

Men on the Red Sea under Senusret I

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In March 1976, Professor Abdel Moneim Sayed made a discovery of major importance concerning the question about the navigation on the Red Sea at Mersa Gawasis (The harbor of the spy-boats). He found archaeological evidence for a passageway of maritime expeditions during the Twelfth Dynasty there. The remains of three of these monuments date to the reign of Senusret I. The first mentions two well-known personalities of this period, the vizier Antefiqer and the substitute Ameny.¹ This monument of limestone has been discovered about 450 m west to the harbor of the Twelfth Dynasty. It consists of a base made of an anchor on which a rectangular stela² had been erected, flanked by two irregular blocks. At the time of its discovery, the top of the stela, which the discoverer assumed as originally curved, had been entirely destroyed by erosion. Its internal face though was still covered by a beautiful hieroglyphic text in incised relief, written from right to left, which started to degrade the moment it had been unearthed. According to the photos, it seems that what had been initially interpreted as the first line of the main text was in fact the end of the inscription accompanying a large figure of which one can only guess some faint traces. (Fig. 1)

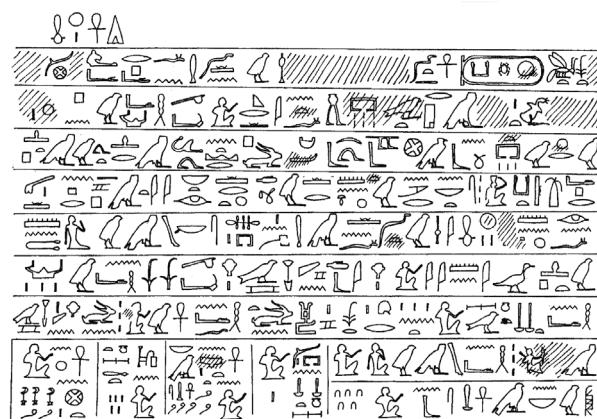
(1) [...] $d(w)$ ϵnh mj r^{ϵ} [...] ³

[...] granted life like *Re* [...]

Thus, the main text probably does not start until line 2.

(2) [...] $n(y)$ - $sw.t$ $bjty$ hpr - $k3$ - r^{ϵ} $\epsilon nh(w)$ $d.t$ [...]

[...] the king of Upper and Lower Egypt Kheperkare living eternally [...]



(Fig. 1) Inscription of Ameny (Antefiqer)
(Farout, *BIFAO* 94, Fig. 1, p. 43, cf; Sayed, *RdE* 29, pl. 16b).

(3) $wd.n$ $hm=f$ n (j) $r(y)$ - $p^{\epsilon}.t$ $h3ty$ - ϵ [...] (j) $m(y)$ - $r(3)$ $njwt$. t [...] $t3ty$ [...] (j) $m(y)$ - $r(3)$ $hw.t$ $wr.t$ 6 $jn(w)$ - $jt=f$ - jk^r

mdh $h^{\epsilon}w$ (j) pn $n(y)$. w^4 (4) w^hr . wt $n(y)$. wt $gbytw$
 $sb.t$ $bj3$ $pwn.t$

r ph m htp

r $iw.t$ m htp (5)

ϵpr $k3$. $wt=sn$ nb . wt

n $mrw.t$ mnh rwd

r $h.t$ $nb.t$ $jry.t$ m $t3$ pn dr $b3h$

(6) jr . $n=f$ mnh sp 2 mj $wd(w)$. t $n=f^5$ m hm $n(y)$
 stp - $s3$

His Majesty commanded the noble governor [...] overseer of the town [...] vizier [...] overseer of the six great castles, Antefiqer, to build this fleet of the dockyards of Coptos and to go to the mining region

of Punt, to reach (it) in peace and to come back in peace, to supply for all their work with the aim of strong efficiency, better than which had been made in this country ever before. It is in perfection, in accordance with what had been commanded to him by the Majesty of the Palace, that he made (it)!

sk whmw s3 mnṯ(7)w-ḥtp jmny ḥr jdb n(y) w3ḏ-wr

*ḥr mdḥ nn n(y) ḥ^cw.w (8) ḥn^c ḏ3ḏ3.t wr.t n(y).t
tp-rsy ḏ3-wr wn(w).t ḥn^c=f*

Now the substitute Ameny, son of Mentuhotep, was at the coast of the ‘Great Blue’, building these boats with the great tribunal of the Thinite nome of the ‘Head of the South’⁶ which was with him.

ḥnh.w wn(w.w) ḥr jdb n(y) w3ḏ-wr:

(9) *(j)m(y)-[r(3)] mš^c ḥn^c whmw*

(10) *šmsw n(y) nb ḥnh(w) wḏ3(w) snb(w) 50*

(j)m(y)-r(3) pr n(y) ḏ3ḏ3.t 1

ḥnh n(y) t.t n(y).t nb ḥnh(w) wḏ3(w) snb(w) 500

sš n(y) ḏ3ḏ3.t ʿ3.t 5

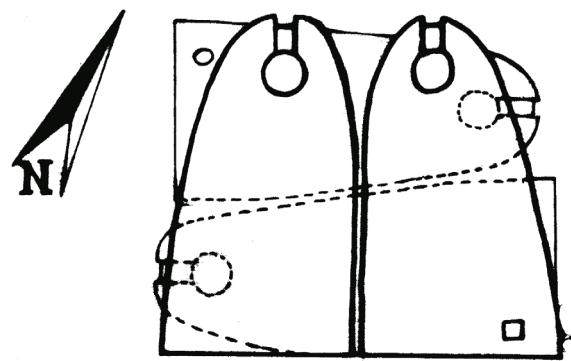
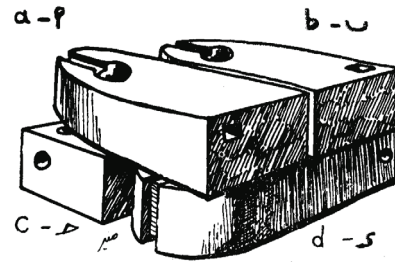
ḥnh n(y) njw.t 3200

The soldiers who were at the coast of the ‘Great Blue’:⁷

Escorts of the Lord (l.p.h)	50
Steward of the tribunal	1
Soldiers of the table the Lord (l.p.h)	500
Scribes of the great tribunal	5
Town soldiers	3200

The overseer (?) of the troop and substitute⁸

The second monument,⁹ which had been discovered 250 m west of the Twelfth Dynasty harbor



(Fig. 2) The pedestal of the shrine of Ankhu after the removal of the inscribed blocks to show the position of the four anchors (Sayed, *JEA* 66, Fig. 1).

and about 200 m east of that of Antefiqer and Ameny, is inscribed with the name of Admiral Ankhu and dates to the Year 24 of Senusret I.¹⁰ It is a limestone chapel made of three anchors of which the upper pierced part had been removed. They were placed on a raised platform constructed of four anchors arranged in two rows (Figs. 2 and 3). The hieroglyphs there are smaller than those of the stela of Ameny. The upper part of the face of the western jamb holds two columns of a text almost entirely lost which named the king. Underneath there are the titles of Ankhu in three columns. The other jamb, which is very rubbed off, must have shown the same text:¹¹ (Fig. 4)

(1) *rḥ n(y)-sw.t m3^c mry=f ḥsy=f m ḥr(y).t* (2)
hrw n(y).t r^c nb jmy-r(3) ḥ-nwtj n(y) pr-ʿ3 (3) *ḥnhw
m3^c ḥrw [nb jm3ḥ]*

The king's acquaintance, his beloved, his favorite, during all days, the overseer of the palace cabinet, Ankhu, true of voice, [holder of a pension].

Fourteen lines of texts to be read from right to left are inscribed on the inner face of the western jamb¹²: (Fig. 5)

(1) [rnp.t-sp] 24 3bd 1 pr[.t] (2) [(j)m(y)-r(3)¹³] h^cw hrp ^cpr.w (j)m(y)-r(3) ^c-[hnwtj (?)... Pw] (3) n.t hnty¹⁴ r ph[w.w ...] (4) hn^c d3mw¹⁵ n(y) nfrw.w [...] (5) s3b ^cd mr nww (j)m(y)-r(3) [...] (6) s3b sš.w šnw.t sš.w [...] (7) jmy-r(3) ^c3.w jmy-r(3) nbwj.w [...] (8) nfrw 400 dmd¹⁶ 400 [D h ...]

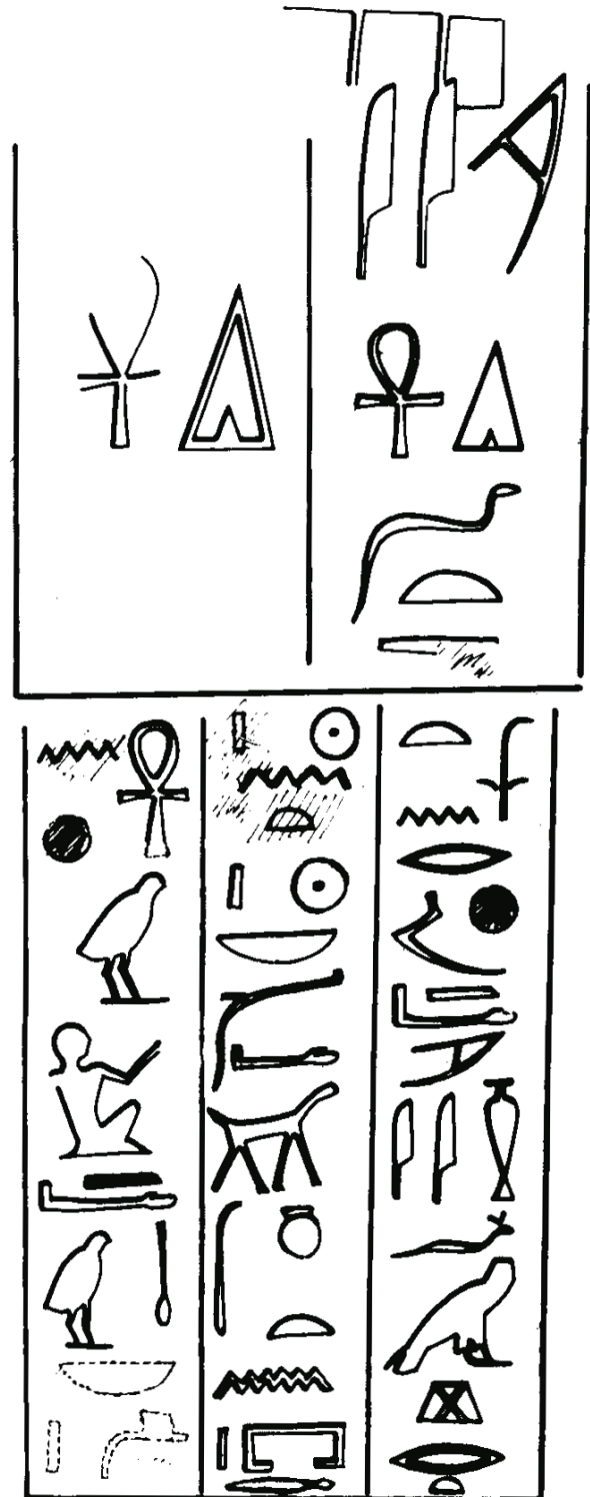
(1) [Year] 24, the first month of the growing season [... the overseer of] (2) the fleet, controller of the crews, overseer of the [cabinet¹⁷ (?)... Pu]nt from the bord[ers...] (4) with the regiments of recruits [...] (5) administrator of the Nun of the service of the vizier,¹⁸ overseer [...] (6) scribes of granaries of the service of the vizier (?), scribes¹⁹ [...] (7) general of the auxiliaries,²⁰ overseer of the goldsmiths [...] (8) recruits : 400. Total 400 + X [...]

(col) rn n(y)²¹ dp.wt²² (?) : (9) smsw.t hnw.t nb.t nww (10) nw.t t[...] m [...] h3 [...] (11) nb. t [...]t.t ph.t [...]

(col) (rn ny) hnm.wt : (12) šn(nw) (?) nww [...]t [...] tr [...] (13) ^chrf (?) šn hr (?) n [...] (14) hr(w).n [...] n [...] snb



(Fig. 3) Photograph of the pedestal of Ankhu after removing one of the anchors to show the criss-cross position of the four anchors (Private communication with Abdel Moneim Sayed via E-mail).



(Fig. 4) Inscription on the façade of the western jamb of the shrine-stela of Ankhu containing his names and titles (Sayed, *RdE* 29, Fig. 3).

(column) name(s) of boats (?): (9) ‘The elder, the mistress, lady of the Nun [...] (10) Nut ? [...] (11) The lady of ? [...] reaching (?) [...]

(column) (name(s) of) wells [...]: (12) That which the Nun surrounds (or the circle of the Nun?) [...] exact ? [...] (13) ?? [...] (14) That from which [...] is far away ? [...] health (?)

The inner face of the eastern jamb shows ten columns of hieroglyphic text, one of them written from right to left and the remaining nine from left to right²³ (Fig. 6).

From right to left:

(1) *mry hr-wr-r^c n(y)-sw.t bjty hpr-k3-r^c mry hnty-h₂ty s3 r^c s-n(y)-wsr.t mry hw.t-hr nb.t pwn.t*

(1) The beloved by Haroeris, the king of Upper and Lower Egypt Kheperkare, beloved by Khentykhety, son of Re, Senusret, beloved by Hathor, Lady of Punt.

From left to right:

(2) [...] *m htp n nb t3.wy n₂h(w) mj r^c*

(2) [...] in peace for the Lord of the Two Lands living like Re.

sk wd.n²⁴ hm=f n smr=f jmy-r(3) s.wt nb.wt n(y.w)t pr n(y)-sw.t jmy-r(3) n₂hwtj²⁵ (3) r²⁶[... jj.] t m htp

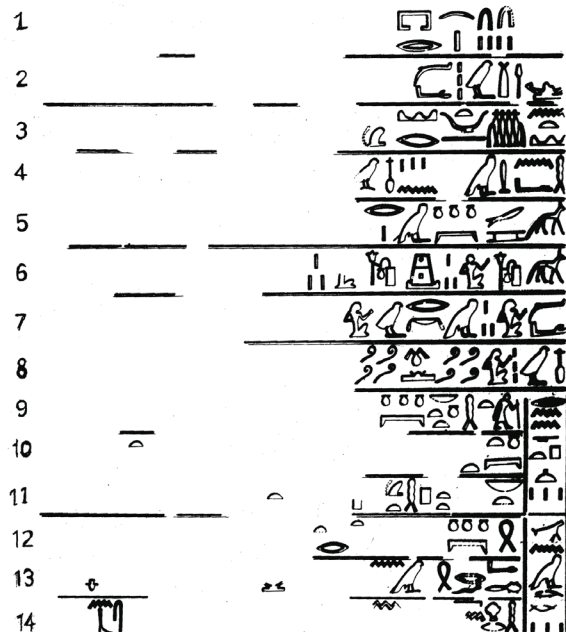
sk gr.t mn₂h(=w) sw m jb n(y) hm=f r smr=f nb jr.w h.t m sn-wr [...] (4) nb ? ht (?) 6²⁷ r[...]t m mt(y²⁸ (qu hmt ?) [...] kn hr s.t n₂wy=f s n(y) m-h₂t hr rh h.t (?) (5) [...] dp.wt [...] dmj n(y) s3ww (?) sp3.t gbtyw r ph (6) [...] r²⁹ [...] h^cw pn mj [...] nb [...]3 jr.t (7) [...]r dr[...]

Now, His Majesty commanded his courtier, the overseer of all the places of the King’s palace, the overseer of cabinet (3) [...] to] come (back) in peace. Now, he was more efficient in the eyes of His Majesty

than any of his courtiers who had made something in the ‘Great circle’ [...] (4) all (or Lord ?) ? six [...one?] exact (?), courageous at the place of his two arms (?), man of the future in keeping informed about things (?) (5) [...] boats [...] the port of Sauu³⁰ (?) (of ?) the nome of Coptos to reach (6) [...] this fleet like ? [...] doing (7) [...] to drive out (?) [...]

Inner face of the rear block³¹: (Fig.7)

(1) [...] *n jmy-r(3) h^cw h₂rp n₂pr.w jmy-r(3) n₂fr.w w³² (2) [...] m3^c r bj3 Pwn.t (3) [...]t jj.n=(j) jn.n(=j) m m3^c[.t] (4) [...] n jj³³ [...] hr [...] n³⁴ hm n(y)³⁵ nb t3.wy³⁶ n(y)-sw.t bjty hpr-k3-r^c nb n₂h w3s d.t (5) [...] jw h^cw [...] n [...] nt[...] n₂sk³⁷ (?) (6) [...] t3.w h3s.wt sn [...]w ? t3=sn jnw t3-n₂r m gs t3.w³⁸ (?) (7) [...] km3(w) [...] hr (?) nb t3-t₂n m h.t nb.t n(y).t t3 pn sdm(w).t m (8) [...] km3(w).t=sn t3 mw³⁹ s^cy (qr tn=sn t3 n(y) jw n(y) s^c ?) hr jdb.w nt(y).t jw₂(y).t⁴⁰ (9) [...] dd⁴¹ (?) st whm (?) [...] 3.w [...] (10) [...] jnw pn j^cbw.n=sn⁴² r b3k.t [...] m [...] t3 (?) n [...] (11) [...] nb jm jn [jmy-r(3) n₂hwtj] n(y) Pr-n₂ n₂hw*

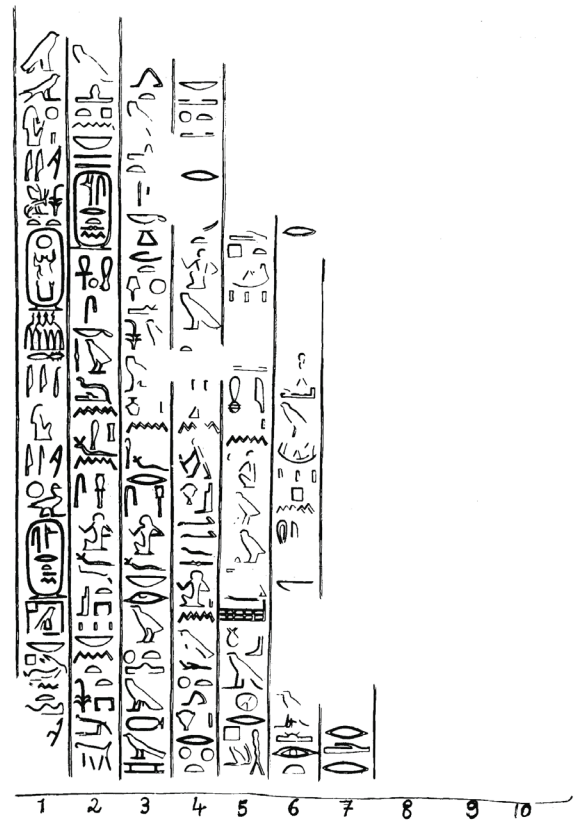


(Fig. 5) Inscription on the inner face of the western jamb of the stela of Ankhu (Private communication with Abdel Moneim Sayed via E-mail).

(1) [...] for (?) the director of the fleet, controller of the crews, general of the recruits (2) [...] send to the Mines of Punt (3) [...] It is having really brought [...] that I came back (4) [...] for the Majesty of the Lord of the Two Lands, King of Upper and Lower Egypt Kheperkare, master of life and power, eternally. (5) [...] The fleet [...] the ‘Great pourer’ (6) [...] the lands and the foreign countries? [...] their lands, the produce of the Land of the God? (7) [...] create [...] Horus Lord of the emerging land (?), as everything of this land being heard (?) (8) [...] their creation : the land, the water, the sand (or : they landed on the land of the sandbank on the shores ?) on the shores, what exists and what does not exist (?) (9) [...] speak (or: may the substitute say it ?) [...] (10) [...] this produce which they have collected for the taxes [...] (11) [...] master there (or: every [...] there) by the [overseer of cabinet] of the palace Ankhu.

Finally, Abdel Moneim Sayed discovered a fragment of limestone,⁴³ certainly belonging to a stela which disappeared. It comprises the third document, which in relation to its content, is not the least interesting of the group. In fact, it contains the remains of three lines of hieroglyphic text, to be read from right to left, where one can recognize the two cartouches of Senusret I followed by an epithet and three representations of boats. They can be identified as the names of ships⁴⁴ including royal names which have navigated on the Red Sea: (Fig. 8)

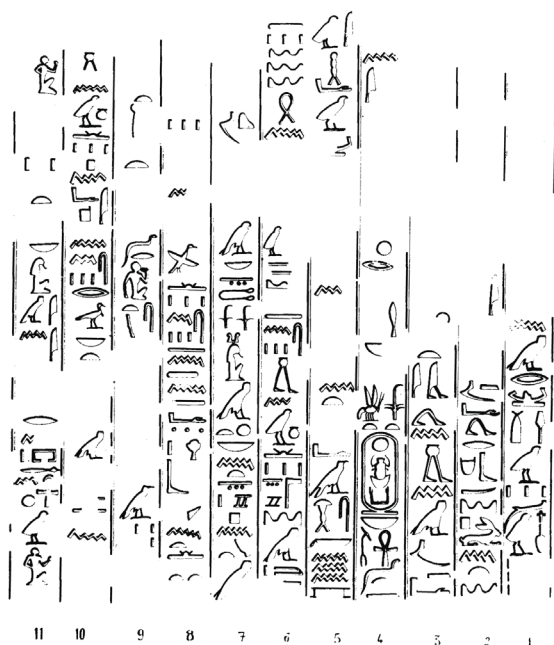
hnm(w)-[mnw ?] [hpr]-k3-[r^c] ...
w3h(w)-^cnh-s-n(y)-[wsr].t
 [...]t[...]
[Kheper]ka[re] is united with [Min ?]
Se[nus]ret is enduring of life
 [...]



(Fig. 6) Inscription on the inner face of the eastern jamb of the shrine-stela of Ankhu (Sayed, JEA 64, Fig. 2).

What was this *w3d-wr* on whose shore Ameny was with his troop? First of all, what is the meaning of the words of which it is made of? Patrick Gautier has brilliantly demonstrated in his doctoral thesis⁴⁵ that *w3d* does not correspond precisely to one of our colors. This notion is linked to the idea of freshness, youth, brightness and corresponds to the chromatic scale of water and plants, from light blue to light green. Moreover, the ancient Egyptians noted the difference between light and dark rather than between green and blue. Thus, *w3d-wr* means literally ‘the large light-blue-green’. In order to analyse this term further, we have to avoid attestations following the Middle Kingdom because the semantic field of a word can vary considerably over time.⁴⁶ The work by Cl. Vandersleyen shows that there is no example of *w3d-wr*⁴⁷ before the Fifth Dynasty. There are

15 attestations of the Fifth and Sixth Dynasties, then 26 from the Eleventh to Thirteenth Dynasties, after having eliminated the doubtful cases, such as example No. 242 of uncertain date which is also too fragmentary. Example No. 235⁴⁸ (Fig. 9) should be moved aside because the man holding a stick written before *w3d*w is probably not the *wr* of *w3d-wr* but the determinative of *j3w*. The fragment of the titles (Fig. 10) *n k3 n(y) h3t [...]* *w3d [...]* inscribed on the south wall of tomb I at Kom Ruqaya⁴⁹ in the Fayum is too fragmentary⁵⁰ in order to establish *h3ty-[*ny] w3d [wr]* with certainty, even if a *w3d-wr* in the Fayum is an attractive idea. At first sight, 41 attestations seem to be significant. However, the majority comes from the *Pyramid Texts*⁵¹ and the *Coffin Texts*,⁵² which are difficult to use in order to locate a geographic feature. One can state though that *w3d-wr* stands in relation with water, that it can be crossed (*d3i* with the determinative of the boat) and that one can travel



(Fig. 7) Inscription on the inner face of the rear block of the shrine of Ankhu (Private communication with Abdel Moneim Sayed via E-mail).

through it (*nmi* followed by the determinative of the boat or water, but also the legs).⁵³ We find *w3d-wr* used five times to name the inundation god.⁵⁴ Thus, this liquid element brings goodness and richness. The Tale of the Shipwrecked Sailor uses this expression seven times.⁵⁵ The hero navigates there to the Mines of the Ruler and the serpent of the enchanted island presents himself as the master of the products of Punt. In order to reach the Mines of the Ruler, one has to take a long trip by boat, faraway from Egypt, crossing a place associated with the way to Punt in the Egyptian imagination. This maybe in the direction of the Mines in Sinai from the harbor of Ayn Sukhna or towards the Mines of Punt via the port at Mersa Gawasis, or possibly via the Nile in direction of Nubia. A wave with a height of 4 meters is more than unlikely to have occurred on a river but in the sense of a tale, nothing is impossible.⁵⁶ However, only the association between *w3d-wr* and Punt is informative here. It is impossible to distinguish the geographic reality in this context, which is like searching for the location of the kingdom of the 'Master Cat'⁵⁷ or of 'Cinderella'.⁵⁸ In a second fictive narrative, Sinuhe evokes a long list of Egyptian divinities and the entirety of the world known to the ancient Egyptians concluding by 'all the gods of Ta-Meri (Egypt) and the islands of *w3d-wr*'.⁵⁹ The context as such is the only information from which one can infer that it is a stretch of water which is vast enough to include islands. In the hymn to Sobek⁶⁰ of the Ramesseum papyrus VI, 50, this god is assimilated with Horus searching for the corpse of Osiris: *šm=k š, hns=k w3d-wr* 'you travel (in the region of the) lake, you travel through cross through (the region of) *w3d-wr*. The two verbs determined by the legs describe *a priori* a terrestrial movement and not one of navigation; *š* and *w3d-wr* relate here to Fayum. The so-called 'dogs-stela' of Antef II from el-Tarif⁶¹ is inscribed with one of the oldest *Königsnovellen* which

has been so far discovered (Fig. 11). In the second column of the text, the king relates his conquest of the Thinite nome which he makes his northern frontier. The following text-column starts with [...] *mi nwy ʕ h.t mj w3d-wr* ‘[...] like the stream, great (or rich?) like *w3d-wr*’. Again there is another reference to water. Despite the considerable lacuna, there is no reason why the context should be a tomb.⁶² Our term can also be found in another *Königsnovelle* of the Eleventh Dynasty which comes from Coptos⁶³ (Fig. 12). Unfortunately, this document is filled with too many lacunae to be useful here. One cannot know what is inclined towards the shores of *w3d-wr* and what is the link with the following paragraph where one learns that the narrator went downstream after he had acted at Elephantine. Finally, three autobiographies quote *w3d-wr*. In the first one,⁶⁴ Mentuhotep III orders the steward Henu to go to Punt with gibilite boats⁶⁵ in order to bring back fresh incense. The leader of the expedition leaves from Coptos with a troop of 3000 men, digs 15 wells on the way and reaches *w3d-wr* where he constructs a fleet that navigates to Punt. He returns from the Land of the God passing via Wag and Wadi Hammamat from where he brings with him stones for statues. The important number of wells dug on the way astonished certain historians

who deduced that the route taken had been very long and could not have been the one through Wadi Hammamat towards Mersa Gawasis. It might have rained during the long trip (l. 13) *jr(=w) n=i mtm m jtrw t3 dšr m ʕ3d n(y) šh.t* ‘the road had been transformed for me into a river and the desert into a grassland of the countryside’. The same phrases are used by the members of the expedition sent in Year 2 of Nebtaure Mentuhotep who experienced the well-known miraculous rainfall.⁶⁶ The Abyssinian stela of Mentuhotep, vizier of Senusret I, uses a comparable metaphor undoubtedly in order to refer to another extraordinary rainfall when he was in Nubia, probably accompanying the king, to inspect the construction of the Nubian fortresses:⁶⁷ *mtn.w m hb, h3s.wt m s3t, nwy (18) rd(=w) hr tp n(y) dw, htp.wt nb.t m ht [...], hnm.t [...]* *hpr(=w) n hm=f sʕnh(w) rhy.t jm* ‘[...] the roads being in feast, the *djebel* pouring libations, the flood having been placed on the top of the mountain, all the food offerings behind [...]’⁶⁸ a well [...] (miracle) which happened for His Majesty who feeds the Rekhyt⁶⁹ with it’. So, Henu would have profited from this occasion of rain in order to dig shafts for water supply. It seems to me that for a troop this large, the water holes are never situated too close to each other and that their number does not give an indication for the distance that has been covered. We do not know



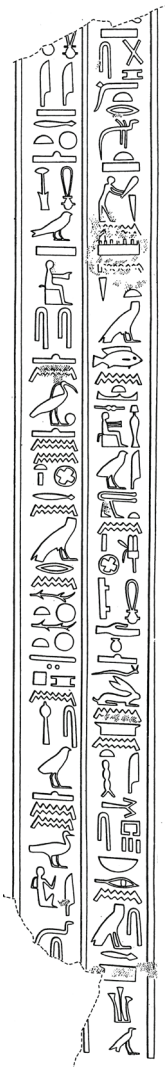
(Fig. 8) Fragment of stela with the names of Senusert I and drawing of boats (Private communication with Abdel Moneim Sayed via E-mail).



(Fig. 9) Inscription of Meir (Blackman, *The Rock Tombs of Meir*, IV, *EES* 25, pl. 14).



(Fig. 10) Inscription of the tomb I of Kom Ruqaya (Arnold, *MDAIK* 21, 106).



(Fig. 11) Stela of King Antef of El-Tarif (D. Arnold, *Gräber des Alten und Mittleren Reiches in El-Tarif*, *AVDAIK* 17, pl. 53a).

where Henu embarked, but his passage through Wadi Hammamat is a strong indication for a return via the Red Sea and via Mersa Gawasis. Here, the meaning of *w3d-wr* refers probably to the Red Sea. In one of the numerous inscriptions referring to the extraordinary expedition in the Year 2 of Mentuhotep IV, Se-ankh⁷⁰ says:

*jr(=w) n=j jn.wt=s m w3d.w k3.wt=s m nw(y).
wt n(y.w)t mw pr(=w) m hrd.w r-dr=s hnty t3w
mhty r mn.t-hwfw*

*pr=kw r w3d-wr msn.n=j 3pd.w msn.n=j k3.w
(qu w.t)*

pr.n=j r h3s.t tn m s js.t 60 nds 70 m msn.w

‘Its wadis have been transformed for me into green fields and its heights into runs of water, being supplied completely with young (animals) from Tjau in the south until Menat Khufu (Beni Hassan) in the north. By having gone until the ‘Great Blue’, I harpooned birds and I harpooned cattle. When I went up to this djebel, it was with 60 men of the crew and 70 young men (military men) equipped with harpoons.’⁷¹ It is known that the expedition had been witness to a miraculous rainfall but this is of no help to shed light on the geographical position of *w3d-wr* —in direction of the Nile or the Red Sea? —in whose vicinity Se-ankh has gone to hunt in order to feed the members of the expedition. The third text is no other than the one left by Ameny at Mersa Gawasis referring to his maritime expedition to Punt. We will deal later on with the link between the shores of *w3d-wr* and the coast of the Red Sea, which is mentioned in this text. It is significant that the three autobiographies which relate to the events that had taken place at *w3d-wr* are located in Wadi Hammamat and in Wadi Gawasis, on the way to or at the coast of the Red Sea, the two of which are clearly relating to an expedition using boats to go to Punt. Furthermore, the connection between Mersa Gawasis



(Fig. 12) Inscription of Coptos (Fischer, *Inscriptions from the Coptite Nome*, *AnOr* 40, Fig. 16b).

and Punt is indisputable, this Land has not only been quoted in the account of Ameny and Ankhu, but also on two ostraca⁷² of the end at the Twelfth Dynasty, on the stela of Iimeru⁷³ of the Twelfth Dynasty, on two stela referring to expeditions during the reign of Amenemhat III⁷⁴ and on a wooden box.⁷⁵ One has to add to this list the stela of Khentykhetyur⁷⁶ from Wadi Gawasis which was certainly originating from Mersa Gawasis as has been suggested by Abdel Moneim Sayed like the one of Khnumhotep⁷⁷ that cites the ‘Land of the God’ like in the text of Ankhu.

It is notable that Ankhu presents himself as administrator of the Nun and that the Nun is written several times on his monument. The inscription left by Hornakht⁷⁸ in the Wadi Maghara in Year 2 of the reign of Amenemhat III provides important information for understanding this title:

iw d3.n=j nww hr špss.w m wp.t hr nb ʿh.

‘I have crossed the Nun loaded with treasures in mission of Horus, Lord of the Palace.’

The verbs seem to imply navigation to Sinai, on the Red Sea from Ayn Sukhna, in consequence of the recent archaeological discoveries. Therefore, it is possible that here Nun corresponds to the sea as it is usually translated. However, the use of the term Nun, which designates a space which is exterior of the created world, puts emphasis on its aspect of being unknown to men and unexplored, with the aim to underline the prowess of Hornakht far from the Nile Valley. Additionally, the title of Ankhu would imply a domestication of this virgin and unknown space. Finally, the text names *Sn-wr* and the much rarer term ʿ3-*sk* which probably also correspond to the marine

environment. It is notable that the same terms ʿ3-*sk*, *w3d-wr* and *sn-wr* are also associated in the Pyramid Texts⁷⁹ but here for the first time they are occurring in a text found in the coast referring navigation.

Most of the numbers corresponding to the expedition of Ankhu are lost. However, it seems to have been considerably large, and that of Ameny includes an administrative and a judicial unit belonging to the tribunal of the Thinite nome of the ‘Head of the South’—one steward and five scribes—at whose side a military troop stood consisting of 50 officers (escort of the lord l.h.p), 500 under-officers (soldiers of the table of the lord l.h.p.) and 3200 regular soldiers (town soldiers). It is remarkable that the list does not name the professions specialized in the stewardship and the assembling of the boats (bakers, carpenters, rope-makers). It is questionable that they were part of the militaries already stated.⁸⁰ If there had been corvée laborers, the author did not consider it worth mentioning. It is clear that the stelae found at Mersa Gawasis were composed in order to be read at this place. The transformation of true anchors into stelae is surely not innocent: their presence indicates the actual existence of the successful expeditions which arrived there.

The recent excavations at Wadi Gawasis brought to light thousands of pottery vessels of tubular shape, with a length of 25–30 cm, an exterior diameter of 7–7.5 cm, being 3.3–4 cm thick, which have been interpreted as pipes for blowing the fire used for the melting of copper in the hearths of clay.⁸¹ The same type of pottery has also been found at Ayn Sukhna and its function has initially been interpreted in the same way.⁸² Nevertheless, they are without doubt bread-molds typical for the Twelfth Dynasty which are characterized by their always tubular form, sometimes very slightly flared, with a flat base which usually has a hole that has been pierced before firing⁸³ (Fig. 13). This type of pottery has been found at

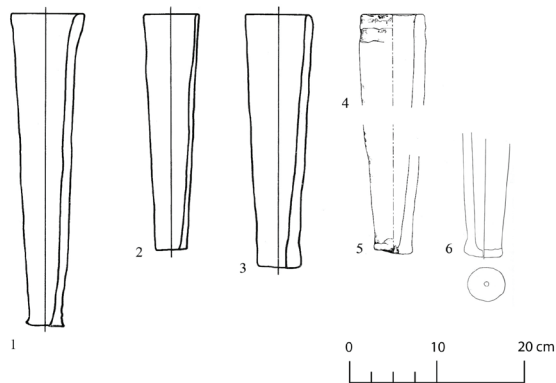
numerous sites in Egypt and Nubia.⁸⁴ It is important to note that the bread-molds of the Twelfth Dynasty are not all pierced but all the pierced molds known so far date to this period.⁸⁵ The ceramicist of *IFAO*, Sylvie Marchand, informed me that those from Ayn Sukhna have a characteristic fine yellow–orange colored slip inside which had the aim to allow the easy removal of the bread which is in the mold after baking.⁸⁶ We have noticed the same slip inside those found at Tell Edfu (Fig. 14 a-c). It can be observed that even though their exterior is always relatively rough, the inside is very smooth and regular, which is the result from shaping the vessel over a cylindrical core, a technique well adapted for taking out the baked bread. Nevertheless, the term ‘bread-mold’ is rather simple because the principal function was to bake the dough which had been filled inside them in a rather liquid form. It is of course not prohibited to suppose that such molds were occasionally reused as tubes for blowing fire. However, the shape of these blowing tubes is slightly different. In particular, the holes are never in the axis of the vessel but always at its side. The excavators of Ayn Sukhna have found such tubes and have recognized that the previous ones are actually bread-molds. The discovery of thousands of bread-molds typical for the Twelfth Dynasty proves the presence of a large number of persons in this area during this period, their food had been prepared locally and had not been imported ready prepared.⁸⁷ This is important evidence for a presence of 3750 soldiers at the maritime coast⁸⁸ who belonged to the expedition of Ameny assembling the boats which were transported in pieces from the arsenals of Coptos, and who participated in an expedition to Punt which corresponds to the hypothesis made by Professor Abdel Moneim Sayed. The vessels and the nautical titles are mentioned frequently in the texts presented here and the vocation of the site to be a ‘harbor’ is confirmed by numerous ropes and pieces

of wood which are from boats.⁸⁹ Additionally, the discovery of burnt remains of a small boat by the 2006 mission to Ayn Sukhna confirms the existence of a second embarkation point at this coast, as well as the significance of the Egyptian navigation on the Red Sea during this period.⁹⁰ These remains suggest that the harbor installation at Mersa Gawasis was of considerable importance, used and reused at numerous occasions. After the navigation season ended, the boats and their equipment were stored in shelter until the following season. It is for that reason that today we find such invaluable material in those conditions. With regard to this evidence we should consider the envoi of several expeditions under the long reign of Senusret I, Ameny is probably not the same as Ankhu⁹¹ which is confirmed by the different numbers given in the two documents.

The ancient Egyptians navigated on the Red Sea in order to reach Punt, one among other aims.⁹² The abundant archaeological and epigraphic evidence paint undeniably the same picture. The fact is that it is logical to suppose that they also navigated on the Mediterranean, even more so because of their close relations to Byblos, because they sailed boats called ‘giblites’ in order to reach Punt, because of the pieces belonging to boats made of cedar wood found at Mersa Gawasis. Indeed, the use of such boats with such names and of such wood on the Red Sea means that these boats existed in the city of Byblos and that they navigated on them from this city on the Mediterranean Sea.

However, the tradition is to pretend that the peculiar geography of the Nile Delta prohibited that the boats reached the coast. Nevertheless, the Mesopotamian Delta presented the same geological characteristics, but the wealth of the Sumerian cities was founded to some extent on maritime trade in the Persian Gulf, with Bahrain (Dilmun), Oman (Magan), and further towards the Indus (Melukha)—

whose maritime access, by the way, is also as difficult to reach as in Egypt and Iraq.⁹³ How can it be that the lagoons, the swamps, the sandbanks which allegedly prohibited the Egyptians at Buto, Busiris or Avaris to access the Mediterranean Sea, did not hinder any marines of Ur, Eridu, Magan and Melukha to reach the Gulf? Under the same conditions, which was possible for the Sumerians should have been also possible for the Egyptians and vice versa. It is time to abandon such prejudices, neither the sea nor the desert stopped the Egyptians.



(Fig. 13) Bread molds of the Twelfth Dynasty
 (No. 1) Kubbán (Jacquet-Gordon, in Arnold (ed.), *Studien zur altägyptischen Keramik*, Fig. 4 no. 9)
 (No. 2) Semna (Jacquet-Gordon, in Arnold (ed.), *Studien zur altägyptischen Keramik*, no.10)
 (No. 3) Mirgissa (Jacquet-Gordon, in Arnold (ed.), *Studien zur altägyptischen Keramik*, no.12)
 (Nos. 4 and 5) from Dahshur (D. Arnold, 'Keramikbearbeitung in Dahschur 19761981-', *MDAIK* 38 (1982), Abb. 7, no.12 and 14)
 (No. 6) Dendera (*Marchand, Cahiers de la céramique égyptienne* 7, Fig.114).



(Fig. 14 a-c) A bread-mold from Tell Edfou (photo Nadine Moller).

I would like to dedicate this article to Professor Abdel Moneim Sayed, whose valuable work has inspired my research. I would also like to thank my friend El-Sayed Mahfouz for his support and encouragement, as well as Nadine Moeller for all her help with the English translation of this text.

Notes

- * Cheops Institute, Paris.
- 1 See A.M. Sayed, 'Discovery of the Site of the Twelfth Dynasty Port at Wadi Gawasis on the Red Sea Shore', *RdE* 29 (1977), 169-173, pl. 15 d-f and 16, a-b; A.M. Sayed, 'The Recently Discovered port on the Red Sea Shore', *JEA* 64 (1978b), 70-71; Leclant, *Orientalia* 49, 399; A. Nibbi, 'Some Remarks on the Two Monuments from Mersa Gawasis', *ASAE* 64 (1981), 69-74; A.M. Sayed, 'New Light on the Recently Discovered Port on the Red Sea Shore', *Chronique d'Égypte* 58 (1983), 29-30; L. Bradbury, 'Reflections on Traveling to 'God's Land and Punt in the Middle Kingdom', *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 25 (1988), 134.
- 2 H. 45 cm; L. 50 cm; W. 15 cm.
- 3 This square bracket replaces the lacunae (three dots) by the computer.
- 4 As suggests C. Obsomer, *Sésostris I^{er}. Etude chronologique et historique du règne* (Bruxelles, 1995), 712 and note a, it is possible to restore the preposition *hr* instead of the nisbe noun *n(y).w*.
- 5 It is possible to read *wḏ(w).t.n=f* and thus understand: 'conforming to that what he (the King) has commanded as Majesty of the palace'.
- 6 See D. Farout, 'La carrière du *wimw* Ameny et l'organisation des expéditions au ouadi Hammamat au Moyen Empire' *BIFAO* 94 (1994), 144, 155.
- 7 It is possible to translate: 'in presence of the great tribunal of the Thinite nome of Tepresy who was with him, and the soldiers who were at the maritime coast'.
- 8 The important space between the owl and the bowman provides a good argument for adding here an *r* but it remains possible to read: *ḥnḥ.w wn(w.w) hr jdb n(y) w3ḏ-wr (9) m mšḥ ḥnḥ wḥmw* 'the soldiers who were at the coast of the 'Great Blue', forming the troop who accompanied the substitute.
- 9 See Sayed, *RdE* 29, 150, 157-169, Fig. 2-6, pl. 13 (d-e) et 14; Sayed, *JEA* 64, 69-71, pl. XI; A.M. Sayed, 'Observations on Recent Discoveries at Wadi Gawasis', *JEA* 66 (1980), 154-155; J. Leclant, *Orientalia* 49 (1980), 399; Nibbi, *ASAE* 64, 69-72; Obsomer, *Sésostris I^{er}. Etude chronologique et historique du règne*, 216, 380-85, document 173, p. 713-15; D. Farout, 'Des expéditions en mer Rouge au début de la XII^e dynastie', *Égypte, Afrique & Orient* 41 (April 2006), 45-48.
- 10 Like Obsomer, *Sésostris I^{er}. Etude chronologique et historique du règne*, 216, 384 and 713. I think that the lacuna at the beginning of the first line before the number contained *rnp.t-sp* and thus that there is no reason to imagine a later date.
- 11 Sayed, *RdE* 29, 157, 158, Fig. 3.
- 12 Sayed, *RdE* 29, 161.
- 13 There has been certainly the sign of the tongue F20 above the boat.
- 14 It seems to me that the copy of Sayed, *RdE* 29, 161, which shows a boat above a horizontal line instead of the sign of the horns F13 above the sign of the land N17, is the correct one. This horizontal line can be interpreted as an *n* and it should be read *ḥnt.n(=i)*, perfective of the verb used to emphasize the sequence introduced by *r ph*. However, this solution does not explain the presence of the sign of the *djebel* which is situated above the *r* in both versions. This is the reason which incited me to prefer *ḥnt(y) r ph[...]* 'from the far edges (or the rear) [of...]'.
- 15 I think that the sign of the man A1 has to be added as determinative of *d3mw*, in accordance to the version by Sayed, *RdE* 29, 161.
- 16 One has to read the sign S23, in accordance to the copy by Sayed, *RdE* 29, 161 and not T12 above the Y1.
- 17 Or *(i)m(y)-r(3) ʕ3[.w]* 'general of the auxiliaries', with the same writing as in line 7.
- 18 See H.G. Fischer, *Egyptian Titles of the Middle Kingdom. A Supplement to Wm. Ward's Index*, (New York, 1997), 25, n° 1267a, who translates 'judicial ʕḏ-mr official of the ocean' which corresponds to the translation by Sayed, *RdE* 29, 160, note c.
- 19 Or 'scribes of the service of the vizier, scribes of granaries'.
- 20 Concerning this writing without the sign S25, see Fischer, *Egyptian Titles of the Middle Kingdom. A Supplement to Wm. Ward's Index*, 41, n° 59.
- 21 The line dividing the column into two parts at the same height as the double line which separates lines 11 and 12 is a strong indication that it functions as two

- groups of proper names. The first (l. 9-11) would then provide the names of the boats, feminine nouns that would not have been formed with the name of the king. The second (l. 12-14) would give the names referring to locations of wells.
- 22 The first sign could be a *d*. Without having seen the original, I do not know whether it is possible to replace the sign of the hillock N30 by the one of the boat.
- 23 Sayed, *RdE* 29, 159-160.
- 24 The *d* after *wḏ* seems to me to be an error in this copy.
- 25 The copy of Sayed, *RdE* 29, shows at the end of column 2 the signs *nw*, *t* and *tj*, which are missing in the drawing. However, the title is clear.
- 26 This sign can only be found in the copy by Sayed, *RdE* 29.
- 27 The letter 6 is only present in the copy by Sayed, *RdE* 29.
- 28 The copy by Sayed, *RdE* 29, gives the sign in D52 and the sign *t* although the drawing shows two vertical lines.
- 29 The 3 only exists in the copy by Sayed, *RdE* 29.
- 30 As has been proposed by Professor Abdel Moneim Sayed, this place, which is named on the stela of Khentykhetyur of Wadi Gawasis, is probably Mersa Gawasis.
- 31 Sayed, *RdE* 29, 162.
- 32 One certainly has to restore the determinative of the man, as in the copy by Sayed, *RdE* 29.
- 33 The second *j* cannot be found except in the copy by Sayed, *RdE* 29.
- 34 This *n* is only present in the copy by Sayed, *RdE* 29.
- 35 The copy by Sayed, *RdE* 29, shows the sign A40, determinative of *hm*.
- 36 The sign of the Two Lands is only present in the copy by Sayed, *RdE* 29.
- 37 It is a rarely written word which can be found in the *Pyramid Texts*, mentioned in *Wb* 310, 8-9, despite the presence of the biliteral sign V29, as well as Hannig, *ÄW* I, 257 [47106] ʿ3-*sk* ‘Oasek (e Meer)’ and *ÄW* I, p. 1308 [33067] šn-ʿ3-*sk* ‘Meer’. See also Meeks, *Alex* 77.3922 ‘couler?’ (of a flow of water) referring to Coptic. One can also find the verb *sk* in the expression *sk mw s3t*, ‘Wasser spenden’ in the offering lists, Hannig, *ÄWI*, p. 1250 [30909]. It seems to me that the ‘Great pourer’, or the ‘One of great pouring’ (ʿ3-*sk*) and the ‘Circle of great pouring’ (šn-ʿ3-*sk*), provides the most logical sense. This image could depict an aspect of the sea, which pours the waves to the coast, perhaps filled with goodness.
- 38 The sign *t3* N 17 is not sure, it could also be the door-bolt *s*. The three lines of the plural can only be found in the copy by Sayed, *RdE* 29.
- 39 This reading implies three trickles of water instead of the sign of the island between two trickles that can be found in both copies.
- 40 In the copy by Sayed, *RdE* 29, *nt(y).t jw(y).t* seems the most logical.
- 41 The *d* is not certain.
- 42 The sign under the arm ʿ is the pot W10 which has the value *jʿb*.
- 43 Sayed, *RdE* 29, 150, pl. 12 (b); Obsomer, *Sésostris I^{er}. Etude chronologique et historique du règne*, document 174, p. 716; Farout, *Egypte, Afrique & Orient* 41, 48.
- 44 D. Meeks, ‘Coptos et les chemins de Pount’, *Topoi. Orient-Occident*, suppl. 3 (Lyon, 2002), 313-314, had already noticed the nature of the fragment.
- 45 P. Gautier, *Le rouge et le vert : sémiologie de la couleur en Egypte ancienne*, Thèse dirigée par Nicolas Grimal, 2 vols. (Paris, 1995).
- 46 See for example the remark about ‘Hau-nebut’ by Cl. Vandersleyen, *Ouadj our w3ḏ wr. Un autre aspect de la vallée du Nil* (Bruxelles, 1999), 26.
- 47 This is confirmed by R. Hannig, *ÄWI*, p. 314 [6771], who provides 16 references.
- 48 A.M. Blackman, *The Rock Tombs of Meir*, IV, *EES* 25 (London, 1924), pl. 14. Sixth Dynasty.
- 49 Vandersleyen, *Ouadj our w3ḏ wr. Un autre aspect de la vallée du Nil*, n° 135a, Middle Kingdom.
- 50 See Di. Arnold ‘Bericht über Fahrten in das El-Gharaq-Becken (Faijûm)’, *MDAIK* 21 (1966), 101-109, Fig. 6.
- 51 Vandersleyen, *Ouadj our w3ḏ wr. Un autre aspect de la vallée du Nil*, n° 271-283.

- 52 Vandersleyen, *Ouadj our w3d wr. Un autre aspect de la vallée du Nil*, n° 47-55.
- 53 This might indicate that *w3d-wr* can be also crossed by foot, but *nmi š* ‘to travel (through a lake)’ is used with the determinative of the legs, too.
- 54 Two of them date to the Fifth Dynasty (Vandersleyen, *Ouadj our w3d wr. Un autre aspect de la vallée du Nil*, n° 1, Sun Temple of Niuserré at Abu Gurob, and n° 2, Sun Temple of Sahure at Abusir) and three of the Twelfth Dynasty (Vandersleyen, *Ouadj our w3d wr. Un autre aspect de la vallée du Nil*, n° 236, Meir 6, 15, n° 171, White Chapel of Senusret I at Karnak, and n° 207, altar of Senusret I at Lisht).
- 55 Vandersleyen, *Ouadj our w3d wr. Un autre aspect de la vallée du Nil*, n° 250-256.
- 56 Nevertheless there exist other references about storms and big waves on the *w3d-wr* in unquestionable contexts, even in earlier texts.
- 57 ‘Master Cat or Puss in Boots’ after the French original ‘Le Chat botté’ by Charles Perrault in *Contes de ma mère l’Oye, ou Histoires ou contes du temps passé avec des moralités* (Mother Goose Tales), Barbin, 1697.
- 58 ‘Cendrillon’ by Charles Perrault, see note 56.
- 59 Vandersleyen, *Ouadj our w3d wr. Un autre aspect de la vallée du Nil*, n° 299.
- 60 Vandersleyen, *Ouadj our w3d wr. Un autre aspect de la vallée du Nil*, n° 285. It dates to Amenemhat III.
- 61 Vandersleyen, *Ouadj our w3d wr. Un autre aspect de la vallée du Nil*, n° 32, CGC 20512; D. Arnold, *AVDAIK* 17, p. 53, pl. 53a.
- 62 Although this has been affirmed by Vandersleyen, *Ouadj our w3d wr. Un autre aspect de la vallée du Nil*, p. 189.
- 63 Vandersleyen, *Ouadj our w3d wr. Un autre aspect de la vallée du Nil*, n° 44; H.G. Fischer, *Inscriptions from the Coptite Nome*, *AnOr* 40, (Roma, 1964), 114, Fig. 16b p. 113, pl. 37.
- 64 Vandersleyen, *Ouadj our w3d wr. Un autre aspect de la vallée du Nil*, n° 143; J. Couyat et P. Montet, *Les inscriptions du ouâdi Hammâmât*, *MIFAO* 34 (Cairo, 1912), n° 114, p. 81-84, pl. 31; Obsomer, *Sésostris I^{er}. Etude chronologique et historique du règne*, 394-397, 400.
- 65 *kbny.wt* is a *nisbe* noun derived from *Kbny* ‘Byblos’. This attribution is incontestable because the kings of this city call themselves *h3ty-^c n(y) Kbny* ‘governor of Byblos’ in the hieroglyphic inscriptions found in their tombs. This is not the only attestation for giblite boats in relation to Punt. Already under Pepi II, Anankhet (*Urk.* I, 134) had been attacked while he was constructing in order to go there. This proves that the term designates in fact the type of boat and not the origin of the owners. It is interesting to note the association between the two destinations in the inscriptions of Khnumhotep of the Sixth Dynasty in tomb 34 at Qubbet el-Hawa in which he declares to have gone several times to Byblos and Punt (*Urk.* 140-1). The reason is probably due to a maritime navigation in this type of boat in both cases. See L. Bradbury, ‘*Kpn*-boats, Punt Trade, and a Lost Emporium’, *JARCE* 33 (1996), 37-60 where the complete bibliography can be found.
- 66 Couyat et Montet, *Les inscriptions du Ouâdi Hammâmât*, *MIFAO* 34, n° 191, l. 3; Couyat et Montet, *Les inscriptions du ouâdi Hammâmât*, *MIFAO* 34, n° 113, l. 12-13; Couyat et Montet, *Les inscriptions du Ouâdi Hammâmât*, *MIFAO* 34, n° 1, l. 5-6.
- 67 *CGC* 20539, v° l. 17-18.
- 68 The sign before *hnm.t* could it be *pr*? Would it then be possible to understand ‘all sorts of food offerings followed the coming forth (= the discovery?) of a well’?
- 69 Or ‘with what the Rekhyt are fed’, but this reading seems to me less likely.
- 70 Vandersleyen, *Ouadj our w3d wr. Un autre aspect de la vallée du Nil*, n° 142; Couyat et Montet, *Les inscriptions du Ouâdi Hammâmât*, *MIFAO* 34, n° 1 p. 32.
- 71 Or: ‘with the same numbers of harpooners’. It has to be certainly read *msn.w* and not *ms.w n(y.w) w^c.t*. I think that the 130 members of the crew of Se-ankh are harpooners and not only the *nds.w*.
- 72 *OG* 24,3 et *OG* 44,3. See Sayed, *Chronique d’Egypte* 58, Fig. 1, p. 25.
- 73 Sayed, *RdE* 29, pl. 13 b-c.
- 74 *WG* 24, see <http://www.usatoday.com/tech/gallery/2006/03/egyptsnapshot/flash.htm>, n° 4, 5.
- 75 See <http://www.usatoday.com/tech/gallery/2006/03/egyptsnapshot/flash.htm>, n° 1.

- 76 S. Birch, *Catalogue of the Collection of Egyptian Antiquities at Alnwick Castle* (n.p., 1880), 267 sq, pl. 3; Erman 1882, p. 203-4; Sayed, *RdE* 29, pl. 8; Obsomer, *Sésostris I^{er}. Etude chronologique et historique du règne*, Doc. 170 p. 709-10.
- 77 Birch, *Catalogue of the Collection of Egyptian Antiquities at Alnwick Castle*, 267 sq, pl. IV; Obsomer, *Sésostris I^{er}. Etude chronologique et historique du règne*, Doc. 171 p. 710-11; Erman 1882, p. 204-205.
- 78 A.H. Gardiner and T.E. Peet, *Inscriptions of Sinai*, part I (London, 1952), pl. X, n° 25; M. Abd el-Raziq, G. Castel, P. Tallet, V. Ghica, *Les inscriptions d'Ayn Soukhna*, *MIFAO* 122 (Cairo, 2002), 110-111, who translate the term by 'ocean'.
- 79 *PT* 628-629 (Spruch 366) and *PT* 1631 (Spruch 593).
- 80 On the other hand, further texts naming expeditions for example to Wadi Hammamat or to Serabit el-Khadim quote the corps of the professions in question. Farout, *BIFAO* 94, 145-149.
- 81 See R. Fattovich and K. Bard, 'A la recherche de Pount : Mersa Gaouasis et la navigation égyptienne sur la mer Rouge', *Egypte, Afrique & Orient* 41 (April 2006), 21, 23, and Fig. 10.
- 82 M. Abd el-Raziq, G. Castel and P. Tallet, 'Dans le golfe de Suez, les mines de cuivre d'Ayn Soukhna', *Archéologia* 414 (September 2004), 10-21, p. 18 and photo p. 17.
- 83 This is type C of the typology by Helen Jacquet-Gordon. See H. Jacquet-Gordon, 'A Tentative Typology of Egyptian Bread Moulds', in D. Arnold (ed.), *Studien zur altägyptischen Keramik* (Mainz, 1981), 16 and Fig. 4.
- 84 By instance Riqqeh, Harageh, Sedment, Gurob, Lahun, Qasr el-Sagha, Dendera, Armant, Tell Edfu, Ikkur, Kuban, Faras, Shalfak, Mirgissa, Kumna, Semna.
- 85 This information has been confirmed and specified by S. Marchand and N. Moeller.
- 86 Personal communication, September 2006. See S. Marchand, 'Fouilles récentes dans la zone urbaine de Dendara : La céramique de la fin de l'Ancien Empire au début de la XII^e dynastie', *Cahiers de la céramique égyptienne* 7 (2004), 223 and pl. 6.
- 87 The Egyptians who work at the excavation of Abu Rawash provide a contra-example. They bring their own, locally made bread called *shamsi* all the way from Luxor which gets wetted and reheated during more than one month, but only because it is impossible to find this kind of bread in Cairo.
- 88 Here *jdb n(y) w3d-wr* designates thus unquestionably the maritime coast.
- 89 See <http://www.usatoday.com/tech/gallery/2006/03/egyptsnapshot/flash.htm>, n° 2, 3, 6, 7.
- 90 Abd el-Raziq, Castel and Tallet, *Archéologia* 414, 10-21; P. Tallet, 'Six campagnes archéologiques sur le site d'Ayn Soukhna, golfe de Suez', *BSFE* 165 (March 2006), Fig. 15. 28, 29.
- 91 Contrary to Obsomer, *Sésostris I^{er}. Etude chronologique et historique du règne*, 216-220, 385.
- 92 About the way to Punt, see the most recent publications by Meeks, *Topoi. Orient-Occident*, suppl. 3 (Lyon, 2002); N. Baum 'La course aux aromates', in *Parfums d'histoire : L'Égypte*, Grasse, Musée international de la parfumerie, (2003), 37-53.
- 93 M. Sauvage, 'Navigation', in *Dictionnaire de la civilisation mésopotamienne* (sous la direction de F. Joannès) (Paris, 2001), 561-563.