

**THE SEBEKHOTPE VIII INUNDATION STELA:
AN ADDITIONAL FRAGMENT**

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Labib Habachi's study of the Sebekhotpe VIII stela,¹ coinciding with mine,² includes the publication of an extra fragment and improved readings on the one previously published. This new information allows a reconstruction of the shape of the entire monument and of much of its text. Some corrections and modifications to my interpretation are necessary as a result, and one or two further points may usefully be discussed. I shall take issue with only a few aspects of Labib Habachi's interpretation, since many of the differences must remain matters of opinion, and the evidence and points of contention are available in the two articles. Reference must also be made to these for illustrations.

Much of the content of the text on the recto of the new fragment³ can be restored with reasonable probability. In the translation that follows the restorations, which are hypothetical and give suggested sense, *not* precise wording, are printed in italics.

¹Year [4], fourth [month] of šmw, [day] [X]^a [. . .^b]. ²One of these days it [happened]^c [(that) the king had come to visit(?) the temple^d] ³of Amun, and his person had found^e a great inundation. [His] [person¹(?) came^f [to see the great inundation filling the X^g] ⁴which was in the hall^h of the hwt-ntr of this temple. Then [his

¹ 'A high inundation in the temple of Amenre at Karnak in the thirteenth dynasty'. *SAK*, I (1974), pp. 207-14 with pls. 1-2 at end of vol.; cited below as Habachi.

² 'The inundation stela of Sebekhotpe VIII'. *Acta Or.*, XXXVI (1974), pp. 39-54, figs. 1-4; cited below as *Acta Or.*

³ Habachi, p. 209, fig. 1.

person came and waded (??)* in the water which was in]-⁵side(?) the hall of the *ḥwt-nṯr* with the 'courtiers' (??) [of the palace. Then the person of this king said in] ⁶'their' [presence] [. . .].¹

a The trace on the copy is probably part of \cap . Since the date on the verso writes no \odot after *šmw*, this one should probably be restored in the same way. If so, it must read 20 (+ X), i.e. \cap [. The trace does not suit *ṛqj*, 'last day', but 20–29 are all possible.

b As the next line begins a sentence and, probably, the narration as a whole, the missing part of this line will have contained the royal titulary or perhaps a phrase like the *ḥr ḥm nj nṯr pn* of the verso.

c See below, p. 17.

d The resumption in 1. 4 with *r'-pr pn* suggests that the temple was named earlier. The supplement is given only as a guide to suggested sense; more words would be required to fill the space.

e The use of the *stpnf* form without adjunct suggests that *gmjnf* continues the previous sentence.

f Habachi's 'Hapy, the Great, going towards [his majesty . . .]' is unsatisfactory on various grounds. *ḥṛpj* as god rather than inundation would probably have had a divine determinative, and the occurrences elsewhere on the stela suggest that *ḥṛpj ṛzj* refers to the god. Cf. *Acta Or.*, p. 41 f. Grammatically 'going towards' would require emendation to $\langle \text{ḥr} \rangle \text{jj} \langle \text{t} \rangle$. If the verb form were a stative, as Habachi suggests (p. 210 b), it would mean 'having come' (this applies to the context here, not, of course, to all uses of the form [cf., e.g., Rainey, *JARCE*, X (1973), p. 72, n. 12]). On the verso it is hard to imagine in what sense the inundation could be coming towards the king, since it has already filled the hall of the temple.

g 'Filling the X' is added to the supplement as it is otherwise much too short for the space.

h *wšht*, cf. Habachi, p. 212; *Acta Or.*, p. 41 d.

j The relationship between *ḥwt-nṯr* and *r'-pr* is not clear from the text. Habachi's 'chapel' implies that *ḥwt-nṯr* describes the temple within the larger area (*r'-pr* – temple enclosure?). This is supported, for example, by *Urk.*, IV, 2027.3 ff., where the same order and relationship of the elements seems to hold. Of the two

abbreviated versions of the full phrase in the present text (recto, l. 5, verso, l. 3) the first omits *r'-pr* and the second *ḥwt-nṯr*.

k The supplements here and in 1. 5 are made to show that this section could have had an almost identical structure to that on the verso. They are of course hypothetical.






l An obvious continuation would be 'I shall renew this temple', or something similar. This line may not be the last on the recto.


The narrative portion of the verso, with the newly read 1.5 and additional words in ll. 6–8, runs as follows (for further commentary cf. *Acta Or.*):

²Year 4, fourth month of *šmw*, the epagomenal days, under the auspices of the person of this god^m, living forever. ³His person went to the hall of this temple <in order to> see the great inundation. ⁴His person came <to>ⁿ the hall of this temple which was full of water. Then his person ⁵waded in it with the workmen (?).^o Then the 'person of' [this] 'king said'^p [6. . .] ' ^{1a} my name (?) l.p.h.r. [I] came [7. . .] great inundation^s. My person, l.p.h. came [8. . .] ' ^{1.t}


m This appears to be the earliest example of *ḥm nj nṯr pn* applied to the king, cf. Blumenthal, *Untersuchungen zum ägyptischen Königtum des Mittleren Reiches*, I, p. 56, n. A 11. This may in part be a weakening in the precision of phraseology, but is more likely in the present instance to go with the king's divinisation by events. The designation on the recto is lost, but its occurrence here after the intermediate titulary suggests some special significance.





n Habachi's 'coming towards' avoids the need to insert $\langle r \rangle$; but it is unacceptable on other grounds, cf. f above. In any case, *r* is frequently omitted from the OK on, cf. Edel, *Altägyptische Grammatik*, § 760 (only cases before infinitives mentioned), and $\langle \text{ḥr} \rangle$, which might also by this time be weakened in pronunciation, must be restored between ll. 4–5.

o Following Habachi's reading of the sign . The eccentric form leaves considerable room for doubt, and , , and  are all equally plausible on grounds of form. , the

sign it most resembles, is excluded by the occurrence of a different form on the stela. Of the alternatives listed, only  produces any sense in this context (cf. *Wb.*, IV, 263.13–14: uses associated with bricklaying). The \aleph III restored by Habachi should be ignored in suggesting readings, as the lower half of the line is missing at this point.

From here onwards readings are very uncertain, as the published photograph is poor, and does not appear to agree at all points with the copy. The rubbing on the stone in this line, alleged *Acta Or.*, p. 40, turns out to be patchy quality on the earlier photograph. See also below, p. 17.

p The  restored by Habachi in *dd* is not visible on the photograph, although the surface seems to be preserved at this point.

q This group is obscure, and cannot be translated plausibly in default of the words that went before it. Habachi's *jrjn(j) rn wr* requires a transposition of the order of the signs in the original. The sign transliterated as *wr* resembles  on the photograph, but looks more like  in the line drawing. The low sign above it could be either , *jr*, or , cf. examples recto ll. 2, 3.

r The use of l.p.h. with the first person is unusual, and again suggests the arrogation of exceptional status.

s *h^cpj 'zj*, therefore perhaps the god, cf. *f* above. The naming as the god would fit into a royal speech extolling the inundation. Traces visible on the photograph in front of the \aleph of *h^cpj* are not included in Habachi's line drawing.

t The last two words, *sdm(?) wdt*, cannot be translated without a context. They are probably the last words of the entire text.

The reading of l. 5 of the verso appears to exclude one of my previous suggestions: that the king's wading imitated the actions of the creator god.⁴ These would be solitary, and the king is not alone here. Some of the measures recounted on the verso might perhaps be of a practical nature—combatting the flood (but see below)—

⁴ As Habachi's copies were made on the original they are mostly to be preferred. Some details of the relief seem, however, to be more accurately rendered in *Acta Or.* Fortunately, the differences do not affect the reading of any completely preserved sign.

though the king also seems to make a proclamation relating to the inundation as a god. The actions on the recto—as opposed to the general run of the text—can only be guessed at; all that is certain is that they come before those on the verso. A likely overall reconstruction would be that on the recto the king came and addressed his court (more text is lost here than on the verso), while on the verso the carrying out of the intended action was reported. This would imply the same sort of manipulation of natural phenomena as the creator-god hypothesis,⁵ but the maximum extent of the king's approach to the creator-god role might be his decisive action in the face of an awe-inspiring manifestation of divinity.⁶ It is at all events remarkable how many details of phrasing stress the king's divinity to an unusual degree. The design of the stela makes a sharp break between recto and verso, probably in order to reinforce the treatment of the events as separate episodes; a more or less independent value must therefore be ascribed to the verso.⁷ How far the placing of the royal cartouche on the verso is meant visually, as a frame for the text, and how far its purpose is to reinforce the division between the two sides, is uncertain.

An element I have not considered in the reconstruction above is the relation of the events to the ritual calendar.⁸ An allusion to ritual could be fitted into the end of either the recto or the verso; but it could equally well be understood without an explicit mention. A further coincidence, not mentioned in my previous article, is with the date of the Amenhotpe III 'lake scarab'⁹ in the natural year. This date (*3 zht* 1), given by Yoyotte as the beginning of October,¹⁰ may be calculated as 24/5 Sept. Gregorian for the years 1394–1392,¹¹ with the later date at the end of the text (*3 zht* 16)

⁵ *Acta Or.*, pp. 43–5.

⁶ cf. *Acta Or.*, pp. 44–5.

⁷ The fact that the writing on the recto is smaller shows that the break between recto and verso is fully planned.

⁸ *Acta Or.*, p. 45.

⁹ *Urk.* IV, 1737; Yoyotte, *Kêmi*, XV (1959), pp. 23–33; Blankenberg van Delden, *The Large Commemorative Scarabs of Amenhotep III*, pp. 134–45; add Boston, MFA 1972.873; Simpson, *JEA*, LX (1974), p. 140, pl. 32.1.

¹⁰ *Kêmi* XV (1959), p. 31 with n. 3; using 1409 as accession year for Amenhotpe III.

¹¹ Using 1404/02 as accession year; cf., e.g., the figures of Helck, *CdE*, XLVIII/96

10–11 Oct. Gregorian:¹² 24 Sept. Gregorian is the same day as that calculated for the first epagomenal on the Sebekhotpe VIII stela.¹³ The closeness of the fit is to some extent illusory, as the natural year is not as accurate as the Gregorian and the Sebekhotpe VIII date is approximate, but it does show that Amenhotpe III chose to mark a similar point in the seasonal cycle with an event of significance. That the whole episode was a manifestation of royal divinity is shown by the use of the pregnant epithet *jtn-ḥn(w)* to describe the king sailing in the royal boat.¹⁴ The divine associations of kings in barks are well known, and otherwise attested for Amenhotpe III,¹⁵ whose divinisation of his mother in a similar manner¹⁶ is a striking confirmation of the significance of the idea for him in particular. An earlier example of royal divinisation in a bark may be provided by the Snofru story in P.Westcar.¹⁷

The agricultural associations of the 'lake scarab', as described by Yoyotte, may illuminate by analogy the puzzling occurrence of 'field labourers' (*ḥwtjw*—if correctly read) in 1. 5 of the Sebekhotpe VIII verso. It is possible that what was alluded to was an agricultural rite—presumably symbolically performed in this context—which would involve manipulating the water levels in the *wsh.t*. Whatever it was, its description must have been very brief,

(1973), pp. 258–9 (adding up to 1320 + 84 = 1404); or with the alternative chronology, Hornung, *Untersuchungen zur Chronologie und Geschichte des Neuen Reiches*, p. 108 (1405/02, favouring 1402).

¹² The festival *wb3 ḥjw* discussed by Yoyotte, *Kêmi*, XV (1959), pp. 30–31, fell on the latter day; it would inevitably be celebrated according to the natural year.

¹³ *Acta Or.*, p. 42.

¹⁴ cf. Fecht, *ZÄS*, LXXXV (1960), p. 113. The last line of the text should be translated: 'His person sailed in the royal bark, *jtn-ḥn(w)* being inside it', or 'Yati shining in it (the bark)'. For *jtn-ḥn(w)* as an epithet of Amenhotpe III cf. Hayes, *JNES*, X (1951), p. 178; Fairman, in Pendelbury, *City of Akhenaten*, III, p. 200. A full discussion is promised by J. R. Harris.


¹⁵ cf. Wildung, *OLZ*, LXVIII (1973), col. 555 with n. 4 (*nb-m3ḥt-rḥ m wj3* as an estate name = Fairman, in Pendelbury, *City of Akhenaten*, III, p. 164 = pl. 85 no. 16).

¹⁶ BM 43 + 505 + 1434: Porter & Moss, *Top. Bibl.*, II³, p. 102. The object as a whole is a cryptogram of the queen's name 'Mut/(my?) mother in the bark', as well as containing a figure of her (protected by an over-large vulture/Mut(?)), so that it has a double meaning. The texts make much play of the association (cf. especially Urk. IV, 1772.15–19).

¹⁷ cf. Derchain, *RdE*, XXI (1969), pp. 19–25.

as much of the last part of the text will have been taken up with the king's speech.

The formula *wḥ m nn n hrww ḥpr* in recto l. 1 disproves my assertion that the text is not a *Königsnovelle*.¹⁸ The reaction to the flood, however, is still clearly positive, even if measures may have been taken to combat its effect. This particular formula is also of significance, and may define more closely the type of event reported. Examples are found in P.Westcar,¹⁹ the sphinx stela of Thutmose IV,²⁰ and the great dedicatory inscription of Ramesses II at Abydos.²¹ Two features are common to most cases: the abruptness and contradictoriness of the formula, and the reference to extraordinary events.

The *ḥpr* in the formula must be understood as '(it) happened', since it mostly has no syntactic link with what follows.²² The writing in the Ramesses II text  supports the assumption that the verb form is a stative. The phrase is used in defiance of logic, as all the contexts except that in P.Westcar, and perhaps the sphinx stela,²³ are in fact precisely dated. So it probably has some special meaning that makes its arbitrary insertion appropriate. In P.Westcar and the sphinx stela the occasion is a theophany—in P.Westcar the miraculous, divinely attended birth of the children, and in the stela the dream in which the sphinx manifests itself. With the Ramesses II text the situation is not so clear; the text continues: 'he went forth favoured with valour and strength under

¹⁸ *Acta Or.*, p. 54, n. 38.

¹⁹ e.g. Sethe, *Lesestücke*, p. 32, l. 21.

²⁰ *Urk.* IV, 1542.10.

²¹ Most recently: Kitchen, *Ramesseid Inscriptions, Historical and Biographical*, II, p. 325, l. 5 (= 1. 30 in Kitchen's continuous numbering, 1. 26 of the old numbering).

²² In the Ramesses II text the added 'in YEAR DATE' probably does not link this sentence to the next one (the words after the date are damaged).

²³ In the sphinx stela the date at the head of the text as a whole is, of course, irrelevant. The 'one of these days' comes after a series of descriptions (*Urk.* IV, 1541–2), each of which begins with *jst*. It is not clear whether what is described before the dream is habitual or a single outing. The former view is supported by 1541.1: 'his person was a youth like Horus in Chemmis', and, if it is correct, a logical sequence is produced and the text ceases to be precisely dated. The phrase 'one of these days' none the less has a very abrupt effect.

the auspices of Amon-Atum in Thebes, after he (Amūn) had 'rewarded' him with millions of years up to the lifetime of Rēc in heaven'. It is possible that this 'rewarding' constitutes a theophany, and as the date refers to no other concrete event, the act of divine favour is certainly singled out for attention.

In view of these other examples it is therefore logical to take the formula in the Sebekhotpe VIII text as referring to a theophany. This will be the exceptional inundation, manifested as a divinity (cf. the distribution of the use of *ḥꜥꜣj ʿꜣj* in the text), and presumably of especial significance because of its presence in the temple. A further link between the occurrences is the theme of election to the kingship;²⁴ this cannot be shown for Sebekhotpe VIII in the same way as for the others, but the king's divinisation by the events, amply and relevantly documented in the relief, is a close analogy. All the cases may therefore be brought into one category; the imponderable question is whether so few cases can establish such a pattern. Since theophany is very different from the normal theme of a *Königsnovelle*, the adherence of the Sebekhotpe VIII text to the genre is scarcely relevant to an understanding of it.

The evidence given here and in my previous article is, I hope, adequate to show that the events of the stela are to be interpreted rather more in terms of their importance for this king's view of his status and role than as a simple record of an unusual inundation. If that or merely repairs to the temple were all that was at stake, the form of relief and text would surely have been different.

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Some additions and corrections to the remarks on iconography in the earlier article may usefully be made. References are to *Acta Or.*, XXXVI (1974).

pp. 46–7. Habachi reads the relief once from right to left (p. 208) and once from left to right (p. 212). Right to left is certainly to be preferred.

²⁴ The Ramesses II text is dated to year 1, perhaps in the first four months of the reign; cf. Redford, *JEA*, LVII (1971), pp. 110–11.

p. 47, n. 23. This apparent detail may be a break in the surface of the stone, cf. Habachi, pl. 1.

p. 48, n. 24. The combination is found in semi-pictorial contexts as early as the first dynasty.²⁵ It is also found elsewhere with the Amūn cap and feathers, see below.

pp. 48–9, n. 26. A number of examples of the king in the Amūn cap with feathers may be added to those given (the references omit doubtful cases, and are not exhaustive). Their variety excludes the hypothesis of derivation from sculpture. The headdress appears to be attested first in the eleventh dynasty,²⁶ and is found sporadically down to the Graeco-Roman period.²⁷ Both in the eighteenth dynasty²⁸ and in the Graeco-Roman period²⁹ there are

²⁵ e.g. Petrie, *Royal Tombs*, I, pl. 10 no. 14 = 14 no. 9; Amélineau, *Les nouvelles fouilles d'Abydos*, II, 1896–1897, pl. 21 no. 4; Lacau & Lauer, *La pyramide à degrés*, IV, pl. III no. 2.

²⁶ cf. Habachi, *MDAIK*, XIX (1963), p. 24 fig. 7 = pl. 6; p. 26 fig. 8 = pl. 8 (top, mid and R); p. 42 fig. 19 = pl. 13; pp. 43–4, figs. 20–21 (detail not visible on plate) (?); for discussion cf. pp. 50–52. Some of these examples definitely imply divinisation. For another eleventh dynasty case cf. B[isson de la] R[oque], *Tôd (1934 à 1936)* (FIFAO XVII), p. 79 fig. 32 = pl. 22 (crowning scene). See also Gautier & Jéquier, *Les fouilles de Licht*, p. 96 fig. 112 (inaccurate drawing) = Hayes, *Scepter of Egypt*, I, p. 173 fig. 104 (Amenemhat I); Rosellini, *Monumenti storici*, pl. 25.4 (Senwosret I, with *mks* and mace); Hölscher, *The Excavation of Medinet Habu*, II, *The Temples of the Eighteenth Dynasty*, pl. 18B (with added horns), 19B (both Thutmose III). These last, in which the king holds *mks* and *ꜥnh*-sign, closely parallel Sebekhotpe VIII. Cf. also the statuette of Amenhotpe I dedicated by Sety I, Mariette, *Monuments divers*, pl. 101, p. 29 = Cairo, CG 1244: Borchardt, *Statuen und Statuetten*, IV, p. 127, pl. 172. This seems from the details of the kilt and blue flesh colour to represent the deified king in the form of Amūn; but he is not called Amūn in the texts on the piece.

²⁷ e.g. Chassinat, *Dendara*, I, pl. 77, mid L, mid register; III, pls. 219, 240; IV pls. 301, 302, 307, 312; Chassinat, *Edfou*, XIV, pl. 621; de Morgan, *Kom Ombos*, I p. 26 no. 21; p. 111 no. 144; II, p. 125 no. 694; p. 211 no. 824; p. 281 no. 925. Note also the Meroitic example, L. D, V, 66 (king and queen, divinised). There are also instances on youthful gods, whose iconography is mostly modelled on that of kings, e.g. L. D, IV, 15a, 30b-c (all on *zm3-t3wj* bases). For cases on goddesses cf., e.g., Chassinat, *Dendara*, II, pls. 88/89; IV, pls. 273, 312. These are probably derived from Amūn, and so represent an extension of earlier use.

²⁸ cf., in addition to n. 26, L. D, III, 22 (including differentiation of types of feather — *Acta Or.*, p. 52 n. 34), 23 (both obelisk reliefs of Hatshepsut).

²⁹ Chassinat, *Edfou*, I–II, pl. 32a-b; XIV, pl. 621.

cases where god (Amūn or Min) and king to some extent share attributes, including cap and feathers. Since Amūn is not attested iconographically at an earlier date than the cap and feathers on kings, the origin of the headdress cannot be known. It could derive from, or be lent to, Min or Amūn. It is unlikely that all examples on kings can be interpreted in a single manner, but the existence of further examples with *mks* (above, n. 26) supports the assumption that either divinisation or an assimilation of the king to Amūn or Min can be shown for most cases. There is a slight preponderance of Theban provenances (notably on youthful deities, n. 27), but it is scarcely significant.

p. 52, nn. 34–5. The figure of Amūn most unusually wears a straight beard, which is clearly contrasted with the conventional longer curved beard of *h'pj*. The reason for this is not clear, but some relationship with the iconography of Ptaḥ, who has the same beard, may perhaps be suggested; the wearing of a close cap is common to the two divinities. I have no examples of the king in such a cap (a rather different one is found in tombs in the Valley of the Queens) and the royal close cap³⁰ is not the same.

³⁰ cf., most recently, Harris, *Acta Or.*, XXXV (1973), pp. 10–11, nn. 34–5; Russmann, *The Representation of the King in the XXVth Dynasty*, pp. 29–33; Ertman, *ARCE Newsletter*, XCI (1974), pp. 26–7.

ADDENDUM:

Since this article went to press the text of the stela has been re-published by Helck, *Historisch-biographische Texte der 2. Zwischenzeit* . . ., pp. 46–7, with restorations of the wording of the lost text on the recto which correspond closely with the general sense suggested above. Helck also reads the puzzling sign in verso l. 5 as *qnbṯ*, which is much more convincing than *ḥwtjw*, and fits well with the posited *s[mrw]* in recto l. 5.

The identification of a larger number of royal figures wearing cap with feathers allows a correction to be made to the attribution of Cairo 13/4/22/9, a small black stone head of the reign of Amenemḥat III (Evers, *Staat aus dem Stein*, I, p. 104. fig. 26; Vandier, *Manuel d'archéologie égyptienne*, III, pl. LXVII.2). This has always been said to be of Amūn, but the presence of a uraeus (small but original: for a comparable example cf. Aldred, *MMJ*, III (1970), p. 48, fig. 34) shows that it must be a head of the king himself. The headdress is therefore attested in sculpture as well as in relief.