

# Zeichen aus dem Sand

Streiflichter aus Ägyptens Geschichte  
zu Ehren von Günter Dreyer

Herausgegeben von  
Eva-Maria Engel, Vera Müller  
und Ulrich Hartung

2008

Harrassowitz Verlag · Wiesbaden

ISSN 1614-8665  
ISBN 978-3-447-05816-2

# ON THE EVOLUTION, PURPOSE, AND FORMS OF EGYPTIAN ANNALS<sup>1</sup>

John Baines

## BACKGROUND

Egyptologists have generally seen royal “annals” as having two polar modes of presentation, with the extant examples distributed between them along something like a typological scale. At one pole is the very terse material making up the year names that are entered in the narrow rectangular boxes in lines 2-4 of the Palermo Stone, which relate to the 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> dynasties<sup>2</sup>. At the other pole are the extensive textual structures of the Annals of Thutmose III inscribed around the barque shrine at Karnak, which include entries for specific days, lists of various types, and statistical information, while also containing narrative passages, among which are some related to the genre of the royal tale (Königsnovelle), that almost constitute a variant form among inscriptions commemorating royal exploits. The Annals of Thutmose III in particular have been the subject of numerous studies<sup>3</sup>. Donald B. Redford has produced a wide-ranging work on related corpora, including annals as well as both the kinglist material preserved in Greek and various legends of Egyptian kings extant in Greek and Latin sources (a facet of the evidence that I do not consider in this article)<sup>4</sup>. He has also published an analysis of the word *gnwt*, which is generally translated “annals” but does not cover the same range of ancient practices as scholars now group together under that term<sup>5</sup>.

The evidence for indigenous Egyptian annals has been greatly enriched since 1980. First, large sections of the annals for two years of the reign of Amenemhat II were discovered and published<sup>6</sup>. In the 1990s these were followed by very

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1 This article is complementary to BAINES, *Genre and Purpose*, and to a detailed study of a passage in the annal inscription of Amenemhat II, in BAINES, *High Culture and Experience*. As work on those materials developed, I concluded that a separate treatment of related issues would be desirable. I am very grateful to Elizabeth Frood and Margaret Maitland for comments on a draft and very valuable suggestions, and to Anthony Leahy and Marc Van De Mieroop for advice.

2 The photographs in Heinrich Schäfer’s publication remain the best visual source: SCHÄFER, *Annalen*, Anhang. See also WILKINSON, *Royal Annals*, with review by BAUD, *Review*, as well as his own valuable studies: BAUD, *Les frontières*; BAUD, *Le format*; BAUD, *Birth of Biography*.

3 Recent monographic treatment: REDFORD, *Wars in Syria and Palestine*.

4 REDFORD, *Pharaonic King-lists*. Jan Assmann has published extensively in this area, see e.g., ASSMANN, *Moses*.

5 REDFORD, *gnwt*.

6 FARAG, *Inscription memphite*; ALTENMÜLLER/MOUSSA, *Inschrift Amenemhats II.*; MALEK/QUIRKE, *Memphis*.

fragmentary materials for the 6<sup>th</sup> dynasty recovered from a slab, originally inscribed on both sides, that had been erased and reused a generation or two later as the lid for the sarcophagus of queen Ankhnespepy<sup>7</sup>. I have proposed elsewhere that indirect evidence for the continuation of annals past the reign of Thutmose III into that of Amenhotep III can be identified in the forms of the texts on his large commemorative scarabs<sup>8</sup>.

During the same years when new annal inscriptions were identified and published, large numbers of 1<sup>st</sup> dynasty year tags, in addition to those previously known, were recovered in Günter Dreyer's re-excavation of the royal tombs at Umm el-Qaab, especially that of Qa'a. Furthermore, the origin of the use of such tags has been moved back to the reign of Narmer by Dreyer's discovery at the same site of a tag with that king's name<sup>9</sup>. While it is uncertain whether this piece records a specific year, it provides an older example of the same practice and is similar to the 1<sup>st</sup> dynasty tags rather than to those from Tomb U-j. It asserts royal dominance in the manner of the iconography of its time, as well as setting a pattern for later developments among the tags. In view of the centrality of Günter Dreyer's discoveries for the understanding of Egyptian modes of recording and their application, it is a particular pleasure to dedicate this discussion to him, in admiration for his fundamental contributions to the understanding of early Egypt and of the records created in that period, which set the pattern for developments of later epochs.

The annal inscriptions mentioned above incorporated central records of the state. Statements of their significance for the context in which they were set up were presumably confined to an initial dedicatory inscription or, as is known for the annals of Thutmose III, a temple relief. In addition to the central annals, others, which might be termed local annals, recorded and celebrated donations of kings to particular temples. A crucial find is a fragment of an annal slab of Senwosret I published in 2005, which enumerates by years his donations to the temple of Heliopolis<sup>10</sup>. This provides a broader context, more than a millennium earlier, for a very fragmentary annal inscription of the 23<sup>rd</sup> dynasty king Pami, also originally from Heliopolis, that was discovered in the 1990s<sup>11</sup>. Since both these finds are from the gates of medieval Cairo, one should assume that annal inscriptions were relatively common at Heliopolis, because otherwise the survival of two from similar

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7 BAUD/DOBREV, *Nouvelles annales*; BAUD/DOBREV, *Verso des annales*; BAUD, *Le format*, 274, with fig. 271b.

8 BAINES, *Genre and purpose*. The study of the scarab texts by GUNDLACH, *Gedenkskarabäen*, is focused around different questions.

9 DREYER et al., *9./10. Vorbericht*, 139, fig. 129, pl. 135c; BAINES, *Visual and Written Culture*, 122-123, with n. 3.

10 POSTEL/RÉGEN, *Annales héliopolitaines*.

11 BICKEL/GABOLDE/TALLET, *Annales héliopolitaines*. Valuable treatment of issues relating to annals of the Third Intermediate period: PERDU, *Chronique d'Osorkon*.

contexts of reuse could hardly be explained. While the quartzite of the Senwosret I inscription is very hard, and so may have survived well and been particularly suitable for sitting in a place that receives heavy wear, the same does not apply to the slab of Pami, which is of limestone. Perhaps a sector of the temple at Heliopolis in which annal inscriptions had been grouped was broken up and its blocks removed in the Middle Ages. The less durable material of the Pami inscription may suggest that numerous such inscriptions had existed, with this one happening not to have been destroyed. By contrast, the quartzite of Senwosret I suggests that such inscriptions were so important that they were carved on the hardest available material.

The same tradition of marking royal donations to a temple in annal form is attested from the 25<sup>th</sup> dynasty, to which date two stelae of Taharqa from Kawa that together cover his years 2-10<sup>12</sup>. Although parallels in other domains, as well as some details of the form of Taharqa's stelae, suggest that they follow ancient models<sup>13</sup>, the discovery of the Pami slab from only a couple of generations earlier nonetheless makes it likely that they represented a continuing tradition, with the only exceptional feature being the fact that they are round-topped, whereas all other annals are on slabs or walls. They would thus be a variant on an existing pattern rather than an innovative archaism. The record for royal inscriptions from the 26<sup>th</sup> dynasty to the Macedonian period is very sparse and perhaps unrepresentative. It is possible that annals, either of kings' reigns or of temples, continued to be inscribed then, as well as conceivably in the Ptolemaic period.

Thus, whereas annals were once seen almost exclusively in terms of the Palermo Stone and associated fragments, a perspective that is rather misleadingly retained in Toby Wilkinson's *Royal Annals of Ancient Egypt* (2000), the fragmentary picture that can be outlined is more complex. The practice of inscribing annals survived the intermediate periods and was one of the most enduring modes of Egyptian text creation. In this article I survey inscribed annals and ask how they may have related to the lost underlying records and what character those records may have had. The relation between 'public' inscription and underlying record is not one of direct copying unless a text is reproduced from a single archetype, for example when the same composition is disseminated in multiple copies. Even where royal inscriptions have something of that character, surviving instances show that different exemplars could vary considerably<sup>14</sup>. Only if two documents were true duplicates might one expect them to correspond more closely. It remains uncertain whether the Palermo Stone and related fragments derive from a single ancient artefact. If they do not, as

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12 MACADAM, *Temples of Kawa I*, nos. iii, vi.

13 This has been noted repeatedly for the trampling scenes on the pylon: MACADAM, *Temples of Kawa II*, 61-62, pl. ix; see also SCHOTT, *Inventartafel*, 65-67.

14 The Semna and Uronarti stelae of Senwosret III are exceptionally close duplicates; see DAVIES, *Hands and Hearts*, 177, with n. 1. The Memphis and Karnak campaign stelae of Amenhotep II offer a convenient example of less similar texts: EDEL, *Stelen Amenophis' II.*; *Urk.* IV, 1299-1316.

Michel Baud and others believe<sup>15</sup>, they are so similar that they might have been set up as two symmetrical monuments in a single architectural space.

Be that as it may, the compilation of the annals most probably assembled multiple documents, as well as adjusting them to some extent to the practice of their day<sup>16</sup>. A discussion of how that process may have operated cannot aim at a precision of results comparable with that aspired to in textual criticism, the methods of which were developed for analysing the continuing transmission of discursive texts<sup>17</sup>. Rather, what can usefully be attempted is to suggest what types of records may have been involved and how they may have been selected and reworked into annals.

#### ANNALS OF THE STATE

Our knowledge of early writing practice and of the uses to which writing was put is severely limited because most surviving material comes from royal tombs. The tags with year names exemplify ceremonial usage around the tombs. As David Wengrow has pointed out<sup>18</sup>, that context is so highly charged and so closely related to royalty as to be uninformative about wider practice, while the wood and bone materials of most tags with year notation were probably not used for everyday writing. Their semi-pictorial form, which is more expansive than what is found on the Palermo Stone, also marks them as non-utilitarian. It is therefore difficult to say how widespread the administrative use of writing was or what media it used<sup>19</sup>. Moreover, the year names cannot in themselves provide evidence on how events were selected for use and display in this way, only on the type of event from which the name formulas were drawn. When regularly recurring rituals or practices were used as year names, they could have been proclaimed at the beginning of the year, but a name could also have commemorated the previous year, and these two possibilities are not mutually incompatible.

Sequences of year names must have been retained; quite apart from their likely practical use in administration, this is demonstrated simply by the existence of annals. Other information that was kept included inundation levels, which were presumably valuable for taxation as well as being significant in themselves. It is unlikely that central records would have been limited to these elements; surely year names constituted a selection from a larger body of material, often among several

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15 BAUD, *Le format*, 274, with n. 9.

16 As noted by BAUD, *Le format*, 276.

17 For their application in Egyptology, see e.g., JÜRGENS, *Grundlinien*; KAHL, *Siut – Theben*.

18 WENGROW, *Early Egypt*, 203-207.

19 REDFORD, *gnwt*, 328-329, suggests that early annals may have been written on wood, partly on the basis of arguments from the hypothetical etymology of the word *gnwt*. Since papyrus was available by the mid 1<sup>st</sup> dynasty and leather too may have been used as a writing medium, this proposal may stay too close to the physical evidence, which does not attest to usage in primary locations such as record offices.

similar possibilities. The process of selection will have included discarding anything negative, but it cannot be known whether negative information was retained in records without being selected for this style of commemorative display. It could also have been eliminated from records or archives at some later date, for example when there was substantial rewriting of the past in the aftermath of the Amarna period.

During the 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> dynasties the central annals of the state were probably created year by year, because they were in principle identical with year names and were required for administration. Even on the 1<sup>st</sup> dynasty tags and in the vertical compartments on the Palermo Stone, however, the annual information given exceeds what would be strictly functional as a year name, where brevity is desirable so that the notation can be fitted into routine documents, and it testifies to a broader significance for the content. While it has proved difficult to match material on the tags and the stone, this could be in part a matter of chance.

After cattle count or year numbering became standard in the 4<sup>th</sup> dynasty<sup>20</sup>, annals no longer needed to be consulted in routine administration (and such consultation might in any case not have been frequent). The material included became much more extensive, presumably because it had been freed from the constraints of concision in year names and could serve broader commemorative and cultural ends. But it is also unlikely that the earlier forms were administrative in a narrow way, again because they are more elaborate than would be needed to identify a year uniquely.

From the 4<sup>th</sup> dynasty on, annals could have been compiled when they were prepared for the annal slabs, long after the years they recorded. Alternatively, they may have continued to be created year by year, with an immediate commemorative intent that breached the limits imposed by the previous format of year names. Such an intent is explicit in the use of the formula *jrj.n.f m mnw.f* “He made as his endowment/monument ...” from the 4<sup>th</sup> dynasty on (discussed below, with n. 41). Mesopotamian annals were subject to successive redactions during a king’s reign<sup>21</sup>. Such a practice is conceivable for Egypt and may be unknown simply because evidence is sparse. It can be posited that a commemorative intent would imply that events were perceived as worth recording in some detail for their own sake no later than the 4<sup>th</sup> dynasty. Reflection, however, suggests that such a date should be extended back at least to the reign of Aha at the beginning of the 1<sup>st</sup> dynasty, from which the oldest tags with distinctive information date: if events were chosen for year names, some sort of commemoration of their character or content was surely intended, even within the brevity that the form required. I therefore see a notion of a specific “history”, and hence an interest in change, as being present and documented from the beginning of the Dynastic period. I exclude here the tag of Narmer, because it may be generic rather than specific in character, but it too constitutes a commemoration, of a type that is known from numerous pictorial examples of the

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20 See e.g., KRAUSS, *Chronologie und Pyramidenbau*.

21 See e.g., VAN DE MIEROOP, *Cuneiform Texts*, 40-50.

Dynastic period, as well as having a partial parallel on a cylinder of the same reign<sup>22</sup>.

A second mode of recording major sequences was in kinglists. Here, Günter Dreyer's discovery of two necropolis sealings with different sets of rulers' names from Narmer to Den and to Qa'a is of fundamental importance<sup>23</sup>, because it shows the construction of such sets independent of annals and year names. Whether these were the sequences incorporated into kinglists is unknown, but lists and tables of various types appear to have been the original core of the "stream of tradition", that is, of texts that were not narrowly functional and were transmitted as part of the high-cultural core of written matter<sup>24</sup>. By the 5<sup>th</sup> dynasty one such list included some Early Dynastic kings' names, a couple of them in a garbled form similar to that of the later kinglists<sup>25</sup>. By contrast, nothing in the forms specific to the annals is known from the stream of tradition, so I assume that they were not used secondarily in that domain. One should probably distinguish the simplified transmission of a cultural past that is attested by the kinglists<sup>26</sup> from the more documentary style of the annals. Perhaps the latter's form and context of inscription in temples were too hallowed for them to be disseminated more widely. If so, theirs is the principal category of royal inscriptions that one can suggest as being subject to such restriction<sup>27</sup>.

#### OTHER ANNALS

The annal inscriptions from Heliopolis and Kawa (cited above) show that, in addition to the central "historical" annals just surveyed, local temple annals could be set up in inscriptions<sup>28</sup>. The rarity of these examples suggests that this mode of inscription was not a regular practice. One would, however, expect the inscriptions to be closely related to documents kept in temple archives, while no doubt subject to redaction when the form to be inscribed on stone was devised. The known texts detail royal donations to particular temples, so that they fit the principle, visible in central annals, that actions are attributed to the king. In the temple context, this signifies that royal action is dedicated to the gods, whether or not that is stated explicitly. The same point applies to the central annals, because the extant examples were set up in temples, but that does not mean that the entire purpose of retaining records and

22 WHITEHOUSE, *Decorated Knife Handle*, 433, 434, fig. 4, 439; BAINES, *Visual and Written Culture*, 123, fig. 128.

23 DREYER, *Siegel*; DREYER et al., *7./8. Vorbericht*, 72, with fig. 26:12b.

24 Discussion of definitions: BAINES, *Research on Egyptian Literature*, 4, 8-9.

25 Lists as original core form: BAINES, *Abydos List*; 5<sup>th</sup> dynasty example: BROVARSKI, *Two Old Kingdom Writing Boards*: another interpretation of names in lists: KAHL, "Ra is my Lord", 16.

26 Here I assume that the Turin kinglist belongs in the stream of tradition: its inscription on the back of an accounting document suggests that it was a "literary" practice piece. Excellent presentation: RYHOLT, *Turin King-list*.

27 On related issues, see BAINES, *Restricted Knowledge*.

28 The "annals" of Karnak published by Jean-Marie Kruchten belong to a different genre: KRUCHTEN, *Annales des prêtres de Karnak*.

assembling the information in them into sequences of years and events was to dedicate them to the gods. Similarly, the local presence of inscribed inundation records, attested notably from Third Intermediate period Thebes, could have fiscal as well as ideological significance<sup>29</sup>.

Some inscriptions in temples share a few characteristics with annals or allude to ancient sources. An example is an inscription in a crypt in the temple of Hathor at Dendara, probably dating to the end of the Ptolemaic period, that evokes a document of the reign of Thutmose III<sup>30</sup>. While features of the text point to its being of some antiquity, it should not be seen as a simple record of royal donation, because it concludes with a fictitious-sounding *historiola* about how the “foundation (*sntj wr*)” of Dendara was discovered in the royal palace in Memphis, in the reign of Pepy I, on a leather roll of the time of the “Followers of Horus (*šmsw hrw*)” – that is, in the remotest antiquity. Another instance is the stela of Thutmose III from Buto with elaborate endowment provisions for festivals<sup>31</sup>. This follows the pattern of standard royal inscriptions that open with eulogistic epithets of the king, but has a far higher proportion of material information than is normally found in royal stelae. It could be a hybrid between temple annals and other genres of royal inscriptions, but it does not belong in any straightforward way to the former genre.

All these inscriptions derive ultimately or immediately from royal donations, which were presumably accompanied by supporting documents, of the kind alluded to in biographical inscriptions such as that of Ikhnofret from the 12th dynasty<sup>32</sup>. The Dendara text implies, in addition to its evocation of a Memphite provenance, that – as seems likely – there would be ancient records kept in provincial temples. What was probably rare was the expenditure of significant resources on inscribing information about royal donations in stone in a more enduring and “public” form. In the Old Kingdom the king seems to have claimed control over setting up statues and other monuments of individuals in temples<sup>33</sup>, while in the 17th dynasty nonroyal entitlements could be designated specifically as a privilege granted by the king<sup>34</sup>. In another case from the same dynasty the king could authorize setting up a slab stating that the title of an individual to rights should be removed from the temple, from materials probably including a stone inscription<sup>35</sup>. The notion that property rights were reaffirmed by inscription on stone is likely to apply to temple annals, whose

29 VON BECKERATH, *Nile Level Records at Karnak*; BROEKMAN, *Nile Level Records*.

30 DAUMAS, *Trône d'une statuette*; DAUMAS, *Derechef Pépi I<sup>er</sup>*. Text: CHASSINAT/DAUMAS, *Temple de Dendara VI*, 158,4 - 159,2, pls. 579, 583.

31 BEDIER, *Stiftungsdekret Thutmosis III.*; SPALINGER, *Festival Structure*.

32 E.g., SETHE, *Ägyptische Lesestücke*, 70-71; LICHTHEIM, *Ancient Egyptian Literature I*, 124.

33 See Koptos decree of Demedjbtawy: *Urk.* I, 304,18 - 305,4; STRUDWICK, *Texts from the Pyramid Age*, no. 39, 123-124.

34 Karnak legal stela, line 1: HELCK, *Historisch-biographische Texte*, 65.

35 Koptos decree of Inyotef VIII: PETRIE, *Koptos*, pl. 8; SETHE, *Ägyptische Lesestücke*, 98; recent treatment: GOEBS, *hftj ntr as Euphemism*.

topic is royal donations, whereas it is hardly applicable to central ones. The temple annals therefore share formal characteristics and royal origin with central annals, but differ from them in context and function.

#### WHAT WAS SELECTED FOR RECORDING AND HOW DID IT DEVELOP?

As Michel Baud has proposed<sup>36</sup>, the records underlying annals are unlikely to have been unitary. They might have consisted of significant documents, retained in central offices, with content relevant to creating such excerpted records – as well as no doubt being used for other purposes. From the Middle Kingdom and later, administrative papyri that had been reused, for example for copying literary compositions, demonstrate that official documents were regularly discarded, while many sources, including the Dendara inscription cited above, make play with the fortunate and unexpected discovery of texts. This evidence for discarding documents does not, however, support Stephen Quirke’s assertion that there was no archiving in the sense of “institutionalised storage of documents no longer in use”<sup>37</sup>. Then as now, it would have been difficult to predict what documents would cease to have a function. Records of transactions such as major changes of ownership were held in central offices<sup>38</sup>, while the ideological value of records of events, and of information from the past for present concerns, is clear from multiple sources<sup>39</sup>. It is hard to imagine a setting in which administration and foresight would be effective enough to retain all and only what was necessary and what enhanced its protagonist’s status for the future; one should credit the ancient actors with the capacity to recognize that difficulty. Whether there was a deliberate policy to retain superseded documents cannot be said, but evidence of many types – which cannot be rehearsed here – shows that manuscripts could be kept for very long periods. What was retained might range, at the least, from religious texts through literary ones to administrative and legal documents and copies of texts that were also inscribed on stone<sup>40</sup>. Those categories, however, do not include the core content of the annals, which is notations of single, sometimes singular “events”.

Third millennium annals present headings and were gradually expanded to include some detail, largely numerical in character. They lack narrative verbal constructions other than the formula *jrj.n.f m mnw.f* “He made as his endowment/monument ...”, which was used from the 4<sup>th</sup> dynasty onward, in headings and brief statements rather than as part of syntactically constructed

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36 BAUD, *Le format*, 276.

37 QUIRKE, *Archive*, 379.

38 The clearest details are again given in the Karnak legal stela: see e.g., THEODORIDES, *Stèle Juridique*; HELCK, *Historisch-biographische Texte*, 65-69. The 19<sup>th</sup> dynasty inscription of Mose is another significant example: GABALLA, *Memphite Tomb Chapel of Mose*.

39 See e.g., BAINES, *Ancient Egyptian Concepts and Uses of the Past*.

40 See notably KAHL, *Siut – Theben*.

discourse<sup>41</sup>. Their form and mode of recording was highly prestigious, as is shown by their retention after extensive narrative inscriptions of kings had developed, no later than the early 12<sup>th</sup> dynasty<sup>42</sup>. The widespread use of the narrative infinitive in annals, and in other prestigious as well as practical contexts going back to the beginning of the Dynastic period, is a related phenomenon<sup>43</sup>. Both of these constructions remain close to pure notations, and even the *jrj.n.f n mnw.f* formula shows its rather arbitrary character by being largely invariable despite the variety of elements that can follow it. These restrictions in form and content probably also fitted with wider practice, since the vast majority of early writing, of which annals were one culmination, was concerned with inventory and notation rather than discourse<sup>44</sup>.

At least until the annals of Thutmose III and probably thereafter, annal inscriptions did not focus either around specific episodes, as is the norm among royal inscriptions, or around rhetorical summaries of a king's deeds of the type exemplified by the same king's Gebel Barkal stela (*Urk.* IV, 1227-1243). Instead, they assembled events, achievements, and actions such as endowments, more in the manner of lists than of narratives. Hartwig Altenmüller<sup>45</sup> has argued persuasively that the order of the elements in the annal inscription of Amenemhat II, which is divided into three sections, is that of the succession of events in the year, probably arranged according to the Egyptian seasons. The same point is generally valid for the campaigns of Thutmose III. Nonetheless, this does not make the inscriptions into narratives. This absence of narrative organization is typical of many Egyptian genres, but the accompanying absence of continuous language is a little less widespread. The retention of non-narrative forms is an archaism in context, like the adherence to vertical column layout, which was becoming rare in the Middle Kingdom and had almost disappeared in the New Kingdom. Within this traditional manner of treatment, the inclusion of a snatch of continuous discourse in the inscription of Amenemhat II marks a radical shift, as is clear from the surrounding context<sup>46</sup>. It is

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41 TAWFIK, *Palermostein*; BAUD, *Le format*, 278, with fig. 274; occurrence on a late 4<sup>th</sup> dynasty royal monument of Shepseskaf: *Urk.* I, 160; REISNER, *Mycerinus*, 278, pl. 219 b, d. This very early usage, in contexts that are otherwise non-verbal, renders questionable the approaches of numerous discussions of the formula, because the verbal system and syntax of Egyptian are not reconstructable before a rather later date (recent grammatical discussion and bibliography: DEPUYDT, *Meaning of a Formulaic Expression*, with bibliography). The work of Schweitzer, which treats verbal forms like these of the 4<sup>th</sup> dynasty, synthesizes material of too heterogeneous types: *Schrift und Sprache der 4. Dynastie*, see esp. §§439-440.

42 Notably the Tod inscription of Senwosret I: BARBOTIN/CLÈRE, *L'inscription de Sésostri I<sup>er</sup>*.

43 See BAINES, *Earliest Egyptian Writing*. 172-173.

44 See e.g., POSENER-KRIÉGER/DEMICHÉLIS, *Papiri di Gebelein*.

45 ALTENMÜLLER/MOUSSA, *Inschrift Amenemhets II.*, 26-27.

46 Discussed in detail in BAINES, *High Culture and Experience*, chapter 4. For the syntactic parallel of the inscriptions of Metjen, perhaps 700 years earlier among slightly less slowly evolving nonroyal biographical texts, see BAINES, *Forerunners of Narrative Biographies*, 32-34.

more difficult to assess how radical the far freer treatment of Thutmose III was, because intervening developments may be lost and a comparable broader context is absent.

So far as I am aware, few texts or passages with content or treatment similar to the annals are known from other contexts; the salient exception is in the large commemorative scarabs of Amenhotep III (see nn. 1, 8 here). Unlike the annals, each of these treats a single episode, but in a fashion that offers many points of comparison with annals.

If few records of the annal type were disseminated widely in written form, this means that a category of documentary information was retained for long periods but, as noted above, was not part of the high-cultural stream of tradition. This is not implausible, because the material would have been housed in places that hardly survive archaeologically, such as central administrative offices, perhaps associated with the principal royal palace, or temple archives, of which representative examples are hardly known from before the Roman period<sup>47</sup>. Annals could conceivably have entered the stream of tradition in a secondary process of copying, like that attested for First Intermediate period biographical inscriptions from Asyut that have been found in Roman period papyrus copies from Tebtunis<sup>48</sup>, but no evidence of such reuse has been identified; perhaps their temple location disfavoured that possibility.

Although the change from year names to numbers in the 4<sup>th</sup> dynasty brought more detail and larger numbers of events into the attested annals, the size of each year entry remained small. The larger size of the entries for the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> dynasties, and still more those of the annals of Amenemhat II, show that the incorporation of detail developed roughly in parallel with general increases in the length of inscribed texts. But it is unlikely that the desire for detail did not exist earlier. Rather, it may not have occurred to people that more information could be included, or established formats and sizes of composition may have constrained usage very strongly. The difficulty of increasing the extent of texts radically is clear from the annals of Amenemhat II, which could hardly have been inscribed in such exhaustive fashion for all his thirty-five years while fitting within an interior space in a temple. In the case of Thutmose III, the annals treated a period of just under twenty years; even with radically selective content – seemingly excluding military undertakings to the south and most of the other types of content known from the annals of Amenemhat II – they filled the walls of two large rooms at Karnak.

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47 See various contributions in: LIPPERT/SCHENTULEIT, *Tebtunis und Soknopaiu Nesos*.

48 KAHL, *Siut – Theben*, 268-270; OSING/ROSATI, *Papiri geroglifici e ieratici*, 55-100.

## RELATIONSHIP WITH UNDERLYING RECORDS

Discussion of the documents from which annals were presumably drawn has been dominated by the annals of Thutmose III<sup>49</sup>. A particular concern has been the relationship between the presentation of military campaigns and the “daybooks” that are mentioned at a couple of points and, it is plausibly assumed, were maintained throughout campaigns<sup>50</sup>. Redford simply characterizes the main text of the annals without comment as “the daybook excerpts”<sup>51</sup>, while Patrik Lundh sees some of the material as having been copied from a daybook and makes that concept integral to his analysis<sup>52</sup>. Yet the inscribed annals include many elements that it is difficult to imagine as forming part of a daybook. An obvious example is the rhetorical regret at the plundering of the enemy army’s equipment in front of Megiddo (*Urk.* IV, 658,8-10). Sections like the discussion of which path to take from Yehem to Megiddo are similar in character to royal tales (*Urk.* IV, 649,3 - 651,17). The annals also evoke other types of document, such as an inventory of military sorties during the siege of Megiddo, which is not stated to be part of a larger whole<sup>53</sup>. That inventory might be compiled from a daybook, in which case the temple, where it is said to have been kept, could have possessed synthesizing documents of such a type, but it could hardly form part of the daybook itself. There is no reason to suppose the daybooks themselves would be kept in the temple; a more likely location would be in palace archives.

These features of the annal text of Thutmose III show that its composition is a special case. Its content is far less diverse than that of any earlier examples except for temple annals, and the opening and concluding sections state that they are a record of campaigns of victory; they do not represent the events of the king’s reign or of a sequence of years as such<sup>54</sup>. They should therefore not be used by themselves in order to model the types of source material that went into annal inscriptions in general or how those sources may have been kept and adapted into annals.

A further concern, again driven to some extent by the annals of Thutmose III, has been to reconstruct “what actually happened” from the inscriptions, which are superficially promising as sources because of their “objective” tone, especially in comparison with other genres of royal inscription. Since the 1960s, however,

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49 Recent, well illustrated discussion of the layout of the annals in their temple location: GRIMAL, *Des notes à l’affichage*.

50 See GRAPOW, *Studien zu den Annalen Thutmosis des Dritten*, 50-54.

51 REDFORD, *Wars in Syria and Palestine*, Part One; the discussion of SPALINGER, *Aspects of the Military Documents*, 120-128, is more nuanced.

52 LUNDH, *Actor and Event*, passim.

53 Plausibly but uncertainly restored by Kurt Sethe as saying that the detail was too extensive to inscribe: *Urk.* IV, 662,4-6.

54 *Urk.* IV, 647,5-9; 734,13-15. This point was made forcibly by GRAPOW, *Studien zu den Annalen Thutmosis des Dritten*, 7.

difficulties have been noted in taking the record of annals as simply factual<sup>55</sup>. In the case of Thutmose III, the patterning of dates, in which the first campaign gets under way at the king's accession festival and the Battle of Megiddo is fought on the day of the New Moon (*Urk.* IV, 648,9; 657,2), may record the real sequence, in which the passage of time could have been managed to set significant transitions on auspicious days. Alternatively, it may have been adjusted retrospectively to fit such an ideal, a possibility that does not seem to be considered in discussions of chronological implications of the second date. Overall, the compilers of annals, which were set up in places to which very few had access, were probably as much prey to the human temptation to improve on reality as their counterparts in other and later societies<sup>56</sup>.

Thus, interconnections between events and their representations need not flow in a single direction. Just as, in the modern world, events are not merely reported but also organized according to regularities like seasonal holidays and constituted by devices such as press conferences, so events in antiquity were no doubt influenced not only by the calendar but also by the way they were to be presented to an audience and recorded. Events lead to records, but records also create events. Such a point, which is generally accepted for the more rhetorical types of royal inscriptions, may also apply to annals, and in different ways to the underlying records. Despite the rarity of annals and the inaccessible contexts of their inscriptional forms, their cultural significance is demonstrated not least by the places where they were set up (see also below).

The documents underlying annals might be subject to slightly fewer special pressures to present ideals than the annals themselves. Such documents could be diverse in character. In the case of daybooks, the best guide to real examples is Papyrus Boulaq 18, an early 13<sup>th</sup> dynasty compilation presumably of the central administration that records details of a court visit to Thebes<sup>57</sup>. Daybooks are alluded to in temple documents, such as the Illahun papyrus that predicts the rising of Sirius in Year 9 of Senwosret III, which forms part of the temple daybook and includes the instruction that the information is to be noted there, using the term *hrwjt*<sup>58</sup>. Taken together with the indirectly attested campaign daybooks, these examples suggest a

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55 See HELCK, *Nilhöhe und Jubiläumsfest*. Compare the discussion of SPALINGER, *Aspects of the Military Documents*, 120-192, 239-240, relating to broader categories of material than annals. See also LUNDH, *Actor and event*, who gives the history of scholarship in this area as well as evaluating the annals of Thutmose III.

56 For the illuminating medieval parallel of charters and similar documents, a very high proportion of which are forgeries, see CLANCHY, *From Memory to Written Record*, 148-149, 318-327.

57 SCHARFF, *Ein Rechnungsbuch des königlichen Hofes*; QUIRKE, *Administration*, 17-35; passage with possible royal "campaign": LUNDH, *Actor and event*, 16 = SCHARFF, *ibid.*, 61-62. For an allusion to the daybook of legal officials, see KRUCHTEN, *Le décret d'Horemheb*, 154-155 – interpretation not completely secure.

58 P. Berlin 10012, conveniently in SETHE, *Ägyptische Lesestücke*, 96,23 - 97,3; translation e.g., PARKINSON, *Voices from Ancient Egypt*, 89 no. 28b. Context: BORCHARDT, *Der zweite Papyrusfund von Kahun*, 99.

diversity of function and context for the type that is unlikely to have required a single format, although features like the use of the narrative infinitive at the beginning of statements or sections of text may have been universal, not just in daybooks but in administrative records as a whole. Nothing points to the existence of a single master daybook recording the events of a year or a king's reign. Rather, daybooks would be one among a number of ways of keeping records, and there would be distinct sets of daybooks for different domains of action and institutions; an obvious example that is far removed from annals is the daybook of the workmen in the Valley of the Kings<sup>59</sup>.

The annals probably transformed their sources in other ways too. At the beginning, the compression of records into what was suited to year names will have distanced the latter from the formulations on which they drew. From the start, then, it was probably not expected that annals should reproduce their sources exactly. In the Old Kingdom annals, the *jrj.n.f m mnw.f* formula, especially the 6<sup>th</sup> dynasty examples where this is used as a horizontal heading, exhibits a formalization for display – at a miniature scale – that one would not expect in purely administrative documents<sup>60</sup>. Baud notes further that the style of annals would be adapted to some extent to the practice of the time when they were inscribed.

That point leads back to the question of whether annals were compiled progressively or in unitary fashion when they were inscribed, an issue that has a different character for Old Kingdom annals as against those of Amenemhat II, Thutmose III, and Taharqa at Kawa, because those examples cover short spans of years and exhibit an evident ordering spirit. I have argued above that year-by-year compilation makes best sense for the Early Dynastic period and is compatible with Old Kingdom conditions. Yet the difference between the 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> dynasty annals and those of the 6<sup>th</sup> dynasty shows a significant rethinking and expansion of presentation. That could have taken place either at the beginning of the new dynasty, when such a change could have marked a new start, or when the annal inscription was designed. Those two possibilities are not mutually exclusive: recording could have changed with the dynasty and have been further adapted at the time when the inscription was created.

A corollary of this argument is that state annals, as against those of specific temples, were based on records that were retained centrally, probably in increasingly extensive form, at least from late dynasty 0 onward. The material they included was not specific to one place but resumed state activities that centred around the king. Although the monuments bearing the texts were set up in major temples – as probably applies to the Old Kingdom examples as well as the securely provenanced later ones – their content seems not to be affected by their location. The presentation scene at the front of the annal inscriptions of Thutmose III anchors them to the temple of Amon-Re at Karnak and relates them to the dedication of the fruits of

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59 BOTTI/PEET, *Il giornale della necropoli de Tebe*.

60 BAUD/DOBREV, *Nouvelles annales*, 67-77 passim, 81.

success to the god, but it is separate from the text itself<sup>61</sup>. The very fragmentary annal slabs are likely to have borne analogous headlines or initial columns, rather than scenes, that related them to their locations, but these seem not to have affected the texts themselves.

If the 5<sup>th</sup> dynasty annals were derived from an existing, progressively compiled version that was lightly edited before inscription, a large store of documents would not have been required for their creation. Nonetheless, as indicated above, annal records were probably not the only ones retained in the long term. The repository in which these documents were kept was presumably of a different character from the archives modelled by Jochem Kahl from material relating to Asyut and Thebes, which included religious, literary, and biographical texts, but not royal inscriptions<sup>62</sup>. Royal texts might be kept together with administrative records, and perhaps apart from ritual compositions: such a mix would be close to the range of material included in the annals themselves. In the Middle Kingdom and later, royal narrative and discursive inscriptions were closely related to texts in the stream of tradition, into which a few of them were briefly incorporated. These were different in type from the annals and hence could be subject to different patterns of transmission.

All the annals should be seen as excerpts from larger bodies of records. We cannot know how much information was collected and retained in central offices in any particular period, but at all times what was available was no doubt presented selectively, either for the seemingly infrequent practice of inscribing annals on stone or for public announcements, of whatever sort there may have been, that disseminated knowledge of royal deeds. In another perspective, some 1<sup>st</sup> dynasty tags that have the same basic physical form as those with year names are purely pictorial in content. An example discovered by Günter Dreyer is an image of the king spearing a hippopotamus<sup>63</sup>. Such tags could have been equivalents to written formulations of the same information; if that applied to the spearing of the hippopotamus, it has no close analogy among annals known in textual form. Thus, material relating to annals seems to have been subject to transformations that varied widely in character.

Another question relating to annals is what patterns of recourse to old documents were possible for purposes that were essentially of display. When Pepy II wrote to Harkhuf and stated that the dwarf/pygmy the latter had brought back from the “land of the horizon dwellers (*t3 3htjw*)” was the equal of the one brought back by Werdjedeba from Punt under Izezy, his advisers could have found out about the century-old parallel from hearsay or from central records<sup>64</sup>. Those records could

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61 *PM* II<sup>2</sup>, 97-98 (282); WRESZINSKI, *Atlas*, pl. 33a-b; SCHWALLER DE LUBICZ, *Les temples de Karnak*, pl. 147.

62 KAHL, *Siut – Theben*.

63 DREYER et al., *9./10. Vorbericht*, 163, pl. 12d; less well preserved example, perhaps from a cattle hunt: PETRIE, *RT* I, pl. xiv:8.

64 *Urk.* I, 128,14 - 128,1, 131,1-2; STRUDWICK, *Texts from the Pyramid Age*, 332-333.

have contributed to annals, in which the name of the individual who brought the exotic person would not have been included. The citation of the name, which is appropriate to something addressed to a peer of the official evoked, requires that documents underlying annals, not just the annals, be preserved. But the possibility remains that nothing so specific as recourse to a document was meant.

A formula that can be compared with that particular case occurs in biographical texts of the late Old Kingdom and First Intermediate period. This states that one of the protagonist's achievements "was not something that I could find (*n gmt.n.j js pw*)" that a person of a particular category had done before<sup>65</sup>. It is impossible to say whether that is meant to evoke a search through written sources, a canvassing of oral traditions, or both.

#### THE STATUS OF ANNALS

I have argued that significant aspects of the Egyptian recording of the present and transmission of the past can be modelled from the richer range of annal materials that has become available. Commemoration and display of the past, both year by year and in consolidated collections, show a desire to organize, select, and project events, the character of which naturally did not correspond with western conceptions of history. In known contexts, that projection addressed the gods, but the human social group surrounding the creation of annals extended its meaning further. Accessible evidence suggests that use of the annal genre continued through most, perhaps all of Egyptian history. I propose that it was the original and most prestigious form in which royal deeds were presented in writing, semi-pictorially on the 1<sup>st</sup> dynasty tags, and subsequently on annal stones. When discursive royal inscriptions were introduced, the old form was retained alongside them, with the annals of Thutmose III constituting a partial fusion of, or compromise between, the two.

Some Egyptologists have seen the invention of writing as being driven by "history"<sup>66</sup>, while Jan Assmann, in particular, has argued for an evolutionary interpretation, in which a sense of history – as meaning that people saw themselves as having a mission going beyond the past and motivations often arising from divine agency – would not have emerged until the New Kingdom<sup>67</sup>. Even though that date is more than a millennium before the classicists' Herodotus as the "father of history", I believe that it is far too late, because a major transformation like the creation of a unitary state is not likely to arise by accident and to be legitimized purely retrospectively; rather, it will be part of continuing discourse about past, present, and future. Sources like the annals, which present events as a coherent sequence in a limited variety of ways, happen not to be appropriate vehicles for expounding a

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65 See e.g., GILULA, *Review*, 208 (iii), with refs.

66 Notably SCHOTT, *Hieroglyphen*.

67 ASSMANN, *Einbruch der Geschichte*.

discursive or strongly ideological “history”. Before the New Kingdom, aspects of the historical sense and mission of Egyptian rulers that might be compared with western conceptions were probably expressed in media, such as oral ones, that are now inaccessible, or were embodied in material culture, for example in choices of models from the past for the design of royal monuments or in patterning of constructions in the landscape. This does not mean that annals should not count as “history” but that definitions of history and historiography are societally relative and that relatively modern occidental ones, to which Assmann’s essentially belongs, should not be seen as normative<sup>68</sup>. Here, Donald B. Redford’s inclusion of annals among material that provides evidence for an Egyptian “sense of history” is more apt<sup>69</sup>. Comparable issues apply also to historiography of the European Middle Ages, as explored notably by Hayden White<sup>70</sup>.

Annal-like material is attested in compiled form from temples and on slabs that were probably set up in temples. Brief statements of individual royal exploits or summaries of aspects of king’s deeds are known on the 1<sup>st</sup> dynasty tags and the large commemorative scarabs of Amenhotep III. Whereas the annals were in inaccessible locations, the tags and scarabs were among the most widely disseminated objects bearing records of royal deeds. Both artefact types are known from burials, a context that is not attested for annals or for royal historical inscriptions of any other type, although marginal examples are known from the 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty, notably the inscribed gilded cubit rod of Amenhotep II, bearing a statement about constructing a residence at Hermopolis, that was found in the tomb of Kha at Deir el-Medina<sup>71</sup>. I have suggested previously that such contexts may have been found inappropriate for dissemination of this sort, which could be one reason why those types did not endure<sup>72</sup>.

Although annals were set up in central areas of temples, their content is among the least overtly “religious” that has been found in that context. The fact that some relatively secular royal actions could be represented in this way in temple interiors is indicative of how wide-ranging human commitment to the gods was taken to be. In this sense, “celebration” for the gods was not only “history” but was a total intertwining of royal and divine<sup>73</sup>. But it would be unwise to take that argument too far. In the best known case of Thutmose III, the annal inscriptions begin in the base area, beneath the more fully sacral dedicatory scene, and are in the barque shrine rather than the sanctuary at Karnak. Probably in all cases some symbolic separation was maintained between the annal inscriptions and the most sacred elements in temples. The extant inscriptions are difficult to interpret in many respects, several of

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68 Compare WOOLF, *Historiography*. For a broader perspective, see GOSDEN, *History without Text*.

69 REDFORD, *Pharaonic King-lists*.

70 WHITE, *Content of the Form*, 1-25.

71 *Urk.* IV, 1509-1510; SCHIAPARELLI, *La tomba intatta dell’architetto Cha*, figs. 155-156.

72 BAINES, *Genre and Purpose*, 43.

73 See HORNING, *Geschichte als Fest*; English translation: HORNING, *History as Celebration*.

them are very fragmentary, and they organize their content in ways that are far from western conceptions of historiography. All of these characteristics have no doubt contributed to their not being given all the weight that they deserve among Egyptian writings. Annals should nonetheless be seen as the original and most prestigious form in which royal deeds were recorded and displayed for the long term.

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