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# **ROLLSIEGEL, PIERRE DE TAILLE AND AN UPDATE ON A KING AND MONUMENT LIST OF THE THIRD DYNASTY**

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I am honoured to contribute to Professor László Kákósy's Festschrift. His vast knowledge on so many Egyptological subjects, and fields connected with them, inspires great admiration, and I am very much indebted to his continued encouragement and help.

Ten years have passed since I wrote *Some Problems on the History of the Third Dynasty* for my first doctorate in Budapest (1981), and eight years since it was published by the Archaeological Society of Alexandria (1983). I presented two general ideas in these studies.

First, I argued that because Netjerykhet's step pyramid complex is so sophisticated and advanced, it represents a climax, and not the beginning, of stone architecture. It is difficult to accept that it came immediately after the funerary monuments of Khasekhemwy at Abydos. I believe it is logical to consider that there was a period between the two monuments to acquire the technical skills and develop such high taste, and therefore I needed to investigate whether there was any truth in the direct succession of Khasekhemwy-Netjerykhet, and if it was possible that other kings reigned between them.

Second, there are more contemporary monuments and names from the Third Dynasty than those acknowledged by the scholarly consensus ten years ago. Some monuments were overlooked and some names were misplaced. Consequently arguments were raised concerning several monument categories: the great rectangular monuments (open courts), the minor step pyramids, the unfinished pyramid at Zawyet el Aryan north and some mastabas of particular importance. Other arguments were presented concerning the positions and identities of kings Khaba, Djeser, Teti, Djeserteti and others mentioned in Egyptian and Greek sources.

By processing the data a dynasty with 9 kings and a duration of 138 years could be considered.

## **A King List of the Third Dynasty Considered in 1981**

The first king bore the contemporary names: Horus Khaba, Hornub Iretjetef and Nebka; the New Kingdom king list names: Nebka of Abydos and Turin; and the Manethonean name Νεχερώφης Necherophis. He reigned for 19 years and the Hieraconpolis great rectangular monument (open court) is attributed to him.

The second king bore the contemporary names: Horus Sa, Djeser and Djesera; the New Kingdom king list names: ... djesersa of Abydos, Djeser of Saqqara and Djeserit of Turin, who was exceptionally inscribed in red ink; and the Manethonean name Τόσορθρος Tosorthros. He reigned for 19 years and the great rectangular construction, Gisir el Modir at Middle Saqqara, is attributed to him.

The third king bore the contemporary names: Horus Ba and Teti; the New Kingdom king list name Teti of Abydos and the Manethonean name Τύρεις Tyreis. He reigned for 7 years and the Second great rectangular monument (open court) of Middle Saqqara is attributed to him.

The fourth king bore the contemporary names: Horus Sanakht and king (W) of the Palermo Stone; the New Kingdom king list name Sedjes could be a lacuna at Abydos which includes this king; and the Manethonean name Μέσσοχρῖς Mesochris. He reigned for 17 years and El Deir, the brick enclosure with a square brick massif at Abu Rawash, is attributed to him.

The fifth king bore the contemporary names: Horus Netjerykhet, Netjerykhetranub, Bity Sensen and king (X) of the Palermo Stone; the New Kingdom king list name Sedjes could be a lacuna at Abydos which includes this king; and the Manethonean name Σώφις Soyphis. He reigned for 30 years and was the owner of the Step Pyramid Complex at Middle Saqqara.

The sixth king bore the contemporary names: Horus Sekhemkhet and Djesertyankh; the New Kingdom king list names: Sedjes, that could be a lacuna at Abydos which includes this king, Djeserteti of Saqqara and Djeserty of Turin; and the Manethonean name Τοσέρτασις Tosertasis. He reigned for 16 years and was the owner of the unfinished layer pyramid buried in a great rectangular construction at Middle Saqqara.

The seventh king bore the contemporary names: Horus (?) and Nebtawi Nebkara; the New Kingdom king list names: Sedjes, which could be a lacuna at Abydos which includes this king, Nebkara of Saqqara and Hudjefa, which could be a lacuna on the Turin canon which includes this king; and the Manethonean name Ἄχης Akhes. He reigned for 3 years and 6 months and was the owner of the unfinished giant pyramid at Zawyet el Aryan.

The eighth king bore the contemporary names: Horus (?) and Neferka; the New Kingdom king list names: Neferkara of Abydos and Hudjefa, that could be a lacuna on the Turin canon which includes this king; and the Manethonean name Σήφουρις Sephuris. He reigned for 2 years and 6 months and attributed to him is the Layer pyramid at Zawyet el Aryan.

The ninth king bore the contemporary names: Horus Qahedjet, Huni; the New Kingdom king list names: Huni of Saqqara and Turin; and the Manethonean name Κερφέρης Kerpheris. He reigned for 24 years and the pyramid of Meydum is attributed to him.

## Developments

I had unknowingly overlooked Professor Peter Kaplony's valuable study on the Third Dynasty in my dissertation.<sup>1</sup> In the meantime some developments have occurred as a result

1) P. Kaplony, Exkurs zur Königsfolge der 3. Dynastie, *Monumenta Aegyptiaca* 2, Bruxelles 1977, 146-155. This work has been reviewed by W.A. Ward, *Bibliotheca Orientalis* XXXVII (1980) 163-165. I am surprised that such an important study was, as far as I know, never argued over or discussed by anyone, especially scholars who specialize in this period of Egyptian history. My thanks to Professor U. Luft, Mrs F. Jariz and Ms. R. Siegmann for assisting me with Kaplony's study and to Dr. Khalid J.D. Deemer for his assistance in editing this paper.

of reports, suggestions, reviews,<sup>2</sup> published material,<sup>3</sup> investigations<sup>4</sup> and archaeological discoveries.<sup>5</sup> Consequently our knowledge of the Third Dynasty has grown, and I feel a need to update my conclusions. Before presenting a list of kings and royal monuments of the Third Dynasty, I would like to discuss some of the ideas of Kaplony and Lauer.

### Kaplony's *Die Rollsiegel des Alten Reichs*

The aim of Professor Kaplony's research was to confirm his theories on royal titles; in the process, he presented some interesting ideas regarding the succession, length of reign and the ownership of monuments of kings of the Third Dynasty. He begun with Khasekhemwy, the last king of the Second Dynasty, followed by Djoser and Sekhemkhet. Beyond this succession, the kings Shenaka,<sup>6</sup> Nebkara, Nebnubhedjet, Nebhedjet, Sanakhet, Khaba, Nebka, Niswt Hw, ...ka, and Tjehnwneb, and their titles, were analyzed, discussed and identified with others on archaic records. This enrichment of our knowledge of the nomenclature of the kings of the Third Dynasty was accompanied by a suggested hypothesis dealing with Horus Sa and a great rectangular monument, Horus Sanakht and the same monument, Horus Khaba and two pyramids, King Huni and one pyramid, the Golden Horus name of Sanakht, a reconstruction of the succession and length of reigns of the kings of the Third Dynasty, and a supplement concerning Horus Qahedjet. I shall briefly mention his hypothetical suggestions, his proposed succession of kings and the supplement. A consistent use of terms in my study required some minor deviation from Kaplony's more accurate transliteration of king's names and his unfamiliar, sometimes inaccurate, descriptive references to monuments.

#### Hypotheses

First hypothesis: the suggestion that Horus Sa was a short lived king between Khasekhemwy and Djoser. This king could have been the owner of the largest funerary monument

2) J-Ph. Lauer, A propos de l'invention de pierre de taille par Imhotep pour la demeure d'éternité du roi Djoser, *Mélanges Gamal Eddin Mokhtar II, BdÉ* XCVII/2 (1985) 61-67; B. Van De Walle, *Bibliotheca Orientalis* XLIII (1986) 408-9; *ABE* (1983) 83.0551; (1985) 85.0573.

3) J. von Beckerath, *Handbuch der Ägyptischen Königsnamen*, München-Berlin 1984, 50-52, 176-177.

4) A careful examination of the erased part of the cartouche of... Djsersa number 16 on the Abydos list led me to believe, during a discussion with V. Dobrev on April 25, 1988, that the name of the god Seth was originally present in that cartouche the name can consequently be read *Stš-Dsr-Sš* Djesersa(setesh).

5) My own work includes: the discovery of The dry moat of the Netjerykhet complex, *Pyramid Studies and Other Essays Presented to I.E.S. Edwards*, London 1988, 12-22; the rediscovery of *The Brick Pyramid at Abu Rawash, Number 1 by Lepsius*, Alexandria 1987; the discovery of the identity of the owner of the step pyramid of Seila, Newsletter, *The Pyramid of Seila Locally Called 'el Qalah'*, season 1987 (march 1987, unpublished). Following much considerations I believe that the pyramid of Meydum was built by king Snofm of the Fourth Dynasty and probably does not belong to king Huni; the discovery of the mutual relationship between the great rectangular monuments of Middle Saqqara: Some Remarks on the Great Rectangular Monuments of Middle Saqqara, *Festschrift für Werner Kaiser, MDAIK* 47 (1991) 389-402. For an important discovery of blue tiles west of the step pyramid complex see: K. Myśliwiec, *Abstracts of Papers: Fifth International Congress of Egyptology, October 29 to November 3, Cairo 1988*, 201.

6) Westendorf's Neferka; the late Klaus Baer read this name Wehemka, but never published his reading.

in Saqqara („Für diesen käme nur der große (größte) Grabbezirk von Sakkara in Betracht“), which I believe should be Gisir el Modir, the great rectangular monument westernmost at Middle Saqqara. The argument that the length of his reign was 2 months and 23 days was based on register 5 of the Palermo Stone. The first part of segment 7 of this register, during which the reign of king (W) ended and the reign of king (X) began, gives that duration. Nebka, the first name of the Third Dynasty on the Abydos and Turin lists, with a reign of 19 years, was thus rejected and repositioned in accordance with the position of Nebkara on the Saqqara list towards the end of the Third Dynasty. Consequently Horus Sa could have been Djeser's father, and his memory may have been preserved in the name Djesersa of Abydos (the text wrongly mentions Turin). Kaplony questions if the name of Horus Sa was a development of the name of the historical persons Wersakhenum or Sakherty, and thinks that Horus Sanakht was not connected with either Sa or Djesersa.

Second hypothesis: the suggestion that Gisir el Modir, the layer pyramid at Zawyet el Aryan south (the text wrongly mentions a brick pyramid), the unfinished pyramid of Zawyet el Aryan north, and the pyramid of Meydum were built in succession after Sekhemkhet. The close association of Sanakht with Djeser at Saqqara and Bet Khallaf suggests that he was the next successor of Djeser. Sanakht can be identified with either Shenaka of Nebka(ra); a seal from Bet Khallaf is in favor of Nebka(ra). The monument of Sanakht could be Gisir el Modir.

Third hypothesis: the suggestion that the Third Dynasty, excluding Horus Sa, was composed of 5 kings. Kaplony states that one of these kings owned the two pyramids at Zawyet el Aryan. This king would be either Horus Khaba-Netjerynub-Shenaka or Horus Nebhedjet-Nebnubhedjet-Niswt Huni. Supporting Horus Khaba is the name of his predecessor (Nebtawi Nebkara) on a block at the unfinished pyramid at Zawyet el Aryan north.

Fourth hypothesis: the argument that Horus Tjehnwneb is the Gold-Horus name of Horus Sanakht.

#### The list of kings of the Third Dynasty

1- Horus Sa / Niswbity Wersakhunum (or similar);	2 months 23 days.
2- Horus Netjerykhet / Niswbity Nebty Netjerykhetranub (/Djeser);	19 years.
3- Horus Sekhemkhet Niswbity Nebty (Neb) Djeserty;	6 years.
4- Horus Sanakhet / Horus Tjehnwneb / Neswbity Nebkara;	19 years.
5- Horus Khaba / Netjeryneb / Neswbity Shenaka;	6 years.
6- Horus Nebhedjet / Nebnubhedjet / Neswt Huni;	24 years.

Thus a total of 74 years.

#### Qahedjet

Worthy of mention is a supplement wherein Kaplony argues that Horus Qahedjet of the Louvre was not of the Third Dynasty as published by Vandier, but from the first Intermediate Period. He had already seen a photograph in the possession of E&M Kofler-Truniger before the relief arrived at the Louvre.

## Comments

This study of texts on seal impressions, stone vessels and other contemporary inscriptions has indeed added to our limited knowledge of the royal title of this remote period of Egyptian history. It is a very important factor in any attempt to list the kings of the Third Dynasty and their monuments. However I do not believe that it is sufficient. To come as close to the truth as possible on such subjects, conformation, support and logical interaction are needed from all the parameters involved. The writing, transcription and reading of archaic inscriptions have not reached a stage that it can be entirely trusted. A bad reading is still considered by Kaplony to be better than no reading. Consequently, for a reliable king list of the Third Dynasty it is equally, and sometimes more, important to consider all parameters concerning the sites, archaeological investigations, architectural studies, judgements of art historians, and both modern and classical studies on its chronology.

I must admit that when reading Kaplony's work I was sometimes unable to differentiate between fact and theory in some of his statements, while I was following a complex train of thought with many departures from the main idea. There was little or no regard for information derived from the sites, the archeological reports from Saqqara, Zawyet el Aryan and Meydum, the architectural studies by Lauer, Maragioglio, Abd al-Salam Husayn, Reisner, Borchartd, and Petrie, the art style of the Louvre sculpture of Qahedjet,<sup>7</sup> and the scholarly conclusions on the Third Dynasty, as well as a complete disregard for Manetho. Kaplony based his argument in 1977 on the following statements: the succession Khasekhemwy, Netjerykhet, and Sekhemkhet; the creation of an additional reign which does not exist on register 5 of the Palermo Stone; placing Sanakht, whom he admits was closely related to Netjerykhet, after Sekhemkhet, while it would be logical to put him before; and suggesting that Horus Sa or Horus Sanakht was the owner of Gisir el Modir, Khaba was the owner of the two pyramids of Zawyet el Aryan and Huni was the owner of the pyramid of Meydum. Two of these monuments, the pyramids of Zawyet el Aryan North and Meydum, have yielded the names of their owners, Nebkara and Snofru, in an undisputed context. His study, however, has selected the reign durations from the Turin canon.

The construction of Gisir el Modir is not only enormous but also revolutionary: a project built at a site at Saqqara 2 kilometres west of the cultivation with embankment walls ranging in thickness from 12 to 40 metres over a length of 2160 metres, creating a rectangle of 400 x 680 metres.<sup>8</sup> This project could not have been built in 83 days, at a rate of 26 meters length of embankment construction per day. Thus, as the owner of Gisir el Modir, the length of the reign of Horus Sa, which in any event comes from a nonexistent reign on the Palermo Stone, is not convincing. However, with a longer reign Horus Sa could be the owner of this monument. Moreover, this monument placed after Sekhemkhet is not consistent with development of monuments; I have argued that a great rectangular monument without a pyramid can be placed before similar great rectangular monuments with pyramids (see

7) J. Vandier, Une stèle Égyptienne portant un nouveau nom royal de la Troisième Dynastie, *CRAIBL*, 1968, 16-22; *La Revue du Louvre*, 1968, 108.

8) N. Swelim, Great Rectangular Monuments..., *MDAIK* 47, 394-396, fig. B.

below),<sup>9</sup> and on this basis its ownership by Horus Sanakht in Kaplony's list is not consistent. Nor is it possible to place Gisir el Modri immediately before Netjerykhet with Sanakhet where he ought to be.

Horus Sekhemkhet, having a reign of 6 years which is really 6 months on the Turin canon, is not to be trusted in my opinion. His great rectangular monument with an unfinished and buried layer pyramid needs to be considered carefully. It is a major construction project revealing at least 4 phases of change of plan with much tunneling, building and filling to produce a monument which is not fully understood. Without detailed calculations, I would estimate that in order to achieve the constructions visible today in 6 years, it would require a theoretical rate of completion of several tens of cubic metres of construction every hour for the length of Sekhemkhet's reign (with ten hours of work each day).

In the third hypothesis, Horus Khaba is considered the owner of the 2 pyramids of Zawyet el Aryan. I have argued at length in Chapter III of my study of the Third Dynasty that the owner of the unfinished pyramid was Nebtawi Nebkara. I suggested that his successor who tidied up, filling in the shaft and pit, after the untimely death of Nekara, was Shenaka (Westendorf's Neferka). Another name of this successor was probably Nebnubhedjet, found by Barsanti and overlooked in my study. I suggested that the layer pyramid was built by the successor Neferka, who started a new tradition of excluding granite in pyramid construction until it was reintroduced by Khufu. The position of Horus Khaba in the Third Dynasty as the first king was discussed, taking into consideration his stone vessels and the similarity of his name to the last kings of the Second Dynasty.<sup>10</sup>

### Lauer's *L'invention de pierre de taille par Imhotep*

Monsieur J.-Ph. Lauer has focussed his activities for several decades on the monumental archaeology of the Third Dynasty, and we owe much of our knowledge to him. It was kind of Lauer to discuss this review with me before he sent it to the press.<sup>11</sup> Missing the main idea of my study, the review considers that I added Third Dynasty Manethonian names to the New Kingdom king lists and assigned anonymous funerary monuments to each king, and that in that process I reshuffled the kings, rejected the identification of Djoser with Netjerykhet,<sup>12</sup> and considered a double existence of Imhotep. Consequently, the suggestions „auxquels il est conduit, appellent les plus expresses réserves”.<sup>13</sup> Here I would like to discuss

9) N. Swelim, *History of the Third Dynasty*, 39-42.

10) N. Swelim, *History of the Third Dynasty*, 198-205.

11) Lauer, *L'invention de la pierre de taille...*, 61-67.

12) I would like to thank Professor Jürgen Osing who sent me a letter, dated Oct. 31, 1984, in which he said: „As for the traditional equation Netjery-khet = Djoser, I think, one further piece of evidence should be considered in addition to the Sehel text. The famous chief-architect Imhotep, attested from the step pyramid complex in Saqqara on a statue base of Netjery-khet, is connected with king Djoser also in a graffito from the Wadi Hammamat (Dyn. XXVI) and apparently also a demotic tale yet unpublished; Wildung, *Imhotep und Amenhotep*, *MÄS* 36, München/Berlin 1977, p.35f. and 130f. – in the same way as he is in the Sehel text. All these documents are admittedly late, but they are consistent in this assignation, and so, I think, they add some weight to the traditional equation Netjery-khet = Djoser”.

13) Lauer, *L'invention de la pierre de taille...*, 61.

the subject of Djoser-Netjerykhet-Imhotep, consider the balance of evidence and the reigns of the preparatory period separating Khasekhemwy from Netjerykhet.

### Djoser, Netjerykhet and Imhotep

We date the step pyramid complex with uncertainty to 2800 BC, but radiocarbon analyses date it at least 300 years earlier.<sup>14</sup> It was addressed by its builders, who also inscribed it as belonging to Horus Netjerykhet, Niswbity Nebty Netjerykhetranub and Bity Sensen, with no mention of Djoser. These names, except for Sensen, appear frequently in contemporary material of this king throughout Egypt, at Saqqara, Sinai, Bet Khallaf, Abydos, Hieraconpolis, Elephantine and elsewhere, without mentioning Djoser. Among them are relics from the step pyramid which are of utmost importance to the person of this king, namely the famous seated statue which preserves his image, the base of a standing statue and six Sed festival scenes. I do not believe that this king kept a secret name (Djoser) which he did not wish to publish on his monuments. Sites have hitherto yielded nothing about Netjerykhet for more than two millennia until Dynasty XXII (800 BC), where an inscription from the Serapeum mentions Nebty Niswbity Netjerykhetranub without any mention of Djoser.<sup>15</sup>

There should be no doubt, however, that another king named Djoser did exist during the Third Dynasty. The name Nebwy Djoser comes from Umm el Giaab, and Sadjoser from Bet Khallaf;<sup>16</sup> the dating of the first is uncertain and the second is to the Third Dynasty. In the Middle Kingdom Senusret II had a statue made for his ancestor Niswbity Djoser without other names.<sup>17</sup> New Kingdom graffiti at the step pyramid<sup>18</sup> mention Djoser but not Netjerykhet. The same independent appearance of Djoser occurs in the Late Period at Wadi Hammamat, and in Manetho's history.<sup>19</sup>

14) „The final conclusion therefore is that the radiocarbon dates suggest that events in the Old Kingdom, up to the 6th Dynasty, are older by at least three centuries than established by traditional historical reconstructions”; quoted from H. Haas, J. Devine, R. Wenke, M. Lehner, W. Wolfl and G. Bonani, *Radiocarbon Chronology and the Historical Calendar in Egypt, BAR International Series 379* (1987). If this is true, it means that the date of the step pyramid complex is 3100 BC and the Sehel inscription is almost three millennia after the step pyramid. The dates provided below are guidelines for the argument.

15) H. Gauthier, *Le livre des rois d'Égypte* I, Le Caire 1907, 52 xi.

16) Concerning this name in J. Gastang, *Mahasna and Bet Khallaf*, London 1903, 27, XXVIII 14; Sethe reads *s3-f*; I thank Dr. Henry Fischer for information in a letter dated Dec. 1983, in which he wrote: „As for the Djoser question, I think you have done well to point out the difficulty or applying the name to Netjerykhet, but can not follow you in reading the Beit Khallaf inscription as Sadjoser or Djosersa. In the first place there is no indication that this is a royal name; and secondly, I think the lower sign may indeed be *f* but hardly *dsr*. The interpretation of *Nbty-dsr* (mentioned here as Nebwy Djoser) also remains problematic”. Madame Posner told me that lower sign could be *dsr*; see however, P. Kaplony, *Die Inschriften der Ägyptischen Frühzeit* I, Wiesbaden 1963, 575, who reads the lower sign *dsr* and the upper sign *hm*; Hoffmeier, *Sacred in the Vocabulary of Ancient Egypt, Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis*, 1985, 14-18 gives a survey of the word *dsr* in Dynasties I-III.

17) H. Gauthier, *Le livre des rois d'Égypte* I, 51 vi.

18) There are similar graffiti at the upper temple of the pyramid of Meydum. W.M.F. Petrie, *Medum*, London 1892, 40-41, pl. XXXII-XXXVI.

19) W.G. Waddell, *Manetho*, London 1973, 41, 43, 45.



