

Egyptian rock-inscriptions at Tombos, Debba and Sabu: the epigraphic survey, Season 2018

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The expedition was in the field for 22 days from 23 November to 14 December, 2018.¹ We continued our epigraphic work at Tombos and Debba (at the Third and Dal Cataracts respectively) and also made a brief but productive visit to Sabu. The main results are summarised here.

Tombos

At Tombos, we completed documentation of the group of three northernmost stelae inscribed for King Tuthmose I of the early 18th dynasty (for the other two stelae in the series, which commemorate the king's Year 2 campaign and conquest of Kush, see Davies 2018, 46-49). First published in copies by Lepsius, who labelled them as 'b', 'c' and 'd' in the series (Figure 1; LD iii, pl. 5; PM vii, 174), the three stelae are situated in an area of the east bank that slopes steeply down

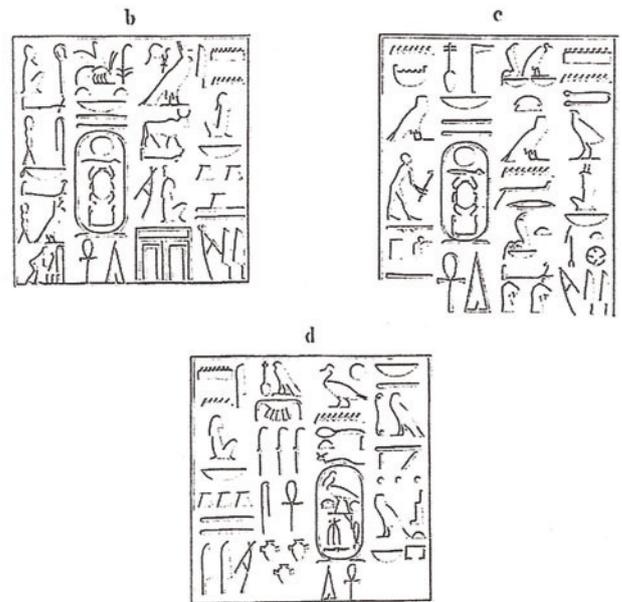


Figure 1. Tombos, stelae 'b', 'c', 'd', after Lepsius (LD iii, pl. 5).



Plate 1. Tombos, view of three royal stelae, 'b', 'c', 'd', in situ.

¹ The team consisted of Vivian Davies (director, epigrapher), Julien Cooper (co-director, epigrapher), Pierre Meyrat (epigrapher), Hozaiifa Abdelmajid (archaeologist, representing NCAM), Osman Dafalla (driver/cook) and Moubarak Adam (driver). This year's SARS expedition was partly integrated with a Yale University project of surveying ancient gold-working and other sites in the eastern desert for which Dr Cooper was the principal investigator (see Cooper and Vanhulle, this volume). For permission to undertake the work, we are grateful to our senior colleagues at NCAM, especially Drs Abdelrahman Ali and El-Hassan Ahmed; also to Dr Mahmoud Bashir for much logistical help. In the preparation of this report, valuable technical assistance was provided by Dr Renée Friedman, while the drawings (Figures 2-11) were inked in by Will Schenck.

to the river, each placed well above ground-level on the upper part of a huge boulder of granite gneiss.² The boulders are located at different levels on the slope, in a roughly east-west line, the stelae facing more-or-less upstream, with 'b' and 'd', situated close to each other towards the top of the bank, and stela 'c', a short distance away nearer to the bottom (Plate 1).³ Often described as 'small' or 'minor', all three are actually substantial monuments, designed to be conspicuous in the local landscape.⁴

The arrangement of their content follows in each case a familiar iconographic pattern: four columns of inscription, enclosed in a frame, with names, title(s) and epithet of the king in three columns and dedication to a deity in the fourth, this last column in opposite orientation so that the god's name faces that of the king. Done in sunk relief, the hieroglyphs were probably finished in paint but no trace survives. Our new study has yielded a number of corrections to the previous record.

Stela 'b' (Figure 2, Plate 2; LD iii, pl. 5, b; *Urk.* iv, 87, 10-12; Sethe 1914, 44-45, no. 33, B).⁵ Height, 1.69m; width 1.46m; height above current ground-level, c. 2.3m.

² For the identification of the stone, see Harrell 1999, 244, Table 2, under nos 2-5, with n. 5.

³ Cf. Edwards and Salih 1992, 18, f-h; Osman and Edwards 2011, 292-295, TMB003, f-h, figs 8.16.1, 8.16.9-12, pl. 50.

⁴ For these and the other inscriptions creating 'a symbolic landscape centred around the Cataract's headwaters and the defeat of Egypt's southern enemy', see Smith and Buzon 2018, 207, reporting also (2018, 213-223) on the recent uncovering of the remains, under the near-by modern village, of a large fortified settlement of the 18th dynasty.

⁵ Cf. Budka 2002, 61, fig. 4, left; Smith 2003, 84-5, fig. 4.10; Budka 2005, 110; Osman and Edwards 2011, 70, fig. 3.16; 83, pl. 50, 293-4, TMB003f, figs 8.16.9-10; Davies 2018, 50, pl. 3.

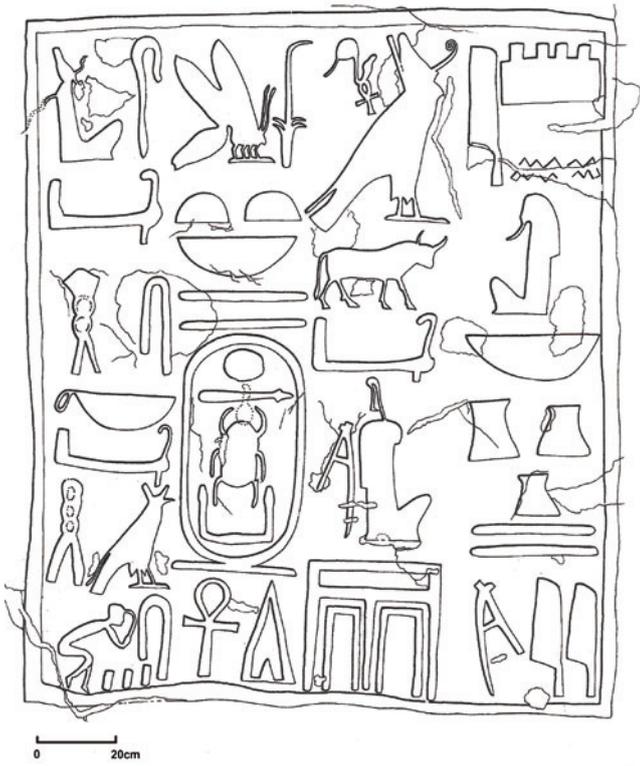


Figure 2. Tombos, stela 'b', copy.

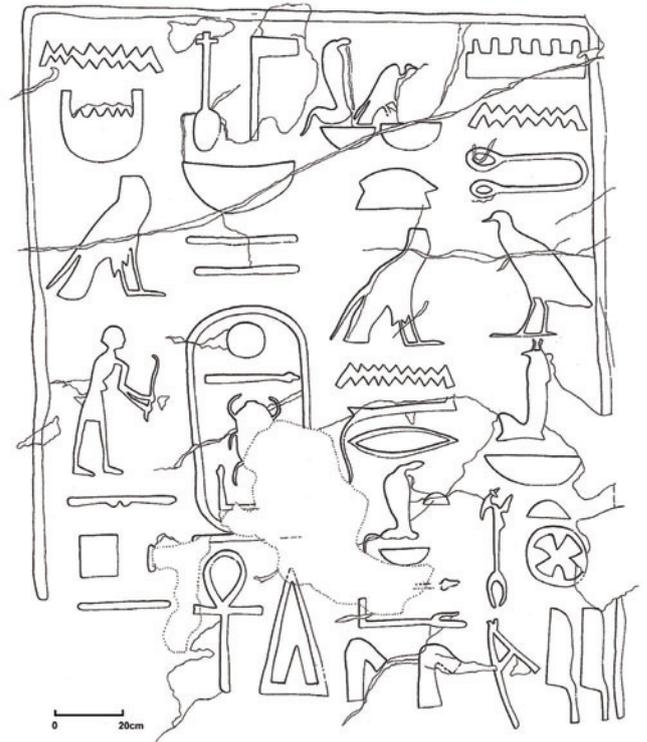


Figure 3. Tombos, stela 'c', copy.



Plate 2. Tombos, stela 'b'.

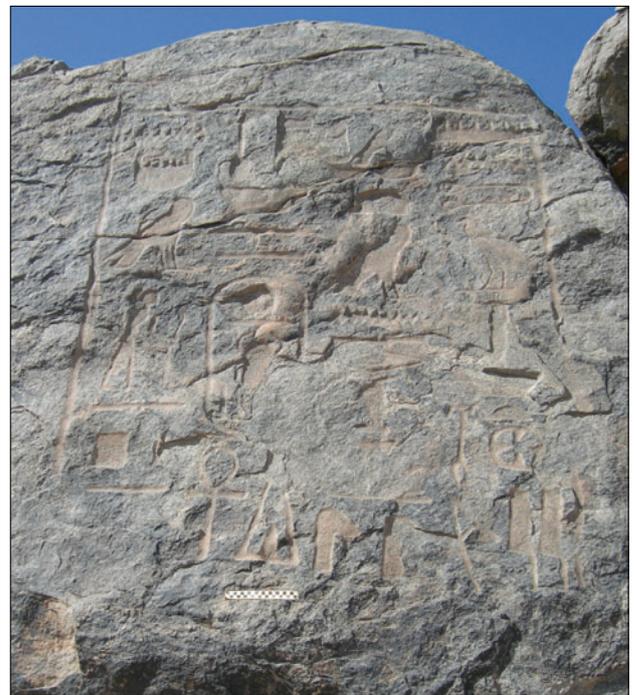


Plate 3. Tombos, stela 'c'.



Figure 4. Tombos, stela 'd', copy.

Inscription: '(1) Horus, Strong bull beloved of Maat, (2) King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Lord of the two lands, Aakheperkare, given life, (3) Strong ruler,⁶ who has destroyed the Nehsyu-Nubians,⁷ (4) beloved of Amun, Lord of the thrones of the two lands.'



Plate 4. Tombos, stela 'd'.

⁶ The determinative of *hks* is the sign A43, with the king's white crown, uraeus and rear counterpoise clearly indicated. There appear to be no traces of a sign (phonetic complement, *k*) in the space between the *hks*-sign and the determinative, which is occupied by a fault in the stone.

⁷ The determinative of Nehsyu is A14, 'man with blood streaming from his head'; cf. below, stela 'd', line 3.

Stela 'c' (Figure 3, Plate 3; LD iii, pl. 5, c; *Urk.* iv, 87, 14-16; Sethe 1914, 45, no. 33, C).⁸ Height, 1.90m; width, 1.60m; height above current ground-level, c. 1.90m.

Inscription (the third column is abbreviated and parts of the text, including a section of the cartouche, are lost through spalling of the surface, some of it recent): '(1) The Two Ladies, One who appears as the uraeus, great⁹ of might, (2) Perfect god, Lord of the two lands, Aakheperkare, given life (3), who has taken this land,¹⁰ (4) beloved of Montju,¹¹ Lord of Thebes.'¹²

Stela 'd' (Figure 4, Plate 4; LD iii, pl. 5, d; *Urk.* iv, 88, 2-4; Sethe 1914, 45, no. 33, D).¹³ Height 1.62m, width 1.54m; height above current ground-level, c. 2.55m.

Inscription: '(1) Horus of gold, Beautiful of years, who causes hearts to live, (2) Son of Re of his body, Djehutymose who appears like Re, given life, (3) who has subdued the Setyu-Nubians¹⁴ in every place, (4) beloved of Amun, Lord of the thrones of the two lands'.

The three stelae (perhaps the first of the series of five to be created) form a coherent self-contained group, containing between them the titulary with all five names of the king, statements of conquest or appropriation, and dedications to the two pre-eminent deities of state and war. Stela 'b' and 'c' are orientated primarily left to right (the dominant orientation) and stela 'd' right to left, these respective orientations and the running-order of the king's names indicating that they are indeed to be read in that order: b, c, and d. Common to all three is that their original surface was not fully prepared for decoration, obliging the artist/sculptor to work with, and around, the various natural faults in the stone, a task efficiently performed but suggesting an imperative for the stelae to be

⁸ Cf. Budka 2002, 60-61, fig. 3; 2005, 109-110; Osman and Edwards 2011, 70, fig. 3.16, 83, 294-5, TMB003h, fig. 8.16.12.

⁹ The reading ϵ_3 is clear, with distinct traces of the ϵ_3 -sign (O29) surmounting the ϵ -arm (D36).

¹⁰ Reading the object of the verb as *ts pn*. The slightly damaged sign to the right of the *p* is the stroke determinative of *ts* (note that the remnant of a suggested *tp*-sign here, *Urk.* iv, 87, 15, note b, is an artefact of the damage); the final, horizontal sign underneath is a bar-*n* (cf. the contemporary stela of Thutmose I on the Hagr el-Merwa, Davies 2017a, 69, n. 10, 71, fig. 6, for the use in a single monument, as here, of both the full ripple and the simplified forms of *n*).

¹¹ The curious miniscule rendering of the two feathers on the head of the determinative of the god's name (correctly indicated by Lepsius, incorrectly in *Urk.* iv, 87, 16) is presumably here a space-saving measure; for the normal form, see, e.g., Naville 1898, pl. lvii, line 6=*Urk.* iv, 247, 1; cf. Leitz 2002, 319.

¹² Or 'Theban nome'; note that the *w3s*-sign is R19 not S40.

¹³ Cf. Budka 2002, 61, fig. 4, right; 2005, 110; Osman and Edwards 2011, 294-5, TMB003g, figs 8.16.9, right, and 8.16.11; Davies 2018, 50, pls 3-4.

¹⁴ For the reading *dr styw* (the *dr* lacking a determinative), see already the observation and preliminary copy in Davies 2018, 50, no. 3, pl. 4, fig. 9. As noted above, the determinative of Setyu (A14) is the same as that of Nehsyu on stela 'b', line 3, there written with three plural strokes, here with three 'pellets' (N33), probably for calligraphic reasons. Recently on the ethnonyms, El-Sayed 2011, 220-222, L 222; Valbelle 2012, 449-451; 2018, 446, 448-9.



Plate 5. Debba, inscription of Merymose.

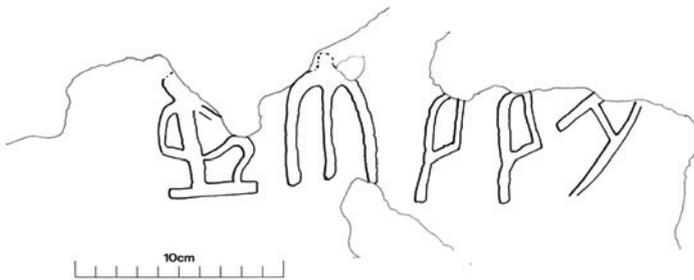


Figure 5. Debba, inscription of Merymose, copy.

completed as expediently as possible (hence perhaps the several abbreviations). In this, they stand in contrast to the Horus-name and Year 2 stelae ('e' and 'a' respectively) to the south, whose surfaces were pre-worked to a comparatively smooth finish (Davies 2018, 46, 49, pls 1-2). These latter stelae (the two largest and most impressive of the series of five), though located a considerable distance apart from each other, might in turn be regarded as a complimentary pair, as they face each other, the inscriptions on 'e' orientated primarily left to right, those on 'a' reading right to left.¹⁵ It is hoped that such issues, together with related matters, might be considered further in a concluding report on all the rock-inscriptions, royal and private, at Tombos.

Debba (Dal Cataract, east bank, Sarkamatto)

We resumed recording of the inscriptions carved into the cliffs of the wadi at Debba,¹⁶ a less than straightforward process, as most are incomplete or otherwise unclear and, on the south side, share the space with a mass of animal and bird drawings (notably giraffe and ostrich) in varying

¹⁵ For the view that stela 'a' (the year 2 stela) was created later in the reign and 'backdated', see Säve-Söderbergh 1941, 149; Redford 2004, 37, 170-1, n. 61; Davies 2017a, 93, n. 72.

¹⁶ For previous seasons at the site, see Davies 2014, 41; 2017b, 65-67; 2018, 52-54.

states of preservation, now difficult to disentangle. Three inscriptions were fully copied or recopied (with corrections), two on the south side (1-2) and one on the north (3). Much remains to be done but the revised corpus continues to mount steadily.

South Side

1. On the cliff-face, remains of a horizontal line of hieroglyphs, now incomplete, reading right to left, consisting of the name: 'Merymose',¹⁷ the title lost (Figure 5, Plate 5). 18th dynasty.

2. On the cliff-face, not far below the former and previously unrecorded, a single horizontal line in a mixed, lapidary script (Figure 6, Plate 6); complete though eroded, reading right to left, the title and name: 'Retainer (*šms*), Pentawer(et)'.¹⁸ Ramesside Period.

North side

3. On a large boulder, just west of the inscription of viceroy Amenemnekh, two columns of hieroglyphs incised into a poor surface, awkwardly angled (Figure 7, Plates 7-8),²⁰ the columns reading from right to left, in retrograde fashion, some signs transposed: '(1) A gift²¹ which the king gives, Sobek-Re, lord of Sumenu,²² and Anubis, who is upon the sacred booth, (2) for the *ka* of the relief-sculptor

¹⁷ Cf. Hintze and Reineke 1989, i, 182, no. 606, ii, pl. 262, bottom. This Merymose is not, of course, necessarily the viceroy of that name (for a viceroy, one might have expected the name-determinative A51 or A52 rather than A1 as here (cf., for example, the rock-inscriptions at Tombos, Davies 2012, 29, pl. 2, fig. 1, 30-32, pl. 4, fig. 2, and Wadi Allaki, Piotrovsky 1983, 51, 153, nos 74 and 82). However, the viceroy Merymose's name with title does appear to occur elsewhere on this rock-face, in a difficult line of inscription still under study (a record to be included, it is hoped, in the next report).

¹⁸ PN i, 111, no. 17; see the several personnel (a servant and scribes) with this name, similarly written, in Ramesside rock-inscriptions in the Wadi Allaki (Černý 1947, 54, no. 19, pl. ix, 2=Piotrovsky 1983, 47, no. 23, and 143; Müller 2013, 269, tab. 2.7.4, no. 7, 401, 22.28; Piotrovsky 1983, 47, no. 25, and 144-5 (with a date of Year 52 evidently of Ramesses II); Müller 2013, 273, tab. 2.7.6, no. 28 and 402, 22.42; and Piotrovsky 1983, 48, no. 39). A 'chief retainer' (*hry šmsw*) with the name is attested on a pectoral from a Ramesside tomb at Aniba (Steindorff 1937, ii, 90, SA 35, E 11198, pl. 50, 3; Feucht 1971, 101-102, pl. 22, no. 123 [obverse]; Müller 2013, 187, Tab. 2.4.1, no. 1, 417, 30.37; Helmbold-Doyé and Seiler, forthcoming).

¹⁹ Davies 2017b, 66-67, pl. 13, fig. 5.

²⁰ Cf. Hintze and Reineke 1989, i, 182, no. 608, pl. 263; Müller 2013, 184, Tab. 2.3.2, no. 22, 231, E 61, 450, 42, 14.

²¹ The *t* and *p* of *hry* are transposed.

²² The revised reading, 'Sobek-Re, lord of Sumenu', I owe to Dr Pierre Meyrat (who helped record the inscription), pointing out that the writing *mnw* is an abbreviation of the toponym *swmnw* (citing, as a Thutmoseid example, Hornung, Stachelin and Brack 1976, 241, no. 250, pl. 24) and that the *nw*-sign and town-determinative are here transposed (see now Meyrat 2019, 212-213, with nn 292-293, and 217, n. 325; cf., more generally, on the deity [as attested in Nubia and in offering-formulae] and on the toponym, Kockelmann 2017, i, 277-278, with n. 1269, ii, 288-289 and 312-321).

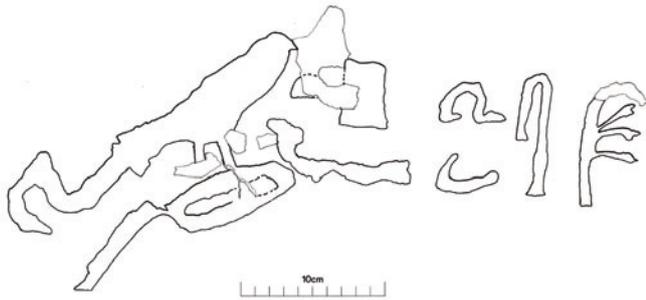


Figure 6. Debba, inscription of Retainer Pentawer(et), copy.

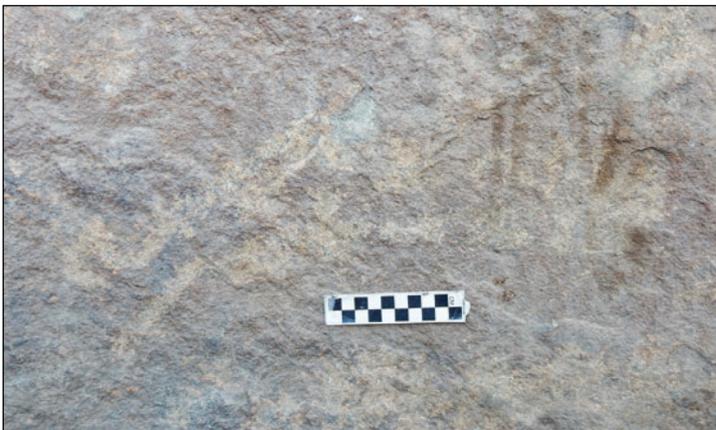


Plate 6. Debba, inscription of Retainer Pentawer(et).

(*tꜣy-mdꜣst*, ‘chisel-bearer’) of Amun,²³ Amenhotep (?).²⁴ New Kingdom, probably 18th dynasty.²⁵

In addition to the epigraphic work at Debba, a brief visual survey of the surrounding landscape and network of wadis was carried out.²⁶ It included the preliminary examination of a series of disturbed tombs of uncertain date, sunk into the top of a long north-south bank of silt (Plate 9), one with a now open, very deep shaft. The site, which appears to be otherwise unrecorded, merits detailed archaeological investigation.

²³ For holders of this title, connected to the 18th dynasty temple of Amun at Karnak, see Eichler 2000, 148, n. 652; cf. Polz 1997, 133-134; Taylor 2001, 234, no. 2272; for later Deir El-Medina data, see the summary in B. G. Davies 2018, 311-2; for the possible attestation of another ‘relief-sculptor’ working in Upper Nubia (at the temple of Jebel Doshā, late in reign of Thutmose III), see Davies 2017b, 62-4, no. 9, n. 31, pl. 9, fig. 2.

²⁴ Assuming that the name, roughly done, is to be read *ʿImn-ḥtp*, there is ample room for the *t* and *p* between the *ḥtp*-sign and the name-determinative, though the space appears to have been left blank (the signs possibly drafted but never carved).

²⁵ Among the Debba inscriptions, no. 3 here is most similar in overall style and execution to the inscription of Sen-Dehuty (Davies 2018, 52-53, no. 2, pl. 12, fig. 10), which dates probably to early-mid 18th dynasty. One other inscription at the site exhibits retrograde writing, one of the two recording the name of Usersatet, viceroy of Amenhotep II (Vila 1975, 27, fig. 16; Davies 2014, 41, pl. 24).

²⁶ By Julien Cooper and Hozaifa Abdelmajid.



Plate 7. Debba, recording inscription of Relief-sculptor Amenhotep (with Pierre Meyrat).

Sabu

At Sabu, known for its ‘numerous groups of rock drawings of very different periods covering the rugged sandstone hills’,²⁷ we took the opportunity to study the group of four Egyptian rock-inscriptions naming New Kingdom artists and scribes.²⁸ They are situated within a cleft formed by the sides of two large neighbouring boulders (Plate 10), at the mouth of a wadi,²⁹ which, it is suggested, ‘may have provided a safe landing/mooring site for boats when the river was in flood.’³⁰ There are three inscriptions (1-3) on the right (west) boulder, located in a line at approx. head-height (Plate 11), and one on the left (4), located above head-height, all orientated right to left. Inscriptions 2-3, and possibly also 1, are of the early to mid-18th dynasty;³¹ inscription 4 is almost certainly of the Ramesside Period. As at Debba, the inscriptions share the space with other drawings, mostly of cattle and ostrich, though including one large *ankh*-sign (Plate 11, left).³²

1. ‘For the *ka* of Scribe of forms (*sš kꜣdwt*) Userhat of Am’ (Plate 12, Figure 8).³³

²⁷ Edwards and Salih 1992, 71, ref 91/120 (citing earlier bibliography); Edwards 2006, 56-57, pls 1-2, 59, pl. 5, colour pls xxxiii-xxxiv; Osman and Edwards 2011, 363-372, 8.29, pls 42-46; cf. Chittick 1961; Hintze and Reineke 1989, i, 184, ii, pls 265-267; Fantusati 2006; Castiglioni, Castiglioni and Roccati 2008, 30-31, 36-37; Kleinitz 2013, 353, fig. 8.

²⁸ Hintze and Reineke 1989, i, 184, nos 610-613, ii, pls 268-269; Edwards 2006, 59; Osman and Edwards 2011, 85, fig. 3.48; Rondot 2013, 42.

²⁹ Osman and Edwards 2011, 363-4, SBU001, figs 8.29.1 and 4.

³⁰ Osman and Edwards 2011, 85; cf. Fantusati 2006, 36-7, suggesting the possibility that travellers, anchoring at Sabu, might have continued overland, avoiding the Third Cataract. See further the boat-drawings discussed below.

³¹ Inscription no. 1 could be taken to be the earliest of the three, as it occupies the better surface and the more prominent position, but there is no certainty (it could well be later in date), as other factors (for example, the presence of earlier indigenous drawings) might have influenced choice of location.

³² Cf. Osman and Edwards 2011, 364, fig. 8.29.4; Castiglioni, Castiglioni and Roccati 2008, 36, fig., lower left.

³³ Hintze and Reineke 1989, i, 184, no. 610, ii, pl. 268; Osman and Edwards 2011, 85, fig. 3.48.1, 364, fig. 8.29.3; Fantusati 2006, 36-7, 44,



Plate 8. Debba, inscription of Relief-sculptor Amenbotep.

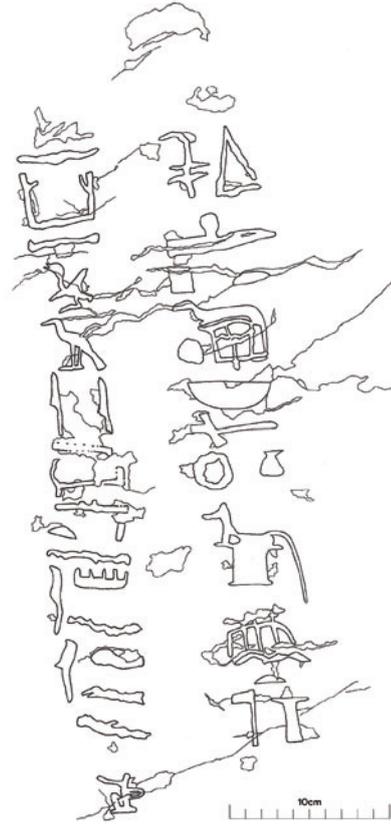


Figure 7. Debba, inscription of Relief-sculptor Amenbotep, copy.



Plate 9. Debba, wadi near the river, with tombs sunk into silt bank.

3. ‘Scribe Dhehutymose of Nekhen’ (Plate 14, Figure 10).³⁵

4. (1) ‘For the *ka* of Temple-scribe (*sš hwt*) Paser, (2) son of Ipu’ (Plate 15, Figure 11).³⁶

Of these individuals, only the ‘scribe of forms Neb of Nekhen’ (2) is certainly known from other sources: from two rock-inscriptions at Sehel³⁷ and probably also one at Jebel Dosha (though lacking the associative toponym), the latter datable to late in the reign of Thutmose III.³⁸ The ‘scribe Djehutymose of Nekhen’

4, 459, 48.3; Rondot 2013.

³⁵ PM vii, 174; Arkell 1950, 35; Hintze and Reineke 1989, i, 184, no. 612, ii, pl. 269; Edwards 2006, 59; Osman and Edwards 2011, 85, fig. 3.48, 3; Müller 2013, 271, tab. 276, no. 5, 460, 48.4. ‘Scribe’ (*sš*) here might have generic meaning (cf. Laboury 2013, 34).

³⁶ Hintze and Reineke 1989, i, 184, no. 613, ii, pl. 269; Castiglioni, Castiglioni and Roccati 2008, 36, fig. centre left; Osman and Edwards 2011, 85, fig. 3.48, 4, 364, fig. 8.29.2; Müller 2013, 242, tab. 2.5.3 H, no. 44, 459, 48.2; Castiglioni and Castiglioni 2014, 524 and 526, pl. 7. For the title *sš hwt* (an abbreviated writing of *sš hwt-ntr*) in similar inscriptions from Lower Nubia, see López 1966, 19, no. 10, pl. vii, 1-2, and 20, no. 15, pl. ix, 2; Müller 2013, 241-242, Tab. 2.5.3 H, no. 42, 410, 27.12-13.

³⁷ Gasse and Rondot 2003, 45-46, pl. 7; Gasse and Rondot 2007, 178, 506, SEH 294, and 171, 504, SEH 281; Rondot 2013.

³⁸ Davies 2004a, 61-62, pl. 4; Davies 2004b, 2, 16-17, figs 22-23; Rondot 2013; Davies 2017b, 60-62, no. 4, n. 23, fig. 1.

2. ‘Scribe of forms Neb of Nekhen’ (Plate 13, Figure 9).³⁴

pl. 11; Castiglioni, Castiglioni and Roccati 2008, 30-31, 36, fig. centre right, and 37; Castiglioni and Castiglioni 2014, 523, pl. 1; cf. Vercoutter 1956, 70-71, no. 8 (omitting the title); Zibelius 1972, 38 (V E b 100), 99; O’Connor 1987, 119-122; Zibelius-Chen 1988, 76-78; Kitchen 1999, 174-177; Meeks 2003, 65-67; Manzo 2012, 84; Müller 2013, 184, Tab. 2.3.2, no. 26 and 459, 48.1; and further on the place-name Amu, Zibelius-Chen 1994, 416; Cooper 2018, 675, n. 7; Cooper, forthcoming.
³⁴ Hintze and Reineke 1989, i, 184, no. 611, ii, pl. 268; Gasse and Rondot 2003, 45, colour plate xxvii; Edwards 2006, 59; Osman and Edwards 2011, 85, fig. 3.48, 2, 364, fig. 8.29.3; Müller 2013, 271, tab. 2.7.6, no.



Plate 10. Sabu, view of wadi-cliff, location of inscriptions (with Hozaiifa Abdelmajid).



Plate 11. Sabu, three inscriptions (with Julien Cooper).

(3) might be the same man as the ‘scribe Dhehutymose’ attested in a rock-inscription at Abu Sir, where the style of writing is similar and the inscription is adjacent to that of a craftsman ‘of Nekhen’.³⁹ Including 2-3 (who were probably colleagues), a significant number of such personnel cite Nekhen (Hierakonpolis) as their place of origin (and perhaps initial training).⁴⁰ Conversely, the ‘scribe of forms Userhat’

³⁹ Hintze and Reineke 1989, i, 38-9, nos. 66-67, ii, pls 31-32 (see n. 40, below).

⁴⁰ Among them in contemporary Nubian contexts: ‘scribe Saibshek of Nekhen’, in a rock-inscription from Djebinne (Roeder 1911, i, 181-2, ii, pl. 119, d; Dewachter 1971, 108; Müller 2013, 270, tab. 2.7.6, no. 3, 394, 16.7; Davies 2017b, 61, n. 20); ‘scribe of forms Hekanefer of Nekhen (?)’ in a hieratic docket on a pot from a grave in Fadrus (Säve-Söderbergh and Troy 1991, 50, fig. 9, A); and ‘jeweller/necklace-stringer (*sti nbw*), Hormose of Nekhen’ in a rock-inscription at Abusir (Hintze and Reineke 1989, i, 39, no. 67, ii, pl. 32; Müller 2013, 186, Tab. 2.3.2, no. 41, 445, no. 39.8; for the title, *Wb.* 4, 330, 2-3; Drenkhahn 1976, 44-45, 50; Fischer 1996, 193, n. 153; Jones 2000, i, 242, no. 884, ii, 982, nos 3625-3626; Hannig 2006, 843). Note in addition that Djehuty, the father of Amenhotep, personal scribe of viceroy Amenemnehu (*temp.* Hatshepsut/Thutmose III), has the second name Pennekhen, ‘man of Nekhen’ (recorded in rock-inscriptions at Abu Sir and Shalfak; Hintze



Plate 12. Sabu, inscription of Scribe of forms Userhat of Am.

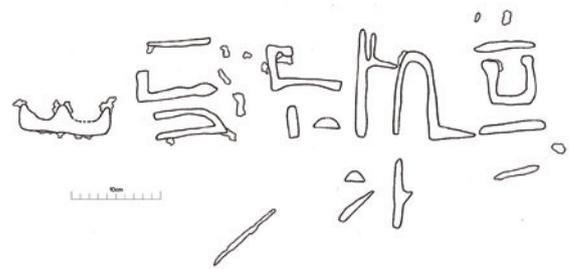


Figure 8. Sabu, inscription of Scribe of forms Userhat of Am, copy.

(1) of the eastern-desert region of $\epsilon m(w)$ remains, in terms of origin, unique and rather incongruous.⁴¹ As for Paser (4),

and Reineke 1989, i, 38, no. 64, ii, pl. 30, and i, 90, no. 365, pl. 122; Müller 2013, 154, Tab. 21 C, no. 4, 444-5, 39.3-4), and that the scribe Hormeni from Nekhen (early 18th dynasty) reports visiting Wawat annually over many years to bring back tribute for the king (Florence, Stela 2549, lines 6-9; Bosticco 1965, 22-24, no. 14, pl.14; Müller 2013, 270, Tab. 2.7.6, no. 1, 329, An. 3.1.15, 380, 11.2). For a notable pre-New Kingdom record, see the rock-inscription at Sayala referring to ‘ruler (*hks*) of Nekhen Reniker’, dated on palaeographic grounds to the First Intermediate Period (Satzinger 2006, 140-141, no. 4).

⁴¹ It is tempting (if speculative) to see ϵm here as an incomplete writing of the toponym *mi ϵ m*, ‘Aniba’, with the initial *mi*-sign (W19) mistakenly omitted or left uncarved (note the gap between the scribe’s name and following group) and with consequent displacement of the genitival *n*. For writings of *mi ϵ m*, see Zibelius 1972, 120-122 (cf. El-Sayed 2011, 202, L 179). Itinerant scribes and officials *n mi ϵ m*, ‘of Aniba’, are ubiquitous in New Kingdom rock-inscriptions; see, for example, López 1966, 21, no. 19, pl. xii, 1 (Khor Shadun Ashshi, 18th dynasty?); Jacquet-Gordon 1981, 228-229, nos. I-II, pls. 88c and b (Gerf Hussein, Ramesside); Davies 2014, 32-33, fig. 3, 36-37, with n. 28, fig. 10 (eastern desert, Ramesside and possibly 18th dynasty); Rothe *et al.* 2008, 117-8, BR07 and 8 (on the latter, Davies 2014, 37, n. 28), 175, BR59; Brown 2017, 187-193, figs 6, 9-10 (Wadi Barramiya, 18th dynasty). It may also be pertinent that during the New Kingdom the toponym ϵmw is otherwise consistently written with the terminal *-w* (Zibelius 1972, 99; Meeks 2003, 66; Cooper, forthcoming). I am grateful to Julien Cooper (who made the copy published as Figure 8 here) for helpful discussion of

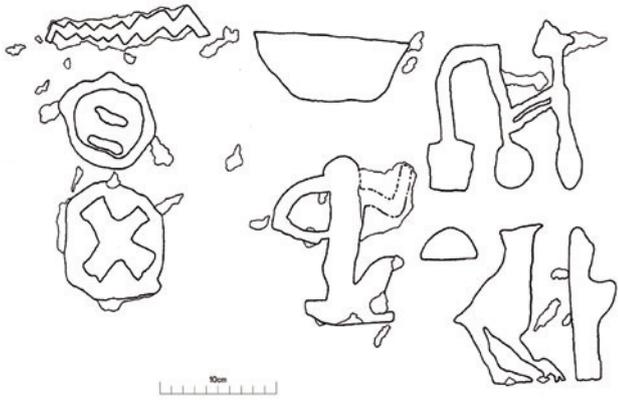


Figure 9. Sabu, inscription of Scribe of forms Neb of Nekhen, copy.



Plate 13. Sabu, inscription of Scribe of forms Neb of Nekhen.



Plate 14. Sabu, inscription of Scribe Djebutymose of Nekhen.

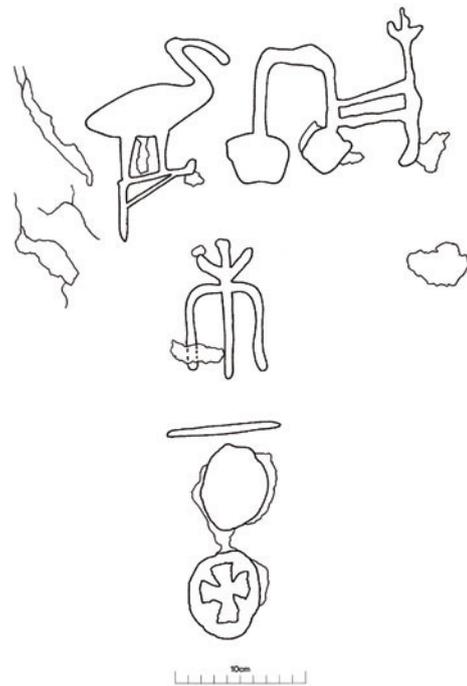


Figure 10. Sabu, inscription of Scribe Djebutymose of Nekhen, copy.



Plate 15. Sabu, inscription of Temple-scribe Paser, son of Ipu.

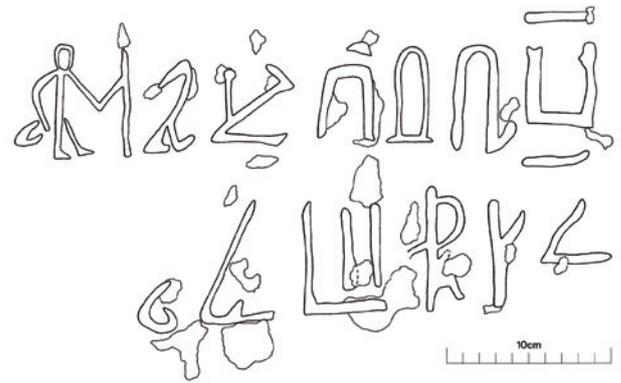


Figure 11. Sabu, inscription of Temple-scribe Paser, son of Ipu, copy.



Plate 16. Sabu, rock-drawings, fleet of pharaonic ships.

other scribes with this commonplace name,⁴² written in the same lapidary style, are known,⁴³ but none so far with the same filiation.

The inscriptions are not the only evidence for pharaonic presence at Sabu and for the wadi's possible function as a convenient spot for mooring. Situated along a rock-face further up the wadi-system is a group of ship-drawings (neatly pecked and incised), partly superimposed on earlier native matter.⁴⁴ This fine tableau, about three metres in length, shows

a fleet of pharaonic travelling ships, facing downstream, most of them unrigged, with one ship approaching, travelling upstream, from the left (Plate 16). They have yet to be studied in detail but on grounds of style and content there is little doubt that they date to the 18th dynasty (earlier rather than later)⁴⁵ and are thus broadly contemporary with the inscriptions of the visiting artists, one or more of whom might possibly have played a role in their production. In the case of one of the ships, a human figure is depicted standing on the central deck-house holding what appears to

the Sabu toponym.

⁴² *PN i*, 117, no. 12.

⁴³ For the palaeography, cf., for example, two of the Wadi Allaki scribes with this name, Piotrovsky 1983, 54, 74, no. 109, 64, 79, no. 174.

⁴⁴ Osman and Edwards 2011, 85-6, fig. 3.49, 363, fig. 8.29.1, SBU024, and 368, SBU024, figs 8.29.19-20, pl.45; cf. Edwards and Salih 1992, cover image; Fantusati 2006, 36-37, 43, pls 9-10; Castiglioni, Castiglioni

and Roccati 2008, 31, fig. lower right; Castiglioni and Castiglioni 2014, 524 and 526, pl. 10.

⁴⁵ On 18th dynasty travelling ships, see Landström 1970, 98-110; Jones 1990, 53-60; Vinson 1994, 38-9; Jones 1995, 49-53; Pomey 2012; Pomey 2015, 9.

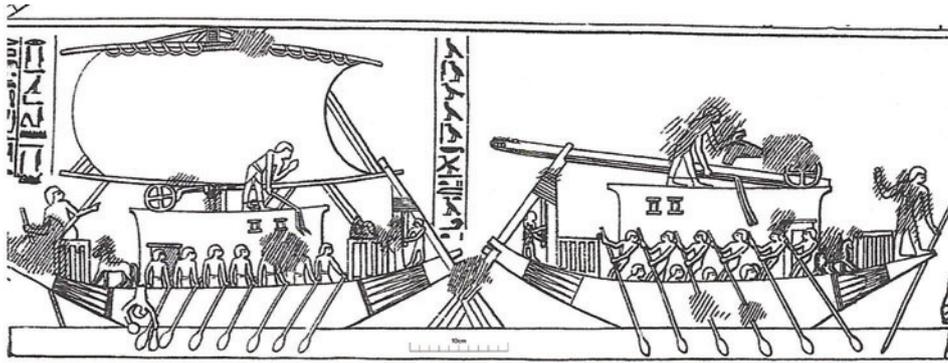


Figure 12. Elkab, tomb-chapel of Pahery, scene of ships, copy (after Tylor and Griffith 1894, pl. iii; courtesy of the Egypt Exploration Society).

be a whip (now a little indistinct) in the rear hand (Plate 16, right, centre row, left). This feature is repeated in a separate drawing, located nearby in the same wadi, which is more detailed and depicts the same type of ship on the move (Plate 17), the scene cursorily but skilfully pecked by a practised hand.⁴⁶ Here a dominant male figure, clearly an overseer, stands on the roof of the deck-house, arms akimbo, holding a curved whip in his rear hand. Below him, on the deck, four groups of oarsmen are shown in the act of rowing, their eight long oars propelling the ship downstream (a hippo in the water beside it); in the stern, the pilot crouches holding the curved tiller and controlling the huge steering oar. Towards the prow of the ship is the figure, facing forwards, of a standing horse (a crucial dating criterion), probably to be understood as one of a pair of chariot-horses. Parallels for the representation are to be found in a number of Egyptian tomb-scenes of the 18th dynasty, the earliest and closest among them being a detailed example from the tomb-chapel of Pahery at Elkab (Figure 12),⁴⁷ dating from the reign of Thutmose III. Here two travelling ships are figured, each with an overseer standing on the deck-house holding a whip, directing the oarsmen rowing below, and with standing horses (rendered on a small-scale) facing the prow, in this case with a chariot stored on the deck-house.⁴⁸ The Sabu ship-scene was surely drawn by an

artist familiar with such a composition, not impossibly, it might be suggested again, by one of the artists named in the Sabu inscriptions.⁴⁹

As already noted, Sabu contains a huge amount of rock-art of all periods, from the prehistoric to the medieval and beyond, most of it yet to be fully documented. In addition to the content treated above, there appears to be a considerable amount of other pharaonic material, including boat-scenes and at least one inscription (Plate 18).⁵⁰ More recording is required but it is already reasonably clear that, as at Tombos



Plate 17. Sabu, rock-drawing, pharaonic ship with horse on board.

and Debba and other sites of significance, such interventions – fine works of art as some of them may be – served, in large

be very closely related iconographically to that of Pahery; see the fragment of a boat-scene from the former showing a grain-barge, perhaps once part of a larger boat-scene, including travelling-ships, like that in Pahery (see Manniche 1988, 69, 85-6, pl. 9, no. 18, and pl. 10; Devillers 2018, 35-6, fig. 4).

⁴⁹ It seems hardly necessary to point out that Nekhen (Hierakonpolis) is the twin-town of Elkab, located directly opposite to it just over the river. Neb of Nekhen and his colleague, Djehutymose, might well have been familiar with the decoration in Pahery's tomb.

⁵⁰ The inscription, its meaning unclear (taken at face value, a name 'Nenankh'[P] or similar), is located on a large low-lying slab of stone in the mouth of a wadi near to the road, about 100 metres south of the other inscriptions. It is deeply cut into a pre-smoothed surface, unlike the surrounding drawings. Its existence was first brought to my attention some seasons ago by Dr Derek Welsby.

⁴⁶ Cf. Osman and Edwards 2011, 370, SBU030, fig. 8.29.29.

⁴⁷ Tylor and Griffith 1894, 16-17, pl. iii, west wall, bottom register (reproduced courtesy of the Egypt Exploration Society); for comment on the ship-type, Pomey 2012, 293.

⁴⁸ Cf. Hofmann 1989, 370-371, pl. 68; Köpp-Junk 2013, 138; Köpp-Junk 2015, 208-209, citing similar scenes in three Theban tombs of the later 18th dynasty, those of Khaemhat (TT 57, *temp.* A.III; Wreszinski 1923, pl. 207; Hofmann 1989, 371, pl. 70); Kenamun (TT 162, *temp.* A.III; Davies 1963, pl. 18; Hofmann 1989, 271, pl. 69), and Huy (TT 40, *temp.* Tutankhamun; Davies and Gardiner 1926, pls 11, 12, 31; Hofmann 1989, 371-372, pl. 71). Such a scene, now lost, might also once have existed in the Theban tomb of Wensu (TT A4), known to



Plate 18. Sabu, inscription.

part, a wider colonial agenda, that of the appropriation and transformation of the native landscape.⁵¹

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⁵¹ See n. 4 above; and, further, Edwards 2006, 58-59; Thum 2016, 76; Davies 2017a, 94; Brown 2017, 164-196; Davies 2018, 50-51, no. 5. On aspects of Egyptian colonial strategy as expressed through the built landscape at Tombos, see Smith and Buzon 2017; Smith 2018; Smith and Buzon 2018.



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Abbreviations

- LD: Lepsius, C. R. 1849-1856. *Denkmäler aus Ägypten und Äthiopien*, 12 volumes. Berlin.
- PM vii: *Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Reliefs, and Paintings VII: Nubia, the Deserts, and Outside Egypt.* Oxford, 1952. B. Porter and R. L. B. Moss assisted by E. W. Burney (eds).
- PN i: Ranke, H. 1935. *Die ägyptischen Personennamen I.* Glückstadt.
- Urk. iv: *Urkunden der 18. Dynastie. 1. Historisch-Biographische Urkunden.* K. Sethe (ed.). Zweite verbesserte Auflage. Leipzig, 1930.
- Wb: *Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache*, 7 volumes. Leipzig, 1925-1950, A. Erman and H. Grapow (eds).