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The American University in Cairo  
School of Humanities and Social Sciences

**Noticing Neighbors:  
Reconsidering Ancient Egyptian Perceptions of Ethnicity**

A Thesis Submitted to  
The Department of Sociology, Anthropology, Psychology, and Egyptology

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
For the Degree of Master of Arts  
In Egyptology

By **Taylor Bryanne Woodcock**

Under the supervision of **Dr. Mariam Ayad**

May 2014

## ABSTRACT

Ethnic identities are nuanced, fluid and adaptive. They are a means of categorizing the self and the 'other' through the recognition of geographical, cultural, lingual, and physical differences. This work examines recurring associations, epithets and themes in ancient Egyptian texts to reveal how the Egyptians discussed the ethnic uniqueness they perceived of their regional neighbors. It employs Egyptian written records, including temple inscriptions, royal and private correspondence, stelae and tomb autobiographies, and literary tales, from the Old Kingdom to the beginning of the Third Intermediate Period. The textual examples are organized by ethnic group and divided into four regions, beginning with those concerning the western groups and proceeding clockwise, ending with those concerning the southern groups. The analysis of these texts produces an understanding of the Egyptian conceptualization of ethnicity in general, and the conceptualization of distinct ethnic identities specific to the four regions surrounding Egypt. This enhances our understanding of the lexical differences through which the Egyptians distinguished their neighbors from each other. Egyptian written records do not support the belief that the ancient Egyptians only understood their foreign neighbors within the simplistic framework of four broad 'races.' Egyptian literature contained a multitude of primary ethnonyms for distinct ethnic groups, as well as a number of secondary, informal ethnonyms. This study elucidates the placement of Egypt's neighbors in the organization of the Egyptian cosmos, their distinct perceptions in Egyptian cultural cognition, and the Egyptian vocabulary for discussing foreigners and foreignness, thus leading to a better understanding of ethnic perceptions in ancient Egypt.

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## Introduction

### *Methodology*

Studies of ethnicity in antiquity have recently gained popularity and many, as a result, have increased our awareness of the amount and the nature of the interactions that the ancient Egyptians had with the *ḥ3styw*, “foreigners.”<sup>1</sup> The vibrant and intricate images of foreigners portrayed in ancient Egyptian tombs, temples, palaces and models attracted Egyptological scholarly attention early on.<sup>2</sup> Visual and written sources illustrate that the ancient Egyptians had an understanding of the ethnic diversity of their world through contact with foreigners in both royal and private arenas, outside of and within Egyptian borders. Egyptian creative and political processes in the Early Dynastic Period illustrate social awareness of a need for rulers to overpower foreign enemies,<sup>3</sup> such as on the Narmer Palette.<sup>4</sup> They also showed an awareness of foreign lands on the so-called Libyan Palette<sup>5</sup> (Fig. 1) that includes the early hieroglyphic combination of the ‘land’ (Gardiner Sign-list N 18)<sup>6</sup> and “throw-stick” (Gardiner Sign-list T 14)<sup>7</sup> signs in the bottom register.

While the textual approach to studying foreigners has not been overlooked, studies of their artistic typologies are overwhelmingly more popular. There has not been a qualitative and comparative discussion of ethnic groups in Egyptian written sources that examines how Egyptians characterized the distinct ethnic groups they encountered, and how those characterizations (including descriptions, epithets, associations and figurative expressions) can be categorized. In order to address the apparent and nuanced ethnic

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<sup>1</sup> For some examples of these studies see: Stuart Tyson Smith, *Wretched Kush: Ethnic Identities and Boundaries in Egypt's Nubian Empire* (New York: Routledge, 2003). Charlotte Booth, *The Role of Foreigners in Ancient Egypt: A Study of Non-Stereotypical Artistic Representations* (Oxford: Basingstoke Press, 2005). Heidi Saleh, “Investigating Ethnic and Gender Identities as Expressed on Wooden Funerary Stelae from the Libyan Period (c. 1069—715 B.C.E.) in Egypt” (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2006). Frederik Christiaan Woudhuizen, “The Ethnicity of the Sea Peoples” (PhD diss., Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam, 2006). William A. Cooney, “Egypt's Encounter with the West: Race, Culture and Identity” (PhD diss., Durham University, 2011).

<sup>2</sup> For example: W. M. Flinders Petrie, *Racial Photographs from Egyptian Monuments* (London: British Association, 1887). W. M. Flinders Petrie, “The Races of Early Egypt,” *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 31 (1901). W. Max Müller, *Asien und Europa nach Altägyptischen Denkmälern* (Leipzig: Verlag von Wilhelm Engelmann, 1893).

<sup>3</sup> A.J. de Wit, “Enemies of the State: Perceptions of ‘otherness’ and state formation in Egypt” (Master's thesis, Leiden University, 2008)

<sup>4</sup> Jean Capart, *Primitive Art in Egypt* (London: H. Grevel & Co., 1905), 244-245.

<sup>5</sup> Capart, *Primitive Art in Egypt*, 236.

<sup>6</sup> Alan Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar* (Oxford: Griffith Institute, 1957), 487.

<sup>7</sup> Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar*, 513.



**Figure 1: 'Libyan Palette,' verso - Image from John Baines, "Contextualizing Egyptian Representations of Society and Ethnicity" (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1991), 365.**

perceptions that have been long overlooked, this thesis is a lexical analysis of foreignness as defined in ancient Egyptian texts.

The research questions of this thesis focus on the human perception, bias and categorization of difference and foreignness. The intent of this work is to identify the collective Egyptian cultural perceptions of their foreign neighbors and to divulge the ways in which each was conceptualized as a distinct ethnicity. It is not designed to create more accurate pictures of those ethnic groups themselves, as is primarily the focus of Egyptological studies of foreigners. This work produces a comparative understanding of the ways the ancient Egyptians thought about, discussed, and categorized their ethnic neighbors. It examines the Egyptians' cultural *perceptions* of several ethnic groups, with the hope that, through comparison, these perceptions will be more clearly apparent. A number of specific questions will be addressed:

- What names and epithets did the Egyptians use for their regional neighbors?
- What can be gleaned from Egyptian texts about the Egyptians' perceptions of these neighbors, in terms of what they were known for and what they were associated with?



- Where did these neighbors fit in the Egyptian cosmography and how did this affect the Egyptian understanding of them?
- How else did the Egyptians talk about and categorize their ethnic neighbors, and what collective opinions can be discerned about individual ethnic groups?

With these questions in mind, a number of ethnic groups were selected for which there are sufficient and varied references in Egyptian written records. Selection of these ethnic groups was based upon extant common elements, patterns, and reoccurring associations in Egyptian texts. The source material includes historical records, such as tomb autobiographies, boundary stelae, king-lists, and temple inscriptions; wisdom literature; royal and private letters; fictional narratives; and religious hymns. The included written sources represent a wide range of Egyptian chronology, from pre-dynastic palettes to Third Intermediate Period inscriptions, with the majority of examples dating to the Middle and New Kingdoms. The Third Intermediate Period and following eras were characterized by foreign rulers, including the ‘Libyans’ and ‘Nubians’, the Assyrians and Persians, and finally, the Greeks and Romans, who adopted Egyptianized roles in temple ritual and relief in order to assume the role of the Egyptian king. Because the Egyptian culture and royal ideology of these periods were influenced by the foreignness of Egypt’s kings, an understanding of the Egyptian conception of ethnicity during those periods would be best addressed separately.<sup>8</sup>

This thesis organizes the selected ethnic groups by the four cardinal directions, befitting of one of the many kinds of associations through which the Egyptians understood their neighbors. This work begins with the ethnic groups associated with the west and proceeds clockwise around the Egyptian cosmos to end with the peoples of the south. This approach allows greater maneuverability in assigning ethnic groups to their appropriate cardinal direction. In this work, each ethnic group has been assigned to one of the four cardinal directions based on the Egyptian perception of where they fit in the ancient political topography, not based on our modern understanding of their actual

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<sup>8</sup> Ethnic relations, assimilation, and adaptation in these periods have nevertheless been studied. For some examples, see: Simon Davis, *Race Relations in Ancient Egypt: Greek, Egyptian, Hebrew, Roman* (London: Methuen and Co., 1951); K. Goudriaan, *Ethnicity in Ptolemaic Egypt* (Amsterdam: J. C. Gieben, 1988); Per Bilde, *Ethnicity in Hellenistic Egypt*, (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1992); and Janet H. Johnson, “Ethnic Considerations in Persian Period Egypt,” in *Gold of Praise: Studies on Ancient Egypt in Honor of Edward F. Wente* (Chicago: The Oriental Institute, 1999).

geographical origins. In many cases, however, these orientations were not concrete, resulting in shifting associations between two cardinal directions, as with the *Aamu*, who were first primarily associated with the east and then with the north. In this situation the ethnic group is included in the dominant orientation determined by the most meaningful and prominent association. Some ethnic groups fulfilled a political and religious role in the Egyptian landscape that was not necessarily consistent with their topographical location (for example, the inhabitants of the Mediterranean Sea are the only ethnic groups located true north of Egypt). The association of the *Aamu* with the north in New Kingdom written sources fulfilled an important cosmographical purpose, although their actual geographical location was to the northeast.

### ***Prior Scholarship***

Scholarly work concerning Egypt's foreigners has primarily been one of two types: 1) an examination of how Egyptians viewed foreign peoples in general (in terms of chaos vs. order, and "us" vs. "them") or 2) a historical review of the archaeological, textual and visual evidence of a single ethnic group.<sup>9</sup> Both of these types of studies miss the differentiation in Egyptian perceptions of distinct ethnic groups. Outside of these categories, there are a number of notable works that attempted to understand foreigners through textual analyses:

Sir Alan Gardiner laid the groundwork for a textual study of ancient ethnic groups with his publication of Amenemope's Onomasticon in *Ancient Egyptian Onomastica* (1947). Approximately fifty-six foreign peoples and locations are included in the list, but many are illegible due to a large lacuna in the papyrus. Gardiner presents the significant textual appearances of each ethnonym or toponym, with a cursory bibliography. His comments on these ethnic groups were restrained by the limitations of the text; Gardiner recognizes that the list is largely restricted to the foreign peoples that were the most familiar to the Egyptians during the Ramesside period, when the papyrus was composed. In addition to the historically narrow sampling of foreign peoples, the majority of the list can be identified as toponyms, not ethnonyms. Gardiner's translations and comments are

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<sup>9</sup> Examples include: Raphael Giveon, *Les Bédouins Shosou Des Documents Égyptiens* (Leiden: Brill, 1971); Oric Bates, *The Eastern Libyans: An Essay* (London: Frank Cass and Company, Ltd., 1914); and John Strange, *Caphtor/Keftiu: A New Investigation* (Leiden: Brill, 1980).

a significant contribution to the topic, but cannot be considered a comprehensive discussion of foreign peoples in Egyptian texts.

The first significant work to deal with Egypt's traditional enemies, known as 'The Nine Bows,' was Eric Uphill's article "The Nine Bows" (1966). As a construct, the Nine Bows appear first in the Early Dynastic period but feature predominantly in New Kingdom royal and political propaganda. Uphill's aims were to highlight their major textual appearances, identify their geographical origins, and illustrate the shifting identities of Egypt's enemies overtime, without being exhaustive on the topic. The article fruitfully details the individuality of these ethnic groups along with their possible homelands, but it does not form any conclusions about Egyptian perceptions of them as a people, or their place in the Egyptian awareness of ethnicity.

The first work on the epithets of foreigners in Egyptian texts is David Lorton's article "The So-Called 'Vile' Enemies of the King of Egypt (in the Middle Kingdom and Dyn. XVII)" (1973). This seminal work examined the uses of the word most commonly associated with foreigners in Egyptian texts: *ḥsy*. Lorton traces the history of the word through Middle and New Kingdom royal and private inscriptions and compares the contexts of each use. He concludes that in many instances, a more accurate translation of *ḥsy* is "defeated" rather than the traditional "wretched," or "vile." Lorton's methodology for analyzing the use of a single word, *ḥsy*, should be applied to other epithets and descriptions of foreigners. Lorton's slightly later work *The Juridical Terminology of International Relations in Egyptian Texts Through Dyn. XVIII* (1974) contained valuable discussions of the common titles *wr* and *ḥk3*, including lists of all known instances of the titles. His conclusions from their contexts about the use of both terms enriched our understanding of foreign rulers in Egyptian texts.<sup>10</sup>

*Topos und Mimesis* (1988), a largely literary examination of references to foreigners in Egyptian texts, was a unique contribution to the topic. Antonio Loprieno presented two major Egyptian interpretations of foreigners in Egyptian texts: the Foreigner *Topos*, or stereotypical, overarching "theme" of the chaotic outsider; and the Foreigner *Mimesis*, or the humanization of foreigners who accept Egyptian ways and/or language. The bulk of his analyses are applied to the Story of Sinuhe (which exhibits

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<sup>10</sup> Refer to the discussion of these titles in the Conclusion on page 102.

mimetic roles) and the Instruction to Merikare (the foreigners in which he considered to be topoi). He does not attempt to diversify his “thematic” and “rhematic” literary divisions by examining which ethnic groups they were applied to and whether there are patterns.

Dominique Valbelle’s *Les Neuf Arcs: L’Egyptien et les étrangers de la préhistoire à la conquête d’Alexandre* (1990) is a historical examination of Egypt’s relationships with its regional neighbors from the Pre-Dynastic Period through the Late Period. The title, which refers to Egypt’s traditional enemies, is misleading; the work covers Egypt’s relationships with the major foreign ‘races,’ which she illustrates were far more complex than that of only enemies. She focuses on how Egyptian foreign policy, evident already during Dynasty 0, dictated different responses to foreign powers, through the construction of fortifications along Egypt’s borders, the forced displacement of foreign captives, and the commercial exploits of Punt and the Levant. She makes special note of the foreign peoples who inhabited Egypt, including the ‘Hyksos’ and foreign kings of the Third Intermediate Period. Valbelle’s work provided an essential overview of the Egypt’s relationship with neighboring peoples on a State and private level, but was not intended to divulge or compare Egypt’s perceptions of those neighboring peoples’ ethnic identities.

A recent and significant work on the classification of ethnic groups is Andrés Diego Espinel’s *Etnicidad y territorio en el Egipto del Reino Antiguo* (2006). His book is a partially lexical, partially visual examination of ethnicity and foreignness as related to each of the major territories of the Egyptian world, including Egypt. The first part is dedicated to the examination of geographical and ethnic terms used by the Egyptians to describe their world, on both the macro and micro scale. His exploration of ethnicity is restricted to the Old Kingdom, thus narrowing the scope of his evidence and missing the opportunity to explore the nuanced ethnic identities of Egypt’s neighbors overtime. Few, if any, textual examples for each ethnonym are included within the brief, individual examinations of each ethnic group, presumably due to the restricted time period from which he drew them. His noteworthy contribution to the study of Egypt’s regional neighbors was his categorization of Egyptian exonyms into types: “Términos genéricos,” “Pseudoetnóminos,” and “Etnóminos.” The categorization of Egyptian exonyms in this

work as 'primary' or 'secondary' does not follow Espinel's in every instance, perhaps because a better understanding of these terms can be made through the examination of their use throughout a greater portion of Egyptian history.

## Chapter 1. Ethnicity, Ethnonyms, and a Vocabulary of Foreignness

Within academia, studies of ethnicity, ethnic identities and ethnonyms are relatively recent, and were even more recently welcomed into Egyptology.<sup>11</sup> ‘Ethnicity’ is a modern term derived from the Greek word ἔθνος, *ethnos*, meaning “nation,” or “people.”<sup>12</sup> An individual’s ethnicity is only a single element of their multi-faceted identity, but it is an element that is easily expressed and perceived. In practice, ethnicity is a means of classifying oneself and others as elements of their societies.<sup>13</sup> Conceptually, ethnicity is “the recognition of a contrast between ‘us’ and ‘them.’”<sup>14</sup> This recognition is two-sided: the characterization of the self, and the characterization of the ‘other,’ which results in the awareness of the differences between them. Therefore, ethnic identities are formed either reflexively or through external assessment.<sup>15</sup> The recognition of ethnic *difference* manifests itself culturally in a number of ways, including through the use of ethnonyms. Ethnonymy, the study of ethnic group names, constitutes a branch of Onomastics.<sup>16</sup> Reflective of the dualistic forms of ethnicity (internal and external), ethnonyms have two types: endonyms, or autonoms, the name used reflexively by an ethnic group, and exonyms, the name applied to an ethnic group by an external source.<sup>17</sup> This thesis deals entirely with exonymic use in ancient Egyptian written sources. Exonyms often emphasize a characteristic visible to the external culture,<sup>18</sup> as will be illustrated with examples in the Egyptian language.

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<sup>11</sup> For an overview of literature see: Smith, *Wretched Kush: Ethnic Identities and Boundaries in Egypt’s Nubian Empire*, 1-55.

<sup>12</sup> Robert Beekes, *Etymological Dictionary of Greek* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 377. Smith, *Wretched Kush: Ethnic Identities and Boundaries in Egypt’s Nubian Empire*, 10.

<sup>13</sup> Sandra Wallman, “The Boundaries of ‘Race’: Processes of Ethnicity in England,” *Man* 13 (1978): 202.

<sup>14</sup> Sandra Wallman, “Ethnicity Research in Britain,” *Current Anthropology* 18 (1977): 532.

<sup>15</sup> Steve Fenton, *Ethnicity, Racism, Class and Culture* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1999), 19-21.

<sup>16</sup> William Bright, “What IS a Name? Reflections on Onomastics,” *Language and Linguistics* 4 (2003): 671.

<sup>17</sup> Frank Proschan, “‘We are all Kmhmu, Just the Same’: Ethnonyms, Ethnic Identities and Ethnic Groups,” *American Ethnologist* 24 (1997): 91.

<sup>18</sup> Kenton L. Sparks, *Ethnicity and Identity in Ancient Israel* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1998), 107: note 44.

Anthropologists have created numerous theoretical models for identifying ethnicity within the last century, and there is no definitive model.<sup>19</sup> For the purpose of this thesis, Hutchinson and Smith's six main features of ethnic groups as outlined in their book<sup>20</sup> will be considered:

1. A common *proper name*, to identify and express the 'essence' of the community
2. A myth of *common ancestry*, a myth rather than a fact, a myth that includes the idea of a common origin in time and place and that gives an *ethnie* a sense of fictive kinship
3. Shared *historical memories*, or better, shared memories of a common past or pasts, including heroes, events and their commemoration
4. One or more *elements of common culture*, which needs not be specified but normally include religion, customs or language
5. A *link with a homeland*, not necessarily its physical occupation by the *ethnie*, only its symbolic attachment to the ancestral land, as with diaspora peoples
6. A *sense of solidarity* on the part of at least some sections of the *ethnie's* population

A society's ethnic identity is built upon these shared characteristics, or "index features."<sup>21</sup> These features are not stagnant,<sup>22</sup> but they are fluid and adaptive and can vary in effectuation from person to person. What determines a person's ethnicity cannot be objectively defined. Ethnicity is neither intrinsic nor permanent.<sup>23</sup> Ethnicity is also situational and an individual may have multiple, even contradictory, ethnic identities. A popular example from ancient Egypt of how the reflexive and imposed ethnic identities may conflict is that of Heqanefer, a Great One (*wr*) of *Miam* (modern Aniba) during the late 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty.<sup>24</sup> In a scene from the tomb of the Egyptian Viceroy of Nubia (or "King's Son of Kush") Huy, Heqanefer is shown in the Egyptian visual style for southern

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<sup>19</sup> For a brief overview of conceptualizations of ethnicity see: Siân Jones, *The Archaeology of Ethnicity: Constructing Identities in the Past and Present* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 100-105; John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith, *Ethnicity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 5-10.

<sup>20</sup> Hutchinson and Smith, *Ethnicity*, 6-7.

<sup>21</sup> Hutchinson and Smith, *Ethnicity*, 24.

<sup>22</sup> Ronald Cohen, "Ethnicity: Problem and Focus in Anthropology," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 7 (1978): 397.

<sup>23</sup> Especially in the modern world, immigration, adoption and international travel facilitates the blending of cultural practices and merging of ethnic identities.

<sup>24</sup> Smith, *Wretched Kush: Ethnic Identities and Boundaries in Egypt's Nubian Empire*, 173.

foreigners: adorned with feathers, gold earrings, and a brightly patterned kilt and sash.<sup>25</sup> Yet his name, Heqanefer, and the titles he held were in the Egyptian language.<sup>26</sup> His rock-cut tomb, located at modern Toshka East, was carved in the Theban style<sup>27</sup> and included Egyptian funerary elements such as Funerary Figurines and a pectoral, as well as hieroglyphic texts and reliefs.<sup>28</sup> The image of Heqanefer created by these contrasting depictions is dualistic: the Egyptians' portrayal of his ethnic origins in Huy's tribute scene as distinctly foreign, and his personal portrayal as an Egyptian official in his own tomb. Heqanefer's shifting identity exemplifies one possible way that ethnic identities are situational, and how at times, an individual may choose to emphasize certain aspects of their ethnicity, when at other times they may minimize it.<sup>29</sup>

While many of the above features would be difficult to identify for an ethnic group based entirely from second-party sources (i.e. a second culture's observations), some are amply found applied to Egypt's neighbors in Egyptian texts. This work examines how the Egyptians identified the "index features" of their foreign neighbors as recorded in Egyptian texts. Externally imposed ethnicity is an active and powerful aspect of interaction between people groups. It may have little to do with the objective truth of who the people group is. The Egyptian perceptions of their foreign neighbors that are discussed here may not be true to the actual identities of the ethnic groups, but detail how the Egyptians categorized and understood them.

The ancient Egyptians were aware of the difference between them and their regional neighbors as early as the formation of the Egyptian state. Their methods of indicating this difference in visual and written culture developed quickly, for the purpose of unification by emphasizing the difference between internal and external cultural

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<sup>25</sup> N. de Garis Davies, *The Tomb of Huy* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1926), plate 27.

<sup>26</sup> Heqanefer means "good ruler." William Kelly Simpson, "Nubia: The University Museum – Yale University Expedition," *Expedition 4* (1962): 33-36. William Kelly Simpson, *Heka-Nefer and the Dynastic Material from Toshka and Arminna* (Philadelphia: University Museum of the University of Pennsylvania, 1963), 8-9.

<sup>27</sup> Refer to the tomb section and plan: Simpson, "Nubia: The University Museum – Yale University Expedition," 32.

<sup>28</sup> Simpson, "Nubia: The University Museum – Yale University Expedition," 35-36.

<sup>29</sup> Another recent work on the evidence for dualistic ethnic identities is: Stuart Tyson Smith, "Colonial Gatherings: The New Kingdom Presentation of Inu and the British Imperial Durbar, a Comparison," abstract, *65<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the American Research Center in Egypt* (2014): 79.



identities.<sup>30</sup> There was no word original to the Egyptian language that meant ‘ethnicity,’ or ‘ethnic group,’ although they were certainly aware of the differences between ethnic groups. The Hymn to the Aten contains a partial image of the world, selecting three regions to represent the ethnic diversity known to the Egyptians: *Kharu* to the north, *Kush* to the south, and Egypt between them:




*ḥ3swt ḥ3r kš {sn}*<sup>31</sup> *kmt di.k s nb r st.f ir.k ḥrwt.sn w<sup>c</sup> nb ḥry r wnmw.f ḥsb ḥ<sup>c</sup>w.f  
nsw wp.w m mdwt ḳdw.sn m mitt inmw.sn stny stny.k ḥ3styw*<sup>32</sup>

“the foreign lands of *Kharu*, *Kush* and Egypt, you put every man into his place. You provide their portion, each one having according to his food. His lifetime is counted out. Tongues are separate by speech, and their natures likewise. Their skins are distinguished; you distinguish the foreigners.”<sup>33</sup>

The Egyptian language contained a plethora of ethnonyms for their regional neighbors.<sup>34</sup> While it is possible that these ethnonyms were orthographically similar to their neighbors’ autonyms (if indeed they had such autonyms), it cannot be guaranteed.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Tonny J. de Wit, “Ethnicity and State Formation in Egypt: Ideology and Practice,” in *Proceedings of the Fourth Central European Conference of Young Egyptologists* (Budapest: Studia Aegyptiaca, 2007), 407-410. De Wit credits the Egyptian awareness of outsiders, especially those to the south and northeast, as a contributing factor to the cultural establishment of the Egyptian *ethnie* and homeland.

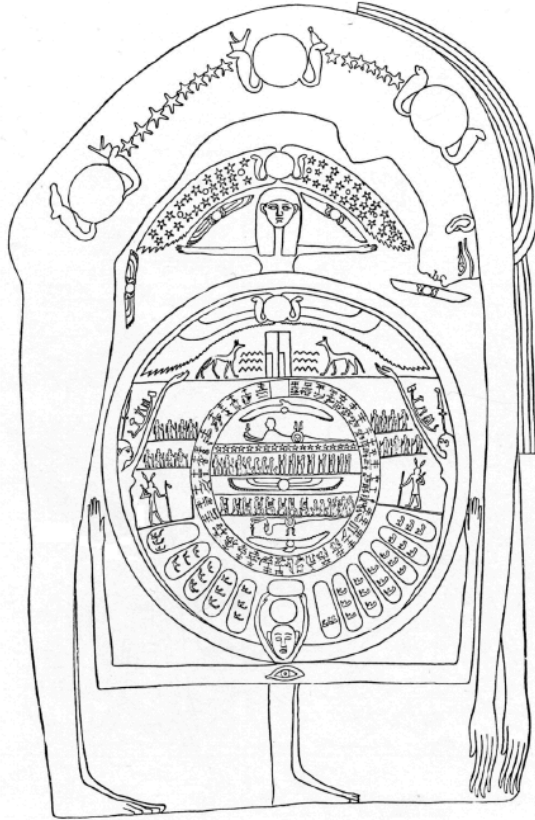
<sup>31</sup> These signs are problematic – it is possible that the *s* should have been *ḥ* (Gardiner Sign-list N 16)  to translate as “the land of Egypt.”

<sup>32</sup> Excerpt from the Hymn to the Aten. N. de Garis Davies, *The Rock Tombs of El Amarna VI: Tombs of Parennefer, Tutu, and Ay* (London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1908), plate 27: lines 8-9.

<sup>33</sup> A similar creation narrative occurs in Papyrus Boulaq XVII: Edda Bresciani, “Foreigners,” in *The Egyptians* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 223.

<sup>34</sup> Schneider notes that even acculturated foreigners in Egypt were unable to free themselves from their original ethnonyms, but the continued use of the ethnonyms “cannot be taken as indicators of a specific degree of ethnicity.” Thomas Schneider, “Foreigners in Egypt: Archaeological Evidence and Cultural Context,” in *Egyptian Archaeology* (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 144.

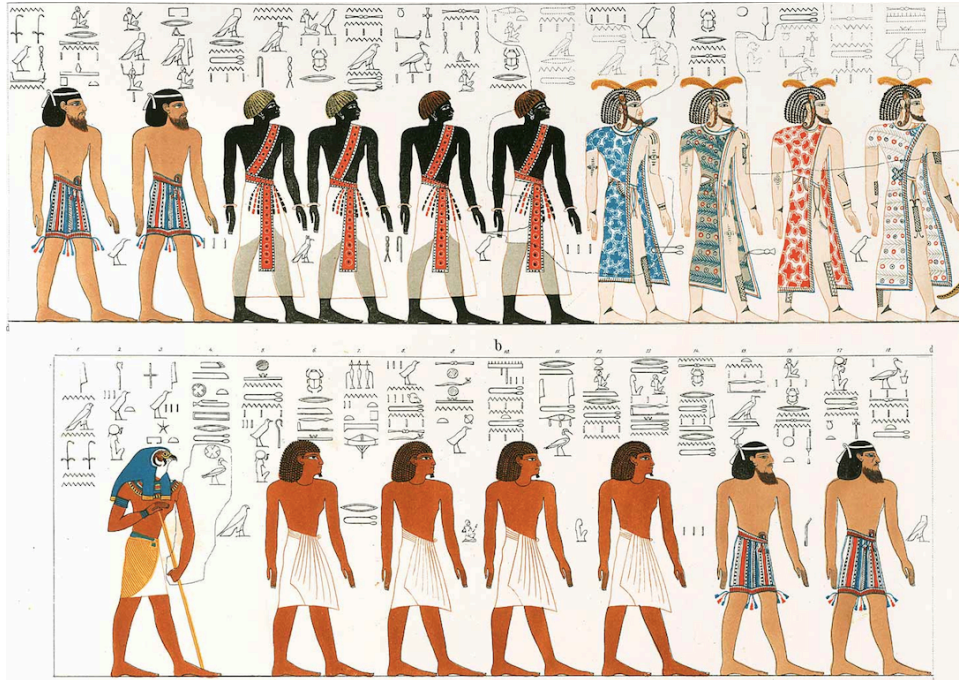
<sup>35</sup> Modern examples of the potential differences and similarities between exonyms and autonyms are the English name for the European country *Germany* and the native name: *Deutschland*, or the English name for the Eurasian country *Russia*, and the native name: *Rossiya*.



**Figure 2: Map of the cosmos from the sarcophagus of Wereshnefer – Image from Othmar Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1997), 38.**

The Egyptian conception of the world featured their homeland, *kmt*, “the Black Land,” at the center of the universe. The 30<sup>th</sup> Dynasty map of the cosmos on the lid of the sarcophagus of Wereshnefer illustrates the regions of the Egyptian world: the realm of the gods in the innermost sphere, surrounded by the Egyptian nomes, and then surrounded again by the regions of the foreign peoples (Fig. 2). The intimate relationship between the gods’ homeland and Egypt in this map reflects the Egyptians’ consideration that Egypt was a part of the ‘ordered’ world (*mꜣꜥt*), and outside of Egypt was chaos (*isft*). Humankind according to the Egyptians consisted of four, broad types, usually referred to in Egyptology as ‘the Four Races,’ which were visually and nominally distinct from each other: Egyptians (*rmt*), *Nehesyu*, *Aamu*, and *Tjehnu* (Fig. 3).<sup>36</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Anthony Leahy, “Ethnic Diversity in ancient Egypt,” in *Civilizations of the ancient Near East I* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1995), 226.



**Figure 3: Horus and the Four ‘Races’ from the tomb of Seti I – Image from Carl Lepsius, *Denkmäler aus Ägypten und Äthiopien*, Abt. III (Berlin: Nicolaische Buchhandlung, 1849-1859), plate 136.**

These four ‘races’ were not the only ethnic groups known to the Egyptians, nor were these the only ethnonyms the Egyptians used for their neighbors, but they were sometimes used as representatives of the western, southern and northeastern regions.

Anthony Leahy described the Egyptian awareness of their foreign neighbors<sup>37</sup>:

The Egyptians had specific names for many geographical areas outside their frontiers, but since the precise origin of foreigners was rarely of importance to them, generic terms covering large areas, such as *ʿmw* (*amu*), “Asiatic,” were preferred.

This approach in Egyptology ignores the ethnic variations among Egypt’s neighbors that were both present and acknowledged in Egyptian written records. It is interesting to note that while there were four ‘types’ of people, the Egyptians divided the world outside of Egypt into four cardinal directions:

<sup>37</sup> Leahy, “Ethnic Diversity in Ancient Egypt,” 226-227.



*di.i n.k knt nht r h3swt nbt di.i b3w.k sndw.k m t3w nbw hryt.k r drw shnwt nt pt*

“I gave to you valor and strength against all foreign countries. I made your authority and fear of you in every land, the dread of you as far as the four supports of heaven.”<sup>38</sup>



*rdi.n.i n.f t3w rsy mht dmd n whi imnt i3bt nw t3*

“I (the king) gave to him (Osiris) the lands of the south and the north united, not lacking the west and the east of the land.”<sup>39</sup>

The formula in royal literature for naming representative foreign lands located at each of Egypt’s four borders, sometimes as gifts from the gods, existed from the Old Kingdom.<sup>40</sup> The inhabitants of each region were called upon based on their cardinal direction to represent the four corners of the world in texts that symbolically ensured Egyptian dominion over them. These references to the four cardinal directions performed the same functions as lists of the Nine Bows did – to symbolically extend the king’s dominion over every region of the world and over all of their inhabitants. The stele of Amenhotep III from his Memorial Temple is a good example of this – in Amun’s speech to the king he names each cardinal direction and its inhabitants: *Kush* to the south, *stt* to the north, *Tjehnu* to the west, and Punt at the sunrise (east).<sup>41</sup> This formula that attributed representative ethnic groups to each of the four cardinal directions was neither permanent nor consistent – it varied to reflect the foreign powers of the time. Its use lasted even into the Ptolemaic Period when it was recorded at the Temple of Edfu with slight variation:


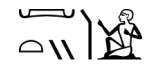




<sup>38</sup> From the Poetical Stele of Thutmose III. Kurt Sethe, *Urkunden der 18. Dynastie IV* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1906), 612: lines 7-9.

<sup>39</sup> From the Dedicatory Stele of Seti I to Ramesses I at Abydos. Kenneth Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions: Historical and Biographical IV* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1982), 114: 9-10.

<sup>40</sup> For example, the ‘three races’ of bound prisoners, albeit without ethnonyms, from the mortuary temple of Sahure in: Ludwig Borhardt, *Das Grabdenkmal des Königs Sahu-re* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1913), plate 5.

<sup>41</sup> W.M. Flinders Petrie, *Six Temples at Thebes* (London: B. Quatrach, 1897), 25 and plate 12.

*Kush* to the south, the *Aamu* to the north, the *Tjemeh* to the west, and the *Shasu* to the east.<sup>42</sup>

Term	Transliteration	Translation
	<i>h3styw</i>	“foreigners, desert-dwellers” <sup>43</sup>
	<i>pdty</i>	“foreigner” <sup>44</sup>
	<i>r-pdtyw</i>	“foreigners” <sup>45</sup>
	<i>rwty</i>	“outsider, stranger” <sup>46</sup>
	<i>šm3w</i>	“foreigners” <sup>47</sup>
	3	“interpreter” <sup>48</sup> “foreigner” <sup>49</sup>

**Table 1: Some Terms for Foreigners**

An additional element of this work is a discussion of the Egyptian ‘vocabulary of foreignness’ or the words the Egyptians used to refer to, categorize, and describe foreigners. Aside from their use of ethnonyms for their regional neighbors, the Egyptian language contained a number of general terms for foreigners (Table 1). These terms often

<sup>42</sup> Giveon, *Les Bédouins Shosou Des Documents Égyptiens*, 164.

<sup>43</sup> Raymond O. Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian* (Oxford: Griffith Institute, 1962), 185. Schneider defines *h3styw* as: “foreigners outside Egypt who are devoid of any opportunity of acculturation.” Schneider, “Foreigners in Egypt: Archaeological Evidence and Cultural Context,” 144. Adolf Erman and Hermann Grapow, *Wörterbuch der Aegyptischen Sprache III* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1982), 234.

<sup>44</sup> Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*, 97. Erman and Grapow, *Wörterbuch der Aegyptischen Sprache I*, 570.



<sup>45</sup> Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*, 146.

<sup>46</sup> Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*, 147. Erman and Grapow, *Wörterbuch der Aegyptischen Sprache II*, 405.

<sup>47</sup> Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*, 266. Erman and Grapow, *Wörterbuch der Aegyptischen Sprache IV*, 470.

<sup>48</sup> Erman and Grapow, *Wörterbuch der Aegyptischen Sprache I*, 159.

<sup>49</sup> Hans Goedicke, “An Additional Note on ‘3 ‘Foreigner,’” *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 52 (1966): 172.

ended with the “throw-stick,” determinative  (Gardiner Sign-list T 14), and the hills determinative  (Gardiner Sign-list N 25). Thutmose III’s stele from Gebel Barkal is a perfect example of an Egyptian text that employs all forms of the Egyptian ‘vocabulary of foreignness.’ It lauds the military might of the Egyptian king and his subjugation of all peoples and lands.<sup>50</sup> The phraseology is both general and specific, pinpointing the names and homelands of numerous Egyptian neighbors (*mntyw stt*, *hryw-sꜥy*, *ꜥ3mw*, *w3w3t*, etc.), their orientations outside of Egypt (*rsyw*, *mḥtyw*), as well as including a number of descriptors (*nbdw-ḳd*, *pḏtyw*, *bštt*, *psdt-pḏt*, *hrw*, etc.) in an attempt to describe ‘the other.’ The descriptions used in Egyptian rhetoric about foreigners can be categorized as two types: first, forms of humiliation<sup>51</sup> and second, judgment of character. Used primarily in political narratives, the Egyptians employed a ‘vocabulary of humiliation’ that involved the degradation of foreign and domestic enemies for the purpose of celebrating the power of the Egyptian king and upholding his leadership of the State by depicting him righteously defeating chaos (*isft*) and maintaining justice (*mꜥt*). Judgments of character appear in fictional and historical narratives, in which a description of the ethnic group, as an active character in the story, was needed for the audience, and also in royal and non-royal correspondence. Other means of discussing foreignness was through the use of analogies with animals<sup>52</sup> or objects. Three simile relationships reoccur repeatedly in New Kingdom texts: the king (as a lion) devouring foreigners (as cattle);<sup>53</sup> the king (as a falcon) catching foreigners (as small birds);<sup>54</sup> and

<sup>50</sup> Adriaan de Buck, *Egyptian Readingbook vol. I: Exercises and Middle Egyptian Texts* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), 56-63.

<sup>51</sup> A discussion of foreign prisoners in New Kingdom Egyptian texts, including the Egyptian terms for their prisoners of war, and descriptions of humiliating forms of execution, is included in: Mark D. Janzen, “Iconography of Humiliation: The Depiction and Treatment of Bound Foreigners in New Kingdom Egypt,” (PhD diss., The University of Memphis, 2013), 220-260.

<sup>52</sup> Teeter specifies that often these comparisons were with “wild, and hence unpredictable animals.” Emily Teeter, “Animals in Egyptian Literature,” in *A History of the Animal World in the Ancient Near East* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 268-269.

<sup>53</sup> Epigraphic Survey, *Later Historical Records of Ramesses III* (Chicago: The Oriental Institute, 1932), plate 83: column 43 and plate 86: column 33.

<sup>54</sup> Epigraphic Survey, *Later Historical Records of Ramesses III*, plate 68: column, 3; plate 82: column 17 and plate 86: columns 22, 43. In the Karnak Inscription of Merneptah the chief of the *Rebu* is described being: “fettered like birds.” Colleen Manassa, *The Great Karnak Inscription of Merneptah* (New Haven: Yale University, 2003), 165.

the king threshing the foreigners (as grain or straw).<sup>55</sup> Other comparisons were made to *ddft*, “snakes,”<sup>56</sup> and *pnw*, “mice.”<sup>57</sup> Further examples of this phenomenon will be discussed with individual ethnic groups.

Aside from the terms in Table 1, which were used homogenously for foreign peoples, Egyptians also talked about their neighbors using more personable terms, including *rmt*, “people,”<sup>58</sup> *nywtjw*, “townsmen,”<sup>59</sup> and *mryt*, “underlings” or “servants,”<sup>60</sup> terms that were primarily applied to Egyptians. The use of these terms was not restricted to situations of the foreigner-mimesis,<sup>61</sup> but could also be used to refer to the distant ‘other.’ This vocabulary creates a dualistic picture of ethnicity in Egyptian texts: words existed exclusively for outsiders that indicate perceived difference, and other words, applied to both foreigners and Egyptians, indicate a perceived similarity.

Stemming from these basic observations of the way Egyptians described foreignness, the following chapters present further textual evidence for their considerations of individual ethnic groups, as arranged by their cardinal orientation, beginning with Egypt’s western neighbors.

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<sup>55</sup> Epigraphic Survey, *Later Historical Records of Ramesses III*, plate 82: column 37; plate 83: column 42; and plate 86: column 49.

<sup>56</sup> Kitchen, *Ramesseid Inscriptions: Historical and Biographical IV*, 4: line 13.

<sup>57</sup> Note that this word is now lost but was recorded by Maspero. Kitchen, *Ramesseid Inscriptions: Historical and Biographical IV*, 21: line 3 and note 3a.

<sup>58</sup> Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*, 150. No. 230 in: Alan H. Gardiner, *Ancient Egyptian Onomastica* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), 98-110.

<sup>59</sup> Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*, 126.

<sup>60</sup> Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*, 111.

<sup>61</sup> Antonio Loprieno, *Topos und Mimesis: zum Ausländer in der Ägyptischen Literatur* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1988), 60-71.

## Chapter 2. The Westerners

The peoples who inhabited the western desert were considered by the ancient Egyptians to be distinct ethnic groups as early as the Predynastic period. The nomadic and pastoral lifestyles of these western neighbors generated almost nothing in the way of permanent, archaeological imprints on their cultural landscape. To make the task of exploring their ethnic identities even more difficult, none of the peoples in Egypt's western desert employed a written language that could provide insight into how they conceptualized their own ethnicity (including through the use of autonoms and toponyms) or which index features they relied upon as a community to differentiate themselves from outsiders, if they did so at all.<sup>62</sup> Without an archaeological record or first-hand records, historians are left with the task of reconstructing their ethnic identity based on little evidence. This chapter will present some of the index features of Egypt's western neighbors from the Egyptians' perspective.



### *Ethnonyms and Homelands*

As early as the Sixth Dynasty, Egyptians employed two common names for these now comprehensively dubbed "Libyan" peoples: *Tjehnu*, the oldest, first appeared on the

Early Dynastic 'Libyan Palette'<sup>63</sup> with a simplistic orthography of , and also on an

ivory cylinder of King Narmer  depicting rows of bound peoples.<sup>64</sup> The

other common ethnonyms, *Tjemeh*, first appeared in the Old Kingdom autobiographies of

Weni<sup>65</sup> as  and Harkhuf<sup>66</sup> as .

Throughout their longstanding use, *Tjehnu* and *Tjemeh* were terms that referred to both the geographical places and the ethnic groups that inhabited them. In close association with the *Tjehnu* and

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<sup>62</sup> For example: religious practices, dress, historical symbols, or language. Hutchinson and Smith, *Ethnicity*, 85-89.

<sup>63</sup> Jean Capart, *Primitive Art in Egypt* (London: H. Grevel & Co., 1905), 236.



<sup>64</sup> John Baines, *Visual and Written Culture in Ancient Egypt* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), fig. 8.

<sup>65</sup> Kurt Sethe, *Urkunden des Alten Reichs* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1933), 101.


<sup>66</sup> Sethe, *Urkunden des Alten Reichs*, 125.



*Tjemeh*, several other ethnonyms appeared in late New Kingdom texts. The ‘Onomasticon of Amenemope,’ composed during the Ramesside Period when the threat of invasion from the west was at its highest, begins the section of foreign lands and

peoples with the<sup>67</sup>:  *Tjemeh*,  *Tjehnu*,

 *Meshwesh*<sup>68</sup> (often abbreviated “Ma” in Egyptian

texts), and  *Rebu*.<sup>69</sup> Their frequent appearances together during the Ramesside Period has been taken as evidence of their ‘Libyan’ identities, but this does not confirm that they shared a common geographic or ethnic origin, only that the Egyptians associated them with one another.<sup>70</sup>

The Egyptians recognized that the ethnonym itself was essential for the longevity of the ethnic group.<sup>71</sup> A speech recorded by Ramses III during his second war against the Westerners begins by boasting<sup>72</sup>:



*i dd n p3 hrw n mšwš ptr rf<sup>73</sup> fh rn.k r nḥḥ dt*

<sup>67</sup> No doubt that when conjuring names of foreign peoples for the composition of the list, the Libyans would have been among those the scribes would first think of. Gardiner, *Ancient Egyptian Onomastica* I, 113-4.

<sup>68</sup> The *Meshwesh* first appear in a topographical list of Thutmose III, without description. They also appear in two topographical lists of Horemheb. Cooney, “Egypt’s Encounter with the West: Race, Culture and Identity,” Appendix D. J. Simons, *Handbook for the study of Egyptian Topographical Lists relating to Western Asia* (Leiden: Brill, 1937), 114.

<sup>69</sup> Otherwise translated as *Libu* or *Labu*. The earliest appearance of the *Rebu* in Egyptian texts is from the reign of Ramses II. David O’Connor, “Egypt, 1552-664 BC,” in *The Cambridge History of Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 919. Cooney, “Egypt’s Encounter with the West: Race, Culture and Identity,” Appendix C.

<sup>70</sup> The term ‘Libyan’ will be avoided in this thesis for its homogenous treatment of these ethnic groups.

<sup>71</sup> This follows the first of the six elements of an *ethnie* according to Hutchinson and Smith, *Ethnicity*, 6. Refer to page 9 for the list of elements.

<sup>72</sup> Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions: Historical and Biographical* V, 45.

<sup>73</sup> Kitchen interprets the second eye determinative (Gardiner Sign-list D 6) to be a mistake for *r* (Gardiner Sign-list D 21): Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions: Historical and Biographical* V, 45: note 13a. Edgerton and Wilson agree with this interpretation: William F. Edgerton and John A. Wilson, *Historical Records of Ramesses III: The Texts in Medinet Habu volumes I and II* (Chicago: The Oriental Institute, 1936), 63 and note 3a.

“Say to the fallen of the *Meshwesh*: See now, your name will be destroyed for ever and ever!”

The use of a common, proper ethnonym that has the ability to carry the “essence” of the people within itself is an important element of an ethnic identity.<sup>74</sup> Especially in contexts of war, the name carries the weight of the enemy’s formidability and unity within itself. The Egyptians ensured their enemies’ destruction with written spells that contained their enemies’ names, both personal names and ethnonyms,<sup>75</sup> on figurines or pots, which were then smashed or burned.<sup>76</sup> By destroying their enemies’ names, the Egyptians believed they also destroyed the threat they posed.

***Orientation: The Western Homelands***

The association of the *Tjemeh* and *Tjehnu* with the western regions of the Egyptian world is present in the Old, Middle and New Kingdoms. The earliest explicit placement of *Tjehnu* in the west appears in the 6<sup>th</sup> Dynasty autobiography of Harkhuf, during the reign of Pepi II.<sup>77</sup> Harkhuf records that he found the ruler of *Yam* (a southern region)<sup>78</sup> heading to the land of the *Tjemeh*:



*r hwi tmh r k<sup>c</sup>h imnt n pt*

“in order to smite the *Tjemeh* at the western bend of the sky.”

The 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty ‘Story of Sinuhe’ begins with the death of King Amenemhat I, while

his son Sensusret (I) is away leading a campaign against the *Tjemeh* <sup>79</sup>

Sensusret I, returning to Egypt with *Tjemeh* prisoners and cattle, is met by messengers sent from the royal court<sup>80</sup>:

<sup>74</sup> Hutchinson and Smith 1996, *Ethnicity*, 6.

<sup>75</sup> For examples, refer to the execration texts included in this work on pages 74-75.

<sup>76</sup> Robert K. Ritner, *The Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice* (Chicago: Oriental Institute Press, 1993), 136-142. Kerry Muhlestein, “Execration Ritual,” in *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology* (Los Angeles, 2008).

<sup>77</sup> Sethe, *Urkunden des Alten Reichs*, 125-6.

<sup>78</sup> David O’Connor, “The Locations of Yam and Kush and Their Historical Implications,” *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 23 (1986): 29.

<sup>79</sup> Alan H. Gardiner, *Notes on the Story of Sinuhe* (Paris: Librairie Honoré Champion, 1916), 123.

<sup>80</sup> Gardiner, *Notes on the Story of Sinuhe*, 124.



*r gs imnty r rdit rh s3 nsw*

“to the western side in order to inform the king’s son (of his father’s death).”

From the recto inscription of a New Kingdom stele erected by Amenhotep III at his mortuary temple is a speech that Amun gives to the king promising to deliver to him the foreigners from the four cardinal directions, south, north, west and east<sup>81</sup>:



*di.i hr.i ir imnt bi3yt.i n.k di.i itt.k thnw*

“I turn my face to the west and I cause a wonder for you. I cause you to conquer the *Tjehnu*.”<sup>82</sup>

This text called upon the *Tjehnu* as the western representative of the Egyptian cosmos. It will be considered again for its placement of other ethnic groups. The Egyptians also used the *Tjehnu* as one of the three foreign ‘races’ whose representatives are smited by the Egyptian king to show his dominion over the entire world.<sup>83</sup>

The *Rebu* and *Meshwesh* were also associated with Egypt’s west, although this association does not assure that the ethnic groups originated there. They were described approaching Egypt from the west<sup>84</sup>:



*wn rb<sup>85</sup> mšwš sndm hr kmt iw iti.w n3 dmiw p3 rwd imnt*

“the *Rebu* and the *Meshwesh* were dwelling in Egypt, plundering the towns and the western shore (of the Nile).”

<sup>81</sup> Petrie, *Six Temples at Thebes*, 25 and plate 12.

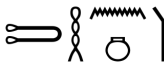
<sup>82</sup> The text was also copied by Ramses III. Kitchen, *Rameside Inscriptions: Historical and Biographical* V, 97.


<sup>83</sup> Mentuhotep Nebhepetre II smiting the three races (*st3w, sttyw, thnw*) in Elisa Fiore Marochetti, *The Reliefs of the Chapel of Nebhepetre Mentuhotep at Gebelein* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 51. Also refer to footnote 40.

<sup>84</sup> Wolja Erichsen, *Papyrus Harris I: Hieroglyphische Transkription* (Brussels: Bibliotheca Aegyptiaca, 1933), 93.

<sup>85</sup> These names (*Rebu* and *Meshwesh*) are examples of group writing. As such, they are transliterated without the vowels, following Junge. Friedrich Junge, *Late Egyptian Grammar: An Introduction* (Oxford: Griffith Institute, 2001), 41-44, and especially 42.

In at least one case, the *Tjehnu* performed a northern role in the Egyptian cosmography. The caption beside a scene of Ramses II smiting a man clearly marked as a

*Tjehnu*  in the Beit el-Wali temple<sup>86</sup> further adds the description:

 *ptpt h3st mhity*, “trampling the northern foreign land.” In the temple, the

*Tjehnu* join scenes of ethnic groups representing the north and east on the northern walls.<sup>87</sup> This grouping of western, northern, and eastern neighbors on the north side, while the representative of the south (*Kush*) take up the southern side of the temple, is an example of a convenient grouping of the northernmost neighbors rather than a redefinition of *Tjehnu* as a northerner. It does indicate that in the mind of the Egyptians, the *Tjehnu* were more comparable for categorization with the Northerners and Easterners than with the Southerners.

During the Ramesside Period when Egypt experienced a steady encroachment of various immigrating peoples from the west, the Westerners were often discussed together in Egyptian texts. The texts from this period illustrate the united front that the Egyptians perceived coming toward them from the west. At times, the discourse indicates that the Egyptians considered the ethnonyms ‘*Tjehnu*’ and ‘*Tjemeh*’ as “umbrella” terms for the western ethnic groups,<sup>88</sup> under which various other western peoples could be described<sup>89</sup>:



*tfti thnw iryw šdt iw.sn twt dmd nn r-˘.sn m rb spd w mšwš*

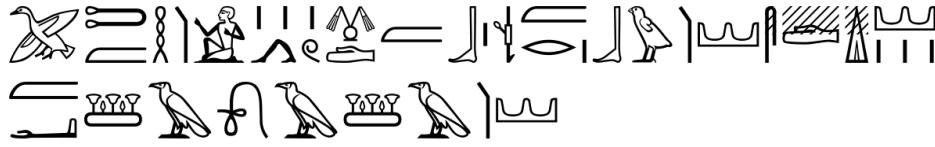
“The *Tjehnu* are in motion, making a plot. They are assembled, united without their limit, consisting of *Rebu*, *Sepedu* and *Meshwesh*.”

<sup>86</sup>Epigraphic Survey, *The Beit el-Wali Temple of Ramses II* (Chicago: The Oriental Institute, 1967), 23 and plate 24.

<sup>87</sup> The ethnic identities of the northerners are only identifiable through their visual stylization; the texts clarifying their ethnicities are now destroyed. Epigraphic Survey, *The Beit el-Wali Temple of Ramesses II*, plates 11-14.

<sup>88</sup> Edgerton and Wilson, *Historical Records of Ramesses III: The Texts in Medinet Habu volumes I and II*, 20.

<sup>89</sup> Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions: Historical and Biographical V*, 12.



*p3 t̄mh iw(w) dmd m bw w<sup>c</sup> m rb spd̄w mšwš*

“The *Tjemeh* have come, united in one place, consisting of *Rebu*, *Sepedu* and *Meshwesh*.”<sup>90</sup>

In both of these examples the *Tjehnu* and *Tjemeh* are mentioned first, likely because their longstanding presence in Egyptian cultural awareness made them the most familiar of the Westerners to the Egyptians, perhaps even synonymous with the western regions. Adding to these more general ethnic terms, the Egyptians specified exactly which western peoples they were referring to, here, the *Rebu*, *Sepedu*<sup>91</sup> and *Meshwesh*.

As seen in the examples above, these western peoples were often referenced *en masse*, but this did not preclude the Egyptian understanding that each ethnic group inhabited its own distinct, cultural land<sup>92</sup>:



*p3 t3 t̄mhw pd iry.w nhr mšwš ‘hy.[sn k3p] m t3.sn*

“The land of *Tjemeh* fled, they went running, and the *Meshwesh*, [they] rose up, [taking shelter] in their land.”

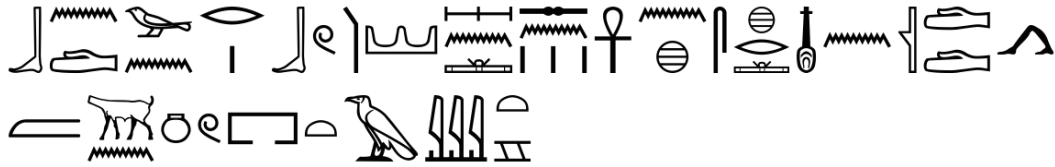
This provides evidence of individuality among the western ethnic groups, lending validity to the idea that they should be treated distinctly, with discrete societal leadership and goals. A description from Merneptah’s Poetical Stele briefly describes what the Egyptians thought of the lifestyle that the *Rebu* enjoyed in their own homeland<sup>93</sup>:

<sup>90</sup> Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions: Historical and Biographical* V, 22: line 12.

<sup>91</sup> The *Sepedu* only appear in the inscriptions of Ramesses III at Medinet Habu. Bates notes their orthographic similarity to *Esbet*, another ethnonym only mentioned in the Medinet Habu records, and proposes that they may be the same people group. Bates, *The Eastern Libyans: An Essay*, 47.

<sup>92</sup> Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions: Historical and Biographical* V, 24: lines 4-5.

<sup>93</sup> Petrie, *Six Temples at Thebes*, plate 14: row 10.



*bnd n rb kn.sn ḥnh šhr nfr n kdd m-ḥnw t3 sht*

“It goes ill for the *Rebu*; they have ceased living the good manner of going around within the countryside.”

Together, these texts show that the Egyptians were aware that a distinct homeland existed for each of the western peoples, an essential element of recognizing an ethnic group. They also perceived enough compatibility among them that their collaboration, as in instances of war with a common enemy, was a natural outcome.

### ***Common Culture: Language, Dress, and Customs***

While there is no extant evidence of the type of languages spoken by the Westerners or what those languages were called by the people who spoke them, Spell PT 301 does indicate that they spoke a language foreign to the Egyptians<sup>94</sup>:



*iti n.k wrwt m ʒḥw wrw ʒ3 ḥntyw thnw*

“Take for yourself the *wrwt*-crown from the great and mighty jabberers who are over *Tjehnu*.”

Faulkner commented that the word ʒḥw, “jabberers,” is intended to give the impression that when the Egyptians heard foreigners speak it was only unintelligible babble.<sup>95</sup> The word was used for the speakers of any foreign language,<sup>96</sup> and in this text linked an unspecified foreign language to the land of *Tjehnu*. Another indication of the linguistic differences between the Egyptians and the Westerners is found in a Ramesside text from Deir el-Medina<sup>97</sup>:

<sup>94</sup>Kurt Sethe, *Die Altaegyptischen Pyramidentexte nach den Papierabdrucken und Photographien des Berliner Museums I* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1908), 234. Anthony Spalinger, “Some Notes on the Libyans of the Old Kingdom and Later Historical Reflexes,” *Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities Journal* 9 (1979): 130.

<sup>95</sup> Raymond O. Faulkner, *Ancient Egyptian Pyramid Texts* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 90.

<sup>96</sup> See it also applied to the *Nehesyu* on page 87.

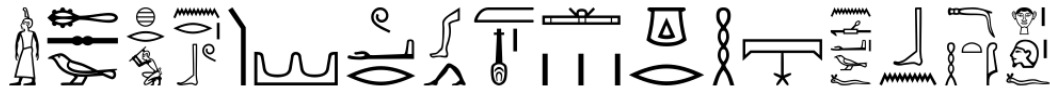
<sup>97</sup> From the Rhetorical Stele of Ramesses III, found at Deir el-Medina in Chapel C: Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions: Historical and Biographical V*, 91: lines 5-7. Serge Sauneron, “La différenciation des



*di.f d3y.w itrw in r kmt st irw m nhtw n nsw nht sdm.w mdt rmt hr šms nsw iry.f sth mdt.sn*

“He made them (the *Rebu* and *Meshwesh*) cross the river, and brought into Egypt, they are put in fortresses of the mighty king. They heard the speech of the people (Egyptians), while serving the king, and he obstructed their language.”

There are fewer descriptions of the Westerners’ cultural dress as might have been expected because of how brightly and intricately the Egyptians visually portrayed their clothing. The Poetical Stele of Merneptah, also called the “Israel Stele,” was written to commemorate the king’s victory over the Westerners, and includes all of their most common ethnonyms: the *Tjemeh*, the *Tjehnu*, the *Meshwesh* and the *Rebu*. It contains a noteworthy image of the *Rebu* ruler as he flees from Egypt after his military defeat and makes an important comment on the cultural dress of the *Rebu*<sup>98</sup>:



*wr hsy hrw n rb w r m nfrw grh n w i.f bn mhwt hr tp.f*

“The defeated, fallen Great One of the *Rebu* fled in the end of the night alone by himself, without a feather on his head.”

Later in the text, this ruler of *Rebu* is cursed by his own people, and called<sup>100</sup>:



*wr hsf š3y bin mhwt*

“a Great One, repressed by fate and evil of feather.”


langages d’après la tradition égyptienne,” *Le Bulletin de l’Institut Français d’Archéologie Orientale* 60 (1960): 41.

<sup>98</sup> Petrie, *Six Temples at Thebes*, plate 14: row 6.

<sup>99</sup> Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*, 132. Alan H. Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar* (Oxford: Griffith Institute, 1957), 266.

<sup>100</sup> Petrie, *Six Temples at Thebes*, plate 14: row 8. Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions: Historical and Biographical* IV, 14-15.

These are two rare references to a cultural element of the western peoples that was essential to their visualization in Egyptian art, and possibly one of their index features: the feather worn on their head.

Egyptian military protocol for counting the dead enemy involved the removal of enemy soldiers' right hands and phalli. Merneptah's Poetical Stele includes the phrases  ḥnnw ḳrnt and ḥnnw m ḳrnt, "phalli with foreskins" several times in the lists of slain enemy soldiers.<sup>101</sup> The Egyptians noted that the phalli collected from the *Rebu* soldiers were uncircumcised, even explicitly contrasting this attribute with that of other defeated enemies "who did not have foreskins."<sup>102</sup> This detail about the *Rebu* provides a glimpse into the cultural customs of this ethnic group, and can be categorized as one of their ethnic index features, something visible to an external culture that made their ethnicity instantly recognizable.<sup>103</sup> The Egyptians' awareness of this feature is reverberated centuries later when Piankhy, founder of the 25<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, deposed several kinglets in Egypt, and allowed only one of the four kings to enter his palace because the others were uncircumcised, and as a result, impure.<sup>104</sup> Together, these texts illustrate a number of cultural features among the western peoples that the Egyptians linked with them: a foreign language, cultural dress, and cultural traditions.

### *Associations, Epithets, and Descriptions*

The unique association of Egypt's western neighbors with the sky in the mind of the Egyptians has already been seen in the autobiography of Harkhuf, as quoted above,

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<sup>101</sup> Manassa, *The Great Karnak Inscription of Merneptah*, plates 11-12. James Henry Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt: historical documents from the earliest times to the Persian conquest* III (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1906), 247: Note h.

<sup>102</sup> The *Sherden*, *Shekelesh* and *Ekwesh* are described as circumcised. They originated from "the foreign lands of the sea." Manassa, *The Great Karnak Inscription of Merneptah*, 163.

<sup>103</sup> Hutchinson and Smith, *Ethnicity*, 24.

<sup>104</sup> Tormund Eide, *Fontes Historiae Nubiorum: Textual Sources for the History of the Middle Nile Region Between the Eighth Century BC and the Sixth Century AD* I (Bergen: University of Bergen, 1994), 111 and 117.



where the *Tjemeh* were placed “at the western bend of the sky.” This association of the western regions with the sky is also present in Spell PT 570<sup>105</sup>:



*ntrw niwtyw ihm-sk hns t3 thnw*

“O, local gods, indestructible stars<s>, which traverse the land of *Tjehnu*.”

The association with the “indestructible stars” continues in Spell PT 665C<sup>106</sup>:



*wn n.k s 6 hsf.w thnw ... šsp.k ʿ ihmw-sk*

“For you, the six door-bolts<sup>107</sup> (which) ward of *Tjehnu*, are opened ... grasp the hand of the indestructible stars.”

Cooney interprets both of these mortuary texts that refer to the western land of *Tjehnu* as metaphorical in meaning.<sup>108</sup> The West was the place to which the deceased traveled after death, where Osiris was known as the “First of the Westerners.” While the land of *Tjehnu* in these texts was more likely in the realm of the afterlife than that of the geographical world, its association with the west persisted.

The majority of Egypt’s descriptions of her western neighbors come from the so-called “Libyan Wars” during the Ramesside period. These interactions likely tainted their perception with a militarized quality and obscured perceptions of western ethnicities that might have been more accurate during a time of peace. During Ramses III’s second war

against the Westerners, the *Meshwesh* and *Tjemeh* were called<sup>109</sup>  *ihw* (for

<sup>105</sup> Sethe, *Die Altägyptischen Pyramidentexte nach den Papierabdrücken und Photographien des Berliner Museums* II, 295.


<sup>106</sup> Gustav Jéquier, *Les pyramides des reines Neit et Apouit* (Cairo: Imprimerie de l’Institut Français d’Archéologie Orientale, 1933), plate 28.


<sup>107</sup> Spalinger identified these “six door-bolts” with the six regions surrounding Egypt. Spalinger, “Some Notes on the Libyans of the Old Kingdom,” 131.

<sup>108</sup> Cooney concludes that this *Tjehnu* is likely a mythical one, not a geographical one: “the Land of *Tjehnu* was one of the last places through which the deceased king... had to pass before becoming an Imperishable Star.” Cooney, “Egypt’s Encounter with the West,” 112.

<sup>109</sup> Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions: Historical and Biographical* V, 63.

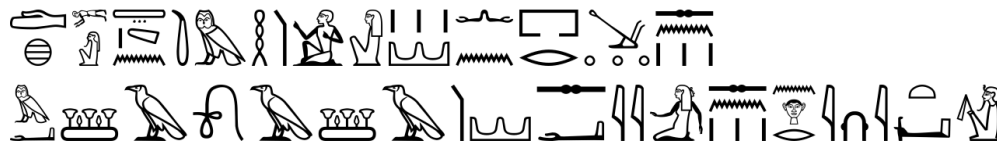
*ḥw*) “miserable”<sup>110</sup> and *bdš*  “languishing,” or “weak”. The two most

common epithets for Egypt’s enemies were used frequently for the Westerners: 

*ḥrw*, “fallen,”<sup>111</sup> and  *ḥsy*, alternatively translated as “wretched,” “despicable,” “defeated,” “weak,” or “vile.”<sup>112</sup> Meroyey, ruler of the *Rebu* is called *bwt*

“an abomination” and  *shwr rn.f*, “his/whose name is cursed.”<sup>113</sup>

The inscriptions at Medinet Habu contain a form of humiliation that compares Westerners to women<sup>114</sup>:



*dh.i t3 n tmḥ nn prt.sn mšwš s'ḥi.sn n ḥryt.i*

“I defeated the land of *Tjemeh*; their seed does not exist. The *Meshwesh* writhe through the fear of me.”

The word *s'ḥi* is used to express writhing caused by birth pangs<sup>115</sup> and is appropriately demarcated with a pregnant woman determinative (Gardiner Sign-list B 2). This text contains a parallel destruction of these westerners by ensuring the *Tjemeh* men could not reproduce and by reducing the *Meshwesh* to the harmless status of pregnant women. Another example of this is a lexical comparison between Meshesher,<sup>116</sup> ruler of the *Meshwesh*, and womanly experiences. Meshesher is described as being<sup>117</sup>:

<sup>110</sup> Erman and Grapow, *Wörterbuch der Aegyptischen Sprache* I, 12.

<sup>111</sup> Leonard H. Lesko and Barbara Lesko, *A Dictionary of Late Egyptian* I (Providence: B.C. Scribe Publications, 2002), 369.

<sup>112</sup> Lesko, *A Dictionary of Late Egyptian* I, 388. Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*, 204. David Lorton, “The So-Called ‘Vile’ Enemies of the King of Egypt (in the Middle Kingdom and Dynasty XVIII),” *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 10 (1973): 65.






<sup>113</sup> Petrie, *Six Temples at Thebes*, plate XIV: row 9.

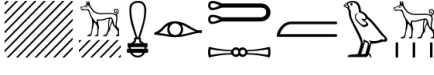
<sup>114</sup> From the ‘First Libyan War’ of Ramesses III. Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions: Historical and Biographical* V, 20.

<sup>115</sup> Lesko, *A Dictionary of Late Egyptian* II, 12.

<sup>116</sup> Cooney, “Egypt’s Encounter with the West,” 192-193.

<sup>117</sup> Edgerton and Wilson, *Historical Records of Ramesses III: The Texts in Medinet Habu volumes I and II*, 79: Note 23e.

 *pg3 hr t3*, “extended on the ground.” The word *pg3* literally means “to open” or “to extend” and the orthography is typically completed with  (Gardiner Sign-list A 2) or  (Gardiner Sign-list D 40) as the determinative.<sup>118</sup> In the same text, the *Meshwesh* and the *Tjemeh* were made  *hdy* “limp”<sup>119</sup> or “spread out”<sup>120</sup> by the king, written with the determinative of a woman giving birth rather than  (Gardiner Sign-list A 61). The implication of both texts is the transformation of these western enemies into women who are humiliatingly “opened” and “spread out” by the Egyptian king.<sup>121</sup>

A recurring form of rhetoric in Egyptian texts is the use of similes, particularly for explaining the foreignness of their neighbors by comparing them with animals or animal behavior. The intention of these comparisons was not only the humiliation of the foreigner, but also the exaltation of the Egyptian king. A stele established at Buhen by Thutmose III describes *Tjehnu* submitting to the king’s power, and coming before him with tribute on their backs<sup>122</sup>:  [...] *mi ir tsmw*, “like dogs do.”<sup>123</sup>

Characteristics that the Egyptians considered specific to the western peoples also exist. Two perceptions of the western peoples reappear frequently in Egyptian discourse: they were not content with their geographical boundaries, and they actively plotted the ruin of Egypt. In the Egyptian worldview the boundaries of Egypt had not been established by men, but by the gods, and upheld an essential demarcation between chaos

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<sup>118</sup> From his ‘Second Libyan War.’ Lesko, *A Dictionary of Late Egyptian I*, 158.

<sup>119</sup> Lesko, *A Dictionary of Late Egyptian I*, 340.

<sup>120</sup> Second Libyan War of Ramesses III. Edgerton and Wilson, *Historical Records of Ramesses III: The Texts in Medinet Habu volumes I and II*, 81: Note 32d.

<sup>121</sup> David O’Connor, “Egypt’s Views of ‘Others,’” in *Never Had the Like Occurred: Egypt’s View of its Past* (Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press, 2003), 157.

<sup>122</sup> Sethe, *Urkunden der 18. Dynastie IV*, 809.

<sup>123</sup> A similar text is found in Merneptah’s Great Karnak Inscription, in which a ruler is compared to a dog, but because of lacunae it is unclear if this comparison was meant for Merneptah the *Rebu* ruler, or a ruler of one of the Sea Peoples. Manassa, *The Great Karnak Inscription of Merneptah*, plate 6.

and order, alien and familiar.<sup>124</sup> As a result, an invasion of foreign peoples represented more than a military threat; it was an offense to the gods and the termination of the established order. The Egyptian kings during the Ramesside period made an effort to repel the western invaders, and spoke about them as bringers of evil to Egypt.

When Ramesses III constructed a temple dedicated to Thoth at Hermopolis he also built a wall surrounding it, made especially for<sup>125</sup>:



*sʿš3t h3styw thnw wn th3 bš.sn dr hry-hʿt*

“repelling the *Tjehnu* foreigners who violate their boundary since of old.”

In another text he expounds on his destruction of the three western peoples<sup>126</sup>:



*p3 t3 tmh spd mšwš wn m it3 hr sʿd3 kmt hrw nb*

“the *Tjemeh*, *Sepedu*, and *Meshwesh* who were capturing and ruining Egypt every day.”

The word *sʿd3*,<sup>127</sup> “to ruin,” or “to harm,” is used again to describe the hearts of the *Tjemeh*, *Rebu*, *Sepedu* and *Meshwesh*<sup>128</sup>:



*ib.[sn] mh m sʿd3 hr pnʿt,*

“[their] hearts are filled with wrongdoing, and possessing perversity.” (literally: “being upside down”)

The Egyptians emphasized that the Westerners had made *shrw* “plans” for Egypt<sup>129</sup> and were actively scheming against it<sup>130</sup>:

<sup>124</sup> Jan Assmann, *The Mind of Egypt: History and Meaning in the Time of the Pharaohs* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 151-3.

<sup>125</sup> Erichsen, *Papyrus Harris I*, 67: line 2.

<sup>126</sup> Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions: Historical and Biographical V*, 14-15.

<sup>127</sup> Lesko, *A Dictionary of Late Egyptian II*, 16.

<sup>128</sup> From the ‘First Libyan War’ of Ramesses III. Epigraphic Survey, *Earlier Historical Records of Ramesses III* (Chicago: The Oriental Institute, 1930), plate 27: columns 27-8.



*rb hr w3w3 bin r irr.w hr kmt*

“the *Rebu* are plotting evil, which they will do against Egypt.”

The Egyptians clearly perceived the *Rebu* as the most sinister ethnic group among the Westerners. They are described as “mobilizing” combined armies against Egypt,<sup>131</sup> leading what might be an attack against the *Tjehnu*, and mentioned in what appears to be a record of accusation that their bad advice was to blame for the war with the Egyptians.<sup>132</sup> In Merneptah’s record of his war against the Westerners, the blame is placed on the *Rebu* for the coming of the *Shekelesh* and *Teresh*, perpetuating their image as conniving initiators.<sup>133</sup>

The Egyptian perception of the character of these western peoples during the late New Kingdom was that they were scheming and conniving, and eagerly planned the downfall of Egypt. This was clearly the result of their unified encroachment on Egyptian land and plundering of Egyptian towns during the Ramesside period.

There are a number of other ethnic groups, some of which are only mentioned once in Egyptian texts that are briefly associated with the *Meshwesh* and *Rebu* invasion during the reign of Ramses III.<sup>134</sup> Because of their appearance with other, unmistakably western neighbors they have conventionally been categorized as other ‘Libyan’ ethnic groups or tribes. Little can be said about these obscure ethnic groups; their ethnic and historical identities as well as origins remain especially dubious.

<sup>129</sup> Epigraphic Survey, *Earlier Historical Records of Ramesses III*, plate 27: columns: 27, 29, 30.

<sup>130</sup> Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions: Historical and Biographical IV*, 10: lines 12-13. Manassa, *The Great Karnak Inscription of Merneptah*, plate 15: column 70.

<sup>131</sup> Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions: Historical and Biographical IV*, 23.

<sup>132</sup> A speech by an unspecified group of people that may have been intended for the general enemies of Egypt, or the Westerners as a whole, says: “The *Rebu* caused our confusion as well as [their own], for we listened to their counsels, and (now) our heat is taken away and we are upon the way [of] crime like <them>.” Edgerton and Wilson, *Historical Records of Ramesses III: The Texts in Medinet Habu volumes I and II*, 84.

<sup>133</sup> Manassa, *The Great Karnak Inscription of Merneptah*, plate 13: line 56.

<sup>134</sup> Including the *Sepedu*, *Imukehek*, *Qeheq*, *Qeyqesh*, *Esbet*, *Ekbet*, *Shai*, *Hes* and *Beqen*. It is even unclear if some are simply an orthographic error of another ethnonym. Bates, *The Eastern Libyans: An Essay*, 46-7. Cooney assess that it is possible some of them might be better characterized as ‘Sea Peoples’ than as Libyans. Cooney, “Egypt’s Encounter with the West: Race, Culture and Identity,” 165-167.

### *Summary*

Modern historians are unable to study the ethnicities of Egypt's western neighbors in their own language. Instead, they have to rely entirely on sources external to their culture, such as those left by the Egyptians and, later, the Greeks. The application of the general ethnonym 'Libyan' to all tribes and lands (*Meshwesh, Rebu, Tjehnu, Tjemeh*, etc.) as is the convention for English translations, causes general confusion and lack of specificity in modern scholarship. It has led to the gross oversimplification that all of the western peoples should be categorized as 'Libyan,' a pre-conception that is now hard to reverse. Referring to all of Egypt's western neighbors with the same name destroys any possibility of grasping their distinctiveness, and as a result, the essence of what forms their individual ethnic identities. Three main features that identify an ethnic group can be found in Egyptian texts concerning Egypt's western neighbors:

1. The use of common proper names (*Tjehnu, Tjemeh, Meshwesh, Rebu*, and others) for referring to individual ethnic groups
2. The awareness of cultural elements, including a distinct language that was dissimilar to the language spoken by the Egyptians (*Tjehnu*); practice of a custom (*Rebu*) uncommon to the Egyptians; and an established article of adornment (*Rebu*)
3. The awareness of distinct homelands for each ethnic group (*Tjehnu, Tjemeh, Meshwesh, Rebu*)

### Chapter 3. The Northerners

The Egyptian awareness of northerners as an embodiment of foreignness, and the north as the delineation of the end of the Egyptian world, was recorded in writing as early as the 2<sup>nd</sup> Dynasty reign of Khasekhemwy on two stone vessels.<sup>135</sup> In the Egyptian cosmography the northern border was located at the Mediterranean Sea,<sup>136</sup> reflective of Egyptian topography. References to the “northland” and “northerners” meant the marshes of the Egyptian Delta before the Middle Kingdom.<sup>137</sup> Egypt’s ethnic neighbors located true north were the island inhabitants, but they did not function as the northern neighbors in cosmographic statements until the New Kingdom.<sup>138</sup>

#### *The ‘Sea Peoples’*

While applying the term ‘Sea People’ to a number of unique ethnic groups is homogenizing, it is at least accurate (Table 2). Because of their historical significance in the Mediterranean region, these peoples have been extensively studied, relying heavily upon comparison with sources from other ancient cultures, including the Hittites, due to restricted information available in Egyptian written records.<sup>139</sup> The majority of their appearances in Egyptian sources are restricted to the Ramesside Period,<sup>140</sup> when a

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<sup>135</sup> Both vessels read: *rnpt ḥ3 hwt mhtyw*, “year of fighting and smiting the northerners.” De Wit, “Enemies of the State: Perceptions of “otherness” and State Formation in Egypt,” 273-276.

<sup>136</sup> Mario Liverani, *International Relations in the Ancient Near East, 1600-1100 B.C.* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 31.

<sup>137</sup> Donald B. Redford, “Egypt and Western Asia in the Old Kingdom,” *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 23 (1986): 126: note 10. Refer to the inscription of Mentuhotep Nebhepetre II, in which the Delta played the role of the northerner: Marochetti, *The Reliefs of the Chapel of Mentuhotep at Gebelein*, 11 and 135.

<sup>138</sup> Redford, “Egypt and Western Asia in the Old Kingdom,” 126. See also his Table 1 for the 1<sup>st</sup> Dynasty label of King Den “smiting the East,” with a stylistically identifiable northern neighbor.

<sup>139</sup> G.A. Wainwright, “Some Sea-Peoples and Others in the Hittite Archives,” *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 25 (1939): 149. G.A. Wainwright, “The Teresh, The Etruscans and Asia Minor,” *Anatolian Studies* 9 (1959): 202. N.K. Sandars, *The Sea Peoples: Warriors of the ancient Mediterranean* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1985), 111; Trevor R. Bryce, “Lukka Revisited,” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 51 (1992): 121.

<sup>140</sup> The *Danuna*, *Sherden* and *Lukka* appear as early as the Amarna Letters from the reigns of Amenhotep III/IV. For the *Danuna* see Amarna letter EA 151; for the *Sherden* see Amarna letters EA 81, 122, 123; for the *Lukka* see Amarna letter EA 38. William L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992).

number of ethnic groups who were intrinsically linked to “the islands” or “the sea” attempted to invade and settle in Egypt.<sup>141</sup> However, the Egyptians’ awareness of islanders living in the *w3d-wr*, literally the “Great Green,” or “the Sea,”<sup>142</sup> predates the appearance of the ‘Sea Peoples.’<sup>143</sup> The existence of the islands in their greater geographical awareness appears in texts as early as the reign of Senusret I, in the tale of Sinuhe.<sup>144</sup>

### Egyptian texts<sup>145</sup> and the ‘Sea Peoples’

Ethnic Group	Islands	Sea
<i>Sherden</i>		<b>K, AS, MH, HP</b>
<i>Lukka</i>		
<i>Danuna</i>	<b>HP</b>	
<i>Shekelesh</i>		<b>K</b>
<i>Peleset</i>	<b>MH</b>	<b>R</b>
<i>Tjeker</i>	<b>MH, W</b>	
<i>Teresh</i>		<b>MH, R</b>
<i>Ekwesh</i>		<b>K, A</b>
<i>Weshesh</i>		<b>HP</b>

**Table 2: Sample of Texts Associating Ethnic Groups with Islands or the Sea**

<sup>141</sup> David O’Connor, “The Sea Peoples and the Egyptian Sources,” in *The Sea Peoples and Their World: A Reassessment* (Philadelphia: University Museum Publications, 2000), 85.

<sup>142</sup> Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*, 56.

<sup>143</sup> *iww hryw-ib w3d-wr*, “islands which are in the midst of the Great Green” are included in Thutmose III’s Poetical Stele: Sethe, *Urkunden der 18. Dynastie* IV, 616.

<sup>144</sup> *iww nw w3d-wr*, “islands of the Great Green”: Gardiner, *Notes on the Story of Sinuhe*, 81.

<sup>145</sup> Abbreviations for Texts in Table 2: **HP** = Harris Papyrus; **K** = Karnak Inscription; **AS** = Papyrus Anastasi II; **A** = Athribis Stele; **MH** = Medinet Habu; **R** = Rhetorical Stele; **W** = Wenamun  
Matthew J. Adams and Margaret E. Cohen, “The ‘Sea Peoples’ in Primary Sources,” in *Philistines and Other ‘Sea Peoples’ in Text and Archaeology* (Atlanta: Archaeology and Biblical Studies, 2013), 646-664.



In the Qadesh Battle inscriptions from the reign of Ramesses II, the *Sherden*<sup>146</sup>



are included among the Egyptian troops,<sup>147</sup> and the *Lukka*<sup>148</sup>



among the large Hittite coalition.<sup>149</sup> In the reign of his son, however, the

*Sherden* exhibited a change in alliance, and fought against the Egyptian army and alongside many other peoples of the sea. There are four extant sources for Merneptah's war with these peoples, the most important of which is the Great Karnak Inscription, now badly fragmented.<sup>150</sup> This inscription recorded a war against the *Rebu*, one of Egypt's western neighbors, who led an army comprised of the *Shekelesh*



*Teresh*  and the *Ekwesh* .

Years later, the *Sherden* were listed again among the Egyptian army<sup>152</sup> in Ramesses III's records of repelling a coalition of people groups from the isles,<sup>153</sup> which included the<sup>154</sup>:

*Shekelesh*  who were joined by the *Peleset*<sup>155</sup>

<sup>146</sup> No. 268 in: Gardiner, *Ancient Egyptian Onomastica* I, 194-199.

<sup>147</sup> Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions: Historical and Biographical* II, 11. Erichsen, *Papyrus Harris I*, 91: line 1. Jeffrey P. Emanuel, "'šrdn from the Sea': The Arrival, Integration, and Acculturation of a 'Sea People,'" *Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections* 5 (2013): 14.

<sup>148</sup> No. 247 in: Gardiner, *Ancient Egyptian Onomastica* I, 127-8.

<sup>149</sup> G. A. Wainwright, "Some Sea Peoples," *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 47 (1961): 71.

<sup>150</sup> Eric H. Cline, "The Sea Peoples' Possible Role in the Israelite Conquest of Canaan," in Doron: *Festschrift for Spyros E. Iakovidis* (London: University College London Press, 2009), 192.

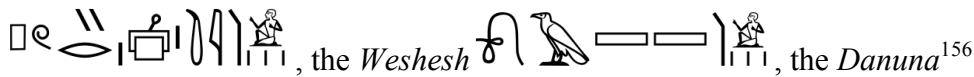


<sup>151</sup> Manassa, *The Great Karnak Inscription of Merneptah*, plate 4: lines 13-14.

<sup>152</sup> Epigraphic Survey, *Earlier Historical Records of Ramesses III*, plate 29: line 39.

<sup>153</sup> Epigraphic Survey, *Earlier Historical Records of Ramesses III*, plate 44: line 15 and plate 46: line 18; Erichsen, *Papyrus Harris I*, 92: line 17.

<sup>154</sup> Note that the orthography for these ethnic groups is rarely consistent, even within the same source.

<sup>155</sup> No. 270 in: Gardiner, *Ancient Egyptian Onomastica* I, 200-205.


, the *Weshesh* 
, the *Danuna*<sup>156</sup>  

, and the *Tjeker*<sup>157</sup>

The Egyptians considered two details important for identifying these ethnic groups: they were located geographically north of Egypt, and they inhabited islands in the sea. These two descriptors reoccur frequently in conjunction with these ethnonyms. An inscription of Ramesses III at Medinet Habu describes two of these ethnic groups as northerners<sup>158</sup>:



*iry h3swt mh̄tt nwt̄ m h̄w.sn m prst tk[r]*

“the northern foreign lands were trembling in their bodies, namely the *Peleset* and the *Tjek[er...]*.”

In Merneptah’s inscription at Karnak the *Ekwesh*, *Teresh*, *Lukka*, *Shekelesh* and *Sherden*

are also called<sup>159</sup>:  *m̄h[tyw] iw.[w] n iww nbw*, “the

northerners who came of all islands.” Another line from the same text reiterates their northern-ness, and also their aquatic origins<sup>160</sup>:



*ist rf h3swt mh̄tt nty m n3y.sn iww hr nwt̄ m h̄w.sn*

“now then, the northern foreign lands who are in their islands, are trembling in their bodies.”

<sup>156</sup> No. 244 in: Gardiner, *Ancient Egyptian Onomastica* I, 124.

<sup>157</sup> Also spelled Zeker in English translations. No. 269 in: Gardiner, *Ancient Egyptian Onomastica* I, 199. For a discussion of the Egyptian sources in which the *Tjeker* appear, see: Hans Goedicke, *The Report of Wenamun* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975), 175-183.

<sup>158</sup> Epigraphic Survey, *Earlier Historical Records of Ramesses III*, plate 28: line 51.

<sup>159</sup> Manassa, *The Great Karnak Inscription of Merneptah*, plate 2: line 1.

<sup>160</sup> Epigraphic Survey, *Earlier Historical Records of Ramesses III*, plate 37: lines 8-9.

In the historical section of the Harris Papyrus, composed during the reign of Ramesses IV but recording events from the reign of his father, Ramesses III, the *Danuna* were linked

directly to the islands<sup>161</sup>: *d3nwn3 m n3y.sn iww*, “*Danuna* in their islands.” In the same text, the *Sherden* and *Weshesh* were

called<sup>162</sup>: *n p3 ym*, “from the sea.”

During Ramesses III’s war against these ‘Sea Peoples’ the ethnic groups are frequently named *en masse*, representing what the Egyptians apparently saw as a united front<sup>163</sup>:



*t3y.w iwnmkt m prst tkr š3krš3 d3nwn3 w3ššš3 t3w dmd*

“their confederation, namely the *Peleset*, *Tjeker*, *Shekelesh*, *Danuna*, and *Weshesh*, lands united.”

As a “confederation” of peoples, they are described having *šhrw* “plans”<sup>164</sup> for Egypt, in the same way the western peoples, as combined foreign forces, were also described at Medinet Habu. The *Peleset*, *Tjeker* and *Danuna* are each individually called *hrw*, “fallen.”<sup>165</sup> On a stele of Ramesses II from Tanis, the *Sherden* are described as having

a<sup>166</sup>: *bštw ḥ3ty*, “rebellious of heart.”

While the narrative describes the Sea Peoples in groups, no doubt to reflect their combined strength, this did not preempt the Egyptians from individualizing some of them. In the tally of the hands and phalli of dead enemies, the *Sherden*, *Shekelesh* and

<sup>161</sup> Erichsen, *Papyrus Harris I*, 92: line 18.

<sup>162</sup> Erichsen, *Papyrus Harris I*, 93: line 1.

<sup>163</sup> Epigraphic Survey, *Earlier Historical Records of Ramesses III*, plate 46: lines 17-18.

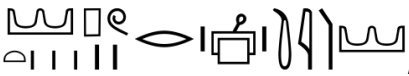
<sup>164</sup> Epigraphic Survey, *Earlier Historical Records of Ramesses III*, plate 46: line 18.

<sup>165</sup> Epigraphic Survey, *Earlier Historical Records of Ramesses III*. For *Danuna* and *Peleset*: plate 44; For *Tjeker*: plate 43.

<sup>166</sup> William Flinders Petrie, *Tanis - Part II: Nebesheh (Am) and Defenneh (Tahpanhes)* (London: Gilbert and Rivington, 1888), plate 2: fig. 78.

*Ekwesh* are commented upon for being circumcised.<sup>167</sup> These brief comments on the cultures of some of the ‘sea peoples’ probably reflect an increased interaction between the Egyptians and a few of these groups, making them suited for more informed descriptions.

The *Peleset* is also the only ethnic group to be described with a homeland more specific than “the islands” or “the Sea.”<sup>168</sup> On the Rhetorical Stele of Ramesses III, among a list of Sea Peoples, the *Peleset* is referred to as<sup>169</sup>: *t3 prst*, “the land of *Peleset*” expressing awareness of a homeland. At Medinet Habu when the rulers of *Kush*, *Kode*, *Tjemeh*, and *Tjehnu* are individually called *hsy*, “defeated,” the mention of the *Peleset*

specifies only<sup>170</sup>:  *h3swt prst*, “the countries of *Peleset*.”

At Medinet Habu the *Peleset* are described<sup>171</sup>:



*hy prst k3p m dmi.sn*

“the *Peleset* are suspended, being hidden in their towns.”

At Medinet Habu, named alongside the rulers (*wr hsy*) of *Hatti* and *Amor*, who are given the typical ruler title and epithet, the leaders of the *Peleset* and *Tjekker* are called *ꜥ3*, “magnate.”<sup>172</sup> Perhaps because of their nomadic, migratory status during the early 20<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, the Egyptians did not recognize the *Peleset* or *Tjekker* leaders as proper rulers.<sup>173</sup> In the Report of Wenamun, written at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, Wenamun travels to Dor, a *Tjekker* town where he meets Beder, the Great One (*wr*) of Dor.<sup>174</sup> At this point the Egyptians recognized an established homeland for the *Tjekker* and could identify

<sup>167</sup> Manassa, *The Great Karnak Inscription of Merneptah*, plate 12: line 52.

<sup>168</sup> Dan’el Kahn, “The Campaign of Ramesses III against Philistia,” *Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections* 3 (2011): 4.

<sup>169</sup> Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions: Historical and Biographical V*, 73.

<sup>170</sup> Epigraphic Survey, *Later Historical Records of Ramesses III*, plate 118. The *Peleset* are also the only ‘Sea People’ included in these scenes and captions.


<sup>171</sup> Epigraphic Survey, *Earlier Historical Records of Ramesses III*, plate 29: lines 20-24.


<sup>172</sup> Note that the *Sherden* and the *Teresh* are included in the same list, but without any titles. Givéon, *Les Bédouins Shosou Des Documents Égyptiens*, 138-139.

<sup>173</sup> This may be corroborated by the application of *ꜥ3* to the *Shasu* leaders, who were nomads, although Egyptian records contain many references to the *Shasu* homeland. Refer to pages 58-63.

<sup>174</sup> Bernd U. Schipper, *Die Erzählung des Wenamun: Ein Literaturwerk im Spannungsfeld von Politik, Geschichte und Religion* (Fribourg: Academic Press Fribourg, 2005), 45.


permanent locations within the *Tjeker* homeland, such as the town (*dmit*) of Dor.<sup>175</sup> It is reasonable to assume that this change in titles for the *Tjeker* from *ʿ3* in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Dynasty to *wr* in the late 20<sup>th</sup> Dynasty could be attributable to their change from a migratory people to a stationary one.

The Report of Wenamun also contains mention of  *n i-r-s*,<sup>176</sup> “the land of *Alasiya*,” generally identified as the island of Cyprus.<sup>177</sup> Wenamun reaches this land by fate of the wind after leaving the *Tjeker* harbor. An ethnonym for the town’s inhabitants is not included in the narrative, but they are twice called *rmt*, “people.”<sup>178</sup> There are two other notable descriptions of *Alasiya* in the Report: first, the leader of *Alasiya* is a woman<sup>179</sup>:

  
*h3-ti-b3*<sup>180</sup> *t3 wr n p3 dmi*<sup>181</sup>

“Hatiba, the Great One of the town.”

Second, Wenamun’s pronounces that *Alasiya* is a place where right is always done:

  
*i.ir.tw grg n dmi nb i.ir.tw m3t n p3 t3 n i-r-s*

“One does evil in every town, (but) one does justice in the land of *Alasiya*.”

<sup>175</sup> Goedicke, *The Report of Wenamun*, 182.

<sup>176</sup> Following Schipper’s transliteration: Schipper, *Die Erzählung des Wenamun: Ein Literaturwerk im Spannungsfeld von Politik, Geschichte und Religion*, 97.

<sup>177</sup> Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature II: The New Kingdom* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 230: note 22. Gardiner, *Ancient Egyptian Onomastica I*, 131. For the placement of *Alasiya* on the island of Cyprus see: Y. L. Holmes, “The Location of Alasiya,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 91 (1971). For the placement of *Alasiya* on the Syrian coast see: G. A. Wainwright, “Alashia-Alaša and Asy,” *Klio* 14 (1914-1915).

<sup>178</sup> Schipper, *Die Erzählung des Wenamun: Ein Literaturwerk im Spannungsfeld von Politik, Geschichte und Religion*, 98, 101.

<sup>179</sup> Schipper, *Die Erzählung des Wenamun: Ein Literaturwerk im Spannungsfeld von Politik, Geschichte und Religion*, 97. It is unclear if this was the social protocol for *Alasiya* - the Amarna Letters EA 33-40 contain reference to a male ruler: Goedicke, *The Report of Wenamun*, 127 and note 194.


<sup>180</sup> Following Goedicke’s transliteration: Goedicke, *The Report of Wenamun*, 126-127. Also see the discussion of her name and title in: Camilla Di Biase-Dyson, *Foreigners and Egyptians in the Late Egyptian Stories: Linguistic, Literary, and Historical Perspectives* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 322-325.


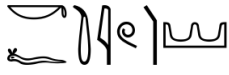
<sup>181</sup> Note that while her name is determined by a seated woman (Gardiner Sign-list B 1), the title *wr* has not been feminized.

While the extant copy of Wenamun’s Report abruptly ends after Wenamun reaches *Alasiya*, providing little else about its inhabitants, Wenamun’s association of *m3t*, “truth” or “justice” with the islanders is notable.

### *The people of Keftiu*


The ethnic identity of the people of *Keftiu* is obscure in Egyptian texts; the items that the Egyptians obtained by trade from them appear far more often in Egyptian records than the peoples do themselves. Wainwright identified only a single use of the Egyptian

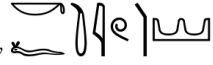
exonym  *kftiwi*,<sup>182</sup> *Keftiui* (and the projected plural of *Keftiuii*), although it is impossible to know if the ethnonym experienced wider use or not.<sup>183</sup> While


the name of their homeland is very clear,<sup>184</sup> *kftiw*  or *kftiw* , their orientation varies: they are associated with the west, the north, and occasionally the island rulers, who were grouped separately. The people of *Keftiu* have been included with Egypt’s northern neighbors in the present work in recognition of its association with the islands<sup>185</sup> and its inclusion with northern neighbors in several topographical lists.<sup>186</sup>

<sup>182</sup> G. A. Wainwright, “The Keftiu-People of the Egyptian Monuments,” *Annals of Archaeology and Anthropology* 6 (1914): 28; Strange, *Caphtor/Keftiu: A New Investigation*, 101.

<sup>183</sup> Other references to an individual from Keftiu are genitival, direct or indirect.

<sup>184</sup> For *kftiw*  see: Alan H. Gardiner, *The Admonitions of an Egyptian Sage*

(Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1969), 32. For *kftiw*  see: Sethe, *Urkunden der 18. Dynastie* IV, 1098.

<sup>185</sup> See also:  “Keftiu ships” in the Annals of Thutmose III: Sethe, *Urkunden der 18. Dynastie* IV, 707.

<sup>186</sup> As further evidence, Wainwright illustrated that in topographical lists, the people of *Keftiu* were grouped with ‘northern’ locations: Naharen, Upper and Lower Retenu, Kheta, Qadesh, Tunip and others: G.A. Wainwright, “Asiatic Keftiu,” *American Journal of Archaeology* 56 (1952): 198. In the tombs of Amenemhab (TT 85) and Kenamun (TT 162) the people of *Keftiu* are also included with the rulers of Retenu: Nina M. Davies, “Foreigners in the Tomb of Amenemhab (No. 85),” *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 20 (1934): 190.

In the Hymn of Victory from the reign of Thutmose III, Amun identifies each region of the Egyptian world and grants the Egyptian king dominion over them. In this list *Keftiu* is located to the west of Egypt<sup>187</sup>:



*ii.n.i di.i titi.k t3 imnty kf3tyw isy hr ššft*

“I came to cause you to trample on the western land, *Keftiu* and *Isy* (Cyprus) being in awe.”

A text that located *Keftiu* to the north of Egypt is found in the Book of the Day from the tomb of Ramesses VI<sup>188</sup>:



*niwt.sn pw kf3tyw iw hprw.sn m iww nw pt m w3d-wr mh3tt*

“their town, it is *Keftiu*. They came into existence in the islands of the sky, in the northern Great Green.”

In a scene of foreigners bringing tribute in the tomb of Rekhmire, the rulers of *Keftiu* arrive with the people of the islands<sup>189</sup>:



*wrw nw kf3tyw iww hry-ib nw w3d-wr*

“Great Ones of *Keftiu* and the islands in the midst of the Great Green.”

The people of *Keftiu* were linked with the *Aamu* in a spell from the London Medical Papyrus, in which words in the *Keftiu* language were to be spoken to cure a northern disease<sup>190</sup>:



*šnt nt tnt-šmw m dd n kf3tyw*

“Spell for the *tnt-Aamu* (disease), in the saying of *Keftiu* (language):....”<sup>191</sup>

<sup>187</sup> Sethe, *Urkunden der 18. Dynastie* IV, 616.

<sup>188</sup> Strange, *Caphtor/Keftiu: A New Investigation*, 87.

<sup>189</sup> Tomb of Rekhmire: Sethe, *Urkunden der 18. Dynastie* IV, 1098.

<sup>190</sup> Walter Wreszinski, *Der Londoner Medizinische Papyrus (Brit. Museum Nr. 10059) und der Papyrus Hearst* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1912), 151: no. 32.

<sup>191</sup> For attempts at translation of the *Keftiu* spell, see: F. G. Gordon, “The Keftiu Spell,” *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 18 (1932): 67; G. A. Wainwright, “Keftiu,” *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 52

There are two ways to interpret this association: that the people of *Keftiu* were similar to the *Aamu* in the minds of the Egyptians and so categorized together in this instance, or that the Egyptians encountered a foreign illness considered to be of northern/eastern origins, and they believed that the people of *Keftiu* had managed to cure it.

These brief mentions demonstrate that the Egyptians identified the *Keftiu* as a distinct ethnic group with a unique ethnonym and cultural homeland (even if they were uncertain of its precise geographical orientation). They were also aware of a language of *Keftiu* enough to either preserve a coherent spell in the foreign language, or imitate its phonemic principles at some length. The textual sources for the people of *Keftiu* are so limited that they do not even appear with epithets or descriptions of a positive or negative kind.

### ***The Aamu and the Setyu***

As discussed, Egypt’s cosmographic “north” was the marshes of the Delta and its northern boundary was at the sea. After the beginning of the Middle Kingdom, the role of the northerner was newly assigned to the *ʿ3mw* and *sttyw* who had represented the eastern neighbors,<sup>192</sup> while the ‘northland’ had previously referred to the Egyptian Delta. This shift is visible in their lingering eastern association even into the New Kingdom, as the *Shasu* replaced them in the role of easterner.


An important distinction should be remembered when discussing northern ethnic group names and place names, which are misleadingly handled by the English translations of “Asiatic” and “Asia” for distinct ethnonyms and toponyms. Many toponyms that are conventionally translated as “Asia” in English publications are not lexically related to the ethnonyms translated as “Asiatic,” as the English translations are. For example, Upper and Lower Retenu (*rtnw*) and Naharen (*nhrn*)<sup>193</sup> are toponyms, and the ethnic groups who resided there were differently named (*ʿ3mw* or *sttyw*).

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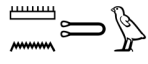

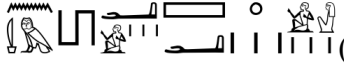
(1932): 27; Wainwright, “The Keftiu-People of the Egyptian Monuments,” 82; Strange, *Caphtor/Keftiu: A New Investigation*, 99; Evangelos Kyriakidis, “Indications on the Nature of the Language of the Keftiw from Egyptian Sources,” *Ägypten & Levante* 12 (2002): 213.

<sup>192</sup> Refer to the Prophecy of Neferty on page 48.

<sup>193</sup> There is, however, at least one instance of Naharen transformed into a title that is evocative of an

ethnonym:  *nhrn*. Erman and Grapow, *Wörterbuch der Aegyptischen Sprache* II, 286. Gardiner, *Ancient Egyptian Onomastica* I, 173.



The Egyptians employed numerous terms and ethnonyms for their northern neighbors<sup>194</sup> (Table 3). Their written records indicate that the Egyptians used the primary ethnonyms  $\text{ʕ}mw$ <sup>195</sup>  and  $sttyw$ <sup>196</sup>  to which a number of “secondary” exonyms could be applied, including the  $mntw$ <sup>197</sup> , the  $hryw-šcy$ <sup>198</sup>  (a *nisbe* adjective literally meaning: “those who are upon the sand”), and the  $nmiw-šcy$ <sup>199</sup>  (a *nisbe* adjective literally meaning: “those who travel the sand”). Three of these exonyms ( $\text{ʕ}mw$ ,  $sttyw$ , and  $mntw$ ) appear independently in written records. Three ( $hryw-šcy$ ,  $nmiw-šcy$ , and  $mntw$ ) can be tentatively dubbed “secondary exonyms.”<sup>200</sup> Two are explicitly linked with a desert lifestyle – it is easy to imagine how these epithets for the northern/eastern desert peoples could evolve into ethnonyms in their own right through consistent usage.<sup>201</sup>

An example of the way the Egyptians used *Aamu* as an ‘umbrella term’ for all the northern peoples can be found in the Qadesh Battle Inscriptions. In the lengthy prayer

<sup>194</sup> Phyllis Saretta, “Egyptian Perceptions of West Semites in Art and Literature during the Middle Kingdom,” (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1997), 28-34.

<sup>195</sup> “Asiatic” in: Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*, 38.

<sup>196</sup> “Asiatic” in: Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*, 255. The earliest extant instance of *stty* is inscribed on an ivory throw-stick from the 1<sup>st</sup> Dynasty tomb of Qaa, above the relief of a man. De Wit, “Enemies of the State: Perceptions of “otherness” and State Formation in Egypt,” 235-6. In this work, this ethnonym will be transcribed as *Setyu* in English. Note, however, that its hieroglyphic orthography is different from that of the southern ethnonym *styw*, also transcribed as *Setyu* in English. Early uses of *stt* and *sttyw* may have been for a Delta town, before the term was expanded to include other northern peoples: William A. Ward, “Early Contacts between Egypt, Canaan, and Sinai: Remarks on the Paper by Amnon Ben-Tor,” *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 281 (1991): 12.

<sup>197</sup> “Beduin” in: Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*, 110. Redford credits Hermann Kees with the likely idea that this exonym, and the name of the Egyptian god Monthu, originate from the same root word meaning “to be wild”: Redford, “Egypt and Western Asia in the Old Kingdom,” 126 and footnote 15. In this work, this ethnonym will be transcribed as *Montiu* in English, following Redford.

<sup>198</sup> “Beduin” in: Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*, 175. Also commonly translated as “sand-farers” or “sand-travelers.” Redford concluded that this term was used first as an attribute of an ethnic group, and later evolved into an ethnonym of its own right: Redford, “Egypt and Western Asia in the Old Kingdom,” 126.

<sup>199</sup> “Sandfarers” in: Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*, 133.

<sup>200</sup> Espinel labeled them “pseudo-ethnonyms” to indicate their nominal function, but their difference from primary ethnonyms: Andrés Diego Espinel, *Etnicidad y territorio en el Egipto del Reino Antiguo* (Barcelona: Institut d’Estudis del Pròxim Orient Antic, 2006), 118.

<sup>201</sup> Examples of this phenomenon occurring in modernity are the evolution of the terms: “hillbilly,” “gypsy,” and “bedouin.”

Ramesses II spoke at the battle, the king refers to all his enemies gathered there, including the Hittites and their large coalition of northerners, as *Aamu*<sup>202</sup>:



*ih hr ib.k nn ʿmw imn hsy hm.w ntr*

“what is your opinion of these *Aamu*, O Amun, wretches who are ignorant of god?”

This observation of godlessness, or the implication that the *Aamu* worshiped gods unknown to the Egyptians, mirrors the descriptions of other godless foreigners or worshippers of Seth. In the eyes of the Egyptians, the *Aamu* did not worship the true, i.e. Egyptian, gods.<sup>203</sup>

The Middle Kingdom Story of Sinuhe is a unique text that provides insight into the life of the *Aamu*, and more specifically, the lifestyle of an outsider (Egyptian) who successfully adopted their homeland and culture. Along Sinuhe’s journey out of Egypt he chronicles numerous places along the frontier between Egypt and the northern countries<sup>204</sup>:



*rdi.n.i w3t n rd<wy.i> m hd dmi.n.i inbw-hk3 iry r hsf sttyw r ptpt nmiw-šʿy,*

“I made a path for <my> feet northwards. I reached the Walls of the Ruler, which were made in order to ward off the *Setyu*, in order to trample those-who-travel-the-sand.”<sup>205</sup>

In the same story, when Sinuhe has cause to praise the Egyptian king (Senusret I), he says of him<sup>206</sup>:

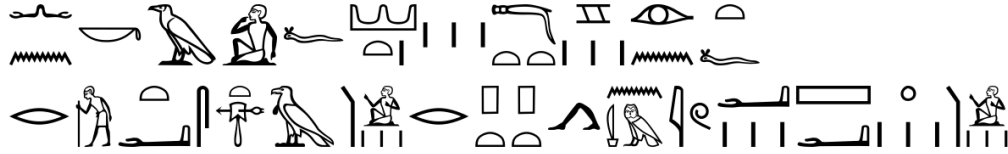
<sup>202</sup> Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions: Historical and Biographical* II, 35.

<sup>203</sup> Richard H. Wilkinson, *The Complete Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2003), 197; H. Te Velde, *Seth, God of Confusion: A Study of His Role in Egyptian Mythology and Religion* (Leiden: Brill, 1977), 109-117. See also the association of Seth with the *Rebu*, and with the *hk3w-h3swt*.

<sup>204</sup> Gardiner, *Notes on the Story of Sinuhe*, 129.

<sup>205</sup> The *Aamu* with which Sinuhe lived were from the land of Retenu. In Thutmose III’s Hymn of Victory they are called *ʿ3mw nw r1nw*, “Aamu of Retenu”: Sethe, *Urkunden der 18. Dynastie* IV, 615.

<sup>206</sup> Gardiner, *Notes on the Story of Sinuhe*, 139.



*nn k3i.f h3swt mh3tt ir.n.tw.f r hwi sttyw r ptpt nmiw-s'y*


“he does not think about the north foreign lands (for) he was made in order to smite the *Setyu*, in order to trample those-who-travel-the-sand.”

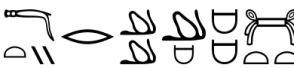
The Stele of Sobek-khu includes two ethnonyms in conjunction with each other in a record of a northern campaign of Senusret III<sup>207</sup>:



*wd3 hm.f m hd r shrt mntw stt*

“his Majesty set out northwards in order to overthrow the *mntw* of *stt*.”

Two lines later he continues his intent:  *r h3 hn' 3mw*, “in order to fight with the *Aamu*.”<sup>208</sup> On a stele near Aswan from the reign of Thutmose II, the king

named Egypt’s northern boundary at<sup>209</sup>:  *mhty r phww stt*,

“northern (boundary) at the marshes of *Setet*.” The association of the north with the marshes of the Delta in the Old and Middle Kingdoms shifted to absorb the new northern boundary by perpetuating the association with marshes further north of the Delta.

<sup>207</sup> John Garstang, *El Arábah: A Cemetery of the Middle Kingdom* (London: B. Quaritch, 1901), Plate 5.

<sup>208</sup> Note that in both orthographies the plurality is indicated by ◦ ◦ ◦ (Gardiner Sign-list N 33A), the sign for sand and other kinds of granules, rather than the typical strokes.

<sup>209</sup> Kurt Sethe, *Untersuchungen zur Geschichte und Altertumskunde Ägyptens* (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1896), 81.

Text	Period	Primary		Secondary		
		ꜣmw	sttyw	hryw-šꜥy	mntw	nmiw-šꜥy
<i>Autobiography of Weni</i>	<b>OK</b>	<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>		
<i>Inscription of Pepy-Nakht</i>	<b>OK</b>	<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>		
<i>Teaching for Merikare</i>	<b>FIP</b>	<b>X</b>				
<i>Inscription of Mentuhotep II</i>	<b>FIP</b>	<b>X</b>			<b>X</b>	
<i>Prophecy of Neferty</i>	<b>MK</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>			
<i>Instructions of Amenemhat I</i>	<b>MK</b>		<b>X</b>			
<i>Story of Sinuhe</i>	<b>MK</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
<i>Stele of Sobek-khu</i>	<b>MK</b>	<b>X</b>			<b>X</b>	
<i>Kamose Inscriptions</i>	<b>SIP</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>			
<i>Admonitions of Ipuwer</i>	<b>SIP?</b>		<b>X</b>			
<i>Obelisk of Hatshepsut</i>	<b>NK</b>	<b>X</b>			<b>X</b>	
<i>Qadesh Inscriptions</i>	<b>NK</b>	<b>X</b>				

**Table 3: Northern Primary and Secondary Ethnonyms in Sample Texts**

Amenhotep II erected a stele at Amada, just north of the Second Cataract, that contains the memorable account of seven Great Ones of *Tikhisy*<sup>210</sup> who were hung on the walls of Napata in *t3-sty* as a display of victory<sup>211</sup>:



*dr ntt itj.n.f rsyw w f.n.f mhtyw*

“since he had seized the Southerners and he had subdued the Northerners.”

This text describes the Egyptian king’s might extending to the north, as represented by the rulers of *Tikhisy*, and to the south, as represented by the inhabitants of *t3-sty*, and in both cases their inhabitants are explicitly identified according to their geographical orientation. On a stele of Ramesses II, the *Setyu* are again identified in the north<sup>212</sup>:



*sh sttyw h3k dmit.sn ptpt.n.f h3swt mhty*

“the *Setyu* are destroyed, their towns are captured after he trampled the northern foreign countries.”

In the Instructions of Merikare, set during the First Intermediate Period, the king describes the same Walls of the Ruler as encountered by Sinuhe, to Egypt’s east.<sup>213</sup> Interestingly, although the inscription from the reign of her husband placed the “marshes of *Setet*” at his northern border, Hatshepsut’s obelisk at Karnak cast the *Montiu* of *Setet* in the role of the eastern neighbor<sup>214</sup>:

<sup>210</sup> In the Theban tomb of Amenemhab (TT 85) the inhabitants of the location *Tikhisy* were called *Aamu*. Georg Ebers, “Das Grab und die Biographie des Feldhauptmanns Amén em héb,” *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 30 (1876) plate 2: line 20. Another negative reference to the inhabitants of *Tikhisy*, though again not with an ethnonym, can be found in a letter of Amenhotep II: Wolfgang Helck, *Urkunden der 18. Dynastie IV* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1955), 1344. For an excerpt from this letter, refer to page 91.

<sup>211</sup> Helck, *Urkunden der 18. Dynastie IV*, 1297-1298.

<sup>212</sup> From his Year 2 Stele at Aswan. Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions: Historical and Biographical II*, 344. It is the *Setyu* whom Mentuhotep Nebhepetre II smites as representative of Egypt’s northern enemies in a scene from his Temple at Gebelein, alongside *Setyu* (southerner) and *Tjehnu* (westerner) men. Marochetti, *The Reliefs of the Chapel of Mentuhotep at Gebelein*, 51-52.

<sup>213</sup> Wolfgang Helck, *Die Lehre für König Merikare* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1988), 50. James K. Hoffmeier, ““The Walls of the Ruler” in Egyptian Literature and the Archaeological Record: Investigating Egypt’s Eastern Frontier in the Bronze Age,” *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 343 (2006): 2.

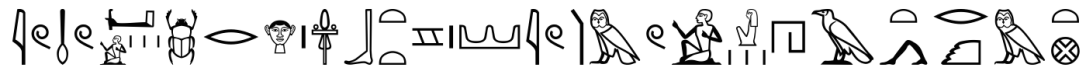
<sup>214</sup> Sethe, *Urkunden der 18. Dynastie IV*, 372.



*ʿ3btj r pḥww stt mntw nw stt m 3mmt.i*

“the eastern (boundary) as far as the marshes of *Setet*, and the *Montiu* of *Setet* are in my grasp.”<sup>215</sup>

The Prophecy of Neferty, the extant copies of which were composed during the New Kingdom but detail the events of the reign of Sneferu (4<sup>th</sup> Dynasty),<sup>216</sup> contains an image of the *Aamu* coming from the east<sup>217</sup>:

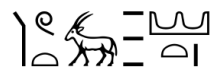


*ʿw hrwyw ḥpr ḥr ʿ3btj iw ʿ3mw h3t r kmt*

“enemies appear in the east, the *Aamu* having descended into Egypt.”

In addition to the etymologies of the “secondary” ethnonyms *ḥryw-šꜥy* and *nmiw-šꜥy* that are lexically built on their associations with sand, the *Aamu* and *Setyu* as ethnic groups were associated with the desert. The foreigners in the Admonitions of Ipuwer, elsewhere identified in the text as the *Setyu*,<sup>218</sup> are equated with the desert, and their invasion into

Egypt is described<sup>219</sup>:  *ms dšrt ḥt ʿ3*, “indeed, the desert is throughout the land.”<sup>220</sup> In the Prophecy of Neferty, the *Aamu* are compared to

 *ʿwt ḥ3st*, “desert herds,” that presume to rest in Egypt beside the Nile.<sup>221</sup>

The Teaching for King Merikare contains advice for the new king from his elderly father, penned before the *Aamu* ruled in the Egyptian Delta (see *ḥk3w-ḥ3swt* below). The text

<sup>215</sup> For an early association of the *Montiu* with the *Aamu* see the badly fragmented 11<sup>th</sup> Dynasty inscription: J.J. Clère and J. Vandier, *Textes de la Première Période Intermédiaire et de la XIème Dynastie* (Brussels: Bibliotheca Aegyptiaca, 1948), 37.

<sup>216</sup> Rosalie David, *The Pyramid Builders of Ancient Egypt: A Modern Investigation of Pharaoh’s Workforce* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 27-28.

<sup>217</sup> From Papyrus Petersburg 1116B. From the Prophecy of Neferty: Wolfgang Helck, *Die Prophezeiung des Nfr.tj* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1992), 30.

<sup>218</sup> For a brief, contextualized discussion of the orthography of *stꜥy* in the Admonitions of Ipuwer see: John Van Seters, “A Date for the ‘Admonitions’ in the Second Intermediate Period,” *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 50 (1964): 15.

<sup>219</sup> Gardiner, *Admonitions of an Egyptian Sage*, 30, and commentary on p. 9.

<sup>220</sup> Note the use of the “throw-stick” determinative (Gardiner Sign-list T 14), not necessary in the orthography, qualifying the foreignness of the desert.

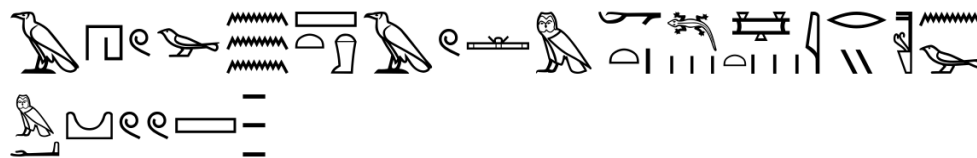
<sup>221</sup> From Papyrus Petersburg 1116B. Helck, *Die Prophezeiung des Nfr.tj*, 33.

contains descriptions of the environment of the *Aamu*, and classifies their lifestyle as one of hardship<sup>222</sup>:



*is ʿ3mw hsy ksn pw n bw ntf im*

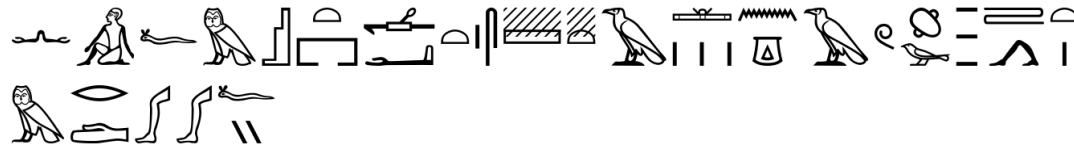
“now, the wretched *Aamu*, it is difficult for the place which he is in.”<sup>223</sup>



*ʒhw.w <m><sup>224</sup> mw št3w m ht ʿš3w w3wt iry ksn m-ʿ dww*

“sufferer of water, short of trees, and many are their<sup>225</sup> paths made difficult from the mountains.”

It continues<sup>226</sup>:



*n hmsi.f m st wʿt sšt3 n g3wt dbn.<w h3s>t m rdwy.fy*

“he does not dwell in one place, but occupied by want, goes around <the desert><sup>227</sup> on his feet.”

The vocabulary used in Egyptian texts to discuss the *Aamu* and *Setyu* is typical of discussing foreignness. In terms of their character as an ethnic group, several Egyptian documents provide an image of the northerners as a quarrelsome and immoral people, described as murderers, thieves, and endless fighters. Pepi-Nakht, a man who held the

<sup>222</sup> From Papyrus Petersburg 1116A. Helck, *Die Lehre für König Merikare*, 55.


<sup>223</sup> This line has been much discussed, with two common interpretations: either that the *Aamu* live in a difficult environment, as would befit the following lines, or that the area itself is made difficult by the presence of the *Aamu*: A. Demedchik, “A Note to §141 of Sir A.H. Gardiner’s *Egyptian Grammar*,” *Göttinger Miszellen* 134 (1993): 29. Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature I*, 108: note 14.

<sup>224</sup> Refer to variant text from Papyrus Carlsberg VI, which contains an *m*. Helck, *Die Lehre für König Merikare*, 55.

<sup>225</sup> Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar*, 87-88.

<sup>226</sup> Helck, *Die Lehre für König Merikare*, 55-56. Note that this transcription is reconstructed from two separate papyri (Papyrus Petersburg 1116A and Papyrus Carlsberg VI) due to lacunae in each.

<sup>227</sup> This is Helck’s interpretation, which cannot be corroborated by either of the two papyri also included in his work.

title “overseer of foreign countries”<sup>228</sup> under Pepi II, records a journey to the land of the *Aamu* to retrieve the body of an Egyptian official who had been killed along with his army by<sup>229</sup>:  *ʕmw nw hryw-šʕy*, “the *Aamu* of those-

who-live-upon-the-sand” and calls them  *smʕw*,<sup>230</sup> “ones who kill.”<sup>231</sup>

In the Instruction to King Merikare the *Aamu* are described as perpetual fighters<sup>232</sup>:



*iw.f hr ʕʕ dr rk hr n kni.n.f n gr kni.tw.f n smi.n.f hrw m ʕʕ*

“he is always fighting since the time of Horus. He does not conquer; moreover, he is not conquered. He does not announce the day of fighting.”

In the Prophecy of Neferty, the author describes their thieving lifestyle<sup>233</sup>:



*hpi ʕmw m hps.sn sh.sn*<sup>234</sup> *ibw ntyw hr šmw nhm.sn htrw hr skʕ*

“the *Aamu* travel by their strength. They terrorize the hearts of those upon the harvest (farmers). They seize the ploughing oxen<sup>235</sup>.”

The label of the *Aamu* as a thief is reiterated in the Instruction to King Merikare<sup>236</sup>:



*mi ʕw šnʕ n smʕyt*

“like one who steals, who is repelled by society.”

A large variety of animals were used in comparison with the northern peoples (Table 4), for a variety of purposes. In the Instructions of Amenemhat, the king boasts<sup>237</sup>:

<sup>228</sup> Sethe, *Urkunden des Alten Reichs*, 132.

<sup>229</sup> Sethe, *Urkunden des Alten Reichs*, 134.

<sup>230</sup> Sethe, *Urkunden des Alten Reichs*, 135.

<sup>231</sup> Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*, 226.

<sup>232</sup> From Papyrus Petersburg 1116A. Helck, *Die Lehre für König Merikare*, 56.

<sup>233</sup> From Papyrus Petersburg 1116B. Helck, *Die Prophezeiung des Nfr.tj*, 18.

<sup>234</sup> Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*, 237.

<sup>235</sup> Note that the determinative for oxen is not a bovine animal, but the Seth animal.

<sup>236</sup> From Papyrus Petersburg 1116A. Helck, *Die Lehre für König Merikare*, 56.





*iw di.n.i iry.i sttyw hr šmt tsmw*

“I caused that I make the *Setyu* go walking as dogs.” (or “do the dog-walk”)<sup>238</sup>

Causing them to behave as dogs before the Egyptian king projects an image of submission, obedience and loyalty. Neferty prophesies that the *Aamu* will immigrate to live in northern Egypt alongside the Egyptians like marsh birds<sup>239</sup>:



*iw 3pdw drdrit r mst m šdwt nt t3-mhw*

“stranger birds will breed in a plot of the Delta.”

A similar description was used by a man in a letter to his wayward son on an ostrakon found at Deir el-Medina, in which the *Aamu* are compared to birds living in the Delta.<sup>240</sup>

The Annals of Thutmose III records the defeat of Megiddo<sup>241</sup> by the Egyptian army<sup>242</sup>:



*skw.sn sdr m stsy mi rmw m kḥ šnw*

“their troops lying prostrate like fish in the bend of a net.”

Using birds and fish as figurative expressions visualizes the chaotic community of foreigners that the Egyptians perceived they created for themselves even away from their homeland. The imagery of schools of fish or flocks of birds evoke their number and their behavior.

<sup>237</sup> From Deir el-Medina ostrakon 1039. Wolfgang Helck, *Der Text der "Lehre Amenemhets I. für seinen sohn"* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1986), 78.

<sup>238</sup> Also refer to the land of *Retenu* described behaving as dogs that belong to the Egyptian king in the Story of Sinuhe: Hans Goedicke, “Three Passages in the Story of Sinuhe,” *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 23 (1986): 173. For further discussion of the dog as an allegory in Egyptian texts, see: José M. Galán, “What is he, the dog?” *Ugarit-Forschungen* 25 (1993).

<sup>239</sup> From Papyrus Petersburg 1116B. Helck, *Die Prophezeiung des Nfr.tj*, 27.

<sup>240</sup> From Menna’s letter to his son: Jaroslav Černy and Alan H. Gardiner, *Hieratic Ostraca I* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1957), plate 78.

<sup>241</sup> The inhabitants of Megiddo were *Setyu* as was mentioned in the record of Thutmose III’s siege of Megiddo: Sethe, *Urkunden der 18. Dynastie IV*, 661.

<sup>242</sup> Sethe, *Urkunden der 18. Dynastie IV*, 659.

Merikare is advised by his father that the *Aamu* is<sup>243</sup>:

*msh hr mryt.f*, “a crocodile on his bank.” The crocodile on its bank evokes an image of watchfulness and the perpetual threat of an attack. The Instruction of Dua-Khety (also known as The Satire of the Trades), describes a tradesman who journeys abroad into foreign lands and is at risk of attack by wild animals or thieves. He was perpetually<sup>244</sup>:

*snd.w m3iw hn' 3mw*

“afraid of lions and the *Aamu*.”

Lions and crocodiles were both used as clear analogies for strength, formidability and danger. The Egyptian king was also compared to lions and crocodiles in royal inscriptions.<sup>245</sup> These texts illustrate that the Egyptians perceived the *Aamu* as a potential threat on a political level, and also on a personal level.

### ***The ‘Hyksos’***

The ancient group known widely as ‘the Hyksos,’ are deceptively studied in Egyptology as a unique ethnic group, although they were clearly identified in ancient Egyptian literature as 3mw.<sup>246</sup> The name ‘Hyksos’ originates from a Hellenized version of the Egyptian title *hk3w-h3swt* or “rulers of foreign lands.”<sup>247</sup> The *Aamu* who ruled northern Egypt during the Second Intermediate Period adopted the use of this title, although the title *hk3* itself predates them<sup>248</sup> and appeared in royal and non-

<sup>243</sup> Helck, *Die Lehre für König Merikare*, 59.

<sup>244</sup> Wolfgang Helck, *Die Lehre des dw3-Htij II* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1970), 94.

<sup>245</sup> Shih-Wei Hsu, “Figurative Expressions Referring to Animals in Royal Inscriptions of the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty,” *Journal of Egyptian History* 6 (2013): 10 and Table 1.

<sup>246</sup> For a discussion of possible lexical origins of 3m, see: Saretta, “Egyptian Perceptions of West Semites in Art and Literature During the Middle Kingdom,” 18-25; Donald B. Redford, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel in Ancient Times* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 1995), 32.

<sup>247</sup> Redford, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel in Ancient Times*, 100. Dominique Valbelle, *Les Neuf Arcs: L’Égyptien et les Étrangers de la Préhistoire à la conquête d’Alexandre* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1990), 115.

<sup>248</sup> Torgny Säve-Söderbergh, “The Hyksos Rule in Egypt,” *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 37 (1951): 56.

royal compositions as a term for unspecified northern rulers.<sup>249</sup> Because the *ḥkꜣw-ḥꜣswt* embody a unique interaction between the Egyptians and the *Aamu*, (the *ḥkꜣ-ḥꜣswt* were foreigners living within traditional Egyptian geographical boundaries) they are discussed, albeit briefly, in the present work separately from the references to the *Aamu* who lived outside of Egypt.<sup>250</sup>

In the Inscription of Kamose, king of the Theban 17<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, the references to the *Aamu* who called themselves kings in northern Egypt carries a distinct tone of distaste and unsuitability<sup>251</sup>:



*wr m ḥwt-wꜣrt ky m kš ḥmsi.kwi smꜣ.kwi m ꜣm nḥsy s nb hr fdḳ.f*

*m tꜣ kmt psš tꜣ ḥnꜣ.i*

“ a Great One<sup>252</sup> is in Avaris and another is in *Kush*. I am seated being united with an *Aamu* and a *Nehesy*. Each man possessing his portion in this Egypt, the land is divided with me!”

As foreigners who dared to enter Egypt and live off of Egyptian land and resources, the Hyksos are depicted as a destructive force in Egypt. The Stele of Kamose, an Egyptian king in southern Egypt at the end of the Second Intermediate Period, contains his judgment concerning<sup>253</sup>:

<sup>249</sup> The leader of the *ꜣmw* “traders” in the tomb of Khnumhotep II at Beni Hasan is identified as a *ḥkꜣ ḥꜣst*. Hans Goedicke, “Abi-Sha(i)’s Representation in Beni Hasan,” *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 21 (1984): 207. David Lorton, *The Juridical Terminology of International Relations in Egyptian Texts Through Dyn. XVIII* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), 22-36, and especially 26-27 for its use during the Hyksos period. The first text to use *ḥkꜣ-ḥꜣswt* is the Story of Sinuhe: *ḥkꜣw ḥꜣswt*. See also the Amada Stele of Amenhotep II: *ḥkꜣ ḥꜣswt wrw nw rḥnw*, “rulers of foreign lands and Great Ones of Retenu.” Pahor Cladio Labib, *Die Herrschaft der Hyksos in Ägypten und ihr Sturz* (Glückstadt: Augustin, 1936), 6-7.

<sup>250</sup> Though in either case, the *Aamu* were “north” of the Egyptians – Kamose says he *ḥdi.n.i*, “sails northwards” to meet them. Alan H. Gardiner, “The Defeat of the Hyksos by Kamōse: The Carnarvon Tablet, No. 1,” *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 3 (1916): 104.

<sup>251</sup> Gardiner, “The Defeat of the Hyksos by Kamōse: The Carnarvon Tablet, No. 1,” 98.

<sup>252</sup> It is interesting to note that while *ḥkꜣ-ḥꜣswt* was the origin of ‘Hyksos,’ here the Egyptian king referred to them with a separate political title: *wr*.

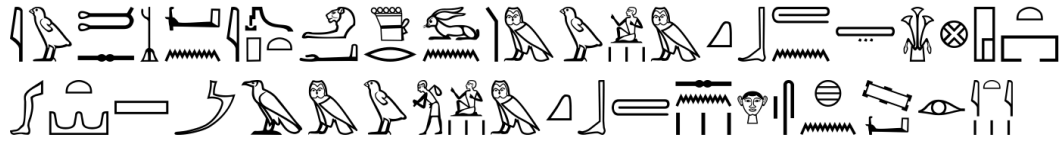
<sup>253</sup> Labib Habachi, *The Second Stela of Kamose and his Struggle against the Hyksos ruler and his capital* (Glückstadt: Augustin, 1972), 38: 18.



*p3 hdt ir.sn m-hnw t3 kmt diw st hr sdm-š n ʿ3mw bt3.n.sn kmt hnw.t.sn*

“the destruction they make inside this Egypt, they who made them (Egyptians) serve for the *Aamu* when they overran Egypt, their mistress.”

Although she ruled Egypt years after the *hk3-h3swt* had already been expelled from the Delta, Hatshepsut’s obelisk at Karnak perpetuated this characteristic<sup>254</sup>:



*iw ts.n.i spt h3t-š dr wn ʿ3mw m-k3b n t3-mhw hwt-wʿrt ʿšm3w m-k3b.sn hr shn iryt*


“I raised up what was ruined, for the first time since the *Aamu* were in the midst of the Delta at Avaris, the foreigners in their midst destroying what was made.”


Kamose recorded it was his desire to *nḥm*, “rescue” or “take away”<sup>256</sup> Egypt from the foreign rulers.<sup>257</sup> The narrative of Apophis (an ʿ3m) and Seqenenre (an Egyptian) introduces another element of their ideology<sup>258</sup>:



*[hʿ.n] nsw ippy ʿ.w.s. hr ir n.f swth m nb iw.f tm b3k n ntr nb nty m p3 t3 r-dr.f [wpw] swth*

<sup>254</sup> Alan H. Gardiner, “Davies’s Copy of the Great Speos Artemidos Inscription,” *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 32 (1946): plate 6: lines 36-38.

<sup>255</sup> Spalinger noted that Avaris is demarcated by the foreign land determinative  (Gardiner

Sign-list N 25) rather than the typical city determinative  (Gardiner Sign-list O 49), which conveys a political statement regarding the foreignness of Avaris’ rulers. Anthony Spalinger, “A Garland of Determinatives,” *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 94 (2008): 142.


<sup>256</sup> Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*, 136.

<sup>257</sup> Gardiner, “The Defeat of the Hyksos by Kamōse: The Carnarvon Tablet, No. 1,” 102.

<sup>258</sup> Alan H. Gardiner, *Late Egyptian Stories* (Brussels: Bibliotheca Aegyptiaca, 1932), 85: lines 8-9.

“[then] King<sup>259</sup> Apophis, l.p.h., made for himself Seth as lord, and he did not serve any god who was in the land in its entirety, [except] Seth.”

Seth as the god of deserts, and of foreignness, naturally associated with the Egyptian neighbors, regardless of whom they worshiped in actuality.<sup>260</sup> Hatshepsut’s obelisk adds that they were not ordained rulers of Egypt, i.e., not Egyptians because<sup>261</sup>:

 *ḥk3.n.sn m-ḥmt rꜥ*, “they ruled without Re.”

The ethnic groups discussed in this chapter are by no means the only northern peoples the Egyptians were aware of or wrote about. These were selected because of the multitude of Egyptian sources about them and the insight they provide into Egypt’s conceptualization of their foreign neighbors. Other northern ethnic groups include the *Kharu*,<sup>262</sup> the *Fenkhu*<sup>263</sup> and possibly the *Apiru*<sup>264</sup> (see Appendix).

### Summary

As was the case with Egypt’s western neighbors, but to a lesser degree, the English all-inclusive translations “Asiatic” and “Asia” for northern ethnonyms obscure the ethnic distinctions being made by the ancient Egyptians in their texts. This obscurity is exacerbated by the Egyptians’ use of seemingly overarching terminology of their own for northerners who inhabited a number of individual homelands, but who were identified by the same proper names. Three main features that identify an ethnic group can be found in Egyptian texts concerning Egypt’s northern neighbors:

<sup>259</sup> Note that although he was a foreigner, the composer of the narrative chose to give him the proper Egyptian royal title.

<sup>260</sup> Note the association of the Westerners with Seth, as well.

<sup>261</sup> Gardiner, “Davies’s Copy of the Great Speos Artemidos Inscription,” plate 6: line 38.

<sup>262</sup> The *Kharu* sometimes performed the role of the northern neighbor in royal cosmographic statements. For examples, refer to pages 11 and 60 of the present work.


<sup>263</sup> Erman and Grapow, *Wörterbuch der Aegyptischen Sprache* I, 577. The *Fenkhu* are mentioned on a quarry stele of Neferperet: Lepsius, *Denkmäler aus Ägypten und Äthiopien* III, plate 3a. A man from the lands of *Fenkhu* is named in the Story of Sinuhe: Hans Goedicke, “Sinuhe’s Epistolary Salutations to the King (B 206-211),” *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 41 (2004): 16.

<sup>264</sup> John A. Wilson, “The Eperu of the Egyptian Inscriptions,” *The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures* 49 (1933) – Wilson considers *ꜥprw* as a word that embodied foreignness to the Egyptians, but did not refer to a unique ethnic group.

1. The use of common proper names, though with some overlap, for referring to individual ethnic groups (*Aamu, Setyu, Keftiui, Sherden, Shekelesh, Tjeker, Peleset, Danuna, Lukka, Ekwesh, Teresh*)
2. The awareness of cultural elements, including a language dissimilar to the language spoken by the Egyptians (*Keftiui*); religious practices dissimilar to those of the Egyptians, either by their association with Seth (the ‘Hyksos’) or their ignorance of Egyptian gods (*Aamu*); practice of a custom specific to some ethnic groups (*Sherden, Shekelesh, Ekwesh*); and cultural or political leaders with tailored titles (*Peleset, Tjeker, people of Alasiya*)
3. The awareness of homelands, even multiple, for each ethnic group (*Aamu, Setyu, Montiu, Keftiui, Peleset, Tjeker, Danuna, Alasiya*)



## Chapter 4. The Easterners

The pre-dynastic docket of King Den smiting the Easterners<sup>265</sup> illustrates the early awareness of foreign peoples located to the east.<sup>266</sup> A spell from the Papyrus Bremner-

Rhind for overthrowing Apophis makes particular mention of  *i3btw nw h3swt nbt*, “Easterners of every desert”<sup>267</sup> in the list of enemies to be defeated on behalf of the Egyptian king.

### *The Shasu*<sup>268</sup>

As was established in the previous chapter, until the Middle Kingdom the *3mw*, *sttyw*, *mntw*, *hryw-šcy* and *nmiw-šcy* (all those ethnonyms conventionally translated as the English “Asiatic”) were categorized as eastern neighbors. Befitting this, the *Shasu* did not play the role of the Easterners until relatively late in Egyptian chronology. The *Shasu*<sup>269</sup>

are found in Egyptian texts with the standard orthography  *š3sw*, beginning in the New Kingdom reign of Thutmose II.<sup>270</sup> There are two proposed origins of their name: a *nisbe* derived from the Egyptian word *š3s*  meaning “to travel”<sup>271</sup> or “to traverse,”<sup>272</sup> thought to refer to their supposed nomadic lifestyle, or from

<sup>265</sup> It reads: *sp tpy skr i3bt*, “first time of smiting the Easterners.” De Wit, “Enemies of the State: Perceptions of “otherness” and State Formation in Egypt,” 175-176. Mary Wright, “Literary Sources for the History of Palestine and Syria: Contacts between Egypt and Syro-Palestine during the Protodynastic period,” *The Biblical Archaeologist* 48 (1985): 248.


<sup>266</sup> Although, by artistic characteristics, the Easterner that the king is smiting was probably an *Aamu*.

<sup>267</sup> Papyrus Bremner-Rhind 28, 15. Raymond O. Faulkner, *The Papyrus Bremner-Rhind (British Museum No. 10188)* (Brussels: Bibliotheca Aegyptiaca, 1933), 68: line 12.

<sup>268</sup> Erman and Grapow, *Wörterbuch der Aegyptischen Sprache* IV, 412.

<sup>269</sup> For a complete collection of the *Shasu* appearing in Egyptian written sources, see: Giveon, *Les Bédouins Shosou Des Documents Égyptiens*. Also see a follow-up article: William A. Ward, “The Shasu “Bedouin”: Notes on a Recent Publication,” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 15 (1972). Note that Ward did not consider the *Shasu* to be a true ethnic group (he calls them “wandering free-booters”), while Giveon treats them as a unique people group and attempted to extrapolate their culture, religion and language from the limited resources.

<sup>270</sup> Giveon, *Les Bédouins Shosou Des Documents Égyptiens*, 219. For a possible attestation of the

ethnonym in an execration text found at Saqqara and dating to the reign of Senuret III,  *šwsw*, see: Georges Posener, *Princes et Pays D'Asie et de Nubie: Textes hiératiques sur des figurines d'envoûtement du moyen empire* (Brussels: Fondation Égyptologique rein Élisabeth, 1940), 91. Ward, “The Shasu “Bedouin”: Notes on a Recent Publication,” 36.

<sup>271</sup> Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*, 261.

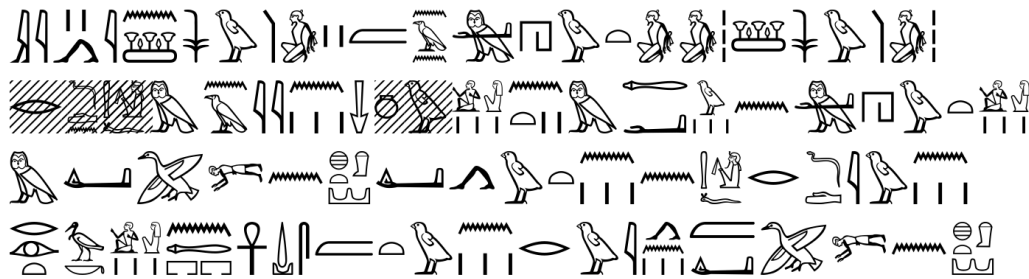
<sup>272</sup> Erman and Grapow, *Wörterbuch der Aegyptischen Sprache* IV, 412.

the Semitic שָׁשׁוּ, *shasah*, “to plunder” or “to pillage.”<sup>273</sup> The name *Shasu* was used by the Egyptians for both the ethnic group and for their homeland. They appear in Egyptian written records relatively late in Egyptian chronology, and their assignment to a cardinal direction in the Egyptian political world occurs later still. While not explicit, a portion of the Annals of Thutmose III contains mention of encountering *Shasu* along a route north of Egypt<sup>274</sup>:



*rnpt 39 ist hm.f hr h3st rtnw m wdyt mh3y 14 nt nh3tt m-ht šmt [... n]3 n hrw n š3sw*  
 “Year 39: now, His Majesty was at the foreign land of *Retenu* on the 14<sup>th</sup> northern campaign of victory after going [...] the fallen of *Shasu*.”

In the historical narrative of the Battle of *Qadesh*, Ramesses II and his army encounter two *Shasu* spies (Fig. 4) allied with the Hittite army while traveling north to *Qadesh*<sup>275</sup>:



*ii.in š3sw 2 m n3 n mhwt š3sw r dd n hm.f m n3y.n snw nty m 3w n mhwt*  
*m-di p3 hrw n ht di iwt.n n hm.f r dd iw.n r-irt b3kw n pr-3 3.w.s. mtw.n rwi.n m-di*  
*p3 hrw n ht*

“Then two *Shasu* arrived from the tribe of *Shasu* in order to speak to His Majesty, saying: ‘Our brethren who are the magnates of the tribe who are in the hand of (in

<sup>273</sup> Thomas E. Levy, Russell B. Adams, and Adolfo Muniz, “Archaeology and the Shasu Nomads: Recent Excavations in the Jabal Hamrat Fidan, Jordan,” in *Le-David Maskil: A Birthday Tribute for David Noel Freedman* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2004), 66. Giveon, *Les Bédouins Shosou Des Documents Égyptiens*, 261-264. Ward, “The Shasu “Bedouin”: Notes on a Recent Publication,” 56-59.

Note also that the Egyptian *š3sw* became the Coptic ωωc meaning: “shepherd.” Giveon, *Les Bédouins Shosou Des Documents Égyptiens*, 264. Jaroslav Černý, *Coptic Etymological Dictionary* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 252.

<sup>274</sup> Giveon, *Les Bédouins Shosou Des Documents Égyptiens*, 11.

<sup>275</sup> Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions: Historical and Biographical II*, 103-104.



allegiance with) the fallen of *Hatti* caused that we come to his Majesty in order to say: we will be servants for the Pharaoh, l.p.h., and we will flee from the hand of the fallen of *Hatti*.<sup>276</sup>

This text reveals two further characteristics of the *Shasu* people that the Egyptians preserved in their record of the event. First, that the *Shasu* could be subdivided into *mhwt*,<sup>277</sup> “families” or “tribes,”<sup>278</sup> which were identified by individual names (although in this case the family name is the same as the ethnonym). Second, that the highest political authority among the *Shasu* were referred to as  $\text{ʕ}$ <sup>279</sup> “magnate”<sup>280</sup> by the Egyptians instead of one of the usual titles for foreign rulers: *wr* or *ḥkꜣ*. This linguistic distinction from the leaders of other foreign peoples no doubt reveals the perceived difference between their political hierarchy, which made *Shasu* leaders deserving of a distinct title.<sup>281</sup>

Additionally, it may reflect the level of respect the Egyptians had for these lesser-



**Figure 4: Drawing of *Shasu* spies at Abu Simbel – Image from Gaston Maspero, *History of Egypt, Chaldea, Syria, Babylonia and Assyria* (London: The Grolier Society Publishers, 1906), 193.**

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<sup>276</sup> Note that this transcription is reconstructed from two sources (Luxor Temple and the Ramesseum) due to lacunae in each record.

<sup>277</sup> Erman and Grapow, *Wörterbuch der Aegyptischen Sprache* II, 114.

<sup>278</sup> Lesko, *A Dictionary of Late Egyptian* I, 196.

<sup>279</sup> Another example of this title used for the *Shasu* elite exists at Medinet Habu:  $\text{ʕ}$  *n snwy n š3[sw]*. Givon, *Les Bédouins Shosou Des Documents Égyptiens*, 139.

<sup>280</sup> Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*, 37.

<sup>281</sup> See also the *Peleset* and *Tjeker* on page 38.

influential leaders, that they were not regarded powerful enough for the title “Great One,” or “ruler.”

The above two examples of the Egyptians encountering the *Shasu* in the north correspond well to a Ramesside text that associates the *Shasu* with the northern/eastern people the *Aamu*. The association is made in the Papyrus Anastasi I, a “satirical letter”<sup>282</sup> addressed to a soldier-scribe,<sup>283</sup> in which a groom is described<sup>284</sup>:



*itt.n.f spyt sw ʿk m n3 nty bin sw šbn m n3 mhwt š3sw iry.f sw m k3i n ʿ3m*

“He carried off what remained and he joined with those who are evil; he consorts with the *Shasu* tribe, and he makes himself in the manner of an *Aam*.”

These texts reveal the placement of the *Shasu* in the Egyptian worldview was partially a northern one. Contrary to these categorizations, the *Shasu* were alternatively associated with the east. On a stele of Ramesses II from Tanis, the *Shasu* are named as Egypt’s eastern neighbors in the Egyptian cosmos as divided into four cardinal directions<sup>285</sup>:



*mki.k kmt wšh tš.k ḥ3k.k hr kš thnw š3sw iww hr ib w3d-wr*

“You protect Egypt; your boundary is extended wide. You capture (or plunder) *Kharu*, *Kush*, *Tjehnu*, *Shasu*, and the islands in the midst of the sea.”

Following the formula of naming a foreign representative from each cardinal direction, it is apparent that the *Shasu* are identified here as the eastern neighbor. As we have already seen, the *Tjehnu* were consistently western neighbors, and *Kush* was unequivocally located at the southern boundary. Here, *Kharu* plays the northern compliment to *Kush*,

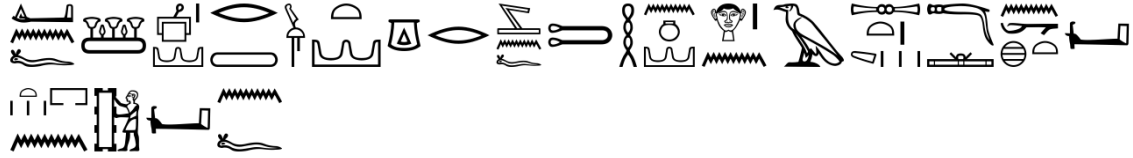
<sup>282</sup> Dated by Gardiner to the reign of Seti II. Alan H. Gardiner, *Egyptian Hieratic Texts - Series I: Literary Texts of the New Kingdom I* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1911), 1.

<sup>283</sup> A. F. Rainey, “The Soldier-Scribe in Papyrus Anastasi I,” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 26 (1967): 58-60. Gardiner, *Egyptian Hieratic Texts I*, 5.

<sup>284</sup> Gardiner, *Egyptian Hieratic Texts I*, 64: lines 5-6.

<sup>285</sup> Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions: Historical and Biographical II*, 404.

and the *Shasu* play the eastern compliment to the *Tjehnu*. Another inscription of Ramesses II again placed the *Shasu* in the East. The king is described transplanting the *Aamu* (northerners) to the south of Egypt, and the *Nehesyu* (Southerners) to the north of Egypt, and doing likewise to Egypt’s eastern and western neighbors<sup>286</sup>:



*di.n.f ššsw r t3 t3bt grg.n.f t̄hnw hr n3 tswt mh n̄htw n kd.n.f*

“He placed *Shasu* in the land of the west. He established *Tjehnu* upon the hills, filling the fortresses he had built.”

Whether or not this records the actual forced displacement of foreign captives, or only ensured the symbolic disassociation of each ethnic group from their homeland, thereby disseminating their threat of invasion, is unclear. The *tswt* “hills”<sup>287</sup> in this text appear several other times in Egyptian records that describe the *Shasu* homeland, and are discussed below.

The Egyptian awareness of the *Shasu* homeland *t3 ššsw* is frequently expressed in topographical lists of the Eighteenth Dynasty.<sup>288</sup> A list of *Shasu* toponyms at the Temple of Soleb from the reign of Amenhotep III<sup>289</sup> provide the names of several localities in the land of the *Shasu*, and potentially the ethnic divisions that inhabited each locality<sup>290</sup>:



*t3 ššsw smt*

*t3 ššsw yhw*

<sup>286</sup> From Abu Simbel. Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions: Historical and Biographical II*, 206-207. Ward, “The Shasu “Bedouin”: Notes on a Recent Publication,” 42. Giveon, *Les Bédouins Shosou Des Documents Égyptiens* 73. Alexandre Vassiliev, “The Localization of the Shasu-Land of Ramesses II’s Rhetorical Texts,” in *Current research in Egyptology 2006: Proceedings of the seventh annual symposium which took place at the University of Oxford, April 2006* (Oxford: Oxbow, 2007): 162.

<sup>287</sup> *tswt* has conventionally been translated “hills” or “ridges” but a recent analysis recommended the translation: “sand dunes.” Vassiliev, “The Localization of the Shasu-Land of Ramesses II’s Rhetorical Texts,” 166.



<sup>288</sup> Giveon, *Les Bédouins Shosou Des Documents Égyptiens*. Reign of Thutmose IV: 16; Amenhotep III: 22, 25, 26.

<sup>289</sup> Raphael Giveon, “Toponymes ouest-asiatiques à Soleb,” *Vestus Testamentum* 14 (1964): 244-245.

<sup>290</sup> Giveon, *Les Bédouins Shosou Des Documents Égyptiens*, 26. For a similar list at the Ramesside temple at Amara West in which *smt* and *yhw* reappear, see: Giveon, *Les Bédouins Shosou Des Documents Égyptiens*, 75.

 b š3sw trbr

A further allusion to the *Shasu* borders occurs in the Wilbour Papyrus, from the reign of Ramesses V.<sup>291</sup> The text describes an Egyptian expedition of the areas surrounding *Shasu*, and uniquely includes ordinal directions to emphasize all of the areas explored,

including:  *mḥ-imnt*, “north-west” and  *rsy-imnt*, “south-west.”<sup>292</sup>

References like these to the *Shasu* homeland and specific places therein confirm that the Egyptians perceived of the *Shasu* as an ethnic group of their own – sharing a unique name with their place of origin.

The hills of *Shasu*-land previously mentioned appear in the records of Seti I’s war<sup>293</sup> against the *Shasu*<sup>294</sup>:



*n3 n ḥrw n š3sw šn.sn bdš n3y.sn 3w n mhwt dmd m bw wᶜ ḥᶜ ḥr n3 [n] tswt n ḥr šsp.sn sh3 hnnw wᶜ im ḥr sm3 sn-nw.f bw ḥm.sn hpw n ᶜḥ*

"The fallen of the *Shasu* are plotting rebellion; their magnates of the tribes are gathered in one place, standing upon the hills of *Kharu*.<sup>295</sup> They initiate turmoil and conflict; one therein killing his fellow. They have no regard for the laws of the palace."

These hills are referenced later in an inscription from the Ramesside temple at Tell el-

<sup>291</sup> Giveon, *Les Bédouins Shosou Des Documents Égyptiens*, 147-148.

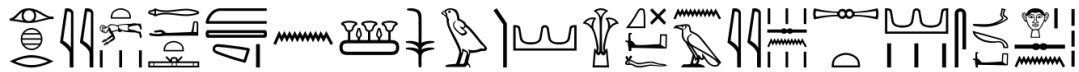
<sup>292</sup> Note that ordinal directions are extremely rare in ancient Egyptian texts.

<sup>293</sup> Anthony J. Spalinger, “Northern Wars of Seti I: An Integrative Study,” *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 16 (1979): 30.

<sup>294</sup> Epigraphic Survey, *Reliefs and Inscriptions at Karnak, vol. IV: The Battle Reliefs of King Sety I* (Chicago: The Oriental Institute, 1986), plate 6: lines 4-9.

<sup>295</sup> Note that this time the hills inhabit a northern foreign land, *Kharu*. This may indicate the *Shasu* territorial boundaries overlapped with those of the *Kharu*, or that the geographical feature was a characteristic of a larger region.

Retaba in Wadi Tumilat<sup>296</sup>:



*ir hryt ʕt m ʔ n š3sw h3k.f n3y.sn tswt sm3 hr.sn*

“Making a great slaughter in the land of *Shasu*, he plunders their hills and slays them.”

The repeated mention of the *tswt* in the land of the *Shasu* stresses that they were a principal feature of the *Shasu* landscape in the Egyptian conception of the *Shasu* homeland. These “hills” may have been a “descriptive placename”<sup>297</sup> used by the *Shasu* to refer to a specific, or even a number of specific locations in their homeland that the Egyptians were aware of and adapted for use.

The satirical letter in Papyrus Anastasi I contains advice from one scribe to another regarding travel and work. In one section, the author attempts to illustrate his experience to the other scribe by describing his travels in foreign places. Among the long-winded narration is a description of other elements of the *Shasu* homeland<sup>298</sup>:



*bw šmt.k r ʕ n š3sw hry ʔ pdt mšʕ [bw] d[g]s.k w3t r p3 mgr pt kk.ti m hrw sw rwd  
m ʕwn-t hr i-n-r-n š ph.w hrt ʕ3t miww r 3byw htmtw inh.w m š3sw hr w3t.f*

“You have not gone to the region of the *Shasu*, with the troops of the army. You have [not] walked the road to the *Mgr*; the sky being dark when day, and it is

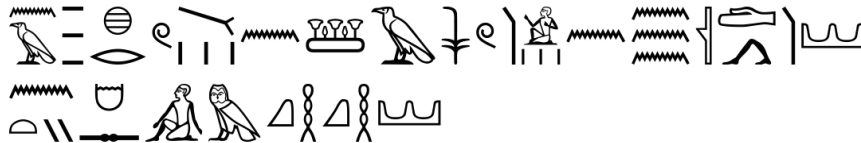
<sup>296</sup> Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions: Historical and Biographical* II, 304: line 14. Giveon, *Les Bédouins Shosou Des Documents Égyptiens*, 114.

<sup>297</sup> Bright, “What IS a Name? Reflections on Onomastics,” 674-677.

<sup>298</sup> Papyrus Anastasi I, 19, 1-4. Gardiner, *Egyptian Hieratic Texts* I, 62: lines 1-5. Giveon, *Les Bédouins Shosou Des Documents Égyptiens*, 127.

prosperous with *awenet* trees,<sup>299</sup> and oaks, and cedars that reach the sky; lions are more numerous than leopards and hyenas,<sup>300</sup> and being surrounded by *Shasu* on his road.”

Other comments on the *Shasu* homeland come from additional Ramesside sources. A series of letters written by the High Priest of Amun Amonrasonther during the reign of Ramesses IX<sup>301</sup> describes<sup>302</sup>:



*n3 hrw n š3sw n mw-ḳd nty ḥms m ḳḫḳḫ*

“the fallen of the *Shasu* of the place of inverted waters<sup>303</sup> who reside in *QehQeh*.”

The text goes on to include the intentions of these specific *Shasu*, who<sup>304</sup>:

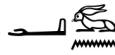


*wn iit r th3 p3 t3 n kmt*

“were coming in order to violate the land of Egypt.”

The same word *th3* “to violate” or “to transgress”<sup>305</sup> was used to describe the *Tjehnu* who did not respect the boundaries between Egypt and the west; in both situations foreigners had intentions of entering Egypt and this was met with contempt by the Egyptians because it disrupted the natural order of the world.

Only a few written sources give us an indication of how the Egyptians perceived the *Shasu* culture. The Great Harris Papyrus contains a clear list of cultural elements of

<sup>299</sup> Gardiner guesses this is a cypress tree. Staves (  ) were made from this tree. Gardiner, *Egyptian Hieratic Texts* I, 21.

<sup>300</sup> Gardiner identifies only one other use of the word, which included a dog determinative. Gardiner, *Egyptian Hieratic Texts* I, 21. See also: Erman and Grapow, *Wörterbuch der Aegyptischen Sprache* III, 198.

<sup>301</sup> Raphael Giveon, “The Shosu of the Late XXth Dynasty,” *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 8 (1970): 51.

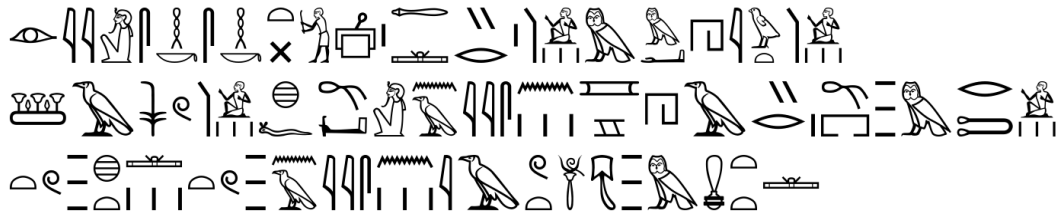
<sup>302</sup> Wolfgang Helck, “Eine Briefsammlung aus der Verwaltung des Amuntempels,” *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 6 (1967): 148: line 46.

<sup>303</sup> The *mw-ḳd*, “inverted waters,” was not a proper toponym; it could refer to the Euphrates River, but also any river that flowed south. Donald B. Redford, “Egypt and Asia in the New Kingdom: Some Historical Notes,” *Journal of the Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities* 10 (1979): 68. Erman and Grapow, *Wörterbuch der Aegyptischen Sprache* II, 52.

<sup>304</sup> Helck, “Eine Briefsammlung aus der Verwaltung des Amuntempels,” 148: line 52.

<sup>305</sup> Lesko, *A Dictionary of Late Egyptian* II, 216.

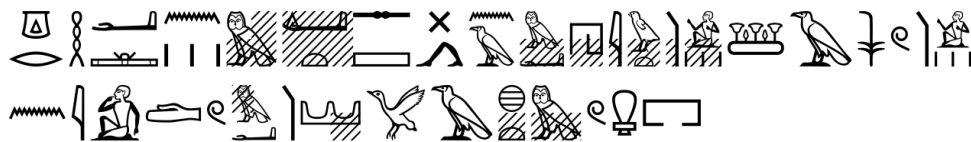
the *Shasu* lifestyle that were captured by Ramesses III<sup>306</sup>:



*iry.i shkshkt s<sup>c</sup>r m mhwt š3sw hf.i n3y.sn mhrw h3rw m  
rmt.w ht.w n3y.sn i3wt m-mitt*

“I destroy *Seir*, namely, *Shasu* tribes. I plunder their tents(?) with their people, their possessions and their herds likewise.”

This text in conjunction with Papyrus Anastasi VI, which contains a letter from a scribe regarding the Egyptian border, creates an image of the *Shasu*’s nomadic lifestyle. The scribe reports that the *Shasu* were entering Egypt to use Egyptian pools.<sup>307</sup> The scribe also assigned a specific place of origin to these *Shasu*<sup>308</sup>:



*grh.n m [dit] sš n3 mhwt š3sw n idwm p3 htmw*

“we have finished permitting the *Shasu* tribes of Edom to pass the fortress....”

In the “satirical letter” of Papyrus Anastasi I there is a vague and critical portrayal of the *Shasu*. A curious portion of the text also seems to refer to their physical size<sup>309</sup>:



*t3 g3wt nh3.ti m š3sw k3p hry n3 b3it<sup>310</sup> wn im.sn n mh 4 n<sup>c</sup> 5 fnd.sn<sup>311</sup> n rdwy hs3 hr*

<sup>306</sup> Papyrus Harris I, 176, 9-10. Erichsen, *Papyrus Harris I*, 93: lines 6-7.

<sup>307</sup> Their intention was to access Egyptian wells *r s<sup>c</sup>nh n3y.w i3wt* “in order to sustain their herds.” Alan H. Gardiner, *Late Egyptian Miscellanies* (Brussels: Bibliotheca Aegyptiaca, 1937), 76: line 15.

<sup>308</sup> Papyrus Anastasi VI, 54-55. Gardiner, *Late Egyptian Miscellanies*, 76: lines 12-13. Givone, *Les Bédouins Shosou Des Documents Égyptiens*, 132.

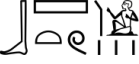
<sup>309</sup> Papyrus Anastasi I, 23, 7-8. Gardiner, *Egyptian Hieratic Texts I*, 70: lines 3-6.


<sup>310</sup> Lesko, *A Dictionary of Late Egyptian I*, 126.


*bw ʕn ib.sn bw sdm.w n swnwn*


“The narrow road being infested<sup>312</sup> with *Shasu* hidden under the thickets; some among them are either of four cubits or of five, from their nose to feet; fierce of face, their heart is not friendly, and they do not listen to flattery.”

Likely because the *Shasu* only appear in records of a single war against the Egyptians, and other interactions with them were minimal, there were seemingly few opportunities to apply the vocabulary of humiliation to them as an ethnic group. In the


inscriptions of Seti I’s war against them, they are called  *bštw*<sup>313</sup> “rebels,”<sup>314</sup>

 *hrw*<sup>315</sup> “fallen,” as was typical of describing foreign enemies. Hans Goedicke

proposed that the phrase  *šs3 hr h3st*, “antelope in the desert,” in Papyrus Lansing<sup>316</sup> might be a metaphorical reference to the *Shasu*.<sup>317</sup> His argument is

strengthened by the orthographic similarities between the words including the use of  (Gardiner Sign-list Aa 18) in both, and by the intrinsic link between a desert animal and nomadism. But, as we have seen from the textual evidence presented, the *Shasu* were not more greatly associated with the desert than any other foreign people.

### ***The Puntites***<sup>318</sup>

The land of Punt  is frequently attested in Egyptian written records, first in the Palermo Stone<sup>319</sup> and consistently afterward until the Late Period<sup>320</sup> as the

<sup>311</sup> Gardiner suggests this word is a corruption of *ʕnd*, “nose.” Gardiner, *Egyptian Hieratic Texts I*, 71.

<sup>312</sup> Lesko, *A Dictionary of Late Egyptian I*, 242.

<sup>313</sup> Epigraphic Survey, *Reliefs and Inscriptions at Karnak IV*, plate 5: line 12.

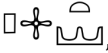
<sup>314</sup> Lesko, *A Dictionary of Late Egyptian I*, 140.

<sup>315</sup> Epigraphic Survey, *Reliefs and Inscriptions at Karnak IV*, plate 3: line 3; plate 5: line 13;

<sup>316</sup> Gardiner, *Late Egyptian Miscellanies*, 102: line 11.

<sup>317</sup> Hans Goedicke, “Papyrus Lansing 3,9- 3,10,” *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 7 (1968): 129. The *šs3* is typically considered to be the bubalis antelope.


<sup>318</sup> Erman and Grapow, *Wörterbuch der Aegyptischen Sprache I*, 506.

<sup>319</sup> Written: , *pwnt*. From the reign of Sahure: Toby A. H. Wilkinson, *Royal Annals of Ancient Egypt: The Palermo Stone and its Associated Fragments* (London: Routledge, 2000), 169 and fig. 3.

<sup>320</sup> Kenneth Kitchen, “The Elusive Land of Punt Revisited,” in *Trade and Travel in the Red Sea Region* (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2004), 27.



destination of Egyptian expeditions and the origin of valued commodities.<sup>321</sup> Punt carried a symbolic significance, as the source of exotic goods including myrrh, which the Egyptians considered ritually sacred and invaluable, to the extent that Punt was often

referred to in the Egyptian language as:  *t3-ntr*, “god’s land.”<sup>322</sup> An examination of the textual evidence, however, reveals an odd absence of Punt’s inhabitants themselves, especially for a location so highly respected by the Egyptians. There are no extant records of wars against Punt, or of Puntites immigrating to Egypt in large groups. Additionally, the great difficulty of reaching distant Punt lessened the actuality of frequent interactions with the Puntites. These facts greatly affected their presence (or lack of it) in Egyptian written records.

Having reached Punt, however, the Egyptians recognized the Puntites as advantageous in obtaining valuable goods. Egyptian expeditions reached Punt both over land and by sea.<sup>323</sup> Upon reaching Punt, Egyptians established their tents<sup>324</sup>:



*m ḥtyw-<sup>c</sup>ntyw nw pwnt ḥr-gswy wd-[wr]*

“in the myrrh terraces of Punt beside the Sea.”

Aside from Punt’s association with the sea, in this case the Red Sea at Egypt’s eastern border, Punt was also consistently associated with the east, the sunrise, and the

<sup>321</sup> Stephen P. Harvey, “Interpreting Punt: Geographic, Cultural and Artistic Landscapes,” in *Mysterious Lands* (London: University College London Press, 2003), 82.

<sup>322</sup> Julien Cooper, “The Geographic and Cosmographic Expression *T3-ntr*,” *The Bulletin of the Australian Centre for Egyptology* 22 (2011): 47-48.

<sup>323</sup> F. D. P. Wicker, “The Road to Punt,” *The Geographic Journal* (1998): 155-161. D. M. Dixon, “The Transplantation of Punt Incense Trees in Egypt,” *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 44 (1969). In the Old Kingdom see the inscriptions of Pepy-nakht who records the building of a ship for the purpose of traveling to Punt: Sethe, *Urkunden des Alten Reichs*, 134. In the Middle Kingdom see the inscriptions of Henu and Antefoker: Louise Bradbury, “Reflections on Traveling to “God’s Land” and Punt in the Middle Kingdom,” *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 25 (1988). In the New Kingdom, see the Great Harris Papyrus that records ships sent by Ramesses III to Punt: Erichsen, *Papyrus Harris I: Hieroglyphische Transkription*, 94: lines 15-16.

<sup>324</sup> Edouard Naville, *The Temple of Deir el Bahari III* (London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1898), plate 69.

horizon.<sup>325</sup> On the Poetical Stele of Thutmose III, already discussed for assigning *Keftiu* and *Isy* to the west, Punt, called here “god’s land.” is located in the east<sup>326</sup>:



*ii.n.i di.i titi.k t3 i3bty hnd.k ntyw m ww nw t3-ntr*

“I came to cause you to trample on the eastern land; you trample those who are in the districts of god’s land.”

On the stele of Amenhotep III from his mortuary temple, Punt is located at the sunrise.


This time, Punt is described as multiple “countries”<sup>327</sup>:



*di.i hr.i r wbn bi3yt.i n.k di.i iwt n.k h3swt nw pwnt*

“I turn my face to the sunrise, I make a marvel for you: I make come to you the countries of Punt.”

Despite Punt’s association with the Red Sea and the sunrise, Punt also exhibited associations with the south and southern peoples. The base of Hatshepsut’s fallen obelisk

at Karnak was the first to locate Punt to the south<sup>328</sup>: 

*rsy r idb nw pwnt*, “my southern boundary is at the lands of Punt.”<sup>329</sup> Here, again, Punt

inhabited a plurality of lands, perhaps indicating it stretched across a number of cultural territories. The only Late Period source to mention Punt is a stele from an unknown reign

<sup>325</sup> Dimitri Meeks, “Locating Punt,” in *Mysterious Lands* (London: University College London Press, 2003), 57-58.

<sup>326</sup> Sethe, *Urkunden der 18. Dynastie* IV, 615: lines 10-12.

<sup>327</sup> Punt, located at the sunrise, acts as the eastern element of the cosmos in this Hymn. Petrie, *Six Temples at Thebes*, plate 12: line 30.

<sup>328</sup> Georges Legrain, “Sur un Fragment D’Obélisque Trouvé à Karnak,” *Recueil de travaux relatifs à la philology et à l’archéologie égyptiennes et assyriennes* 23 (1901): 195.

<sup>329</sup> Much ink has been spilt in an effort to coax Punt’s actual geographical location from the expedition texts and reliefs. Kitchen insists that Punt was in East Africa: Kitchen, “The Elusive Land of Punt Revisited,” 29. Meeks makes the case that Punt was in Arabia: Meeks, “Locating Punt,” 78. Punt probably embodied a massive, shifting region; it remained sufficient in Egyptian written records to associate Punt with the east, and place the great emphasis on the commodities themselves they obtained. Put cogently by Jacke Phillips: “... it is not inconceivable that the term was successfully applied to several areas trading the same products to Egypt: Punt equals myrrh, therefore myrrh equals Punt.” Jacke Phillips, “Punt and Aksum: Egypt and the Horn of Africa,” *The Journal of African History* 38 (1997): 439.


of the 26<sup>th</sup> Dynasty that corroborates Hatshepsut’s assignment of Punt to the south, and connected Punt to the source of the inundation<sup>330</sup>:




[nn] m33 nn nn sdm nn hwit r dw n pwnt ʿnd pw hwit m šw rsy

“this is [not] seen, this is not heard – Rainfall upon the mountain of Punt, it is scarce, namely rain, in the southern lakes.”

Despite Punt’s many attestations in Egyptian historical and religious compositions, the Egyptians’ perceptions of the Puntites’ ethnic identity is conspicuously silent. In the Hymn to Amun from Papyrus Leiden I 350, the inhabitants of Punt are

simply labeled<sup>331</sup>:  *imyw pwnt*, “those who are in Punt,” and the

only further description is of them bringing sweet-smelling incense to the god. The 5<sup>th</sup> Dynasty autobiography of Harkhuf describes a dancing dwarf from *Yam* that was brought to Egypt for an anxious King Pepi II, likened to the one brought from Punt for King Isesi, although nothing else is said about it.<sup>332</sup> In the autobiography, Punt is called the

 *t3 3htyw*,<sup>333</sup> “land of the horizon-dwellers,”<sup>334</sup> an epithet used

not only for distant places but also for the realm of the Egyptian gods.<sup>335</sup> A stele of Mentuhotep IV dedicated to Min in Wadi Hammamat provides an additional association of *t3-ntr* with the horizon, and the realm of the gods<sup>336</sup>:



šps p3wty hnty st m t3 3htyw ʿh ntr hnk m ʿnh sšy hr ntry w3hh ntr pn im.f st.f wʿbt  
nt šmh-ib hryt-tp h3swt t3-ntr

<sup>330</sup> Found at Defenneh. Petrie, *Tanis II*, plate 42: lines 12-14.

<sup>331</sup> J. Zandee, *De Hymnen aan Amon van Papyrus Leiden I 350* (Leiden: Brill, 1948), plate 1: line 5.

<sup>332</sup> Sethe, *Urkunden des Alten Reichs*, 128.

<sup>333</sup> Sethe, *Urkunden des Alten Reichs*, 128.

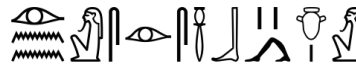
<sup>334</sup> For a complete compendium and analysis of this phrase see: Charles M. Kuentz, “Autour d’une Conception Égyptienne Méconnue: l’*Akhit* ou soi-disant horizon,” *Bulletin de l’Institut Français d’Archéologie Orientale* 17 (1920).

<sup>335</sup> Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*, 5.

<sup>336</sup> Kuentz, “Autour d’une conception égyptienne méconnue: l’*Akhit* ou soi-disant horizon,” 121: lines 4-7.



“O Venerable one, primeval god, foremost of the position in the land of the horizon-dwellers, the palace of the god is presented with life, the sacred nest of Horus in which this god is refreshed is his pure place of enjoyment upon the hills of god’s land.”

Amun calls himself the creator of Punt in the inscriptions at Deir el-Bahari.<sup>337</sup>

 *ir.n.<i> n.i s<y> r s3bi ib.i,*<sup>338</sup> “<I> made it for myself in

order for my heart to tarry.”<sup>339</sup> These texts reveal Punt’s uniqueness among the neighboring lands and peoples known to the Egyptians. Because Punt was located at the south-easternmost horizon, at essentially the ‘edge’ of the human world, it warranted a special, divine designation of “god’s land.”<sup>340</sup> As an extension, it is possible that, in the minds of the Egyptians, the inhabitants of “god’s land” were endowed with some sacredness.

Although the texts and reliefs are incomplete and poorly preserved, the most attractive and complete record of Egyptian-Puntite relations is from the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty expedition to Punt recorded at Hatshepsut’s mortuary temple of Deir el-Bahrari.<sup>341</sup> In only two instances at Deir el-Bahari, however, are the inhabitants of Punt referred to by

an ethnonym<sup>342</sup>:  *pwntyw*, “Puntites,” and 

*nw pwntyw*, “of the Puntites” (referring to a commodity) and nothing meaningful is said about their ethnicity. The inscription lists a group of Puntites brought back to Egypt with their children by this expedition, but they are only called *mrwt*,<sup>343</sup> “subjects” or “serfs.”<sup>344</sup>

The Egyptians *were*, however, aware of leaders among the Puntites. Their leaders were called *wr*,<sup>345</sup> “Great One,” as was common for labeling foreign rulers of moderate influence. A register of reliefs at Deir el-Bahari contains a row of men who are labeled

<sup>337</sup> Naville, *The Temple of Deir el Bahari* III, plate 84.

<sup>338</sup> Note that the second *ir* should be read as the *r* of purpose.

<sup>339</sup> See also Amun’s titles associating him with Punt and *Medja* on page 76.

<sup>340</sup> Gerald Moers, “The World and the Geography of Otherness in Pharaonic Egypt,” in *Geography and Ethnography: Perceptions of the World in Pre-Modern Societies* (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 173.

<sup>341</sup> Naville, *The Temple of Deir el Bahari* III, plate 77.

<sup>342</sup> From Amun’s speech to the Queen: Naville, *The Temple of Deir el Bahari* III, plate 84: line 15.

Below the trees: Naville, *The Temple of Deir el Bahari* III, plate 78.

<sup>343</sup> Naville, *The Temple of Deir el Bahari* III, plate 74. Kitchen, “The Elusive Land of Punt revisited,” 39.

<sup>344</sup> Erman and Grapow, *Wörterbuch der Aegyptischen Sprache* II, 106.

<sup>345</sup> Naville, *The Temple of Deir el Bahari* III, plate 69.




*wrw nw pwnt*, “Great Ones of Punt,” below a register of Southerners also labeled *wrw*, “Great Ones,” of *Irem* and *Nemiu*.<sup>346</sup>

The Deir el-Bahari texts include a curious epithet unique to the Puntites<sup>347</sup>:



*hbstyw*, “bearded.”<sup>348</sup> The physical characteristic “bearded” was also used to describe myrrh harvesters in the Ptolemaic Period, and the Egyptian king himself when he offered myrrh to the gods.<sup>349</sup> The beard may have been a physical feature that the Egyptians associated with the gods, and so became associated with the myrrh (and Puntites) that was harvested for them.<sup>350</sup> In another place, the Puntites’ submission to the Egyptian queen is likened to the behavior of *tsmw*, “dogs.”<sup>351</sup> It is interesting to note that in the inscriptions at Deir el-Bahari, Punt and Puntites are not given negative epithets of any kind, while *Kush* is called *hst*, “wretched” or “defeated,” within the same text Punt is mentioned.<sup>352</sup> This may be due to the simple fact that Punt never necessitated defeating or subduing, as the word *hsy* implies.<sup>353</sup>

A unique attribution of ethnicity to the land of Punt is briefly alluded to in the Festival of Min at Medinet Habu.<sup>354</sup> A man who takes part in the Festival and solely

recites a hymn to Min is labeled<sup>355</sup>:  *nhs n pwnt*, “*Nehesy* of Punt.”<sup>356</sup> As is explored in the next chapter, the term *Nehesy(u)* was used by the

<sup>346</sup> Naville, *The Temple of Deir el Bahari* III, plate 76. Anthony J. Spalinger, “Covetous Eyes South: The Background to Egypt’s Domination over Nubia by the Reign of Thutmose III,” in *Thutmose III: A New Biography* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006), 365.

<sup>347</sup> Naville, *The Temple of Deir el Bahari* III, plate 84: line 15.

<sup>348</sup> Eрман and Grapow, *Wörterbuch der Aegyptischen Sprache* III, 255.

<sup>349</sup> Meeks, “Locating Punt,” 65.

<sup>350</sup> See, for example, the deceased assuming the divine beard of Osiris in their transformation of identity for the afterlife. Gay Robins, “Hair and the Construction of Identity in Ancient Egypt, c 1480-1350 B.C.,” *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 36 (1999): 68.

<sup>351</sup> Sethe, *Urkunden der 18. Dynastie* IV, 321: line 11.

<sup>352</sup> Refer to page 84 for full text.

<sup>353</sup> Lorton, “The So-Called ‘Vile’ Enemies of the King of Egypt,” 65.



<sup>354</sup> The same text was also inscribed at the Ramesseum: Henri Gauthier, *Les fêtes du dieu Min* (Cairo: Imprimerie de l’Institut Français D’Archéologie Orientale, 1931), 200-202.

<sup>355</sup> Epigraphic Survey, *Medinet Habu* IV: Festival Scenes of Ramesses III (Chicago: The Oriental Institute, 1940), plate 203: lines 10, 16. Dimitri Meeks, “Coptos et les Chemins de Pount,” *Topoi*, supplement 3 (2002): 284.

<sup>356</sup> Note that his artistic representation is that of a typical Egyptian man. While he is identified as a foreigner there is nothing in the visual record to corroborate this. Epigraphic Survey, *Medinet Habu* IV: Festival Scenes of Ramesses III, plate 203.

Egyptians to refer to their southern neighbors – the inhabitants of *Kush* and the various other political factions that existed in modern-day north Sudan. This text corroborates the connection between Punt and the southern countries, but may reflect the myth of Min’s exotic origins as an element of the Festival, more so than it identifies the inhabitants of Punt as a *Nehesy*.<sup>357</sup>

### *The Medjay*<sup>358</sup>

The inquisition of the ethnic identity of the  *md3y*,<sup>359</sup> *Medjay* and the location of their homeland  *Medja*<sup>360</sup> in Egyptian written records is on going in Egyptology, most specifically targets the relationship between the ethnic group apparent in Old Kingdom texts and the official titles frequent in New Kingdom texts. The oldest references to the *Medjay* seem to reference an ethnic group associated with Egypt’s southern neighbors; did the name refer to an ethnic group throughout, or when was the title *Medjay* adopted for the title of “policeman” during the New Kingdom?

In the late Old Kingdom, the perception of the *Medjay* is that of a people belonging to the *Nehesyu*, the southern neighbors and the inhabitants of such polities as *Wawat*, *Kush*, *Irtjet* and *Yam*.<sup>361</sup> The earliest reference to the land of *Medja* is recorded in the Dahshur Decree of Pepi I<sup>362</sup>, where it was listed alongside *Yam* and *Irtjet*<sup>363</sup> but the only foreign peoples mentioned in the text (later) are *Nehesyu*. Twice in the autobiography of Weni the inhabitants of *Medja* are associated with the southern regions. Among the Egyptian army formed to repel the *Aamu*, Weni records representatives of foreign lands also<sup>364</sup>:

<sup>357</sup> Gauthier, *Les fêtes du dieu Min*, 89.

<sup>358</sup> Erman and Grapow, *Wörterbuch der Aegyptischen Sprache* II, 186.

<sup>359</sup> For the purposes of this thesis *md3y* will be transliterated *Medjay*. Other common spellings include: Mazoi, Mezaiu, Medjai, Madjai, and Mejay.

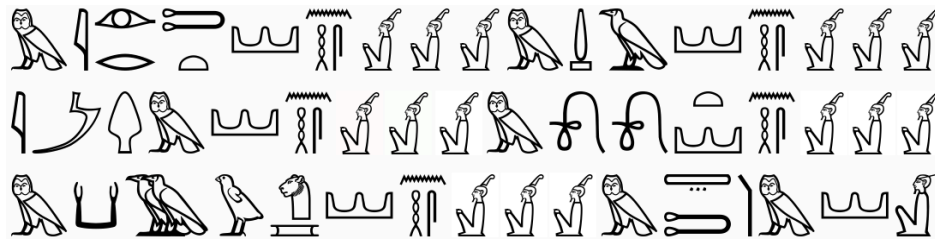
<sup>360</sup> For a list of locations within the land of *Medja* see: Kate Liszka, ““We have Come to Serve Pharaoh:” A Study of the Medjay and Pangrave as an Ethnic Group and as Mercenaries from C.2300 BCE until C. 1050 BCE” (PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2012), 146-147.

<sup>361</sup> O’Connor, “The Locations of Yam and Kush and Their Historical Implications,” 27.

<sup>362</sup> Sethe 1933, *Urkunden des Alten Reichs*, 209: line 16.

<sup>363</sup> An individual is named *imy-r nw md3 im3m [i]rtt*, “overseer of Medja, Yam and Irtet.”

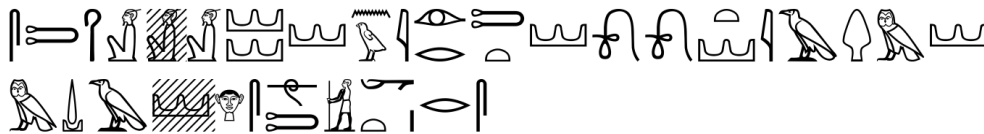
<sup>364</sup> Sethe, *Urkunden des Alten Reichs*, 101: lines 13-16.



*m irtt nḥsyw md3 nḥsyw i3m nḥsyw m w3w3t nḥsyw m k33w nḥsyw m t3 tmḥw*

“from *Irtjet* Nubians, *Medja* Nubians, *Yam* Nubians, from *Wawat* Nubians, from *Kaau* Nubians and from the land of *Tjemeh*.”

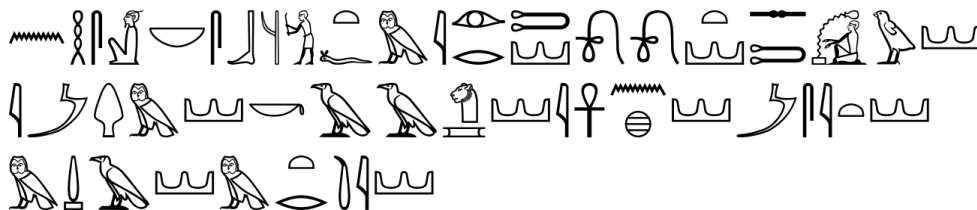
Near the end of the inscription is the record of barges made from acacia wood<sup>365</sup>:



*ist ḥk3w ḥ3swt nw irtt w3w3t i3m md3 hr s3 ḥt r.s<n>*

“then, the rulers of the foreign lands of *Irtjet*, *Wawat*, *Yam*, *Medja* conveyed the timber to them.”

Another such Old Kingdom association comes from the reign of Merynre, where again, the rulers (*ḥk3w*) of *Medja*, *Irtjet* and *Wawat* pay obeisance to the Egyptian king together.<sup>366</sup> In an Execration Text from Giza the inhabitants of the land of *Medja* were also identified as *Nehesyu*<sup>367</sup>:



*nḥs nb sbit.f m irt<t> w3w3t s3tw i3m k33w nḥi m3sit md3 mtrti*

“every *Nehesyu* who rebels in *Irtjet*, *Wawat*, *Satju*, *Yam*, *Kaau*, *Ankhi*, *Masit*, *Medja*, and *Meterti*.”

A similar association of the lands of *Medja* and *Wawat* appear in a 6<sup>th</sup> Dynasty letter in

which  *tswt nt md3 w3w3t*, “the troops of *Medja*

<sup>365</sup> Sethe, *Urkunden des Alten Reichs*, 109: line 2.

<sup>366</sup> Sethe, *Urkunden des Alten Reichs*, 110: line 15. Note that an apparent duplicate of this text, albeit with lacunae, from the same reign exists: Sethe, *Urkunden des Alten Reichs*, 111.

<sup>367</sup> Jurgén Osing, “Ächtungstexte aus dem Alten Reich (II),” *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts* 32 (1976): 148.

and *Wawat*” are mentioned.<sup>368</sup> Clearly, in the Old Kingdom the Egyptians believed the inhabitants of *Medja* were similar enough to the inhabitants of southern (i.e. ‘Nubian’) polities that they could be identified by the same ethnonym, *Nehesyu*.

In the Middle Kingdom the *Medjay*, perhaps through increased interaction or immigration into Egyptian areas, experienced the development of a unique ethnonym in Egyptian sources: the topo-ethnonym (demonym) *md3yw*. The appearance of this demonym relays that in the Egyptian mind the *Medjay* were deserving of representation distinct from the *Nehesyu*, and one that tied them to their homeland.<sup>369</sup> This development is illustrated in yet another execration figure, this one from the early Middle Kingdom<sup>370</sup> that differentiates between the *Medjay* and the *Nehesyu*<sup>371</sup>:



“all the *Medjay* of Webet-Sept;<sup>372</sup> all the Nubians of *Wawat*, *Kush*, *Shaat*, *Beqes*.”

The Instructions of Amenemhat I also made a distinction between the two of these topo-ethnonyms, and compares each to a separate animal<sup>373</sup>:



“I captured lions and I took crocodiles. I seized the [*Wa*]wayu; and I took the

<sup>368</sup> Paul C. Smither, “An Old Kingdom Letter concerning the Crimes of Count Sabni,” *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 28 (1942): 17: line 12.

<sup>369</sup> See also the Middle Kingdom fort at Serra East named *hsf md3yw*, “Repelling the Medjay.” Alan H. Gardiner, “An Ancient List of the Fortresses of Nubia,” *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 3 (1916): 185. László Török, *Between Two Worlds: The Frontier Region between Ancient Nubia and Egypt 3700 BC - AD 500* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 88.

<sup>370</sup> Dated to the reigns of Senusret I or Amenemhat II by Parkinson. Richard B. Parkinson, *Voices from Ancient Egypt: An Anthology of Middle Kingdom Writings* (London: British Museum Press, 1991), 125.

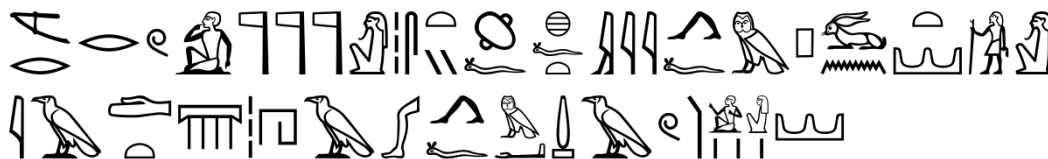
<sup>371</sup> Georges Posener, *Cinq Figurines D’Envoûtement* (Cairo: Institut Français d’archéologie orientale du Caire, 1987), 45-47.

<sup>372</sup> Karola Zibeliuss-Chen, *Afrikanische Orts- und Völkernamen in hieroglyphischen und hieratischen Texten* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1972), 104.

<sup>373</sup> From the ostracon Petrie 77. Helck, *Der Text der “Lehre Amenemhets I. für seinen sohn,”* 76-77.







*mrr ntrw sty.f hft ii.f m pwnt wr i3dt h3i.f <m> md3yw*

“His fragrance the gods love, when he comes from Punt. Great One of dew  
(when) he descends <from> the *Medjay*.”

The hymn also describes incense and myrrh coming from *Medja*, commodities that were closely associated with Punt and the east.<sup>382</sup> The associations between the two lands continue through related titles of Amun: the lord (*nb*) of the *Medjay* and ruler (*ḥkꜣw*) of Punt.<sup>383</sup>

The awareness of the *Medja* homeland persisted in Middle Kingdom tomb biographies as a location from which Egyptian officials received goods from the *ḥkꜣw ḥ3swt*, “rulers of the foreign lands,” of *Medja*.<sup>384</sup> By far the most interesting written records of the *Medjay* are a pair of Dispatches sent by unknown scribes at the fort of Semna to an unknown individual during the reign of Amenemhat III.<sup>385</sup> The scribe, who dutifully noted the day’s happenings, recorded the emergence of several *Medjay* from the desert, associating them directly with a nomadic lifestyle.<sup>386</sup> Dispatch No. 3 records the discovery of *Medjay* individuals by Egyptian and *Medjay* scouts in their employ<sup>387</sup>:



*gm.n.n st hr rsy p3 ʕd hr hrw t3 ḥti nt šmw*

“We found them south of the desert-edge<sup>388</sup> under the engraving of *Shemu*.”

Semna Dispatch No. 5 contains a further association of the *Medjay* with the desert<sup>389</sup>:

<sup>382</sup> Luiselli, *Der Amun-Re Hymnus des P. Boulaq 17 (P. Kairo CG 58038)*, 26.

<sup>383</sup> Grebaut, *Hymne à Ammon-Ra: des papyrus égyptiens du musée de Boulaq*, 301: line 4.

<sup>384</sup> Autobiography of Sarenput. Kurt Sethe, *Historisch-biographische Urkunden des Mittleren Reiches* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1935), 2: line 1.

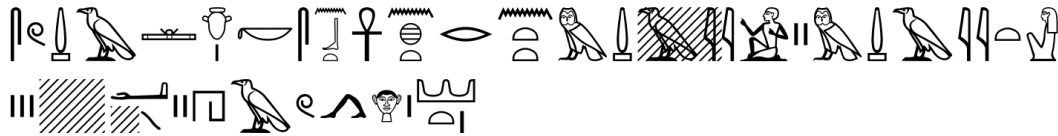
<sup>385</sup> Paul C. Smither, “The Semnah Despatches,” *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 31 (1945): 4-5.

<sup>386</sup> Liszka, ““We have Come to Serve Pharaoh,”” 269-272.

<sup>387</sup> Smither, “The Semnah Despatches,” plate 3a: line 12.

<sup>388</sup> ʕd, translated here as “desert-edge,” is defined: “das Land am Wüstenrande an der Grenze des regelmässig bewässerten Gebietes.” Erman and Grapow, *Wörterbuch der Aegyptischen Sprache* I, 239.


<sup>389</sup> Smither, “The Semnah Despatches,” plate 5a: lines 7-8.



*swd3-ib.k snb.ti ʿnh.ti r ntt md3yw 2 md3ywt 3 [...] 2 h3i.w hr h3st*

“Be informed, may you be well and living, that 2 *Medjay* men and 3 *Medjay* women<sup>390</sup> and 2 [...] descended from the desert.”

These *Medjay* were so considered so acquainted with the desert that the Egyptians of the

fort inquire of them its condition,<sup>391</sup> before they were<sup>392</sup>:  *hdt [r]*

*h3st.sn*, “dismissed [to] their desert.” These dispatches say more about the association of the *Medjay* to the desert than any other written source, and it is upon these brief lines that much of their character in modern scholarship is based.

In the New Kingdom, the term *md3y* was transformed into an element in numerous titles<sup>393</sup> for individuals who formed communities of policemen or institutional guards.<sup>394</sup> The textual evidence for the *Medjay* ethnicity during this period is scarce. The land of *Medja* did not disappear from written records, however. It became the duty of the Viceroys of Nubia to collect revenue from *Medja*.<sup>395</sup>

<sup>390</sup> Note the feminine form of the ethnonym in the hieroglyphs.

<sup>391</sup> To which they reply: *n sdm.n hwt nbt iw t3 h3st hr [mt] m-ʿ hkr*, “We do not hear anything; the desert is [dying] from hunger.” Smither, “The Semnah Despatches,” plate 5a: lines 9-10.

<sup>392</sup> Smither, “The Semnah Despatches,” plate 5a: line 10.

<sup>393</sup> Including *hry md3y*, “Captain of the *Medjay*,” *wr n md3y* “Chief of the *Medjay*,” and *idnw n md3y*, “Deputy of the *Medjay*,” Erman and Grapow, *Wörterbuch der Aegyptischen Sprache* II, 186. Liszka, ““We have Come to Serve Pharaoh,”” Table 15. Danièle Michaux-Colombot, “The *MD3Y.W*, not Policemen but an Ethnic Group from the Eastern Desert,” in *Études nubiennes: conférence de Genève: actes du VIIe Congrès international d’études nubiennes, 3-8 septembre 1990* (Genève: Société d’études nubiennes, 1992), 29-30. Torgny Säve-Söderbergh, *Ägypten und Nubien* (Lund: Ohlssons, 1941), 232-233.

<sup>394</sup> Gardiner, *Ancient Egyptian Onomastica* I, 73-89. Liszka, ““We have Come to Serve Pharaoh,”” 316-375. Some scholars believe that the title *Medjay* was adapted for the policemen because the original members of the police force had been, ethnically, of *Medjay*-descent: Stephan Johannes Seidlmayer, “Nubier im Ägyptischen Kontext im Alten und Mittleren Reich,” in *Akkulturation und Selbstbehauptung: Beiträge des Kolloquiums am 14.12.2001* (Halle-Wittenberg: Orientwissenschaftliches Zentrum der Martin-Luther-Universität, 2002), 99.

<sup>395</sup> Refer to the Inscription of Turo, Viceroy of Nubia under Amenhotep I: Wolfgang Helck, *Historisch-biographische Texte der 2. Zwischenzeit und neue Texte der 18. Dynastie* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1983), 115. Labib Habachi, “The First Two Viceroys of Kush and their Family,” *Kush* 7 (1959): 49.

### *Summary*

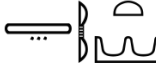
Surprisingly little can be extrapolated from Egyptian written records about their eastern neighbors, in comparison to other orientations. Unsurprisingly, they are associated with both the deserts and the coasts, as is consistent with Egypt's eastern borders. Few wars, if any, were conducted against these neighbors, presumably providing little opportunity to apply the vocabulary of humiliation to them. Three main features that identify an ethnic group can be found in Egyptian texts concerning Egypt's eastern neighbors:


1. The use of common proper names for referring to individual ethnic groups (*Shasu*, Puntites, *Medjay*)
2. The awareness of cultural elements, including their lifestyle (*Shasu*); the division into sub-cultural units or families (*Shasu*); a trademark physical characteristic (Puntites); and cultural or political leaders with tailored titles (*Shasu*, Puntites, *Medjay*)
3. The awareness of homelands for each ethnic group (*Shasu*, Punt, *Medja*) as well as a distinct topographical element of their homeland (*Shasu*)

## Chapter 5. The Southerners

Interaction between Egyptian and southern cultures are consistently attested for thousands of years, appearing in written records during the first Egyptian dynasties, but certainly occurring even before then.<sup>396</sup> Egyptians and their southern neighbors inhabited a similar environment, connected by the flow of the Nile from south to north and broken only by the six cataracts. Traditionally, the First Cataract in modern-day Aswan (ancient *Swenet*) marked the boundary line between Egypt and the southern lands, although during periods of expansion and colonization, especially during the 13<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasties, direct Egyptian influence extended as far as the Fourth Cataract. It was within Egyptian interests to establish forts along the southern Egyptian border, between the second and third cataracts,<sup>397</sup> as well as towns and temples at strategic points further south to maintain administration in the area.<sup>398</sup>

### *Ethnonyms and Homelands*

The earliest extant use of the toponym  *t3-sty*, “Land of the Bow,”<sup>399</sup> for the lands south of Egypt was during the 1<sup>st</sup> Dynasty reign of King Aha.<sup>400</sup> During the Middle Kingdom, the Egyptian word for the bow was modified for use as the *nisbe*

adjective  *styw* to denote the inhabitants of *t3-sty*.<sup>401</sup> An early example of

<sup>396</sup> Jane Roy, *The Politics of Trade: Egypt and Lower Nubia in the 4<sup>th</sup> Millennium BC* (Leiden: Brill, 2011). Török, *Between Two Worlds*, 36.

<sup>397</sup> Bruce Williams, “Second Cataract Forts,” in *Ancient Nubia: African Kingdoms on the Nile* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2012), 340-347. Stuart Tyson Smith, “To the Supports of Heaven: Political and Ideological Concepts of Frontiers in Ancient Egypt,” in *Untaming the Frontier in Anthropology, Archaeology, and History* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2005), 211.

<sup>398</sup> William Y. Adams, “The First Colonial Empire: Egypt in Nubia, 3200-1200 B.C.,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 26 (1984): 44-66.


<sup>399</sup> Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*, 253. *t3-sty* was also the name of the first Upper Egyptian nome that formed the borderland of Egypt and the south: Nigel Strudwick, *Texts from the Pyramid Age* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005), 117. Robert Morkot, *The Black Pharaohs: Egypt's Nubian Rulers* (London: Rubicon Press, 1996), 53.

<sup>400</sup> Label of Aha from Abydos. De Wit, “Enemies of the State,” 173-174. And translation in: Wolfgang Helck, *Untersuchungen zur Thinitenzeit* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1987), 145.




<sup>401</sup> Note the name of the Egyptian fort at Semna South: *d3i sti*, “subduer of the Land of *Sety*,” or “subduer of the *Setyu*.” Louis V. Žabkar, “Semna South: The Southern Fortress,” *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 61 (1975): 42.

this is found on a fragmented stele of Khasekhemwy from Hierakonpolis, on which a bow is carved above the head of an enemy to identify his identity as a southern neighbor.<sup>402</sup> It also appears numerous times in the Pyramid Texts.<sup>403</sup> Another early

toponym  *t3-nhs*, “Land of the *Nehe*sy” appears in the 4<sup>th</sup> Dynasty on the

Palermo Stone<sup>404</sup> and anticipated the appearance of  *nhsy*,<sup>405</sup> *Nehe*sy, the primary ethnonym for all of Egypt’s southern neighbors. *Nehe*syu is conventionally translated “Southlander,”<sup>406</sup> “Nubian,”<sup>407</sup> or, in archaic translations, “Negro.”<sup>408</sup> By the middle of the Old Kingdom,<sup>409</sup> more specific toponyms for southern polities<sup>410</sup> can be

found in Egyptian texts, including:  *Medja*,<sup>411</sup>  *Yam*,<sup>412</sup>

 *Wawat*,  *Irtjet*, and  *Setjau*.<sup>413</sup> By the New

Kingdom, Egyptian written records include contact with the major southern polities of

<sup>402</sup> De Wit, “Enemies of the State,” 243-244.

<sup>403</sup> Alejandro Jiménez-Serrano, “Two Different Names of Nubia before the Fifth Dynasty,” *Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur* 35 (2006): 142.

<sup>404</sup> Record of Sneferu relocating thousands of men, women and cattle. Jiménez-Serrano, “Two Different Names of Nubia before the Fifth Dynasty,” 142. Trigger believes this was to: “pacify the region and perhaps also to secure manpower for their projects in the north.” Bruce G. Trigger, “New Light on the History of Lower Nubia,” *Anthropologica* 10 (1968): 88.

<sup>405</sup> Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*, 137. Erman and Grapow, *Wörterbuch der Aegyptischen Sprache* II, 303.

<sup>406</sup> Erman and Grapow, *Wörterbuch der Aegyptischen Sprache* II, 303.

<sup>407</sup> ‘Nubia’ and ‘Nubian’ are the most common names by which Egyptologists refer to the southern lands (modern-day Sudan) as a whole, and their inhabitants in general. These terms will be avoided for the purpose of this thesis because of the impression of ethnic homogeneity they promote.

<sup>408</sup> Junker believes that this term does not in any way indicate the “blackness” of the ethnicity, but was used generally for Egyptian neighbors to the south and south-east, only later to be applied to Egypt’s black neighbors: Hermann Junker, “The First Appearance of the Negroes in History,” *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 7 (1921): 124-125. Redford, on the other hand, believes that its very definition was “bronzed/burnt”: Donald B. Redford, *From Slave to Pharaoh: The Black Experience of Ancient Egypt* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), 5.



<sup>409</sup> Gerald E. Kadish, “Old Kingdom Egyptian Activity in Nubia: Some Reconsiderations,” *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 52 (1966).


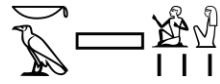
<sup>410</sup> For a complete compendium of southern toponyms see: Zibelius-Chen, *Afrikanische Orts- und Völkernamen in hieroglyphischen und hieratischen Texten*.

<sup>411</sup> Refer to the *Medjay* on page 72.



<sup>412</sup> Julien Cooper, “Reconsidering the Location of Yam,” *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 48 (2012). O’Connor, “The Locations of Yam and Kush and their Historical Implications,” 27. D. M. Dixon, “The Land of Yam,” *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 44 (1958).

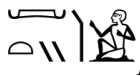
<sup>413</sup> Säve-Söderbergh, *Ägypten und Nubien*, 11-30. Morkot, *The Black Pharaohs: Egypt’s Nubian Rulers*, 48.

 *Irem*<sup>414</sup> and  *Kush*, along with continued records of *Wawat*.<sup>415</sup> The Egyptians considered the inhabitants of these countries to be *Neheisyu*, although in some cases separate ethnonyms developed for these polities, such as

 *w3w3yw*<sup>416</sup> for the people of *Wawat*, and  *k3šw*<sup>417</sup> for the inhabitants of *Kush*, appearing only infrequently in written records.

Similar to their treatment of the northerners, the Egyptians employed a number of

“secondary ethnonyms” for their southern neighbors, including  *iwntyw*<sup>418</sup> (translated interchangeably as “pillar people,” “Bedouin,” “tribesmen,” “bowmen,”<sup>419</sup> or, archaically, “troglodytes”), which was likely a *nisbe* adjective derived from  *iwnt*, “bow.”<sup>420</sup> This moniker appears in Old Kingdom literature, as at the Mortuary temple of Sahure where it was named alongside the *Montiu*.<sup>421</sup> It has been consistently translated as a pejorative in Egyptology,<sup>422</sup> especially through the heavy use of “troglodytes,” although the word itself, and the contexts in which it appears, do not lend themselves to this


interpretation. The Southerners are also called  *pdty*, “bowmen,” or “foreigners,”<sup>423</sup> although this designation was not exclusive to them.<sup>424</sup> Both of these labels were designed to function as nicknames that call attention to a cultural characteristic for which the Southerners were known; they were not proper ethnonyms.

<sup>414</sup> David O'Connor, “The Location of Irem,” *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 73 (1987): 100.

<sup>415</sup> Morkot, *The Black Pharaohs: Egypt's Nubian Rulers*, 59-90.

<sup>416</sup> Refer to the Instruction of Amenemhat I on page 74.

<sup>417</sup> William Flinders Petrie, *A Season in Egypt, 1887* (London: Field and Tuer, 1888), plate 13, no. 340.

<sup>418</sup> Note the existence of an Egyptian fort in Lower Nubia named  *hsf iwntyw*, “Repelling the *Iuntyu*.” Gardiner, “An Ancient List of the Fortresses of Nubia,” 185.

<sup>419</sup> Note that the Egyptian god Min is called *hry-tp iwntyw*, “foremost of the bowmen.” Kuentz, “Autour d'une conception égyptienne méconnue: l'*Akhit* ou soi-disant horizon,” 122: line 18.

<sup>420</sup> Erman and Grapow, *Wörterbuch der Aegyptischen Sprache* I, 55. “Bowmen” in: Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*, 13.

<sup>421</sup> Borchardt, *Das Grabdenkmal des Königs Sahu-re*, plate 5.

<sup>422</sup> Vinogradov suggested that its absence from the texts of the 25<sup>th</sup> Dynasty might indicate it did, in fact, have an insulting connotation. Alexey K. Vinogradov, “On the Rendering of the Toponym *T3 STJ*,” *Chronique d'Égypte* 75 (2000): 230: note 36.

<sup>423</sup> Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*, 97.

<sup>424</sup> Espinel, *Etnicidad y territorio en el Egipto del Reino Antiguo*, 127.

**Orientation: The Southern Homelands**

The Land of the *Nehesy*, the “Land of the Bow,” and the other topographically proximate lands named above consistently represented the south in Egypt’s political world. While the north was associated with the marshlands of the Delta or of *stt*, the south was associated with the wind.<sup>425</sup> Akhenaten, largely criticized for his apparent disregard for expanding his political borders, was nonetheless aware of the geographic elements of his world and proclaimed his dominion over them<sup>426</sup>:



*rsy mi mh̄tt imnt i3bt [...] h̄ry-ib n w3d-wr m hnw n k3.f t3.<f>-rsy r ʿ t3w mh̄tt r sh̄dwt itn*

“The south, as well as the north, the west and the east [and the islands] in the midst of the sea are in praise to his *k3*. <His> south-land is at the region of the wind, (his) northern is at the shining of Aten.”

The Hymn to the Aten, also composed during the reign of Akhenaten, is a religious work that describes the world and all of its elements as the creations of the god. In one instance it names the northern (*Kharu*) and southern (*Kush*) regions of the world, and Egypt between them.<sup>427</sup> Seti I’s stele at Qasr Ibrim also expresses his dominion over the entire world by naming the symbolic north and south<sup>428</sup>:



*t3š.f rsy r ʿ t3w mh̄ty dd.f<sup>429</sup> phwy w3d-wr*

<sup>425</sup> Liverani, *International Relations in the Ancient Near East, 1600-1100 BC*, 31.

<sup>426</sup> From the ‘Hymn to the Rising Sun’ in the tomb of Ahmose. Note that most of this inscription is now damaged and was reconstructed by Davies for publication from photographs and through comparisons with 2 other versions of this hymn. Norman de Garis Davies, *The Rock Tombs of El Amarna III: The Tombs of Huyu and Ahmes* (London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1905), plate 29. William J. Murnane, *Texts from the Amarna Period in Egypt* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 156.

<sup>427</sup> Refer to page 11 for text.

<sup>428</sup> Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions: Historical and Biographical I*, 99: line 11.

<sup>429</sup> Lesko, *A Dictionary of Late Egyptian II*, 276.



“his southern boundary is at the region of the wind, the northern (boundary), it penetrates the border of the sea.”

Spell 162 of the Coffin Texts, designed to offer the deceased control of the four winds also associates the wind with the south and, more specifically, the Southerners<sup>430</sup>:



*rsw pw rsw m nhs rsyt*

“it is the south-wind, the south-wind as a *Nehesy* of the south.”

Historical records provide much documentation of the Egyptians’ contact with their southern neighbors, specifically descriptions of sailing southward, or upstream along the Nile, to the southern countries. Travel between Egypt and the regions of their southern neighbors was arguably the easiest for the Egyptians to reach, by journeying up the Nile; the regions to the north, west and east were only approachable across a sea, desert, or mountain range. This fact made maintained control of the southern regions essential.

The earliest written records of Egyptian expeditions to the south contain an awareness of numerous foreign countries and their inhabitants. The Autobiography of Ahmose, son of Abana, records a southern campaign during the reign of Ahmose I. The inscription includes both a primary and a secondary ethnonym for the Southerners<sup>431</sup>:



*wn.in.f hr hntyt r hnt-hn-nfr r sksk iwntyw styw*

“he (the king) went on a southern voyage to *Khent-hen-nefer* in order to destroy the *Setyu* bowmen.”

Both *iwntyw* and *styw* are conventionally translated individually as “bowmen,” although *Setyu* functions as a proper topo-ethnonym and *iwntyw* as an informal moniker. In the

<sup>430</sup> Adriaan de Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts vol. II: Texts of Spells 76-163* (Chicago: The Oriental Institute, 1938), 397-398.

<sup>431</sup> Sethe, *Urkunden der 18. Dynastie* IV, 5.

same inscription, but from Ahmose's service to Amenhotep I, these *Setyu*-bowmen are mentioned again, though this time the name of their homeland is specified<sup>432</sup>:



*iw.f m hntyt r kš r swsh tšw kmt wn.in hm.f hr skr iwntyw styw pf m hr-ib mš3.f*

“he (the king) was on a southward voyage to *Kush* in order to extend the boundaries of Egypt. Then, his Majesty struck down that *Setyu*-bowman in the heart of his (the *Setyu*) army.”

As established in the previous chapter, the land of Punt was occasionally mentioned alongside these southern countries, as in the Deir el-Bahari inscriptions of Hatshepsut's expedition. What is notable about these inscriptions is the perpetual use of *hsy*, “wretched,” or “defeated,” to designate *Kush*, while Punt is listed simultaneously but without an epithet<sup>433</sup>:



*hrp bi3w n pwnt špssw n t3-ntr m-<sup>c</sup>b inw n h3swt rsyt nw b3kw n kš hst g3wt nt t3-nhs*

“bringing the wonders of Punt and the riches of god's land, together with the tribute of the southern countries, and of the revenues of defeated *Kush*, and the tribute of the land of the *Nehesy*.”

A similar text in which a southern land is given the special designation *hsy* is the stele of Amenhotep III from his mortuary temple. It identifies *Kush* as the representative of the south in the Egyptian cosmography<sup>434</sup>:



*di.i hr ir rsy bi3y.i n.k di.i phr n.k wrw kš hst hr inw.sn nb hr psd.sn*

<sup>432</sup> Sethe, *Urkunden der 18. Dynastie* IV, 7.

<sup>433</sup> Naville, *The Temple of Deir el Bahari* III, plate 77.

<sup>434</sup> Petrie, *Six Temples at Thebes*, plate 12: lines 27-28.

“I turn my face to the south; I make a miracle for you: I cause the Great Ones of defeated *Kush* to surround you, under all their tribute upon their backs.”

This text is a notable one: Amun presents the king with each of the four directions of the earth along with their inhabitants, as representatives of the whole earth to signify his dominion over its entirety. Of the four lands included (*Kush*, *stt*, *Tjehnu*, and Punt) only the southern neighbor is given an epithet: *h̄sy*. This phenomenon will be explored below further.

### ***Common Culture: Language, Dress, and Physical Characteristics***

Egyptian written sources contain some descriptions of the Southerners’ culture that agree with their bright and intricate representation in Egyptian visual sources. Papyrus Anastasi IIIA, a single-sheet papyrus containing a list of luxury items and other trade goods from the south provides a vivid description of Southerners brought to Egypt and their adornments<sup>435</sup>:



*n̄hsyw n̄frw n̄ kš n-š3w*<sup>436</sup> *h̄bs bh3 iw.w tby m t<b>wt*<sup>437</sup> *h̄d t3y m sfry n3y.sn krmt r drwt*

“fine *Nehesyu* of *Kush* fit for giving a fan’s shelter. They are shod with white sandals and clad in fine linen(?), their bracelets on (their) hands.”

Papyrus Koller contains a similar description of a different southern ethnic group and their ornamentation, with similar language. Paser, an Egyptian official<sup>438</sup> penned a letter to an unnamed southerner, presumably a ruler, regarding the presentation of tribute to Egypt. He invited the southerner to imagine the scene<sup>439</sup>:

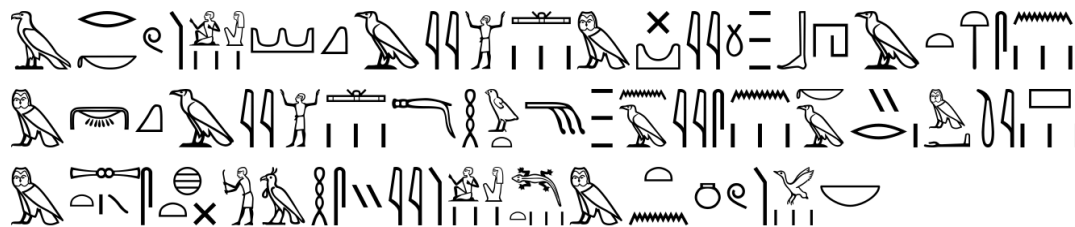
<sup>435</sup> From Papyrus Anastasi IIIA 6-7. Gardiner, *Late Egyptian Miscellanies*, 33: lines 8-10.

<sup>436</sup> Lesko, *A Dictionary of Late Egyptian II*, 108.

<sup>437</sup> The *b* is missing from the original text, but it was often dropped from the orthography: Lesko, *A Dictionary of Late Egyptian II*, 228.

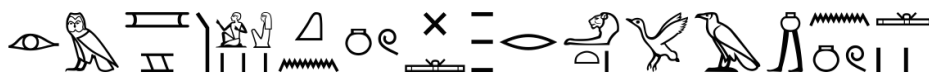
<sup>438</sup> Possibly a “King’s Son of Kush,” although that specific title is not given: Gardiner, *Late Egyptian Miscellanies*, 118: line 15. Also refer to: Gardiner, *Egyptian Hieratic Texts I*, 40: note 1.

<sup>439</sup> From Papyrus Koller 4, 5-7. Gardiner, *Late Egyptian Miscellanies*, 119: lines 14-16.



*trk*<sup>440</sup> *k3y m sdy bh3.sn m nbw k3y mhwt n3y.sn krmt m tst sht nh3yw š3 m tnw nb*  
 “tall *Terek* people in *sedjy*-garments,<sup>441</sup> their fans of gold, (wearing) long feathers,  
 their bracelets with woven knots, and many *Nehesyu* consisting of every and all.”

These ‘types’ of *Nehesyu* may have referred to the inhabitants of the different southern polities, such as the *Wawayu*, *Kashu*, and *Terek*<sup>442</sup> already mentioned. In addition, Paser also mentioned the inhabitants of *Irem*<sup>443</sup>:



*irmi*<sup>444</sup> *knw r-h3t p3 inw*  
 “many *Irem*-folk at the head of the tribute.”

These texts highlight two items of adornment that the Egyptians associated with the southern cultures: bracelets (*krmt*)<sup>445</sup> and fans (*bh3*). That they are mentioned among the accouterment of two separate southern ethnic groups (*Nehesyu* and *Terek*) may indicate the homogenous nature of the Egyptians’ perception of southern cultures and peoples. This conclusion is supported by the frequent appearance of numerous southern ethnic groups in Egyptian tribute scenes in tandem.

Despite the absence of a written language unique to the southern peoples until Meroitic,<sup>446</sup> their spoken language (or languages) were notably foreign to the Egyptians,

<sup>440</sup> Following Caminos’ transliteration: Ricardo A. Caminos, *Late-Egyptian Miscellanies* (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), 438 and note (4,5) on page 444.

<sup>441</sup> This ambiguous garment is not unique to the Southerners but appears in the same text worn by an Egyptian: Gardiner, *Late Egyptian Miscellanies*, 118: line 11. For other texts that mention this garment see: Gardiner, *Egyptian Hieratic Texts I*, 40: note 1.

<sup>442</sup> Säve-Söderbergh, *Ägypten und Nubien*, 157: note 4.

<sup>443</sup> Gardiner, *Late Egyptian Miscellanies*, 119: line 11.

<sup>444</sup> Following Caminos’ transliteration: Caminos, *Late-Egyptian Miscellanies*, 438 and note (4,3-4) on page 444.

<sup>445</sup> Inge Hofmann, Herbert Tomandl, and Michael Zach, “*k3rm.t* – Armband aus Elefantenhaar?” *Göttinger Miszellen* 74 (1984): 7-9.

<sup>446</sup> Susan K. Doll, “Texts and Writing in Ancient Nubia,” in *Ancient Nubia: African Kingdoms on the Nile* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2012), 154-166.

as is commented upon in the Sallier Papyrus. The letter details a scribe’s frustration with his stubborn student<sup>447</sup>:



*tw.k m-di.i m nḥsyw ʒ<sup>c</sup>.ti iw in.f m pʒ inw*

“You are in my employ as the jabbering *Nehesyu*, when he is brought with the tribute!”

This description of the sounds of the *Nehesyu* language uses the same word the Egyptians used in the Old Kingdom reference to the language of *Tjehnu*. The word ʒ<sup>c</sup> probably served as an amiable imitation of sounds and words unknown to the Egyptians, and its use confirms that the language of the *Nehesyu* was not familiar to the Egyptians.<sup>448</sup>

A medical papyrus in Berlin (B. Papyrus 3038) contains a method for determining if a woman will give birth that comments on a physical difference between the *Nehesyu* and the *Aamu*<sup>449</sup>:



*ky mʒʒ rdit rḥ.kwi ḥ<sup>c</sup> st m wmwnt nt dwʒt ir gm.k twt nw irt.st w<sup>c</sup> mi ʒmw kt ti mi nḥsy nn msi.s ir gm.<k> st m inm n w<sup>c</sup> iw.st r msi*

“Another observation causing that I know: when she stands in the reveal of a doorway - if you find the pupils of her eye (that) one is like an *Aamu*, and another is like a *Nehesy*, she will not give birth. If <you> find them having the appearance<sup>450</sup> of one,<sup>451</sup> she will give birth.”

<sup>447</sup> From Papyrus Sallier I 8,1. Gardiner, *Late Egyptian Miscellanies*, 85: lines 10-12.

<sup>448</sup> See note 77.

<sup>449</sup> Walter Wreszinski, *Der große medizinische Papyrus des Berliner Museums (Pap. Berl. 3038)* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1909), plate 23: lines 1-2.

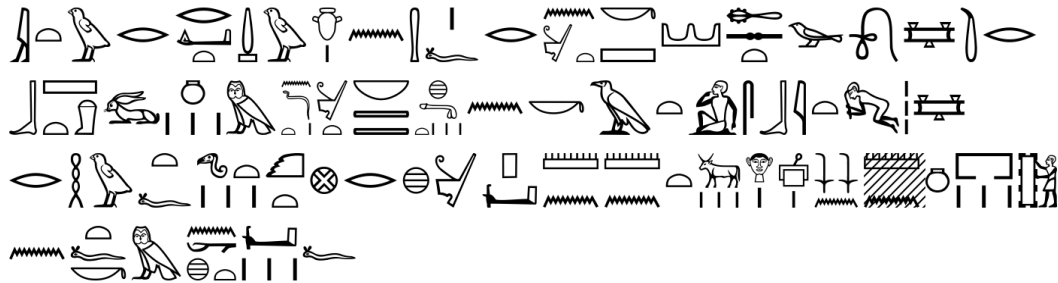
<sup>450</sup> While the hieratic clearly reads *inm*, “skin,” perhaps *inw*, “appearance,” “color,” or “character,” was meant. Lesko, *A Dictionary of Late Egyptian I*, 33.

<sup>451</sup> Or, “if you find them as the same color.”

While this papyrus does not specify the type of difference meant by this text between the eyes of the *Aamu* and the eyes of the *Nehesyu* (color, expression, shape, or size), it indicates that the Egyptians were so aware of the physical differences between the two ethnicities that the author did not need to specify how to identify that difference.

### ***Associations, Epithets, and Descriptions***

A common description of the Southerners in written sources is their propensity for *bštw*, “rebellion.”<sup>452</sup> The inscription of Thutmose II from Aswan contains a lengthy discussion of a rebellion in *Kush*. The text contains the announcement of the rebellion and the king’s response *en force*<sup>453</sup>:



*ii.tw r rdit wd3-ib n hm.fr ntt kš hst w3.ti r bštw wnw m ndt nt nb t3wy hmt.<w> n k3 sbit w3 r hwt.f rmt kmt r hnp mnmnt hry-s3 nn mnnww kd.n it.k m nhtw.f*

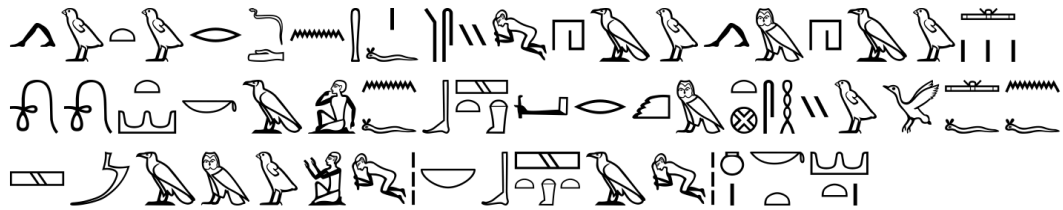
“One came in order to inform his Majesty that: defeated *Kush* are fallen into rebellion, those who are serfs of the lord of the Two Lands! <They> are plotting of the rebels’ plan, readying to strike the Egyptians, namely, stealing these cattle of the fortress which your father built out of his victories.”

Thutmose IV, the great-grandson of Thutmose II, left a similar inscription of a rebellion<sup>454</sup>:

<sup>452</sup> Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*, 85. For a discussion of *bštw*, translated alternatively as “rising up,” or “troublesome,” see: Patrik Lundh, *Actor and Event: Military Activity in Ancient Egyptian Narrative Texts from Tuthmosis II to Merneptah* (Uppsala: Akademistryck, 2002), 75.

<sup>453</sup> J. De Morgan and others, *Catalogue des Monuments et Inscriptions de L’Egypte Antiqu* (Vienna: Adolphe Holzhausen, 1894), 2-3.

<sup>454</sup> Helck, *Urkunden der 18. Dynastie*, 1545.



*iw.tw r dd n hm.f nhsy h3.w m-h3w w3w3t k3i.n.f bštw r kmt šhwy.f n.f  
šm3w nb bštyw nw kt h3st*

“One came to say to his Majesty: ‘The *Nehesy* is descending in the area of *Wawat*; he planned a rebellion against Egypt! He is assembling to himself all the foreigners and the rebels of another country.’”

Amenhotep III also recorded a rebellion in Kush<sup>455</sup>:



*iw.tw r dd n hm.f p3 hrw n kš hst k3.n.f bštw m ib.f*

“One came in order to say to his Majesty: ‘The fallen of defeated *Kush* has plotted rebellion in his heart.’”

Another such rebellion was recorded during the reign of Akhenaten.<sup>456</sup> These texts follow a formula:<sup>457</sup> a messenger makes an announcement to the king that the Southerners were actively planning harm against Egypt, or against the Egyptians themselves, and were assembling a force of “rebels.” While other foreign peoples were also called “rebels,”<sup>458</sup> the frequency of the “rebellions” in the south indicates a special relationship with the Egyptians, one that required continual intervention and management.

The autobiography of Ameny from his tomb at Beni Hassan contains the earliest application of *hsy*, “defeated,” to the Southerners.<sup>459</sup> What is notable about this text is

<sup>455</sup> De Morgan and others, *Catalogue des Monuments et Inscriptions de L’Egypte Antique*, 4. Helck, *Urkunden der 18. Dynastie*, 1666: lines 3-4.

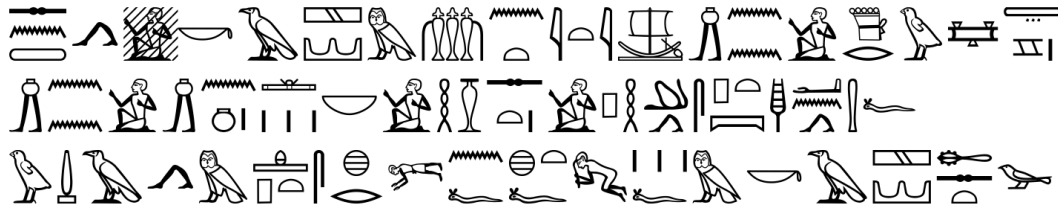
<sup>456</sup> Wolfgang Helck, “Ein ‘Feldzug’ unter Amenophis IV gegen Nubien,” *Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur* 8 (1980): 117-126.

<sup>457</sup> For the *iw.tw* formula, see” Anthony J. Spalinger, *Aspects of the Military Documents of the Ancient Egyptians* (London: Yale University Press, 1982), 1-33.

<sup>458</sup> Refer to page 37 for the *Sherden* and page 66 for the *Shasu*.

<sup>459</sup> Identified by Lorton as the earliest use of *hsy* in a historical text. Lorton, “The So-Called “Vile” Enemies of the King of Egypt (in the Middle Kingdom and Dyn. XVIII),” 66. Sethe, *Urkunden des Mittleren Reiches*, 14.

that *Kush* was not described as *hsy* until after the Egyptian king travelled south to “overthrow” them<sup>460</sup>:




*sni.[i] kš m hntyt in.n.i drw t3 in.n.i inw nb.i hst.i ph.s pt ḥ<sup>c</sup>.n ḥm.f*  
*wḏ3 m htp shr.n.f hfty.f m kš hst*

“[I] passed by *Kush* going southward; I reached the limits of the land. I brought away the tribute of my lord, and my praise it reached the sky. Then, his Majesty set out in contentment, (for) he had overthrown his enemies in defeated *Kush*.”

The Southerners were not the only foreigners to which this term (*hsy*) was applied; it appears in historical and political texts more than any other term concerned with foreignness.<sup>461</sup> Lorton concluded that the term emphasizes the “defeat” of the ethnic group, not the intrinsic “wretchedness.” Its frequent application to the Southerners stemmed from the absolute necessity for them to be, and to *remain* defeated, not necessarily because the threat they represented was greater than that of other foreign groups, but because their threat was closer to home.

The Stele of Senusret III established at Uronarti includes the most aggressively berating example of Egyptian perceptions of Southerners. In the text the king first establishes his authority south of Egypt<sup>462</sup>:



*iw ir.n.i Bš hnty itw.i*, “I have made the border going southward (more than) my forefathers.” Then he addresses the character of the *Nehesy*<sup>463</sup>:

<sup>460</sup> Percy E. Newberry, *Beni Hasan I* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co, 1893), plate 8. Sethe, *Urkunden des Mittleren Reiches*, 14.

<sup>461</sup> Lorton devoted an article to exploring the use and accuracy of the translations of this term. Lorton, “The So-Called “Vile” Enemies of the King of Egypt (in the Middle Kingdom and Dyn. XVIII),” 68.

<sup>462</sup> Jozef M. A. Janssen, “The Stela (Khartoum Museum No. 3) from Uronarti,” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 12 (1953): 52: line 2.

<sup>463</sup> Janssen, “The Stela (Khartoum Museum No. 3) from Uronarti,” 52: line 9 -53: 11.





3d.t<w> r.f dd.f s3.f hm-ht.<tw> w3.f r 3d n rmt̄ is nt šfyt st ḥwrrw pw sdw ibw  
iw m3 st hm.i nn iwms<sup>464</sup>

“When one is aggressive against him, he gives his back; when <one> retreats, he falls into aggression. They are not people of respect; they are wretches, broken of heart. My Majesty has seen them - it is no misstatement.”

A letter by the king to Amenhotep II’s Viceroy of Nubia (or “King’s son of *Kush*”<sup>465</sup>)

Usersatet warned him to beware of the *Nehesyu* and their magic while he was with them<sup>466</sup>:



ky dd n p3 s3-nsw m n<sup>c</sup>it n nhsy m-kf3t s3w.tw r n3y.sn rmt̄ ḥn<sup>c</sup> n3y.sn ḥk3w ...  
m ir sdm n mdwt.sn m d<sup>c</sup>r wpwt.sn

“Another saying for the king’s son: do not be lenient to the *Nehesy*.<sup>467</sup> Indeed, one should take care against their people and their magicians... Do not listen to their words. Do not search out their messages!”

This text indicates that distrust and caution were recommended for Egyptian officials for dealing with the southern neighbors, and gives at least one cause: their use of magic.

<sup>464</sup> The *m* before *iwms* should have been an *3* – making *3ims*, a variant spelling of *iwms*. Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*, 13.

<sup>465</sup> George E. Reisner, “The Viceroys of Ethiopia,” *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 6 (1920): 28-55.

<sup>466</sup> Helck, *Urkunden der 18. Dynastie*, 1344.

<sup>467</sup> Another inscription with a similarly aloof practice of interacting with the Southerners is the Middle Kingdom graffito of Khuisobek, who said he performed his duties: “without placing a Nubian in my heart.” Josef W. Wegner and Josef Wegner, “Regional Control in Middle Kingdom Lower Nubia: The Function and History of the Site of Areika,” *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 32 (1995): 150.

Historical texts are not the only ones to contain insight into the Egyptians' perceptions of the Southerners. A figurative comparison of southern ethnic groups with animals from a historical inscription has already been included in Chapter 4: "I captured lions and I took crocodiles. I seized the *Wawayu*; and I took the *Medjay*."<sup>468</sup> The 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty Instruction of Ani, not to be confused with the well-known Book of the Dead of Ani, contains instructions to a scribe. In one section, the author names several animals, including a dog, a monkey and a goose, and describes how they should normally behave, followed by a reference to the *Nehesyu*<sup>469</sup>:



*twtw <hr> sb3 nh3syw mdwt rmt n kmt h3r h3sty nbt mitt i dd{i}*<sup>470</sup> *iry.i m i3wt nbt sdm.k rh.k p3 iri.w*

"One teaches the *Nehesyu* the language of the people of Egypt, the *Kharu* and any foreign land likewise. Say: 'I will act as all the animals.' You should listen and you should learn what they do."

In another letter to a wayward student the author makes a similar allegory of the south<sup>471</sup>:



*p3 kry hr sdm mdwt in.tw.f hr kš*

"The ape understands speech, (yet) he is brought from *Kush*."

Within academic study, these texts are usually presented as examples of the foreigner *topos*<sup>472</sup> - the way in which all foreigners, as outsiders, were pejoratively portrayed both



<sup>468</sup> Refer to page 74 for text.

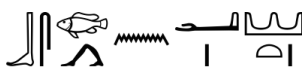

<sup>469</sup> Papyrus of Ani 10, 5-7, from P. Cairo CG 58042 (formerly P. Boulaq 4). Joachim Friedrich Quack, *Die Lehren des Ani: Ein neuägyptischer Weisheitstext in seinem kulturellen Umfeld* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994), 335.

<sup>470</sup> Refer to the variant text in P. Louvre E 30144 (formerly P. Guimet 16959) in which this seated man is absent. Quack, *Die Lehren des Ani: Ein neuägyptischer Weisheitstext in seinem kulturellen Umfeld*, 335. Volten comments that this error for *dd* occurs twice in this papyrus: Aksel Volten, *Studien zum Weisheitsbuch des Anii* (Copenhagen: Levin & Munksgaard, 1937), 29, 160.

<sup>471</sup> From the Bologna Papyrus 1094. Gardiner, *Late Egyptian Miscellanies*, 3: lines 15-16.

visually (as bound captives or subjugated enemies) and textually (as ‘wretched’ or ‘rebels’). On the contrary, the purpose of these letters was not the degradation of the Southerners. They create an arena in which the innate *differences* and *functions* of the Southerners and the Egyptians could be explored allegorically. The moral for the students was that all people, like animals, are prescribed actions and behavior according to their identity (an ape, an animal foreign to Egypt, was competent in its functions even when it was removed from its natural environment), and not that the Southerners were comparable to apes. These animals, and foreigners, were used as positive examples of beings fulfilling their purpose, as the disobedient student was not.

The autobiography of Ahmose, son of Abana, contains other descriptions of the Southerners. The *Setyu* are called  *hrw* “fallen,”<sup>473</sup> and  *styw pf hsy*, “the defeated *Setyu*.”<sup>474</sup> Their behavior is described as

 *bsi n ʿ h3st*, an “intrusion<sup>475</sup> to the desert region.”<sup>476</sup> Also during the reign of Thutmose I, the Southerners are called<sup>477</sup>:  *nbdw-ḳd* on the Tombos Stele - a *nfr-ḥr* construction translating as “those of bad character,”<sup>478</sup> although this epithet was not exclusively applied to the Southerners.<sup>479</sup>

### Summary

The Egyptians always had a clear awareness of their southern neighbors – the primary and secondary ethnonyms and the toponyms appear in written records early on in Egyptian chronology and maintain much consistency throughout. The south was associated with the wind. Southerners were often discussed as “rebels” engaging in

<sup>472</sup> As in: Smith, *Wretched Kush*, 27.

<sup>473</sup> Sethe, *Urkunden der 18. Dynastie* IV, 8.

<sup>474</sup> Sethe, *Urkunden der 18. Dynastie* IV, 9.

<sup>475</sup> *bsi* is generally used to describe a flow of water: Erman and Grapow, *Wörterbuch der Aegyptischen Sprache* I, 474.

<sup>476</sup> Sethe, *Urkunden der 18. Dynastie* IV, 8.

<sup>477</sup> Lepsius, *Denkmäler aus Aegypten und Aethiopien* III, plate 5a.

<sup>478</sup> Erroneously translated by Breasted as “curly-haired”: Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt* II, 30. See brief discussion in: Wilhelm Hölscher, *Libyer und Ägypter* (Glückstadt: Augustin, 1937), 34. Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian*, 130.

<sup>479</sup> Also see its application to foreign rulers in general: Lepsius, *Denkmäler aus Aegypten und Aethiopien* III, plate 61.

“rebellion” against Egypt. The word *h<sub>2</sub>sy* was applied to Southerners more frequently than other foreign groups because their geographic proximity to Egypt made it essential that they remain “defeated.” Three main features that identify an ethnic group can be found in Egyptian texts concerning Egypt’s southern neighbors:

1. The use of multiple, common proper names (in many cases topo-ethnonyms), and ‘pseudo-ethnonyms’ for referring to individual ethnic groups (*Nehesyu, Setyu, Wawayu, Kashu, Terek, Irimi*)
2. The awareness of cultural elements, including items of personal adornment (*Nehesyu* and *Terek*); a distinct physical characteristic (*Nehesyu*); and a language foreign to the Egyptians (*Nehesyu*)
3. The awareness of a homeland for each ethnic group (*Wawat, Irem, Kush, Yam, Irtjet, Satju*)

## Concluding Remarks

This work highlights the ethnonyms used by the Egyptians for their neighbors, as well as their developed ‘vocabulary of foreignness.’ Because the origins of these ethnonyms remain uncertain, they should be categorized as exonyms, a name applied to the ethnic group by an outsider.<sup>480</sup> The exonym may or may not reflect the name that the ethnic group uses reflexively, its endonym,<sup>481</sup> but the relationships between Egyptian exonyms and their neighbors’ endonyms unfortunately cannot be determined with any degree of precision. The Egyptian exonyms can be divided into two types: primary ethnonyms and secondary ethnonyms.<sup>482</sup> In the Egyptian language, primary ethnonyms were occasionally formed with the *nisbe*, plural ending *-tyw* to the Egyptian name for the homeland.<sup>483</sup> Secondary ethnonyms<sup>484</sup> were often formed in one of two ways: by referencing the group’s living environment<sup>485</sup> or an ethnic characteristic.<sup>486</sup> For the purpose of this thesis the determination of secondary ethnonyms was based on several factors, including their symbiotic use with other ethnonyms, and the etymology of their root words. Primary ethnonyms received the most frequent use, although they could also be accompanied by a secondary ethnonym, perhaps for clarification or perhaps as a cultural comment. While in some cases it is impossible to ascertain whom exactly the Egyptians were discussing, it appears that they could use more than one primary or secondary ethnonym for the same ethnic group.

This thesis presented a sampling of Egyptian texts that provide insight into the ancient Egyptians’ perceptions of their neighbors. These examples were selected based

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<sup>480</sup> Note that endonyms and ethnonyms can also be used to refer to external and internal place names and not only to ethnic names. For an explanation of these types of ethnonyms in modern contexts, see the following: Drago Kladnik, “Semantic Demarcation of the Concepts of Endonym and Exonym,” *Acta Geographica Slovenica* 49 (2009): 396; Paul Woodman, “The Nature of the Endonym,” Typescript for the 25<sup>th</sup> UNGEGN session (Nairobi: 2009); Bright, “What IS a Name? Reflections on Onomastics,” 671.

<sup>481</sup> Proshan, “‘We are all Kmhmu, Just the Same’: Ethnonyms, Ethnic identities, and Ethnic groups,” 91.

<sup>482</sup> Refer to the Appendix.

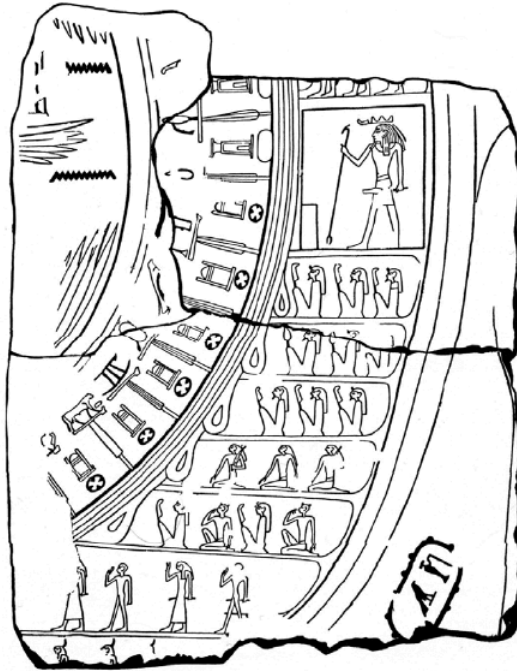
<sup>483</sup> For example, *sti* becomes *sttyw*, *pwnt* becomes *pwntyw*, and *ḥ-sty* becomes *styw*.

<sup>484</sup> Or, what Espinel calls “pseudoetnóminos.” The present author does not make use of this term because the English “pseudo” relays a sense of fakery and phoniness. Espinel, *Etnicidad y territorio en el Egipto del Reino Antiguo*, 118. The present work does not agree, however, with all of his ethnonym placements within the categories.

<sup>485</sup> For example, *ḥryw-šꜣy*.

<sup>486</sup> For example, *iwntyw* and possibly *mntw*.

upon their commonalities, reoccurring themes and insightful comments about Egypt's neighboring peoples. This work attempted to present the general pictures of the Egyptians' ethnic neighbors as perceived by the Egyptian population. For this purpose, the texts included came from a variety of genres, including historical and biographical, religious, and literary.



**Figure 5: Fragment of a map of the cosmos - Image from Othmar Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1997), 40.**

At times in royal literature, the Egyptians selected ethnic groups associated with the four cardinal directions to represent the elements of the entire world. Upon inspection, there exist clear, permanent associations for some ethnic groups and an overlap of associated cardinal-point orientations for others. The 'Libyan' peoples were decisively linked with the west, and the 'Nubian' peoples were decisively linked with the south. Among the Northerners and Easterners, however, there are shifting associations over time: the people of *Keftiu* as western and northern, the *Aamu* and *Shasu* as eastern and northern, and the Puntites and *Medjay* as eastern and southern. While reaching any of Egypt's neighbors required crossing expansive deserts, seas, or mountains, those to the north and east (island inhabitants, *Aamu*, Puntites) were located the furthest away. There seems to be a direct correlation between the absoluteness of the ethnic group's cardinal

orientation and their geographical proximity to Egypt. The Egyptians exhibited little confusion over the orientation of the Westerners and Southerners because of their immediate presence on the Egyptian western and southern borders. However, in the cases of the Northerners and Easterners, they reconsidered their orientations possibly to account for their locations at ordinal rather than cardinal directions or to make room for newly prominent ethnic groups in the region. A number of further remarks can be made regarding each orientation, and the ethnic groups associated with them.

The Egyptian cosmography naturally associated elements of the world with the cardinal directions, and these associations carried over into their discussions of the peoples who inhabited those regions. The Egyptians associated the Westerners with elements of the western cosmography: the sky and the stars.<sup>487</sup> Befitting Egypt's northern geographical border at the Mediterranean Sea, the north in the Egyptian cosmography was associated with the sea, and it follows that many of the ethnic groups included in this section were also associated with the sea. The east was firstly associated with the sunrise, although the Egyptians' easterly journeys also included their awareness of the Red Sea. The southern boundary was associated with the wind.<sup>488</sup>

The most recurring names for the Westerners were: *Tjehnu*, *Tjemeh*, *Meshwesh* and *Rebu*, although others also existed. The four major ethnic groups that inhabited the west were identified by topo-ethnonyms identical to the Egyptian names for their homelands (*Tjemeh*, *Tjehnu*, *Meshwesh*, *Rebu*). The Egyptians considered these ethnic groups as distinct entities with separate ethnonyms, homelands, and cultural elements that distinguished them from each other. Of the western peoples, the *Rebu* were the most maliciously described in Egyptian texts. They were seen as the instigators of a mass immigration from the west during the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Dynasty that involved a number of western ethnic groups.<sup>489</sup> This unwanted intrusion into the Egyptian homeland caused the Westerners to be characterized as ruinous,<sup>490</sup> plotters of evil,<sup>491</sup> and violators of the Egyptian boundaries.<sup>492</sup>

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<sup>487</sup> Refer to excerpts from the Pyramid Texts on page 27.

<sup>488</sup> Refer to the inscription of Seti I from Qasr Ibrim on page 82.

<sup>489</sup> Refer to "mobilizing" armies on page 31 and causing "confusion" in footnote 132.

<sup>490</sup> Refer to page 30.

<sup>491</sup> Refer to page 31.

<sup>492</sup> Refer to page 30.

The people of *Keftiu*, the *Keftiuu*, were associated with the west<sup>493</sup> and the northern sea.<sup>494</sup> The ethnicities collectively dubbed ‘The Sea Peoples’ in Egyptology are described as being from the islands or the sea at Egypt’s northern border (Table 2). They collaborated together to form a “confederation” of rebels against Egypt several times during the 20<sup>th</sup> Dynasty.<sup>495</sup> Egyptian texts about northerners use a number of primary and secondary ethnonyms, and often in combination. The *Aamu* were doubly associated with the north and the east, and, understandably, with the desert and desert herds.<sup>496</sup> They inhabited a number of different regions, none of which were directly associated to their Egyptian exonym. Their environment was described as a place of hardship.<sup>497</sup> In terms of their character, Egyptian texts contain much judgment of the *Aamu*: they are described as cowardly and aggressive,<sup>498</sup> and as thieves.<sup>499</sup> The *Aamu* Delta rulers are described as ruinous of Egypt<sup>500</sup> and servants of Seth.<sup>501</sup>

The *Shasu* only appear in texts during the New Kingdom and later periods. They were primarily associated with the east during the Late New Kingdom,<sup>502</sup> although they were also affiliated with the northerners at the Battle of Qadesh.<sup>503</sup> The Egyptian awareness of the *Shasu* included their practice of dividing their people into family units consisting of both male and female members<sup>504</sup> called *mhwt*. The leaders of these family units were known as *ꜥ3w*, “magnates.”<sup>505</sup> Like the *Aamu*, the *Shasu* homelands were also described as a place of hardship,<sup>506</sup> and they contained a topographical feature, the *tswt*, “hills” that were frequently mentioned.<sup>507</sup>

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<sup>493</sup> Refer to the Hymn of Victory on page 41.

<sup>494</sup> Refer to the inscription from the Book of the Day on page 41.

<sup>495</sup> Refer to the inscriptions from Medinet Habu on page 37.

<sup>496</sup> Refer to the Prophecy of Neferty on page 48.

<sup>497</sup> Refer to the Instruction of Merikare on pages 49.

<sup>498</sup> Refer to the Instruction of Merikare on page 50.

<sup>499</sup> Refer to the Instruction of Merikare and the Prophecy of Neferty on page 50.

<sup>500</sup> Refer to the Kamose Inscription on page 53 and Hatshepsut’s Obelisk on page 54.

<sup>501</sup> Refer to the Narrative of Apophis and Seqenenre on page 54.

<sup>502</sup> Refer to page 61.

<sup>503</sup> Refer to the Battle of Qadesh inscription on page 58.

<sup>504</sup> Refer to the determinative of *mhwt* on page 58.

<sup>505</sup> Refer to the Battle of Qadesh inscription in which the *Shasu* spies use this term about their own leaders on page 58.

<sup>506</sup> Refer to the Papyrus Anastasi I on page 63.

<sup>507</sup> Refer to the Ramesside inscription from Tell el-Retaba on page 63.



David O'Connor and Stephen Quirke rightly suggested that some foreign peoples “were more alien than others.”<sup>508</sup> This is briefly exemplified by the people of *Alasiya* in the Report of Wenamun, but perfectly defines the Egyptians’ positive portrayal of the Puntites. The Puntites were spared negative comments or epithets in Egyptian written sources entirely. With no political tension between their rulers, and no infringement on Egyptian resources through immigration, the Puntites presented little necessity for interaction with the Egyptians, aside from their faithful procurement of commodities for them, and this may explain their absence in Egyptian texts. Punt, as the source of incense, also provides the exception to the rule that every foreign land necessitated an association with Seth or godlessness.<sup>509</sup> The Puntites and the *Medjay* were both closely associated with Egypt’s eastern borders and with the Southerners. During the Old Kingdom, the Egyptians considered the inhabitants of *Medja* similar enough to the inhabitants of the southern polities, to warrant calling them *Nehesyu* also.<sup>510</sup> The Egyptians did not develop an ethnonym for the *Medjay* that was reflective of their homeland, *Medja*, until the Middle Kingdom. This was reflected in their continued association with southern peoples during the Middle Kingdom and Second Intermediate Period.<sup>511</sup>

Egyptians also used a number of primary and secondary ethnyms for the Southerners, sometimes in conjunction, although *Nehesyu* was overwhelmingly the most common. In texts that mention numerous peoples (the best example is the stele of Amenhotep III), the south is the only one to be singled out with a negative epithet.<sup>512</sup> They are presented as untrustworthy<sup>513</sup> and aggressive.<sup>514</sup> The Southerners are often described rebelling against Egypt, and subsequently being repeatedly defeated. Southern regions, but especially *Kush*, were consistently called “defeated”<sup>515</sup> after the construction of the Egyptian forts along the southern border, but not before. This was not because the

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<sup>508</sup> David O'Connor and Stephen Quirke, “Introduction: Mapping the Unknown in Ancient Egypt,” in *Mysterious Lands* (London: University College London Press, 2003), 17.

<sup>509</sup> Refer to the stele of Mentuhotep IV on page 69.

<sup>510</sup> Refer to the autobiography of Weni on page 73.

<sup>511</sup> Refer to the inscription of Sobeknakht on page 75 and the execration figure on page 74.

<sup>512</sup> Refer to the stele of Amenhotep III on page 84 and the inscription from Deir el-Bahari on page 84.

<sup>513</sup> Refer to the letter of Amenhotep II on page 91.

<sup>514</sup> Refer to the inscription of Senusret III on page 91.

<sup>515</sup> Following Lorton’s preferred translation of *ḥsy*. Lorton, “The So-Called ‘Vile’ Enemies of the King of Egypt.”

*Nehesy* posed a greater threat than other foreign peoples, but because the Southerners lived in such close proximity to Egypt. The cataracts were the only things obstructing passage down the Nile into Egypt. The forts and the epithet *hsy* performed a similar and complimentary function: it was not only important for the Southerners to *be* defeated, but to *stay* defeated.

The above considerations of Egyptian perceptions of individual ethnic groups lead to additional conclusions about foreigners in ancient Egypt and their conception of foreignness in general. There is a strong sense that for each region of the world there is a designated inhabitant: *kmt*, the “Black Land” was the homeland of the Egyptians, the islands were the homes of *Tjeker*, *Pelest*, and *Danuna*, and *Shasu*-land was for the *Shasu*, etc. This understanding of the cosmos led to the belief that the worst offense was when foreigners, *en masse*, approached the Egyptian border and tried to enter. Foreigners who succeeded in entering Egypt in large migrations were described as “ruining” it.<sup>516</sup> In some cases, an even greater travesty could occur: foreigners representing a number of different ethnic groups formed a united enemy intent on entering Egypt together. In these instances, the foreign peoples were described as making “plans” for Egypt.<sup>517</sup> These intruders went against *mꜣꜥt* and the ordered world,<sup>518</sup> and were condemned by the State, and repelled by the king. This insistence that foreigners belonged outside of Egypt should not be interpreted as a sign of xenophobia in the Egyptian culture, or as the “inferiorization”<sup>519</sup> of foreigners. This prevalent assessment of the way Egyptians thought of foreignness no doubt owes much to the explicit ‘smiting’ scenes predominantly displayed on temples and stelae, and the ‘bound captive’ motif frequently found in tombs, on thrones and footstools, boundary stelae, and also on temple exteriors. The negative language prevalent in Egyptian texts concerning foreigners, including *hsy* and *hrw*, performed the same symbolic function that the foreigners on royal floor tiles and shoe

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<sup>516</sup> Refer to the Hyksos on page 54 and the Westerners on page 30.

<sup>517</sup> Refer to the Westerners on page 30, and the ‘Sea Peoples’ on page 37.

<sup>518</sup> The ordered world is exemplified by a ‘Map of the Cosmos’ on the lid of the 30<sup>th</sup> Dynasty sarcophagus of Wereshnefer (MMA 14.7.1a) and a fragmentary map in the Yale Map Collection (61). Gerry Dee Scott III, *Ancient Egyptian Art at Yale* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), 155.

<sup>519</sup> This term was used to categorize the perception of foreigners in the Egyptian mindset alongside the term “dehumanizing” in: Moers, “The World and the Geography of Otherness in Pharaonic Egypt,” 176-179.

soles did: to ensure their eternal subjugation.<sup>520</sup> Although there is no evidence that a ‘hierarchy’ of races existed in the collective Egyptian mind,<sup>521</sup> there was the understanding that a place existed for every group of people, and every group was meant to be in its place. The Egyptians’ ‘vocabulary of foreignness’ should be interpreted as the recognition that foreign peoples were undeniably *different*, and being different necessitated their own, unique regions.

	<b>Lion</b>	<b>Crocodile</b>	<b>Bird</b>	<b>Dog</b>	<b>Fish</b>	<b>Ape</b>	<b>Desert Herds</b>
Westerners			<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>			
Northerners	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>
Easterners		<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>			
Southerners	<b>X</b>					<b>X</b>	

**Table 4: Sample of Animals associated with Foreigners**

Animals were often used as allegories for certain aspects of foreignness in Egyptian texts. The modern instinct is to assume that these comparisons were of derogatory functions by nature, although this was certainly not the case. The Egyptian king was often compared to animals in military records and within his titles, and indeed, many of those same animals were applied to foreigners.<sup>522</sup> In the Egyptian worldview the associated animal itself did not necessitate a pejorative intent in the same way that calling someone an “ape” or an “ass” would in many modern societies; instead they functioned as a framework for comparative behavior. The dog represented obedience, subservience, and submission.<sup>523</sup> Comparisons to fish, locusts, mice, or flocks of birds, evoked imagery of easily caught, and therefore easily defeated, masses.<sup>524</sup> Lions and crocodiles, both used as symbols of the Egyptian king,<sup>525</sup> represented power, dominance, and strength.

<sup>520</sup> Stuart Tyson Smith, “Ethnicity and Culture,” in *The Egyptian World* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 223-224. Leahy, “Ethnic Diversity in Ancient Egypt,” 228.

<sup>521</sup> This is a relatively modern philosophy that has unfortunately been transposed into our understanding of ancient Egyptian perceptions of their ethnic neighbors.

<sup>522</sup> Hsu, “Figurative Expressions Referring to Animals,” 3-12.

<sup>523</sup> Galán, “What is he, the dog?” 179.

<sup>524</sup> Teeter, “Animals in Egyptian Literature,” 268.

<sup>525</sup> Hsu, “Figurative Expressions Referring to Animals in Royal Inscriptions of the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty,” 9-10. Teeter, “Animals in Egyptian Literature,” 267.

Egyptian discourse about Egypt's ethnic neighbors reveals a number of possible titles for the ruling class of neighboring peoples including *ḥkꜣ* or *ḥkꜣ-ḥꜣswt*, *wr*, and *ꜣ*. Before the New Kingdom, *ḥkꜣ* was the primary title of foreign rulers in Egyptian texts, while *wr* was reserved for Egyptian vassals, landowners and nobles.<sup>526</sup> Reflecting this, there are extant examples for the *Aamu* and *Nehesy* rulers being referred to by either title.<sup>527</sup> The *Shasu*, however, did not seem to have a complex political structure and their leaders were only called *ꜣ*, “magnate.” This is attributed to the functions of *ḥkꜣ* and *wr*: the title *ḥkꜣ* was used to refer to leadership over a geographical area rather than a group of people,<sup>528</sup> while *wr* evolved from an indication of high social rank indebted to the Egyptian king.<sup>529</sup> This discussion of a hierarchy of political titles can be supplemented by the fact that Ramesses II calls himself *ḥkꜣ* while he calls Hattusili, the Hittite king, *wr*.<sup>530</sup>

The purpose of this thesis was to examine the ways in which the ancient Egyptians wrote about their ethnic neighbors. Ironically, the task of presenting these sources has raised a number of issues concerning the ways in which foreigners appear in Egyptological discourse. One aspect of this is the common understanding that in the Egyptian worldview: [+ AUSLÄNDER] = [- *rmꜥ*].<sup>531</sup> This prevalent idea prompted Anthony Leahy to write<sup>532</sup>:

Egyptian vocabulary made a similarly sharp distinction between the inhabitants of the Nile Valley, who were *rmꜥ* (*remetj*), or “people,” and the rest of humankind, who were not.

Although it is commonly believed in Egyptology<sup>533</sup> that foreigners were never referred to as *rmꜥ*, this is not the case. Most uses of *rmꜥ* refer to the inhabitants of Egypt,

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<sup>526</sup> Lorton, *The Juridical Terminology*, 61.

<sup>527</sup> For the *Aamu* refer to the narrative of Apophis and Seqenenre on page 54, for the *Nehesy* refer to the stele of Amenhotep III on page 84.

<sup>528</sup> Lorton, *The Juridical Terminology*, 23.

<sup>529</sup> Lorton, *The Juridical Terminology*, 62-63.

<sup>530</sup> Liverani, *International Relations in the Ancient Near East, 1600-1100 BC.*, 39. For further examples of the Egyptians calling foreign kings *wr*, see: Lorton, *The Juridical Terminology*, 62.

<sup>531</sup> Loprieno, *Topos und Mimesis*, 22.

<sup>532</sup> Leahy, “Ethnic Diversity in Ancient Egypt,” 226.

<sup>533</sup> Gardiner stated this attitude similarly: “...the Egyptians were, they themselves considered, the only true ‘men’, the only people really entitled to bear the name *rōme*. Normally she was contemptuous of her nearest neighbors, to whose chieftains she invariably applied the epithet ‘vile.’” Alan H. Gardiner, *Egypt of the Pharaohs: An Introduction* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), 37.

and may have even been their self-defining ethnonym,<sup>534</sup> but the word more broadly meant “humankind.”<sup>535</sup> It functioned “as the semantic plural of the singular *s*”<sup>536</sup> and as the plural of *rm̄t*, “man,”<sup>537</sup> but included the seated woman determinative (Gardiner Sign-List B 1) to indicate the general populace.<sup>538</sup> The distinction between *rm̄t* and *h3styw* is not as black and white as Leahy asserts; the word *rm̄t* was also used to refer to foreigners. Several examples were included in this thesis: twice *rm̄t* referred to the *Nehesyw*,<sup>539</sup> once to the *Shasu*,<sup>540</sup> and twice to the inhabitants of *Alasiya*.<sup>541</sup> Another example is found in Thutmose III’s stele at Gebel Barkal when the king boasts of capturing<sup>542</sup>: *rm̄t.sn nbt in m skrw-ḥnh*, “all their people (of Naharen), brought as living prisoners.” The Egyptians acknowledged that the foreign peoples surrounding Egypt were people, they recognized that they were people of a very different sort. These foreign neighbors were simultaneously *rm̄t*, “people,” but not *rm̄t*, “Egyptians.”

The conceptualization of Egypt’s foreigners as only three types (Fig. 3) glosses over the numerous ethnic divisions that exist in textual records. While the ancient Egyptians certainly conceptualized humankind as composed of four ‘races,’ they also acknowledged that ethnic differences among those four races existed. Greater care should be taken in the translation of some of the ethnonyms, such as *iwntyw* as “troglydytes”<sup>543</sup> or “barbarians,”<sup>544</sup> or a great number of the northern and eastern ethnonyms that are

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<sup>534</sup> In some cultures the generic word for “people” is the same word used for their reflexive ethnonym. This may have been the case for the Egyptians, creating a dualistic meaning of the word *rm̄t*. For a discussion of the phenomenon in a modern context, see: Proschan, “We are all Kmhmu, Just the Same’: Ethnonyms, Ethnic Identities and Ethnic Groups.”

<sup>535</sup> Espinel, *Etnicidad y territorio en el Egipto del Reino Antiguo*, 107-109.

<sup>536</sup> Denise M. Doxey, *Egyptian Non-Royal Epithets in the Middle Kingdom: A Social and Historical Analysis* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 191.

<sup>537</sup> Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar*, 77.

<sup>538</sup> Fischer takes the usual inclusion of the seated woman determinative (Gardiner Sign-list B 1) in the orthography of the word *rm̄t* as a sign of the “good opinion of women.” Henry George Fischer, “Women in the Old Kingdom and the Heracleopolitan Period,” in *Women’s Earliest Records: From Ancient Egypt and Western Asia* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 24.

<sup>539</sup> Refer to both texts on page 91.

<sup>540</sup> Refer to the Great Harris Papyrus on page 65.

<sup>541</sup> Refer to the Report of Wenamun on page 39.

<sup>542</sup> De Buck, *Egyptian Readingbook I*, 57: line 13.

<sup>543</sup> For comments on this translation see: W. F. Albright, “Notes on Egypto-Semitic Etymology. III,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 47 (1927): 211: note 13.

<sup>544</sup> For example, used in: Margaret R. Bunson, *Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt: Revised Edition* (New York: Facts on File, 2002), 185.

homogenously translated as “Bedouin.”<sup>545</sup> Similar care should be taken in the use of homogenous terms like ‘Libyan,’<sup>546</sup> and ‘Nubian.’<sup>547</sup> Although most of the reflexive ethnonyms of Egypt’s neighbors remain unknown, their Egyptian exonyms are well documented. Unfortunately, these ethnonyms have been replaced in Egyptological discourse, no doubt for convenience, by the all-encompassing terms ‘Libyan,’<sup>548</sup> ‘Nubian,’ and ‘Asiatic.’ Although convenient, these ‘umbrella terms’ are misleading and destructive to the ethnic uniqueness represented by individual ethnonyms.<sup>549</sup> The evidence for distinctions within these large, homogenous labels for the foreigners is ignored when these terms are used. In these instances, translation is at its best a loss, and at its worst a lie. If scholars continue to think of Egypt’s neighbors in this restricted manner, they will come to believe that the Egyptians were also not aware of the subtle distinctions between their foreign neighbors, a fact unsupported by the Egyptians’ use of a plethora of ethnonyms and descriptors. Indeed, acknowledging the fluid and nuanced identities of people groups, whether those of self-identification or of external observation, is at the very heart of conceptualizing ethnicity.


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<sup>545</sup> Including *ḥryw-šꜥy*, *nmiw-šꜥy*, *mntw*, and *Shasu*. See Appendix.

<sup>546</sup> As in the recent conference title: G. P. F. Broekman, R. J. Demaree, and Olaf E. Kaper, *The Libyan Period in Egypt: Historical and Cultural Studies into the 21<sup>st</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> Dynasties: Proceedings of a Conference at Leiden University, 25-27 October 2007* (Leiden: Peeters, 2009).

<sup>547</sup> As in the publication title: Morkot, *The Black Pharaohs: Egypt’s Nubian Rulers*.

<sup>548</sup> According to Gardiner, the name ‘Libyan’ “is both a misnomer and an anachronism, since the

important tribe of the  Libu is first heard in the reign of Merneptah....” Gardiner, *Egypt of the Pharaohs: An Introduction*, 35.

<sup>549</sup> In the same way that referring to all indigenous North American tribes as “Indian” refuses them the acknowledgement of their unique ethnicities.

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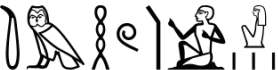


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## Appendix: Sample of ethnonyms in ancient Egyptian written sources

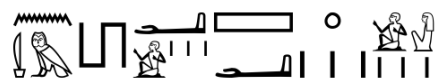
This appendix is not comprehensive of all ethnonyms found in Egyptian sources, nor does it illustrate the vast orthographic variations that existed for each ethnonym. It is intended to present some common ethnonyms, which were discussed in this thesis according to their orientation, for reference and to provide an idea of the number of distinct ethnonyms found in Egyptian texts. The ethnonyms are listed along with their common English translation(s) for clarity.

### Western ethnonyms

Hieroglyphs	Translations	Text	Status
	<i>Tjehnu</i> / Libyans	Story of Sinuhe	Primary
	<i>Tjemeh</i> / Libyans	Prophecy of Neferty	Primary
	<i>Meshwesh</i> / Libyans	Medinet Habu	Primary
	<i>Rebu</i> / Libyans	Merneptah's Athribis Stele	Primary

### Northern ethnonyms

Hieroglyphs	Translations	Text	Status
	<i>Aamu</i> / Asiatics	Great Speos Artemidos Inscription	Primary
	<i>Setyu</i> / Asiatics	Stele of Ramesses II	Primary
	<i>Montiu</i> / Asiatics / Bedouin	Stele of Sobek-khu	Secondary
	<i>hryw-s'cy</i> / Sandfarers/ Bedouin	Autobiography of Pepi-Nakht	Secondary



*nmiw-scy /  
Sandfarers /  
Bedouin*

Story of  
Sinuhe

Secondary



*Shekelesh*

Medinet Habu

Primary



*Peleset/  
Philistines*

Medinet Habu

Primary



*Tjeker /  
Zekeru*

Medinet Habu

Primary



*Sherden*

Qadesh Battle  
Inscriptions

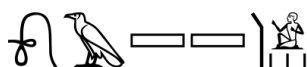
Primary



*Lukka*

Qadesh Battle  
Inscriptions

Primary



*Weshesh*

Medinet Habu

Primary



*Teresh*

Medinet Habu

Primary



*Ekwesh*

Medinet Habu

Primary



*Keftiui*

BM writing-  
tablet  
EA29558

Primary



*Fenkhu /  
Syrians /  
Phoenicians?*

Quarry  
Inscription of  
Neferperet

Primary



*Kharu /  
Syrians /  
Hurrians*

Papyrus of Ani

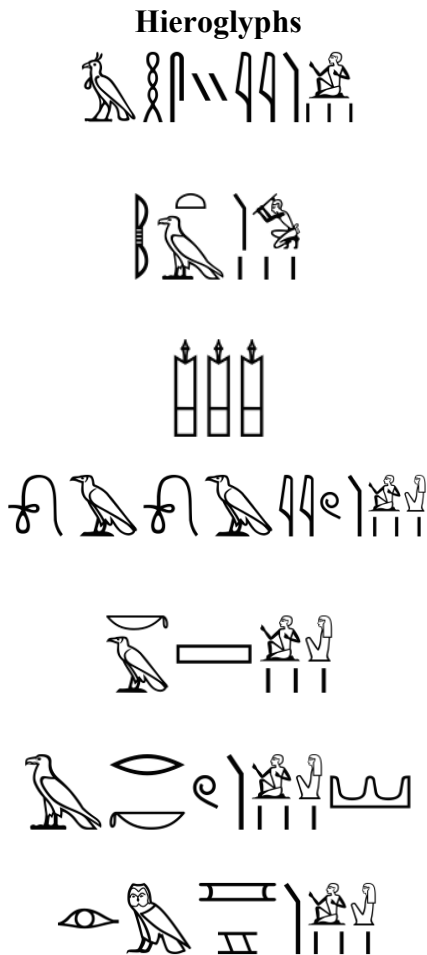
Primary

### Eastern ethnonyms



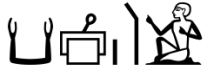
Translations	Text	Status
<i>Shasu</i> / Bedouin	Stele of Ramesses II from Tanis	Primary
<i>Puntyu</i> / Puntite	Deir el Bahari – Hatshepsut's Mortuary Temple	Primary
<i>Medjay</i>	Papyrus Boulaq XVII	Primary

### Southern ethnonyms



Translations	Text	Status
<i>Nehesyu</i> / Nubians	Papyrus Sallier	Primary
<i>Setyu</i> / Nubians	Autobiography of Ahmose, son of Abana	Primary
<i>iuntyu</i> / Bowmen	Autobiography of Ahmose, son of Abana	Secondary
<i>Wawayu</i>	Instruction of Amenemhat I	Primary
<i>Kashu</i> / Kushites	Inscription of Senusret III	Primary
<i>Terek-folk</i>	Papyrus Koller	Primary?
<i>Irem-folk</i>	Papyrus Koller	Primary?

**Hieroglyphs**



Other ethnonyms

Translations	Text	Status
<i>Kasa</i>	Papyrus Lansing	Unclear
<i>Apiru</i>	Papyrus Leiden I	Unclear