

EGYPTIAN CULTURE AND SOCIETY

STUDIES IN HONOUR OF NAGUIB KANAWATI



Preface by

ZAHİ HAWASS

Edited by

ALEXANDRA WOODS
ANN MCFARLANE
SUSANNE BINDER



VOLUME I

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SUPPLÉMENT AUX ANNALES DU SERVICE
DES ANTIQUITÉS DE L'ÉGYPTE

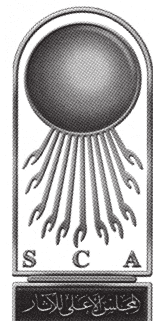
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Presented to

NAGUIB KANAWATI AM FAHA

Professor, Macquarie University, Sydney
Member of the Order of Australia
Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities

by his
Colleagues, Friends, and Students

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A GOVERNOR OF DAKHLEH OASIS IN THE EARLY MIDDLE KINGDOM

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During the 2008 season of excavations at Mut el-Kharab in the Dakhleh Oasis an inscribed sandstone stela was discovered reused as a door sill in a mud-brick complex on the west of the Temple of Seth. The inscriptions upon three faces of the stela record the erection of a monument dedicated to the god Igai by the local dignitary, Sa-Igai. This article presents a detailed discussion of the find context, date of the stela and the implications of its text for the study of the site and oasis during the early Middle Kingdom, the period to which the monument is ascribed.

The study of interaction between the occupants of the Nile Valley and the oases of the Western Desert during the Middle Kingdom has long been based upon a limited range of textual data from the Valley and there has been a dearth of relevant information from the oases themselves.¹ This situation is partly being rectified by on-going fieldwork in the Western Desert and there is a growing body of evidence that indicates a major interest by the Theban administration of late Dynasty Eleven in the control of the oases. This paper discusses this situation in relation to a newly-discovered inscription at Mut el-Kharab in the Dakhleh Oasis that derives from a monument erected by one Sa-Igai, a governor of the oasis, which was dedicated to the god Igai.² It is offered in tribute to Naguib Kanawati in recognition of his contribution to Egyptology and especially within Australia. We are sure that it will be of interest to him in light of his research into ancient Egyptian administration both in the centre and the periphery, and his constant support for work in Dakhleh Oasis.

I. The Find Context of the Inscription (CAH)

The site of Mut el-Kharab is located in south central Dakhleh Oasis (Figure 1) on the edge of the modern town and comprises a large temenos enclosure, 240 x 180 m in size, in which are the remains of the temple dedicated to Seth, Lord of the Oasis, at the centre of the site and a wide variety of mud-brick structures.³ At the southern end of the main mound is a small cemetery of built tombs; those which have been investigated are of the Late Period. Surrounding the site are mounds on the west, north-west and north that contain cemeteries of the Late Period to Roman Period; further cemeteries are located more distant from the site to the north-west, north-

east and east, also of the same dates but with some burials of Dynasty Twenty-five. The excavations have revealed a history of activity at the site which spans almost four millennia, from the Early Dynastic Period until the Mamluk Period,⁴ and the data unearthed will play a major role in extending considerably our understanding of relations between Dakhleh and the Nile Valley.

The earliest substantive strata have yielded evidence for an Old Kingdom settlement with mud-brick and possibly stone architecture, though the exact nature of the buildings has yet to be determined.⁵ They are located beneath the central area of the later temple (Figure 2). Ceramics associated with this complex predate the Sixth Dynasty and are dominated by a repertoire that reflects both local Sheikh Muftah Cultural Unit and Nile Valley traditions, which clearly implies close interaction between the two groups.⁶ It may have been developed as a part of the earliest phase of Egyptian exploration of the Western Desert in the Fourth Dynasty;⁷ during the subsequent colonization of Dakhleh in the Sixth Dynasty, settlements and cemeteries developed throughout Dakhleh⁸ with the administrative capital located near Balat at Ayn Asil.⁹ Associated with this latter phase was the development of the overland route known as the Abu Ballas Trail that may ultimately have terminated at Gebel Uweinat.¹⁰

Wherever they have been revealed to date, the Old Kingdom buildings at Mut el-Kharab lie directly beneath structures of a considerably later date and no *in situ* remains of the First Intermediate Period to New Kingdom have yet been located. Fortunately, decorated and inscribed blocks reused in paving and other architectural features testify to the probable existence of such buildings there and a variety of artefacts, especially ceramics, support this contention.¹¹ The blocks have been discovered in the same general area as the Old Kingdom buildings, but predominantly due west of the surviving remains of the temple, which may be of the Roman Period.¹² In its final form this area (Figure 3) was dominated by a formal mud-brick building (Trench 6) on an east-west orientation, at right-angles to the main temple building. It has two main rooms on the north and two smaller ones on the south; entry is provided by a door in the east into the outer northern room and one from the north into the inner northern room. The outer room had a stone paved floor on mud bricks while the inner one had a central area with baked bricks within a stone-lined area, also on mud bricks. This is the latest construction in the area. Due north of this building is the remains of a stone paved area (Trenches 21 and 25 south) that was accessible from the east by a door opening off a probable corridor on the west of the temple; on the north of the paved area are two adjacent rooms (Trenches 18 and 25 north) accessed from the paved area by doors in their south walls. The floor of the westernmost of these rooms (Trench 25 north) was originally stone paved, but the nature of the floor in the eastern room cannot be determined. How far the paved area extended to the west is uncertain as this area is extensively pitted. It originally extended to the south into the area of the Trench 6 building, as stone blocks project under its northern wall on the east. When the various upper floors in the inner northern room of that building were removed, a

stone paved area was revealed set between red and yellow mud-brick walls on the same alignment as those of the western room north of the paved area in Trench 25. This indicates that originally there were at least three rooms flanking the paved area before the Trench 6 building was erected, and in light of the symmetrical arrangement of those on the west it is probable that originally there were four rooms, two on either side of the paving, and that the two southern rooms were dismantled to make way for the Trench 6 building.

To the west of the Trench 6 once stood another formal building that incorporated two large stone columns. This was constructed over at least two circular features, assumed to be silos, and other storage facilities that include large, ceramic storage jars set into the floors. They extend to the north, due west of the paved area and rooms on its north. It was within the remains of a structure here, associated with this complex, that the inscription of Sa-Igai was discovered. In the northern part of Trench 30 a mud-brick pier forms the western edge of a building only partly preserved and the function of which has yet to be determined; it abuts the western wall of the room in Trench 25 north. The Sa-Igai block formed the foundation for the pier, laid with its long side approximately east-west face upwards, and set into the earth floor of the small room to the east of the pier (Plate 1).

The reuse of a wide variety of blocks, plain, inscribed and/or decorated, of different dates is a characteristic of the stone paving in this area of the site.¹³ In Trench 21, the paving due south of the eastern room (Trench 18) contained blocks from a monument of Horemheb dedicated to Amun-Ra and a single block with the name of Ramesses IV.¹⁴ Within the doorway into the room a single block was found amongst rubble that has been assigned to the Twenty-first Dynasty.¹⁵ The paving within the inner room of the Trench 6 building contained a lintel from a private house of the Ramesside period¹⁶ and a block with part of a representation of what may be the front of a portable barque shrine either of the same period or slightly later.¹⁷ The finds in the western room north of the paved area (Trench 25 north) are of more interest in relation to the Sa-Igai inscription. At its entrance was a block very similar in dimensions to the latter, with similar features and in the same material (red sandstone): each tapers in width from 37.0–34.0 cm; the Sa-Igai block is 25.0 cm thick and the other is 20.0 cm, while the former is 1.18 m in extant length and the latter 1.09 m. This second block now preserves a hymn to Seth probably contemporary with Ramesses II.¹⁸ Several other blocks from this same location appear to derive from similar rectangular 'pillar'-shaped blocks. They may be divided into two groups by approximate similarity in thickness:

- (1) width 22.0–29.0 cm; thickness 8.5–12.5 cm; extant length 31.0–62.0 cm
- (2) width 21.0–31.0 cm; thickness 16.5–21.0 cm; extant length 64.0–96.0 cm; one of this group tapers from 25.0–21.0 cm.

It is possible that these blocks derive from the same monument as the Sa-Igai block and the hymn to Seth and increase the likelihood that the monument from which they originate was erected at the site.

It is now necessary to determine if possible when the structures were erected into which these blocks were incorporated, especially the Sa-Igai inscription. The following is a tentative proposal as the stratigraphy of the area where the block was found has been badly damaged by the collapse of substantial walls from the surrounding structures.¹⁹ As mentioned above, the oldest undisturbed strata in this part of the site are of the Old Kingdom, and in Trenches 30, 33–34 and 36 the remains of mud-brick walls of this period have emerged sitting on extensive sand deposits. These deposits occur also under the architecture in Trench 30 north, where the Sa-Igai inscription was located, Trench 25 and the inner room of Trench 6. The areas surrounding the Old Kingdom features were then packed with various earth deposits and the silos and associated features were built. The large silo that extends from Trench 30 south into 34 was erected after the smaller one in Trench 34 was abandoned and upon earth fill. From the ceramics within this fill and associated with the earlier silo it would seem that these features belong to the Third Intermediate Period; more detailed study of this material is necessary to refine the date further. Subsequently the large silo was no longer required and it, and the entire area, was filled with compact earth and mud-brick rubble, upon which the more formal structure with stone columns was erected. The earth and brick packing for this phase extends into Trenches 30 north and 25 south. Extensive pitting in Trench 25 south prevents a definite interpretation of the sequence there to be proposed, but it appears probable that the packing may have extended into Trenches 21 south and 25 north and formed a foundation for the stone pavements in those areas. In Trench 30 north the packing abuts a short section of wall at its southernmost edge, overlies a section of brick floor on the north of this wall and extends up to the pier built over the Sa-Igai inscription. If this sequence proves correct, then our inscription would have been built into the structure in the Third Intermediate Period contemporary with the use of the silos to the south. Certainly a similar range of ceramics was found in the rooms adjacent to the pier to that which is associated with the silos. If the decorated block found in the entrance to the Trench 18 building had been incorporated into the stone paving immediately to the south, this would provide additional support for this scenario. The reuse of the Sa-Igai block would have predated that of other blocks from the same monument, though possibly not by too long a time span. This is indicated by the similarity of depths at which they occur: the Sa-Igai inscription sat upon a surface 0.635 m below datum point, thus its surface was at 0.435 m below, while the surface of the blocks in the Trench 25 north room was 0.39 m below datum. This could indicate that the depth of packing over the area was not consistent and little was required on the east. The local datum point for the site is fixed on the pavement in the outer room of the Trench 6 building; it is 0.615 m above the pavement in the east of Trench 21, which is at a similar depth to the floor upon which the Sa-Igai block sat.

The Trench 6 building was the latest erected in the area; its north wall not only overlies the pavement of Trench 21 but its west wall cuts through the entire stratigraphic sequence on the west. A well-preserved decorated and inscribed block with Psamtek I making offering to Atum and Ra-Horakhty was found in the outer northern room of this structure,²⁰ but this cannot be used with any certainty to indicate when it was built.

II. The Inscription (Figure 4; Plate 2) (OEK)

II.1 *Physical description of the stela*

Material: red sandstone

Dimensions: extant height 118 cm; width 37 cm at the base, tapering to 34 cm; thickness c. 25 cm.

Technique: sunk relief

Preservation: broken at the top and bottom; the front of the stone is badly damaged, but there seem to be no intentional hack marks; all damage must have occurred during the secondary use of the stone; the upper half of the front face has suffered much from this use, while the lower half was protected by the pier.

Description: four text columns on three sides; hieroglyphs are between dividing lines; the orientation of the script is to the right and the columns have been numbered accordingly from right to left; no remains of colour; the back of the stela has been smoothed and has slightly rounded corners.

Dimensions of signs: columns 2–3 on the front are 11 cm wide; maximum size of signs: 7.8 cm wide and 8.2 cm high; column 1 on the right is 13.4 cm wide and the signs measure 9.4 wide and 8.4 cm high; column 4 on the left is 13.5 cm wide; maximum size of signs: 9.2 cm wide and 8.0 cm high.

II.2 *The Text*



The text partly takes the form of an autobiography of the governor of the oasis, Sa-Igai, written in columns 1, 3 and 4, each of which starts with his name and titles. Column 2 contains the name and titles of the god Igai, the beneficiary of the temple where this stela was set up originally. Columns 2 and 3 on the front are separated by an empty band of c. 8.9 cm in width, which visually emphasizes a difference in their contents, relating to the god and to the governor respectively. Because all columns start with the name and titles of the governor or of the god, it may be assumed that there is not much missing from the top of the inscription. At the most, we may reconstruct an introductory *dd mdw in* at the start of each column, but no trace of this remains and its presence would not be necessary.

Right side, column 1



imy-r hm<w>-ntr iy.w mrw.n niwt=f hti.n<=i> rn<=i>hr inr
in=i hk3 mnḥ[-ib? ...]

'The chief of the priests: I am one who returns, beloved by his city, (after) I have inscribed my name upon the stone that I brought, a ruler who is loyal (...)'


- The *k*-sign is reversed, which suggests an origin of this inscription in Hieratic.
- *iy* is an imperfective active participle.²¹
- The suffix pronoun first person is omitted in the inscriptions, which is a regular feature of autobiographical inscriptions.²²
- Even though the suffix pronoun *=i* is otherwise not written, it occurs once in this column, probably to avoid confusion. Its shape as  is unexpected, but it is identical to that in inscriptions at Deir el-Bersheh in tombs from the time of Mentuhotep II.²³ The alternative interpretation would be to read *mš^c* ('army', 'forces') with a variant of the sign , but without the weaponry in his hands. This is unlikely here, as no other such occurrence is known. Moreover, the phenomenon of 'mutilated hieroglyphs', intended to lessen the sign's potential threat to the temple in which it was written, has not been attested in inscriptions of the First Intermediate Period or Middle Kingdom.²⁴
- There is no reason to take *mnḥ* as an adjective with *hk3* ('the efficient ruler'), as this combination is otherwise unknown. It is more likely to form part of a qualification such as *mnḥ-ib*.

This first column of the inscription cites the words of the governor, who is only indicated by the title 'Chief of the Priests'. He refers to the building works commemorated by this stela. The verb *iy* ('come') is to be interpreted here as 'returning' to the community after the successful outcome of a project.²⁵ The governor claims a good relationship with his town and he stresses the origin of the stone that was quarried by an official expedition, which he led personally.

Front face, column 2



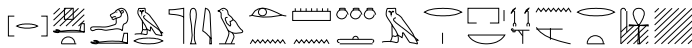
Ig3y [nb] wh3t Mrt [... di.n=f] nḥtw [...]
 'Igai (lord of?) Mut (? *Mrt*) in the Oasis (... he has given) strength (...)'

This column is badly damaged, so that only parts of the inscription may be reconstructed and read. Only the name of the god Igai at the top is beyond doubt. Following the name of the god, I propose to read his most common title, *nb wh3t*, attested on several monuments.²⁶ The exact signs employed to write *wh3t* are uncertain, except for the final signs .²⁷ Following *wh3t*, the signs *mr* and *r* are problematic, unless these are interpreted as a spelling for the place name Mut where this stela was found and where it presumably was erected. The word order in this case, with the word for the region preceding the toponym, is as expected.²⁸ At

present, we have no definite evidence for the Egyptian name of this settlement, which should be the origin of the Greek *Mothis* known to be the name of the site in many Roman period inscriptions. There is a toponym *Mit* in three builders' marks on limestone blocks from the mortuary chapel of the governor Khentika at Balat, which identifies the origin of its builders.²⁹ A toponym *Mt* occurs in an inscription of the Twenty-sixth Dynasty from the temple at Amheida, now reused in El-Qasr Dakhleh.³⁰ Later, in the Roman period, there are again a few spellings of a toponym *Mit* in the oasis,³¹ and both of these names may conceivably refer to the town of Mut. The etymology of these names is unclear, and an earlier antecedent *Mrt*, as proposed here, would phonetically be possible, although its significance is unclear.³²

The inscription seems to be concerned exclusively with the god of the temple, Igai. The god's name is followed by titles and further qualifications. The only other word that is recognizable among the latter is *nht.w*, strength.³³

Front face, column 3

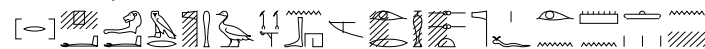


iry-p^ct h3ty-^c imy-r hm<w>-ntr iw ir.n<=i> mnw m r3-pr nb<=i> Ig3y n mrw.t s[^cnḥ rn=i ...]

'Member of the elite, foremost of action, chief of the priests: I have erected a monument in the temple of my lord Igai, so that [my name lives ...]'


Sa-Igai declares his purpose in simple terms. Following the governor's full official titulary it states that he has carried out building works in the temple of Igai. This comes close to what would be a dedication inscription in a royal monument, except that the text is phrased in direct speech, as is also the case in the autobiographical texts of the sides of the stela.

Left side, column 4



iry-p^ct h3ty-^c imy-r hm<w>-ntr S3-Ig3y nhb ir ḥsst ntr=f ir.n<=i> mnw.w n ...

'Member of the elite, foremost of action, chief of the priests, Sa-Igai, who rubs?, who does what is praised by his god: I have erected monuments for ...'

I have no satisfactory reading for the signs following the name of Sa-Igai. The sequence of signs *n + b + h + mr* is clear, as there is not much damage here. I have chosen to interpret it as a writing of the rare verb  *nhb*, attested once in a veterinary papyrus from Kahun,³⁴ but possibly we should emend it further to *nḥb*, 'to bestow honour'.³⁵ The signs are unlikely to form part of the personal name. The spelling of *mnw* without the *nw*-pot is exceptional, but its reading is beyond doubt.

Finally the name of the governor is given, following his full titles. An enigmatic element follows his name, after which the text continues with a phrase known from

autobiographical inscriptions.³⁶ Sa-Igai says that he did what his god praises, a formula that has its origins in master-servant terminology,³⁷ which thus portrays Sa-Igai as a servant of his god.

II.3 *The Donor*

Sa-Igai is otherwise unknown and this is the first occurrence of this personal name. Others containing the element Igai are known from Dakhleh in the Old Kingdom. A priest, Meru-Igai, is mentioned in documents from the governor's palace at Ayn Asil (Balat) from the time of Pepi II.³⁸ A military chief (*ꜥꜣw*) of the oasis with the same name is known from the Thirteenth Dynasty.³⁹ Occurrences of the name Igai-hotep are known from the Nile Valley from around the same time, although the name is as old as the Fourth Dynasty.⁴⁰

What was the function of Sa-Igai? The inscription gives his official titles in columns 3 and 4. First the ranking title *iry-pꜣt*, 'member of the elite', followed by his office *ḥꜣty-ꜥ imy-r ḥmw-ntr*, 'foremost of action (corresponding to 'mayor'), chief of the priests'. In line 1, the titles are abbreviated to *imy-r ḥmw-ntr*, 'chief of the priests'. The combination of titles 'mayor and overseer of priests' was first introduced at the start of the Middle Kingdom under Mentuhotep II.⁴¹ Officials with this title were based in a particular city and its surrounding area (*w*). In the present inscription the city is explicitly referred to in column 1 and this was most probably the town of Mut where the inscription was found. Contrary to accepted theories, Harco Willems has recently argued that the titles *ḥꜣty-ꜥ imy-r ḥmw-ntr* probably designated the local nomarch or governor, even though the expected title *ḥry-tp ꜥ* is lacking. He points out that the archaeological evidence for this group of officials is simply too significant to consider them mere mayors.⁴²

In Dakhleh Oasis, the governors of the Sixth Dynasty carried the title *ḥꜣꜥ wḥꜣt*, 'ruler of the oasis', which differed from the usual title of a governor in the Nile Valley.⁴³ This title, which was still employed in the First Intermediate Period,⁴⁴ this is usually considered a local idiosyncrasy.⁴⁵ Governors of the Middle Kingdom are named and depicted amongst the rock art/inscriptions of Dakhleh Oasis.⁴⁶ These officials bear only the title *ḥꜣty-ꜥ*, and three of them are mentioned by name: Khentykhetyhotep, Ameny and his son and successor Mery. Their high rank is indicated by the officials associated with them, such as the scribe of the district (*sꜥ n spꜣt*), magistrates (*wḥmw*) and temple scribes (*sꜥ ḥwt-ntr*). The date of these inscriptions seems to fit with evidence from the Twelfth Dynasty.⁴⁷ The use of only the title *ḥꜣty-ꜥ* corresponds to the use of this title for Sa-Igai and we may assume that this was the usual designation of the governor of Dakhleh at that time.

II.4 *A Temple for Igai*

In the autobiographical inscription, Sa-Igai states that he commissioned building works in the temple of the local god Igai. The expression *ir mnw*, 'to make monuments' is mostly found in descriptions of the actions of kings.⁴⁸ From the

Eleventh Dynasty onwards it is found also in private dedicatory inscriptions, but in these cases it is used almost exclusively with reference to funerary chapels not to temples.⁴⁹ The expression *smnh mnw* is sometimes used with the same meaning.⁵⁰

In addition to building a temple, Sa-Igai declares that he has inscribed (*hti*) his name on the building. Comparable statements in private dedications in a temple are extremely rare,⁵¹ and I can cite only three other autobiographical texts, dating to the Tenth and Eleventh Dynasties:

(1) In Assiut, the nomarch Khety II had building works carried out at the local temple by order of King Merikare.⁵² According to Willems, his autobiographical text (in the second person) implies that the name of the governor was inscribed on its walls, in the words: 'Your name will be eternally in the temple of Wepwawet'.⁵³

(2) The nomarch Baket II at Beni Hasan (tomb 33) from the early Eleventh Dynasty is described as follows: 'who made a monument of eternity in the temple of Khnum',⁵⁴ this presumably refers to the erection of a memorial statue or a *ka*-chapel.⁵⁵

(3) The closest parallel to the Dakhleh inscription is provided by the autobiography of the nomarch Ahanakht on the façade of his tomb (no. 5) at Deir el-Bersheh.⁵⁶ He says in column 17: 'I made great monuments in the temple of my lord Thoth' (*iw ir.n=i mnw.w ʕ3.w m r3-pr nb<=i> Dhwtj*), and in columns 18–19: 'I built a temple(?) to my lord Thoth, I placed my name (upon the portal) that I built, I inscribed the stone that I brought in order that my name might be perpetuated upon the monuments that I made' (*kd.n=i hm(?) n nb=i dhwtj rdi.n=i rn=i [hr sbht?] kd=i ht.n=i hr inr in.n=i n mrwt sʕnh rn=i hr mnw ir.n=i*).⁵⁷

In her study of dedication inscriptions, Grallert concluded that private dedications to deities are extremely rare.⁵⁸ The theme first occurs in the Middle Kingdom and the inscription of Ahanakht provides the best evidence for this practice. When we date the Sa-Igai inscription to the early Middle Kingdom on the basis of its close correspondence with the inscriptions of Ahanakht (see further below), the temple building at Mut would belong to the earliest phase of public patronage of temples. Previously temples were built by the local community and remained uninscribed. Only the king acted as patron for temples to the royal cult and gods with exceptionally strong links to kingship, such as Re and Horus. Wahankh Antef II of the Eleventh Dynasty has left the earliest inscribed building blocks at temples for different gods, such as Amun of Karnak and Satet of Elephantine.⁵⁹

II.5 The God Igai in Dakhleh Oasis

The god Igai is known from the Third Dynasty into the Third Intermediate Period, from a variety of sources. For our purposes here, it suffices to collect the references currently known from the area of the Dakhleh Oasis. The earliest evidence comes from site Khufu 01/01 in the desert west of Dakhleh. This was a mining site for ochre and rock inscriptions at the central hill depict the god standing in human

form with the two sceptres of his name on his head. This is the earliest known depiction of Igai and the only image that gives him a distinctive iconography.⁶⁰ The fact that the quarrying expeditions were placed under the protection of Igai may indicate that the god was already associated with this part of the Western Desert. Alternatively, it may indicate the origin of the expedition forces involved, because Igai was venerated in the Nineteenth Upper Egyptian nome (Oxyrhynchus),⁶¹ from where Bahariya Oasis was normally accessed. It has been speculated that the oases were governed from U.E. 19 already in the Middle Kingdom.⁶²

The name of Igai was written with a double *was*-sceptre, or rarely a single *was*-sceptre. It has been found on two ceramic *Clayton Rings* of the Fourth Dynasty at the same mining site as the inscription just mentioned.⁶³ Following these early references, we meet Igai again as the beneficiary of a cult in the settlement of Ayn Asil in Dakhleh in the Sixth Dynasty. A letter (no. 3688, from the 'conciergerie du palais') speaks of short-horned cattle (*wndw*) being raised for Igai,⁶⁴ and another (no. 5051, from the '4e travée de pièces de service') speaks of a temple or a domain of Igai.⁶⁵ The occurrence of the private name Meru-Igai at Ayn Asil, mentioned above, confirms his popularity as a local god. Pantalacci has observed that the god Igai was venerated in Balat together with an obscure deity named Taout.⁶⁶

The *was*-sceptre is also known from rock art in the oasis. In Halfat el-Bir, in the desert north of Ayn Asil, an incised single *was*-sceptre has been found.⁶⁷ In northern Kharga, the sign is found together with a five-pointed star and a public triangle,⁶⁸ and this joint occurrence seems to indicate that the sceptre was a personal mark, inspired by the signs of hieroglyphic writing.⁶⁹ The combination of the *was*-sceptre with a public triangle is also known from one of the *Clayton Rings* from the site Khufu 01/01. This shows that the single sceptre found in rock art is not necessarily to be related to the god Igai.

A graffito of the New Kingdom at Gebel el-Teir, near Kharga, carved on the wall inside a cave mentions Amun of Hibis as well as 'Igai lord of the oasis'.⁷⁰ Osing has suggested that the Igai graffito is much later than that of Amun because of the spelling of the word 'oasis' with an apparently Hieratic writing of the *h3st* determinative.⁷¹ The spelling of the word, however, is otherwise in accordance with Eighteenth Dynasty practice,⁷² and the quickly incised inscription does not seem out of the ordinary in any way.⁷³ A horse follows Igai and perhaps this belongs to the same graffito.⁷⁴


The cult of Igai is known to have continued in Dakhleh into the Third Intermediate Period. A Hieratic stela from Mut el-Kharab mentions a *sš hm-ntr Swth H'ci n pr I'g3y*, 'the scribe and priest of Seth, Khai, of the domain of Igai'.⁷⁵ This indicates a transition in the cult, whereby the god Seth was apparently venerated within the temple domain of Igai. In the Late Period, Seth is the principal god mentioned at Mut el-Kharab and it is not yet known why the god Igai disappeared. He is not

included in the decoration of Hibis temple from the Twenty-seventh Dynasty,⁷⁶ nor in any other source from the Late Period from anywhere in Egypt.

II.6 Date of the Stela

The inscription is likely to date to the early Middle Kingdom, possibly as early as the reign of Mentuhotep II. The following arguments may be brought forward in favour of this dating.

No king is mentioned in the text and there is no indication that one was mentioned in the missing parts of the monument. From the mid-Thirteenth Dynasty onwards town and temple administration were separated,⁷⁷ which is a clear date *ante quem*. But already after the reign of Senwosret II the titles *iry-p^ct* and *ḥ3ty-^c* were only occasionally given to officials.⁷⁸ The fact that no king is mentioned in our inscription points to a date early in the Middle Kingdom, before the kings of the Twelfth Dynasty increased their direct control over the provincial administration. This seems the clearest indication that Sa-Igai held office before the reign of Amenemhet I. Furthermore, it is known that governors could build temples to the local gods, from sources of the time of Mentuhotep II into the middle of the Thirteenth Dynasty. In Elephantine donations to the shrine of Heqaib were made by 'mayors and overseers of priests' into the Thirteenth Dynasty.⁷⁹ From the second half of that dynasty onwards only royal officials and others in their circle donated to this shrine. The closest parallel inscriptions, in which a major deity was the beneficiary of a donation, date from the time of the Tenth and Eleventh Dynasties, as mentioned above. The autobiography of the nomarch Ahanakht from the reign of Mentuhotep II should be mentioned here especially, as it contains some nearly identical phrases.⁸⁰ The close correspondence in their phraseology suggests that the two inscriptions were roughly contemporary.

The paleography of the stela does not contradict a dating in the early Middle Kingdom. The book roll with one end of its rope shown has been claimed by Schenkel and Fischer to appear in the reign of Amenemhet I,⁸¹ but this has been contested both by Brovarski and Willems,⁸² who have shown that an earlier date for this feature is possible. As for the shape of the city sign (*niwt*) in column 1, this is paralleled by the shape of this sign in the tombs at Deir el-Bersheh from the reign of Mentuhotep II, as is the use of the sign  for the suffix pronoun first person singular.⁸³

Even though the name Sa-Igai is as yet unknown, it is of a type first attested in the Middle Kingdom.⁸⁴ Near Balat, a tomb was discovered of a lady with the name Sat-Amun, which has been dated to the early Middle Kingdom.⁸⁵

III. Conclusion (CAH / OEK)

The block is an example of a type of stela from the Middle Kingdom encountered at the temple of Serabit el-Khadim.⁸⁶ It differs in appearance from mortuary stelae

because of its different function inside a temple. This type has vertical columns of inscription on the front, and single columns on the sides, containing the name of the donor. In Sinai, the backs of the stelae were inscribed with horizontal lines of text, but the smoothed back of the Mut stela makes it likely that the stone was set up against a wall. An alternative hypothesis has been considered that the stela formed part of a series of pilasters surrounding a courtyard, as in the temple of Mentuhotep II at Elephantine.⁸⁷ This temple had a mud-brick wall surrounding an open court with a series of stone pilasters.⁸⁸ In favour of the latter interpretation is the fact that more stones of a similar size and from the same quarry have been found at Mut el-Kharab. Yet, even though these blocks possibly derive from the same building or the addition to the building that Sa-Igai commissioned and which is mentioned in the stela, the tapering shape of the blocks is different from those of the pilasters in the temple at Elephantine. Therefore, the most likely interpretation of the blocks is a stela or a series of stelae erected inside the temple of Igai. The inscription may possibly contain the ancient name for the town of Mut, *Mrt*, which is not yet known in this form from other sources of the pharaonic period.

The closest parallel is the autobiography of the nomarch and vizier Ahanakht at Deir el-Bersheh. In both inscriptions, the officials claim an almost royal prerogative in constructing temples and leaving a dedication inscription. Ahanakht is known to have been a contemporary of Mentuhotep II,⁸⁹ he sent his son to the quarries together with a force of 600 workmen to bring him stones for a temple for Thoth.⁹⁰ Sa-Igai also sent an expedition to the stone quarries for his building project, but the text does not specify the size of the workforce. Apart from ordering building works in the temple, Ahanakht also acted as High Priest of Thoth,⁹¹ but Sa-Igai does not possess such a title.

It is even conceivable that the corresponding phrases in the inscriptions left by Ahanakht and Sa-Igai were the result of mutual contact between these two officials and their staffs. There is no doubt that Ahanakht was the most powerful of the two, as he held the office of assistant vizier,⁹² and among his responsibilities were dealings with the desert. His position as Overseer of the Western Desert indicates that he was in charge of trade with the oases. In that capacity he may have met with Sa-Igai. Willems has suggested that Ahanakht acted as chairman to the Council of Magistrates (*sh n srw*) in which selected members of the elite convened, among whom were perhaps the provincial rulers (*hk3w*).⁹³

One of the most significant insights gained from the inscription from Mut concerns the political situation in Dakhleh around the time of Mentuhotep II. In writing about the significance of the Wadi Shatt er-Rigal inscriptions of Mentuhotep II, Winlock commented as follows: 'We can rule out the oases as the country from which the prince and chancellor were returning. Those regions were probably of too little importance at this period to have justified an expedition under such distinguished leadership'.⁹⁴ John Darnell expressed a similar opinion more recently when he concluded that Kharga and Dakhleh were 'still lawless at the beginning of

the Middle Kingdom', on the basis of the information provided by the stelae of Dediku and Kay.⁹⁵ In those stelae from the reign of Senwosret I, military intervention from the Nile Valley in the oasis is described. Yet this does not imply that the oases were not under Egyptian control either then or slightly earlier. In a fragmentary inscription from Deir el-Ballas, a king, who is most likely Mentuhotep II, claims the following: 'Wawat and the oasis, I annexed them to Upper Egypt' (*w3w3t wh3t sdm.n(=i) st n Sm*).⁹⁶ The oasis in question has regularly been identified as one of the major series in the Western Desert but in 2004 Darnell argued for this as a reference to Kurkur, connecting it with the route into Wawat;⁹⁷ more recently he is less definite.⁹⁸ The present inscription provides an additional reason to identify Dakhleh as belonging to the region in question. Perhaps Sa-Igay was appointed as governor immediately after this annexation, and placed under the supervision of Ahanakht of Hermopolis. Darnell has discussed the integration of the oases and Lower Nubia into the Egyptian economy under Mentuhotep II, as is evidenced by the Deir el-Ballas inscription,⁹⁹ and his efforts to make of their inhabitants 'good, tax-paying Egyptians'.¹⁰⁰ Sa-Igay may have been responsible for the payments of such tax (*b3k*) to the new administration in Thebes.


The efforts of the early Middle Kingdom rulers to bring the southern oases under their control can also be documented in the archaeological record. At the Theban end of the Girga Road the ceramic assemblage found within outposts for use by desert patrols suggests that it was supplied by the state,¹⁰¹ and this is also the impression created by the material from an important settlement at Abu Ziyar on this road one third of the distance out between the Valley and Kharga.¹⁰² The ceramics have been assigned to the early Twelfth Dynasty. Within Kharga itself, Middle Kingdom presence is attested in the vicinity of Ghueita Temple in the form of settlement and cemeteries, following the establishment of which the Abu Ziyar outpost appears to have been abandoned by the Thirteenth Dynasty.¹⁰³ A small number of tombs have been assigned to the Twelfth Dynasty in Dakhleh Oasis both near the Old Kingdom capital of Ayn Asil¹⁰⁴ and further to the south at Ayn Tirghi,¹⁰⁵ while a small amount of Twelfth Dynasty pottery has been identified at Ayn Asil itself,¹⁰⁶ Ayn Gazzareen in the west of Dakhleh Oasis¹⁰⁷ and Mut el-Kharab. The name of Senwosret I was found at Amheida inscribed upon the lid of a stone vessel.¹⁰⁸ It should be noted that the vast majority of Middle Kingdom material found throughout the oases, however, dates to the Thirteenth Dynasty.¹⁰⁹ While the early Middle Kingdom material is far from abundant, it is sufficient to indicate continued Valley intervention in the region and the existence of organized communities in both Dakhleh and Kharga.

The formal administration of Dakhleh can be shown to have continued unabated from the end of the Old Kingdom until the Middle Kingdom, though the actual level of control prior to the Twelfth Dynasty awaits further clarification. Two governors of Dakhleh are known from a painted burial chamber found at Qila el-Daba, one of the cemeteries of the settlement at Ayn Asil, from around the time of the Tenth Dynasty. These governors held the titles of *hk3 wh3t, imy-r hmw-ntr* like

their predecessors of the Old Kingdom.¹¹⁰ In the same tomb, the names of two further governors were found, It and Her-ikhet, which shows that a dynasty of local administrators continued the traditions of the Old Kingdom, apparently still from the old capital Ayn Asil. The inscription of Sa-Igai demonstrates that the unification of the country caused some important changes in the local situation. The town of Mut, and its temple to Igai, were important to the new administration, and it is even possible that the capital was moved to this town. No tombs or palaces of governors of this period have been found as yet and until this situation changes the location of the capital will remain uncertain. The new governor also had access to artists that were much better trained than the ones working for the governors of the Tenth or early Eleventh Dynasty. It is possible that artists trained in the Memphite area, or in Thebes, came to Dakhleh for particular assignments.¹¹¹ The governors mentioned in the Twelfth Dynasty rock inscriptions to the east of Dakhleh, Khentykhetyhotep, Ameny and Mery, should be the successors of Sa-Igai.

The present inscription confirms that the unification of Egypt included Dakhleh Oasis at a very early stage and that immediately a local governor was installed to rule it on behalf of the new royal house of Thebes. Montuhotep II's interest in the Western Desert did not stop with Dakhleh and Kharga, but extended much further to the south. Recently an inscription has been discovered at Gebel Uweinat recording a probable expedition under this ruler: the figure of the king is shown within a booth, his name writ large in front of him as *nsw bity (s3 R^c Mntw ḥtp)*, while two supplicating figures and another with an oryx are associated with a text that records Yam and the otherwise unknown place Tekhebet presenting gifts.¹¹² During the late Old Kingdom the Abu Ballas Trail may have linked Dakhleh Oasis with Gebel Uweinat but there is no evidence that the trail was in use consistently during the Middle Kingdom.¹¹³ The occurrence of the Montuhotep II inscription at Gebel Uweinat may indicate that the trail was used intermittently for accessing Uweinat to trade with or receive tribute from Yam and other regions, and to monitor movements of local peoples before the network of forts was developed in Nubia. Such a monitoring process is also indicated by the late Old Kingdom to Middle Kingdom inscription of Mery found outside of Dakhleh.¹¹⁴ Thus, the inscriptions at Gebel Uweinat and from Mut el-Kharab combine to give credence to the creation of a deliberate policy by Montuhotep II and his regime for the incorporation of not only regions close to the Nile Valley into the orbit of the Theban state but also large expanses of the eastern Sahara.

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- * Olaf E. Kaper is also an adjunct research associate of Monash University.
- 1 Conveniently collected and discussed in L. L. Giddy, *Egyptian Oases. Bahariya, Dakhla, Farafra and Kharga During Pharaonic Times* (Warminster, 1987), 53-65 and 161-173.
- 2 For a preliminary discussion of the text and its contexts see C. A. Hope et al., 'The Excavations at Mut el-Kharab, Dakhleh Oasis in 2008', *BACE* 19 (2008), 49-71.
- 3 The work was inaugurated in 2001 as a part of the Dakhleh Oasis Project directed by Anthony J. Mills and directed by Colin A. Hope with Olaf E. Kaper as the epigrapher; since 2007 the excavations have been conducted on behalf of Monash University. Funding has been provided by Monash University, Australians Studying Abroad, The Museum of Old and New Art (Hobart), The Egyptology Society of Victoria (Monash University) and various private donors.
- 4 Reports on the excavations have appeared annually in *The Bulletin of the Australian Centre for Egyptology* since 2001; summaries of the early seasons can be found in C. A. Hope, 'Egypt and Libya: Excavations at Mut el-Kharab in Egypt's Dakhleh Oasis', *The Artefact* 24 (2001), 29-45 and 'The 2001-2 Excavations at Mut el-Kharab in the Dakhleh Oasis, Egypt', *The Artefact* 26 (2003), 51-76.
- 5 C. A. Hope et al., 'Report on the 2009 season of excavations at Mut el-Kharab, Dakhleh Oasis', *BACE* 20 (2009), 47-86.
- 6 See M. M. A. McDonald et al., 'The mid-Holocene Sheikh Muftah Cultural Unit of Dakhleh Oasis: a preliminary report on recent fieldwork', *Nyame Akuma. Bulletin of the Society of Africanist Archaeologists* 55 (2001), 4-9, for a recent discussion of this Sheikh Muftah Unit.
- 7 C. A. Hope, 'Egypt and 'Libya' to the end of the Old Kingdom: A view from Dakhleh Oasis' in Z. A. Hawass and J. Richards (eds), *The Archaeology and Art of Ancient Egypt. Essays in Honor of David B. O'Connor*, SASAE 36 (Cairo, 2007), 399-415.
- 8 A. J. Mills, 'Pharaonic Egyptians in the Dakhleh Oasis' in C. S. Churcher and A. J. Mills (eds), *Reports from the Survey of Dakhleh Oasis 1977-1987*, DOP Monograph 2 (Oxford, 1999), 174-76; A. J. Mills, 'Another Old Kingdom Site in the Dakhleh Oasis', in R. Friedman (ed.), *Egypt and Nubia. Gifts of the Desert* (London, 2002), 74-84; O. E. Kaper and H. Willems, 'Policing the Desert: Old Kingdom Activity around the Dakhleh Oasis' in R. Friedman (ed.), *Egypt and Nubia. Gifts of the Desert* (London, 2002), 79-94.
- 9 Amongst the numerous publications of this site consult: G. Soukiassian et al., *Balat, III. Les ateliers de potiers d'Ayn Asil. Fin de l'Ancien Empire, Première Période Intermédiaire*, FIFAO 34 (Cairo, 1990); G. Soukiassian et al., 'La ville de 'Ayn-Asil à Dakhla', *BIFAO* 90 (1990), 347-58; G. Soukiassian et al., *Balat, VI. Les palais des gouverneurs de l'époque de Pépy II: les sanctuaires de ka et leurs dépendances*, FIFAO 46 (Cairo, 2002); M. Valloggia, *Balat, I. Le mastaba de Medou-Nefer*, FIFAO 31 (Cairo, 1986) and idem, *Balat, IV. Le monument funéraire d'Ima-Pepy/Ima-Meryrê*, FIFAO 38 (Cairo, 1998).
- 10 F. Förster, 'With donkeys, jars and water bags into the Libyan Desert: the Abu Ballas Trail in the late Old Kingdom/First Intermediate Period', *British Museum Studies in Ancient Egypt and the Sudan* 7: www.britishmuseum.org/research/publications/bmsaes/issue_7/foerster.aspx
- 11 For New Kingdom material see Hope, *The Artefact* 26 (2003); R. A. Long, 'Ceramics at Mut el-Kharab, Dakhleh Oasis: Evidence for a New Kingdom Temple', *BACE* 19 (2008), 95-110.
- 12 Hope et al., *BACE* 20 (2009), 47-86.
- 13 It should be noted that a wide selection of blocks of differing dates (Thutmose III to Ptolemaic Period) have been found amongst rubble in the area of the temple, but it is not possible to determine how they were incorporated into that structure.

- 14 C. A. Hope et. al., 'Report on the Excavations at Ismant el-Kharab and Mut el-Kharab in 2005', *BACE* 16 (2005), 43-44; C. Hope and O. Kaper, 'Egyptian Interest in the Oases in the New Kingdom and a New Stela for Seth from Mut el-Kharab', in M. Collier and S. Snape (eds), *Ramesside Studies in Honour of K. A. Kitchen* (Bolton, forthcoming).
- 15 O. E. Kaper, 'Epigraphic Evidence from the Dakhleh Oasis in the Libyan Period', in G. P. F. Broekman et al. (eds), *The Libyan Period in Egypt, Historical and Cultural Studies into the 21st – 24th Dynasties. Proceedings of a Conference at Leiden University, 25–27 October 2007*, Egyptologische Uitgaven 23 (Leiden and Leuven, 2009), 154-155.
- 16 Hope, *The Artefact* 26 (2003), 53-57.
- 17 Hope, *The Artefact* 26 (2003), 57.
- 18 Hope and Kaper, in Collier and Snape (eds), *Ramesside Studies in Honour of K. A. Kitchen* (Bolton, forthcoming).
- 19 This is based primarily upon the results of the excavations in 2009 and follows the account in Hope et. al., *BACE* 20 (2009), 47-86.
- 20 O. E. Kaper, 'Two decorated Blocks from the Temple of Seth in Mut el-Kharab', *BACE* 12 (2001), 75-77.
- 21 A. H. Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar* (Oxford,³ 1957), §357.
- 22 W. Schenkel, *Frühmittelägyptische Studien* (Bonn, 1962), 43; J. F. Borghouts, *Egyptisch. Een inleiding in taal en schrift van het Middenrijk* (Leuven and Leiden, 1993), § 17.c.2.
- 23 H. O. Willems et. al., *Dayr al Barsha, I. The rock tombs of Djehutinakht (No. 17K74/1), Khumnakht (No. 17K74/2) and Iha (No. 17K74/3); with an essay on the history and nature of nomarchal rule in the early Middle Kingdom*, OLA 155 (Leuven, Paris, Dudley, 2007), occurrences are listed in the index on p. 118a.
- 24 R. Parkinson, *Cracking Codes. The Rosetta Stone and Decipherment* (London, 1999), 140.
- 25 See J. Janssen, *De traditionele Egyptische autobiografie vóór het Nieuwe Rijk*, II (Leiden, 1946), 59-60.
- 26 Upon a statue of Senwosret III, the king is described as 'beloved of Igai lord of the Oasis' (Walters Art Museum, Baltimore MD, no. 22.115): G. Steindorff, *Catalogue of the Egyptian sculpture in the Walters Art Gallery* (Baltimore, 1946), 23, no. 30, pls. 5, 110; PM VIII, 15, no. 800–364–100; K. Radtke, *GM* 202 (2004), 88-90 ascribes the statue to Theban workshops. The same epithet occurs upon the stela of Inu (University of Pennsylvania Museum no. 54.33.1), dated by H. G. Fischer, *JNES* 16 (1957), 223-226, to the late Twelfth or Thirteenth Dynasty; PM VIII, no. 803–031–480 (dated Eighteenth Dynasty). Also, in a graffito upon the Niuserre reliefs, dated to the New Kingdom or later; J. Osing, 'Einige Notizen zu den Oasen', *GM* 89 (1986), 73, note 2; J. Osing, 'Notizen zu den Oasen Charga und Dachla', *GM* 92 (1986), 84 note 19. Finally, the title occurs in a New Kingdom graffito in Gebel el-Teir mentioned in note 48 below.
- 27 This spelling is known only from the Deir el-Ballas inscription of Montuhotep II (Phoebe Hearst Museum 6-19868): see L. L. Giddy, 'A note on the word , *Bulletin du centenaire, Supplément au BIFAO* 81 (Cairo, 1981), table on p. 25.
- 28 Edel, *Altägyptische Grammatik*, § 314; Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar*, §90.3.
- 29 L. Pantalacci, in G. Castel, L. Pantalacci and N. Cherpion, *Le mastaba de Khentika. Tombeau d'un gouverneur de l'Oasis à la fin de l'Ancien Empire*, 2 vols, FIFAO 40 (Cairo, 2001), 141.
- 30 In the titles of Thoth: *Dḥwtj nb ʕnh ḥry-ib Mt* [...] inscribed upon blocks reused in a house from the seventeenth century, included in the photograph in Ch. Décobert and D. Gril, *Linteaux à épigraphes de l'oasis de Dakhla* (Cairo, 1981), pl. V. Their dating is based on comparisons with other excavated epigraphic material in recent years. Previously, these

- blocks were ascribed to the Greco-Roman period, as in J. Osing, *Denkmäler der Oase Dachla. Aus dem Nachlass von Ahmed Fakhry*, *ArVer* 28 (Mainz am Rhein, 1982), 40; O. E. Kaper, 'Egyptian Toponyms of Dakhla Oasis', *BIFAO* 92 (1992), 130.
- 31 O. E. Kaper, *Temples and Gods in Roman Dakhleh. Studies in the indigenous cults of an Egyptian oasis* (PhD private edition: Groningen, 1997), 60.
- 32 The word *mrw* 'desert' is only attested from the early New Kingdom onwards; *Wb* II, 109.5: the earliest attestation may be in Pap. Berlin P. 3027, dated to the Seventeenth Dynasty at the earliest; see N. Yamazaki, *Zaubersprüche für Mutter und Kind. Papyrus Berlin 3027* (Berlin, 2003); dated to the Seventeenth to early Eighteenth Dynasty in H.-W. Fischer-Elfert, *Altägyptische Zaubersprüche* (Stuttgart, 2005), 147.
- 33 Attested titles containing this word are listed in C. Leitz (ed.), *LGG* IV, 311c-317a.
- 34 Papyrus UC 32036, Third case, line 47; M. Collier and S. Quirke (eds), *The UCL Lahun Papyri. Religious, Literary, Legal, Mathematical and Medical*, BAR Int. Series 1209, (Oxford, 2004), 56-57. This term was erroneously included as *hbhb* in H. von Deines and W. Westendorf, *Wörterbuch der medizinischen Texte* (Berlin, 1962), 564 and in R. Hannig, *Ägyptisches Wörterbuch* II, 1563a. I thank J. F. Borghouts for drawing my attention to this term.
- 35 Hannig, *Ägyptisches Wörterbuch* II, 1311a.
- 36 See Janssen, *De traditionele Egyptische autobiografie*, I, 74; II, 47.
- 37 Jansen, *De traditionele Egyptische autobiografie*, I, 73; Jansen-Winkeln, 'Zur Bedeutung von *hzj* und *mrj*', *GM* 190 (2002), 47-52.
- 38 On clay tablet no. 3487, Meru-Igai is included among a list of names; Soukiassian et. al., *Balat*, VI. *Le palais des gouverneurs*, 340-342; this tablet was published in a hand copy in: L. Pantalacci, 'Les habitants de Balat à la VI^{ème} dynastie: esquisse d'histoire sociale', in C. J. Eyre (ed.), *Proceedings of the Seventh International Congress of Egyptologists*, OLA 82 (Leuven, 1998), 830, fig. 1. The name and the tablet were first mentioned in P. Posener-Krieger, 'Les tablettes en terre crue de Balat', in É. Lalou (ed.), *Les tablettes à écrire de l'antiquité à l'époque moderne* (Turnhout, 1992), 48: 'celui qui aime Igay'.
- 39 See H. G. Fischer, 'A God and a General of the Oasis on a Stela of the Late Middle Kingdom', *JNES* 16 (1957), 229; Giddy, *Egyptian Oases*, 60-61.
- 40 The Fourth Dynasty Gebelein Papyri mention a hunter named Igaihotep; P. Posener-Krieger, 'Les papyrus de Gébélein. Remarques préliminaires', *RdE* 27 (1975), 220: 'le plus ancien exemple de ce nom rare'. Another Old Kingdom occurrence of the same name is Ranke, *PN* I, 48 (AR); *PM* III/2, 671-2 [6]; the relief CG 1537: the name of the third in a row of offering bearers in a tomb relief of Ipi from Saqqara or Dahshur; Borchart, *Denkmäler des Alten Reiches im Museum von Kairo CG 1295-1808*, I (Cairo, 1964), 241, pl. 50 (bottom), dated Sixth Dynasty; see Fischer, *JNES* 16 (1957), 231, note 46. Fischer, *JNES* 16 (1957), 231-232, lists several examples from the Thirteenth Dynasty and later.
- 41 D. Franke, *Das Heiligtum des Heqaib auf Elephantine. Geschichte eines Provinzheiligtums im Mittleren Reich*, SAGA 9 (Heidelberg, 1994), 11.
- 42 H. Willems, *Les textes des sarcophages et la démocratie. Éléments d'une histoire culturelle du Moyen Empire égyptien. Quatre conférences présentées à l'École Pratique des Hautes Études. Section des Sciences religieuses. Mai 2006* (Paris, 2008), ch.1 (esp. 63-65).
- 43 M. Valloggia, 'Les amiraux de l'oasis de Dakhleh', in F. Geus and F. Thill (eds), *Mélanges offerts à Jean Vercoutter* (Paris, 1985), 355-364.
- 44 S. H. Aufrère, 'Et les oasis? Relations entre les oasis méridionales et Thèbes', *Égypte, Afrique & Orient* 18 (2000), 44.
- 45 So too, Willems, *Les textes des sarcophages et la démocratie*, 61-62.

- 46 M. Baud, F. Colin, P. Tallet, 'Les gouverneurs de l'oasis de Dakhla au Moyen Empire', *BIFAO* 99 (1999), 1-19; M. Valloggia, *Les oasis d'Égypte dans l'Antiquité. Des origines au deuxième millénaire avant J.-C.* (Gollion 2004), 147 fig. 169; P. Tallet, *Les grands pharaons. Sésostris III et la fin de la XI^e dynastie* (Paris 2005), 117-120.
- 47 Tallet, *Sésostris III*, 117.
- 48 Franke, *Das Heiligtum des Heqaib*, 86, note 284.
- 49 Examples are listed in *Wb* II, 70.8-13; Janssen, *De traditionele Egyptische autobiografie*, I, 65; II, 43.
- 50 A few Twelfth Dynasty examples are listed in *Wb* IV, 137.9.
- 51 S. Grallert, *Bauen – Stiften – Weißen. Ägyptische Bau- und Restaurierunginschriften von den Anfängen bis zur 30. Dynastie*, ADAIK 18 (Berlin, 2001) mentions only two examples of the verb *ḥti*, both from Kawa from the reign of Taharqa, omitting the Ahanakht inscription.
- 52 F. L. Griffith, *The inscriptions of Siût and Dêr Rîfeh* (London, 1889), pl. 13; tomb IV, 21-22.
- 53 *mk wnn rn=k r nhḥ m ḥwt-ntr nt Wpw3wt*; Siut IV, pl. 13, 23-24; Willems, *Dayr al Barsha* I, 98, who also refers to line 30: *mnw.w=k m ḥwt-ntr*.
- 54 *ir mnw nw dt m ḥwt-ntr nt Ḥnmw*; P. E. Newberry, *Beni Hasan*, II (London, 1894), pl. 36b; Grallert, *Bauen – Stiften – Weißen*, 136, note 5.
- 55 Franke, *Das Heiligtum des Heqaib*, 125. On the role of these cult chapels, see Willems, *Les textes des sarcophages et la démocratie*, 224-227. The same probably applies to the monument built by Antef's descendent Khnumhotep II at Beni Hasan, during the reign of Senwosret II, who declares 'Within my city did I make my memorial ... My name is on every monument that I made' (*rn=i ḥr mnw nb ir.n=i*); *Urk* VII, 34; translated by A. B. Lloyd, 'The Great Inscription of Khnumhotep II at Beni Hasan', in A. B. Lloyd (ed.), *Studies in Pharaonic Religion and Society for J. Gwyn Griffiths* (London, 1992), 24. Alternatively, the dedication could consist of an offering table, such as Cairo CG 23019 / JdE 39571, which carries a private dedication from the time of Amenemhet II.
- 56 Published in F. L. Griffith and P. E. Newberry, *El Bersheh*, Part II (London, 1895), pl. 13; PM IV/1, 181-182.
- 57 I follow the emendations of E. Brovarski, 'Ahanakht of Bersheh and the Hare Nome in the First Intermediate Period and Middle Kingdom', in W. K. Simpson and W. M. Davis (eds), *Studies in ancient Egypt, the Aegean, and the Sudan. Essays in honor of Dows Dunham* (Boston, 1981), 18-19, 21; a new translation with some different views was published by H. Willems, 'De autobiografie van Ahanacht I uit Deir al-Barsja', in R. J. Demarée and K. R. Veenhof (eds), *Zij schreven geschiedenis. Historische documenten uit het Oude Nabije Oosten (2500–100 v. Chr.)* (Leiden and Leuven, 2003), 57-70, esp. 58; and most recently H. Willems, *Dayr al Barsha* I, 89. Partly also translated in Grallert, *Bauen – Stiften – Weißen*, 136, note 4.
- 58 Grallert, *Bauen – Stiften – Weißen*, 62-64, who claims that private dedications of a chapel for a deity are not attested elsewhere, but she omits the evidence cited here.
- 59 With W. Grajetzki, *The Middle Kingdom of Ancient Egypt. History, Archaeology and Society* (London, 2006), 14-15.
- 60 K. P. Kuhlman, 'Der "Wasserberg des Djedefre" (Chufu 01/1)', *MDAIK* 61 (2005), 243-289, who does not discuss this image; see also K. P. Kuhlman, 'The "Oasis Bypass" ', in: *Tides of the Desert* (Cologne, 2002), 125-170; R. Kuper, 'Les marches occidentales de l'Égypte', *BSFE* 158 (2003), 12-34.
- 61 The White Chapel of Senwosret I mentions Igai as the principal god of the nome U.E. 19; P. Lacau and H. Chevrier, *Une chapelle de Sésostris I^{er} à Karnak*, I (Cairo, 1956), 229; II

- (Cairo, 1959), pl. 3. On the opposite bank of the Nile, the son of the tomb owner Ipi bears the title *hm-ntr Igꜣy* in Kom el-Ahmar Sawaris (Sharuna), tomb no. G7, dated to the Old Kingdom: F. Gomaá, 'Bemerkungen zur Nekropole von el-Kom el-Ahmar Sawaris', *WdO* 14 (1983), 135-146, esp. 140; *LGG* I, 570c-571a; W. Schenkel and F. Gomaá, *Scharuna, I. Der Grabungsplatz, Die Nekropole, Gräber aus der Alten-Reichs-Nekropole* (Mainz am Rhein, 2004), 114, pls. 56-57; N. Arafa, 'Le Dieu Igay', *DE* 63 (2005), doc. 4. A Middle Kingdom cult of Igai in U.E. 19 is mentioned in the Annals of Amenemhet II: H. Altenmüller and A. M. Moussa, 'Die Inschrift Amenemhets II. aus dem Ptah-Tempel von Memphis. Ein Vorbericht', *SAK* 18 (1991), 22; J. Malek and S. Quirke, 'Memphis, 1991: Epigraphy', *JEA* 78 (1992), 16.
- 62 Altenmüller and Moussa, *SAK* 18 (1991), 32.
- 63 H. Riemer, 'Trouvailles prédynastiques et des premières dynasties du désert de l'ouest et libyque', *Archéo-Nil* 12 (2002), 98. nos. 3, 4 (a double sceptre next to a vulva); H. Riemer, 'Clayton Rings et empilements de pierres: les premiers voyages en milieu désertique dans le Sahara oriental', in M.-C. Bruwier (ed.), *Pharaons noirs. Sur la Piste des Quarante Jours* (Morlanwelz, 2007), 21-27, figs. 7, 11.
- 64 L. Pantalacci, 'La documentation épistolaire du palais des gouverneurs à Balat-'Ayn Asil', *BIFAO* 98 (1998), 303-315, esp. 314; This letter was first mentioned in P. Posener-Krieger, in *Les tablettes à écrire*, 46, as: 'une lettre relative à un bovide élevé pour le Dieu Igay (*Igꜣy*) dont l'auteur de la lettre assure qu'il est en bonne santé, et que lui-même a agi conformément aux ordres qui lui ont été donnés'; a photo was published in J. Leclant and G. Clerc, 'Fouilles et travaux en Egypte et au Soudan, 1986-1987', *Orientalia* 57 (1988), pl. 46, fig. 56.
- 65 Soukiassian et. al., *Balat*, VI. *Le palais des gouverneurs*, 358-360: 'un temple ou un domaine d'Igay'; similarly already in Pantalacci, *BIFAO* 98 (1998), 315.
- 66 L. Pantalacci, 'Le nom du dieu "Taout" de Balat?', *GM* 175 (2000), 59-63; observing that only Taout and the great god Igai 'enjoy the privilege of eponymy' (p. 60).
- 67 Giddy, *Egyptian Oases*, 255, 280 (Graffito 11).
- 68 C. Rossi and S. Ikram, 'Petroglyphs and Inscriptions along the Darb Ayn Amur, Kharga Oasis', *ZÁS* 129 (2002), 147, pl. 22a.
- 69 O. E. Kaper, 'Soldier's Identity Marks of the Old Kingdom in the Western Desert', in B. J. J. Haring and O. E. Kaper (eds), *Pictograms or Pseudo Script?*, *Egyptologische Uitgaven* 25 (Leiden and Leuven, forthcoming), 169-178.
- 70 A. Fakhry, 'The rock inscriptions of Gabal el-Teir at Kharga Oasis', *ASAE* 51 (1951), 401-434, p. 413 (5), 415 (fig. 25), identified by Fischer, *JNES* 16 (1957), 232 and collated and extended in Osing, *GM* 92 (1986), 81.
- 71 Osing, *GM* 92 (1986), 84, note 19.
- 72 Giddy, *Bulletin du centenaire*, 26-27.
- 73 A. J. Peden, *The Graffiti of Pharaonic Egypt*, PdÄ 17 (Leiden, 2001), 76 dates the graffito to the New Kingdom; Arafa, *DE* 63 (2005), doc. 14 dates it to the Eighteenth Dynasty.
- 74 Fakhry, *ASAE* 51 (1951), fig. 24.
- 75 Stela Cairo Museum JdE 52478; C. van Zoest and O. Kaper, *Treasures of the Dakhleh Oasis* (Cairo, 2006), 24-25. This passage in the stela is already mentioned in Fischer, *JNES* 16 (1957), pl. 34 [V], but slightly erroneous. Arafa, *DE* 63 (2005), doc. 15 (dated Twentieth Dynasty [sic.] and on p. 17 as 'époque tardive' and Twenty-second Dynasty).
- 76 As noted already by Fischer, *JNES* 16 (1957), 233, and by Arafa, *DE* 63 (2005), 17 note 46.
- 77 S. Quirke, 'The regular titles of the late Middle Kingdom', *RdE* 37 (1986), 109.
- 78 Grajetzki, *The Middle Kingdom of Ancient Egypt*, 159.

- 79 Franke, *Das Heiligtum des Heqaib*, 30.
- 80 On the dating of Ahanakht in the reign of Mentuhotep II, see L. Gesteremann, 'Die Datierung der Nomarchen von Hermopolis aus dem frühen Mittleren Reich – eine Phantomdebatte?', *ZÄS* 135 (2008), 10-11 and Willems, *Dayr al Barsha* I, 84-88, who arrive independently at a similar dating. Willems thinks it possible that Ahanakht was in office already before the unification of the country; *Dayr al Barsha* I, 107. On p. 110, he suggests that the independent building activities of Ahanakht referred to here, should belong to the period before the unification.
- 81 W. Schenkel, *Frühmittelägyptische Studien* (Bonn, 1962), 27-28; H. G. Fischer, *Ancient Egyptian calligraphy. A beginner's guide to writing hieroglyphs* (New York, 1999), 51; Franke, *Das Heiligtum des Heqaib*, 212.
- 82 Brovarski, in Simpson and Davis (eds), *Studies in Ancient Egypt, the Aegean, and the Sudan*, 14-30, esp. 26-27, note 103; Willems, *Dayr al Barsha* I, 47 note i demonstrates that the book roll with single tie was already in use in the reign of Mentuhotep II.
- 83 See note 3 above. The *niwt* sign may also have another shape in the middle of the Eleventh Dynasty, as is indicated by L. Postel, 'Une nouvelle mention des campagnes nubiennes de Montouhotep II à Karnak', in L. Gabolde (ed.), *Hommages à Jean-Claude Goyon. Offerts pour son 70^e anniversaire*, BdE 143 (Cairo, 2008), 333.
- 84 Ranke, *PN* II, 233; J. Quaegebeur and K. Vandorpe, 'Ancient Egyptian Onomastics', in: E. Eichler et. al. (eds), *Namenforschung, Name Studies, Les noms propres. Ein internationales Handbuch zur Onomastik* (Berlin and New York, 1995), 844a.
- 85 G. Andreu, 'La tombe à l'ouest du mastaba II de Balat et sa stèle funéraire', *BIFAO* 81 (1981), 1-7.
- 86 A. H. Gardiner and T. E. Peet, *The Inscriptions of Sinai* (London, 1952–1955), nos. 87, 90, 147, dating from the reigns of Amenemhet III (87-90), and an unknown king of the Middle Kingdom (147). This type of stela may also be recognized in the 'obelisk' from Abgig, which was erected by Senwosret I; see K. Martin, *Ein Garantsymbol des Lebens*, HÄB 3 (Hildesheim, 1977), 72-75, who considers its shape to be influenced by the obelisk.
- 87 This interpretation is given by the authors in *BACE* 19 (2008), 58.
- 88 W. Kaiser et. al., 'Stadt und Tempel von Elephantine, 19./20. Grabungsbericht', *MDAIK* 49 (1993), 149 fig. 8, 151-152.
- 89 L. Gesteremann has recently convincingly argued against the general opinion that Ahanakht dated the years according to his own years in office: *ZÄS* 135 (2008), 1-15.
- 90 Willems, *Dayr al Barsha* I, 89-90.
- 91 Willems, in: *Zij schreven geschiedenis*, 62-64; *Dayr al Barsha* I, 96.
- 92 Willems, *Dayr al Barsha* I, 102-109. Willems concluded (p. 109) that Ahanakht may have served as a provincial vizier working for the residential Theban viziers Bebi and Dagi.
- 93 Willems, *Dayr al Barsha* I, 103.
- 94 H. E. Winlock, *The Rise and Fall of the Middle Kingdom in Thebes* (New York, 1947), 75.
- 95 J. C. Darnell, 'The Route of Eleventh Dynasty Expansion into Nubia: An interpretation based on the rock inscriptions of Tjehemau at Abisko', *ZÄS* 131 (2004), 25, n. 4, as already in J. C. Darnell and D. Darnell, *JNES* 56 (1997), 250 n. 31 and again in 'The Deserts', in T. Wilkinson (ed.), *The Egyptian World* (London and New York, 2007), 37.
- 96 H. G. Fischer, *Inscriptions from the Coptite Nome* (Rome, 1964), 112-118 (no. 45), pl. 37 (line x+12); Giddy, *Egyptian Oases*, 107 n. 120; Valloggia, *Les oasis d'Égypte*, 147; J. C. Darnell, *Theban Desert Road Survey in the Egyptian Western Desert*, I (Chicago, 2002), 41;

- Darnell, *ZÄS* 131 (2004), 24; J. C. Darnell, 'The Eleventh Dynasty Royal Inscription from Deir el-Ballas', *RdE* 59 (2008), 81-110.
- 97 Darnell, *ZÄS* 131 (2004), 25; this argument incorporates his re-assessment of the Shatt er-Rigal and Tjehemau inscriptions.
- 98 Darnell, in Wilkinson (ed.), *The Egyptian World*, 37; Darnell, *RdE* 59 (2008), 94.
- 99 Darnell, *RdE* 59 (2008), 98-102.
- 100 J. C. Darnell, 'The Girga Road: Abu Ziyar, Tundaba and the Intergration of the Southern Oases into the Pharaonic State', in F. Förster and H. Riemer (eds), *Desert Road Archaeology in the Eastern Sahara* (forthcoming); we are most grateful to John Darnell for access to a preliminary manuscript of this article before its publication and various other information on the results of Yale University work in the Western Desert.
- 101 Darnell, in Wilkinson (ed.), *The Egyptian World*, 37-8.
- 102 Darnell, in Wilkinson (ed.), *The Egyptian World*, 38, and in greater detail: Darnell, in *Desert Road Archaeology in the Eastern Sahara* (forthcoming).
- 103 D. Darnell, 'Gravel of the Desert and Broken Pots in the Road: Ceramic evidence from the routes between the Nile and Kharga Oasis', in R. Friedman (ed.), *Egypt and Nubia. Gifts of the Desert* (London, 2002), 173; Darnell, in *Desert Road Archaeology in the Eastern Sahara* (forthcoming).
- 104 P. Ballet, 'La Céramique du Kom I' appendix to S. Aufrère, 'La nécropole sud de Qila' al-Dabba (Oasis de Dakhla, Secteur de Balat): Un palimseste archéologique', *BIFAO* 90 (1990), 25-8.
- 105 C. A. Hope, 'Pottery Manufacture in Dakhleh Oasis', in C. S. Churcher and A. J. Mills (eds), *Reports from the Survey of Dakhleh Oasis 1977-1987* (Oxford, 1999), 225.
- 106 D. Arnold, 'Keramikfunde aus Qila' el-Dabba', in J. Osing et. al., *Denkmäler der Oase Dachla* (Mainz am Rhein, 1982), 54-5; S. Marchand, personal communication, 1997. No structural remains survive of this period at Ayn Asil: M. Baud, 'Balat/Ayn Asil, oasis de Dakhla: La ville de la Deuxième Période intermédiaire', *BIFAO* 97 (1997), 24.
- 107 From the excavations by A. J. Mills; the material awaits publication.
- 108 Surface find by the mission directed by R. S. Bagnall, as yet unpublished.
- 109 Dakhleh: Hope, in *Reports from the Survey of Dakhleh Oasis 1977-1987*, 25-6 (with references); S. Marchand, 'La céramique de la fin de la XIIIe Dynastie (Deuxième Période Intermédiaire) découverte en contexte urbain à 'Ain Aseel (Oasis de Dakhleh)', in Bowen and Hope (eds), *The Oasis Papers* 3, 113-22; S. Marchand, 'Final report on the ceramics from the Second Intermediate Period settlement at Ayn Asil', in S. Marchand and G. Soukiassian, *Balat*, VIII. *Les habitations de la XIIIe dynastie - 2e Période Intermédiaire à Ayn Asil*, *BIFAO* 59 (in press); Baud, in *BIFAO* 97 (1997). Kharga: S. Marchand, in O. E. Kaper and F. Leemhuis (eds), *The Oasis Papers* 4-5 (Oxford, forthcoming); S. Marchand, pers. communication 2006; J. C. Darnell, pers. communication 2009. Bahriyeh: F. Colin et. al., 'Qaret el-Tub: un fort romain et une nécropole pharaonique', *BIFAO* 100 (2000), 145-92; S. Marchand, pers. communication 2009.
- 110 The painted burial chamber of Betju and his son Ideki at Qila ed-Dabba was first mentioned in J. Leclant and G. Clerc, *Orientalia* 62 (1993), 258-259, pl. 42, fig. 49; Aufrère, *Égypte, Afrique & Orient* 18 (2000), 41-44; Valloggia, *Les oasis d'Égypte*, 166-167, fig. 194. Small tombs of a comparable date, with a stela for a lady called *Bt*, were found close to Mastaba II at Balat; V. and Y. Koenig, 'Trois tombes de la Première Période Intermédiaire à Balat', *BIFAO* 80 (1980), 35-43.
- 111 As at other locations around the country; R. Freed, 'Art historical overview', in: E. Brovarski et. al., *Bersheh Reports I. Report of the 1990 Field Season of the Joint*

- Expedition of the MFA, Boston, University Museum, University of Pennsylvania, Leiden University* (Boston, 1992), 53-63.
- ¹¹² J. Clayton et. al., 'A Hieroglyphic Inscription found at Jebel Uweinat mentioning Yam and Tekhebet', *Sahara* 19 (2008), 129-134.
- ¹¹³ We are grateful to Frank Förster and Heiko Riemer for confirming this.
- ¹¹⁴ G. Burkard, 'Inscription in the Dakhla Region', *Sahara* 9 (1997), 152-153.

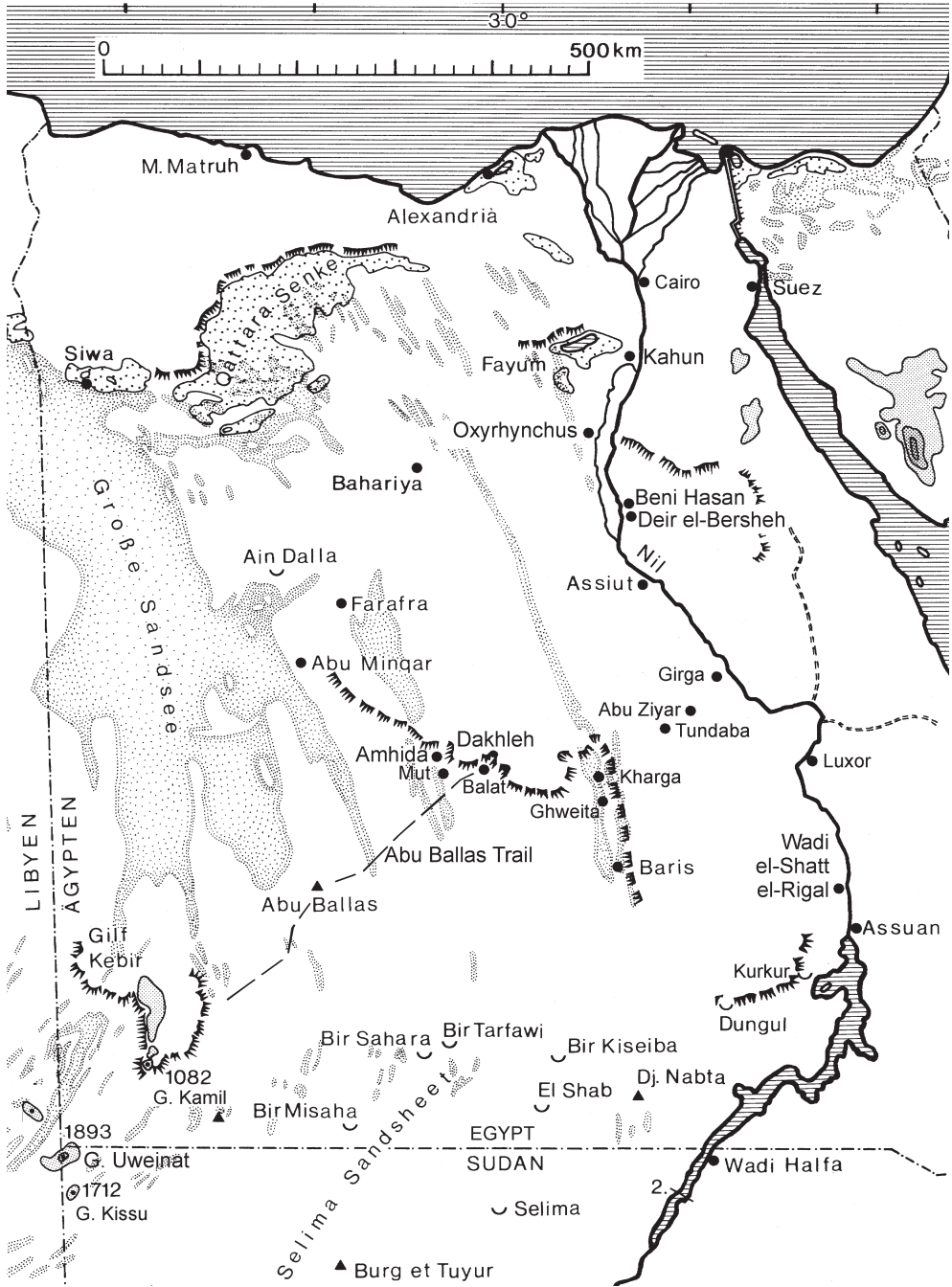


FIGURE 1. Map of Egypt (adapted from Jennerstrasse 8 [eds.], *Tides Of The Desert – Gezeiten der Wüste*, [Cologne, 2002]).

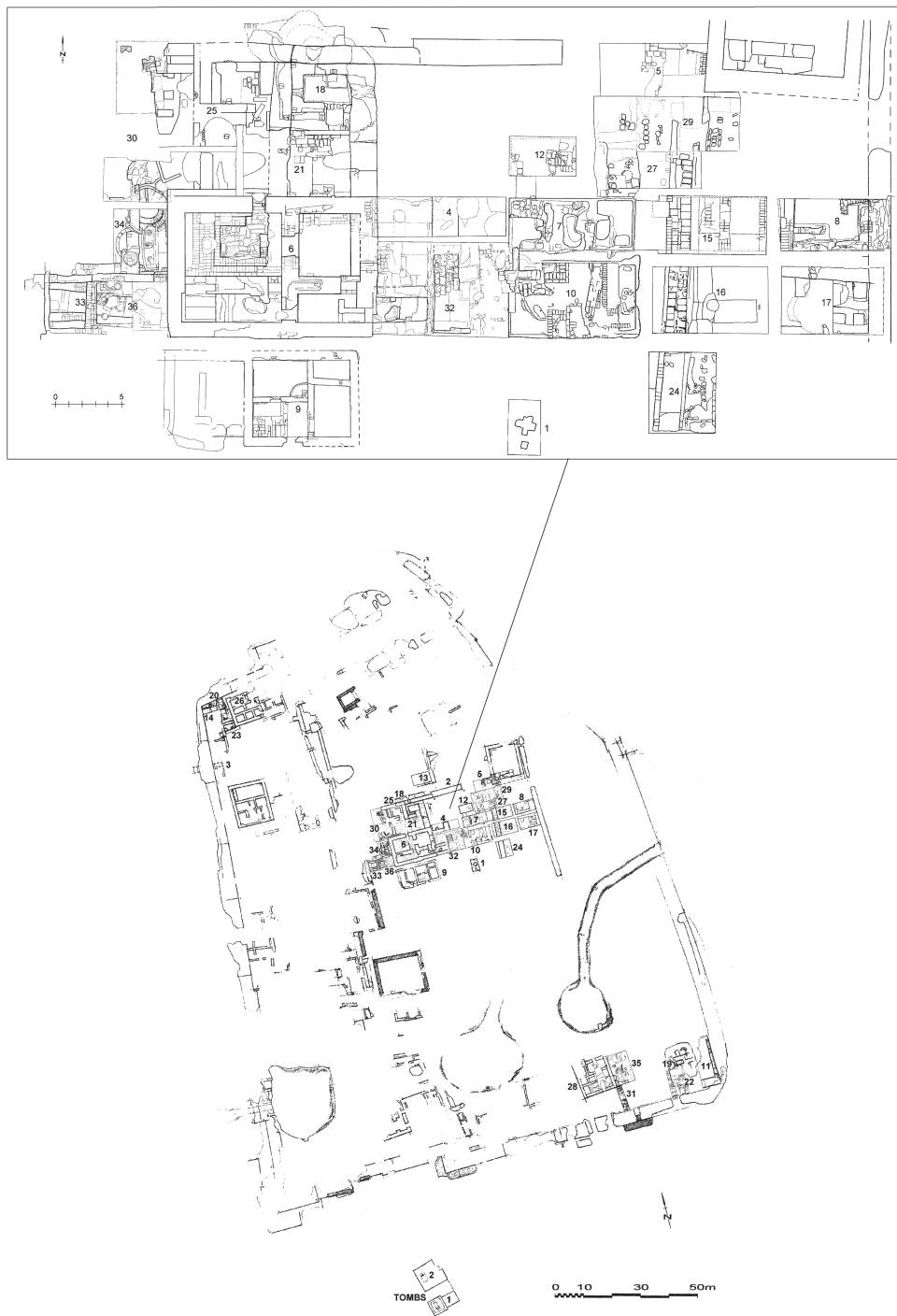


FIGURE 2. Mut el-Kharab with inset showing details of the temple area.

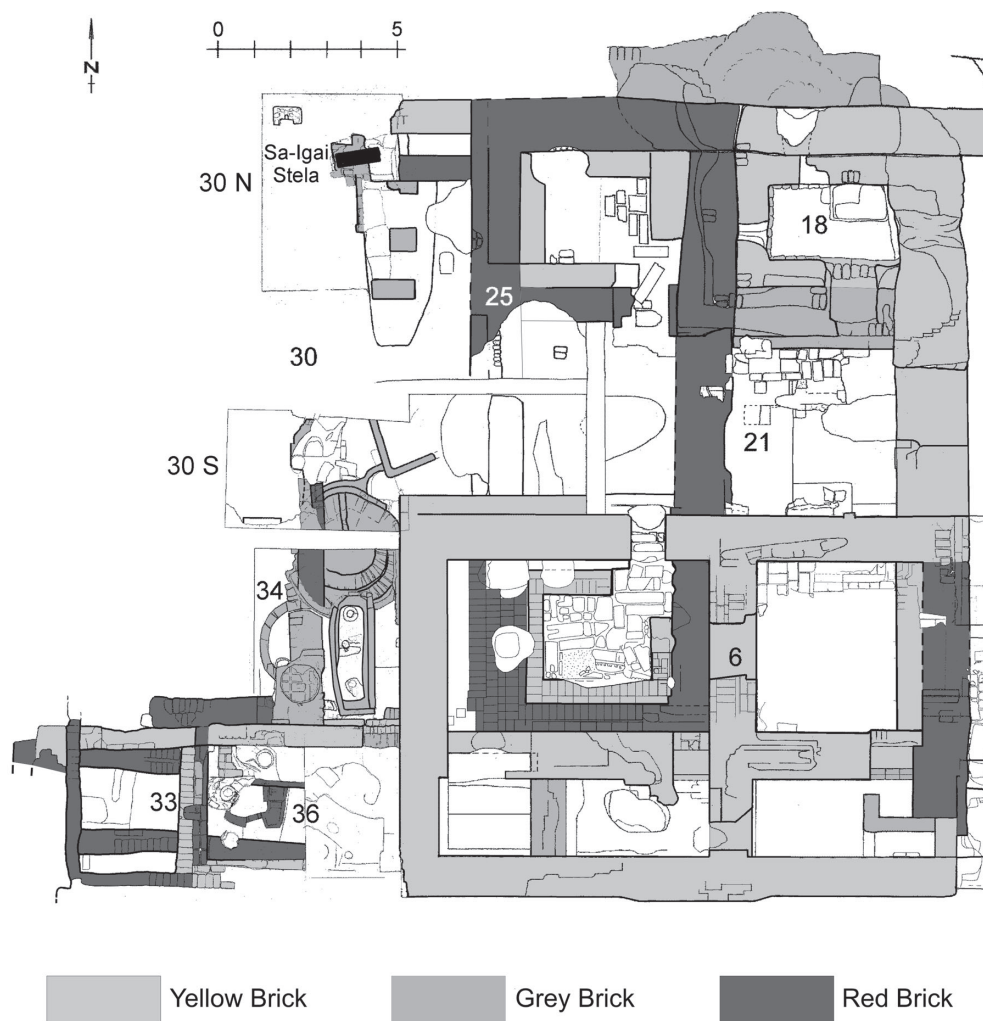


FIGURE 3. Plan of the area due west of the temple.

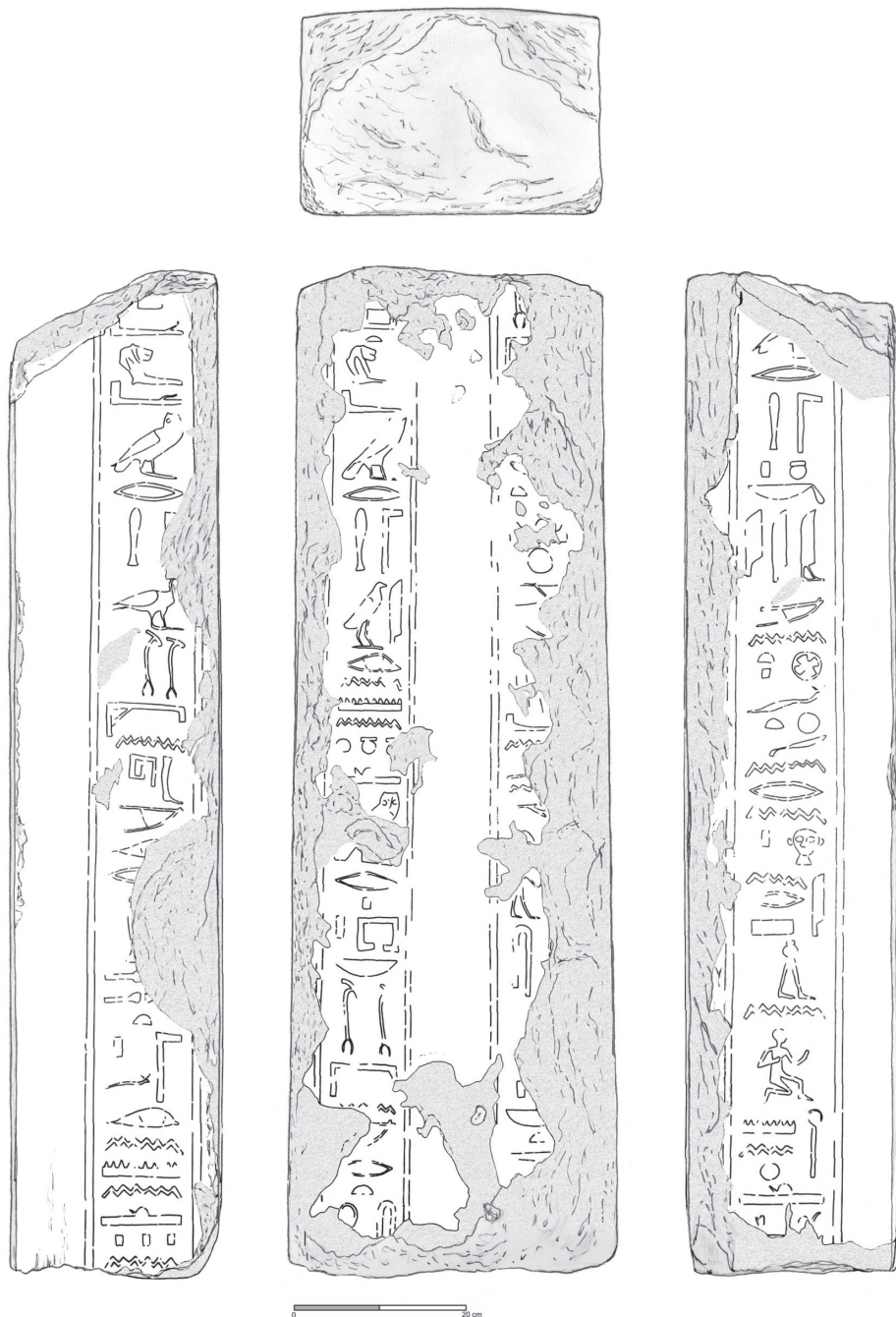


FIGURE 4. Facsimile of the Sa-Igai stela.



PLATE 1. The Sa-Igai stela reused as a door sill in Trench 30 north.

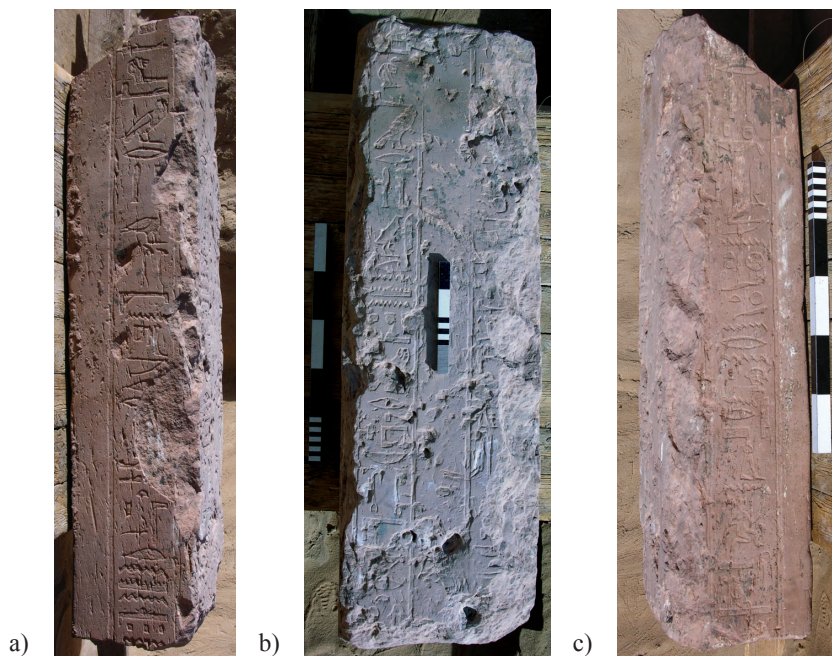


PLATE 2. The Sa-Igai stela a) left b) front c) right.

SUPPLÉMENT AUX ANNALES DU SERVICE DES ANTIQUITÉS DE L'ÉGYPTE

CAHIER N° 38

PUBLICATIONS DU CONSEIL SUPRÊME DES ANTIQUITÉS DE L'ÉGYPTE



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