

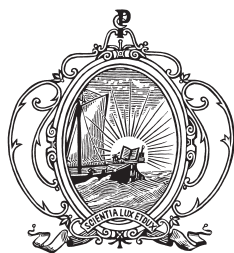
BRITISH MUSEUM PUBLICATIONS ON EGYPT AND SUDAN 1

THE FOURTH CATARACT AND BEYOND

Proceedings of the 12th International Conference for Nubian Studies

edited by

Julie R. ANDERSON and Derek A. WELSBY



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CONTENTS

CONTENTS	V
CONTRIBUTORS	XV
PREFACE	XXIII
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	XXV
ABBREVIATIONS.....	XXVII

INTRODUCTION

YUSUF FADL HASAN and Derek A. WELSBY	
Opening Session	1
SALAH MOHAMED AHMED	
An Introduction to the Merowe Dam Archaeological Salvage Project (MDASP).....	5

THE FOURTH CATARACT AND BEYOND - MAIN PAPERS

PREHISTORY

Piotr OSYPIŃSKI	
Prehistory of the Fourth Cataract	9
Mathieu HONEGGER	
Recent Advances in Our Understanding of Prehistory in Northern Sudan	19
Donatella USAI	
Recent Advances in Understanding the Prehistory of Central Sudan	31
Maria Carmela GATTO	
Recent Advances in the Understanding of Nubian Prehistory in Lower Nubia, Upper Egypt and the Deserts	45

THE KERMA PERIOD

Henryk PANER	
Kerma Culture in the Fourth Cataract of the Nile.....	53
Charles BONNET	
Forty Years Research on Kerma Cultures	81

Brigitte GRATIEN	
Kerma North of the Third Cataract	95

Dominique VALBELLE	
International Relations between Kerma and Egypt	103

THE KUSHITE PERIOD

SALAH MOHAMED AHMED	
Kushites at the Fourth Cataract	111

Vincent RONDOT	
The Island of Meroe	119

Angelika LOHWASSER	
Kush and her Neighbours beyond the Nile Valley	125

THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD

Bogdan ŻURAWSKI	
The Fourth Cataract in the Medieval Period	135

Włodzimierz GODLEWSKI	
The Kingdom of Makuria	155

David N. EDWARDS	
Medieval Nobadia	171

Derek A. WELSBY	
The Kingdom of Alwa	183

THE ISLAMIC PERIOD

ABDELRAHMAN ALI MOHAMMED	
The Islamic Period in the Fourth Cataract	201

INTISAR SOGHAYROUN ELZEIN	
Islamic Archaeology in Northern Sudan	209

Michael MALLINSON	
The Red Sea Littoral since the Arrival of Islam	217

YUSUF FADL HASAN	
The Islamic Sudan and the Outside World, c. 1317-1821	227

REPORTS AND RESEARCH PAPERS

PREHISTORY

Elena A. A. GARCEA

- The Evolution from Large Social Units with Loose Networks into Small Social Units with Tight Networks from the Khartoum Variant to the Abkan and the Pre-Kerma at Sai Island 235

Sandro SALVATORI, Donatella USAI, MOHAMED FAROUG ABDELRAHMAN, Antonietta DI MATTEO, Paola IACUMIN, Veerle LINSEEE and MONGEDA KHALEB MAGZOUN

- Archaeology at el-Khiday: New Insight on the Prehistory and History of Central Sudan 243

Andrea ZERBONI

- The Geoarchaeological Contribution to the el-Salha Project: From Site to Landscape at el-Khiday (Central Sudan)..... 259

Tina JAKOB

- A Bioarchaeological Appraisal of the Human Skeletal Remains from el-Khiday 2, Central Sudan..... 271

ABDELRAHIM M. KHABIR

- Typological and Technological Examinations of Neolithic Pottery from Khartoum Province, Sudan 279

AZHARI MUSTAFA SADIG

- Child Burials: A Funerary Practice in the Middle Nile Region. Evidence from the Late Neolithic Site of es-Sour 285

Przemek BOBROWSKI, Agnieszka CZEKAJ-ZASTAWNY and Romuald SCHILD

- Gebel el-Muqaddas (site E-06-4). The Early Neolithic Tumuli from Nabta Playa (Western Desert, Egypt) 293

HEBA-TALLAH A. A. IBRAHIM

- Megalithic Architecture and the Nubian Desert 303

KERMA AND CONTEMPORARY CULTURES

George HERBST and Stuart Tyson SMITH

- Pre-Kerma Transition at the Nile Fourth Cataract: First Assessments of a Multi-component, Stratified Prehistoric Settlement in the UCSB/ASU Salvage Concession 311

Magdalena WŁODARSKA

- Kerma Burials in the Fourth Cataract Region – Three Seasons of Excavations at Shemkhiya 321

Geoff EMBERLING, Bruce B. WILLIAMS, Megan INGVOLDSTAD and Thomas R. JAMES

- Peripheral Vision: Identity at the Margins of the Early Kingdom of Kush 329

Enrico DIRMINTI

- Between Kerma and Avaris: The First Kingdom of Kush and Egypt during the Second Intermediate Period 337

Pernille BANGSGAARD

- Nubian Faunal Practices – Exploring the C-Group “Pastoral Ideal” at Nine Cemeteries 347

Petra WESCHENFELDER

Linking the Eastern Desert and the Nile Valley: Pan-Grave People from the Late Middle Kingdom to the Early New Kingdom	357
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----

PHARAONIC

Florence DOYEN

Sai Island New Kingdom Town (Northern Sudan): 3 rd and 4 th Seasons (2009-2010)	367
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----

Giulia D'ERCOLE, Giacomo ERAMO and Italo M. MUNTONI

Archaeometric Approaches to Ceramic Manufacture and Traditions at Sai Island, Northern Sudan	377
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----

Lauriane MIELLÉ

Nubian Traditions on the Ceramics Found in the Pharaonic Town on Sai Island	387
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----

Giacomo CAVILLIER

Soleb 2010 Project: Amenhotep III's Fortified Complex Research	393
----------------------------------------------------------------------	-----

W. Vivian DAVIES

A Statue of Amenhotep III Rediscovered.....	399
---------------------------------------------	-----

Kate SPENCE and Pamela ROSE

Fieldwork at Sesebi 2010	409
--------------------------------	-----

Philippe RUFFIEUX

Early 18 th Dynasty Pottery Found in Kerma (Dokki Gel).....	417
------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----

Stuart Tyson SMITH and Michele R. BUZON

Colonial Entanglements: "Egyptianization" in Egypt's Nubian Empire and the Nubian Dynasty.....	431
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----

Doris PEMLER

Looking for Nubians in Egypt. Taking a Look at the Iconographic Evidence from the 1 st Intermediate Period and Middle Kingdom	443
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----

Natalie A. POMERANTSEVA

Images of the Foreigners in Egyptian Art	451
------------------------------------------------	-----

Neal SPENCER

Amara West: Considerations on Urban Life in Colonial Kush	457
-----------------------------------------------------------------	-----

Michaela BINDER

Cultural Traditions and Transitions During the New Kingdom Colonial Period and Its Aftermath – Recent Discoveries from the Cemeteries of Amara West	487
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----

Danièle MICHAUX-COLOMBOT

Pitfall Concepts in the Round of 'Nubia': Ta-Sety, Nehesy, Medja, Maga and Punt Revisited.....	507
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----

Alfredo CASTIGLIONI and Angelo CASTIGLIONI

À la recherche de la terre d'Amou.....	523
----------------------------------------	-----

KUSHITE

EL-SAMANI AL-NASRI MOHAMMED AHMED	
The Emergence of Kush.....	531
Jean REVEZ	
The Role of the Kings' Brothers in the Transmission of Royal Power in Ancient Egypt and Kush: A Cross-Cultural Study	537
Friederike JESSE	
On the Borders of Kushite Power – The Gala Abu Ahmed Fortress in Lower Wadi Howar, Northern Sudan	545
Michael H. ZACH	
The Army and Military Dictatorship in Meroe?	557
Stanley M. BURSTEIN	
The Satrap Stela and the Struggle for Lower Nubia	573
Jeremy POPE	
Meroitic Diplomacy and the Festival of Entry.....	577
Maria Iride PASQUALI	
On the Traces of Nubians: Notes on the Relations between Romans and Meroites	583
IKHLAS ABDUL LATIEF	
The K3 Symbol in Kushite Civilization	587
Amarillis POMPEI	
Delivery of Nubian Royal Insignia: The Crowns.....	591
Katarina ALDENHOVEN	
Kushite Barque Stands	601
Julie R. ANDERSON and SALAH MOHAMED AHMED	
Early Kushite Royal Statues at Dangeil, Sudan	613
László TÖRÖK	
Quality, Style, and Nubianness. Prolegomena to a History of Meroitic Sculpture	621
MURTADA BUSHARA MOHAMMED	
The Possible Royal Tomb of Eltameer Merowe	635
Julia BUDKA	
Egyptian Impact on Pot-Breaking Ceremonies at el-Kurru? A Re-examination	641
Brigitte BALANDA	
Protecting the Mummy – A Reinterpretation of <i>Shabtis</i> in Napatan Funerary Customs	655
Timothy KENDALL	
Reused Relief Blocks of Piankhy from B 900: Toward a Decipherment of the Osiris Cult at Jebel Barkal	663

Svetlana BERSINA† Sabazios dans les pays de la vallée du Nil. Variétés régionales de l'image et du culte.....	687
Emanuele M. CIAMPINI and Grażyna BĄKOWSKA-CZERNER Meroitic Kingship and Water: The Case of Napata (B2200).....	695
Tracey SWEET, Julie R. ANDERSON, SALAH MOHAMED AHMED and Satoko TANIMOTO Conservation of an Amun Temple in the Sudan	703
Karla KROEPER Excavation of “Offering Chapel 360” in Naga	711
Paweł WOLF, Ulrike NOWOTNICK and Catharine HOF The Meroitic Urban Town of Hamadab in 2010.....	719
Eugenio FANTUSATI, Eleonora KORMYSHEVA and Svetlana MALYKH Survey in Abu Erteila: Preliminary Results.....	739
Richard A. LOBBAN Preliminary Findings at Abu Erteila: A Meroitic and Early Christian Site in Sudan	759
Michel BAUD† Downtown Muweis – A Progress Report (2007-2011).....	763
Marc MAILLOT The Palace of Muweis in the Shendi Reach: A Comparative Approach	783
Vincent FRANCIGNY An Elite Meroitic Cemetery at Sai Island	797
MAHMOUD SULIMAN BASHIR The Archaeological Material from the Meroitic Cemetery at Berber	805
Tsubasa SAKAMOTO Chronology of Meroitic Graves in Northern Sudan: Agency, Power and Society	809
Serge FENEUILLE, Jean-Pierre LETOURNEUX and Marie BOUCHAR Archaeological Information Extracted from a Comparative Study of Samples of Mortar Collected on Various Ancient Monuments in the Nile Valley between the Third and the Sixth Cataracts.....	827

MEDIEVAL

Marek CHŁODNICKI The “Royal” Tumulus at Hagar el-Beida.....	833
Brenda J. BAKER Tracking Transitions in the Fourth Cataract Region of el-Ginefab: Results of the Arizona State University Fieldwork, 2007-2009	841

Eugen STROUHAL	
Anthropology of Wadi Qitna and Kalabsha South	857
Artur OBLUSKI	
Rank-Size Rule in Nubian Settlement Systems	867
William Y. ADAMS	
The Eparch at Meinarti.....	875
Bogdan ŻURAWSKI	
Meroitic to Medieval Occupation Upriver from Dongola. Excavations at Banganarti and Selib in 2010.....	887
Mariusz DRZEWIECKI	
Banganarti – Fortifications	901
Marta OSYPIŃSKA	
Animals in the Economy of Christian Makuria	909
Małgorzata MARTENS-CZARNECKA	
Nubian Representations of Nativity Discovered in the Monastery in Old Dongola	917
Magdalena WOZNIAK	
Royal Iconography: Contribution to the Study of Costume.....	929
Dobrochna ZIELIŃSKA	
The Iconography of Power – The Power of Iconography: The Nubian Royal Ideology and Its Expression in Wall Painting	943
Adam ŁAJTAR	
A Survey of Christian Textual Finds from Gebel Adda in the Collections of the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto	951
Giovanni RUFFINI	
May God Increase Your Years: Unpublished Old Nubian Correspondence from Qasr Ibrim	961
Grzegorz OCHAŁA	
Old Nubian Lists of Goods and Money: A Preliminary Presentation	971
Claudia NÄSER and Alexandros TSAKOS	
From Bits and Pieces. A Corpus of Medieval Manuscripts from the Humboldt University (H.U.N.E.) Concession in the Fourth Nile Cataract	977
Alexandros TSAKOS and Henriette HAFSAAS-TSAKOS	
A Note on the Medieval Period of Sai Island.....	985
Robin SEIGNOBOS	
Nubia and Nubians in Medieval Latin Culture. The Evidence of Maps (12 th -14 th Century)	989

ISLAMIC TO MODERN

NADA BABEKIR MOHAMMED	
Fangool Archaeological Site: A Brief Note	1005
RAGEH Z. MOHAMED	
Bani Ady, Darb el-Arbaiin's Last Station between Upper Egypt and Nubia in the Islamic period.....	1009
Alex DE VOOGT	
The Introduction of Mancala to Sai Island	1017
HAIFA MOHAMMED HASSAN ELTAYEB	
Sudanese Beautification Ornaments between the Past and the Present	1021
Armgard GOO-GRAUER	
House Decoration by Nubian Women Prior to 1964 Resettlement	1025
Anne M. JENNINGS	
The Changing Face of Tourism in West Aswan Village	1027
Costanza DE SIMONE	
Perceptions of Nubia in Museum Collections and Displays	1031
Salomé ZURINAGA	
The Preservation of the Documentary Heritage of the 'Nubian Campaign' kept at the Spanish National Archaeological Museum, Madrid, Spain	1035

MULTI-PERIOD

KABBASHI HUSSEIN GISSEMA	
The Merowe Dam Salvage Archaeological Project (Sudan)	1049
FAWZI HASSAN BAKHEIT	
Rock Drawing Studies: Four Seasons In The Middle Nile Region	1057
Joanna THEN-OBLUSKA	
The Code of the Hidden Beads – From the Kerma to the Islamic Period According to the Fourth Cataract Material from the Gdańsk Archaeological Museum Expedition Excavations	1069
Ross THOMAS	
Changing Societies in the Fourth Cataract: Identity Displayed through Ceramic Use and Consumption Practices	1091
YAHIA FADL TAHIR	
Archaeology and Palaeoecology of el-Ga'ab Basin	1099
ALI OSMAN MOHAMED SALIH	
Archaeology and Settlement in the Third Cataract Region. Abu Fatma: A Nubian Settlement from the Kerma Period to Modern Times	1107

Margaret JUDD	
Growing Up in Gabati: An Overview of Health	1115
SIDDIG BABIKER AHMED	
The Archaeological and Ethnographical Reconnaissance in the Sabaloka Area (Western Bank of the Nile, North of Omdurman District)	1125
Tim KARBERG	
Rock Art from Wadi Abu Dom. Recent Discoveries of the W.A.D.I. Project (Münster/Germany)	1135
KHIDIR ADAM EISA	
The Recent Archaeological Survey and Salvage Excavations on the Eastern Bank of the White Nile, 8 th Season – 2009	1143
Andrea MANZO	
Beyond the Fourth Cataract. Perspectives for Research in Eastern Sudan.....	1149
YOUSIF ELOBEID ELSHEIKH SALIH	
GIS in Archaeology	1159

LANGUAGE AND LINGUISTICS

Claude RILLY	
Language and Ethnicity in Ancient Sudan	1169
Herman BELL	
A World Heritage Alphabet: The Role of Old Nubian in the Revitalization of the Modern Nubian Languages	1189

PITFALL CONCEPTS IN THE ROUND OF 'NUBIA': TA-SETY, NEHESY, MEDJA, MAGA AND PUNT REVISITED

DANIÈLE MICHAUX-COLOMBOT

Territorial and ethnic designations are seldom clearly defined in ancient sources. Hence modern scholars resort to conventional translations. However, insidiously, they foster long-lasting theories and uncritical data that can seriously flaw historical construing. Too often, history anticipates and justifies geography, whereas a correct approach requires the opposite. Where did events happen is the first question to elucidate, so as to grasp their basic context and to give us a chance to understand what triggered them. Geography is the 'open sesame' to history. Herein are stressed pitfalls resulting from amalgamating translations of 'Nubia' and 'Nubians' for places and people that are not necessarily so and that have fostered circular reasoning hampering our understanding.

At the Warsaw Conference, Claude Rilly defined the area covered by and the history of the terms 'Nubia' and 'Nubians'. They refer to Middle Nile Valley populations called Noba by Greeks and Meroites, possibly derived from Egyptian *nbw*, 'gold', the name of Pnubs/ed-Dakka (Rilly 2008, 211-223). Places and groups named *Ta-Sety*, *Nehesy*, *Medja/Medjay* and *Maga* are systematically dubbed Nubian ones. Yet, nothing substantiates that they did *belong* to Middle Nile Valley populations. These groups often also appear elsewhere, far from Nubia in the Delta and Sinai. Interpretation of context can seriously be distorted if they are systematically relegated to far south. That Nubia has been largely investigated should not stimulate the idea that all documented provincial events occurred south of Aswan, each time supposed southern groups appear in sources. 'South lands' begin south of Lower Egypt and conscript labour is essentially mobile (Bakir 1952, 2-9, 72-73; Quaegebeur 1995, 259-270).

Comments on southern events all give the impression that 'Nubia' was the one and only stage for action, whereas the northern Eastern Desert remained void of any history (Nibbi 1981, 146). Are we to understand that the frequent and varied mining activities, enforced by Egyptians, occurred in peace and harmony with local nameless populations living in a toponymic vacuum? Ancient Egypt was only the Nile Valley. Consequently, the wealth of Egyptian inscriptions dotted

about this area stand in foreign lands, necessarily without names. If the Roman period sources do yield some (Bülow-Jacobsen 1998, 63-74), it would be an illusion to conclude that none existed previously. Many inscriptions near reliable wells and close to natural resting places, hark back to the Old Kingdom (Rothe *et al.* 2008, 5-8). They are telling landmarks in a much travelled area, for which a history is desperately wanting.

TA-SETY

It is taken for granted that *T3-sty*, the 'Land of the bow', necessarily labels lands south of the First Cataract. In fact, *Ta-Sety* referred originally, *stricto sensu*, to the first nome of Upper Egypt between two natural barriers, Elephantine and Gebel Silsileh, the first being its capital. From the Middle Kingdom onwards, the name came to span the whole of Upper Egypt and Nubia within a loose and complex notion depending on the determinative *h3s(w)t*, foreign country or *sp3t*, nome of agricultural land (Gardiner 1947 II, 2; Helck 1977, 385-386; Zaki 2009, 309-319). It seems that *Ta-sty* underwent semantic extensions but this was not exclusively southwards. At el-Kanais, the *Medjay* chieftain Iuny, claims viceroyalty over Kush (KRI I 303, 15-304, 3; RITA I 247; RITANC I 200-201). However, on his Abydos stela, he also claims viceroyalty over *Ta-Sety* (*s3 nsw m T3-sty*) (KRI III 68, 9, RITA III 47, 33). So does the Viceroy Huy II (*s3 nsw r h3ry m T3-sty*) who enjoyed the office of Overseer of the southern banks, *rsy idb*, of *T3-sty* (KRI III 79, 11 & 13; RITA III 55, Michaux-Colombot 2010a, 180-182). The Ramesside administrative unit *T3-sty* could still be distinguished from that of *Kush*. Iuny even mentions *two Kush* at el-Kanais. Unless a graphic error, it may refer to double offices and administrative units, *Kush*, south in Nubia proper and *Ta-Sety* in the east.

In the amethyst mine of Wadi el-Hudi, Mentuhotep IV's stela refers to two *Ta-Sety*-countries, a northern one and a southern one (WH 4, 5), presumed to be in and south of *Wawat* (Sadek 1980, 12). Yet, Middle Kingdom Min is 'fragrance-laden when he comes down

from *Medja-land in T3-sty* (Gauthier 1931, 199; Lichtheim 1975, 204) and Min's territory is northern Etbaye, east of Upper Egypt (Colin 1998, 119, figs 9-10, 125, fig. 26). Moreover, the Wadi el-Hudi stela of Iunefer (Sebekhotep IV) informs us that the amethyst mine was 'in this country of the Medja chieftain', *h3s.t tn wr n Md3w* (WH 23, 4), erroneously read *wr n d3mw*, 'chief of recruits' (Sadek 1980, 48-50, pl. XI) and corrected by Bietak (1966, 78; Michaux-Colombot 2007a, 86-87, 92 n. 51). Events occurring in *Ta-Sety*-foreign country should be placed in Nubia proper *only* if further information sustains the location. If not, northern Etbaye can be the theatre of action. It follows that if *T3-sty* is not necessarily 'Nubia' proper, *Styw* are not necessarily 'Nubians' and maybe what has been perceived as Nubian history belongs in fact to the history of Min's realm.

NEHESY

Translations and attached comments reinforce the impression that *Nehesy* are Nubians *par excellence* (Säve-Söderbergh 1941, 226-240; Gardiner 1947 I, 74, 100, 115, 120; Posener 1958, 38-43; Zibelius 1972, 140-142; Meurer 1996, 122-129; Schneider 2003, 82-91; Winnicki 2009, 85-89) in an overall multi-ethnic way linked to amalgamated concepts of 'South-erner', *Puntites* and *Negroes* (Drenkhahn 1967, 4-18). Rather difficult to pin down, these could have occupied the whole of the Eastern Desert (Nibbi 1981, 142-182). Their geographical foreign distribution spans from south Sinai to the Upper Egyptian deserts (Bell 1977, 93). Pacified, *Nhsj htp*, were employed in the pyramid town of Senefru at Dashur. They are thought to be Nubian C-Group stock (Meurer 1996, 99 n. 8); yet, Nubian artefacts are absent in Dashur (Bell 1977, 72). Also 4th Dynasty execration texts around Khufu's pyramid, give Egyptian names to *Nehesy* people, long before Nubia fell under Egyptian rule (Abu Bakr and Osing 1976, 115-116). Early dynastic occurrences of *Ta-sty*, *Ta-Nehesy* and 'gold countries' have created a confusing melting-pot of presumed Nubian natives, though, the then 'gold countries' were the northern ones (Gratien 1995, 44-45). Fourth Dynasty *Nehesy* land was devastated; 7,000 prisoners and 200,000 live-stock were taken away (*Urk.* I 236, 10); however, as the Nubian native population was at that time sparse (Gratien 1995, 55-56), the picture does not fit.

The small *Nehesy* kingdom round Avaris during the 14th Dynasty (Bietak 1984; 1997) could undermine the Nubian stock theory. Kamose complains that there were two foreign rulers, one in Avaris and another in Kush, while he was associated with an '*Amu* and a *Nehesy*, 'each man has his slice in this Egypt' (Redford 1997, 13). It is not clear if the *Nehesy* in the Black Land is the ruler of *Kush* or of the Delta *Nehesy* kingdom. The territorial extent of *Hyksos* rule is unclear (Redford, 1997, 3-4, 21-22). Interestingly, the treasurer who engraved Kamose's victory stela was named User-Nehesy (Redford 1997, 15). Fifth Dynasty *Nehesy* at Giza are ranking people. Seneb held the office of treasurer (Bell 1977, 70). Was he a native pastoral Nubian? New Kingdom *Nehesy* villages are attested in the Delta, tenth nome of Upper Egypt, Middle Egypt, near Herakleopolis and in Syria (Winnicki 2009, 87-88, 484-488). *Nehesy* are often associated with Semites and are found everywhere from Kush to the Delta at Daphne > D/Taphanes > *hwt (n) p3 Nhsy*, the House or the Cow of the *Nehesy* (Leclère 2008, 507, 526-527). Settlements named *N3.w-3m-p3-nhs* would prove a much discussed Semitic association (Winnicki 2009, 484-485).

The name could have a Semitic origin, deriving either from Hebrew *nhs*, 'copper', 'bronze', 'brass cult serpent', 'daring', 'diviner' and related words, and Arabic *nhs*, dark colour, hence copper-coloured or related to copper mining and through semantic extension to any metal mining (Yievin 1936, 63, 73; Farina 1925, 40-41; Lüddekens 1977, 284-285; Nibbi 1981, 164-166). A possible derivation is from Akkadian *nishu* 'to extract' (Black *et al.* 1999, 255). Loprieno sees them as Asiatic *Benjamin* from the Middle Euphrates and later Madianites or Arabian caravanning tribes (Loprieno 1998, 211-217). Biblical *Pinehas* (*Exodus* 6, 25; *Nu.* 25, 7), the grandson of Aaron who met Moses in the desert east of Egypt, would correspond to *Pa-Nehesy*. In fact, *nhs* is not an Egyptian word, but a probable Semitic loanword. It occurs once with the meaning 'to sting', 'the sand-fly *stings* and sucks at every vein' in a complaint letter from a military post near Djahi (Camino 1954, 188-189; *LEM* 5, 12-10), possibly an extended use related to Canaanite serpent worship.

In Thutmose III's time, a *wr nw t3 Nhsy*, brings tribute of gold, silver and ivory (Drenkhahn, 1967, 11, 157). This country could be identified with *Nechesia* port (Ptolemy IV, 5) placed inland of Wadi Mubarak or Wadi Nakari near the very important gold mines of Sukari (Meredith 1953, 103; Klemm and Klemm 1994, 94-198, Abb 2 and 3). The most important copper

mines of the desert are north of Berenice at Um Semi-uki (Lucas and Harris 1962-1998, 205-206). Along the coast, copper and gold mining started very early. At Esh el-Melaha further north near Jebel Zeit, eight villages of miners of the early dynastic period have been documented (Abdel Tawab *et al.* 1990, 359-364). Mining activities in Sinai were entrusted to the King's Scribe, Overseer of the Treasury [Sebek]hotep called Pa-Nehesy accompanied by Amenmose, trading from there with *Punt* (Gardiner *et al.* 1955, no. 211, 217-220 = *Urk.* IV, 1890-1893). Earlier the Chancellor Nehesy conveyed the *Punt* expedition for Hatshepsut (Zivie 1984, 245-252). Rituals and Hymns to the *Nehesy of Punt* celebrated their mutual link, both associated with Min and the prospecting Medjay (Gautier 1931, 199-200; Yoyotte 1952, 126-137). Mines and the *Punt* trade are a *Nehesy* concern, but major mines lie to the north, not to the south.

A collection of *Nehesy* mercenaries followed Weni to repel '3mw sand-dwellers, and amongst them *Thmw*, Delta people (*Urk.* I 24; Gardiner 1947, I, 116). Mixed *Nehesy* groups circulated south to north or *vice versa*. It can, therefore, be postulated that originally, copper miners from Canaan infiltrated Sinai and the mining activities on the Red Sea littoral, after which they progressed into Nubia. Early Nubia had Red Sea trading connections with Canaan (Michaux-Colombot 2010b, 366). The word *hsmn*, used for amethyst, if not copper and bronze, would be Semitic *ḥašmanu*, *išmaru* (Seyfried 1981, 141-150) and mining know-how was Canaanite. Extraction and trade, involving *Nehesy* treasure hunters produced a number of *Nḥsy* '3w, translated 'caravan leader', dragoman or 'Egyptianised Nubian' versed in speaking native tongues. The word would be a metaphoric use of 'braying' donkeys for babbling foreigners (Bell 1977, 75-76). In WH 6,13 there are 50 of them, a conspicuous number should they be dragomans. Standard pack animal herders staffed for transportation would be more appropriate. Donkey conveyance is a means of transport attested with Semites in Sinai (Černý 1935) and Beni Hassan (Nibbi 1981, 178). *Nḥsy* '3w would just be 'donkey people' accompanying *Nehesy* miners. They need not be Egyptianised Nubians, a conclusion reached through subconscious circular reasoning.

MEDJA IN NEHESY-LAND

Nebhepetre Mentuhotep II 'subdued the *eastern* lands, striking down the four mountains and trampling the deserts, (to draw) *b3k*-revenue from the *Nḥsyw* [...] *rsy*, *Md3*, *W3w3t*, *Tmh*' (Habachi 1963, 21-23, fig. 6). It is contested, however, whether or not his expedition reached *Wawat*, because he left no inscription in Nubia (Vandersleyen 1995, 31; Obsomer 1995, 237-241), and the Gebelein block only shows four types of prisoners, 'Egyptian, *Styw*, *Stt*-Asiatics and *Thnw*' (Habachi 1963, 39, fig. 17), mainly northerners and easterners. After these events, Mentuhotep adopts the deification crown *Md3.t*, Min's mortar or headdress (Gabolde 1994, 261-274), in two graffiti on Konosso island near Philae (Habachi 1963, 43-44, figs 20-21; Michaux-Colombot 2006, 54). In Wadi Hammamat he is shown facing Min (M, 112). Ashait, a lesser wife of Mentuhotep II had three *Medjay* ladies-in-waiting, a 'fallen' one, a *knbt* one and one named *Ibhat* (Clère and Vandier 1948-1982, 28-29).¹ Later, Senwosret I, also campaigned against *Medja*, *Nehesy* and 'Amu rebels who had damaged his temple in Tod, presumably in the Wadi Hammamat, for the badly preserved inscription would refer to [Ro]hanou. (Barbotin and Clère 1991, fig. 3, col. 35-39, pl. 25e, 10, 25, 29). Senwosret I sent expeditions to Wadi Hammamat (G.61; G.65; M.87; M.117; Seyfried 1981, 248-253) and so did Amenemhat III who smote there *Nehesy* 'to open the land of the 'Amu', many herdsmen were captured and their chieftain overthrown (M.43, 7; M.17,5, 40) and sometime after cattle from *Medja* were brought to Gebelein in the 13th Dynasty (Vernus 1986, 141-143). *Nehesy* and *Medjay* clearly lived at a walking distance from Thebes from an early date.

An 8th Dynasty Nagada cornice fragment refers to *Medjay* with *Wawat* warriors (Fischer 1964, 40, 70-72, pl. XX). These *Medjay* are probably related to an unpublished and most tantalizing scene in the ka-chapel of Shemai at Kom el-Koffar. A squad of 17 or 18 plumed *Medjay* covers the entire wall of over 3m long.² Shemai was the Nomarch of Coptos and husband of Nebt, daughter of King Neferkauhor. This King's Treasurer and Stewart of stores (Fischer 1964, 98-100),

¹ The name is also borne by another lady, wife of Haqabâ at Aswan (Cecil 1903, 69 n.1).

² Information from Maha Farid Mostafa to whom I am most grateful. Publication of this scene has been delegated to a member of her team, Dr Laila Azzam, Associate Professor, Helwan University, who is working on it.

quarried in Wadi Hammamat (Mostafa 1984-1985; 1987; forth.). A track to Hammamat leads from Kom el-Koffar which may have been a border post with *Medja*. Shemai's relief is the earliest representation of armed *Medjay*, predating the 13th Dynasty stela of unknown provenance, of Res, son of Ptahwer and Satepkaou (Moret 1909). These men however are not in military guise, but they held some office (see below).

***Ibhat*, a *Medjay* settlement in the Wadi Hammamat**

The question of *Ibhat* is pertinent to Nubian studies because it has been located near Toshka, Abu Simbel, Elephantine or a remote sector of Wadi Allaqi (Zibelius 1972, 74-75, Vandersleyen 1995, 373). *Ibhat* is the place from where Weni brought back the sarcophagus for Merenre (*Urk.* I 106, 14-17). Now the stone happens to be *greywacke*, the Wadi Hammamat clastic sediment, called *Bekhen* (Wissa 1994, 386-387). This identification should invalidate Nubian locations, a conclusion, however, that M. Wissa was not prepared to argue.

Translations of the so-called Semna Dispatch no. 3 (Smither 1945, 7-8; Wente 1990, 71), referring to three *Medjay* women having come 'from the well of *Ibhat*', preclude a correct understanding of the document. It is supposed to have been sent from [*Iken*] / Mirgissa. Yet, the provenance, in a lacuna, is unknown. Dispatch no. 4 mentions a fort *hsf-Md3w* and no. 5 reports *Medjay* coming to Elephantine. The impressionistic background of *hsf-Md3w*, Repelling-the-Medjay, fosters the idea that they roamed in the vicinity of Mirgissa, where Execration Texts banish them along with other hostile groups (Koenig 1990, 105-109, 118-119, 120-121, 124-125). However, Wadi Allaqi inscriptions are silent on *Medjay* and yet the same groups are execrated alike in Saqqara, Helwan and elsewhere. These texts have no bearing on the location of the subject. Moreover, Nubian forts are trading centres and pedlars can travel from afar. Mud sealings found at Serra East from *hsf-Md3w* and the granary of *hsf-Md3w* suggest a nearby location, which the *Ramesseum Onomasticon* (*AEO* I, 11, 75) listing *Ink-tawy* / Faras south of *hsf-Md3w* does not confirm (Karkowski 1981, 18-20). In any event, the scribe of the Theban Dispatches does not provide any 'journal' logistics and Dispatch no. 4 is badly preserved. The guards that report men and donkeys on the desert edge of *hsf-Md3w* come from *Nekhen*/Hieraconpolis, *Tjebew*/Qau and *Meha*, believed to be Abu Simbel on the evidence of a later source. These are wide

apart, but reporters are said 'to communicate between them'. Nothing contradicts locating *hsf-Md3w* near Elephantine from whence came Dispatch no. 5, where pack asses would come from Wadi el-Hudi in *Medja*, where *g3wt* arrived from *Medja* princes to Sirenpwt (*Urk.* VII, 1,2-2,3) and where *Medja* *st*-troops patrolled in the late 6th or 8th Dynasty (Redford 1997, 19 no. 76e).

Further information on *Ibhat* is provided by the Semna stela of the viceroy Merymose. He mustered an army because '*Ibhat* had been haughty'. Defeated 'in one day, in one hour' *Nehesy* and *Maga*, were captured or killed (Figure 2, 4). Leaving the Beki/Kubban fortress, Merymose journeyed 52 *itrw* some 500km to Tary, an unknown place. He left graffiti at Aswan, el-Kanais, Barramiya and Tombos (Žába 1974, 232-234; Vandersleyen 1995, 374-375) and five more in watershed wadi petroglyphs upstream from Edfu and Kom Ombo (Rothe *et al.* 2008, 484-486). Wadi Hammamat inscriptions do not record his name, however the *Ibhat* count of 1,052 (heads + hands) corresponds to the estimated population in adjacent Roman Fawakhir (Meyer and Heidorn 1998, 197-212), a density not evidenced on the Nubian plateau.

Around that period, an expedition of the Company 'Sun of Princes', noted in Abu Kua, 15km from Wadi Hammamat (Gasse 1994, 48-52), would have stimulated mining activities starting afresh under Akhenaton. None had been recorded since Sobekhemsaf I of the 16th-17th Dynasty, a good enough reason for a *casus belli* and the distance of 500km covers that from Kuban. In later periods, at Edfu and Esna, the mountains of *Ibhat* are associated with the Land of the God, Master of *Feqhir* (Sauneron 1959, 64); a name temptingly reminiscent of Fawakhir. A scientific verdict corroborated by sources from Weni to Ptolemies, all induce the conclusion that the 'well of *Ibhat*' from where came *Medjay* women, fits Bir Hammamat, the Well of Hammamat, where cascades and natural wells provide water all year round. An inscription 'Cistern (called) Feast-room of Merirê' (Goyon 1949, 368-374, fig. 14; 1957, 16, 72-72, no. 46) would indirectly confirm Weni's greywacke extraction in *Ibhat*.

In year 1 of Ramesses IV, 20 *Medjay* were enrolled to fetch *Bekhen*-stone in the Wadi Hammamat (*KRI* VI 1). In year 3 a deputy and 50 *Medjay* returned there with a large army of workmen (*KRI* VI 13-14) and at an unknown date, the royal messenger Achakhet, sent to bring back monuments for his Lord, acted there as deputy to the *wr n Md(3)yw n 'rsy*, the local 'chieftain

of the southern *Medjay*' (KRI VI 3). In Wadi Hammamat, and from an early date, dwelt a mixed population of *Nehesy*, *'Amu*, *Maga* and *Medjay*, and native *Medjay* were there in the 20th Dynasty. In a year 7, (presumably earlier), Nakht[...]ou, a Ramesside *wr n Md(3)yw* 'of the South', visited the Temple of Thutmose III at Deir el-Bahari to honour gods (KRI IV 377, 5). Twentieth Dynasty sources evidence strong ties between the Wadi Hammamat quarries and the Theban Tomb administration (Peden 1994, 24-28).

Old theories on Medja and Medjay

When A. Gardiner (1947) and G. Posener (1958) examined the *Medjay* question, a limited number of sources were available, 50 at the most. Also Gardiner's aim was 'less completeness than a review of current opinion and an attempt to cope with the essentials of the problem' (AEO I 73). Since then, it has been repeated time and again that these old 'Nubian' natives disappeared, absorbed by the New Kingdom *Wawat* group. Despite unusual spellings, Gardiner read *Md3yw* in *Onomasticon* entry no. 188 (Figure 1-A, 5) and because it is listed in a craftsmen section, he 'ventured the theory' of its antiquarian use as an occupational title for Egyptian 'policeman' reminiscent of the familiar old native desert ranger services (AEO I 78, 82, 84, 88). 'Medjay' would thus have two meanings depending on the period: firstly old 'Nubian' natives and secondly unrelated 19th-20th Dynasty Egyptian special police force. The 21st Dynasty *Onomasticon* is viewed in the context of the 20th Dynasty tomb strike and robberies and the vast Deir el-Medina data from which *Medjay* police action is surmised. So Gardiner's theory is constantly reactivated (Valbelle 1990, 82, 96; Vernus 1993, 78; Meurer 1996, 137-139; Zibelius 1972, 133-137; 2007, 391-405; Janssen 2005, 102; Takáks 2008, 809-815; Winniki 2009, 97-99; Dorn 2011, 435; Liszka 2010, 315-331). However, old Nubian evidence is scarce and unconvincing and new data on the so-called 'policemen' spelling allow revisions.

Nubian evidence

Source material south of Aswan is rare. Of the above mentioned Middle Kingdom sources sealings, execrations and supposed Dispatches, none are compelling as to an ancient 'Nubian' origin. Only the Wadi el-Hudi one is informative with its record of distance, 20km, from Aswan. Three 18th Dynasty vice-regal *ex-voto* are

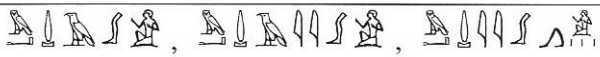
but brief propaganda announcements on tribute and inspection: one of In[...] at Tombos, Hatshepsut-Thutmose III, (Urk. IV 1375, 12,16), one of Seni, Thutmose II, and another of [Wesersetet] or [Nehi]³, Thutmose III at Kumma (Caminos 1998, II, 12-13, 22-25, pl. 20-22). Near Toshka, the Gebel Agg stela, maybe of Amarna age, was cut by Humay 'Medjay of His Majesty' (Simpson 1963, 36-41, pl. 20, fig. 22). Humay was versed in Semitic cults because he dedicated to Reshep. Opposite to Wadi el-Hudi on the Aswan-Kurkur road, 50km west of Aswan, a stela of Penniut, deputy of *Wawat*, and fort commander, dated to the reign of Tutankhamun, appears as a milestone. Penniut admonishes a subordinate unnamed *p3 Md3y*, who '*B.t* on the western *inbw*' for not having taken the seal with which to perform duty (Darnell 2003, 76, 79, pl. 2; Michaux-Colombot 2007a, 89-90).⁴ After the 18th Dynasty *Medjay* disappear from Nubian sources, except on the Amada stelae of Merneptah 'a strong bull against Kush, to slay the *Medjay*-land' (KRI IV 1,10; RITA IV 1), which proves that the country still existed in the 19th Dynasty, and maybe later if the *Meded* and *Medyt*, in three inscriptions from Kawa and Jebel Barkal between the reigns of Irike-Amannote and Nastasen in the 5th to 4th centuries BC, are *Medjay* (FHN II 407, 448-450, 492).

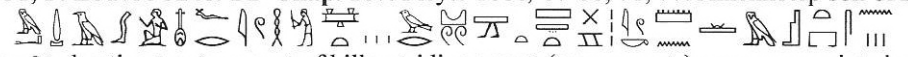
Nubia has not much to say on Medja. Humay and Penniut's subordinates are Egyptian employees, probably *smdt* conscripts (see below). A much disputed equation of *Beja* and *Medja* is adduced to make Blemmyan speaking *Medjay* real Nubians (Zibelius-Chen 2007). However, according to Takáks, *Beja* would derive from *Boga*, impossible to relate to *Medja* (Takáks 2008, 809-815). That southern *Medjay* in Trogydyte country around Berenike (Michaux-Colombot 2007b, 288-290) could speak the Blemmyan language would be no surprise. Blemmyans are found around Elephantine (Winniki 2009, 488-494), next to *Medja* territory.

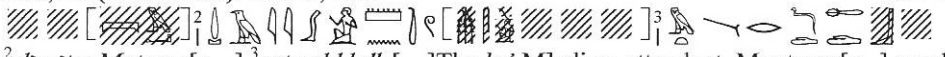
Years ago and with sure insight, K. Sethe suggested that pacified *Medjay* occupied the deserts of Coptos (Sethe 1926, 36), which confirms our investigation of

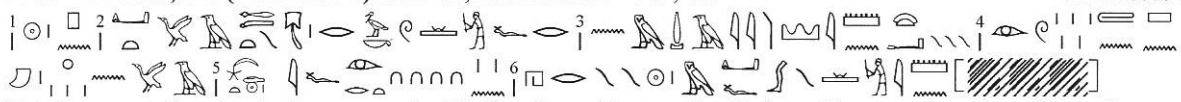
³ In a previous publication of Semna-Kumma, D. Dunham and J. Janssen (1960, 119 no. 3, pl. 51) read *m3t* as *g3wt* of *Medja*. Caminos objected to the reading *m3t*, but it remains unclear. Two *m3t* red granite obelisks, now in Benevento, were brought back to Rome in Domitian's time from *Medja*-land (Michaux-Colombot 2007a, 87 n. 65). Red granite only comes from either Shellal or Wadi Fawakhir. These two sources span the *Medja*-core land.

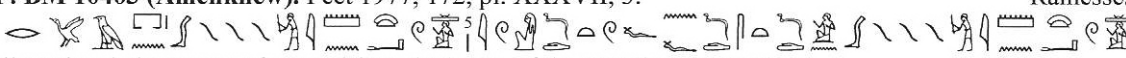
⁴ For the administrative meaning of these terms see below.

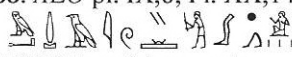

A. Medjay attendant, *Md3-3tw* 


1: P. Leide 31, P. Louvre 3248. BD Chap. 167. Pleyte 1888, 67-68, 71, 77. Amenhotep son of Hapu

 Good Medjay-3tw beating tracts, regent of hills, striding secret (assessments) you are appointed where they are.

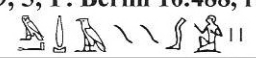
2: O. DM 308,1-3 (Montumes). KRI V, 566. Seti II-Ramesses IV

 [...hry M]² 3tw Mntw-m[s....] ³mt r-dd hdb[....] The hry M]edjay, attendant Montume[s...] nearly dead...


3: O. DM 1068, 1-6 (Amenkhew). KRI VI, 250. Janssen 2005, 15. Ramesses III

 This day according the donkey..... to the Medjay Amenkhew... for 42 days. The attendant Amen[khew].





4: P. BM 10403 (Amenkhew). Peet 1977, 172, pl. XXXVII, 3. Ramesses XI

 (Tell us about) the matter of your visit to the house of the attendant Amenkhew...

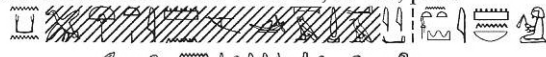
5 : Onomasticon d'Imenopê N° 188. AEO pl. IX,8; Pl. XX,14. Ramesses IX.
 a) Onomasticon Golénischeff  *Md3yw-ikd²-3tw* Medjay builder² attendant
 b) Ramesseum Fragments  *Md3yw-3tw* Medjay attendant

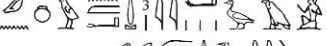
6: P. Turin 2021/271, Page 4, 15-21. Allam 1973, pl. 119. Ramesses XI

 The hry Medjay of the Tomb:
 3tw Imenhotep, 3tw Pakhor, 3tw Imenkhâou, 3tw Imenipetou, 3tw Panakhtipet, 3tw Ankhtoumdîmen.

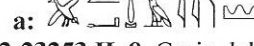
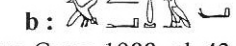
5.6.7 : P. Berlin 10.487, 2; P. Berlin 10489, 5; P. Berlin 10.488, ro, 2 (LRL 21; 34; 35). Ramesses XI


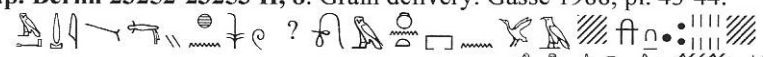
B. Institutional Medjay 

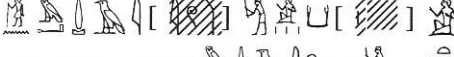
1: Stela of Res. C 14 (Guimet) = 331-69-C (Lyon). Moret, 1909, pl. XIII. Dynasty XIII
 a:  b:  c:  d: 


2: Stèle of Nebamon. Eid 1983-84, 19-20, pl. I. Tuthmosis IV-Amenhotep III

 Superior of the Medja]y of Thebes West, Nebamon.

3: Samout :  Deputy of the Medjay. Macadam 1957, n° 500. Dynasty XVIII

4: Kurkur stela: a:  b:  Tutankhamon

5: Pap. Berlin 23252-23253 II, 8. Grain delivery. Gasse 1988, pl. 43-44. Dynasty XXI


6: P. Anastasi IX, 1-2, Grain delivery. KRI III, 508.  Ramesses II

7-8-9 : P. Anastasi IV, 2,6 ; P. Anastasi IV, 10,4-5 ; P. Koller, 2,4-5 


10: Edfou VII, 106,7-8 :  Good Medjay of Punt. Yoyotte 1952, 132. Ptolemy X

Figure 1. Medja.

over 330 sources, from the 4th Dynasty to the time of the Roman emperor Trajan (Michaux-Colombot 1992, 29-36; 2007a, 83-93).⁵ *Medja* core country spreads east of Upper Egypt, between the deserts of Coptos and the Wadi el-Hudi. New Kingdom material reports their presence in the eastern Delta, at *Tjaru*, *Tjekw* and at Serabit el-Khadim. They are miners, builders, chariot-eers, royal messengers to every country and even overseer of *Khor*. The reign of Ramesses II sees the acme in high-ranking offices of native chieftains, *wrw* (Michaux-Colombot 2010a). Late Ramesside ones work in fields.

The so-called 'policeman' title

Gardiner's admitted 'ventured theory', a very persuasive one, needs revisiting. What he correctly analyzed as an occupation in a craftsmen section is in fact a compound title like the previous ones.

no. 184, *ikd ndst*, potter

no. 185, *ikd hnw*, potter of *hnw* measures

no. 186, *ikd inbw*, builder of walls

no. 187, *s3kw-(ty)*, stone mason (*AEO* I 72-73, Liszka 2010, 321)

no. 188, *Md3yw-ikd-3tw*, Medjay mason attendant, *Onom. G.* (Figure 1-A, 5a)

Md3yw-3tw, Medjay attendant, *Ramesseum fragment* (Figure 1-A, 5b)

This section follows inherent logic, not related to security but to builders, amongst which are *Medjay* personnel. The next section on hunters and harpooners is another field of activity. K. Liszka rejects the idea of a double title reduced to one by Gardiner, advocating orthographic errors for the unusual spelling (Liszka 2010, 317-318; Michaux-Colombot 2007a, 85). Being a didactic document, one wonders why specific determinatives were used at random, to be read or not read. What hampered Gardiner in 1947 was the leg determinative not yet read *3tw*. The title was discovered much later in 1963 by G. Posener. Previously read *w'rtw*, the office is institutional, referring to districts, field work and any kind of team work manned on military lines. The word would mean 'assistant', 'attendant', 'quartermaster' or 'administrator' (Posener 1968, 127-128; Berlev 1971, 34-42; Ward 1982, 6-8; Fischer 1992, 3, 33, 39-40; Schulman 1964, 37-38, *w'rtw*). The word *3tw* derives from *3t* 'to nurse', an adapted meaning for

adolescent army conscripts that needed to be fed, educated and attended to (Berlev 1971, 32, 42).

However, *Md3yw-ikd-3tw* is not otherwise attested, albeit, *Md3yw-3tw* are. The *3tw n imntt niwt* administer Thebes West for its mayor (Borghouts 1982, 83; Valbelle 1985, 71, 88, 135, 176, 213; Ventura 1986, 183; McDowell 1990, 53-59). The well documented *hry Md3yw* Montumes is an *3tw* (Figure 1-A, 2) as is the *Medjay* Amenkhau (Figure 1-A, 3-4). Six *hry Md3yw n p3 hr* of the tomb are listed as *3tw* (Figure 1-A, 6; Allam 1973, pl. 119), amongst which is Amenkhau and Pakharu, both *Medjay* of Thebes West, and Amenhetep and Amenpetu, all four *Medjay* are attested elsewhere, if not always promoted *hry*.⁶ Thebes West is not the only necropolis attended by *Md3yw-3tw*. At Saqqara, Ramesside *wr n Md3yw* Wadjmes (El-Aguizi 2007, 1) also holds the *3tw* office, evidenced in two unpublished inscriptions.⁷

The earliest hieratic writing of 'Good *Md3yw-3tw* who beats the tracts, regent of hills, striding secret (assessments), you are appointed where they are' is found in a supplementary Chapter 167 of the *Book of the Dead*. (Figure 1, A,1). The origin of the document is Amenhotep son of Hapu (Pleyte 1881, 67-68, 71, 77), a much honoured court official, who supplied the Memnon colossi and build Amenhotep III's great mortuary temple. He had his own temple beside the king's (Wilkinson 2000, 191). The 21st Dynasty copy of the decree endowing his temple addresses maledictions on the *hry.w Md3yw iri-sp3t*, chief *Medjay* who belong to the district (L.16), and the mayor of Thebes, should they not secure the income 'of the dependants who *md3c* (L.6 and 13), cultivate revenue lands' (Robinchon and Varille 1936, 4, 6, 12-13). Expressing field work with an otherwise unknown word *md3c* is a clear clue on *Medjay* land tenure. Land is also allotted to two *Medjay* in P. Mallet III, 1-8 (*KRI* VI 65-68; Peden 1994, 117-119) and P. Wilbour (Gardiner 1941-1948, A.III, 46, 40 (pl. 21); A.71, 30 and 38 (pl. 33)). In short, common *Md3yw*, *hry Md3yw*, and *wr n Md3yw* could be *3tw*-assistants /administrators for Egyptian state or private institutions.

⁵ A publication of the research is awaiting financial support; meanwhile new data still accrues to the corpus.

⁶ In spite of the skeptical opinions of Ventura 1986, 174 n. 1; McDowell 1990, 57, contra Janssen 1975, 26 for Imenhetep.

⁷ Courtesy of Ola El-Aguizi to whom I owe my thanks. Both inscriptions have the leg determinatives appended to *Md3y* written without foreign determinatives. Wadjmes holds the title *Medjay* of the Lord of the two countries.

New Kingdom native *Medjay*

Wadjmes, the *wr n Md3yw-3tw* in royal service proves that a *Medjay* native could hold institution office. The well documented Amenmone, *wr n Md3yw*, and overseer of works in all monuments of Ramesses II, 'commands the *idnw*, *wrw* and *hryw n Md3yw* and all the *Medjay* of the district' (*KRI* III 272-274; Lipińska 1969, 42-49). Officers were recruited amongst their own kinsfolk, but scholars are not always aware that *wr*, 'big man', 'chieftain', is not an Egyptian administrative title like *hry*, the superior/captain. *Wr* always refers to a foreign ruler or vassal chieftain (Lorton 1974, 21-63). So there is no reason to make an exception for New Kingdom stereotyped Egyptian looking *Medjay*. Some have Semitic features and wear a short pointed beard like Min or Sopdu-Horus (Michaux-Colombot 2007a, 85-86; Yoyotte 1989, 20). Nine *wrw n Md3yw* are dated to the 19th Dynasty: Iuny (*KRI* I, 303-304; *KRI* III, 68, Huy (*KRI* IV, 125), Penre (Goyon 1990-1991, 53-65), Amenemone, Hatiay (*KRI* III, 196-197), Rehw (Lipińska 1984, 47, 49, 118 n° 168), Ka[ka] (*KRI* III, 128), Seti and Anhernakht (*LEM* 66-71). The exact dates for Sethnakht and Nenkhemsen in Sinai (Gardiner *et al.* 1955, n° 296, n° 305, n° 369), Nakht[...]w at Deir el-Bahari (*KRI* IV, 377, 5), and Wadjmes at Saqqara are not known. The unnamed Wadi Hammamat *wr* is dated to Ramesses IV (*KRI* VI, 3), Mahuy in P. Wilbour to Ramesses V and the father of the *Medjay* Nesymen, to Ramesses XI (Peet 1977, 64). In all, 16 *wrw* are known in the 19th-20th Dynasties.

The case of the vizir *wr n Md3yw* Seti, a top ranking military officer, qualified on the 400-Year Stelae with a string of high court, administrative and religious titles, is dramatically relevant to our purpose, because many scholars have identified him with Seti I, though his mother is named Tia and not Sitre, the known name of Seti I's mother (*KRI* II 287-288, *RITA* II 116-117, *RITANC* II 168-172; Brand 2000, 338-344). That high ranking military had parallel career paths after the 19th Dynasty are not compelling enough reasons to identify Seti and his father Ramesses, with Ramesses I and Seti I. P. J. Brand's historical construing of the reign misses a crucial point on the *raison d'être* of the rock temple of Seti I at el-Kanais (Brand 2000, 280). It was not only constructed as a result of the gold mining operations, but also to reflect the allegiance of the above mentioned *wr n Md3yw* Iuny, depicted kneeling with uplifted arms at the feet of Seti I, in the posture of a

submitting vassal (Michaux-Colombot 2007a, fig. 3). He was there on *Medja* territory. However, Brand, unaware of the situation, omits the stela from his catalogue. It naturally follows that the study fails to integrate the foreign *Medjay* political party, with whom the new dynasty had to accommodate to achieve a semblance of power. The 400-Year Stela commemorates a meeting, presumably an early treaty (Michaux-Colombot 2010a). *Medja* had military capacities on the Delta frontier since Neby, the first *wr n Md3yw* to managed *Tjarw* under Tuthmose IV (*Urk.* IV, 1635), and *Medja* owned precious gold, malachite, red granite and *Bekhen* mines; not exactly small assets.

Medjay women and children at Deir el-Medina

Medjay is not an empty or obsolete ethnicon for an Egyptian and adult male police office. Lady Medja's *richi* coffin, dated to Hatshepsut, comes from the east cemetery along the Deir el-Medina valley in which foreigners, musicians, many women and children were interred (Bruyère 1937, 157-158). Whether the cemetery was the early tomb workmen's foundation, or one for their relatives, remains unclear (Valbelle 1985, 6-10; Pierrat-Bonnefoi 2003, 49-65). What is certain is that another lady *Medjay* musician harpist is depicted in Tomb TT 260 (Ranke 1935, *PN* I, 357, 18; *PN* II, 343) and a letter from a 20th Dynasty necropolis scribe Butehamon to the general's singer Pentahures recommends *bi Md3y* with a feminine determinative (*LRL* 31, Wente 1990, 199). Of the same period, a child or youngster, Kasa *šri n Md3yw*, was 'not to be neglected' but fed and put to weave fabrics (*LRL* 9, 5-6; Wente 1990, 192). There is much concern about him (*LRL* 50, 21; Wente 1990, 190) and no work for [him] (*LRL* 2, 10; Wente 1990, 189). No longer *šri* in *LRL* 16, 5 he is *Medjay Kasi of the Tomb* (Wente 1990, 193). Yet, translations omit giving the age and foreign determined categories. Naturally, they do not tally with the accepted ideas about 'policemen' during the Ramesside Renaissance era.

The *Medjay*-of-Thebes-West and *Medjay*-of-the-Tomb

Theban and Deir el-Medina source material are unique for the study of Ancient Egypt and still the subject of many uncertainties, in particular about the 70 or more *Medjay*, who appear in over 140 Ramesside papyri and ostraca. In his posthumous study, J. Černý

admits that 'the true nature of their dealings remains obscure' because they are found in varied situations, yet he maintains the theory that 'The chief task of the *Medjay* of the Tomb was to see to the safety of the king's tomb, and no doubt, of the royal tombs in the Valley of the Kings in general', adducing the case of Mininiwy's report to his lord the vizier Khay (*KRI* III 42, 4-5) (Černý 1973-2004, 277, 281). However, his translation 'I acted as *Medjay* of the West of Thebes and guarded the walls of His Great Place', conforming to current ideas, is incorrect and misleading. 'I assigned *Medjay* to West of Thebes and I guarded the watchposts of His Great Place', *iry.i Md3y.w n imntt W3st iw.i s3w n3 n inbw n t3yfst 3t*, is a better rendering (Ventura 1986, 124), and more in keeping with what follows: 'I was appointed *hry Md3y.w*, as handsome reward on account of my good behavior', and also with the reporting that the tomb was 'in excellent order', with 'safe *inbw*-postguards' and 'wages delivered' (Wente 1990, 46, no. 48). His authority on tomb order oversteps basic policing, it includes overall administration. At Deir el-Medina, *Medjay* deliver messages and supplies, hire donkeys and give testimony. Chiefs do no more than non *Medjay* administrators. They accompany scribes, *3tw* and *rwḏw*, deliver reports and assist in controlling duties (McDowell 1990, 51-63). No specific policing is evident.

Mininiwy started his career in Year 7 of Horemheb. He yoked up the royal horse, like contemporary el-Amarna *Medjay*, under the authority of Mahu, *hry Md3y.w n 3ht itn*. Mahu's tomb depictions show *Medjay* yoking up horses and a scene of *Medjay* sentries presented in a string, each standing in front of a small watch-post (Davies 1905-6, pls XVII, XIX, XXII). It so happens that in Year 7 of Horemheb, new occupants were given land at Deir el-Medina (Meskell 2000, 260). It can, therefore, be postulated that Mininiwy did bring *Medjay* kinsfolk to the valley and participated in its reorganisation, hence his reward. The el-Amarna watch-posts are a plausible model for Mininiwy's Western *inbw* and also the contemporary Kurkur Western *inbw*, for which Penniut's *Medjay* subordinate was seal bearer. In his comment on *inbw* J. Darnell suggested they were small *zeribas* of brush and thorn to provide protection, because of the absence of any walled structure at Kurkur (Darnell 2003, 80). Interestingly, the above mentioned *Onomasticon* no. 186 lists builders, *ikd inbw*, maybe a *Medjay* native technique for rest places along desert routes. J. Darnell translates the verb *ḫ.t-ḫ* 'to guide' or 'show the way' on the west-

ern *inbw*, adducing the added -ḫ as possible indication of the police title *shḫ* found in a Gebel Tjauti rock inscription (GTI 17. Darnell 2002, 59, 80 n.c), and implying to 'bear arms'. Now the GTI 17 *shḫ* is son of a royal *3tw*. The office organised on military lines would produce 'arm bearers' and Penniut's *p3 Md3y* does hold a bow. When his duty is mentioned the strong arm *nht* determinative replaces (Figure 1-B, 4b) the foreign one written in the address (Figure 1-B, 4a). This particular spelling is found from the Middle Kingdom to late periods (Figure 1-B, 1a, b, d, 2-3, 10) with the arm or with the man and stick (Figure 1-B, 6-9). Such distinctive spellings certainly have a meaning. Presumably they refer to conscript empowered institutional *Medjay*, opposed to native ordinary *Medjay*. Penniut's employee who complains about walking hardships, was probably a scout. Yet the seal suggests oasis caravan checking duties. The verb *ḫ.t-ḫ* would mean 'administer' or 'hold office', something between *ḫty*, 'vizir' and *ḫw* 'bearer'.

Twentieth Dynasty Thebes West populations were referred to as *rmḫ n p3 t3*, translated 'citizens' for lack of a better understanding (Peet 1977, 39, 43 n. 11, 64, 70 n. 34, 92), amongst which were foreign inhabitants, *Kharu*, *Nehesy* and *Medjay*, who received grain rations. They were *smdt*, serfs or conscript labour staff, employed in menial tasks. The *Medjay* that followed the necropolis inspectors and workmen to Thebes for a major demonstration are part of *smdt* (Peet 1977, 40). Yet, *Medjay*, dubbed policemen, and *smdt* are considered distinct categories (Černý 1973, 183-190; Valbelle 1985, 129-133; Ventura 1986, 112-113, 116-118, 179-181; McDowell 1990, 93-95), a hampering approach making *Medjay* involvement unclear. Institution *Medjay* are *smdt*. Anhernakht, *wr n Md3yw* and *p3 rwḏw*, administrator, of the tract of Pre', in the Wadi Tumilat area of *Tjeku* is reminded by his superior of his duties to enroll desert kinsfolk. He is 'Born a *smdt*', *ms n n3 smdt* (26, 5-6) and both 'those who are in foreign area, *hr ḫ3st*' and 'those in Egypt, *hr Kmt*, belonged to you! You are the *rwḏw* of the *Medjay*' (27, 1-2) (P. Anastasi V 25, 2 - 27, 3; LEM 66-71; Caminos 1954, 253-254).

The first mention of *Medjay*-of-the-West teams occurs under Amenhotep III in the tomb of Nebamun (Davies 1923, 24-36; TT 90, *Urk.* IV 1618-1624) (Figure 1-B, 2), suggesting an important settlement of *Medjay smdwt* in Thebes West. Their number during the strike and tomb robbery period testifies more to a lack of Egyptian labour (Peden 2000, 289) than to drastic policing necessities. The famous Pwero, mayor of

Thebes, was *hry Md3y*, probably because his staff was mainly composed of kinsfolk. Pwero is not chief of a reinforced police force. Pwero is an immigrant, defending his people against the Theban authorities, a new picture on dramatized events, but not a new situation, harking back at least to Amenemon, the above mentioned Ramasseum builder.

MAGA

Also germane to the subject are the *Mg3w*, supposedly 'Nubian' from *Ibhat* (Figure 2, 4). Because of the youth determinative, *Maga*, like *Medjay*, is read like a ghost word (*WB* II 164, *LÄ* I 444; *LÄ* III 1133; *LÄ* IV 134; Takács 2008, 676-677). However, scarce sources associate them with *Hyksos*, 'Amu or *Setyw*. Ahmose, son of Ebana, took *Maga* captives from a *Hyksos* ship (Figure 2, 1). Haremhab, scribe of the recruits in the time of Tuthmose III-Amenhotep III, has a brother Amenemhet 'his beloved, the captain of the *Maga-Setyw* of His Majesty' (Figure 2, 2). Neb[amon]-Mennefer, mayor of the Great River, is 'superior of the *Maga* host of His Majesty, 'Apiru children likewise' (Figure 2, 3) and Huya, Tiye's attendant, manned a company of *M3g.w n 3ht itn*' (Figure 2.5). From that period onwards a child, runner or dancer determinative replaces the ethnic ones (Figure 2, 6-7). However, the child one characterizes northern, Syrian or Delta prisoner slaves (Quaegebeur 1995, 260-268), a cultural clue that tallies with the crocodile *Maga* deity, son of Seth in the eastern Delta marshes (Figure 1, 10). *Maga*-land is also a satrapy listed next to *Nehesy*-land in Persian sources, spelt alike in the statue of Darius I in Susa and his Kabret stela in the Wadi Tumilat (Figure 1, 8-9, Yoyotte 1972). These *Maga* are not Nubians but Arab nomads of Sinai. *M3g* can, without difficulty, fit the cuneiform source *Magan*-land (Michaux-Colombot 2011). *Maga* mix with *Nehesy* at *Ibhat* and *Medjay* at el-Amarna, that both enrolled in companies *n 3ht itn* is no real surprise. These groups intermingled from the Delta to Etbay.

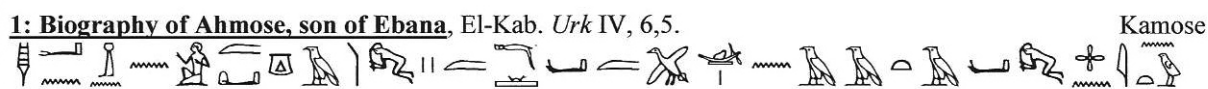
PUNT

On the issue of Punt being related to *Nehesy* and *Medja*, recent documents are here briefly commented upon to postulate a far more northern location than usually surmised, next to *Medja*. The opening lines of

Sobeknakht's tomb biography at El Kab (17th Dynasty) runs: 'Kush came [...] aroused(?) along its length, he having stirred up the tribes of *Wawat*, [the island dwellers?] of *Khenthennefer*, *Punt* and the *Medjay*...'. They attack the city's rampart and the *Nehesy* were fought back (Davies 2003, 52-54). The last tribe listed is *Medjay*, as expected near El Kab. *Punt* figures between *Khenthennefer* and *Medja*. Now, an ostrakon from a Wadi Gawasis storage jar (OG 24) mentions 'Punt, the domain of Khenty, the Gateway Herald', *pwnt rmnyt whmw n* [ʿrr]yt *hnty*, (Mahfouz 2006, 33). The Wadi Gawasis port would have been a 'domain' or conquered area of *Punt*, used as a staging point to reach the northern Red Sea shore 'mines of Punt'. Sinai is another staging area for the above mentioned *Nehesy* treasurers. Now *Punt* is a confederation. No less than eight *wrw* came in a delegation to Horemheb in Thebes (Säve-Söderbergh 1946, 26-27). They wear Sopdu's thin and elongated beard depicted in a relief of Neuserre (Nibbi 1981, 37). In the 12th Dynasty, *Punt* is associated with north-eastern deities, Weret mistress of *Punt*, Sopdu-Neferbauenra-Semseru and Horus the Easterner in West Theban hinterland at Wadi el-Hol (WHI 5, 12, Darnell 2002, 96, 99). Weret exercised over northern lands and their denizens in Sinuhe B 63-64 (Darnell 2002, 100). WHI 5 is near WHI 6b which represents a striding king on a sledge, wearing Min's crossbands. Whatever caravan track Wadi el-Hol connected, a northern *Punt* realm is here suggested. Taken together, the El Kab inscription, the Wadi Gawasis ostrakon, Weret, Sopdu, Eastern Horus, 'Min the Medjay Lord of Punt' and otherwise *Nehesy* involvement, all point to some *Punt* next to *Medja*.

CONCLUSION

The Eastern Desert was the theatre of intense economic ventures across ore yielding mountains and valleys inhabited by a scattered mixture of *Nehesy*, *Medjay*, *Maga*, 'Amu, *Setiw*, *Iwntyw*. None are true 'Nubians'. All are nomads with varying shades of Semitic components. *Md3y* comes from *m-d3y*, 'those who cross' the vital economic area between Nile and Red Sea or wider sea-faring spaces, Red Sea and Mediterranean Sea. The name goes back to a Pyramid Text boat goddess *Md3* daughter of Rê (PT § 2048) and *md3*-boatmen (PT § 1237; PT § P 454). East and west of Thebes are native *Medjay-of-the-South* and conscripted *Medjay-of-the-West*. No idiomatic *Medjay-of-the-North*

1: Biography of Ahmose, son of Ebana, El-Kab. *Urk IV*, 6,5.

h^c n ini.n.i Mg3 2 m mh m p3 dpt n 33 wn.in.tw

Then I brought 2 **Maga** as captives from the very ship of (the) 'A'ata.

Kamose

2: The tomb of Haremhab. TT 78. *Urk IV*, 1593,4. MMAF 5/3, pl. III.

Thutmose III-Amenhotep III

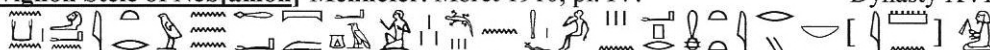


sn.f mr.f hry Mg3 Styw n hm.f lmmmbt

His brother, his beloved, the captain of the **Maga** Setyw of His Majesty, Amenemhet.

3: The Avignon Stele of Neb[amon]-Mennefer. Moret 1910, pl. IV.

Dynasty XVIII

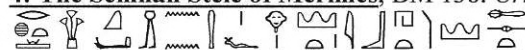


n k3 n h3ty-^c itrw 3 hry Mg3w '3 n hm.f hrdw 'pr mitt ury Nb[imen] šps. For the ka of the mayor of the Great River, captain of the **Maga** host of His Majesty, 'Aperu children likewise, Neb[amon] nobleman.

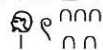
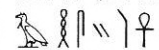
4: The Semnah Stele of Merimes, BM 138. *Urk IV*, 1660.

Ibhat had become haughty.

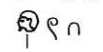
Amenhotep III



Number of captured HM carried off from the land of Ibhat



Nhsy nh tp 150 Living Nehesy 150 heads



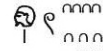
Mg3 tp 110 **Maga** (youths) 110 heads



Nhsyt tp 250 Nehesy women 250 heads



sdm-^c3 n Nhsyw tp 150 Servants of Nehesy 55 heads



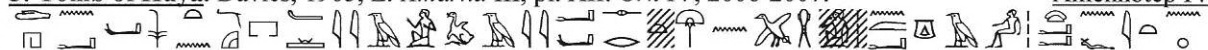
hrdw sn tp 55 Their children 175 heads



dmd tp nh 740 Total: 740 living heads (+312 hands).

5: Tomb of Huva. Davies, 1905, *El Amarna III*, pl. XII. *Urk IV*, 2006-2007.

Amenhotep IV



dhn imy-r ipt nsw Hwyz By-sryt n p3 sw n Mg3w h^ci.n.f Itn. Appointment of the superintendant of the royal harem Huva, and of/as the **standard bearer of the company of Maga**, Aten has risen on him.

6: P. Anastasi II, 8,7,4. LEM 16.

The profession of a scribe is superior to all others.

Dynasty XIX



p3 šriw šmswt w^cw p3 mn^h m Mg3-inw.

The small/inferior is in the service of a soldier, the young as a **Maga**

7: P. Anastasi V, 6,10,6 = P. Sallier I, 2,3,8. LEM 61. Be a scribe for the soldiers lot is a hard one.

Dynasty XIX



tw.tw hr dit p3 w^cw p3 mn[ht] r Mg3-hyhnw.

The grown man is put to be a soldier, the strip[ling] to be a **Mega**.

8-9: Monuments of Darius I. Maga Satrapy.

Dynasty XXVII

8: Statue: (Yoyotte 1972, 256). 9: Kabret Stele N° x: (Posener 1936, pl. V)

10: Magical Pap. Harris (BM 10042 R'6 4/9). (Lange, *Magische P. Harris*, 50-51, 91).

Late period



h3.k Mg3-mzh/hnty s3 Sth. Get out, **Maga**, son of Seth !



h^c.n.k Mg3 mzh/hnty s3 Sth. Stand still **Maga**, son of Seth !

Figure 2. Maga.

are yet attested. However, those of el-Amarna and Wadi Tumilat seem conscripted from the nearby deserts, as also are the braves who expelled *Hyksos* for Kamose. In the future, not translating ethnicons would be more profitable and time saving for contextualizing each group with other source data. What has only been outlined here shows that loose methodology and closed in research fields has led scholars seriously astray for many years. Clearing up the *Medjay* horizon, for which Nubian and police clichés must be left aside, has hopefully shed some light on the chain of command mechanisms, which linked internal Egypt to the external eastern world through immigration. *Ibhat* identified opens a new page on desert history. Yet, much is yet to be done about homonymous necropolis workmen, because their ethnic label is not noted if unnecessary. Amenemone's title *wr n Md3yw* does not always appear (KRI III, 274-276) and Neby's similar title given in *Tjaru* (*Urk* IV, 1635) is omitted in Sinai (*Urk* IV, 1634, 6-7) amongst other cases. Humay at Gebel Agg is not the only *Medjay* in the family but the only high ranking one. Writing economy excludes useless details. Be it as it may, his stela shows that *Medjay* families did command in *Wawat* as much as others did in the Delta. *Medjay* in Egypt were ordinary people employed in many common fields of activity, high and low. Desert life is another matter based on opportunity. *Ta-Sety* and *Nehesy* dossiers are far from completed. Yet the present data is sufficient to call for caution. All in all, these intermingling populations formed a complex background multi ethnic situation in the ancient north-east African deserts, a world of its own, certainly linked to Nubia, but not absorbed by it.

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ABBREVIATIONS

- AEO: Gardiner, A. H. 1947. *Ancient Egyptian Onomastica*. London.
- FHN: Eide, T., T. Hägg, R. H. Pierce and L. Török (eds), *Fontes Historiae Nubiorum I-III*. Bergen.
- G: Goyon, G. 1957. *Nouvelles Inscriptions Rupestres du Wadi Hammamat*. Paris.
- KRI: Kitchen, K. A. 1975-89. *Ramesside Inscriptions. Historical and Biographical*. 7 vols. Oxford.
- LÄ: *Lexikon der Ägyptologie I-VII*. Wiesbaden.
- LEM: Gardiner, A. 1937. *Late Egyptian Miscellanies*. BAE VII. Brussels.
- LRL: Černý, J. 1939. *Late Ramesside Letters*. BAE IX. Brussels.
- M: Couyat, J. and P. Montet 1912. *Inscriptions hiéroglyphiques et hiératiques du O. Hammamat*. MIFAO 34. Cairo.

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