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A Wish-List for Amun. The Theophorous Statue National Museums Scotland, Edinburgh, A.1952.53

David KLOTZ

Independent Scholar

Résumé

Première publication d'une petite statue théophore agenouillée portant une statuette d'Amon, actuellement conservée à Édimbourg. Datable du IV^e siècle av. J.-C. (XXXe dynastie – début de l'époque ptolémaïque), cet objet présente de nombreux parallèles avec les statues provenant de la Cachette de Karnak et provient probablement également de Thèbes. Le visage et les noms du propriétaire sont détruits, ce qui suggère que l'effigie a été intentionnellement mutilée dans l'Antiquité. Néanmoins, le texte hiéroglyphique subsistant présente une prière unique adressée à Amon, comportant plusieurs graphies intéressantes ainsi qu'une nouvelle attestation de la mystérieuse expression « descendant après son frère ».

Mots-clés : Sculpture de la Basse Époque ; Époque ptolémaïque ; Amon ; Thèbes

Abstract

First publication of a small kneeling theophorous statue featuring a statuette of Amun, currently in Edinburgh. Dating to the 4th century BCE (Dynasty 30-early Ptolemaic), this object bears multiple parallels to statues from the Karnak Cachette, and thus likely also originates from Thebes. The owner's face and names are destroyed, suggesting the effigy was intentionally mutilated in antiquity. Nonetheless the remaining hieroglyphic text presents a unique prayer to Amun, featuring multiple interesting spellings and another attestation of the mysterious phrase “descending after his brother.”

Keywords: Late Period Sculpture; Ptolemaic Period; Amun; Thebes

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A Wish-List for Amun

The Theophorous Statue National Museums Scotland, Edinburgh, A.1952.53

David Klotz
Independent Scholar

Introduction

Within the Egyptian collection of The National Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh, sits a small theophorous statue representing a devotee of Amun (A.1952.53). The presence of this divinity and multiple textual parallels to monuments from the Karnak Cachette suggest the object derives from Thebes, even if not from the Cachette itself. Although the dedicant's face, name, and titles are lost in damage, the back pillar contains a lengthy set of funerary wishes directed to Amun. Since this piece has, at least to my knowledge, only been mentioned in museum databases,¹ this short contribution was written to make this object available for future research.²

In 1952, Cyril Aldred, curator of the then Royal Museum of Scotland, acquired the object from Spink & Son, Co. London. The statuette (**Figs. 1-4**) measures 21.7 cm (height) by 7.9 cm (width) and 13.3 cm (depth). It is made of a black stone which has been described alternately as serpentine (Aldred) and steatite (Bothmer), presumably because of the “grayish-green material” in the broken parts. The subject kneels holding a large naos in his hands, resting upon his kilt, not on a pedestal, within which stands the god Amun (**Fig. 5**). He wears a bag wig and a tripartite, pleated *shendjyt*-kilt with a plain belt. Except for its ears, which appear to be original, the asymmetrical face with a high chin and heavily hieroglyphic eyes is a later restoration, probably carried out under Aldred's

¹ Online Collection Database of the National Museums Scotland: <https://www.nms.ac.uk/search-our-collections/collection-search-results?entry=299537> (accessed 6/11/25). The statue was also duly registered in the archives of the *Corpus of Late Egyptian Sculpture (CLES)*, #245. The author would like to thank Kathy Zurek-Doule of the Brooklyn Museum for providing information and scans from the CLES.

² The author would like to thank Margaret Maitland and David Potter for providing further information on this statue, and to National Museums Scotland for permission to publish photographs.

supervision (**Fig. 6**);³ according to Bothmer's note in the *CLES*, it had been "doweled in with a wooden peg." Despite the damage, the slope of the chin suggests the subject's gaze was directed upwards (cf. **Fig. 4**), a Late Period style analyzed by Bothmer.⁴

The simple naos (**Fig. 5**) has a cavetto cornice (the standard *k3r*-shape)⁵ but no additional attributes (e.g. inscriptions, winged sun disk, trace of doors, uraeus frieze). Amun also wears a tripartite, pleated kilt, and has his typical double-plumed mortar crown (also no sun disk) and a divine beard. Amun's fists are clenched, but he does not appear to be holding anything. Naophorous statues featuring the fully anthropomorphic Amun are surprisingly rare in Thebes during the Late and Ptolemaic periods, although there are quite a few theophorous variants without shrines.⁶

Negative space between the figures, the back pillar, and the base are solid. The back pillar gives the illusion of being trapezoidal at the top, but that is only a result of damage. Traces indicate the back pillar originally supported five columns of hieroglyphic inscriptions, likely all reaching the same height behind the dedicant's head. Roughly 20% of the original text is missing, damaged precisely where one would expect to read the personal name and titles. We learn only that the figure was the son of a woman named Takhybiat (*infra*, text note **a**). Such damage could be coincidental, as it occurs on the widest extremities of the statue's rear surface. Yet the generally excellent preservation of this piece, particularly the sacred image of Amun, contrasted with the notable damage to the dedicant's face and name, suggests it was intentionally mutilated in antiquity, rather than accidentally broken over the millennia.⁷

³ See recently Ch. STABLE, M. MAITLAND, D. DE BELLAIGUE, D. POTTER, B. BRYAN, M. MURRAY "Rediscovering Ancient Egypt: consideration of the legacy, ethics and aesthetics of previously restored Egyptian artefacts," *Journal of the Institute of Conservation* 44:2, 2021, pp. 134-152.

⁴ B.V. K "Apotheosis in Late Egyptian Sculpture," in M.E. Cody (ed.), *Egyptian Art: Selected Writings of Bernard V. Bothmer*, Oxford, 2004, pp 249-278.

⁵ H. SELIM, "The Naophorous Statue JE 38016 in the Cairo Museum," *MDAIK* 56, 2000, p. 368, with nn. 72-73.

⁶ See recently M.G. RASHED, "The Theophorous Statue of Pedeamunnebesuttaui, Son of Nesmin (Cairo JE 36715) with a Discussion of his Career," *JARCE* 61, 2026, p. 79, with n. 23. See also H. SELIM, "Three Unpublished Late Period Statues," *SAK* 32, 2004, pp. 373-374, Pl. 21; JE 37140 (CK 297).

⁷ See recently S. CONNOR, "Broken Noses: Accidental Breaks? Intentional Alterations?," in V.E. Allen, S. Connor(eds), *Altering Images – Iconoclasm in Egypt (AegLeodiensia 14)*, Liege, 2025, pp. 17-37.

Possible Date

Bothmer had recorded the date of this statuette as Ptolemaic (*CLES* #245; *supra*, fn. 1), which accords with various dating criteria. Kneeling naophorous statues are attested from the New Kingdom through the Late Period, and at least one kneeling theophorous statue from Karnak can be securely dated to the early Ptolemaic Period.⁸ While this style was considerably more popular during Dynasty 26,⁹ multiple examples were fashioned in Dynasty 30 or the 4th century BCE more generally.¹⁰ The mother's name, Takhybiat (*infra*, text note a) was popular in the Ptolemaic Period and the earliest securely dated example comes from year 4 of the reign of Phillip Arrhidaeus (320 BCE).¹¹

The hieroglyphic spellings are more consistent with Ptolemaic writing than the terse, quasi-alphabetic system of Dynasty 30. Many of these "Ptolemaic" spellings occur already in the New Kingdom or Late Period, but one diagnostic feature might be the uraeus (𐀀) for the second person masculine singular suffix pronoun (=k), in column 3. This value is extremely common in Ptolemaic and Roman texts,¹² including on statues from Karnak,¹³ but I know of no securely

⁸ Berlin 18562: K. LEMBKE, G. VITTMANN, "Die ptolemäische und Römische Skulptur im Ägyptischen Museum Berlin. Teil I: Privatplastik," *JBM* 42, 2000, pp. 26-34. noted by B.V. BOTHMER, *Egyptian Sculpture of the Late Period, 700 B.C. to A.D. 100*, Brooklyn, 1960, p. 3.

⁹ H. SELIM, *MDAIK* 56, 2000, p. 368, n. 71.

¹⁰ E.g. CG 682 (R. EL-SAYED, "Un document relatif au culte dans Kher-Aha (statue Caire CG 682)," *BIFAO* 82, 1982, Pls. 28-29); J.-Cl. GOYON, "Une statue du quatrième prophète d'Amon Nesmin (CS X 349/13 1/76) (1)," *Karnak* 7, 1982, pp. 281-287 (for the date see R. BIRK, *Türöffner des Himmels. Prosopographische Studien zur thebanischen Hohepriesterschaft der Ptolemäerzeit (ÄgAbh 76)*, Wiesbaden, 2020, pp. 232-233); JE 38041 (CK 620); JE 37138 (CK 243); JE 38016 (CK 587; H. SELIM, *MDAIK* 56, 2000, pp. 361-369); JE 37215 (CK 809; for the date, see R. BIRK, *op. cit.*, p. 208); Louvre E 18967 (*JWIS* V/1, p. 326, 75.155).

¹¹ *JWIS* V/2, pp. 556 (80.18), line 3 (with bibliography).

¹² D. KURTH, *Einführung ins Ptolemäische. Eine Grammatik mit Zeichenliste und Übungsstücken*, Hützel, 2007-2008, II, p. 592, §39.

¹³ N. ALZOHARY, "A Ptolemaic Naophorous Statue from the Karnak Cachette (Cairo JE 36682)," *Shedet* 8, 2021, pp. 77-78, with n. b. See also D. KLOTZ, "A Good Burial in the West: four Late Period Theban statues in American collections," in L. COULON (ed.), *La Cachette de Karnak. Nouvelles perspectives sur les découvertes de Georges Legrain (BdÉ 161)*, Cairo, 2016, p. 440, lines 4 and 10; *idem*, "The Sorrows of Young Nesmin: the early demise of a Theban priest," in Chr. Thiers (ed.), *Documents de Théologies Thébaines Tardives (D3T 3)*, (*CENiM* 13), Montpellier, 2015, pp. 99, line 6, 113, line 6.

dated examples which predate the Macedonian invasion.¹⁴

Other indices point towards a date in the 3rd century BCE. The difficult phrase “descending upon his brother” (*infra*, text note **m**) occurs in several other inscriptions from the Ptolemaic Period, the earliest of which was inscribed under Ptolemy III Euergetes. As noted above, the damaged areas of the statuette affect only the subject’s face, and the portions of the hieroglyphic text bearing his name and titles. Laurent Coulon has recently discussed similar damage to the face of a statue belonging to a Theban priestess, also named Takhybiat, from the reigns of Ptolemy III or IV, perhaps retribution by nationalist clergy who resented her close ties to the Lagide rulers.¹⁵ Of course the name Takhybiat was quite common, but it is tempting to speculate that the owner of the Edinburgh statue was her son or otherwise related, and thus his monument suffered targeted mutilation for similar reasons.

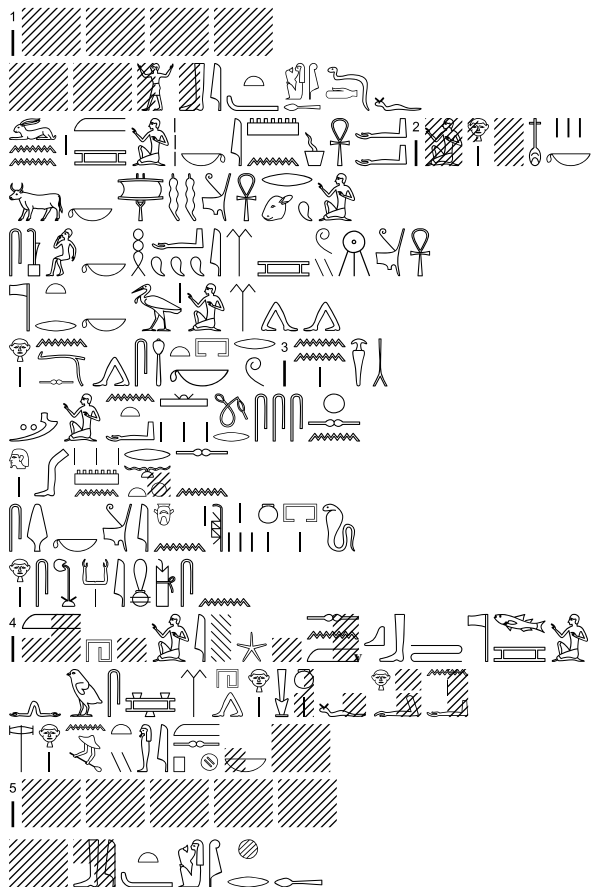
Hieroglyphic Inscriptions (Fig. 7)

The surviving hieroglyphic inscription, lacking the subject’s names and titles, records a sequence of funerary wishes addressed directly to Amun. This god is represented standing in front of the kneeling dedicant, and the hieroglyphic text graphically alludes to their relative positions. In most of the subjunctive *sḏm=f* clauses referring to Amun, the suffix pronoun (=k) is reversed from the rest of the inscription, reflecting the dialogue between the subject and his city god. The only exception to this reversal occurs in col. 3, where the pronoun is spelled not with the traditional basket but rather with a uraeus serpent, so perhaps the engraver did not recognize its grammatical function. Such reversals are surprisingly not very

¹⁴ Two transitional examples occur on JE 37075 (JWIS V/2, pp. 455, line 8; 456, col. 2; 457, col. 6) and Lausanne 7 (JWIS V/2, p. 462). For the date of the latter (early 3rd century BCE), see T. MÉKIS, “L’équipement funéraire de la prêtresse thébaine Nestaneteretten,” *CdE* 86, 2011, p. 59, n. 52. The former monument cannot be earlier than Nectanebo II, but it might date to the early 300’s BCE: K. JANSEN-WINKELN, “Die Inschriften der Stehfigur Kairo JE 37075,” in N. Strudwick, D.A. Aston (eds), *From Objects to Histories: Studies in Honour of John H. Taylor*, Wallasey, 2024, pp. 306-308.

¹⁵ L. COULON, “Les cimetières osiriens, témoins de la politique des Lagides et de ses aléas,” in R. Birk, L. Coulon(eds), *The Thebaid in Times of Crisis: Revolt and Response in Ptolemaic Egypt (Chronoi 13)*, Berlin 2025, p. 118. For photos of the statue (JE 37452), see: <https://www.ifao.egnet.net/bases/cache/ck931>. Note in passing that another Ptolemaic statue from Thebes, Florence 6315, belonging to a different Takhybiat (daughter of Nesmin) is also missing her head: E. SCHIAPARELLI, *Museo Archeologico di Firenze-Antichità Egizie*, Rome, 1887, p. 470, No.1739; <https://www.globalegyptianmuseum.org/record.aspx?id=9948>.










common on Late Period and Ptolemaic statues,¹⁶ and I have not found comparable examples on theophorous or naophorous statues.



Transliteration and Translation

¹ [...]	[...]
[ms.n...T3-hy]-bī3.t m3 (.t)-hrw	[born of ... Takhy]biat, ^(a) justified,
dd=f	he says:

¹⁶ The phrase *dī=f* (referring to Osiris) switches orientation to match the vignette of an Abydene fetish on the cuboid statue Brooklyn 51.15: *JWIS* III, p. 530 (52.326); noted by H.G. FISCHER, *The Orientation of Hieroglyphs. Part I, Reversals*, New York, 1977, p. 29, n. 78. On statue CG 697, the hieroglyphs reverse direction only for the epithets of Thoth, matching his position on the top of the back pillar: K. JANSEN-WINKELN, “Die Inschrift der Porträtstatue des Hor,” *MDAIK* 54, 1998, p. 230, col. 1. See also O. PERDU, “Ouahibré, gouverneur de Saïs sous Amasis (stèle-niche Édimbourg A.1956.134 + Brooklyn 73.86),” *BIFAO* 126, 2026, p. 311, n. b.

- (b) The statue owner identifies as one of Amun's  . Other clergy use this term to refer to themselves in relation to their local god (e.g. Amun, Thoth, Sokar, Neith).¹⁸ While this is often translated as “friend,” that term seems inappropriate for the dynamic between deity and priest. Rather, this is more likely the technical term “(temple) staff” or “dependents” (*Wb.* II, 106, 14-16), especially since in similar contexts the same word is spelled with the land determinative (e.g.  ),¹⁹ which would be unusual for “friends.”
- (c) Amun “the living Ba” is not a generic epithet, but a precise indication of his role providing the breath of life. The priest Osirwer addresses this form of the god (  ) in a short prayer on his statue requesting similar benefactions (*infra*, text note n. h).²⁰ Similarly, on the first column of statue MMA 07.228.28, the priest invokes Amun as “the living Ba” ( ) in the verse requesting “may you enliven the Ba (*s'nh=k b3*)” of the deceased “with your breath of life (*m t3w=k n 'nh*).”²¹
- (d) The traces favor restoring *wtz nfrw*,²² “supporting the perfection” (carrying a statue or processional bark), but one might also consider the

Nam 128 (many examples); N. ALZOHARY, “A Ptolemaic Naophorous Statue from the Karnak Cachette (Cairo JE 36682),” *Shedet* 8, 2021, p. 77, with n. e.

¹⁸ LGG III, 330a; K. JANSEN-WINKELN, *Ägyptische Biographien der 22.-23. Dynastien* (ÄAT 8), Wiesbaden, 1985, I, p. 329 (1.7.5); *idem*, “Ein Amunpriester in Memphis,” *SAK* 27, 1999, pp. 126, Abb. 6, col. 7-8, 127; *idem*, *Biographische und religiöse Inschriften der Spätzeit aus dem Ägyptischen Museum Kairo* (ÄAT 45), Wiesbaden, 2001, II, p. 368, text 15, c12; O. PERDU, *BIFAO* 126, 2026, p. 318, col. 2. Compare also the phrase *nty(.w) m mr.t=f* designating people faithful to a god, see *Edfou* I, 443, 7; *Edfou* II, 13, 12; *Petosiris* 115, 4.


¹⁹ K. JANSEN-WINKELN, *Ägyptische Biographien* I, p. 329 (1.7.5); *idem*, *Biographische und religiöse Inschriften*, II, p. 368, text 15, c12.

²⁰ Amsterdam, statue APM 8844: A. EGGBRECHT (ed.), *Corpus Antiquitatum Aegyptiacarum. Geschichte, Ziele, Richtlinien und Arbeitsbeispiele für das Erfassen Ägyptischer Altertümer in Form eines Lose-Blatt-Kataloges* (HÄB 12), Hildesheim, 1981, pp. 70-71; <https://www.globalegyptianmuseum.org/record.aspx?id=12293> (accessed 6/11/25), see further <https://www.ifao.egnet.net/bases/cachette/ck999>.

²¹ L. COULON, “Jeux d’écriture sur un monument privé thébain d’époque ptolémaïque. La statue de Nespamedou fils de Paiouenhor (New York, MMA 07.228.228),” in Ph. COLLOMBERT, L. COULON, I. GUERMEUR, Chr. THIERS (eds), *Questionner le Sphinx. Mélanges offerts à Christiane Zivie-Coche* II (*BdÉ* 178), Cairo, 2021, pp. 581, 583, n. e, 591, col. 3.

²² Used to describe theophorous statues in *KRI* II, 495, 7; *KRI* VII, 407, 13.

phrases *hpt nfrw*, “embrace the perfection”,²³ or even *hpt wtz-nfrw*, “embrace the cult statue/processional bark.”²⁴ Clearly this statement alludes to the dedicant’s gesture, both supporting and embracing Amun’s shrine between his hands.

- (e) Although the animal’s head is partially damaged, enough remains to conclude this was originally a bull, likely with the phonetic value *dwn* < *twn*, “to attack; gore,” more properly written ²⁵. This verb most often employs a hand or arm as direct object, not the breath of life; yet in some instances gods “extend their arms bearing (*dwn* ‘*wy hr*’)” the ankh-sign to the king or Osiris,²⁶ a variant of Amun offering the sail and *ankh* symbolizing air.²⁷

Since the syntax is slightly unusual, one might consider other hypothetical values of the bull hieroglyph, for example *zm3*, “to unite” (< *sm3*, “sacrificial bull”),²⁸ or *k3wt*, “to lift up” (< *k3*, “bull”).²⁹ Finally, the bull could also write a standard value of the cow (*nb*),³⁰ in which case one might translate: “may you fashion (*nbi*) sweet breath for my nose.”³¹

- (f) Many funerary texts express a desire for solar rays to shine upon the mummy.³² As here, some passages claim that the light can rejuvenate

²³ JWIS V/2, p. 722 (82.171) = JE 37353 (theophorous statue); S. DHENNIN, *Mefkat et la déesse Hathor. Topographie et religion dans la III^e province de Basse Égypte* (MIFAO 146), Cairo, 2022, p. 142, A1, Pl.19 (Vatican 22689).

²⁴ JWIS V/2, p. 624 (82.55) = CG 682 (naophorous statue); KRI II, 495, 6-7.

²⁵ O. PERDU, “Socle d’une statue de Neshor à Abydos,” *RdE* 43, 1992, p. 155, n. j; D. KURTH, *Einführung ins Ptolemäische* I, pp. 198, No. 13, 208, n. 44.

²⁶ E.g. *Edfou* I, 440, 15; P. CLÈRE, *La Porte d’Évergète*, Pl. 10 (speech of Khonsu-Thoth); *Dendara* X, 60, 13-61, 1; 344, 6; see also R. JASNOW, *A Late Period Hieratic Wisdom Text* (P. Brooklyn 47.218.135), (SAOC 52), Chicago, 1992, p. 48, Figs. 4-5 (2, 19).

²⁷ Chr. THIERS, “Amon-Rê dispensateur du souffle de vie. À propos d’une scène du mammisi d’Ermant copiée par J. Gardner Wilkinson,” in Ph. COLLOMBERT, et al. (eds), *Questionner le Sphinx* II, 2021, pp. 552-554.

²⁸ Air “unites (*zm3*)” with Osiris in *Dendara* X, 260, 5.

²⁹ The king “elevates (*k3wt*)” the breath of life in *Esna* III, 325, 5.

³⁰ D. KURTH, *Einführung ins Ptolemäische* I, pp. 198, No. 13, 208, n. 46.

³¹ Note that Khnum-Re is once called “the fashioner of air (*p3 nbi t3w*)”: *Esna* III, 356, 12.

³² H. KOCKELMANN, “Sunshine for the Dead: on the role and representation of light in the vignette of Book of the Dead Spell 154 and other funerary sources from Pharaonic and

(*srrp*, *snhn*) the deceased's body, especially in two statues from Karnak quoted *in extenso* below (APM 8844, JE 37353; *infra*, text note **h**).³³ Most other examples use the term *st.wt* for “rays,” with only a couple instances employing *m3wy*, “light,”³⁴ the latter cases perhaps influenced by the much more common phrase “to be rejuvenated anew” (*rnp m m3w.t*).³⁵

- (g) The verb *ntri* has a causative meaning already in the New Kingdom, particularly in reference to the deceased's Ba, just as here.³⁶
- (h) A nearly identical phrase occurs on the Theban statue JE 37199, also quoted again later (*infra*, note **n**):³⁷

Edinburgh



JE 37199

In this phrase the official reminisces about the privilege he enjoyed to enter Amun's sanctuary while alive. A similar recollection of time “on earth” occurs on the statue of Osirwer (Amsterdam, APM 8844), mentioned in previous notes (lines 2-4), along with requests for the breath of life (*supra*, text notes **c** and **e**) and rejuvenation through sunlight (*supra*, text note **f**):

Graeco-Roman Egypt,” in R. JASNOW, Gh. WIDMER (eds), *Illuminating Osiris: Egyptological Studies in Honor of Mark Smith (MVCAE 2)*, Atlanta, 2017, pp. 181-196; T. LEKOV, “The Concept of the Revivification of the Dead Body by the Sun Rays,” *JES* 6, 2023, pp. 27-39.

³³ See also *Edfou* VII, 81, 10; *Edfou* VIII, 45, 8; *Esna* III, 295, 16; *Esna* IV, 433; Fr.-R. HERBIN, *Le livre de parcourir l'éternité (OLA 58)* 1994, pp. 275 and 511 (Text N, 1); G. MASPERO, *Sarcophages des époques persane et ptolémaïque I*, Cairo, 1914, p. 60 (CG 29301), cols. 92-95. In a different context, cf. *Deir Chelouit* V, 135, 14.

³⁴ *Edfou* I, 199, 12 and *Médamoud*, No. 169 (cited by *LGG* VI, 393a).

³⁵ E.g. *Dendara* II, 146, 4; *Dendara* X, 61, 11; 154, 5; 251, 6; 263, 8; 321, 3; *Dendara* XIV, 152, 6-7; *Edfou* VI, 33, 11-12; P. CLÈRE, *La Porte d'Évergète*, Pl. 30 (speech of the king); *Deir Chelouit* V, 141, 6.

³⁶ Wb. II, 364, 15-18, notes this meaning since Dyn. 21, but see already E.A.W. Budge, *The Papyrus of Ani*, London and New York, 1913, Pl. 19, BD 15, cols. 13-14. For later examples, see Fr.-R. HERBIN, *Books of Breathing and Related Texts (LERTBM 1)*, London, 2008, p. 18; I. ADHAM, “The Stela of *Hr-tzy=s-nht* from Akhmim CG 22069,” *IWNW* 4, 2025, p. 93, line 13.

³⁷ K. JANSEN-WINKELN, *Biographische und religiöse Inschriften der Spätzeit I*, p. 190; II, p. 412, No. 31, a5; C. PRICE, *Materiality, Archaism and Reciprocity: The Conceptualisation of the Non-Royal Statue at Karnak during the Late Period (c. 750-30BC)*, PhD dissertation, University of Liverpool, 2011, pp. 58-59.



swʒh=k snn=i m-ḥnt ḥzy.w=k

šms=i im=s(n) tp tʒ

tʒw=k n ḥḥ ḥr srq ḥty.t=i

srnp mʒwy=k ḥ ḥw=i

Let my statue endure amidst your
favored ones,
among whom I served (*while*) on
earth;
your breath of life letting my throat
breathe,
and your light rejuvenating my body.

A comparable sequence of wishes to Amun occurs on a theophorous statue from the Karnak Cachette (JE 37353), already mentioned above:³⁸

ḥwy=i rwd(.w)

ḥr ḥpt nfrw=k nb=i

mī wnn(=i) ḥr-tp tʒ

snḥn=k ḥ ḥw=i m stw.t=k

r ḥ-nb



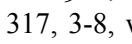

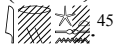
My arms are firm
while embracing your perfection,
my Lord,
just like when I was on earth;
may you rejuvenate my body with
your rays,
every day.

- (i) The dedicant wishes to observe, as a statue, the various temple rituals performed on schedule in perpetuity. Nearly identical phrases occur in descriptions of ideal temple services,³⁹ but can also refer to the fixed circuit of the sun and moon.⁴⁰

³⁸ H. SELIM, “Three Unpublished Late Period Statues,” *SAK* 32, 2004, p. 372, Pl. 21; *JWIS* V.2, 722 (82.171).

³⁹ *Edfou* IV, 73, 6-7 (*tp.w-rd.w=s mn(.w)*, *nt.w-ḥ=s rwd(.w)*); *Dendara* II, 4, 7-8 (*nt-ḥ=sn mn(.w)*, *ḥb.w=s rwd(.w)*); *Dendara* VII, 25, 9 (*nt-ḥ=sn mn(.w)*, *irw=sn rwd(.w)*); *Esna* II, 31, 64.

⁴⁰ For *nt-ḥ*: see *LGG* IV, 387b; Fr.-R. HERBIN, “Hymne à la lune croissante,” *BIFAO* 82, 1982, pp. 270-272, n. 29. The same astronomical nuances can be true for the combination of *sw.w*, “days” and *dmḏy.t*, “period” as employed on this statue: cf. *Edfou* III, 208, 3; 210, 16-17; V. ALTMANN-WENDING, *MondSymbolik – MondWissen. Lunare Konzepte in den ägyptischen Tempeln griechisch-römischer Zeit (SSR 22)*, Wiesbaden, 2018, pp. 211, 215.

- (j) Priests from Karnak often ask the divinity to make the clergy's hearts be pleasant (*sim3, rdi im3*) to them.⁴¹
- (k) The restoration of this damaged portion  is difficult, but in the present context of clergy acting within the temple, one thinks of the phrase  *imy.w-3bd=sn*, “those (priests) who are in their monthly service” as it occurs on the closely related statue JE 37199,⁴² and in multiple temple texts.⁴³ Alternatively, if there is not enough space for the word *3bd*, this could simply be *wnw.t*, “hourly (temple) service” (*Wb. I*, 317, 3-8, with the spelling: )⁴⁴ restoring instead  or .⁴⁵
- (l) The divine administrators (*'d-mr-ntr*) are often mentioned among various sacristans at Karnak and other temples,⁴⁶ which is why the present dedicant wishes for them to also take care of his statue within the temple.
- (m) This phrase occurs in several Ptolemaic scenes of inscribing years and Sed Festivals for the kings, recently studied by Dagmar Budde.⁴⁷ In those

⁴¹ K. JANSEN-WINKELN, *Biographische und religiöse Inschriften*, II, pp. 415 (No. 31, d3), 419 (No. 33, c1), 432 (No.38, c1-2); D. KLOTZ, “The Cuboid Statue of Ser-Djehuty, Master Sculptor in Karnak: Los Angeles County Museum of Art 48.24.8 + Cambridge University, Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology 51.533,” *RdE* 66, 2015, p. 66, lines 9-10.

⁴² K. JANSEN-WINKELN, *Biographische und religiöse Inschriften*, II, p. 413, No. 31, b7.

⁴³ G. VITTMANN, “Die Autobiographie der Tathotis (Stele Wien 5857),” *SAK* 22, 1995, p. 288, line 6; N. LEROUX, *Les Recommandations aux prêtres dans les temples ptolémaïques et romains. Esquisse d'un héritage culturel et religieux* (SSR 21), Wiesbaden, 2018, pp. 9 (1), 167 (1), 194 (1), 206 (2), 225 (2), 227, n. h.

⁴⁴ Compare the phrase: “coming and going according to the cycles of the moon, in order to perform their hourly duties (*r ir.t wnw.t=sn*)”: K. JANSEN-WINKELN, *Biographische und religiöse Inschriften*, I, p. 207, n. 30; II, pp. 418 (No. 32, d2), 422 (No. 35, a7-8)

⁴⁵ Compare the phrase *iry-wnw.t=f*, “one assigned to his hourly service” in *Edfou VI*, 77, 5.

⁴⁶ D. KLOTZ, “A Good Burial in the West: four Late Period Theban statues in American collections,” in L. COULON (ed.), *La Cachette de Karnak. Nouvelles perspectives sur les découvertes de Georges Legrain* (*BdÉ* 161), Cairo, 2016, p. 444, n. o (with references). See also K. JANSEN-WINKELN, “Eine Bau- und Bittinschrift am Tempel von Luxor,” *ZÄS* 140, 2013, p. 5, n. 10; N. LEROUX, *Les Recommandations aux prêtres*, p. 13, n. f.

⁴⁷ D. BUDDÉ, *Das Mammisi von Edfu. Inschriften, Dekorationsprogramm, Architektur und Theologie eines ägyptischen Geburtstempels der Ptolemäerzeit, Band II, 1: Die Inschriften, Übersetzung und Kommentar* (*Edfou Mamm.*, 1–105), (*ÄGAbh* 79, 1) Wiesbaden, 2024, pp. 67-68, n. 478, 75-78.

instances, Thoth, Khonsu-Thoth, or Seshat inscribe “years” or “kingship” of/for (*nty/n*) *hzi hr snw=f*. Budde assumed it was an epithet designating the new king succeeding (*hzi hr*) the throne of his older, deceased brother,⁴⁸ and noted examples in Ptolemaic history where this might have been the case, beginning with the earliest royal example – albeit somewhat dubious – under Ptolemy III.⁴⁹

Yet there are various difficulties with this interpretation. First, multiple examples employ the genitive *nt(y)*, not simple *n*, so Budde’s interpretation of giving years “to (*n*) he who followed his brother” is untenable. Moreover, the verb *hzi* is not frequently paired with the preposition *hr*. When it is, the phrase can occasionally denote things simply falling on the ground or another object,⁵⁰ but more often it has a violent, inimical connotation. Demons or enemies “descend upon” victims,⁵¹ butchers upon sacrificial bulls,⁵² armies upon enemy territories,⁵³ and the Persians famously arrived “while coming down upon Egypt” (*Petosiris* 59, 3). It is thus tempting to render this phrase as an epithet: “He who fell upon his brother,” in other words, a euphemistic designation of Seth. As Budde noted, one example of the phrase even employs a divine determinative for the word “brother.”⁵⁴ In that case, the

⁴⁸ For the phrase *hzi m/r s.t NN*, “succeeding to the place of *NN*”, see D. BUDDÉ, *op. cit.*, p. 68, n. 478, noting *Wb.* II, 472, 21-22; see also R. HANNIG, *Ägyptisches Wörterbuch II: Mittleres Reich und Zweite Zwischenzeit (Hannig-Lexica 5)*, Mainz am Rhein, 2006, p. 1551.

⁴⁹ D. BUDDÉ, *op. cit.*, pp. 77-78. It remains unclear how Ptolemy the Son was related to Ptolemy III Euergetes (perhaps half-brothers), but in any event Ptolemy III succeeded his father, Ptolemy II Philadelphus, and not his elder sibling. For this historical figure see: L. CRISCUOLO, “Ptolemy the Son: a pretended co-regency?”, *AncSoc* 47, 2017, pp. 1-18.

⁵⁰ For example, Re “descends upon his statue (*hzi=f hr shm=f*)” on earth in *Edfou* I, 13, 7 (right); 327, 13. Note that the entry for *hzi hr mw* meaning “to be loyal” recorded by *Wb.* II, 472, 14, should be removed, as it was based on an erroneous copy of a solitary attestation: *MD* III, Pl. 81e = *Dendara* VI, 160, 5.


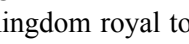
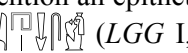
⁵¹ *Wb.* II, 474, 1-5; H. VON DEINES, W. WESTENDORF, *Wörterbuch der medizinischen Texten*, II (*GMAA* VII/2), Berlin, 1962, p. 562; R. HANNIG, *Ägyptisches Wörterbuch II*, p. 1551 (“s. beschäftigen mit”); *Mutter und Kind*, Text E (passim); Y. KOENIG, “Le papyrus de Moutemheb,” *BIFAO* 104, 2004, p. 292, n. c.

⁵² *Dendara* X, 53, 13 and 315, 2-3.

⁵³ C. MANASSA, *The Great Karnak Inscription of Merneptah: Grand Strategy in the 13th Century BC (YES 5)*, New Haven, 2003, p. 24, n. c.

⁵⁴ *Mam. Edfou* 14, 13; D. BUDDÉ, *op. cit.*, pp. 76, 78.

“kingship” or “years” of Seth could allude to his proverbially lengthy reign, as evidenced by the so-called 400 Year stela from Tanis, or other texts in which kings are said to receive “the years of Seth.”⁵⁵

In terms of divine epithets, one might compare a unique designation of Seth from Edfu, which vaguely resembles the present phrase:  “he who failed his brother (*p3 wh n snw=f*).”⁵⁶ Also similar – especially considering the common parallelism of *pri* and *h3i* and the interchange of those similar signs – is the mysterious caption to a swan in New Kingdom royal tombs:  (*LGG* III, 82b-c). There is also a popular epithet of Osiris, “he who illumines (for) his siblings (*h3y (n) sn.w=f*)” (*LGG* V, 3c-4a), but phonetic interchange between *h* and *ḥ* is not common prior to the Roman Period,⁵⁷ and the determinatives are quite different. Finally, one might mention an epithet of Isis, “she who mourns her brother (*ih(3.t) sn=s*)”:  (*LGG* I, 539c).

Yet while these divine epithets could make sense in the context of temple inscriptions – that is as designations of various gods (Seth, Horus, Osiris) – they are difficult to reconcile with the present statue and two other private monuments, in which the phrase is preceded by the preposition *m*. Consideration of all examples together yields a slightly different interpretation.

1. *Mam. Edfou* 14, 12-13 (Thoth): “he who inscribes years of (*nt*) *h3i hr snw=f*.”
2. *Porte d’Evergète*, Pl. 43 (Khonsu-Thoth): “he who records kingship of (*nt*) *h3i hr snw=f*, since (the time) of Tatenen until today.”
3. *Edfou* I, 522, 8-9 (Thoth): “he who inscribes years of (*nt*) *h3i hr snw=f*, since (the time) of Tatenen until today.”
4. *Edfou* I, 378, 9: “the kingship of (*nt*) *h3i hr snw=f*”
5. *Edfou* IV, 92, 1: “inscribing the kingship of/for (*n*) *h3i hr snw=f*”

⁵⁵ Fr. GAUDARD, “On the “Immortality” of the God Seth,” in R. JASNOW, Gh. WIDMER (eds), *Illuminating Osiris*, 2017, pp. 93-98, especially p. 96, n. 32. For Seth as a god of kingship, see the remarkable stela recently published by J.M. ISKANDER, E.G. ABD EL-KARIM, “Der Seth-Name Ramses’ II. Ein Beleg aus dem Baal-Tempel in Bahr el-Baḡar,” *MDAIK* 79, 2023, pp. 111-125.

⁵⁶ *Edfou* VI, 216, 5-6; *LGG* II, 514c-515a.

⁵⁷ D. KURTH, *Einführung ins Ptolemäische* I, pp. 524-525, §20.2.

6. Edinburgh: “with no interruption, as (*m*) *h3i hr snw=f*”
7. Vienna, Stela KhM 5857, line 8:⁵⁸
- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| <i>nī wšr:n k3.t</i> | You Ka can never be dry (i.e. thirsty), |
| <i>hr iw nb m pr=t</i> | before anybody who comes from your house, |
| <i>m h3i hr snw=f</i> | as (<i>m</i>) <i>h3i hr snw=f</i> , |
| <i>m swđi-mni</i> | as “embarking and landing”, |
| <i>n-đr:w ntr:w đ.t</i> | for as long as the gods exist, forever. |
8. Moscow, Pushkin Museum, I.1.a.5351:⁵⁹
- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| <i>(hr) šms pr=f</i> | (My family has been...) serving his (viz. Ptah’s)
temple, |
| <i>m h3i hr snw=f</i> | as (<i>m</i>) <i>h3i hr snw=f</i> , |
| <i>đr rk ĩnb-đđ</i> | for as long as Memphis has existed. |

Several examples combine this phrase with an allusion to the entire span of Memphite kingship (“from Tatenen until today”, “as long as Memphis has existed”) or “as long as the gods exist.” Similar statements occur at Kom Ombo, designating a succession of generations, beginning with the demiurge Irita-Tatenen and culminating in Harsiese or the current king.⁶⁰ Similarly, the stela of Tathotis follows this phrase with the equally

⁵⁸ G. VITTMANN, *SAK* 22, 1995, pp. 289, 293, 321, nn. 198-199, who parsed and translated this quite differently: “dein Ka hat keinen Mangel. Und (*hr*) ein jeder, der aus deinem Haus kommt wie (*m*) einer, der zu seinem Bruder herabgestiegen ist.” Based on this translation, Budde assumed the phrase in question was a euphemistic designation for death, and thus not relevant for a discussion of the temple texts (D. BUDDÉ, *op. cit.*, p. 78, with n. 532). Compare the slightly different translation: “Il n’y aura aucun manque pour ton *ka* de la part de toute personne qui vient de ta maisonnée *comme quelqu’un qui vient (?) à son frère*” (Ph. COLLOMBERT, “La succession éternelle des générations. À propos d’une formule des autobiographies tardives,” *RdE* 49, 1998, p. 49).

⁵⁹ Noted in connection with the Tathotis stela and the phrase in question already by Ph. COLLOMBERT, *RdE* 49, 1998, p. 49, n. 10. For the text, see O.D. BERLEV, S.I. HODJASH, *Sculpture of Ancient Egypt in the Collection of the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts*, Moscow, 2004, pp. 387, 393, 397, n. ap, line 5 (“(therefore each) servant of his house enters the service of his brother since the time of the White Walls”); M. PANOV, “Three Records of the Late Period,” *LingAeg* 19, 2011, pp. 92, 95 (“(And) the servant (*šmsw*) of his house comes to his associate.”).

⁶⁰ A. GUTBUB, *Textes fondamentaux de la théologie de Kom Ombo (BdE 47)*, Cairo, 1973, pp. 255-256, n. k (citing *KO* 62, 6; 90, 2; 613, 16); see further D. VON RECKLINGHAUSEN, *Das Land von Pfeil und Bogen : Studien zu Neith und ihren Attributen in der Theologie des Tempels von Esna (Esna-Studien I) (SSR 36)*, Wiesbaden, 2022, pp. 73-75.

mysterious “disembarking and landing (*m swđi-mni*),” a popular idiomatic expression for the idealized succession of offices.⁶¹

These texts all employ the phrase in question in the context of promising a very long time span, combined with references to the succession of divine and human generations, without any interruptions (Edinburgh: *nī ws*; Vienna: *nī wšr*).⁶² That final detail suggests this phrase refers to an unbroken legacy, where a brother, rather than a non-existent or too young son, succeeds his deceased brother in office to maintain continuity. Or – given the divine determinative in the example from the Edfu Mammisi – perhaps this expression alludes to the divine precedent of Seth succeeding his brother Osiris, or of Horus following Seth, sometimes referred to as a brother.

It is worth noting that in a couple of instances, the phrase *hzi hr* refers to the act of caring for Osiris. The first instance is PT 519 (*Pyr.* 1213c), where the children of Nut “descend upon” the deceased king, apparently to aid with his resurrection. Much later is a detail from the Hourly Vigil ritual (“Stundenwachen”), during the Fourth Hour of the Day, when Neith and the two mourners (Isis and Nephthys) “descend upon” (*hzi r*) the majesty of Osiris.⁶³ In the vignettes to this hour from Philae and Edfu, all three goddesses kneel down before the sacred shrine, something they only do elsewhere in the Fifth Hour of the Night (Philae only),⁶⁴ suggesting the phrase “to descend upon” somehow has the meaning “to kneel before.” Taken more generally, both examples might refer to

⁶¹ Ph. COLLOMBERT, *RdE* 49, 1998, pp. 47-58; see also G. VITTMANN, *Altägyptische Wegmetaphorik (Beiträge zur Ägyptologie 15)*, Vienna, 1999, pp. 144-145; K. JANSEN-WINKELN, in N. Strudwick, D.A. Aston (eds), *From Objects to Histories*, p. 304, n. 33, who noted that only additional examples of the phrase might help determine its meaning. One might compare *Esna* III, 395, 2 and 3 (two apparent examples of *wđz-mni* meaning “in perpetuity”), and possibly already *KRI* III, 597, 5-6 (possibly: *swđd-mni n hr-mw=f*, “a proper succession to whoever is loyal to him”).

⁶² Note that the expression *nn ws* also appears in conjunction with the related expression, *w'-z3-w'*, “one son following another” on other Theban statues: K. JANSEN-WINKELN, *Biographische und religiöse Inschriften*, II, pp.362, No. 13, d; 372, No. 17, a7.

⁶³ A. PRIES, *Die Stundenwachen im Osiriskult. Eine Studie zur Tradition und späten Rezeption von Ritualen im Alten Ägypten (SSR 2)*, 2011, I, p. 385; II, p. 102. The full phrase only occurs in *Dendara* X, 143, 7-8, as the verb was omitted in the Philae redaction. See also K.A. GILL, *The Hieratic Ritual Books of Pawerem (P. BM EA 10252 and P. BM EA 10081) from the Late 4th Century BC (SSR 25)*, Wiesbaden, 2019, I, pp. 357 (27, 13), with note on p. 432, note to 27, 13, for Horus “descending” to seek and take care of Osiris.

⁶⁴ A. PRIES, *Die Stundenwachen im Osiriskult*, II, Pls. I, 43

Conclusion

The concise speech to Amun on this diminutive monument is comparable in multiple respects to the brief inscriptions on two statues from the Karnak Cachette (Amsterdam, APM 8844 and JE 37353; *supra*, text note **h**). Despite its short length, the text on the back pillar contains many interesting spellings and phrases, with intertextual allusions to a larger statue from the Karnak Cachette (JE 37199; *supra*, text notes **h**, **k**, **n**), and possibly to the propylon of Khonsu Temple (*supra*, text note **m**). The individual's requests from Amun include the typical wishes for an idealized legacy in the temple:

Column 2 Cosmic elements from Amun necessary for the body or Ba to function (breath of life, rejuvenating solar rays, divinization of the Ba)

Column 3 Access to the temple to witness the continued performance of rituals

Columns 3-4 Veneration of his statue by the regular temple staff

If the statue was indeed mutilated intentionally in antiquity (*supra*, discussion), such destruction would have voided several of these mortuary wishes. With his face hacked away, the dedicant could no longer observe the temple rituals (col. 3), and ancient passersby, just like us, would never be able to commemorate his name (col. 3).



Fig. 1. National Museums Scotland A.1952.53, Front
Image © National Museums Scotland



Fig. 2. National Museums Scotland A.1952.53, Back
Image © National Museums Scotland



Fig. 3. National Museums Scotland A.1952.53, Left
Image © CLES (Brooklyn Museum)



Fig. 4. National Museums Scotland A.1952.53, Right
Image © CLES (Brooklyn Museum)



Fig. 5. National Museums Scotland A.1952.53, Detail of Naos
Image © CLES (Brooklyn Museum)



Fig. 6. National Museums Scotland A.1952.53, detail of face (modern
restoration)
Image © CLES (Brooklyn Museum)



Fig. 7. National Museums Scotland A.1952.53, detail of back pillar text
Image © CLES (Brooklyn Museum)