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Donation Stela of Ramesses II from Sidi Oweis at Sudan

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Keywords

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Abstract

Donation stelae are essential to the understanding of the historical setting of each period as they traditionally include a king's reign years and record donations from some of the most prominent dignitaries of the time. Donation stelae give us a glimpse of the economic aspects of the ancient Egyptian temples. This paper provides an examination of a republished donation stela of King Ramesses II. The stela was discovered at Sidi Oweis, north of Sudan at Serra. The study aims at contextualizing this donation stela, whose main character is Heka-Nakht, the viceroy of Kush and governor of the principality Teh-Khet during the reign of King Ramesses II. It is proposed that the main role of the viceroy of Kush in the process of donation during the Ramesside Period was to be as a deputy between the central government in Egypt proper and the provincial authorities. The researcher conducted an analytical and historical study.

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Introduction

Donation stelae are a type of monument known to Egyptologists that are inscribed stone tablets that memorialize grants of land plots through graphic depiction and inscriptions. Usually memorialize religious land endowments to deities, temples, or temple personnel by private individuals on behalf of the king or sometimes by the king himself (Heidi 2006)

Donation stelae appeared for the first time during the New Kingdom at the 17th Dynasty and were particularly prevalent during dynasties 22 and 23, they continued to be in use until the end of the Saite period (Erik 1941; Alan 1966).

Shortly after the beginning of Dynasty 27th Donation stelae disappear (Dimitri 1979), Posener suggested that one of the main reasons for the lack of donation stelae at this period was the Persian King Cambyses, who tried to reduce the wealth of Egyptian temples (Heidi 2006; Dimitri 1979). Another opinion mentioned that Temple donations may also have continued during the Persian period but were no longer recorded on stelae (Heidi 2006).

Under the reign of Nephérites and Achoris, stelae whose external appearance is similar to donation stelae reappear from the 29th Dynasty (Dimitri 1979). Meeks said that even if they are no longer registered on stelae, the temple donation does not stop, and donations appeared in the texts of the 30th Dynasty. Also, Meeks gave an explanation about the uninterested of the kings of 28th dynasty and 29th dynasty because they faced a great political difficulty so they did not have time to look after the temples and economy (Dimitri 1979)

The aim of the study is to contextual this donation stela, whose main character is Heka-Nakht, the viceroy of Kush and governor of the principality Teh-Khet during the reign of King Ramesses II. The study follows an analytical and historical methodology to achieve its aims.

Description and texts

The studied donation stela was discovered at Sidi Oweis at the provenance of Serra. The site of Sidi Oweis el quarani [1] or (El Qurnein), is situated 20 kms north of Wadi Halfa, was discovered by Sayed Thabit Hassan Thabit in 1956 during the survey of the west bank of the Nile in connection with the Nubian project. This donation stela was mentioned at journal of the Sudan antiquities service and still without full publication. According to the primary publication it was found in a ship and the skipper told them that he found this stone at Serra in Kush (Torgny 1963) No further evidence referred to this place and no information stating the opposite. The current location of this stela is unknown.

The classical shape of donation stelae is a rounded stone slab of its top, the different characters are represented such as the god, the king or the representative of the local power (the donor) then a text contain names of these characters and defines the donation (Dimitri 1979) .The main standards of these stelae represented in cannot be tracked

[1] Sidi Oweis was a Sheik who lived during the time of prophet Muhammad but he never saw him, sidi oweis was of Yemeni origin from Murad tribe. Apparently, this place derived its name from the name of Skeik Sidi Oweis. For further see;

down in this stela as it was mostly damaged except for three lines of the text with some words missing.

The original text is oriented from right to left reads

1)

mri mi imn r xt nt nb pn iwy ??

2)

pA wr TH xt rdit swHt[2] ipy[3] iy[4]

3)

Xt sfx(7) iri tAwy d(5) m rdi n=f sAnswt n kAS HkAnxt

(1) é . . beloved like A this lord iwy n?? (2) the prince (lit. authority great[6]) of Theh-Khet., given to him, those who are in the egg ??, counting the utterance (3) seven khat donated lands (also) five to give to him, the son of the king of Kush Heka-nakht é é é é .

Discussion and Commentary

According to Meeks's classification, each stela has taken three numbers. the first number refers to the Dynasty, the second number recalls the order of the mentioned king listed his Dynasty and the third number indicates the year of the reign indicated on the stela. Occasionally, the second and third numbers are unsure or missed, Meeks used the number 0 in some cases when the name of the sovereign or the year of his reign is not known or when the name of the king does not help to determine exactly which king was (Dimitri 1979).

Meeks often used the number 00 when the data was randomly or purposely lost. This system will give the same number to certain stelae, so that stelae will be distinguished from each other by adding letters in alphabetical order to the last number (Dimitri 1979). After applying these conditions to the donation stela of king Ramesses II from Sidi Oweis, the stela number is (19.3.00).

[2] FCD,217
[3] WB. I, 66.1
[4] WB. I, 36.14
[5] KRI III.72
[6] FCD,64

Kush is identified as the kingdom of Kerma in Egyptian texts from the Second Intermediate Period and the early New Kingdom. However, the Egyptian kings (Viceroy of Kush) had power over both Lower and Upper Nubia (Wawat and Kush). Lower Nubia is located between the First and Second Cataracts, whereas Upper Nubia is located between the Second and Fifth Cataracts (László 2009)

The term 'Nubia' is most often used to describe a geographic region in Africa's northeast corner, comprising the southern end of modern Egypt and the northern half of the modern Sudan (Sarah 2015).

Serra East was one of the Egyptian fortresses which were built along the banks of the Nile in lower Nubia. All of these fortresses were built during the Middle Kingdom as defensive fortification in Lower Nubia in order to: maintain military dominance over Lower and Upper Nubia; maintain control over the trading routes leading from Kush, supervise Kushite's raids and larger-scale activities in the region and to provide assistance to the pharaonic army in their fight against Kush (Eduardo 2019).

The following fortifications may be traced back to Senusert III's reign in the region of the second cataract: Semna-South, Semna-West, Kumma, Uronarti, Shalfak, Askut, and Serra-East (Carola 2010).

Faras and Serra East were likewise in close proximity to one another; Serra East was built on the east bank of the Nile. The name in Egyptian language was hsf mdAjw, The Egyptians had given Serra East the suggestive name "Repelling the Medjau"(Eduardo 2019). It had a two-story rectangular building that would be filled with a large number of stores and warehouses (Franck 2010).

After the researcher studied several donation stelae from the New Kingdom until the late period, it turned out that the donation usually begins with the year when the donation was given then the name of the king and followed by the land area which was presented to the god. Unfortunately, the first lines of this stela are destructive so the text has lost some of its standards.

The first line starts with mri mi imn which means ñ beloved then the rest Amunò, of the first line is r xt nt nb pn iwy?? Which means under the authority of this lord iwy?. The word r xt appeared in another stela of king Ramesses III from Qantir No (20.2.25).[7] and was followed by the personôs name, applying that follows a personôs name but obviously part is still inscribed as Iwy.

This person probably played the role of mediator. Scholars assigned the title "mediator" to the person appointed by the donor to be responsible for the donation land and to expend its revenue in accordance with the donor's instructions, as stated in the donation text.

The second line starts with the sentence pA wr TH xt means the lord of Theh-Khet. This line contains the act of donation which is mentioned in the rdi ò[8] means give.ñ Other stelae that use the verb rdi such as the Donation Stela of king Ramesses III from

[7] For further see; Chappaz, J.L. (2005). ñ Un Set¯le de Donation BSÉG 27, 5-19 Rams¯s III ò
[8] FCD,154

Qantir No (20.2.25) and the Donation Stela of King Ramesses III from Medamud No (20-2-2). [9]

The second part of this line includes the word swHt means those who are in the egg ??, this part in the stela is in a bad state of preservation and the researcher found it difficult to read this word. Torgny translated this sentence as given to him in the egg and he assumed that the word egg referred to the country Theh-Khet or something similar (Torgny 1963), swHt was followed by ipy iy means counting the utterance.

Theh-Khet (Teh-Khet) was probably a Nubian region around Serra east and Debeira [10] .(Bruce 2017) Mr Vercoutter mentioned that Theh- Khet refers mainly to the district of Debeira, but includes the district of Serra East as well (Torgny 1960). This is explained by the fact that the administrative center of Theh-Khet was somewhere in the Debeira district during the 18th Dynasty, and hence was a hotspot for human activity leaving well-defined traces (Carolin 2014).
The principality of Theh -Khet, which is too small to be called a kingdom, has only recently become recognized thanks to the monuments of Prince Djehutey Hetep and his brother Amenemhat, all of which have been published in the journal of Kush vol viii ((Torgny 1963).

The father of Djehutey Hetep and Amenemhat was the prince of Theh-Khet Rwiw and their mother was rwnA, they ruled under the reign of queen Hatshepsut and king Thutmose III, the Egyptologists know the origin of their family from their tombs at Debeira, other monuments such as the grey granite stela of Amenemhat, statue of Amenemhat and some seals found in the tomb of Amenemhat (Torgny 1960 ; 1963).

The Princes of Theh-Khet who undoubtedly were not Egyptians but Nubians (Florence 2017). Nothing in the iconography or in the text, with the exception of the title and name of his father, betrays the fact, that Amenemhet was of Nubian origin, despite their Egyptian names and titles, it is very likely that many other officials in the Nubian province were Nubians as well (Torgny 1960).
The name of Theh-Khet was written on the monument of this family in a different way, it was mentioned in the inner entrance of Djehutey Hetep tomb as nH xt, the determinative is xAswt refer to the foreign lands, also mentioned on the same entrance as but with a different determinative rw refer to a fortress and finally the same word for Theh-Khet mentioned on the stela of Amenemhat as with the determinative niwt refer to a town.
God Thutmose III was the main deity that worshipped in Teh-Khet as Egyptian kings worshipped in Nubia and probably for political motivation to consolidate Egyptian influence. The number of the kings worshiped in Egypt were eight kings, king Sunusert III with his wife, Thutmose III with his wife, Amenhotep III with his wife, Tutankhamun and Ramesses III with his wife. This worship began during the reign of king Thutmose III who decided to worship the king Sunusert III as the protector of Nubia (¸ ⁄ ⁄ ˜ б у .к) F Ɔ ϡ ϖ

[9]For further see; Kitchen. A. (1973)." A Donation Stela of Ramesses III from Medamud ò , i n *BIFAO73*,193-200

[10]Debeira is an archaeological site in Sudan situated on the eastern bank of the Nile about 20 kilometers north of Wadi Halfa.

The last line determined the land area as sfx xt followed by iri tAwydy(5) m rdi n.f means seven khat of donated lands (also) five to give to him, the suffix pronoun probably referred to the god who was the main beneficiary of the donation or to the mediator who was responsible for this land. Then the text mentions the donor of the land sA nswt n kS HkAnxt means the son of the king of Kush Heka-Nakht.

One of the length measurements was cubit, which was equal to 52.5 centimetres (20 5/8 inches), slightly longer than the average Egyptian's elbow to middle fingertip, this royal cubit was divided into seven palms, approximately the width of four fingers without the thumb. Palms were further divided into fourths, called "fingers," making twenty-eight fingers (digits) to the cubit. Another measurement was used to measure the land by robes was a khat. Khat was equal to 100 cubits (52.5 meter) (Kob et al., 2008 ; Francis 1892 ; ¸ / / Э y).Т н Х

The Viceroy of Nubia position appeared for the first time during the reign of Amenhotep I and remained until the Twenty-first Dynasty to consolidate the relationship of the pharaoh with Nubia. The king appointed a ruler known as the "son of the king and ruler of Nubia," who ruled as the pharaoh's deputy (/ ` ` ¸ б).у Я Ђ)

The first person held this position was Tory[1] [1]during the reign of sA Amenhotep nsw imyr xAswt rsyt means son of the king, overseer still in his position during the reign of king Tutmosses I. (¸ / /б ̆у к Ь) Ɔ Ґ) ѡ

During the seventh year of reign of king Amenhotep I the viceroy of Nubia became son of the king of the southern territories, it was an honorary title and did not have to be the son of the real king (¸ / / ̆б у к) F Ɔ Ґ) ѡ

During the reign of kS ̀ on ga dTue tdm ot sSA nsw ̀ sh tIoVt itthlee differentiate between this position and the real son of the king because king Tutmosses IV III had a son called Amenhotep and the Viceroy of Nubia called Amenhotep. (б у Я Ђ) / ` ` ; Arthur 1987)

The last one held the position of viceroy of Nubia was Paankhy who was the real son of king Herihor (twenty first Dynasty). It is clear that the title appeared in the twenty-third Dynasty as an honorary title taken by an employee named Osorkon Ankh (б у Я Ђ) / ` `),

Hka- nakht was the viceroy of Kush during the reign of king Ramesses II. He began his position in the third ruling year of Ramesses II. He had many titles as any viceroy of Kush such as sA nsw n kS imy xAswt rsyt sS nsw tAy xw Hr wnmy n nsw which means son of the king (ruler of Kush), overseer of the southern lands, scribe of the king and fan bearer on (¸ h/e/б ̆у к Ь) Ɔ Ґ) ѡ right

Reisener mentioned some of his titles, including Hereditary prince, Toparch, Royal seal bearer, the Messenger to every lands witness of truth and Glory of his lord. He was the only viceroy during the reign of Ramesses II take the title wpwty nsw (Abdul Rahman 2006) means royal envoy (George 1919).

[1] [1]Tory was appointed by king Ahmose as commander of Buhen fort to be the center of the Egyptian administration in Nubia, Tory became the ruler of Nubia during the reign of king Amenhotep I.

Conclusion

Land donation stelae appeared during the New kingdom. Thankfully, many of these donation stelae remained preserved and were studied by the Egyptologists.

This land donation concerned with the land where located is Serra at Sudan , it was concluded that the land donation extended to Nubia which was under the Egyptian control and those donations recorded on some stelae such as Two identical stelae of Ramsess II from Abu simbel No (19.3.0a), No (19.3.0b), which were originally located at Faras in the temple of TutanKhamun in Shetep-Neteru, then transported to Abu Simbel and Donation Stela of Ramesses II from Sidi Oweis at Sudan No (19.3.00).

This land donation is considered to be a private donation from Hka-Nakht (donor) to a deity. Unfortunately, we did not exactly know the principal deity who benefited from this donation. But the researcher supposed that this donation donated to god Thutmose III because he was the main god worshipped in Teh-Khet.

The mediator mentioned commonly in the tex Kingdom such as the text of the two identical stelae of Ramsess II from Abu simbel No (19.3.0a) and No (19.3.0b) and still mentioned in the third intermediate period such as Donation stela of King Sheshonq III from Mendes No (22.8.22).

This fragment stela was recorded when it was discovered, but it was not taken to a consideration because it was an unidentified artifact stone so unfortunately it was missed.

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