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WITH APPENDIX BY FELIX ARNOLD

Petempamentes, Petensetis, Petensenis
– *their Portraits on Elephantine*

The 2011 autumn season excavations performed by Felix Arnold on Elephantine yielded a fragment of a wall located inside a small building. Its decoration significantly enhances the range of discussion of the divine triad listed on a Greek stele I.Th.Sy. 303 from Sehel:¹

FRAGMENT INV. GR 805, EXCAVATION NUMBER 41705I/A-3 (Fig. 1a-b)

Width 63.0cm; height 39.0cm; depth 9.5cm.

Sandstone. Traces of cream-coloured plaster. Blackened surface.

Partially preserved two registers of decoration carved in high relief.

LOWER REGISTER

The upper part of the scene is diagonally cut off.

The king, with a vulture goddess spreading her wings over his head, in front of three standing gods.

In front of the king, whose silhouette has not been preserved, two cartouches and a vertical text:

1. *Njswt bjt jw^cw-(n)-ntr.wj- prj.wj-ḥpr.w-Pth-stp-(n-Jmn)-jrj-m^{3c}.t-R^c*
2. *s³ R^c Ptwrms-^cnh-d.t-mrj-Pth*
3. *stp n Jmn-R^c sf [(j ?)... ...]*

1. King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Heir of Epiphaneis, image of Ptah, chosen by Amun, who realize the Maat of Re.
2. Son of Re, Ptolemy, living eternally, beloved of Ptah.
3. Chosen by Amun-Re, child? ...

PETEMPAMENTES

A standing male silhouette wearing a tripartite wig and the *atef*-crown, holding the *was*-sceptre.

The god:

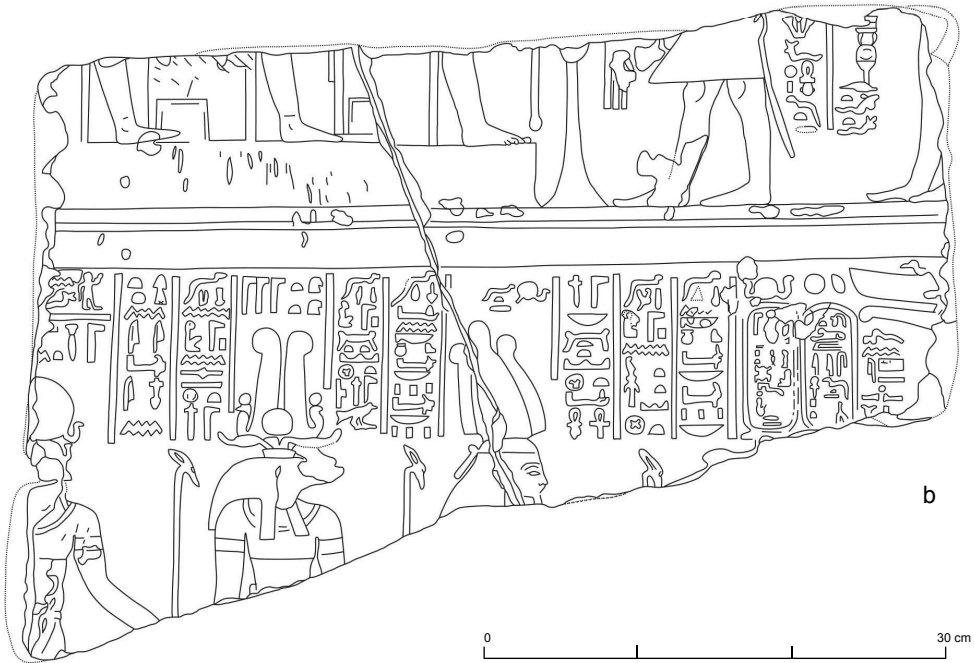
1. *ḏd mdw (j)n P³-ntr-n-Jmnt.t* (a)
2. *ntr ³ nb St.t dj ^cnh mj*
3. *R^c ḏ.t*
4. *ḏd mdw dj(.j) n.k kn.t nb(.t) nḥt nb* (b)

1. Petempamentes,
2. the great god, the lord of Sehel, life-giver,
3. like Re eternally.
4. I give you all power and victory.

¹ Cf. *infra* Felix Arnold, Appendix. I would like to thank Dr. Cornelius von Pilgrim, the director of Swiss Institute for Architectural and Archaeological Research on Ancient Egypt, for entrusting me with the publication of the artefact.



a



b

1. Decoration fragment from a sacral building on Elephantine (Phot. C. von Pilgrim / Swiss Institute for Architectural and Archaeological Research on Ancient Egypt, Drawing: E. Laskowska-Kusztal).

- (a) Greek transcription of this name would require here a caption as follows: *P3-ntr-n-p3-jmnt.t*.²
- (b) The terms *kn.t* and *nht* in the wishes for the king refer to the nature of the provider-god as well as emphasize the aspect of the ruler's function of a warrior and protector.³

Comments:

It is the god whose name was inscribed on two Greek stelae erected by Ptolemaic associations of the *basilistai*, commemorating synodal assemblies which concerned the organization of the royal cult.⁴ At least one of the synods, the one mentioned on stele I.Th.Sy. 303, was held on Sehel Island.⁵ Petempamentes is included in the list of gods to whom the stelae were dedicated. Both texts emphasize his identification with the Greek god Dionysus.

An image of Petempamentes was first identified in a scene belonging to the decoration programme of a small portal decorated by Ptolemy XII Neos Dionysos. The portal was found on Elephantine and comes from an edifice located in a cult enclosure of the so-called temple Y.⁶ The iconographic details of the deity from the portal – the tripartite wig and the *atef*-crown together with the *was*-sceptre held in the hand – correspond to the god's iconography from the fragment under discussion.

In the scene from the portal, Petempamentes is depicted together with an accompanying text which described him as Osiris' *mswt/mstjw*, first translated as 'descendant'. This translation rejected the notion of his direct identification with Osiris that might have been suggested by the structure of his name.⁷ Initially, the term inspired a hypothesis that the deity is Osiris' offspring, his juvenile hypostasis resembling the concept of *Khnoum – maître de la campagne* from Esna and that he belongs to the group of warriors and protectors.⁸ When Vincent Rondot presented his verification of the text interpretation, and above all, of the term *mswt*, he introduced a notion of Petempamentes as a manifestation of Osiris, and used the term 'l'avatar d'Osiris' to refer to him.⁹

The text accompanying the image of Petempamentes in the fragment under discussion corresponds to the initial notion of his nature of warrior god (*dieu combattant*). What draws

² J. QUAEGBEUR, s.v. Petempamentes, *LÄ IV* [= Petempamentes], 993.

³ Cf. *Wb.* V, 46.1–6; A. GUTBUB, Textes fondamentaux de la théologie de Kom Ombo, *BdE XLVII/1*, Le Caire 1973 [= Textes fondamentaux], pp. 262 (f), 318 (d); P. WILSON, A Ptolemaic Lexikon. A Lexicographical Study of the Texts in the Temple of Edfu, *OLA 78*, Leuven 1997 [= A Ptolemaic Lexikon], p. 1061.

⁴ OGIS no. 111, pp. 190f. and OGIS no. 130, pp. 207f.; A. BERNAND, De Thèbes à Syène, Paris 1989 [= I.Th.Sy.], I.Th.Sy. 302, pp. 260–266; I.Th.Sy. 303, pp. 266–273; QUAEGBEUR, Petempamentes, 993.

⁵ BERNAND, I.Th.Sy. 303, pp. 268, 271. On the subject of the synodal council cf. V. RONDOT, Séhel et son dieu, [*in:*] Actes du colloque international Séhel. Entre Égypte et Nubie. Inscriptions rupestres et graffiti de l'époque pharaonique Université Paul+Valéry 31 mai–1^{er} juin 2002, *OrMonsp XIV*, Montpellier 2003 [= Séhel], pp. 113, 124–125; P. HEILPORN, La provenance de la dédicace I.Th.Sy. 302, *CdE LXV*, 1990, pp. 117–121.

⁶ E. LASKOWSKA-KUSZTAL, Petempamentes, Petensetis, Petensenis. Dieux toujours inconnus?, [*in:*] C. Berger, G. Clerc, N. Grimal (Eds), Hommages à Jean Leclant, *BdE 106/4*, Le Caire 1994 [= Petempamentes, Petensetis, Petensenis], pp. 177–182; EAD., Die Dekorfragmente der ptolemäisch-römischen Tempel von Elephantine, *Elephantine XV*, *AV 73*, Mainz a/Rhein 1996 [= *Elephantine XV*], pp. 128–129.

⁷ LASKOWSKA-KUSZTAL, Petempamentes, Petensetis, Petensenis, p. 181.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 180–182.

⁹ RONDOT, Séhel, pp. 116–117, 122–124.

one's attention is the lack of reference to the relationship with Osiris. However, associations with Osiris – the lord of the western land, suggested by the name of the god and confirmed by his identification with Greek Dionysus must remain unquestioned. Taking into consideration these two facts, it would be reasonable to modify the interpretation of the god once again and recognize him as an independent personality created by theologians, a protector-god acting in the land of the dead, an image or possibly a substitute of Osiris¹⁰ in his aspect of *dieu combattant*.¹¹

Due to the lack of evidence for the presence of the god's cult in decorations of other temples outside Elephantine and the context where his name is found in the Greek stelae texts, it might be deduced that he was a local protective divinity. His accession to the local pantheon might have been preceded with a popular cult located on Sehel Island, including other locally worshipped entities later transformed into divine personalities.¹² This theory would be in partial agreement with the interpretation of the character of Petempamentes presented by V. Rondot. It should be accepted that the illustration of the local cult would be a type of a small 'chapel' instituted in the New Kingdom, where three divinities, evoking associations with the triad of Petempamentes-Petensenis-Petensetis, were worshipped.¹³

The definition of Petempamentes as a 'substitute' of Osiris is relevant to the concept of the Osirian roots of the god's cult. The disputable part of the theory is the identification of the blocks from Sehel signed with Ptolemy IV Philopator's cartouches as the remains of the Petempamentes temple. The blocks seem to be the construction material which came from the sacral buildings of Elephantine, carried also to Aswan.¹⁴ Considering Paul Heilporn's dismissal of the theory that stele OGIS no. 111 / I.Th.Sy. 302 was initially located on Sehel¹⁵ and the fact that the text from stele I.Th.Sy. 303 made no reference to the sanctuary situated on the island, a supposed place of the synod proceedings, hypotheses which concern the temple appear rather unlikely. What also calls for attention is Morgan's description of the placement of the decorated blocks. It implies that they were

¹⁰ Referring to the profound interpretation of the term *mswt* presented in J. BAINES, *Mswt* "Manifestation", [*in:*] *Hommages à François Daumas*, Montpellier 1986, pp. 43–50, one should, above all, recall relationships between the king and god as analogies. They leave no doubt that there are two independent entities involved. Cf. other interpretations of the term: 'heir', 'image', 'manifestation' quoted by WILSON, *A Ptolemaic Lexikon*, p. 460.

¹¹ On the subject of this aspect of Osiris cf. L. KÁKOSY, *Ein literarisch-mythologisches Motiv: Osiris als Gott des Kampfes und der Rache*, [*in:*] J. Assmann, E. Feucht, R. Grieshammer (Eds), *Fragen an die altägyptische Literatur*, Wiesbaden 1977, pp. 285–288; J.G. GRIFFITHS, *The Origins of Osiris*, Leiden 1980, pp. 149–150; ŽABKAR, *Hymns to Isis*, pp. 27–38. The issue of the relationship of Petempamentes and Osiris Nesmeti with Osiris the warrior was introduced by E. LASKOWSKA-KUSZTAL, *The Contribution of Graeco-Roman Elephantine to the Theology of the First Cataract Region*, [*in:*] D. Raue, S.J. Seidlmayer, Ph. Speiser (Eds), *The First Cataract of the Nile. One Region – Diverse Perspectives*, Berlin-Boston 2013, pp. 106–107.

¹² It does not seem necessary to search for the origin of this divine entity in the cult of Osiris on Sehel cf. QUAEGBEUR, *Petempamentes*, 993.

¹³ J. DE MORGAN *et al.*, *Catalogue des Monuments et Inscriptions de l'Égypte Antique I/1*, Vienne 1894 [= *Cat. des Mon. I/1*], no. 28, p. 18; RONDOT, *Séhel*, p. 118, photos 2–4.

¹⁴ Small blocks which come from the co-called 'Baukomplex X' cf. LASKOWSKA-KUSZTAL, *Elephantine XV*, pp. 15–21, 42–56.

¹⁵ Cf. *supra* n. 5.

found in a mixed cluster of various elements of the edifice.¹⁶ The most important reservations concerning the temple dedicated to Petempamentes are related to the interpretation of the god's personality. It should be expected that the cult of the god who as early as in Ptolemy IV Philopator's times was honoured with a temple (not a small chapel) which displayed a traditional programme of decorations ought to be present in significantly more evidence than what has been discovered so far.

The scene under discussion is of great importance to the characteristics of Petempamentes' cult. It is a precise illustration of the second part of the list of gods found on stele I.Th.Sy. 303, the gods who constitute a group accompanying the great patrons of Elephantine. The selection of epithets implying a uniform range of their divine competences is of uttermost consequence. Petempamentes is only distinguished as the main recipient of the offerings. Nevertheless, none of the epithets mentions his relationship with Elephantine.

PETENSETIS

A crocodile-headed god wearing a tripartite wig and *anedjtj*-crown, holding the *was*-sceptre. The god:

1. *ḏd mdw (j)n P3-ntr-(n)-Sṯ.t (a) ntr ʿ3 wr*
2. *ph.tj ntr.w (b)*
3. *ḏd mdw dj(.j) n.k kn.t nb(.t) nḥt nb*

1. Petensetis, the great god, great
2. with the power of gods.
3. I give you all power and victory.

- (a) The name was listed on stele I.Th.Sy. 303 from Sehel and mentioned in the inscription from Sehel.¹⁷
- (b) The epithet implies a role of an intermediary delivering divine power or deriving strength from divine power. This appears a crucial argument in favour of the search for the origins of the Sehel triad worship in popular cults.¹⁸ The epithet also evokes associations with Egyptian concepts of saints, whose help was efficient due to their contacts with gods.¹⁹ The question of the power given by the gods draws attention to the epithets *wr ph.tj*, *nb ph.tj*, *tkr ph.tj* which describe the Pharaoh of Bighē.²⁰

¹⁶ DE MORGAN, *Cat. des Mon.* I/1, pp. 82f.

¹⁷ BERNAND, *I.Th.Sy.* 303, p. 268; DE MORGAN, *Cat. des Mon.* I/1, p. 98, no. 182.

¹⁸ They were mentioned as gods included in a popular cult, like the patrons of Dendur, by G. ZAKI, *Le Premier Nome de Haute-Égypte du III^e siècle avant J.-C. au VII^e siècle après J.-C. d'après les sources hiéroglyphiques des temples ptolémaïques et romains*, *MRE* 13, Turnhout 2009 [= Premier Nome], pp. 245–251.

¹⁹ On the subject of Egyptian saints acting as intermediaries between gods and people cf. D. WILDUNG, *Imhotep und Amenhotep. Gottwerdung im alten Ägypten*, München-Berlin 1977 [= Imhotep und Amenhotep], pp. 42, 136, 213, 255, 257, 296–297; E. LASKOWSKA-KUSZTAL, *Le sanctuaire ptolémaïque de Deir el-Bahari*, *Deir el-Bahari* III, Varsovie 1984, pp. 89–104.

²⁰ *LGG* VI, 203.

The epithets do not specify if the power is received as a gift or is a natural quality of the warrior-god but they deserve attention due to the possible identification of the Pharaoh of Bigeh with Petensenis (cf. *infra*). In the context of identification of Petensetis with Sobek (cf. *infra*) and the texts from Kom Ombo it must be taken into account that the power = *ph.tj* might have been a gift bestowed on successive generations of gods and also on the monarch.²¹

Comments:

Petensetis, due to the structure of his name, appears to have the closest relation with Sehel. Nevertheless, in the text on the Greek stele I.Th.Sy. 303 he is obviously dominated by Petempamentes-Dionysus who acts as the lord of the island. Petempamentes' relationship with Sehel is also attested by the god's epithet found in the portal of Ptolemy XII Neos Dionysos on Elephantine.²² His rule over Sehel is confirmed by the texts accompanying him in the scene discussed here. Implied connections of both Petempamentes and Petensetis with Sehel, associated with the worship of the Elephantine triad, significantly diminish the urgency for search after the sources of their cult springing out of the veneration of great gods honoured on the island. As already mentioned in the comments on Petempamentes, they might have been theological creations originating in popular cults with places of worship accessible to believers.²³

The image of the two patrons of Sehel is further complicated by stele B planted on the terrace on Elephantine and located in a place where worshippers could deliver their acts of reverence.²⁴ In a scene from the stele, *p3 ntr mnḥ nb n Sṯ.t* is the object of the royal cult, but he is the patron of Elephantine as well. Depicted as a human silhouette wearing a tripartite wig and the *atef*-crown, in iconographic terms he resembles Petempamentes in the scenes from Elephantine and is associated with him by Vincent Rondot.²⁵

Despite the absence of the god's name on Stele B, the identification suggested by Vincent Rondot seems correct. It means that the crocodile-headed representation of Petensetis found on the Elephantine relief under discussion is his only image. His iconography referring to the character of Sobek-Geb obviously justifies his identification with Cronus recorded in the Greek text on the Sehel stele.²⁶ The texts associated with the god and corresponding to his function as a warrior god (*dieu combattant*) also match the personality of Sobek.²⁷ Such double identification with Geb-Cronus and Sobek-the warrior evokes associations

²¹ K.O. 194; GUTBUB, *Textes fondamentaux*, pp. 74 (q), 82 (an).

²² Cf. *supra* n. 6.

²³ Cf. *supra* n. 13.

²⁴ H. JARITZ, Die Terrassen vor den Tempeln des Chnum und der Satet, *Elephantine III*, AV 32, Mainz a/Rhein 1980 [= *Elephantine III*], pp. 27–29.

²⁵ RONDOT, Séhel, p. 117.

²⁶ Consequently, it confirms the comment by J. Quaegebeur, who, taking into account the identification with Cronus, suspected the crocodile nature of the god cf. J. QUAEGBEUR, s.v. Petensetis, *L'Égypte*, 994.

²⁷ It concerns the image of Sobek-warrior shown in Kom Ombo, representing one of the animal images of *dieu combattant*, and Sobek defeating his enemies, identified with Re or Shu cf. GUTBUB, *Textes fondamentaux*, pp. 261 (e), 316 (c), 522–523.

with the identification of Sobek-Geb with the juvenile god Panebtaoui marked in the texts from Kom Ombo.²⁸ The relations with the patron of Kom Ombo described above suggest that they could be defined in the same way as the relations between Petempamentes and Osiris, and use terms such as ‘image’ and ‘substitute’ of Sobek.²⁹

PETENSENIS

A standing male silhouette wearing a short wig and the solar disc, holding the *was*-sceptre.

1. *dd mdw (j)n n sic! P3-ntr-n-Sn(m)t (a) ntr ʕ3*
2. *mnḥ.t (b) nḥw nfr (c) (n) njs*
3. *n.f (d)*
4. *ntr w3d... (e)*

1. Petensenis, the great god
2. in his efficiency, excellent protector of the one,
3. who calls out to him,
4. the god who makes one flourish...

- (a) Petensenis closes the procession of gods. He is only known from the Greek stele OGIS no. 130 = I.Th.Sy. 303 where his name was listed.³⁰

The toponym in his name should be seen as a deficient form of the term *Snmt*.³¹ Considering the context of the god’s personality and his function as a protector of Osiris – see *infra* on the identification with Pharaoh of Bigeh – it seems that the toponym refers to Bigeh and has no wider correspondence to the region of the First Cataract.³²

- (b) An epithet referring to *ntr mnḥ* epithet, describing the god depicted on stele B from the terrace of the Khnum’s temple on Elephantine. As mentioned above, the iconography of the god from stele B resembles Petempamentes, and the epithet *nb n St.t* resembles both the latter and Petensetis. Both epithets *ʕ3 mnḥ.t* and *ntr mnḥ* describe the divinities as providers of favours. The epithet *ntr mnḥ*, associated above all with Imhotep and less frequently with Amenhotep, the son of Hapu, is absolutely essential for defining the personalities of the Sehel triad.³³

- (c) The widespread use of the epithet *nḥj nfr* to describe protector gods in different religious centres sheltering Re, Osiris and the juvenile god does not serve the purpose of identification of the divinity.³⁴

²⁸ K.O. 820; GUTBUB, *Textes fondamentaux*, pp. 190 (h), 191 (l).

²⁹ The possibility of a creation of a warrior-god being an image of Sobek and venerated by a popular cult was introduced by ZAKI, *Premier Nome*, pp. 246–247.

³⁰ BERNAND, I.Th.Sy. 303, p. 268.

³¹ An example of a deficient spelling of the toponym *Snmt* is provided in the temple on Bigeh cf. A.M. BLACKMAN, *The Temple of Bigeh, Les temples immergés de la Nubie*, Le Caire 1915, p. 30.

³² On the subject of a larger territory covered by this toponym cf. recently ZAKI, *Premier Nome*, pp. 177–181.

³³ WILDUNG, *Imhotep und Amenhotep*, pp. 158, 160, 162, 163, 166, 168, 178, 191, 213, 218, 223, 225, 238, 242. The epithet is translated as ‘hilfreicher Gott’.

³⁴ Cf. GUTBUB, *Textes fondamentaux*, pp. 215–216 (e).

- (d) A similar association with a beneficent activity of a divinity bearing the epithet *ntr mnḥ* with responses to the believers' requests is found in texts referring to Imhotep in the scene from the Ptah temple in Karnak.³⁵ The context of the scene urges to remember the use of the term *njs n.f* to describe the call for *dieu combattant's* assistance.³⁶ The protective function performed by the god towards the one who asks him for it resembles the Roman cult stelae which were the place of prayer for the believers and the stelae's Ptolemaic precursors placed in the decoration of temples. It is worth mentioning that in both cases the function of protectors described as *nhj nfr* was performed by the leading gods of the temple.³⁷
- (e) The spelling errors, most probably resulting from the difficulty of the text composition, call for attention. They imply that the edifice was not entrusted to the best qualified team of sculptors.

Comments:

Texts which accompany Petensenis emphasize his protective qualities and refer to the features of a warrior-god at the same time. His identification with Hermes, recorded on the stela, is compliant with his personality as a *dieu combattant* displaying the same features.³⁸

Because of the name, many generations of scientists identified Petensenis with the Pharaoh of Bigeh,³⁹ a god introduced into the official decoration programme of Ptolemaic and Roman temples in Lower Nubia and Philae. Texts associated with the Pharaoh of Bigeh, which attribute him with personal qualities of Horus – protector of his father, present him as a warrior-god who fulfils the duties of a divine heir. That disputable, nevertheless difficult to preclude, identification with the Pharaoh of Bigeh⁴⁰ should also be applied to Petensenis represented in the scene under discussion. This suggestion is disturbed by the presence of the solar disc on the head of the god from Elephantine, which is inconsistent with established iconography of the Pharaoh of Bigeh depicted wearing the Blue Crown – the royal war helmet.⁴¹

In order to maintain the concept of identification of the two gods, the personality of the Pharaoh of Bigeh should be expanded to include a juvenile aspect of a solar divinity encoded in the title of 'the son of Re' attributed to every monarch. These solar associations, which involve the victory of the son over his father's enemies with a change of

³⁵ WILDUNG, Imhotep und Amenhotep, p. 191.

³⁶ K.O. 167 and GUTBUB, Textes fondamentaux, p. 117 (bb).

³⁷ A. GUTBUB, Éléments ptolémaïque préfigurant le relief cultuel de Kom Ombo, [in:] H. Maehler (Ed.), Das ptolemäische Ägypten. Akten des internationalen Symposions 27.–29. September 1976, Mainz a/Rhein 1978, pp. 165–176, in particular pp. 172–173.

³⁸ On the subject of established iconography of Hermes' personality as *dieu combattant* cf. G. SIEBERT, s.v. Hermes, LIMC V/1 [= Hermes], 355–358, 370.

³⁹ K. SETHE, Πετενοσηίτις » der Gott von Sehêl « und Πετενοσηίτις » der Gott von Bige «, ZÄS 47, 1910, p. 166; H. BONNET, s.v. Bigge, RÄRG, 118; QUAEGBEUR, Petensenis, 993.

⁴⁰ RONDOT, Séhel, pp. 117–118.

⁴¹ On the subject of the royal traits of Egyptian gods cf. O.E. KAPER, The Egyptian God Tutu. A study of the warrior god Tutu. A study of the sphinx-god and master of demons with a corpus of monuments, OLA 119, Leuven 2003, p. 59.

generation, are obviously in harmony with the combative personality of the Pharaoh of Bigeh.⁴²

A particular choice of Petensenis' epithets is of great interest. They emphasize his kindness towards those who ask him for it. They raise the conjectures about the accessibility of the god for his believers and about popular origins of the cult.

UPPER REGISTER

Preserved lower part of the scene. Offering given by the king and accompanying child to three sitting gods. The main recipient of the offering is the god holding the *was*-sceptre. The lack of traces of sceptres held by the other divine entities implies that they laid their hands on the shoulders of preceding gods in a gesture of protection.

Between the king and the platform there is an altar with flower stems hanging down from it. The text behind the king:

[*s3 ʕnh w3s nb*] *h3.f mj Rʕ d.t*

[Every protection, life and power] around him like Re for ever.

The text in front of the child character:

[...] *ssš.t jr(.t) (n) jt.f (a)*

[...] shaking the sistrum done for his father.

- (a) This juvenile figure might be the eldest son of Ptolemy VI, who was given the epithet of Eupator in 152 BC, included in the dynastic cult and nominated the coregent of his father.⁴³ The suggested interpretation could imply that the decoration of the building on Elephantine was created after these political decisions and before the death of the young monarch.⁴⁴ It could even be proposed that the scene was a purposeful allusion to the new status of the royal son. The young monarch, who acted as a celebrant, was depicted behind his father. It resembles the situation in which the name of the living Ptolemy Eupator had a similar position on the lists of the Ptolemaic rulers who were included in the dynastic cult. After his death, his name was listed before the names of his parents who were still alive.⁴⁵

⁴² Supporting the theory of identification of Petensenis and Pharaoh from Bigeh seems more justified than searching for a connection of the former with Thoth from Pnubs, which would be encouraged by the identification of both gods with Hermes. Such connection cannot be precluded by the function of *dieu combattant* fulfilled by both divine entities. The arguments against such interpretation are inconsistent toponyms found in their names and the established iconography of Thoth from Pnubs which emphasizes his affinity with a group of gods identified with Onuris, D. INCONNU-BOCQUILLON, *Thot de Pnubs (la ville) ou Thot du Nébès (l'arbre)*, *RdE* 39, 1988, pp. 52, 53, 61.

⁴³ W. HUSS, *Ägypten in hellenistischer Zeit 332–30 v. Chr.*, München 2001 [= *Ägypten*], p. 576; G. HÖLBL, *A History of the Ptolemaic Empire*, London-New York 2001 [= *Ptolemaic Empire*], p. 192.

⁴⁴ Given the date of his death also in 152 BC, it would mean only a few months of coregency cf. HUSS, *Ägypten*, p. 578.

⁴⁵ Cf. M. MINAS, *Die hieroglyphischen Ahnenreihen der ptolemäischen Könige. Ein Vergleich mit den Titeln der eponymen Priester in den demotischen und griechischen Papyri*, *AegTrev* 9, Mainz a/Rhein 2000 [= *Die hieroglyphischen Ahnenreihen*], p. 142.

The shaking of the sistrum, equivalent to the offering of the instrument, suggests the identification of the young individual with god Ihy, a symbol of the divine heir taking over the rule.⁴⁶ It would be a confirmation, by referring to the Egyptian tradition, of his legitimacy as a royal successor, which was expressed by giving him the epithet of Eupator. Suggested religious connotations of the young king could be used in the discussion on the Egyptian version of the epithet.⁴⁷ It appears that its correct understanding should contain information about the elevation of the son by his father, who as a monarch was also regarded as a god and made his son a divine heir.

Comments:

Both scenes, from the lower and upper registers, seem to comment on each other and pave the way for a hypothesis that the unknown edifice which held this fragment was connected to royal ideology and Egyptian policy of protection of the royal power.⁴⁸ It might have been related to the festive rituals with participation of statues of the Ptolemaic ancestors and the monarch currently in power, together with his family.⁴⁹ Undoubtedly, it should be considered in the context of the altar erected on Elephantine and dedicated to Ptolemy VI together with his family and a stele associated with Elephantine which is stored in the Louvre.⁵⁰ The attribution of the construction of the sanctuary to Ptolemy VI Philometor, depiction of the king's three protectors from Sehel, the king's construction and decoration activities on Elephantine⁵¹ should be connected with political and religious propaganda which was a reaction to political disturbance during the reign of the monarch's predecessors.⁵²

POPULAR AND OFFICIAL CULT OF PETEMPAMENTES, PETENSENIS AND PETENSETIS – CONCLUSIONS

Epithets describing Petensenis as a benefactor paying attention to the requests of worshippers and the epithet recorded next to Petensetis, which marks his inferiority in relation

⁴⁶ R. PREYS, La fête de la prise de pouvoir d'Ihy "le grand dieu" à Dendera, *ZÄS* 128, 2001, *passim*, in particular pp. 146–166.

⁴⁷ G. VITTMANN, Zu den ägyptischen Wiedergaben von „Eupator“, *GM* 46, 1981, pp. 21–26; HUSS, Ägypten, n. 311 on p. 576.

⁴⁸ It should be noted that there have not been identified texts or representations which referred to the Ptolemaic cult introduced to the decoration programme of Egyptian temples among the fragmented and dispersed materials from the temples of Elephantine cf. E. WINTER, Der Herrscherkult in den ägyptischen Ptolemäertempeln, [*in:*] H. Maehler, V.M. Strocka (Eds), *Das ptolemäische Ägypten. Akten des internationalen Symposiums 27.–29. September 1976 in Berlin, Mainz a/Rhein 1978* [= *Der Herrscherkult*], pp. 147–160.

⁴⁹ An example of an analogical event could be represented by the procession mentioned in the festive calendar from the temple in Kom Ombo which was also related to the reign of Ptolemy VI Philometor cf. *K.O.* 597.

⁵⁰ H. MAEHLER, Griechische Inschriften aus Elephantine, *MDAIK* 26, 1970, pp. 169–170, Inschrift 1; BERNAND, I.Th.Sy. 302, pp. 260–266; HEILPORN, *CdE* LXV, 1990, pp. 116–121, in particular p. 121.

⁵¹ LASKOWSKA-KUSZTAL, *Elephantine* XV, p. 3.

⁵² The particular efforts made by Ptolemy VI Philometor to sanction the rule of the Ptolemies, also through the expansion of the Greek dynastic cult, were emphasized by the scientists cf. HUSS, Ägypten, p. 595; MINAS, *Die hieroglyphischen Ahnenreihen*, p. 141.

to gods, bring to mind the intricate function of Egyptian saints acting as intermediaries between the worlds of the people and the gods. The epithets are additional arguments favouring the connection of the cult of the three gods with places accessible to believers or even created by the believers themselves. In the case of Elephantine this kind of cult is associated with the terrace of the Khnum temple and the stelae placed there.⁵³ On Sehel, such place of worship would be the small chapel described by V. Rondot.⁵⁴

That popular aspect of the cult of the three gods does not preclude a possibility of performing their protective function in an ‘institutionalized’ manner related to the country policy. A significant reason for this line of interpretation is related to the discussed fragment of the unknown building from Elephantine and the context from the upper register implying associations with royal ideology. It must be noted that the three gods who were portrayed in the lower scene endow the ruling monarch with their power of a victorious warrior by fulfilling the protective functions connected to their divine nature. In this manner, they extend the range of gifts offered by gods and royal ancestors to the reigning king.⁵⁵

It summons another argument, i.e. the listing of the three gods on the already mentioned stele I.Th.Sy. 303 commemorating the synod of Ptolemaic religious community which tended to the Ptolemaic dynastic cult. In the case of Petempamentes, it is important to note the presence of his name on stele I.Th.Sy. 302, a monument of an analogical religious community which probably gathered on Elephantine and erected the stele there.⁵⁶

Without an attempt to define a complete list of sanctuaries of the Syene region which were the seat of the Ptolemaic dynastic cult, it should be supposed that the cult must have been connected to Elephantine, and above all, the Khnum temple.⁵⁷ Parallel to other religious centres, the place of this cult should be the outer parts of the temple, that is, the courtyard or the terrace.⁵⁸ Despite the variety of places mentioned as venues of meetings of religious

⁵³ On the subject of the terrace of the Khnum temple as a place of prayer and festive assemblies of the worshippers cf. JARITZ, *Elephantine* III, pp. 59–65; LASKOWSKA-KUSZTAL, Petempamentes, Petensetis, Petensenis, p. 180.

⁵⁴ Cf. *supra* n. 13.

⁵⁵ These traditional gifts were: the years of reign, the throne, the succession, the office cf. WINTER, *Der Herrscherkult*, pp. 152–155.

⁵⁶ Priests who were in charge of the royal cult in the temples of Elephantine, Philae and Abaton participated in both synods cf. E. LANCIERS, *Die ägyptischen Priester der ptolemäischen Königskultes*, *RdE* 42, 1991, pp. 132, 140.

⁵⁷ In the second part of the Ptolemaic rule, apart from the Elephantine’s Khnum and Satet temples, there was the northern cultural enclosure situated near the monumental staircase, first identified as Temple Y. The Osiris Nesmeti temple was added to it in the Roman Period cf. C. UBERTINI, *Restitution Architecturale du “Temple Y”*, *MDAIK* 61, 2005, pp. 64–75; E. LASKOWSKA-KUSZTAL, *Osiris-Nesmeti-Child from Elephantine*, *MDAIK* 61, 2005, pp. 75–82.

⁵⁸ Cf. LANCIERS, *RdE* 42, 1991, p. 136, where a courtyard located between the pronaos and a pylon is mentioned, as well as a dromos. It must be noted that according to current notions of the chronology of the Khnum temple on Elephantine the courtyard in its present shape is a Roman construction. Royal statues associated with the cult were worshipped in a particular manner during dynastic festivities and accompanied gods in processions during other celebrations, *ibid.*, pp. 137–138. In the context of artefacts discussed here, the papyrus record of P. BM dem. 10591 from 170 BC should be brought to attention as it mentions the garden of the Isis temple in Aswan. The income from that garden was assigned for offerings for Ptolemy VI, Ptolemy VIII and Cleopatra II cf. *ibid.*, pp. 138–139.

communities, such as temples, *dromoi*, animal cemeteries, chapels⁵⁹ it is difficult to explain the fact of organization of a synod on Sehel as it is an island distant from the main localities of divine cult, deprived of sacral architecture and without marked connections to the Ptolemaic dynastic cult attested before. The text on the stele from the times of Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II, I.Th.Sy. 303, alludes to a synod on Sehel – the island of Dionysus, a god listed on the stele as Petempamentes-Dionysus; nevertheless, it does not acknowledge a sanctuary associated with this god. As mentioned above, the existence of a temple located on Sehel and dedicated to Petempamentes is doubtful.⁶⁰ It might be supposed that the reason for the organization of the meeting on Sehel was the special function which the triad Petempamentes-Petensetis-Petensenis venerated there fulfilled for the Ptolemaic dynasty.

Two hypotheses should be considered to analyze the personality of Petempamentes-Dionysus and his services for the royal power of the Ptolemies. The first one claims that he is a divine protector summoned to shield the members of the Ptolemaic dynasty on earth and in the land of the dead. The other hypothesis would recognize Petempamentes as an image of Osiris in his warrior aspect and the Ptolemaic monarchs would be identified with him. These hypotheses need not mean the acknowledgement of Osiris as a mythical ancestor of the Ptolemies, just as it was in the case Dionysus.⁶¹ Attempts at linking Petempamentes to the Ptolemaic dynasty would lead to a similar manner of interpretation of the other two gods' personalities.

In the case of Petensenis, the pursuit of his connections with the Ptolemaic dynasty would support the hypothesis of the identification of the god with the 'Pharaoh from Bigeh'. It would be an obvious incorporation of a deified pharaoh-warrior into the protection of the monarch and the dynastic cult. This concept would remain in harmony with the identification of Petensenis – *dieu combattant* with Hermes (cf. *supra*) since it showed examples of the use of Hermes' iconography in his role of *lutteur / athlète* found in representations of Ptolemy III.⁶² The notion is undisturbed by the presence of the solar disc on Petensenis' head as it is a symbol of a solar origin of each ruler.

Associations with the dynastic cult might have also inspired the recognition of the third divine entity, Petensetis, as a protector. As indicated above, his crocodile-headed body and related texts describing his function of warrior god (*dieu combattant*) bring to mind his connection to Sobek of Kom Ombo. To justify this theological creation one could refer to a mythological motif of triple protection provided by three elements and the battle of the crocodile-headed god with enemies concealed in water. Reaching for the arguments related

⁵⁹ F. DE CENIVAL, Les associations religieuses en Égypte d'après les documents démotiques, *BdE* XLVI, Le Caire 1972, pp. 177, 178, 180.

⁶⁰ Cf. *supra*, p. 221.

⁶¹ Scientists contradict this equal recognition of Osiris and Dionysus as ancestors of the Ptolemies cf. J.G. GRIFFITHS, *Plutarch's De Iside et Osiride*, Cambridge 1970, pp. 429–430. On the subject of the Dionysian character of the Hellenic cult of Ptolemies cf. HÖLBL, *Ptolemaic Empire*, pp. 282–283. The inclusion of Petempamentes into the scenes in the portal of the so-called Temple Y on Elephantine might be of special importance for the definition of the character of relationship of the Ptolemaic dynasty and Osiris. The portal is signed with Ptolemy XII Neos Dionysos' cartouches cf. *supra* n. 6.

⁶² SIEBERT, *Hermes*, 370, cat. 970, 971.

to the state policy, it must be recalled that during Ptolemy VI Philopator's reign the capital of the first nome of Upper Egypt was transferred to Kom Ombo,⁶³ which could be connected to the display of the protective function of the god who was a substitute for Sobek.

The suggestion of the recognition of the gods from Sehel as protectors of the royal dynasty would explain the choice of the island as a venue of the synod of a religious community which discussed the issues of the dynastic cult during Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II's reign. The question of the protection of the royal power is also the reason for looking at Sehel from the point of view of political disturbance caused by rebellions of Haronnophris and Chaonnophris together with an unclear definition of the reaction of the local priests to the uprisings.⁶⁴ It is possible that supporters of the legal power of the Ptolemies participated in their meetings at a peripheral setting of the Sehel Island, safeguarded by the local protector-gods and that the tradition of such gatherings survived until the times of political stability.

The texts from Elephantine which are found together with representations of Petempantes, Petensetis and Petensenis are uniform in their message and draw attention to analogies in the personalities of the gods as warrior divinities fulfilling protective functions. The hypothesis of their connection with the dynastic cult and protection of the monarch could be expanded further in the form of a concept of the three gods represented on the Sehel stele and in the sanctuary on Elephantine acting as a shield protecting the region of the First Cataract. It was the key area for the functioning of the country due to its role in the annual Nile flooding and defense against the Nubian neighbours. It appears that the extension of this shield over Lower Nubia was the triad of Arensnuphis, Thothis from Nubis and Mandulis depicted together on a wall in 'Chapelle ptolémaïque' in Kalabsha.⁶⁵

Another hypothesis worth mentioning is the one by G. Zaki, according to which the three warrior-gods were held in high esteem among the soldiers stationed in garrisons guarding the southern area near the Egyptian border.⁶⁶

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⁶³ ZAKI, Premier Nome, pp. 357–360.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 341; HÖLBL, Ptolemaic Empire, pp. 152–159. Even if Ptolemy V Epiphanes' troops controlled the southern Egyptian border, including Elephantine, cf. P.W. PESTMAN, Haronnophris and Chaonnophris. Two indigenous pharaohs in Ptolemaic Egypt (205–186 B.C.), [*in:*] S.P. Vleeming (Ed.), *Hundred-Gated Thebes. Acts of a Colloquium on Thebes and the Theban Area in the Graeco-Roman Period (P. L. Bat. 27)*, Leiden-New York-Köln 1995, pp. 133–136, the social perception of riots in other parts of the country might have affected certain aspects of religious life, together with publicly enforced dynastic cult.

⁶⁵ H. DE MEULENAERE, M. DEWACHTER, La chapelle ptolémaïque de Kalabcha, Le Caire 1964–1970, Pl. XXXII. In the case of Arensnuphis, connections of his cult to Elephantine and stelae dedicated to him expand the territory of his protective functions and make it possible to consider them in the context of personalities and characteristics of the Sehel 'trinity' cf. E. LASKOWSKA-KUSZTAL, Arensnuphis sur une stèle d'Eléphantine, *EudTrav* XIX, 2001, pp. 135–144, in particular pp. 140–141.

⁶⁶ ZAKI, Premier nome, p. 247.

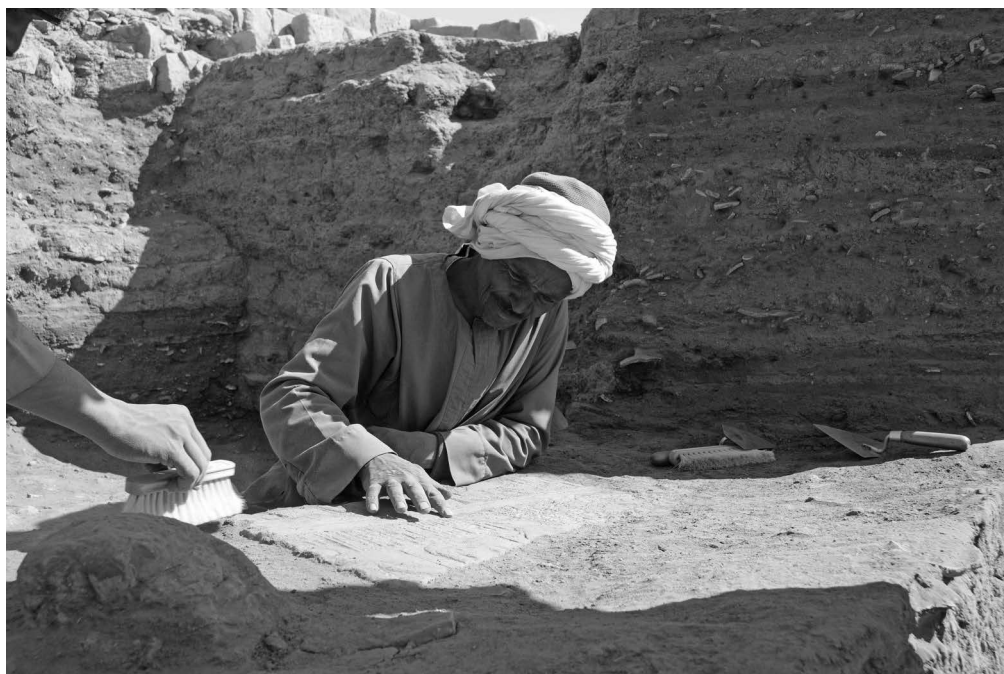
APPENDIX

A BRIEF NOTE ABOUT THE BLOCK DISCOVERY

The relief block was found by the Swiss Mission on Elephantine under the direction of Felix Arnold on November 20, 2011 (**Figs 1–2**). The relief lay face up on top of a destruction layer inside the northeastern room of the Late Antique house K26 just south of the Khnum temple (find context 41705 Hb). The layer can be dated to the second half of sixth century AD (stratum 02, stage 1). The house (K26) was first constructed in the second quarter of fifth century AD (stratum 01), but was substantially remodeled around the middle of sixth century AD. The relief block had most probably been reused in the masonry of the house, possibly on the second floor of the house. The original location of the block before its reuse in house K26 is unknown.¹

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¹ For house K26, see: F. ARNOLD, Die Nachnutzung des Chnumtempelbezirks Wohnbebauung der Spätantike und des Frühmittelalters, *Elephantine XXX*, AV 116, Mainz a/Rhein 2003, pp. 69–72 and 94–98.



1–2. Decoration fragment from a sacral building on Elephantine under excavation (Phot. S. Olschok / Swiss Institute for Architectural and Archaeological Research on Ancient Egypt).