THE BALU'A STELE : A NEW TRANSCRIPTION WITH PALAEOGRAPHICAL AND HISTORICAL NOTES

W. A. WARD AND M. F. MARTIN

Today, the Balu'a stele stands outside the 'Amman Museum. It was discovered around 1930 at Balu'a, in Moab, about 15 miles north of Kerak. G. Horsfield, then Director of the Department of Antiquities of Transjordania, had the stele transferred to its present place. It is of black basalt[1] and presents a rather ungainly shape, having an irregularly conical shaped top[2] which curves out and downwards to the base. Its face is divded into two distinct parts: an upper panel on which an inscription originally stood and a lower raised relief consisting of three personages. Horsfield communicated the first exact details of the stele to the International Congress of Orientalists at Leiden in 1931. In collaboration with L. H. Vincent O. P. he published a detailed study of the stele in the following year.[3] Their general conclusions were that the stele dated from the period between Thutmosis III (1501-1447) and Ramses II (1292-1225),[4] and that it represented a Moabite predecessor of Balaq, son of Sippor, in the presence of Cemoš and Astarte. They noted the "egyptianizing" character of the relief panel. They also published a tentative drawing of the upper panel which originally carried inscribed characters.[5] Their photograph of this panel (which was used by most subsequent studies[6]) suffered from over-exposure and a certain distortion. They remarked on the extremely weathered state of the original signs and described their attempted transcription as only one of "nombreux essais tentés par des lumières différentes."[7] They remarked, however, that the position of the inscription (above the relief and not below it) was a curious one; they would have expected to find it beneath the relief.[8] This remark of the two authors has led to notable consequences.

The only remark of the two authors concerning the type of script used in the upper panel occurs at the end of their article where they speak of "le déchiffrement du texte hiératique."[9] In another place, they state that they incline to adopt the suggestion of a "texte en quelque forme assez evolué de l'égyptien hiératique."

The following year, E. Drioton published a detailed study of the relief.[11] This author was chiefly and exclusively concerned with the relief. He concluded that the date given by Horsfield and Vincent should be lowered to about the beginning of the 12th century. He did not deal with the inscription.

An expedition to Balu'a of a tentative kind was organized in 1934 by J. W. Crowfoot at the request of the Committees of the Palestine Exploration Fund and the British School of Archeology in Jerusalem.[12] After three soundings and examination of the results it was concluded that Balu'a did not appear to be "attractive as a site for future excavations." No evidence was found as to the original position of the stele. Crowfoot also thought that the stele could not be earlier than the beginning of the 12th century.

We recorded above the remark which Horsfield and Vincent made concerning the (for them) unexpected position of the inscription panel in relation to the relief (above the latter and not below it). W. F. Albright took up this remark and drew much larger conclusions. In effect, he argued,[13] the only way of explaining this discrepancy was to presume that the inscription was much older than the relief and that therefore the original stele (presumably inscribed in its full length) had been **re-used.** The reasons he adduced were six in number; the inscription is carved more lightly and is more weathered than the relief. The relief is in a rectangular space[14] which was lowered considerably to receive it. The horizontal line below the fourth register of the text and originally separating it from a no longer existing fifth line of text stands in no recognizable relationship to the depressed space employed by the relief. The stele resembles the Naram-Sin stelae from the middle of the 3rd millennium and the agreed upon date for the relief is towards the end of the 2nd millennium. The script is not at all like any known script but may easily be a variant of the syllabic script of Byblos. Balu'a was occupied in the last third of the 3rd millennium like so many other sites in this region.

None of these reasons can resist critical examination. The entire stele is weathered — both inscription panel and raised relief. The relief is a **raised** one, the inscription is sunken, and the very fact that the sculptor of the relief sank his relief panel lower than the inscription panel seems **prima facie** merely that he wished to carve outstanding figures. The inscription characters on the other hand were directly graven in sunken style on the surface. The horizontal line below the fourth line of text[15] has not got to stand of itself in any recognizable relation to the upper edge of the depressed space employed for the relief unless we suppose (with Albright) that it originally separated the fourth line "from a no longer existing fifth line"; its function is that of a lower line of a register such as we find on Byblian inscriptions of the 2nd millennium.[16] The resemblance to the Naram-Sin stelae is superficial; the latter were carved to their present shape, but the shape of the Balu'a stele is its own natural one. The script is, as we shall see, hieroglyphic in character and cannot be thought of "as a variant of the syllabic script of Byblos," unless we suppose that the latter is a syllabic script or we establish some palaeographic connection between the two scripts. Balu'a was certainly occupied in the last third of the 3rd millennium, but there was certainly occupation also in the 2nd millennium, and no one as yet knows the extent of Egyptian penetration into Moab at that time.

In another place,[17] Albright states that the inscription "exhibits several of the same characters" as the proto-Byblian script. Even in the inadequate drawing supplied by Horsfield and Vincent and in their photograph this statement is difficult to verify, as is his statement that "the original inscription above the later panel both suggest a date towards the end of the third millennium." A glance at the drawing supplied by Horsfield and Vincent confirms this

T. H. Gaster had already published the first part of his **The Chronology of Palestinian Epigraphy** in 1935.[18] In the second and concluding part,[19] he accepts Drioton's dating and reproduces the drawing of Horsfield and Vincent. The Balu'a script, he says, is a "penalphabetic writing" descended from Palestinian Linear "because out of eighteen traceable characters thirteen have clear parallels in that script." He nowhere clearly indicates these thirteen. The script consists, for Gaster, of basic signs with attached "tags" which introduce **variants.** He was certain about the position of the script in his basic scheme of alphabetic development — even if the tracing and the decipherment were

both still in the region of doubt. He dates the script to a period between 1400 and 1250. This second part of his treatise on alphabetic development came after Albright's treatment which had condemned as "impossible" Gaster's general theory concerning the early Mediterranean signary. A **fortiori**, he would condemn his subsequent remarks in the second part of his treatise.

R. Weill saw the Balu'a script as an adapted form of Cretan Linear.[20] He worked with the photographs and the drawing provided by Horsfield and Vincent. He attempted to justify this by an appeal to certain similarities with Linear Cretan signs and by a discussion of historico-political events of the 2nd millennium.

A. Alt accepted Albright's supposition that the inscription preceded the relief panel in age.[21] He maintains that the inscription tells us that the settlement at Balu'a took place around the turn of the 3rd and 2nd millennia. The inscription was written in some form of Cretan Linear (in this he accepts Weill's opinion) and therefore was the work of Emites from the West and not of the Moabites who came from the East. He rejects any palaeographic relation to Thamudean or Safaitic or Egyptian hieratic. The relief was added later by a Moabite chieftain and shows symbolically the handing over of the power, under the aegis of the gods, from the old inhabitants (the Emites) to new conquerors (the Moabites). In particular, Alt is very definite in stating that there is complete similarity between the Balu'a characters and those of Cretan Linear B. With similar force he states that there is a total difference between the style of the text and that of the relief. Alt's remarks apropos of the inscription are based on the photograph and the drawing supplied by Horsfield and Vincent.

A. van Zyl likewise presumes there was an Emite occupation[22] and that the latter were responsible for the "Balu'a stele in its older form." He makes no really thorough examination of the inscription panel. In discussing the relief panel he says that it is "obvious that they (the personages depicted) are Cemosh and Astarte or their predescessors who had the same character." Further, he sees in this scene the symbolical representation of the handing over of the power to the conquering Moabites. The originator of the stele wished by this representation to notify the conquered people that his government would not break drastically with the past but be a mere continuation of the preceding government. Thus the change to an established population was expedited. As a popular presentation of an ancient scene and couched in modern terminology, this conception and its verbal expression would be difficult to surpass.

As is clear from the foregoing review of past studies of the Balu'a stele, any studies of the inscription panel were performed with the drawing and the photograph supplied by Horsfield and Vincent in hand. They themselves characterize their drawing as one chosen from many tentative essays in reproduction. In addition, their remarks apropos of the present state of the inscription panel are to be noted, in particular when they say that "la plus délicate palpation ne sont presque nulle part le creux de lettres, marquées à peine aujourd'hui par une coloration plus claire sur le fond sombre du basalte égratigné." This statement must be slightly nuanced: today there seems to be no difference in coloration between the slight "trenches" of the original characters and the surrounding face of the entire stele (inscription and relief panel). The evidence for the characters is primarily a visual and a tactile one, the former standing out due to favourable light-incidence. But this fact together with the

tentatave type of their original drawing hardly justifies in any way the linking of the original characters with the proto-Byblian lists (Albright) or their association with any form of Cretan Linear B, (Weill, Alt), or with some form of a supposed Mediterranean signary (Gaster). And although Albright adduces five other reasons for his pre-dating the inscription in relation to the relief panel, one has the very strong impression that both he and those who have adopted his views have opted for the hypothesis of the re-use of an originally inscibed stele chiefly because the type of signs they saw in the drawing by Horsfield and Vincent did not fit in with any known script of about the 13th or 12th centuries B. C. The theory of re-use, therefore, which got its first impulse from the remark by Horsfield and Vincent concerning the relative positions of relief panel and inscription panel and which received its definite formulation at the hands of Albright, depends to a large extent on the conception of the kind of script contained in the inscription panel of the stele. In this connection, it is hard to accept immediately Alt's remark that there is a total difference between the style of the text and that of the relief. An inscription which is sunken and a relief which is raised are necessarily different. To be worth while, such a remark must be based on definite evidence that the character or type of the inscription (Egyptian, non-Egyptian, proto-Byblian etc,) is one totally different from the kind of inscription which the author or authors of the relief would have employed if they set themselves to make an inscription. Actually, we do not know as yet who executed the relief, nor has anyone quite resolved the problem of a definitely "egyptianizing" scene (in the relief panel) which was evidently not executed by an Egyptian craftsman. Nor do we know for sure what sort of script ran in the registers of the inscription panel. In other words, we cannot as yet say whether there is a total difference between the "style" of the text and that of the relief. But Alt's remark is made within the framework of mind of one who has accepted the hypothesis that the relief panel is subsequent to the inscription, and this hypothesis was formulated on the basis of the idea that the script was not such as would be executed at the supposed time of execution of the panel. A vicious circle vitiates this thinking.

A re-examination of the stele in its present state had been considered advisable. Due to the kindness of the authorities of the 'Amman Museum, the authors of this article were greatly facilitated in this undertaking during the summer of 1962.[23] As Horsfield and Vincent had found out thirty years ago, the stele had to be examined minutely and carefully at different times of the day in order to allow for the differing variations of light intensity and light-incidence.[24] In the present state of the inscription and of the relief panel, such allowance is absolutely necessary. In addition, (and this applies both to relief and inscription), each apparent trait was subjected to a double criterion, a tactile and a visual one. Even when this double criterion was applied, further consideration had to be taken of the possible damage caused by the extreme age of the stele and the effect of sun and wind and possible injuries by falls, etc.[25]

The damage which the stele has undergone has affected the original surface polish of the basalt and is quite apparently and chiefly due to natural causes rather than to chance breakages or scratches, etc. This damage has resulted in the gradual levelling of the uninscribed parts of the inscription panel, the reduction of the relative depths of the "trenches" of the original strokes, and the blurring of details in the relief panel. The levelling of the originally uninscribed parts of the inscription has made the identification of strokes and curves difficult because of the disappearance of the internal ridges of the latter. Indeed, in certain parts of the inscription panel, nothing at all remains.[26] The writers would

not altogether agree with Horsfield and Vincent that "l'estampage est chimérique"; the photography of the stele was, as they phrase it, "particulièrement ardue," but thanks to the expertise of Farid Morqas official phothgrapher to the Museum, we were able to have in our hands an excellent photographic reproduction[27] which does not suffer from the over-exposure of the photograph used by Horsfield and Vincent and those who limited themselves later to using the latter's reproduction. In the following account of our results we deal first with the inscription panel, then with the relief panel.

THE INSCRIPTION PANEL

Up to this time, the only reproductions of the inscription panel have been based on that of Horsfield and Vincent.[28] We give in disregard the final results of our attempt to reproduce the original characters on the stele.[29] A few points must be noted. The number of original registers was most probably six. The main evidence for this lies in (a) the vague traces of characters up to the top of the stele, and (b) the equally vague traces of register lines to the same extent. But, except for the one tentative reproduction on **Register II** (no. 1), nothing else can be objectively affirmed; the surface polish of the area has almost completely disappeared.

Register III : at the beginning if this register we are faced with very vague traces. Horsfield and Vincent give nothing, nor can anything definite be distinguished. Throughout the register, particularly in its upper area, we find a similar situation. Nos. 4-6 are crushed together, as depicted. No. 4, in particular, suffers from originally unskilled engraving. No. 7 is a very good example of how a photograph, however good, can deceive. On our photograph and to some extent on Horsfield and Vincent's photograph, it would seem that here we have a more or less double-lined triangular form, the two sides being slightly convex. Yet on the stone itself, only the two lines as depicted in our drawing can be established with certainty. These two appear on the photograph as part of the left-hand double-lined side of the apparent triangular form. Moreover, what appears as the right-hand double-lined side lies on the outward curving side of the stone and is definitely the result of some relatively recent damage.

Register IV : No. I — it is possible that at the left of the vertical another projection of the triangular form originally existed. No. 3 — beneath the present base-line of this sign there were some further strokes. No. 4 — the general outline of this form is exact, but interior details once there are now impossible to determine. Nos. 6 and 7 — as they are now, they almost touch at the upper tips. On the vertical shaft of No. 6 there were some original strokes. Likewise, it is possible that on the left of the vertical of No. 7 a curvature exists corresponding to the one to the right of the vertical. No. 8 — the base-line of this is incomplete.

Register V : Nos. 6 and 8 are incomplete.

Register VI : No. 2 — in between the two roughly diamond shapes of this sign there existed a further complex of strokes, perhaps a third diamond shape. Grouped under No. 7 is a complex of three charactes, (a) a seated figure, (b) a crescent shape, (c) an orb within "horns." No. 8 — traces of a further curving stroke are visible where we have drawn a dotted line. The complex around and inside the object on which the figure in No. 7 sits is not clear. No. 9 — this is not complete.

Is there any possible relationship between the Balu'a and other scripts of the area? It is obvious that we can correctly attribute a "hieroglyphic" character to these signs even though, at this stage, it would be incorrect to conclusively identify the script as belonging to one of the known ancient hieroglyphic systems. However, certain possibilities, namely proto-Byblian and Egyptian, do produce some interesting results.

If we turn first to the proto-Byblian script,[30] we find that there is no cogent reason for absolute identification of the latter with the script manifested in the remains of the Balu'a inscription. There are definite similarities, but only in a few cases can we speak of possible identities. In general, it seems better to point to underlying pictorial **motifs** which coincide. We can do this schematically, putting the code-numbers of the proto-Byblian (Dunand's system) opposite the register numbers of the Balu'a signs;

Register	Sign	Proto-Byblian	Motif
II	1	E 20	plant, stick?
III	1	C 2	water?
III	2	B 7 / B 9	plant?
III	3	A 5	insect?
III	6	A 10	serpent?
IV	3	A 1-4	bird?
IV	4	A 10	serpent?
IV	5	E 4	courtyard, house?
V	2	A 1-4	bird?
V	4	E 4	courtyard, house?
VI	5	A 1-4	bird?
VI	8	B 7 / B 9	plant?

Thus out of 53 signs there are 12 possible identifications. Again, it must be pointed out that in the majority of cases it is an identification of **motif** and not an absolute conformity of paleographic characteristics. There seems to be no recurrence of the proto-Byblian sequence **serpent-bird**[31] unless III-5 is a **bird** sign. Allowing for the unfortunate lacunae in the inscription, we can still not see any grounds for presuming any more connection between the proto-Byblian and the Balu'a scripts other than that which would exist between two scripts which sprang from a common parent — in this case, obviously Egyptian. And perhaps this is all that could be expected in the second millennium between script developments in Transjordania and Byblos. A further puzzling thing (which may be explained by the lacunae in the inscription) is that we find very few signs repeated. Here we must be careful not to demand from the engraver an identical reproduction of the same sign everywhere; the proto-Byblian inscriptions have taught this lesson quite vividly. Thus the **serpent** sign (III-6) may very well be equivalent in value and signification to IV-4. IV-3, V-2 and VI-5 may represent the same thing and may all be equal to the rather obscure III-5. IV-5 and V-4 can be identical or allied in value and signification. What seems certain enough is that V-9 and VI-2 are the same.

A connection between the inscription and the relief panel is possibly afforded by the complex of symbols which we have grouped under VI-7. Here, the crescent shape, the orb within a half-

circle (with "horned" tips) and the seated figure may all stand in close relation to the central figure of the relief-panel. On the whole we can certainly speak of this sample of Balu'a script as "hieroglyphic," but we cannot use the term specifically in the same sense as we apply it to the proto-Byblian script. In a corrupt text such as this, the results appear definitively negative.

We turn now to the possibility of an Egyptian origin for the characters of the Balu'a inscription. At the outset, however, we must point out that any comparison with the normal forms of Egyptian hieroglyphic signs is fruitless. If these signs do represent Egyptian, and we suggest this only as a possibility, the scribe was certainly an ill-trained one. While the relief panel is fairly accurate in reproducing features of Egyptian relief, the characters of the inscription are so badly done that they have often lost all but a vague memory of the suggested originals. Consequently, it seemed best to turn to the most logical comparative material, Egyptian graffiti. These short, crudely drawn inscriptions compare in workmanship to the characters of the Balu'a inscription and extensive comparison has produced the tentative scheme given in the following chart. Egyptian material noted here has been drawn from Černy, **Graffiti hieroglyphiques et hiératiques de la necropole Thebaine** (Cairo, 1956). All Egyptian signs are given their accepted numbers according to Gardiner's **Egyptian Grammar.**

Register	Sign	Suggested Egyptian Original	Notes
II	1	**w** (V1)	reversed
III	1	**n** (N35)	cf. VI-3
III	2	**nsw. t** (M23)	by analogy to hoeroglyphic; the form in the graffiti is different.
III	3	**bity** (L2)	Černy, 1149, 1269.
III	4	**ḥ** (V28)	
III	5+6	**nb.ty** (G16)	the normal positions of the COBRA and VULTURE are here reversed.
IV	1	(a) **sn** (T22) (b) **ḫ3ᵘ** (M12)	(a) Černy, 1082, 1121. (b) by analogy to hieroglyphic.
IV	2	**imn.t** (R14)	Černy, 1142, 1076; very doubtful.
IV	3	**p3** (G14)	the outstretched wings are in favor of **p3** rather than **s3**. The graffiti, following hieratic usage, show G40 instead of G41; Cerny, 1349, 1364, 1389.
IV	4	**m** (G17)	by analogy to hieroglyphic, especially cursive forms in the papyri.
IV	5	**p** (Q3)	cf. V-4.
IV	7	**w3s** (S40)	Černy, 1377, 1383, 1393.
IV	8	WALL (036)	Černy, 1252.

Register	Sign	Suggested Egyptian Original	Notes
V	2	HORUS ON STAND (G 7)	Černy, 1285e; note also the first sign in Černy, 1068 which is very close to V-2 and which Černy, reads $s^{?}_{?}$ with question.
V	3	ḥry-tp (D 2+D 1)	For ḥry: Černy, 1113, 1276; for tp; Černy, 1169, 1331.
V	4	p (Q 3)	cf. IV-5.
V	5	IBIS ON STAND (G 26)	Černy, 1285b, (1285b) 1308. The LOAF and strokes usually accompanying this sign may be lost in the weathering in the stele.
V	6+7	ms + s (F 31 + S 29)	cf. discussion below.
V	8	ʿnḫ (S 34)	cf. discussion below.
V	9	ḥḥ (V 28 +N 5+V 28)	Černy, 1135, 1226, 1232. V-9 shows a streight line in the middle whereas the graffiti have at least a partial circle.
VI	1	ʿImn (M 17+Y 5+N 35+G 7)	Černy, 1139, 1165, etc. The graffiti show a more complex sign with horizontal strokes missing in VI-1. The stele is badly worn at this point and original lines may have disappeared.
VI	3	n (N 35)	cf. III-1.
VI	4	nb (V 30)	or possibly k (V 31).
VI	5	w (G 43)	by analogy to hieroglyphic.
VI	6	SEBEK ON SHRINE (14)	for the crocodile, Černy, 1214. By analogy to hieroglyphic for whole sign.
VI	7	HATHOR ON THRONE	Černy, 1061, for male figure on throne. The horns-and-disc behind the head of VI-7 are misplaced because of lack of space. The crescent shape before the face could be the lotus blossom held in the figure's hands, as customarily in Egyptian reliefs.
VI	10	r (D 21)	

At first glance, the possible identification of 29 of the signs in the Balu'a inscription might indicate that we are definitely on the right track in attempting to read this text as Egyptian. However, we must emphasize that we can vouch for very few of these identifications with any assurance that they are beyond reasonable doubt. The most we can hope to do is point to possible readings.

Can this inscription be translated? The numerous lacunae and the crude character of the signs present great difficultes. Also, we should note the rarity of alphabetic signs, a factor which could be accounted for if we assume the scribe was quite inept at writing

Egyptian. Allowing for these problems, we would suggest a very tentative reading and translation for V-3 to V-9:

ḥry-tp Ḏḥwty-ms (dí) ʿnḫ ḥḥ, ". . . on behalf of Thutmosis, (given) life forever . . . ."

We can hardly say that this is any more than a first attempt and do not profer it as anything but a suggestion. The following notes should dispell any doubt that this rendering is tentative :

(a) While ḥry-tp is made up of signs which can be given reasonable counterparts in the graffiti, V-3 may in reality be intended to represent some other, single sign.

(b) The signs V-5 to V-7 do actually bear more than a superficial resemblance to the name Thutmosis as it appears in the graffiti (Cerny, p. 35, **sub** Ḏḥwty-ms). However, V-7 could also be **rnp.t** (M4) or **sw** (H6). We suggest **s** for this sign on the basis of the suggested reading for the preceeding two signs and the fact that this name is normally written Ḏḥwty + ms + s.

(c) The verb **dí** does not appear, but we assume it **could** have been in the lacuna above V-8.

(d) The reading of V-8 as ʿnḫ is based on the fact that all the essential characteristics of the ʿnḫ-sign are present.

(e) The reading ḥḥ for V-9 has plausible analogies in the graffiti, but note that the normal Egyptian expression is **dí ʿnḫ** d.t or **dí ʿnḫ mí R**ʿ d.t.

These objections to our translation could be ascribed to the lack of ability and knowledge of the individual who carved this inscription. This, however, seems to be much too convenient an answer to cover all points raised here. Therefore, we present this translation as one possible solution which may or may not be correct. Should the identification of the proper name eventually prove to be valid, there is then the problem of whether or not this stands for an Egyptian ruler and, if so, which one of those that bore this name. As we will show below, the relief carving could hardly have been made prior to the mid-eighteenth dynasty, in which case this name might represent Thutmosis IV. If so, the two groups of signs III-2 to III-3 and III-5 to III-6 could be taken as the royal titles **Nsw-bit** and **Nb. ty,** though there is no possible way to read names with these titles in this inscription. Can we again suggest the ignorance of the scribe?

As will be pointed out in our discussion of the relief panel, there are certain features of this relief which indicate it was done by an artist who possessed some knowledge of Egyptian art but a somewhat limited skill in reproducing it. Assuming that the inscription was done by this same artist — and there is nothing to prove the contrary — we should expect this inscription to exhibit abnormalities. Whether we can really accuse an ancient artist of producing such a grotesque caricature of Egyptian writing remains to be seen.

THE RELIEF PANEL

The relief panel of the Balu'a stele (fig. B) has only been studied once in detail, by E. Drioton, shortly after its discovery.[32] His general analysis of the costumes worn by the three figures

is substantially correct, though all but one of his criteria for dating the relief must be discarded. It has been assumed that the three figures represent a god, king and goddess, moving left to right. There is no good reason at present to doubt this assumption and the three figures will be referred to as such in the following discussion.

It is obvious even from a cursory look at this relief that it was not done by a trained Egyptian artist. The proportions, for example, do not conform to the normal canons of proportional representation for the human figure used during the Empire age. On the other hand, the sculptor was not ignorant of Egyptian art; he was able to reproduce a complete facsimile of Egyptian costume and design. The individual elements of this relief, with certain exceptions noted in the following description, are taken from Egyptian prototypes. The attitudes and positions of all three figures are according to Egyptian style. And the costume of all three figures, as well as the crowns worn by both god and goddess, are good Egyptian dress. What we have, then, is an "egyptianizing" relief done by a foreigner who had at least a basic training in Egyptian sculpture and who adapted the Egyptian style to some purpose as yet unclear.

The god wears the double crown of Upper and Lower Egypt which is often portrayed in just this manner in relief carvings from Egypt (fig. I). The curled projection in front (obscured by a shadow in our photograph), the triangular projection below it and the double line running up the rear of the crown are often all that is shown of the Red Crown even in the finest Egyptian reliefs; only an outline of the ensemble is given. The double line indicating a band of some kind just below the knob of the White Crown is not found in Egyptian examples and is one detail which leads us to believe that the relief was carved by a non-Egyptian.[33] The kilt worn by the god needs no comment as this is quite typical for male figures throughout the Empire. While it is of the simplest style, lacking the triangular apron or other added features, this simple kilt is frequently worn by gods in Egyptian reliefs.[34]

The most difficult problem about the figure of the god is what, if anything, he is holding in his right hand. There is no problem about the left hand which grasps a **was**-scepter in the normal position. But, as Drioton pointed out, the **was**-scepter was never grasped in both hands in the manner apparently portrayed on the Balu'a stele. There are, however, many representations of deities extending one hand holding an **ankh**-sign or other object toward a worshipper.[35] Drioton thus suggested that the right hand of the god is holding an **ankh**-sign to the upraised hands of the king. If this is so, the supposed **ankh**-sign has been very badly carved and we reserve judgement on this particular point.[36]

The figure of the king presents no problem with regard to the dress. As Drioton has shown, this is the "vêtement de gala" introduced during the Amarna Period and worn by kings from that time on.[37] It is the headdress of the king which poses difficulties. Drioton collected several examples of headdresses which resemble that of the Balu'a king and concluded that this type was typical of the Shasu beduin who are mentioned from time to time in Egyptian texts. These examples of the Shasu headdress stretch in time from the reign of Seti I to Ramses III, though it is only in the time of the latter that exact duplicates are found.[38] To the examples collected by Drioton may be added an excellent parallel from the

Medinet Habu tiles (fig. 2a)[39] and several examples from the reliefs at Medinet Habu.[40] There can be no doubt that the headdress of the Balu'a king is of the type shown in these Egyptian examples, primarily those dating from the reign of Ramses III. There is thus positive evidence that this type of head-gear — a cloth covering attached to a metal headpiece — was actually known to have been used in wsetern Asia during the Egyptian Empire age.[41] The question now arises as to just who it was who used this type of headdress.

As noted above, Drioton concluded that these figures represent the Shasu beduin, an apparently Semitic people having no specific homeland.[42] They are mentioned twice in Papyrus Anastasi I as being in the area of Qadesh and Tubihi[43] and in the region of Megiddo.[44] They also appear among the enemies of Ramses II at the battle of Qadesh.[45] The "land of the Shasu" is mentioned in inscriptions of this king[46] and there is a vague reference to Shasu tribes in the time of Ramses III.[47] A text of Seti I briefly describes a war with the Shasu in the region between Egypt and southern Palestine.[48] On the basis of this latter inscription, which accompanies a relief in which some figures appear wearing a headdress similar to the Shasu headdress of the reliefs of Ramses II and III, it has been accepted that this type of headdress is to be associated with the Shasu beduin. It follows, according to Drioton, that the king on the Balu'a stele is of this group. It should be noted that the Seti I relief is apparently the only example where the headdress and the name "Shasu" actually appear together and that the headdresses of this relief are quite different from those of later times (fig. 2f).[49] This could, of course, be accounted for by the span of time between Seti I and Ramses III, during which some modification of the headdress should be expected.

Another theory which gives a different origin for this headdress has also had many adherants over the past half century. Daressy long ago suggested that the prisoner on the Medinet Habu tile (fig. 2a) was a Shekelesh, one of the numerous groups among the Sea peoples.[50] The most recent defense of this position is by Wainwright who feels that this headdress was peculiar to the Shekelesh and Teresh, separating them from all other Sea Peoples.[51] There is something to be said for this identification since foreigners wearing this headdress also wear kilts which seem to be a salient feature of the costume of the Sea Peoples (figs. 2d, e).[52] But it should also be pointed out that Syrians wear the kilt of the Sea Peoples sometimes even in the company of genuine Sea Peoples.[53] The distinction in costume is not as clear as we would like it to be. Even the best Egyptian paintings and reliefs are apt to show some confusion in the representation of foreign peoples, a factor which must always be kept in mind when attempting to identify such foreigners. Still, Wainwright's general case is a good one and must be seriously considered in connection with the figure on the Balu'a stele. In the present state of our knowledge, it is probably best to admit that the weight of the evidence stands in favor of the Balu'a king being a Shasu. Several of the Egyptian inscriptions discussed below (pp. 20 ff.) tend to support this.

The dress of the goddess on the Balu'a stele is quite commonly found on female figures from the Eighteenth Dynasty onward. Drioton is incorrect, however, in saying that this particular sheath dress with the sash and trailing ends does not appear on goddesses until the Nineteenth Dynasty.[54] Both Hathor and Nut appear in this dress in the tomb of Tutankhamon, hence we must discard this feature of the Balu'a stele as a possible criterion for dating it no earlier than the Nineteenth Dynasty.[55] This costume also appears on female members of the royal family as early as the reign of Amenhotep III (figs. 3a, b).[56]

The goddess' costume is made up of the simple sheath dress known from earlier times with the addition of a broad bead collar and a sash wrapped twice around the middle and tied at the side with long trailing ends. This sash was also used with the fancy billowing civil dress of the Empire (fig. 3d). The use of the sheath dress and sash on divine figures does not appear to ante-date the reign of Tutankhamon and extends into the Twentieth Dynasty and beyond (fig. 3e).

The crown worn by the Balu'a goddess is that normally worn by Osiris in Egyptian reliefs and paintings. However, it is quite significant to note that Canaanite goddesses are frequently found in Egyptian reliefs wearing this crown so that the Balu'a goddess fits into a well-known category of divine female figures.[57] This may eventually be of some help in identifying the Balu'a goddess. The goddess holds a crudely-made **ankh**-sign in her right hand. There are faint traces of vertical lines in the collar of her costume, indicating an attempt to reproduce the lines of beads.

The two symbols which appear over the king's shoulders are probably not to be interpreted within the framework of Egyptian iconography. The crescent between the king and goddess may be a symbol of the goddess.[58] The symbol before the face of the king — an orb and crescent — is probably to be associated with the god. The crescent is quite interesting in that it distinctly appears to be separated near the center and the ends may have forks, though this feature is very unclear.[59] What appear to be these same symbols are found together on a Phoenician stele done in egyptianizing style, found at Tell Tahpanhes in the northeast Delta region.[60] The deity in this case is Baal-Saphon and both symbols are associated with him. While this stele is of much later date than the Balu'a stele, it is an important indication that the symbols involved are not Egyptian.[61] Though the position of these symbols on the stele could indicate they are to be associated with the figure of the king, their usage in western Asiatic art as divine symbols stands against this interpretation.

There now remains the matter of the faces portrayed on all three figures of the Balu'a stele. Comparing features such as prominent noses and pointed beards and drawing conclusions from such comparisons is at best unsatisfactory. Basing our judgement on such details, it is possible to conclude that the faces on this relief represent Semites, Hittites, Sea Peoples or several other ethnic groups. It must also be remembered that the relief is rather crudely drawn in many respects and we can hardly expect to find a clear-cut ethnic type. We thus cannot support Drioton's statement relative to the Shasu of Seti I relief that: "Le type ethnique de ces pillards du désert est identique à celui de l'orant du Balou'a ...."[62] Even

working from the badly done line drawing and the very indistinct photographs of the original publication[63] such a conclusion is inadmissable. Our own examination of the stele produced as clear a representation of these faces as is now possible.[64] It would be difficult, to say the least, to insist that these faces represent a specific ethnic group. They are obviously not Egyptians and the only thing that can be said about them is that they probably represent Semites. This tentative statement is based on our presupposition that the Balu'a stele was carved at Balu'a by a non-Egyptian sculptor who was apparently attempting to reproduce the local ethnic type. But beyond this general statement it is impossible to go.

Since the relief panel bears such a strong Egyptian flavor, we should first place this scene in its Egyptian setting. The scene portrayed here is very common in Egyptian art and, within an Egyptian context, the interpretation would cause no difficulty. We refer, of course, to the scene on which the living king stands in adoration before the head of the pantheon with an attendant goddess behind the king. It is precisely this scene which we have on the Balu'a stele.

Within its Egyptian setting, this scene portrays the Pharaoh receiving his power and authority from the divine world, embodied in the figure of the chief deity of Egypt. In the example chosen here for comparative purposes (fig. 5), Ramses II stands before Harakhty (one form of Amon-Re) with the goddess Hathor in attendance.[65] The short texts which accompany this relief panel inform us that Ramses II is here being granted the crook and flail — the symbols of royal power — from Harakhty who holds these two objects in his extended right hand. Hathor, on her part, bequeathes a long life as ruler and eternal existence to the king. Thus, the scene shows that unique relationship which the Egyptian ruler had with the gods, a relationship in which the king was dependent on the gods for his temporal authority.[66] Note also that this particular scene does not represent a coronation scene, a sed-festival or any other prominent occassion. The long inscription which takes up the bulk of this stele is concerned with the ordering of statues to be presented to certain temples and numerous details about their manufacture. Hence, Ramses II is here taking advantage of the opportunity to reassert the intimate connection between himself and the gods, a theological doctrine which could be portrayed at any time and in many different contexts.[67]

Within its own setting, therefore, the scene in the Balu'a stele has a well-known meaning. But can this meaning be transferred to Moab and would it be at home in this new context? Or has the original significance of the Egyptian scene been altered somewhat to conform to local beliefs? Unfortunately, these are questions which cannot be readily answered. Our present knowledge of the Moabite religion is limited to only the barest details about a small number of deities and their cults. Any attempt to define the concept of the kingship as practised by the Moabites is practically fruitless due to the lack of material. Indeed, much of the scanty evidence comes from references in the Old Testament and these may well represent a tradition later than the Balu'a stele. And there still remains the problem of the inscription. Contrary to previously held opinions, we are convinced that the inscription and relief panel are part of the same composition. The real secret to the interptetation of the

relief panel may thus lie in the short text above it. Until this is dec phered, if indeed it ever can be, interpretations of the relief will remain in the realm of theory.

Summarizing this discussion of the relief panel, we may conclude that it represents a scene which is well known in Egyptian art. The style is definitely egyptianizing, the sculptor having more than a passing acquaintance with Egyptian art, Certain details lead us to the conclusion that it was carved by a non-Egyptian artist.[68] The headdress of the king can be positively identified with that worn by certain foreigners appearing in reliefs of the time of Ramses III. Beyond these statements it is impossible to go with assurrance. But we can at least make some attempt at dating this stele and can examine the historical perspective within which it should be interpreted.

DATE AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

It is first necessary to examine the proofs previously offered for the twelfth century B. C. date now universally accepted for the relief panel. The original publication dates the relief to the period between Thutmosis III and Merneptah, that is, anywhere in the fourteenth or thirteenth centuries B. C.[69] Drioton placed this relief in the early twelfth century B. C. and this date has stood as the accepted one ever since. However, most of the criteria he used to date this monument cannot be accepted and the sum total of evidence indicates that it is not now possible to date the Balu'a stele any more accurately than sometime in the thirteenth or early twelfth centuries B. C.

Drioton pointed out that the closest analogies to the headdress worn by the Balu'a king were to be found in the time of Ramses III, a conclusion with which we agree completely. Both the pictorial evidence produced by Drioton and that produced by our own search for comparative material point in this direction. But this is the only criterion of Drioton's with which we are in accord.

In his discussion of the goddess' costume, Drioton attaches too much importance to the hem line of her garment. According to him, this dress appears with a narrow border in the Nineteenth Dynasty, while a broad border with decoration appears in the Twentieth Dynasty. Since the space between the hem line and the trench indicating the upper limit of this band at the hem of the dress on the Balu'a goddess indicates a broad band, Drioton places her costume in the Twentieth Dynasty.[70] But this criterion of broad and narrow bands is not as carefully distinguished in Egyptian reliefs as Drioton indicates,[71] and in many examples of this costume the border is not represented at all. Then too, most of the examples known to us of this costume are from tomb paintings and funerary papyri and there is always a good deal of leeway possible between representations of a detail of costume in relief and representations in painting. Finally, as we have noted from time to time, the artist who produced the Balu'a stele did not follow Egyptian style in every detail. We can hardly expect him to have paid close attention to such details as the width of the garment's border in the light of his other inaccuracies.[72]

By far the most unacceptable criterion for dating this stele is the statement that a Moabite king could only usurp the "vêtement de gala" of the Egyptian king when Egyptian power was weak and there was no chance of Egyptian raids into Palestine. The presupposition that the Balu'a stele implies a weakened Egyptian influence in Palestine, combined with the early Twentieth Dynasty parallels for the headdress of the Balu'a king, led Drioton to conclude that the relief must have been produced at "le temps du déclin de l'influence égyptienne qui suivit, en Palestine et dans les pays limitrophes, la mort de Ramses III."[73]

We believe that exactly the contrary is the case. Our examination of the Balu'a stele has shown that there is no evidence whatsoever for the idea that the stele was re-used. We are of the opinion that both the inscription and the relief panel were placed on this stone at the same time. Furthermore, the inscription, like the relief panel, can safely be called "egyptianizing." We are thus faced with a document of paramount importance, but in a sense that has never been realized and which is along different lines than heretofore supposed. Far from indicating that Egyptian influence was on the wane or had died out completely when the stele was carved, the very existence of the Balu'a stele proves exactly the opposite. Egyptian prestige was at one of its many apexes in Palestine and Egyptian influence must have been very strong. An egyptianizing stele would hardly have been erected in a foreign land if Egyptian influence was not present. There is no conceivable reason why a stele with such a pronounced Egyptian flavor would be set up in a Moabite city if there was not some kind of connection with Egypt. Nor can we envisage why this would take place when E ypt was weak and unimportant, the very circumstances which, to our minds, would discourage the adoption of Egyptian motives rather than offer free rein for such cultural borrowing. Hence, it seems to us that the Balu'a stele could only have been carved at a time when Egypt was a power to be reckoned with, when Moab was thoroughly aware of the presence of considerable Egyptian strength in Palestine and when there was the possibility of Egyptian intervention in east Jordan itself.

We suggest that two historical conditions were necessary before an egyptianizing stele could have been set up at Balu'a. First, there had to be a well-established sedentary population in Moab and, second, Egyptian power in Syria-Palestine, with the concomm itant cultural and political influence of such power, had to be firmly entrenched in Palestine. As the following paragraphs will show, both these conditions were present throughout the Egyptian Empire period, that is, from the mid-sixteenth to the mid-twelfth centuries B. C.

We must first turn briefly to the history of east Jordan to point out the necessity for a rather drastic change in our concepts of this area during the Middle and Late Bronze periods. Until recently, east Jordan has been very little excavated and the long series of surface explorations carried on by Nelson Glueck were the primary source of information. His conclusions regarding east Jordan in the Middle and Late Bronze ages, however, must now be seriously questioned. According to Glueck, whose conclusions are still generally accepted, east Jordan was the home of a settled culture during the Early Bronze age but, for reasons unknown, this dwindled and died out around the twentieth century B. C. The area, was not settled again with a sedentary population until late in the thirteenth century B. C. that is, at the beginning of the Iron Age.[74]

This whole picture of east Jordan during the Middle and Late Bronze ages is now in the process of being substantially altered. Discoveries of Middle and Late Bronze sites are rapidly beginning to fill in the cultural hiatus previously thought to have existed during this period. Tombs of both Middle and Late Bronze date, a Late Bronze city at Deir 'Alla and a small temple of the Late Bronze age at 'Amman show that there was much more than a nomadic culture in east Jordan at this time. These are recent finds and are evidence that with more excavation our present concept of this area during this period will have to undergo a radical change.[75]

We turn now to Egyptian evidence bearing on relations with east Jordan; this is unfortunately very meager and certainly inconclusive. Egyptian records are strangely mute on east Jordan except for vague hints. But this is partly due to the lack of the kind of inscriptions which would mention cities and other places in east Jordan. The most important source for the geographical distribution of Egyptian political interests abroad are, of course, the lists of place-names preserved in the royal annals of the Empire age. These range in time from Thutmosis III to the Twenty-Second Dynasty and in extent from a half dozen to scores of names.[76] They must be used with caution in determining the extent of Egyptian rule in Asia, however, and most authorities agree that only the long list of Thutmosis III can be taken at face value.

There is no question of an Egyptian full-scale invasion and occupation of east Jordan, hence these geographical lists are of very limited value to us, purporting as they do to give the extent of the Egyptian Empire. Thus, the appearance of "Moab" in a short text of Ramses II does not indicate an Egyptian occupation of this territory any more than the appearance of Khatti and Naharain in the same list proves Egyptian suzerainty over the Hittites and north Syria.[77] But the listing of Moab among other foreign countries certainly indicates that Egypt was aware of the existence of this territory. The great list of Thutmosis III preserves a place-name **Tpn** which has sometimes been taken as indicating Dibon in Moab, but this is hardly posslble.[78] As far as it is possible to judge at the present time, Egyptian control east of the Jordan valley never extended south of the town of Pella, a few kilometers east of Beth Shan.

There is one small scrap of evidence which may be useful here. As far as we are able to ascertain, there are only two records of Egyptian military activity which might possibly refer to east Jordan. The first reference comes from an obelisk of Ramses II at Tanis, on the east face of which is the following inscription : "(Titulary of Ramses II) a raging and ferocious lion who has destroyed the land of the Shasu and plundered this mountain of **S'r** with his mighty arm."[79] Second, there is a passing reference in the historical section at the end of Papyrus Harris I in which a general survey of the achievements of Ramses III is given. In the summary of his Asiatic wars, Ramses III notes : "I overthrew **S'r** of the Shasu-tribes."[80] **S'r,** in the passage from Papyrus Harris I, has usually been taken as a place-name and identified with Hebrew **Se'ir,** or Edom.[81] Should this identification prove correct, these two short references are unique in Egyptian military annals in placing Egyptian raiding parties in southern Transjordan.[82]

A puzzling reference to "Edom" is found in Papyrus Anastasi VI, dating to the reign of Seti II who ruled toward the close of the Nineteenth Dynasty. One of the texts in this papyrus is a record of Shasu-tribes who entered Egypt to secure water. The passage of importance here is : "We have ceased allowing the Shasu-tribes of Edom (**'Idm**) to pass the fortress (named) Merneptah Hetep-her-Maat which is in Tjeku (in order to go) to the pools of Pithom of Merneptah Hetep-her-Maat which is in Tjeku, in order to keep themselves alive and their cattle alive ...."[83] The location of these places is the eastern end of the Wadi Tumilat,[84] though our interest here is in the place from which these beduin are said to have come. We know from this and other documents that a careful watch was kept on foreigners entering and leaving Egypt during the Empire. Whether beduin from "Edom" were a common occurrence or not cannot be determined. Unfortunately, this is the only occurrence of "Edom" in a connected text and it is impossible to say that the term refers to east Jordan. "Edom" is a fluid term and, while this Egyptian reference is generally accepted as the equivalent of Hebrew **'edom,**[85] it must be remembered that the Hebrew term was also used to indicate the Negev area of southern Palestine.[86] This would also seem to be the case in Papyrus Anastasi VI. Though foreign peoples often came to Egypt for the purpose of securing food, it does not seem plausible that beduin would migrate from east Jordan to the Delta for water. We hesitate to insist that the Shasu mentioned here did actually come from beyond the Jordan valley, The tribes in question were probably nomads from the desert east of Egypt proper.[87]

Of Egyptian objects in east Jordan there are very few, but these have all been recently discovered and give promise of new material in years to come. A bronze **Khepesh**-sword and some scarabs have been found in the Late Bronze temple near the 'Amman airport. This find is all the more remarkable since a considerable amount of Mycenaean and Cypriote pottery (or imitations thereof) and some Syrian cylinder seals were also discovered here.[88] A Late Bronze — Early Iron age tomb at Madaba yielded some scarabs of late Empire date,[89] and scarabs probably of the sixteenth century B. C. were found in a Middle Bronze age tomb at 'Amman.[90] This material, plus the Balu'a stele and some as yet unpublished finds found within the past year, represents the total evidence now available for determining the extent of Egyptian influence during the Empire period in that part of Jordan lying east of the Dead Sea.[91] But there is one point which could be quite significant. All three sites — 'Amman, Madaba and Balu'a — are situated on the great "King's Highway" which ran north and south through the heart of east Jordan. Another recent discovery of Egyptian material in east Jordan comes from Deir 'Alla, the first Late Bronze city to be found in this area. This object is a faience jar with the cartouche of Ramses II.[92] Deir 'Alla lies on the east bank of the Jordan valley proper (near the Zerqa River) and this slim piece of evidence falls together with the appearance of "Moab" in the short geographical list of Ramses II and the campaign of this king to the "mountain of **S'r.**"

We have stated above (p. 19) that two historical conditions are presupposed by the existence of the Balu'a stele. The first, a settled population in east Jordan, was present throughout the Middle and Late Bronze agas. The second condition, strong Egyptian power in Palestine, was present from the late sixteenth to the mid-twelfth centuries B. C. It is not necessary to summarize the military and political exploits of the Pharaohs of the Eighteenth

to Twentieth Dynasties beyond stating that, with the exception of three short periods, Egyptian power in Palestine was constant from the time of Thutmosis I (1522-1515) to Ramses III (1182-1151).[93] The three periods when this was not true were the latter years of the reign of Hatshepsut (1490-1468), the Amarna Period and the close of the Eighteenth Dynasty (1367-1304) and the closing reigns of the Nineteenth Dynasty (1214-1194).

Having thus presented the evidence which can be used to date the Balu'a stele, it remains to give the chronological range within which we consider it possible to place this monument. There is no single element, or group of elements, in the relief panel which allows us to offer any conclusive date. The costume of the god was in use throughout the Empire period, the costume of the king from the Amarna period to the end of the Empire and the costume of the goddess from at least the time of Tutankhamon to the close of Egyptian dynastic history. The only feature of the relief panel which could conceivably be used as a criterion for a closer dating is the headdress of the king. This has its closest analogies in the reign of Ramses III, but one isolated element could certainly not be taken as a positive indication of date.

The historical context is unfortunately of very little help. East Jordan had a sedentary population throughout the Egyptian Empire period and, except for a few scattered decades, Egyptian power in Palestine was firmly entrenched throughout this age. Egyptian objects in east Jordan spread from the Hyksos age to the late Empire and beyond, and references in Egyptian inscriptions are too vague to allow us to say anything beyond the mere fact that there is slim evidence of Egyptian influence in Moab and possible references to military raids into east Jordan. We can, however, indicate the earliest and latest possible dates for the Balu'a stele. The costumes of both goddess and king on this monument apparently do not ante-date the Amarna Age. But this was an age of decline as far as Egyptian power in Palestine is concerned. We can thus suggest that the earliest date for the Balu'a stele would be the reign of Seti I, when the power of Egypt was again established in western Asia. The latest possible date would be the reign of Ramses III, after which Egyptian prestige in Asia suffered its final decline. Barring a decipherment of the inscription, the best that can be said is that the stele was erected some time during the period 1309-1151 B. C.

As we have indicated above, it is possible that we are correct in attempting to read the inscription as Egyptian and that it does actually contain the proper name Thutmosis. Should this prove to be the case, we might be able to give a much more circumscribed date to the stele. Should it ever be possible to decipher the whole text, this might give the necessary clues for the interpretation of the relief panel. Dating the Balu'a stele even to the last of the Thutmosids — Thutmosis IV (1413-1405) — would present new problems, none of which, however, are insurmountable. In the present stage of investigation, it is best to leave the numerous questions raised by this interesting document unanswered. The authors of the present study have intended only to offer what evidence they have gathered and to suggest certain possible answers, Beyond this, we feel it inadvisable to go.

NOTES

1 *Cf. Plate I.*

2 *For exact measurements, cf. the proportional diagram published by Horsfield and Vincent,* **RB** 41 (1932), 416-44, *on p.* 423.

3 **Ibid.,** *pls. XI-XII.*

4 *In Breasted's chronology.*

5 *Horsfield and Vincent,* **op. cit.,** *p.* 425.

6 **Ibid.,** *pl. XI.*

7 **Ibid.,** *p.* 424.

8 **Ibid.,** *p.* 423.

9 **Ibid.,** *p.* 444.

10 **Ibid.,** *p.* 424.

11 *Drioton,* **RB** 42 (1933), 353-65.

12 *Crowfoot,* **PEQ** 1934, *pp.* 76-84.

13 *In* **JAOS** 56 (1936), 129, *note* 8; *cf. also* **BASOR** 63 (1936), 11.

14 *Trapezoidal, to be correct.*

15 *We shall see that this was originally the sixth line of the text.*

16 *The Yehawmilik inscription, the stele which Dunand has entitled* **stèle a,** *the Enigmatic Stone of Byblos published by Dunand,* **Byblia Grammata** (*Beirut,* 1945), *pp.* 135 *ff.* ; *etc. The upper register line of* **stèle a** *stands in no relationship to the upper area of the stone. The lower line of the Enigmatic Stone* **(Ibid.,** *pl. XIV) stands in no relationship to the lower unused area of the stone. Both lines stand in relationship to the register which they border.*

17 **The Archeology of Palestine** (*Penguin,* 1960), *p.* 186.

18 **PEFQ** 1935, *pp.* 128-40.

19 **PEFQ** 1937, *pp.* 43-58.

20 *Weill,* **Rev. d'Égyptologie** 3 (1938), 81-89.

21 *Alt,* **Palaestinajahrbuch** 37 (1940), 29-43.

22 *Van Zyl,* **The Moabites** (*Leiden,* 1960), *pp.* 31, 110 *ff.*

23 *We take this opportunity of thanking the authorities for the facilities afforded and the time put at our disposal by the officials of the Museum and the Department of Antiquities of Jordan.*

24 *Horsfield and Vincent say that they made "nombreux essais tentés par des lumières différentes"* **(op. cit., p.** 424). *This time we conducted our examination from* 0700 *in the morning to about* 1030, *then again at full noonday time, again in the middle of the afternoon about* 1600, *and again at dusk before the sun had definitely sunk. At other times we returned to the stele in the late morning and in the early afternoon. From such varied views of the stele we came finally to determine what could safely be accepted as objective and not due either to a particular light-incidence or a definite stage of light intensity.*

25 *Crowfoot,* **op. cit.,** *p.* 83.

26 *Cf. the section dealing with the inscription for details.*

27 *Cf. Plate I.*

28 *Cf.* **RB** 41 (1932), *pls. XI and XIII, and fig.* 5 *on p.* 425. *Horsfield and Vincent's photograph was reproduced by Crowfoot* **(op. cit.).** *Their drawing of the inscription was repro-*

duced by Gaster (**op. cit.**) and, with certain modifications, by Weill (**op. cit.**). A fresh attempt at transcription does not seem to have been made since Horsfield and Vincent's time.

29 For the sake of easy reference we have numbered the signs from left to right. This does not reproduce the original order as many have disappeared throughout all registers. In the following commentary, we make observations only on those which call for such. Throughout our fig. A, we have indicated the position of original characters by parallel lines in parentheses.

30 In giving references to the latter, we use Dunand's code-numbers. References to the sign of the Balu'a text are given according to register and number: III-2, etc.

31 *Cf.* **stèle a**, 8, 2-3, *for instance.*

32 *Cf. note* 11, *above. The relief panel was also examined by Miss Olga Tufnell who visited 'Amman shortly after the authors. A comparison of results between us has cleared up many details.*

33 *It is possible that the artist had in mind the conical cap of north Syrian style found in such numbers on statuettes at Byblos and other sites. The decorated leaf of a dagger handle from Byblos actually portrays this headdress with a double line, indicating a band running around the top just below the knob*; *Dunand*, **Fouilles de Byblos II** (*Paris*, 1950-58), *pl.* 144, *no.* 5.

34 *A remarkably similar figure is found on an uninscribed stele, now in Cairo, which may have been intended for a Syrian resident of Egypt. This stele dates to the Empire period and shows the goddess Qadesh in the center flanked by two male deities. The figure on the left wears the same costume as the Balu'a god and holds a staff in one hand. The concensus of opinion seems to be that this deity represents Seth; cf. Potratz*, **Orientalia** 31 (1962), *pl.* 82, *no.* 25*; Pritchard*, **The Ancient Near East in Pictures** (*Princeton*, 1954), *p.* 304, *no.* 470, *and references quoted there.*

35 *Naville*, **Deir el Bahari.** 6 *vols.* (*London*, 1894-1908), *IV, pl.* 106*; holding a* **khepesh**-sword: *Lefevbre*, **ASAE** 27 (1927), 19-30, *pl.* 1*; holding scepters: Hamada*, **ASAE** 38 (1938), 217-30, *pl.* 30 (*see our figs.* 4-5).

36 *Drioton*, **op. cit.**, *p.* 354. *The stele was very closely examined at this point and several drawings made at different times of the day. The orb in the crook of the head of the* **was**-*scepter is definitely outlined by a trench. There are other trenches, one vertical and one horizontal, in the approximate positions of the handle and cross-bar of an* **ankh**-*sign. We should properly expect, however, that these trenches would be double, causing the handle and cross-bar to stand out in relief and that the orb would be instead a double circle to represent the loop of the* **ankh**-*sign. As it stands, the supposed* **ankh**-*sign is merely shown by incised lines and is not done in relief as is the rest of the panel. It may be that the supposed* **ankh**-*sign is made up only of channels left between the king's hands and the scepter and hand of the god. There are two small raised portions in this space which seem to indicate that the channels have some purpose. On the basis of our examination of the stele, we cannot accept the conclusion that this is an* **ankh**-*sign. Comparing these traces with the* **ankh**-*sign held by the goddess, it is obvious that there is no relation between the two. There is ample room for a completed* **ankh**-*sign to have been placed in the god's hand had this been the sculptor's intent. There is, by the way, no question of the king holding something in either hand. This point is quite clear on the stone.*

37 **Ibid.**, *pp.* 355 *ff.*

38 *Drioton's examples are taken from Wreszinski*, **Atlas zur altaegyptische Kulturegeschichte**, II, *pls.* 34, 39-44, 58*b*, 87, 149 *and* 160*a*.

39 *Hoelscher*, **The Excavation of Medinet Habu.** *Vol. IV*, **The Mortuary Temple of Ramses III, Part I** (*Chicago*, 1951), *pl.* 31*b*.

40 *Nelson, et al*, **Medinet Habu I. Earlier Historical Records of Ramses III** (*Chicago*, 1930), *pls.* 18 *and* 35; **ibid.**, *Vol. II* (*Chicago*, 1932), *pl.* 98.

41 *There are some short trenches on the headdress, some of which are visible on the photograph, which show that this is meant to be cloth and, in its original state, must have looked very much like the headdress on the Medinet Habu tile.*

42 *The term "Shasu" is a derivative of the old verb* **šꜣs**, "*durchziehen, gehen*" **(Woerterbuch,** *IV*, 412), *and literally means "those who wander around." It first appears in the Eighteenth Dynasty and seems always to be used as a generic term for beduin. It is now considered probable that Hebrew* **šōsēh**, "*beduin,*" *and Amarna* **suzume**, "*plunderers,*" *were borrowed from the Egyptian term; Lambdin*, **JAOS** 73 (1953), 155, *and Albright*, **BASOR** 89 (1943), *p.* 32, *note* 27.

43 *Gardiner*, **Egyptian Hieratic Texts.** *Part I* (*Leipzig*, 1911), *Papyrus Anastasi I*, 19.1. **Dbḫ** *in this text is the Tubiḫi of the Amarna letters and also appears in the Syro-Lebanese territories of the geographical list of Thutmosis III; Yeivin*, **JEA** 36 (1950), 53.

44 *Papyrus Anastasi I*, 23.6 - 8, *where the Shasu are described as fierce, marauding bandits.*

45 *Keuntz*, **La bataille de Qadech** (*Cairo*, 1928-34), *p.* 330.

46 *Petrie*, **Hyksos and Isrealite Cities** (*London*, 1906), *pl.* 28, *the lower portion of a stele. The text mentions enemies of the "land of Shasu" and then goes on to say that the kin "plundered their mountains." The word for 'mountain" is the common Egyptian term* **ṯs.t** *and should not be translated 'mountain-strongholds" as Petrie. The term rather indicates hill-country in which the Shasu-beduin lived. The stele was found at Tell el Retebah in the Wadi Tumilat but the text gives no indication as to the location of this war. Another reference to the "land of the Shasu" is on an obelisk of Ramses II; cf. note* 79, *below.*

47 *Papyrus Harris I*, 76.10 : "*I overthrew* **S'r** *of the Shasu-tribes.*"

48 *Breasted*, **Ancient Records of Egypt,** *III*, *sects.* 85-86.

49 *A relief from the time of Ramses II has been a source of difficulty for some time. This shows a prisoner wearing the headdress in question, but the accompanying inscription breaks off at the end:* **ꜥꜣ n ḫrwy.w n Š**..., "*Chief of the enemies of the Sh . . .*" *Scholars are divided as to whether the last word should be restored* **Š(sw)**, "*Shasu,*" *or* **Š(krš)**, "*Shekelesh.*" *There is hardly room for the latter in the inscription; cf. Pritchard,* **Ancient Near East in Pictures,** *no.* 9. *Wainwright's suggestion that the scribe had run out of room, having intended to write* **Škrš**, *is unconvincing; cf. note* 51, *below.*

50 **ASAE** *II* (1911), 58-59, *pl.* 4, *no.* 13.

51 **JEA** 47 (1961), 83 *ff. Wainwright also suggests that all examples of this headdress from the time of Seti I onward actually represent the Shekelesh-Teresh group who, he says, seem to have originated in Lydia and Caria. After the manuscript of this article had gone to press, a detailed study on the Shekelesh-Shasu problem by E. Wente appeared in* **JNES** 22 (1963), 167 *ff. He presents sufficient evidence bearing on this problem to answer our own question relative to the identity of the headdress of the Balu'a king* (*above, pp.* 14-15). *There seems to be no doubt that the headdress should be attributed to the Shasu. Wente's statements, based on a close examination of all the original reliefs* **in situ,** *certainly supercedes all previous statements made on this subject. We willingly accept Wente's conclusions as*

the answer to a perplexing problem which has been raised for half a century and which may eventually be of great value in estabilshing more clearly the identity of the Balu'a king.

52 *The fact that in some cases (fig. 2c) they carry two spears also points to these people being part of the Sea Peoples;* **ibid,** *pp.* 73-74.

53 *Pritchard,* **op. cit.,** *nos.* 6-7.

54 *Drioton,* **op. cit.,** *pp.* 354-55. *One detail in the sash on the Balu'a goddess — the two holes which seem to be purposely placed on either side of the middle — cannot be found in any Egyptian example. These may be accidental or an attempt to reproduce some kind of decoration; examples from Egyptian paintings rarely show a spotted design. It should also be pointed out that on the photograph, the ends of the sash are apparently joined by a horizontal line. On the stele, however, there is no thrench at this point and this apparent curved line is made up of natural furrows in the stone.*

55 *Steindorff,* **ASAE** 38 (1938), *pls.* 116, 119.

56 *Portrayed here are Mutemwiya, the mother of Amenhotep III, and his principle wife Queen Teye. Two of their daughters also wear a similar costume on a cameo; Hayes,* **The Scepter of Egypt.** *Vol.* 2 (*New York,* 1959), *fig.* 147. *This costume was still in use for goddesses in the Persian Period; Fakhry,* **ASAE** 40 (1940), *pl.* 106.

57 *"Anat, Mistress of Heaven," appears wearing this crown in an Egyptian temple relief, probably from Tanis; Cooney,* **Five Years of Collecting Egyptian Art,** 1951-56 (*Brooklyn,* 1956), *pp.* 27-28, *pls.* 51-52. *Though the lower half of the relief is missing, Anat also seems to be wearing the same dress as the Balu'a goddess. The goddess Astarte is also found with this crown; Leclant,* **Syria** 37 (1960), *pl.* 1 (*an Egyptian relief and Syrian cylinder seal*), *pl.* 2*b* (*Egyptian relief*), *p.* 31, *fig.* 10 (*Egyptian stele*). *Since there is nothing on the Balu'a stele to suggest the identity of this goddess, we can only point out these examples without attempting to suggest that Anat or Astarte is shown on the stela. The Egyptian goddess Satis appears with this crown in Empire times; Bruyère,* **Les fouilles de Deir el Medineh** (1934-1935), *Part III* (*Cario,* 1939), *fig.* 81, *and Cerny,* **BIFAO** 27 (1927), 159-203, *pl.* 2. *Finally, on a stele from the time of Ramses II found at Beth-Shan, a Canaanite goddess appears with this crown, wearing a sheath dress and holding an* **ankh**-*sign in one hand, a* **was**-*scepter in the other; Rowe,* **Topography and History of Beth Shan** (*Philadelphia,* 1930), *pp.* 32-33.

58 *Though the photograph seems to show something at the ends of this crescent, a minute examination of the stele at this point showed nothing. It is a simple crescent, logically the moon.*

59 *The center break is not visible on the photograph, but is obvious enough on the stele to be considered a characteristic of this symbol. The fork on the left prong was visible only at a certain time of the day, but was very clear. None was visible at any time on the right prong. A minute examination of the stele at this point — it is badly weathered here — showed that this is not just the simple crescent-disc motive used commonly in religious iconography throughout western Asia. The exact nature of the crescent-tips ecapes us.*

60 *Aimé-Giron,* **ASAE** 40 (1940), 447 *ff. pl.* 42.

61 *A moon and crescent also appear on the stele of Amrit* (*Pritchard,* **op. cit.,** *no.* 486) *and this symbol is found everywhere on cylinder seals throughout the Semitic-speaking world. But again we must note that the symbol on the Balu'a stele could be something else.*

62 *Drioton,* **op. cit.,** *p.* 361.

63 *Horsfield and Vincent*, **op. cit.,** *fig.* 4. *pls.* 11-12.

64 *It must be noted again that our photograph shows certain apparent lines which do not exist on the original stele and, in the case of the facial features, our drawing is closer to the original than the photograph. Our photograph was constantly compared with both the relief and the inscription so as to enable us to differentiate between shadows on the photograph and real trenches left by the sculptor. There are thus several details which appear to be present on the photograph which do not actually exist.*

65 *After the photograph in Hamada*, **op. cit.,** *pl.* 30.

66 *Cf. Posener*, **De la divinité du pharaon** (*Paris*, 1955), *Chap. III.*

67 *This scene recurs with almost monotonous regularity throughout Hatshepsut's mortuary temple at Deir el Bahari. The contexts in which this scene appears are quite varied and one gains the impression that Hatshepsut, in reality a usurper, was establishing her right to rule by the mere argument of repitition.*

68 *Notably:* (1) *the ring just below the knob of the god's crown*, (2) *the Semitizing facial features*, (3) *the crudely done* **ankh**-*sign in the goddess' right hand*, (4) *the two symbols over the shoulders of the king and* (5) *the constant violation of all the canons of proportional representation in all three figures. To these may be added the possible attempt to reproduce Egyptian characters in the inscription.*

69 *Horsfield and Vincent*, **op. cit.,** *p.* 444.

70 *Drioton*, **op. cit.,** *p.* 355.

71 *A narrow border appears, for example, in* **Medinet Habu III,** *pl.* 179 (*Ramses III*) *and broad borders appear in the Nineteenth Dynasty.*

72 *Cf. note* 68, *above.*

73 *Drioton*, **op. cit.,** *pp.* 260, 365.

74 *Glueck*, **The Other Side of the Jordan** (*New Haven*, 1940), *Chap. V, gives a summary of his work.*

75 *Some of this material is as yet unpublished. For a general statement, see Harding*, **The Antiquities of Jordan** (*London*, 1959), *pp.* 32-33, 63, 73, *and* **PEF Annual** *VI* (1953), 14. *Preliminary notes on the Amman temple are in* **PEFQ** 1958, 10-12, *and* **ADAJ** 3 (1956), 80*; part of the hoard of foreign objects from this temple is published in Vol. IX of* **ADAJ.** *A tomb of the Middle Bronze period is published by Dajani*, **ADAJ** 2 (1953), 75-77. *The Madaba finds and a Middle Bronze age tomb are published by Harding in* **PEF Annual** *VI* (1953). *For the Late Bronze city at Deir 'Alla, see note* 92, *below. Finally, a new Late Bronze-Early Iron tomb and a new Hyksos tomb have just been discovered at 'Amman* (*Spring*, 1963).

76 *The major studies on these lists sre Simons*, **Egyptian Topographical Lists Relating to Western Asia** (*Leiden*, 1937)*; Jirku*, **Die aegyptischen Listen Palaestinensischer und Syrischen Ortsnamen** (*Leipzig*, 1937)*; Noth*, **ZDPV** 60 (1937), 183-97, 198-239*;* 61 (1938), 26-65, 277-304*;* 64 (1941), 39-74. *cf. now Astour*, **JNES** 22 (1963), 220-41.

77 *Simons*, **op. cit.,** *List XXII*, 10 *and p.* 70. *This short list is a traditional collection of foreign "conquests" with no meaning in reality. The Egyptian frontier was in south Syria in the reign of Ramses II. Egyptian kings of the post-Empire age were still claiming victories over Khatti, a nation which had ceased to exist at the beginning of the Twentieth Dynasty.*

78 *Simons*, **op. cit.,** *p.* 219. *However. cf. Albright*, **AASOR** 6 (1926), 19, *and* **BASOR** 125

(1952), 9, *note* 7; *Jirku*, **op. cit.,** *p.* 15, *note* 5. *The place referred to may be Tell Dibbân in the Jordan Valley.*

79 *Montet*, **Kemi** *V* (1936), *pl.* 3.

80 *Erichsen*, **Papyrus Harris I. Hieroglyphische Transkription** (*Brussels*, 1933), *p.* 93, *lines* 76, 9-10 *of the papyrus.*

81 *Breasted*, **Ancient Records of Egypt** *III*, *sect.* 404; *Burchardt*, **Die altkanaanaeischen Fremdworte und Eigennamen im Aegyptischen** 2 *vols.* (*Leipzig*, 1909-10), *II*, *no* 766; *Albright*, **Vocalization of the Egyptian Syllabic Orthograpy** (*New Haven*, 1934), *V*, *A*, 12.

82 *While Egyptian* **S'r** *corresponds phonetically to the Semitic term, nothing in either of these passages is any help in locating this area geographically. However, we see no objection to an identification with the mountainous area south of the Dead Sea. Certainly "This mountain of* **S'r**" *on the obelisk of Ramses II can be taken thus. The* **S'r** *of Papyrus Harris I, which has the ethnic determinative rather than the foreign place determinative, would indicate "Sierites," or the inhabitants of these mountains. A further argument in favor of this interpretation is that in both inscriptions these people are defined as "Shasu," whom we find as nomadic highlanders in other Egyptian texts; cf. note* 46, *above.*

83 *Papyrus Anastasi VI*, 54-57; *Gardiner*, **Late Egyptian MIscellanies** (*Brussels*, 1937), *p.* 76; *Caminos*, **Late Egyptian Miscellanies** (*London*, 1954), *p.* 293. 2

84 *Caminos*, **op. cit.,** *p.* 294; *Wilson, in Pritchard* (*ed*), **Ancient Near Eastetn Texts Relating to the Old Testament** (*Princeton*, 1950), *p.* 259*a*, *note* 3.

85 *Burchardt*, **op. cit.,** *no* 196; *Albright*, **Vocalization,** *no. III*, *A*, 21.

86 *Kraeling*, **Rand McNally Bible Atlas** (*New York*, 1956), *p.* 116. *Glueck and Albright locate Edom on the eastern side of Arabah in the area from Wadi el-Hesa to the edge of the Negev;* **BASOR** 55 (1934), 3-17; **JPOS** 15 (1935), 187-88.

87 *For completeness' sake, we should also mention the two references to* **Yrdn,** *"Jordan," that is, the Jordan valley, found in Egyptian texts. The first is an almost illegible stele of Seti I found at Beth Shan which refers to the "mountain of Jordan," probably the Gilead range on the east side of the Jordan river; Rowe,* **Topography and History of Beth Shan,** *pp.* 29-30. *The second reference is Papyrus Anastasi I*, 22. 8-23. 1, *which mentions the "stream of Jordan"; Gardiner*, **Egyptian Hieratic Texts I,** *p.* 24.

88 *Cf. note* 75, *above.*

89 *Harding*, **The Antiquities of Jordan,** *p.* 38, *pl.* 4; **PEF Annual** 6 (1953), *pl.* 5, *nos.* 215-16, 219.

90 **Ibid :,** *pp.* 14 *ff.*, *pl.* 2, *nos.* 109-10.

91 *Egyptian scarabs have also been found in tombs dating before and after the Empire period: Dajani*, **ADAJ** 2 (1953), 75-77, *and* 66-69; **ADAJ** 1 (1951), 48.

92 *Franken*, **VT** 11 (1961), 361-72, *pl.* 5.

93 *Dates of Egyptian rulers taken from Gardiner*, **Egypt of the Pharaohs** (*Oxford*, 1961).

INDEX TO FIGURES

PLATES II — VI

Fig. A: The inscription panel as transcribed by M. Martin and W. Wsrd.

Fig. B: The relief panel as transcribed by M. Martin and W. Ward.

Fig. C: The inscription and relief panels as transcribed by Horsfield and Vincent.

Fig. 1: The Double Crown
- (a) from the Balu'a stele
- (b) Naville, **Deir el Bahari** I, pl. 11 (Thutmosis II)
- (c) **Ibid.**, pl. 108 (Hatshepsut)
- (d) Ranke, **The Egyptian Collection of the University Museum**, fig. 2 (Ramses II).
- (e) Murray, **Egyptian Sculpture**, pl. 30.1 (Ramses IV).

Fig. 2: The Shasu Headdress, etc.
- (a) The Medinet Habu tile (Rameses III).
- (b) Wreszinski, **Atlas** II, pl. 160a (Ramses III).
- (c) **Medinet Habu I**, pl. 35.
- (d) **Ibid.**, pl. 18.
- (e) **Ibid.**, II, pl. 98.
- (f) Wreszinski, **Atlas** II, pl. 34 (Seti I).

Fig. 3: Sheath Dress and Sash
- (a) Davies, **The Tomb of Menkheperresonb**, etc., pls. 41, 43. (Mutemwiya, mother of Amenhotep III).
- (b) Fakhry, **ASAE** 43 (1943), pl. 40 (Teye, wife of Amenhotep III).
- (c) Smith, **Art and Architecture of Ancient Egypt, pl.** 141a, (from tomb of Tutankhamon).
- (d) **Ibid.**, pl. 151 (wife of Tutankhamon).
- (e) Papyrus of Ani, pl. 20.

Fig. 4: Lefebvre, **ASAE** 27 (1927), pl. 1.

Fig. 5: Hamada, **ASAE** 38 (1938), pl. 30.