stylistic Features and the Dating of the Stela

The features and attitude of the human figure and the organisation of the offering table in the stela of Jj are indicative of a style typical of Upper Egypt in the Eleventh Dynasty: the modelling of the facial features, the large and obliquely positioned ears with pendulous lobes, the narrow and elongated eye, and the fleshy lips.³ Also the broad dividing lines of the hieroglyphic inscription are typical of the Eleventh Dynasty.⁴ One of the stelae from the tomb of Heny offers the closest comparable example for the stela of Jj, except for the kind of relief (raised) and for a higher level of detail and refinement.⁵ The two stela share a number of features, ranging from the type of seat to the attitude of the human figure (in-

³ SPANEL, in DER MANUELIAN (ed.), *Studies in Honor of William Kelly Simpson*, vol. II, 777.

⁴ EVERS, *Staat aus dem Stein*, 76; FISCHER, *Inscriptions from the Coptite Nome*, 99.

⁵ HODJASH, BERLEV, *The Egyptian Reliefs and Stelae*, 64-7, no. 25.

cluding the large ointment jar brought to the face), from the shape of the reed leaves to the arrangement/type of the jars below the table. The stela of Heny almost certainly comes from the area of el-Tarif at Thebes (tomb no. 4 of the tomb complex of King Intef II, *Saff el-Kisasiya*) and is dated to the Eleventh Dynasty, given the presence of King Intef II's name. The style of the human representation on the stela of Jj finds another adherent parallel on the stela of Henenu,⁶ although in this case the owner is not represented alone.⁷ Also this stela very probably comes from Thebes (TT 313 at Deir el-Bahri) and is dated to the Eleventh Dynasty.⁸ Other comparable stelae point to Thebes⁹ and the Eleventh Dynasty.¹⁰ Finally, the epigraphic remarks – as noted in the *Textual notes* above – also rather point to a date in the late Eleventh Dynasty. The handwriting of the signs of bread and *wab* – as well as the mutilation of the vipers and the arrangement of the offerings, especially the attitude of the goose – find close echoes in an unprovenanced stela preserved in the Louvre Museum (C 304), stylistically dated to the Eleventh Dynasty.¹¹ Nonetheless, Franke has cautioned about the limitations of the epigraphic system proposed by Bennett in 1941:¹² characteristics of the late

Eleventh Dynasty in a peripheral area may have been more resistant to the innovations that developed in core regions, such as Thebes and Abydos, and thus continued in use for longer periods of time.¹³

Other elements might contradict a firm date of the stela to the Eleventh Dynasty: the type of relief, which is low and flat, contrasts rather strikingly with the reliefs and inscriptions of Eleventh Dynasty stelae, which are more deeply incised.¹⁴ The style of carving finds a close parallel in the stela Cairo CG 20105 dated to the reign of Amenemhet I, including the broad lines in the inscription and the goose with upswept wings.¹⁵ Also, the lack of incised or modelled inner details, apart from the collar and wig, can point more comfortably to an early Twelfth Dynasty date.¹⁶ The special care taken with the positioning and balance of the figurative and textual elements on the stela, with special attention to the symmetry of the elements, is in line with the stylistic approach of the early Twelfth Dynasty, when a '*strict adherence to symmetry, organization, balance, and proportion is apparent but not overdone*', while for Eleventh Dynasty stela the organisation is rougher and less balanced.¹⁷ All these features might support a date more towards the early Twelfth Dynasty, and especially from the reign of Amenemhat I onwards.¹⁸

The style of the stela of Jj seems to differ from other stelae produced locally in Aswan¹⁹ and instead has strict parallels with stelae whose provenance is considered to be Thebes. The sculptural workshop which produced Jj's stela seems to be tied to a more central or centralised production, situated immediately after the independent style of the Pre-Unification Period (time of Montuhotep II, late Eleventh Dynasty).²⁰ Detlef Franke already questioned whether some of the stelae found at Elephantine

⁶ GRAJETZKI, *Die höchsten Beamten*, 80-1.

⁷ HODJASH, BERLEV, *The Egyptian Reliefs and Stelae*, 67-72, no. 26.

⁸ See ALLEN, in STRUDWICK, TAYLOR (eds), *The Theban Necropolis*, 16.

⁹ Cf. the stela of the gatekeeper Maat (MMA 14.2.7, unprovenanced); HAYES, *The Scepter of Egypt*, vol. I, 153, fig. 91 and OPPENHEIM *et al.* (eds), *Ancient Egypt Transformed*, 44, no. 2. The stela was acquired by Mohammed Mohassib at Luxor and very likely comes from Thebes, since among the people mentioned there is the treasurer, later promoted to vizier, Bebi, an official during the reign of Montuhotep II, whose tomb is in the Theban necropolis, see GRAJETZKI, *Die höchsten Beamten*, 10; ALLEN, in STRUDWICK, TAYLOR (eds), *The Theban Necropolis*, 22. The curled top of the *h3* sign is quite distinctive to El-Tarif stelae, cf. also the stela of Megegi and Henit MMA 14.2.6 (WINLOCK, *Rise and Fall*, pl. 2).

¹⁰ Cf. stela of Qemmen and Henut (Torino, Museo Egizio Cat. 1513; unprovenanced), ROSATI, in DONADONI ROVERI (ed.), *Civiltà degli Egizi*, 106-7, pls 139-40; stela of Intef and Senettekh (Brooklyn Museum 54.66, unprovenanced), SPANEL, in DER MANUELIAN (ed.), *Studies in Honor of William Kelly Simpson*, vol. II, 772-7, with bibliography.

¹¹ Unpublished, acquired by Nicolas Tano in 1913, see <https://collections.louvre.fr/ark:/53355/cl010022803>, <accessed 31.05.2022>. A few epigraphic similarities can be seen also in another Eleventh Dynasty stela from the Cairo Museum (JE 88876), see FISCHER, *ZÄS* 100, 16-28.

¹² FRANKE, *JEA* 89, 57. See for instance, Hetep-iqer, probably from Rizeiqat, Museo Egizio Torino (S.1277) or the stela of Intef from Sheikh Farag, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (25.672), BROVARSKI, *Naga ed-Dêr*, 396-7. See also comments

of ILIN-TOMICH, *ZÄS* 138, 20-1.

¹³ Cf. MOULAERT, SEKIA, *Regional Studies* 37/3; EDER, *IRSR* 42/2.

¹⁴ FREED, in SIMPSON, DAVIS (eds), *Studies in Ancient Egypt*, 71-2.

¹⁵ METAWI, *JARCE* 49, 168.

¹⁶ FREED, in SIMPSON, DAVIS (eds), *Studies in Ancient Egypt*, 72.

¹⁷ FREED, in SIMPSON, DAVIS (eds), *Studies in Ancient Egypt*, 72.

¹⁸ FREED, in DER MANUELIAN (ed.), *Studies in Honor of William Kelly Simpson*, vol. I, 314. See also FREED, *The Development of Middle Kingdom Egyptian Relief*, 192-2.

¹⁹ See for instance the stela from the tomb of Sattjeni (QH35p) in the necropolis of Qubbet el-Hawa, dated to the time of Amenemhat I, see GARCÍA GONZÁLEZ, in JIMÉNEZ-SERRANO, MORALES (eds), *Middle Kingdom Palace Culture*, fig. 6.3. Cf. for stelae from the sanctuaries of Elephantine as products of the royal residence, see FRANKE, *Das Heiligtum des Heqaib*, 105-17.

²⁰ FREED, in SIMPSON, DAVIS (eds), *Studies in Ancient Egypt*, 73; FISCHER, in VANDERSLEYEN (ed.), *Das alte Ägypten*, 294. See also FREED, *The Development of Middle Kingdom Egyptian Relief*, 181-6.

should not have been assigned to a local workshop, but instead could have been imported from central areas of production.²¹

The Archaeological Context

The stela was the only inscribed object found in the earlier sanctuary (Sanctuary II) (see Fig. 3), which directly precedes the well-known sanctuary of Heqaib (Sanctuary I) in Elephantine.²² It was found leaning with the front side against the north wall of the room in the south-east corner of the building (see Fig. 4). The stela stood slightly inclined on a layer which included the remains of wooden logs (from the collapsed ceiling?) and fragments of pottery stands that had been left on the floor. Dense brick rubble, undoubtedly from the deliberate destruction of the surrounding walls, was then levelled in the room before the new sanctuary (I) was built. Apart from the pottery stands, only a few other (anepigraphic) objects from the former cultic equipment (flat stone bases, offering table, offering basin) remained in the other rooms of this building, none of which offer any evidence for precisely dating this phase of the sanctuary. Nonetheless, a dating of Sanctuary II as well as of the construction phase preceding it (Sanctuary III) is confirmed stratigraphically.

The dating of Sanctuary II

The chronological key-horizon is represented by an extensive layer of predominantly limestone rubble from the construction of the nearby Satet Temple in the reign of Senwosret I. As it contains a number of flakes of architectural elements and decorated blocks that can be assigned to the previously demolished temple from the time of Mentuhotep II and III, there can be no doubt that the layer was deposited in the time of Senwosret I.²³ The construction debris was deposited as a thick layer under the festival courtyard to the north of the Heqaib sanctuary and in the street in front of the entrance to the courtyard. The steadily diminishing extension of this layer in the street can still be traced further to the south along the sanctuary to its southern limit, and there it is cut by the foundation pit of Sanctuary III. Therefore, this

building can only have been constructed after the Satet Temple of the Eleventh Dynasty had already been demolished and works on the new temple had at least begun in the reign of Senwosret I. Since the inscriptions in the latest sanctuary (I) prove that it was also built in the reign of Senwosret I, the preceding sanctuary (II) must also have been built during his reign. Therefore, the two older Sanctuaries II and III may have existed only for a comparatively short period of time before they were replaced by Sanctuary I.

The dating of the sequence of the sanctuaries was questioned some time ago by A. Dorn, also with reference to the stela of Jj.²⁴ In fact, at the beginning of the investigations it was tempting – and seemed plausible – that the buildings preceding Sanctuary I, dated to the time of Senwosret I by built-in inscriptions, should be dated to the reigns of earlier kings.²⁵ However, the archaeological evidence is more complicated and cannot be made consistent with this simplified model. For the sanctuary of Heqaib no longer stands as an isolated building in this part of the town. Thanks to detailed investigations over several years in the vicinity of the sanctuary and especially in the main street of the city running alongside it, it was possible to integrate the sanctuary stratigraphically into the complex development of the adjacent town quarters. The direct stratigraphic connection of the entrance into the festival courtyard with the entrance into the sanctuary of Heqaib provided a decisive chronological key-horizon associated with the time of Senwosret I. As this layer sloped not only to the west, but in the street also to the south, Sanctuary III was initially about one metre lower than the entrance to the festival courtyard. As a consequence, more layers accumulated in the street in this lower area than in the north in front of the courtyard. Until the construction of Sanctuary I, however, the difference in height of about 2 m between the floor of Sanctuary III and the last built Sanctuary I was not filled, a difference that is also referred to by Dorn for an older dating of Sanctuary II. In fact, before the construction of Sanctuary I, the street in front of the sanctuary had only risen by about 60 cm. However, the new sanctuary (I), presumably in anticipation of the continuously rising level of the street, was built over a thick backfill at a much higher level, while the level of the road remained unchanged. The difference in level to the street was therefore bridged by an external staircase made of mud bricks, which led up to the entrance of Sanctuary I.

The oldest sanctuary attested so far on this site is Sanctuary IV from the Eleventh Dynasty (*Bauschicht* 15). The coincidence in date with the restoration inscrip-

²¹ 'Königlichen Residenz-Handwerkern', FRANKE, *Heqaib*, 107; see also comments in FREED, in DER MANUELIAN (ed.), *Studies in Honor of William Kelly Simpson*, vol. I, 314.

²² An overview of the building sequence of the sanctuaries is given in VON PILGRIM, *Entwicklung der Verehrungsstätten des Heqaib*, 412–18.

²³ VON PILGRIM, *MDAIK* 53, 152–7 and pl. 20. In addition, it should be noted that column shafts from the Temple of Mentuhotep II were used in the water channel of the oldest phase of the festival courtyard.

²⁴ DORN, *Kisten und Schreine*, 48.

²⁵ As it was at the beginning of the investigations in the preliminary report, cf. VON PILGRIM, *MDAIK* 53, 157.



Fig. 3 – View of the stela in its excavated context in Sanctuary II © photo: C. von Pilgrim

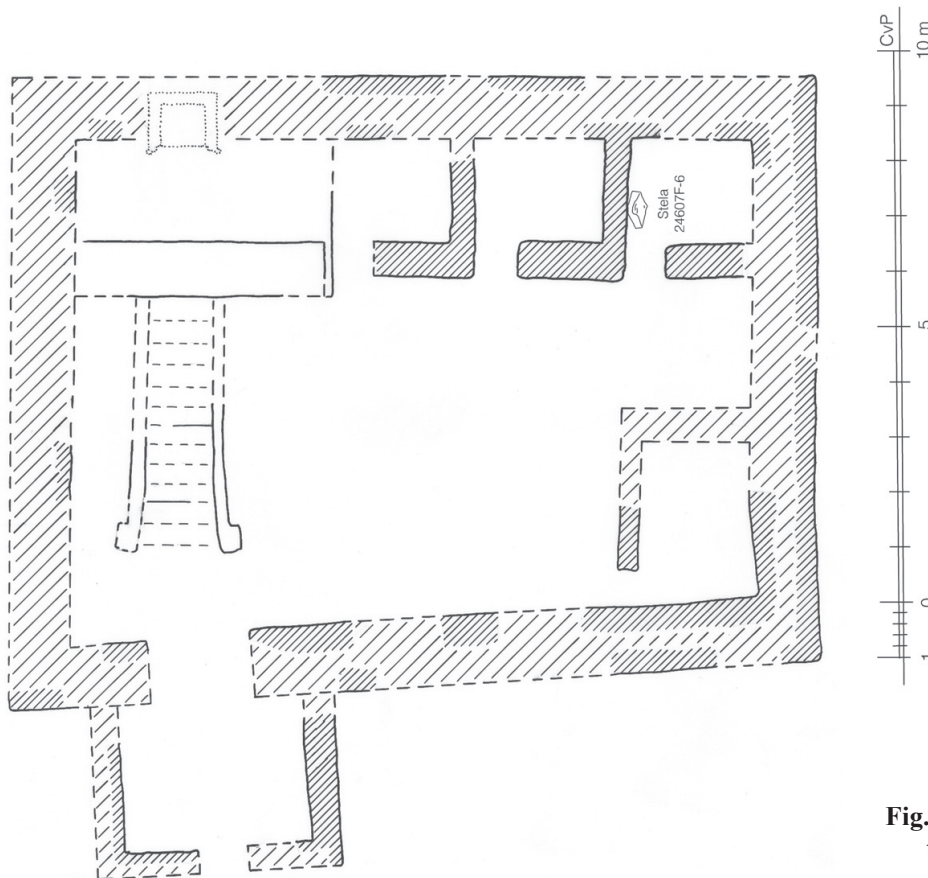


Fig. 4 – Plan of Sanctuary II showing the position of stela 24607F-6
© drawing: C. von Pilgrim

tion of Intef III on a lintel, which was found and most probably reused in the latest sanctuary (I),²⁶ suggests that it may originally have belonged to Sanctuary IV. So far, it has not been possible to confirm the existence of an even older sanctuary in this area of the city to whose restoration the inscription could have made reference. Dorn therefore argued that the inscription can only refer to the restoration of Sanctuary IV and must therefore belong to a more recent phase (Sanctuary III), although he quotes Seidlmayer, who has no doubts about a tradition of sanctuaries in this area since the Sixth Dynasty.²⁷ The complete archaeological evidence, however, makes these considerations by Dorn obsolete.²⁸

The Mutilation of the Hieroglyphs

The stela of Jj presents the ‘mutilation’ of two hieroglyphic signs: the horned viper (GSL I9) – represented in such a condition twice, both in line 2 – and the crocodile (GSL I5) in column 4. The viper sign is also represented again in column 4, but this time it is complete (although, as noted above, the hieroglyphs in the rows and those in the columns are clearly by two different hands).

The two vipers in line 2 are mutilated in different ways: the first the head is separated from the body and shown in front of it, while for the second the separated head is shown at an oblique angle next to the body. The crocodile (in vertical column 4) is represented instead in an incomplete form, with the hind part of the body absent.

The mutilation of the two vipers in the horizontal lines of the stela of Jj is perfectly in keeping with other stelae of the Eleventh Dynasty.²⁹ Also, the co-presence of complete and incomplete vipers on the same stela is attested in other instances, as documented by Melanie Pitkin for 14 stelae of the First Intermediate Period.³⁰ The presence/absence of viper mutilation on the stela of Jj can be explained by the differences between the handwriting in the horizontal and vertical lines: it is reasonable to consider that different textual sources were used for the stela inscriptions, since the horizontal lines present a standard offering formula that would have been ‘mechanically’ repeated from stela to stela, while part

of the vertical inscription includes very personal information which would not have been duplicated. Therefore, the sculptor who carved the names was not versed in the concept of viper mutilation (also perhaps because there might have been a time gap between the two types of inscriptions).³¹

While the phenomenon of the mutilation of the viper is frequently attested between the end of the Old Kingdom and the very early Middle Kingdom (at least until the end of the Eleventh Dynasty), the mutilation of the crocodile in a stela inscription is a unicum. The crocodile head of the hieroglyphic sign GSL I5 was occasionally struck by arrows in carvings of the First Intermediate Period-early Middle Kingdom,³² but in no instance is it included among the signs targeted in the mutilation process. The type of crocodile mutilation recorded on the stela of Jj is, to our knowledge, unattested in any similar source from the same period, nor does it occur in other sources where the mutilation of signs is usually documented. Moreover, the presence of a mutilated sign inside a theophorous name – such as Sobekhotep – is even more exceptional, since the attested custom was to avoid manipulating the crocodile sign, phonetically spelling the single signs (*s*, *b*, *k*) rather than mutilating the trilateral.

The presence of the manipulated crocodile hieroglyph questions the logic behind the system in which the hieroglyphs were mutilated in the transition phase between the late Old Kingdom and the early Middle Kingdom.

The manipulation of hieroglyphs: the rise of a practice

The manipulation³³ of hieroglyphic signs appeared for the first time in the *Pyramid Texts* of Unas (end of the Fifth Dynasty).³⁴ The main intent of this phenomenon was to ‘mutilate’ a grapheme or alter its composition by omitting/substituting specific signs.³⁵ The manipulation consisted of six main – alternative – processes applied to a grapheme:

³¹ On other stelae the viper is only mutilated in the final part of the offering formula, the one that is usually added secondarily, PITKIN, *Egypt in the First Intermediate Period*, stela no. 406.

³² RITNER, *The Mechanics*, 164-5; see also FISCHER, *WZKM* 57, 59-60 (for a crocodile sign from the nome standard of Dendera) and SPIEGELBERG, *RT* 23, 101-2 (stela in Leiden Rijksmuseum, Z 2-3).

³³ Here, manipulation refers to the mutilation, replacement, or the omission of a hieroglyphic sign. The manipulation is attested in the hieroglyphic script and not in hieratic.

³⁴ ROTH, in RITNER (ed.), *Essays for the Library of Seshat*, 291-310; LACAU, *ZÄS* 51; THUAULT, *ZÄS* 147/1, 106-14.

³⁵ There is no regularity and systematicity in the *Pyramid Texts* carved on the walls of the royal pyramids, although till the reign of Pepi II the phenomenon displays more stability and consistency.

²⁶ Slab No. 100, HABACHI, *The Sanctuary of Heqaib*, 111.

²⁷ SEIDLMAYER, in SEIDLMAYER (ed.), *Texte und Denkmäler*, 306.

²⁸ Unfortunately, the pottery from this area has not yet been conclusively presented. For some examples from House 87c (*Bauschicht* 14), which is contemporary with Sanctuary III, and from House 109, which is beneath the festival courtyard and H 87 (*Bauschicht* 15), see RZEUSKA, *MDAIK* 55, 197-201.

²⁹ PITKIN, *Egypt in the First Intermediate Period*, § *Mutilation and suppression of hieroglyphs*.

³⁰ PITKIN, *Egypt in the First Intermediate Period*, stelae nos 68, 136 (?), 154a, 254 (?), 274, 327, 341, 373 (?), 390, 406, 556, 580, 631, 641.

1. The mutilation of the body by cutting it into two separate parts, as though severed with a blade;
2. The covering of body parts by the addition of plaster;³⁶
3. The omission of body parts, cutting out part/s of the body;
4. The drawing of a sign as an incomplete form;
5. The substitution of the sign (via spelling it out phonetically or using another equivalent phonetic sign or group of signs or a 'symbolic' substitute);
6. The omission of a sign.

At the dawn of this custom, the signs involved uniquely represented living beings, primarily and consistently focusing on human figures (male and female).³⁷ They were generally omitted or less frequently replaced by abstract symbols (a circle or a diagonal line).³⁸ From the time of Teti/Pepi I, human signs, especially when used as classifiers, were affected in parts of their bodies.³⁹

Starting from the time of Pepi I, the manipulation (omission and mutilation) was applied to a wider array of signs representing animals and especially mammals: lions (GSL E23), hares (GSL E34), hartebeests (GSL E9), gazelles (GSL E29), elephants (GSL E26), cows, calves, and bulls (GSL E1-3); with less frequency to hippopotami (GSL E25), donkeys (GSL E7), giraffes (GSL E27), and baboons (GSL E32-33);⁴⁰ more rarely jackals (GSL E15-21), rams (GSL E10), collared goats (GSL E31), and goatskins (GSL F26).⁴¹ Scorpions (GSL L7) were represented in a form that omitted the tail.⁴² Jackals (GSL E17) were suppressed only in the pyramid of Pepi I.⁴³ Most importantly, no birds, insects, snakes, and reptiles were involved in the process of mutilation at this stage,⁴⁴ although the words for snakes and worms were not accompanied by any determinative.⁴⁵ The horned viper (*f*) and cobra (*d*) were regularly spelled and fully represented in the *Pyramid Texts* corpora.⁴⁶

Although the practice of mutilation shows some signs of variability and inconsistency within the *Pyramid Texts* corpora, it was subject to its own 'rules' (though this varied from pyramid to pyramid), some of which have been identified by scholars.⁴⁷ For instance, in the first attestations of the phenomenon (time of Teti/Pepi I), the human determinative was 'mutilated' in the upper part of the body, which involved the head, whereas in the later stage the mutilation affected the lower part of the human figure (time of Merenre/Pepi II).⁴⁸

The manipulation of hieroglyphs in the private sphere at the end of the Old Kingdom

The practice of manipulating hieroglyphs in funerary contexts rapidly passed from the royal to the private domain, breaking up the documentary isolation of the *Pyramid Texts* corpora. The appearance of the 'mutilation/omission/replacement' phenomenon in private contexts is first attested in the second half of the Sixth Dynasty,⁴⁹ and followed its own evolutionary path with innovation, change, and transformation. Once detached from the royal sphere and control, the manipulation phenomenon also assumed traits of higher inconsistency and randomness, distributed across various contexts without any regularity or systematicity.

The practice of hieroglyph manipulation in private contexts of the late Old Kingdom is mainly documented in funerary chambers or coffin inscriptions.⁵⁰ The reptiles, vipers, and cobras are for the first time mutilated in the private funerary inscriptions of the late Sixth Dynasty.⁵¹ The first non-royal inscriptions with

³⁶ See especially LECLANT, *CRAIBL* 121/2, 282, 288.

³⁷ Also the signs representing fishes were consistently omitted, ROTH, in RITNER (ed.), *Essays for the Library of Seshat*, 293. LACAU, *ZÄS* 51, 42-9.

³⁸ ROTH, in RITNER (ed.), *Essays for the Library of Seshat*, 292; LACAU, *ZÄS* 51, 17-24; IANNARILLI, *JAIE* 17, 41.

³⁹ IANNARILLI, *JAIE* 17, 40.

⁴⁰ ROTH, in RITNER (ed.), *Essays for the Library of Seshat*, 293, LACAU, *ZÄS* 51, 36-41.

⁴¹ ROTH, in RITNER (ed.), *Essays for the Library of Seshat*, 293.

⁴² LACAU, *ZÄS* 51, 49.

⁴³ ROTH, in RITNER (ed.), *Essays for the Library of Seshat*, 293.

⁴⁴ The pelican is omitted in one instance, probably because fish could potentially be hidden in its beak; ROTH, in RITNER (ed.), *Essays for the Library of Seshat*, 294; LACAU, *ZÄS* 51, 41.

⁴⁵ LECLANT, *CRAIBL* 121/2, 282.

⁴⁶ LECLANT, *CRAIBL* 121/2, 282.

⁴⁷ IANNARILLI, in PIACENTINI, DELLI CASTELLI (eds), *Old Kingdom Art and Archaeology*, 296-303; IANNARILLI, in ROSATI, GUIDOTTI (eds), *Proceedings of the XI International Congress*, 287-90.

⁴⁸ IANNARILLI, *JAIE* 17, 30-40, esp. table 1.

⁴⁹ ROTH, in RITNER (ed.), *Essays for the Library of Seshat*, 303 and JÉQUIER *Tombeaux de particuliers contemporains de Pépi II*, 73, 81, 103, pl. 7. The tomb of Ihy at Saqqara may be an earlier example, since it probably dates to the reign of Unas but was usurped by Princess Idu in the later Sixth Dynasty. The original plan of inscription foresaw the inclusion of human signs in a complete form (as in the fragments of an offering list and on the west side of the sarcophagus where the determinative for the word *kꜣt* is present; while on the east side, the determinative is omitted). In a second phase, probably by workmen of the usurper Idu in the late Sixth Dynasty, the human figures were erased, see ROTH, in RITNER (ed.), *Essays for the Library of Seshat*, 299-300.

⁵⁰ The vipers on an offering table in the tomb of Nesw at South Saqqara show mutilation. The context is dated to after the Sixth Dynasty, see BERGER-EL-NAGGAR, in PANTALACCI, BERGER-EL-NAGGAR (eds), *Des Néferkarê aux Montouhotep*, 15-30, fig. 16.

⁵¹ LACAU, *ZÄS* 51, 49; POLOTSKY, *Zu den Inschriften der 11. Dynastie*. Before the late Sixth Dynasty, vipers and cobras

mutilated viper/cobra signs are found in a number of tombs at Heliopolis:⁵² vipers are cut at the neck, while cobras are omitted.⁵³ Barbara Russo has presented 60 cases documenting the mutilation of the horned viper (relating to the suppression of the head only) between the late Old Kingdom and the very early Middle Kingdom and has convincingly shown how this phenomenon had its epicentre in the Memphite necropolis – specifically at Saqqara South.⁵⁴ It is not inconceivable that the manipulation of hieroglyphs passed from the royal to the private sphere in this area of the Memphite necropolis around the end of the Sixth Dynasty, which is also the time when the royal tradition of the *Pyramid Texts* moved into the private sphere.⁵⁵

The case of Weni at Abydos⁵⁶ shows how the manipulation of hieroglyphs in funerary texts also reached southern Egypt at the end of the late Old Kingdom. While the hieroglyphic signs in the funerary inscriptions of Weni's father, Iuu, vizier during the reign of Pepi I, were not mutilated or omitted, all the inscriptions from the subterranean rooms in the tomb of Weni bear mutilated signs, including the viper and the name of Weni himself.⁵⁷

While in the *Pyramid Texts* targeted signs inside proper/divine names were – at most – avoided but never mutilated, because proper names were considered sacred, the private contexts show a peculiar deviation by extending the mutilation of signs also to proper names. For instance, in the tomb of Idu at Dendera, the name of the seated child in Idu's name (GSL A17) is mutilated,⁵⁸ at Saqqara the name of Meru is reproduced with the sign of the lion cut in two parts,⁵⁹ and at Abydos, the

epithet *smsw* (GSL A20) in the name of Weni is deprived of the lower part of its body.⁶⁰ However, in none of the preserved cases (both in the private and royal spheres), were the signs (either as ideograms or determinatives) of a theophoric name mutilated when it contained animals (such as crocodiles, birds, jackals, etc.): these signs were instead accurately avoided by phonetically spelling them.⁶¹

The manipulation of hieroglyphs in the First Intermediate Period: an experimental phase?

The practice of manipulating hieroglyphs evolved as it spread out from the centre where it first appeared. For instance, in the late Old Kingdom the rule seems to be set rather clearly in that mutilated signs were not used beyond the proper funerary space (the one in close proximity to the deceased): for instance, in the tomb of Meru at Saqqara,⁶² dated to the Sixth Dynasty, the name of the deceased is written with the body of the lion cut into two parts in inscriptions in the funerary rooms, while in the structure above occurrences of his name show no mutilation.⁶³ The tomb of Weni at Abydos provides an even clearer case, where the spelling of his name is 'systematically' mutilated only in the subterranean chamber, being written complete in inscriptions in the above-ground parts. By the beginning of the First Intermediate Period, the practice of mutilation seems instead to have migrated also to inscriptions on different media, not always intimately connected with the funerary sacred space, such as stelae, offering tables and false doors.⁶⁴

In particular, the mutilation of the viper in the late Old Kingdom and afterwards – in private contexts – assumed some peculiar traits, and endured as the most persistent feature even by the First Intermediate Period, when the practice of mutilation/omission started to wane (very early Middle Kingdom, *i.e.* late Eleventh Dynasty). In the attested cases of sign mutilation of the late Old Kingdom–Eleventh Dynasty, the viper shows four different types of inflicted damage: *a.* head separated from the body, as though severed by a cut; *b.* head separated from the body and displaced somewhere else in an unnatural position (often placed above the viper's body); *c.* without the head; *d.* without the tail.⁶⁵ The late Sixth Dynasty tomb of Idu at Dendera⁶⁶ contains one of the first

were not subject to any type of manipulation in either royal or private contexts apart one single exception: the tomb of Meruruka where the cobra is avoided in the word Wadjet, ROTH, in RITNER (ed.), *Essays for the Library of Seshat*, 301, table 18.1. See also FIRTH, GUNN, *Teti Pyramid Cemeteries*, 173–4, pls 2–4 and COLLOMBERT, *Le tombeau de Mérérouka*, 76, no. 133. In private contexts of the late Old Kingdom inanimate signs – such as the emblem of divinity (GSL R8) – are for the first time subjected to the manipulation of signs, *cf.* LACAU, *ASAE* 26, 80 (suppression).

⁵² DARESSY, BARSANTI, *ASAE* 16, 193–220 (archaeological context and plan). See comments on the mutilation in LACAU, *ASAE* 26, 77–81.

⁵³ ROTH, in RITNER (ed.), *Essays for the Library of Seshat*, 303. In these tombs lions also continued to be mutilated.

⁵⁴ RUSSO, *BIFAO* 110, 261.

⁵⁵ WILLEMS, *Historical and Archaeological Aspects*, 168–77; MORALES, *The Transmission of the Pyramid Texts*, 1–16. See especially ALLEN, in JOHNSON, WENTE (eds), *Studies in Honor of George R. Hughes*, 1–29.

⁵⁶ RICHARDS, *JARCE* 39, 85–102.

⁵⁷ RICHARDS, *JARCE* 39, 98, fig. 23.

⁵⁸ ROTH, in RITNER (ed.), *Essays for the Library of Seshat*, 306.

⁵⁹ LACAU, *ASAE* 26, 78.

⁶⁰ RICHARDS, *JARCE* 39, fig. 23.

⁶¹ LACAU, *ASAE* 26, 72 (suppression); LACAU, *ZÄS* 51, 58. See also the comments in ROTH, in RITNER (ed.), *Essays for the Library of Seshat*, 307.

⁶² DARESSY, BARSANTI, *ASAE* 16, 195–8.

⁶³ LACAU, *ASAE* 26, 81.

⁶⁴ See RUSSO, *BIFAO* 110, table 1, from nos. 39–55.

⁶⁵ PITKIN, *New Perspectives*, 107–22, esp. table 5.0.

⁶⁶ PETRIE, *Denderah*, 46, pl. Va

documented combinations of two different mutilations of the viper sign: most of the vipers are shown headless while two are represented decapitated,⁶⁷ indicating that different types of mutilation coexisted. The removal of the tail, documented only sporadically, seems to occur instead only in later times, by the beginning of the Eleventh Dynasty, and only in provincial contexts.⁶⁸ Also the social group seems to expand during the First Intermediate Period, reaching a more modest and peripheral level of the population as demonstrated by the titles of the owners of some stelae from Nag ed-Deir and Rizeiqat.⁶⁹

The number of signs targeted for mutilation during the First Intermediate Period gradually reduced and disappeared at the dawn of the Middle Kingdom, shortly after the reign of Mentuhotep II,⁷⁰ only to make a sudden reappearance in the late Middle Kingdom. In this sort of 'second phase' of manipulation, the hieroglyphs were mutilated in a different manner, being drawn in an incomplete way from the start, rather than being properly mutilated (body erased, divided into two parts, covered by plaster, etc., see above points) or omitted/substituted.⁷¹

The mutilation of the vipers in the stela of Jj is in accordance with the customs attested in the transitional phase of the First Intermediate Period—very early Middle Kingdom, when the manipulation of signs is mainly limited to the reptile signs, and specifically reduced only to the *f* grapheme. Strikingly, the type of mutilation and the balanced position of the crocodile sign within the arrangement of the column of hieroglyphs⁷² does not find any correspondence with the features of the time but it could be more in line with the mutilations documented for the late Middle Kingdom.⁷³

Conclusions

The stela of Jj features epigraphic and stylistic criteria that directly support a date in the Eleventh Dynasty, even if most of these are still in use in the early Twelfth Dynasty. Whereas the mutilation of the viper signs and the

detachment of the spinal cord from the backbone sign are not documented beyond the end of the Eleventh Dynasty⁷⁴, the style of flat and low relief rather points to a date at the beginning of the Twelfth Dynasty

The find-context of the stela is undoubtedly dated to the Twelfth Dynasty and the reign of Senwosret I. The sanctuary in which the stela was found (Sanctuary II) was built only after the construction of the Satet temple of Senwosret I had started because the building that precedes the construction of Sanctuary II cuts into the construction rubble of the Temple of Satet. The building above Sanctuary II is dated to Senwosret I by the stelae and shrines of Sarenput I. Therefore, the sanctuary in which the stela was found must necessarily be dated within the time frame of Senwosret I, as it was squeezed between two buildings belonging to his time.

The position of the stela at the time of discovery does not allow any conclusions to be drawn about its original placement in the sanctuary. Its position cannot be considered as *in situ* in a strict sense, since it was leaning with its recto side against a wall. Therefore, it remains unclear whether the stela was originally set up in one of the rooms in this sanctuary. The style and the epigraphic features of the stela might support the conjecture that it was originally made for installation in Sanctuary IV of the Eleventh Dynasty. However, the stela's good state of preservation – with the exception of the natural stone defects – hardly supports the idea that it had previously been used in an earlier context (Sanctuary IV or III), lying exposed to the natural elements for some time and then reemployed in Sanctuary II where it was found. In the context of the other cult objects found scattered around, it seems reasonable to assume that the stela was originally placed in one of the rooms of Sanctuary II (possibly to be considered as side chapels).

In conclusion, given the contrasting elements emerging from the above analysis, it can be inferred that some features of the Eleventh Dynasty style and epigraphy found a longer echo in the first part of the Twelfth Dynasty at Elephantine, as it is also visible in the shrine of Sarenput I in the Heqaib Sanctuary (I).⁷⁵

Finally, the mutilation of the crocodile – and particularly its presence within a theophoric name – is a unicum that finds no close parallels in the preserved documents from the Old Kingdom to the early Middle Kingdom. Its presence on a stela from a site such as Elephantine is significant, being many miles away from the centre of origin and diffusion of the practice of mutilated hieroglyphs (the Memphite necropolis). The incomplete crocodile sign on the stela of Jj supports the idea that

⁶⁷ ROTH, in RITNER (ed.), *Essays for the Library of Seshat*, 306.

⁶⁸ The removal of the tail is a rare feature in the First Intermediate Period: see for instance PETRIE, *Qurneh*, 3, 16–17, pls II–III; CLÈRE, VANDIER, *Textes de la Première Période Intermédiaire*, 14, § 18; BROVARSKI, *Naga ed-Dér*, 386, fig. 12.9 (stela from Nag ed-Deir, N 4593). See also RUSSO, *BIFAO* 110, 252, n. 6.

⁶⁹ See PITKIN, *Egypt in the First Intermediate Period*, § *Corpus of First Intermediate Period false doors and stelae*.

⁷⁰ BROVARSKI, in LESKO (ed.), *Ancient Egyptian and Mediterranean Studies*, 58.

⁷¹ MINIACI, *RdE* 61, 113–34.

⁷² Note that if the crocodile had been carved complete and then erased or covered by plaster it would appear visibly off-line compared to the other signs.

⁷³ Cf. MINIACI, *RdE* 61, figs 3, 5.

⁷⁴ RUSSO, *BIFAO* 110, table 1.

⁷⁵ Cf. HABACHI, *The Sanctuary of Heqaib*, vol. I, pl. 11; FREED, *The Development of Middle Kingdom Egyptian Relief*, 212.

the mutilation of hieroglyphs continued along its own developmental and experimental path after having abandoned the centre of origin.

In addition, given that the mutilation of the crocodile sign most closely resembles those of the late Middle Kingdom, one can also conjecture that the practice of mutilating signs was not suddenly interrupted at the end of the Eleventh Dynasty but continued, largely invisible in the archaeological record, and was occasionally reproduced and subject to experimentation, especially in peripheral areas (which are sometimes the most conservative) far from the decorum of the central administration.⁷⁶ Here, the term peripheral refers to both the geographical and the human spheres (given also the underprivileged social status of Jj). And it seems that from the periphery, the practice of mutilating hieroglyphs had returned to the centre in the late Middle Kingdom by a seemingly invisible route.⁷⁷

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⁷⁶ Cf. BAINES, *JARCE* 27, 1-23.

⁷⁷ MINIACI, *The mutilated Hieroglyphs, Gramsci, and the Absorption of Practices of the Dominant in the Folk Culture*, in preparation.

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Pls LVIII-LX – Wooden Kohl Tube, Cairo (CG 44703/JdE 18553)



Pl. LXI – Stela
of Jj, Elephantine
24607F-6 ©
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Pilgrim