

## Exceptional epithets of Amasis

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### Key words

Amasis – 26<sup>th</sup> dynasty – son of Neith – royal titles– epithets.

### Summary

This paper deals with some of royal names and epithets of Amasis (570–526 B.C.) which could be considered so exceptional among the corpus of royal titles and names of late period in general and in 26<sup>th</sup> dynasty in particular. These titles are: (*s3 nt*)The son of *Neith*, (*spd t3wy*) who has restored the Two Lands (to order)and (*skbt3wy*) who quiet/calm the two lands?. The paper followed the importance and significance of these epithets and the religious or political context. The most remarkable conclusion is that Amasis did not follow literally the traditional titles of 26<sup>th</sup> dynasty.

### الكلمات الدالة

أحمس الثاني – الأسرة ٢٦ – ابن نيت – ألقاب ملكية – نعوت.

### ملخص

يعرض هذا البحث لبعض الأسماء والنعوت لأحمس الثاني (٥٧٠-٥٢٦ ق.م.) والتي يمكن أن تعد ألقاب استثنائية بين مجموعة الألقاب الملكية للعصر المتأخر بشكل عام وألقاب الأسرة ٢٦ بشكل خاص. هذه الألقاب هي: (سا نيت) أي ابن نيت ، (سبد تاوي) الذي أعاد النظام للأرضيين و(سقب تاوي) الذي أعاد الهدوء للرضيين. وقد تابع البحث أهمية ومغزى كل لقب والسياق الديني أو السياسي لكل منها. ولعل أهم نتائج البحث هي أن أحمس الثاني لم يتبع حرفيا الألقاب التقليدية للأسرة السادسة والعشرين.

Choosing a particular name was an especially symbolic act for an ancient Egyptian ruler, since names were so significant within the culture<sup>1</sup>. The traditional five royal names<sup>2</sup> of ancient Egyptian kings are regarded to be as one of the main aspects of royal authority. In addition to these names there were many royal titles and epithets<sup>3</sup> added to the Royal names. The importance and significance of these epithets are varied from period to another according to both religious and political situation.

This paper deals with some of royal names and epithets for Amasis (570-526 B.C.)<sup>4</sup>, which could be considered so exceptional among the corpus of royal titles and names of late period in general and in 26<sup>th</sup> dynasty in particular. In his paper dealing with the Royal protocols morphology of Saite kings, El-Enany<sup>5</sup> was the first scholar who drew attention to these epithets but since it deserves more attention and a much detailed

treatment, the objective of this paper is to shed more light on the case of Amasis.

Surveying the corpus of royal names and titles of Amasis II gathered by both Henri Gauthier<sup>6</sup> and presented by Von Beckerath<sup>7</sup> revealed that there are three exceptional epithets or titles were attributed to Amasis:

1- **The son of Neith( s3nt)**

The epithet *s3nt* is attested on several documents from the reign of Amasis, for example as follows:

1- Stele BM 952 conserved in the British Museum and dated to year one of Amasis, the epithet is written in the first line of the text among other epithets and titles<sup>8</sup>.



*Nbtj s3 Nt spd t3wy Hr-nbw .*

"the Two Ladies the son of Neith *spd t3wy*, Horus of Gold".

2- Stela from Bubastis dated to third year in Cairo Meusum whereas the epithet is inserted inside his cartouche<sup>9</sup>:



*Rnpt 3 3bd prt (hnm-ib-Rc) s3 Rc (i'c h ms s3 Nt) c'nh dt.*

Year 3, third month of winter season (*hnm-ib-Rc*) son of Re (Ahmose<sup>10</sup> the son of Neith), may he lives forever.

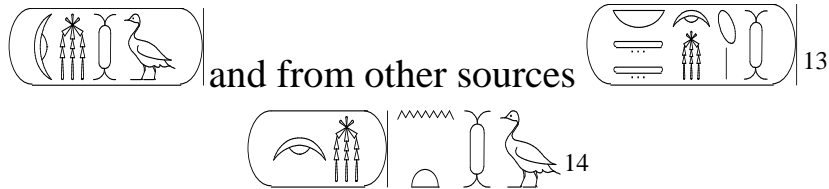
3- Stele from Serapeum dated to year 8<sup>11</sup>:



*Rnpt 8 3bd 8 ir.n.f (ms(w) s3 Nt) di c'nh w3s dt.*

Year 8 month 8 it is made for him (Ahmose) given life and  
dominion eternally.

4- From year 35 on a stela n<sup>o</sup> 1640 in Florence Musum<sup>12</sup>



On the bronze statue donated by his daughter to Amun in  
the Oriental institute of Chicao 10584<sup>15</sup>:



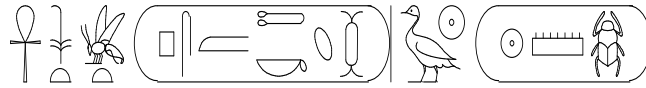
*Nt iḳrt sꜣt nb tꜣwy (iḥ ms sꜣ Nt).*

Nitokris daughter of the lord of two lands (Amasis so of  
Neith).

El-Enany<sup>16</sup> noted that the morphology of royal epithets of  
saite kings was not followed to the letter by Amasis who is the  
only saite king to use a developed epithet in one of his first three  
names (Nebty Name: *sꜣnt* + *spdtꜣwy*) and which often adds the  
epithet *sꜣnt* inside the cartouche containing his Birth Name. He is  
to be noted that the main difference in the Amasis's name  
structure boils down to the addition of the epithet "son of Neith"  
in his *Nebty* Name and inside of the cartouche framing his Birth  
Name.

This desire to highlight the filial bond with his local  
goddess Neith is expected from this saite general arrived at the  
throne by force. However, even though Amasis is the only one  
to insert the epithet: *sꜣnt* inside his Birth Name cartouche on

several of his monuments, this step is already attested for one other king from 26<sup>th</sup> dynasty<sup>17</sup>, the king Psmthk<sup>18</sup>:



*ꜣnh nsw-bit (Psmthksꜣ Nt) sꜣ Rꜥ (mn hpr Rꜥ).*

May live king of upper and lower Egypt (Psmthk son of Neith) son of Re (established of being (like) Re<sup>19</sup>).

It is worthy to note that Von Beckerath did not report the case of Psmthk<sup>20</sup>.

There is an evidence of the gradual rise of Amasis; for long after his assumption of the royal cartouche he continued to use his titles as a noble and a powerful palace official. Thus he inscribed his mother's sarcophagus as follows<sup>21</sup>:



*i.nꜣꜣ.s ir n.s bit sdꜣwty smr wꜥt hꜣp ꜥh hm ꜣst imy-r rrt (iꜥh ms) sꜣNt*

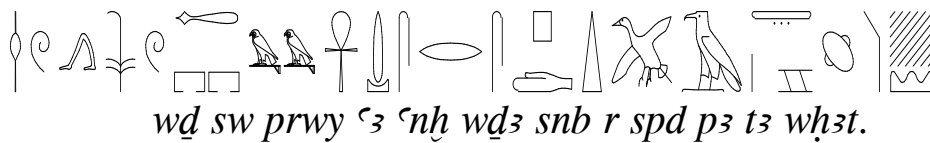
" It was her son who made it for her, the wearer of the royal seal, sole companion, chief of the palace, prophet of Isis, master of the judgment - hall, *iꜥhms* (Amasis) *sꜣ nt*."

The epithet son of Neith appeared for the first time out of cartouche from the first year but later on, it appeared on the Elephantine stela from the third year of his reign<sup>22</sup>. It is written in the upper part of the stele as part of his birth name inside the cartouche: (*iꜥhms(w) sꜣnt*) but in the first column as an epithet added to the *Nebty* title. In the same first column another unusual epithet for Amasis is present: *skꜣbtꜣwy* which may mean towine<sup>23</sup>. It is suggested that the adjective or phrase in a royal





The epithet *spdtꜣwy* is translated by Alexander Piankoff as "the one who equip the two lands" and he followed it with a question mark as a symbol of uncertainty<sup>35</sup>. On the other hand, the term is translated by Lepron<sup>36</sup> as: "who restored the two lands (to order)". The Latter translation is most likely probable since Gardiner<sup>37</sup> translated it (to restore order), the verb *spd* was reported on the Stela of Dakhlah Oasis from 22<sup>nd</sup> dynasty when king ShaShanq I send one of his commanders (The prince Wayheset) to the Dakhlah Oasis:<sup>38</sup>



"The Pharaoh had sent him to restore order in the Oasis-land".

(*spdtꜣwy*) is one of the epithets attributed to Amasis, the interest of this epithet is that it is dated to the first year of his accession to throne. The nature of the title may reflect that Amasis adopted it after the civil war against his opponent Apries.

The events of civil war were when the defeat of an Egyptian army sent against Cyrene by Apries led to a rebellion. When Apries dispatched one of his officials, Amasis, to bring the soldiers to heel, the latter was proclaimed king by the rebels, and joined them, Apries alienating more of his subjects by the mutilation of an unfortunate courtier who brought the bad news. Apries advanced from Sais with 30,000 Carians and Ionians against the oncoming Amasis. The battle which followed at Memphis resulted in a victory for Amasis, the capture of Apries and, after an unspecified time, the death of the latter at the hands



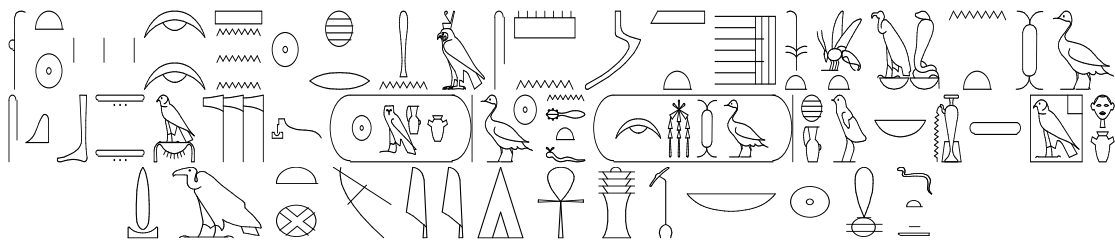
of the populace to whom he had been unwillingly surrendered by the new king. He was, however, granted burial in the dynastic cemetery in the precinct of Neith at Sais<sup>39</sup>.

Leahy commented on the beginning of his reign: "*A minor complication is that we do not know from what point Amasis began to date-from his acclamation by the army (Herodotus ii, 162), or from a subsequent, more formal coronation. The latter is the more likely, and is certainly implied by the full titulary which the new king is accorded on BM 952.*"<sup>40</sup>

. Apries, who was left with his Greek sailors and control over the Nile mouths (via the navy), was eventually defeated but left alive for a while by Amasis. Then, under obscure circumstances, Apries died or was killed<sup>41</sup>.

Amasis was the fifth king of the twenty-six dynasty and not descended from the royal line begun by Psamtik I, Amasis was an army general of uncertain but probably Lybian ancestry, selected by Egyptian troops to replace his predecessor Apries.<sup>42</sup> So it is possible that the epithet of *spdtꜣwy* was an echo of the civil war events and responding to the warrior character of Amasis.

3- *skbtꜣwy* : The translation and interpretation of this epithet still uncertain so far. On a Stela from year three one read<sup>43</sup>:



*rnpt-sp 3 3bd 2 šmw hr hm n hr (smn m3t) nsw-bit nbty s3  
Nt skb t3wy hr nbw stp ntrw ( hnm ib R<sup>c</sup> ) s3 R<sup>c</sup> n ht.f (i<sup>c</sup>h ms s3  
Nt) mry hnmw nb kbh ht-hr hry-ib dmt di n<sup>c</sup>h dd w3s nb mi R<sup>c</sup>  
dt.*

"Year 3, second month of summer under the majesty of Horus ( The one who has established Maat )<sup>44</sup> king of upper and lower Egypt, son of Neit, who (quiet ?)the two lands, Horus of gold, chosen by gods<sup>45</sup>( *hnmibr<sup>c</sup>*) son of Re from his body (*i<sup>c</sup>hmss3nt*) beloved of Khnm lord of Elephantine and Hathor of Djmt, may he give all life, stability and dominion like Re forever".

Despite the richness of monuments and texts from the reign of Amasis, this example of text is the only one in which Amasis used this epithet *skbt3wy*. Daressy translated the epithet as "resserrant les deux terres"<sup>46</sup> or "who control the two lands". The term *skb* probably belongs to that category of epithets: *snfrt3wy*, *sw3dt3wy* Analyzing the term may reveal that it is composed of the causative letter s and the verb or adjective *kb*. The second part may mean quiet or calm<sup>47</sup>, consequently, the epithet can be translated as: "who quiet/calm the two lands?"

After the above examples and notes, one can conclude the following points:

Firstly: It is of interest to note that the title *s3Nt* "son of Neith" is used in and out of cartouche to confirm his filiation, connection and loyalty to the local goddess of Sais. Yet it was Amasis who ostensibly demonstrated his affiliation with the dynastic Saite goddess Neith by permanently incorporating the filiation *s3-Nt* into his cartouche. Hence, the epithet denotes

rather a religious quality. Additional possible interpretation for the reason of this epithet is that Neith was described in late periods as *nbtw3d-wror* "mistress of the sea"<sup>48</sup>, so she dominated the Mediterranean and navigation whereas the field of maritime activities of Amasis and his royal fleet.

In several cases the epithet "son of Neith" is attested in his Nebty Name, this phenomenon is probably interpreted because the Nebty title is composed of two goddesses: Wadjet and Nekhbet, so there is addition of third deity, it is Neith. Hence, the king is loyal and protected by all of them.

Secondly: the epithet *spdt3wy* could be considered as an echo of (or respond to) the political situation and the civil war between Amasis and Apries.

Thirdly: the epithet *skbt3wy* is recorded (to my knowledge) only in one case so far, and Amasis is the only king who presented himself with this epithet.

It is obvious as well that the varied orthography is the most remarkable characteristics in epithets and titles of Amasis. At last but not least, it is remarkable that these exceptional titles and epithets of Amasis were not restricted on one type of royal monuments, but they are reported on various kinds of royal monuments: stelae, naos, offering tables and blocks of temples. This fact reflects the strong will of royal protocol to confirm the particular character of Amasis among the Saites kings.

However, the titles of Amasis testifies to several singularities compared to those of his predecessors: He is the first pharaoh to use the term Xnm used in his coronation name; and he is the only one since Psmthk I to remove from his Horus

name the word *ib* – which he keeps in his in his coronation name. So, the differences in the titles and epithets of Amasis highlight his will to distinguish himself from the lineage of his Saites predecessors. And he wanted through his titles to stand out of the program of his predecessors<sup>49</sup>.

Finally, it could be concluded that although the archaism so evident in Dynasty XXVI in royal names, Amasis adopted such exceptional epithets as a respond to some political and religious reasons and to justify his role.

## Endnotes

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- <sup>1</sup>) Leprohon, R.J., *The Great Name, Ancient Egyptian Royal Titulary*, Writings from the ancient world Number 33, 2013, pp. 5 ff..
- <sup>2</sup>) The first of them was the so-called Horus name, the second was the name of the two ladies, the third name was that of the golden Horus, the fourth name was called the throne-name or king of upper and lower Egypt, the fifth name was the personal name or the birth name which preceded by the title son of Re. As for these names in general see: Leprohon, R.J., Op.Cit, pp. 7-20.
- <sup>3</sup>) Von Beckerath, *Königsnamen und titel*, LÄ III, 540-556. ; Kaplony, P., *Königstitulatur*, LÄ III, 641-659.
- <sup>4</sup>) As to the reign of Amsis cf.: Parker, R.A., *The Length of Reign of Amasis and the Beginning of the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty*, MDAIK 15, 1957, PP.208-212.
- <sup>5</sup>) El-Enany, Kh., *Clergé saïte et protocole royal* , dans D. Devauchelle (éd.), *La XXVIe dynastie. Continuités et ruptures. Promenade saïte avec Jean Yoyotte, Actes du colloque international organisé les 26 et 27 novembre 2004 à l'Université Charles-de-Gaulle – Lille 3*, Paris, pp. 153-158.
- <sup>6</sup>) Gauthier, H., *Le Livre des Rois d'Égypte*, IV, MIFAO 20.1, 1914, PP.113 – 128.
- <sup>7</sup>) Von Beckerath, J., *Handbuch der Ägyptischen Königsnamen*, MÄS 49, 1999, pp.214-219.
- <sup>8</sup>) Leahy, A., *The Earliest Dated Monument of Amasis and the End of the Reign of Apries*, JEA 74, 1988, pp.183-185, fig.1

- <sup>9</sup>) Maspero, G., *Notes sur quelques points de Grammaire et d'Histoire*, ZAS 23, 1885, p. 11.; Von Beckerath, J., *Handbuch der Ägyptischen Königsnamen*, p.218, E 3
- <sup>10</sup>) The nomen of (iaHms) could be interpreted as "born (like) the moon" , see: Fischer, H.G., on some reinterpretations of royal names, GM 108, 1989, P. 21.
- <sup>11</sup>) Chassinat, E., *Textes provenant du Sérapéum de Memphis*, Rec et Trav. XXII, 1900, P.20 ; Von Beckerath, J., *op.cit.* p.218, E 4.
- <sup>12</sup>) Gauthier, H., *op.cit.*, p.119, document XXIV and the same epigraphy in documents XXXI – XXXV; XXXIX, LVIII, LXII, LXVII, LXVIII, LXXI. Additionally for the same orthography see: Seton-Williams, M.V., The Tell El-Fara<sup>c</sup> in Expediton, JEA 55, 1969, P.19, fig.3.
- <sup>13</sup>) *ibid*, p. 126, document LXIII.
- <sup>14</sup>) *ibid*, p. 129, document LXXII.
- <sup>15</sup>) De Meulenaere, H., *La Famille du Rois Amasis*, JEA 54, 1968, P.186.
- <sup>16</sup>) El-Enany, Kh., *op.cit.* p. 153.
- <sup>17</sup>) *ibid*, pp. 153-154 .
- <sup>18</sup>) Maspero, G., *La chapelle d'asfoun*, ASAE 7, 1906, P.59 ; Gauthier, H., *op.cit.* P. 74, document XXXIII., El-Sayed, R., *La déesse Neith de Saïs II. Documentation* ,(BdE 86), Le Caire, 1982, p. 406 (doc. 452)
- <sup>19</sup>) Bennet, J., *The Meaning of the Royal Nomen and Prenomen*, JEA 51, 1965, P. 207.
- <sup>20</sup>) Von Beckerath, J., *Handbuch der Ägyptischen Königsnamen*, p.203 ; p.215.
- <sup>21</sup>) The sarcophagus is conserved now in the Museum of Stokholm, see: Piehl, K., *Doit-on accepter l'hypothèse d'un règne simultané d'Apriés et d'Amasis?* , ZÄS 28, 1890, p.10.
- <sup>22</sup>) Daressy, G., *Stele de L'an III d'Amasis*, Rec et Trav. XXII, 1900, pp. 2-3.
- <sup>23</sup>) Wb. IV, 307,1.

- <sup>24</sup>) Bennet, J., op. cit. P.7.
- <sup>25</sup>) Christophe, B., *La voix des hiéroglyphes*, Paris 2005, pp.32-33 ; and see additionally  
<http://egyptomusee.over-blog.com/article/28031711.html>
- <sup>26</sup>) Piankoff, A., *Le Naos D 29 du Musée du Louvre*, RdE1, 1933, p. 164, fig.4. ; p. 167, fig.7, p.170, fig.10.
- <sup>27</sup>) The dedicatory texts on the three naoi of Amasis (Leiden AM 107, Louvre D 29, and Cairo CG 70011 from Athribis ), They are all start with the expression 'may live' (anx), followed by the complete titulary of the king, as in the naos Louvre D 29 dedicated to Osiris Merty, or by his Horus name (HrsmnmaAt) and throne-name, as in the case of the Leiden naos for Osiris Hemag and in CG 70011 dedicated to Kem-wer. See: Zeceni, M., *The Naos of Amasis, a monument for the awakening of Osiris*, PALMA 20, Leiden 2019, p.110.
- <sup>28</sup>) Soghor, Ch.L., *Inscriptions from Tell el Rub'a*, JARCE 6, (1967), P. 19, fig.4.
- <sup>29</sup>) Ibid, p. 22, fig. 6.
- <sup>30</sup>) Golénischeff, W., *Trois Petites Trouvailles Égyptologiques*. Rec et Trav. XI, 1889, P. 98, Gauthier, H., op.cit. p.123.
- <sup>31</sup>) Year 44 is the highest monumental date recorded for Amasis, see: Parker, R.A., op.cit. PP.208-212.
- <sup>32</sup>) Couyat, J and Montet, P., *Les Inscriptions Hieroglyphiques et Hieratiques du Ouadi Hammamat*, MIFAO 34, 1912, P. 88; Gauthier, H., Op.Cit. p.120, document XXX.
- <sup>33</sup>) Gauthier, H., Op.Cit. p.121, document XXXVII.
- <sup>34</sup>). For example the use of K, Q and g in the name of king Achoris ( hkr / hqr / hgr ). See: von Beckerath, op.cit. pp. 224-225.
- <sup>35</sup>) Piankoff, A., op.cit. p.164.
- <sup>36</sup>) Leprohon, R.J., op.cit. p. 166.

- <sup>37)</sup> Gardiner, A.H., *The DakhlehStela* , JEA 19, 1933, P.24.
- <sup>38)</sup> Ibid, p.24.
- <sup>39)</sup> Leahy, A., *op.cit.* p.189.
- <sup>40)</sup> Ibid, p.188.
- <sup>41)</sup> Spalinger, A., *The Concept of the Monarchy during the Saite Epoch — an Essay of Synthesis*, *Orientalia*, NOVA SERIES, Vol. 47, No. 1 (1978), P.15.
- <sup>42)</sup> Josephson, J., Amasis, *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt*, Vol. I, 2001, PP.66-67.
- <sup>43)</sup> Gauthier, H., *op.cit.* p.114, doc. IV, Daressy, G. ,*op.cit.* pp. 2-3.
- <sup>44)</sup> In many cases the Horus name( smnmAat )is written in serkh, see: Farid, A., *Re-used blocks from a temple of Amasis at Philae, the final results*, MDAIK 36, 1980, p. 86, fog.7.
- <sup>45)</sup> stpnTrw it could be translated as "he whom gods chose". See: Bennet, J.,*Op.Cit.*, P. 206.
- <sup>46)</sup> Daressy, G., *Op.Cit.* p.3.
- <sup>47)</sup> Faulkner, R.O., *a concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*, Oxford 1991, P. 277 ; Hannig, R., *Ägyptisches Wörterbuch II (Mittleres Reich und Zweite Zwischenzeit)*, P. 2512.
- <sup>48)</sup> Leitz, Ch., LGG, IV, P.38.
- <sup>49)</sup> El-Enany, Kh., *op.cit.* P.155.



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