

Aegyptiaca Vespasiani
Notes on Vespasian's presence on Elephantine

EWA LASKOWSKA-KUSZTAL

Abstract: The article reviews the share that Vespasian had in the decoration of the Temple of Osiris Nesmeti on Elephantine. It is considered in the context of a report of Cassius Dio (LXVI 8, 1) who associated that ruler's entry into Alexandria with an exceptional rise of flooding waters and also in view of the connection of that report with the Egyptian royal ideology which identified the king with the Nile and its flooding.

The Vespasian's decoration of the Temple of Osiris Nesmeti is analyzed in the light of representations of Nilus on the monumental staircase leading to the temple and of the stele of Florence (no. 4021).

Keywords: Vespasian, Nile flooding, Elephantine, Temple of Osiris Nesmeti, Nilus' representations

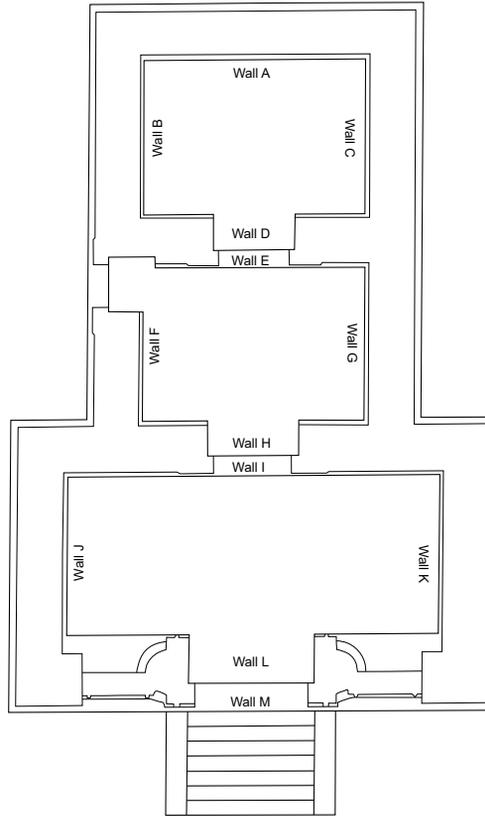
Ewa Laskowska-Kusztal, Instytut Kultur Śródziemnomorskich i Orientalnych PAN, Warszawa;
elaskowska@iksio.pan.pl

The progress in archaeological studies carried out by the German Archaeological Institute on Elephantine and the Swiss Institute for Architectural and Archaeological Research on Ancient Egypt on Elephantine and in Aswan created an opportunity to emphasize the role of those monarchs, whose activity in the region has not been well recognized so far. A recent description of Nero's presence in the Temple of Osiris Nesmeti on Elephantine and in the so-called Temple of Domitian in Aswan¹ has been an inspiration for the following commentaries related to Vespasian, who took possession of the Egyptian throne one year after Nero's death.

Vespasian's attitude to the Egyptian religion, understood as a tool of propaganda legitimizing authority of a foreign monarch as a pharaoh, was reflected until recently in materials from five temples: in Deir el-Chelouit, Medamud, Esna, Kom Ombo and in Deir el-Hagar in Dakhla Oasis.² The reliefs signed with Vespasian's cartouches found in these

¹ Laskowska-Kusztal 2013b: 418–425.

² Zivie 1982: 9, nos 3–5; Drioton 1927: 43–44, no. 346; *Esna* 47B, 97, 457–459, 564; *K.O.* 879, 884–889, 901; Bull 1936: Pl. XXII.



1. Plan of the temple of Osiris Nesmeti (Drawing: Ch. Ubertini).

structures were added to the decorative programme of other monarchs and they affirmed the continued good relations with the Egyptian clergy.

The list of Vespasian's activities in the Egyptian sacral buildings, has lately been expanded with evidence for decoration works performed in the temple of Osiris Nesmeti on Elephantine (**Fig. 1**). The edifice is connected with the cult of the juvenile divinity, the son of Khnum, identified with recurrent Nile flooding.³ The decoration of the sanctuary of the temple, an exceptional structure in terms of its theological message, was carved during the reign of Vespasian (**Fig. 2**).

The interest in the cult of Osiris Nesmeti shown in the times of Vespasian and the works undertaken in the Osiris Nesmeti temple might be connected with the extraordinary circumstances in which the monarch took possession of the Egyptian throne. In Egypt the event was related to an exceptional rise of the Nile which made it possible to claim that the new ruler generated that flooding. This association, obvious from the point of view of both the Egyptian royal ideology and the pharaonic propaganda, which related each monarch with

³ Cf. E. Laskowska-Kusztal in Dreyer *et al.* 2005: 75–82.



2. Temple of Osiris Nesmeti on Elephantine. Vespasian's decoration of the sanctuary (Phot. E. Laskowska-Kusztal).

the recurrent flood,⁴ requires an explanatory note. Vespasian was proclaimed emperor, on the initiative of the prefect Tiberius Julius Alexander, on the 1st of July 69 in Alexandria. He arrived in the city in late autumn of that year and was solemnly greeted at the hippodrome as Soter and Euergetes.⁵ According to Cassius Dio (LXVI 8, 1), the exceptional flooding, corroborating the divine approval of the new monarch, was associated with his triumphal entry into Alexandria.⁶ While discussing the interpretation of Cassius Dio's report, the possibility of connecting the swelling waters of the Nile flooding with the November entry (in AD 69), when the waters should already be subsiding, must be contradicted.⁷ The symbolic association of Vespasian with the revival of the flood waters should be related to the date of his accession to the throne in July. Such interpretation is suggested by T. Schneider, and, recently, by S. Pfeiffer; G. Hölbl connects Vespasian's departure from Alexandria on the 1st of July 70 with the anniversary of that unusual event.⁸

A token of special relationship of Vespasian and the Nile, emphasized by scholars, is his donation of a statue of god Nilus to the *Templum Pacis* in Rome. According to Pliny

⁴ Kurth 1982: 486. On the subject of this concept, cf. Plas 1986: 105–106, 124–125, 154–156, 163, 182–185, 187. On the Roman rulers of Egypt regarded as the grantors of the Nile flooding or associated with the flooding, cf. also Pfeiffer 2010: 135.

⁵ Montevecchi 1981: 157–158; Clarysse 2000: 34–38.

⁶ Malaise 1972: 407–408.

⁷ On the subject of the key dates related to the Nile flooding, cf. Bonneau 1971: 56–61.

⁸ Schneider 1997: 308; Hölbl 2000: 34; Pfeiffer 2010: 111 and n. 491. On the questionable interpretation of the report by Cassius Dio, cf. Lichočka 2015: 96–100.

the Elder (Plin., *Nat. hist.*, XXXVI, 7, 58) it was fashioned from black basalt and it represented a reclining silhouette of Nilus accompanied by sixteen nude male child characters, alluding to the Egyptian system of Nile flooding measurement and symbolizing the ideal height of the flooding measured in cubits.⁹

The depiction of Nilus from the *Templum Pacis* draws attention to two representations of reclining Nilus carved in the lower part of the so-called monumental staircase (*Monumentaltreppe*) on Elephantine, one of which is preserved *in situ* (Fig. 3). Originally, the images marked the perfect Nile flooding as measured on the island.¹⁰ That monumental staircase, regarded as the beginning of the processional route leading from the Nile to the sacral enclosures of Elephantine,¹¹ is now mainly associated with the Temple of Osiris Nesmeti, whose sanctuary was decorated by Vespasian.¹² Both images analyzed by H.G. Martin were dated by him to the times of Marcus Aurelius.¹³ They should be, however, reconsidered in the context of new functional attributions and established chronology of the stages of decoration of the Temple of Osiris Nesmeti itself.

The reliefs from the *Monumentaltreppe*, following the classical conventions and related to the repertoire of the Greek reclining statues of the river god, are neither replicas nor archetypes of Nilus from the *Templum Pacis*.¹⁴ In terms of iconography, they are most closely related to the statue of reclining Nilus with the cornucopia (third or second century BC) from von Sieglin collection, Museum in Stuttgart,¹⁵ or to the Roman marble statue of reclining Nilus with the cornucopia leaning on a hippopotamus from the Graeco-Roman Museum in Alexandria.¹⁶ Referring to Hellenistic and Roman representations of reclining Nilus as analogies to the statue from the *Templum Pacis* and sculptures from the monumental staircase on Elephantine it must be remembered how controversial their dating is among scholars.¹⁷

⁹ According to a comment by D. Bonneau, this type of statue of Nilus first appeared during the reign of Vespasian and commemorated the accession to the throne of the monarch coinciding with the Nile flooding, cf. Bonneau 1964: 337–342. What should also be mentioned here is the interpretation of the sculpture from *Templum Pacis* as referring to the function of a granary of Rome which Egypt performed, cf. Pfeiffer 2010: 119. On the ideal Nile flooding, cf. Jaritz, Bietak 1977: 59, especially n. 58. A statue from the times of Hadrian, stored in the Vatican Museums, is a widely recognized replica of the sculpture from the *Templum Pacis*. It represents a reclining elderly man with the cornucopia, resting on a sphinx and surrounded by sixteen *putti*, cf. Adriani 1961: N194, 52–55, Pl. 89, Fig. 298; Bonacasa 1963: 491, Fig. 628; Ostrowski 1991: 23, Fig. 45; Jentel 1992: Cat. 1, 720.

¹⁰ Cf. Jaritz 1984: 191–194; 1987: 103–107. The reliefs were discussed in Martin 1987: 187–194.

¹¹ Jaritz 1980: 9–12, Fig. 1.

¹² Jaritz, Laskowska-Kusztal, Niederberger forthcoming.

¹³ Martin 1987: 194.

¹⁴ The type of personification of a reclining river goes back to the Greek art tradition in the fifth and fourth centuries BC. It was adopted by Alexandrian artists in the third and second centuries BC and persisted until the Roman Period. The statue founded by Vespasian for the *Templum Pacis* and the statue of Nilus from Vatican – inspired by the former one – referred to the Hellenistic Alexandrian archetypes. These inspirations are connected with the discussion on the dating of the statue from Vatican, cf. Ostrowski 1991: 22–23, 43; Jentel 1992: 720.

¹⁵ Adriani 1961: 55–56, N.195, Pl. 93, Fig. 306; Bonacasa 1963: 491, Fig. 627; Ostrowski 1991: 23, 42; Jentel 1992: Cat. 18.

¹⁶ Savvopoulos, Bianchi 2012: 150–151, no. 47A.(29448); Ostrowski 1991: 23, 43; Jentel 1992: 721.

¹⁷ Jentel 1992: 720, Cat. 1; 721, Cat. 18.



3. Reclining Nile from the monumental staircase on Elephantine (Phot. J. Iwaszczuk).

These controversies include the dating of the Elephantine sculptures proposed by H.G. Martin. However, the chronology of the sculptures should rather be related to the chronology of the Temple of Osiris Nesmeti. The very fact of carving the classical style reliefs on Elephantine, which suggests a correspondence with the founding of the statue of reclining Nilus in the *Templum Pacis* and Vespasian's particular associations with the Nile flooding, implies an affinity of those sculptures with the reign of that monarch. It appears that their affinity with the Temple of Osiris Nesmeti undoubtedly confirms the theological personality of this god as the renewed Nile in the form of a child. Functional relations between the sculptures and the Temple of Osiris Nesmeti, however, support H.G. Martin's concept of the connection between the monumental staircase and the Nile feast *Semasia*.¹⁸

Close relationship of these sculptures with Vespasian as the new Nile would be a substantial argument supporting the view of the decoration activity undertaken during his reign in the Temple of Osiris Nesmeti as an intentional propaganda venture. Moreover, this seems to be a more likely motive for decoration of the temple than an automatic continuation of the works of Nero. It must also be emphasized that in the case of Vespasian, it was an opportunity to exploit ingeniously the cult of Osiris Nesmeti developed by his predecessors, Tiberius and Nero,¹⁹ to benefit his own personal propaganda.

¹⁸ Martin 1987: 194; Hölbl 2004: 36. On the subject of the feast, cf. Bonneau 1971: 58–59.

¹⁹ It is now known that, according to the new data concerning the cult of Osiris Nesmeti provided by the spolia discovered during the excavation works in Aswan, the so-called Temple of Domitian was also connected with the cult of that god, cf. Laskowska-Kusztal 2013b: 423–425. The most recent discovery of a block decorated by Tiberius, found among the spolia excavated in the vicinity of the façade of the Temple of Domitian, confirms the presence of decorations commissioned during the reign of Nero in that temple. It is a crucial piece of evidence to support the hypothesis assuming that the construction and decoration of the so-called Temple of Domitian could be associated with the reign of Tiberius.

The decorative programme completed during the reign of Vespasian in the sanctuary of the Temple of Osiris Nesmeti on Elephantine does not diverge – in terms of composition – from the standard canons. As indicated in the dedication formula, the aim of the monarch was to preserve the representation of Osiris Nesmeti in stone.²⁰ The dedication text placed on the right wall (wall C) and the scene with Osiris Nesmeti situated above²¹ remain the only preserved evidence of the cult of the god officiated by Vespasian.

Vespasian's cartouches accompanying the ruler's representations include the set of names attested also in other temples decorated during his reign (**Fig. 4a**).²² They contain his throne name *Wtwkrtr Kjsjrs* and his son of Re name *W3spsjnjs ntj h̄w*.

Fragments of antithetically laid out royal protocol, separated by the sign of *ankh*, have been preserved on three blocks belonging to the socle of the rear wall (A) (**Fig. 4b**). The symmetrical texts were unquestionably identical which makes it possible to reconstruct the epithets which were used in the titulary. Even though the epithets have their equivalents in Vespasian's royal protocol from Esna,²³ the group of epithets carved on the rear wall leaves no doubt that the texts were a copy of the Nero titulary,²⁴ Vespasian's predecessor in the decoration works on Elephantine and in Aswan. It could indicate that the sculptors started works in the sanctuary of the temple of Osiris Nesmeti directly after Vespasian took the Egyptian throne. It would be an additional argument for the exceptional interest in that temple shown by the royal propaganda.

Left side:

ḥ̄h(.tj) Hr ṯm3-ḥ̄wj [(h̄3s.wt wr ph.tj n̄ht m̄hw šmḥ h̄k3 h̄k3.w)] stp n Nww wr j̄t j̄3w.t n Rḥ [(ns.t?) n[(Gb?)]

May live Horus of strong arms, who defeats [(the foreign lands, great in power, the protector of Lower and Upper Egypt^(a), the ruler of rulers)], chosen from the great primeval ocean, who takes possession of the royal dignity of Re, [(throne?) of [(Geb?)^(b)].

^(a) Epithet not found in imperial protocols. It could be suggested that it replaced the one present in protocols *n̄ht B3k.t*.²⁵

^(b) Assuming that two cartouches with the names of the monarch were placed in the final parts of the protocol it can be concluded that they were the last epithets introduced in the titulary found on this wall.

Right side:

ḥ̄h(.tj) Hr [(ṯm3-ḥ̄wj h̄3s.wt wr ph.tj n̄ht m̄hw)] šmḥ h̄k3 h̄k3.w stp n Nww wr [(j̄t j̄3w.t n Rḥ ns.t n Gb?)... ...]

²⁰ Laskowska-Kusztal 2005: 76, 77, 80, Fig. 22.

²¹ Laskowska-Kusztal 2005: 76, Fig. 23.

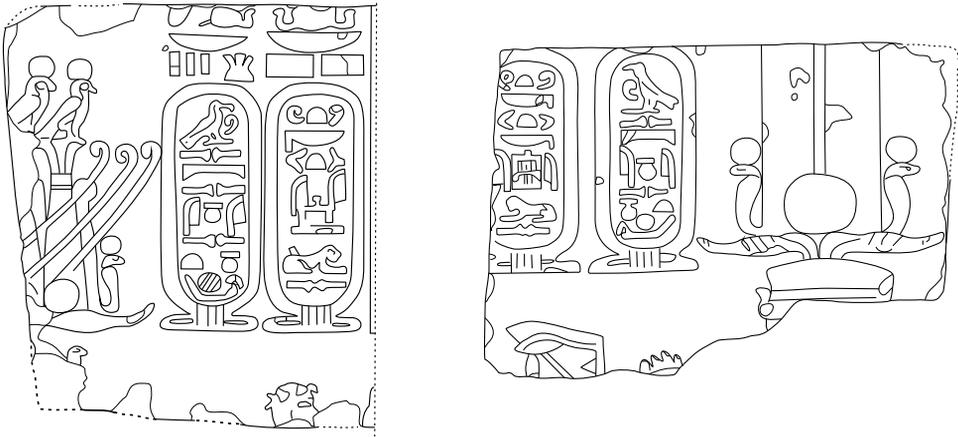
²² Grenier 1989: 37, B2; Hallof 2010: 103–104.

²³ *Esna* 47 B.

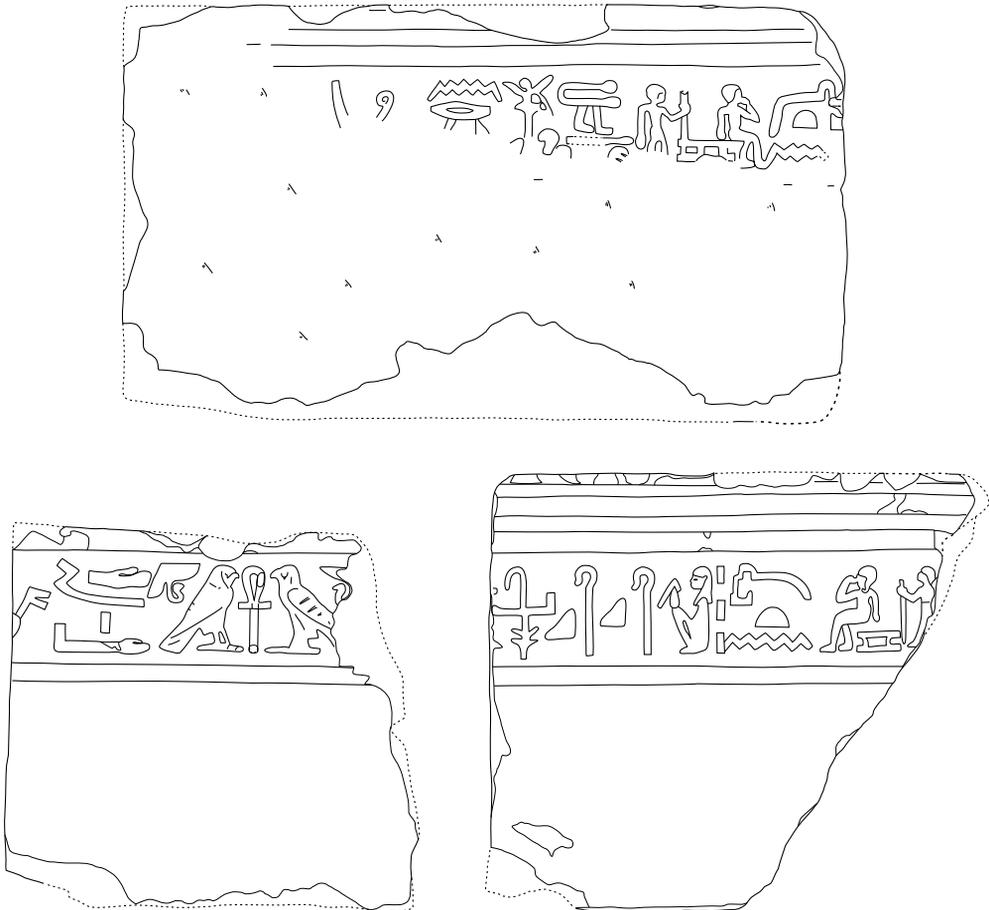
²⁴ Grenier 1989: 84

²⁵ Grenier 1987: 98.

a



b



4. Vespasians cartouches (a) and potocol (b) from the temple of Osiris Nesmeti (Drawing: E. Laskowska-Kusztal).

May live Horus [(of strong arms, who defeats the foreign lands, great in power, the protector of Lower)] and Upper Egypt, the ruler of rulers, chosen from the great primeval ocean, [(who takes possession of the royal dignity of Re, throne of Geb?)].

The protocol from the right side of the rear wall (A) socle continues into a dedication formula situated on the right wall of the sanctuary (wall C), beginning in its northwest corner.²⁶

A similar convention of the development of the royal protocol could be expected on the socle of wall B on the left side of the sanctuary. The symmetry of the decoration would require also on the wall B the presence of a dedication text, related in terms of composition to the one from the socle of wall C. Such a text could refer not to Osiris Nesmeti but to a different god.²⁷ Location of the only preserved fragment of a block belonging to this part of decoration, reconstructed on the basis of epigraphic and architectural clues, corresponds to the suggestions regarding the contents of the text on the socle.

That only preserved block from the lower frieze of the wall B (**Fig. 5**) bears a text referring to Osiris Onnophris:

[... ...] *Wnn-nfr-m3^c-hrw h3t ntr.w* [... ...]

[... ...] *Onnophris victorious, who leads the gods* [... ...]

Osiris Onnophris, the suggested recipient of the dedication text is also the beneficiary of the offering in the second scene from wall C. The scene is adjacent to another one, showing sacrifice offered to Osiris Nesmeti. Taking into consideration the indisputable domination of Khnum and his divine companions in the decorative programme,²⁸ Osiris Onnophris identified with Khnum seems to be the god who this dedication refers to. That would be a repetition of theological concept found in the temple of Isis in Aswan, with the scene of water and incense offering given to the originator of the Nile flooding, Osiris Khnum, lord of Nubia, also given the name of Onnophris.²⁹ It would show a combined power of victorious Osiris who represented the power of renewal, including the renewal of the Nile flooding, with the general function of the protector of the flooding performed by Khnum.³⁰

The act of designating gods related to the Nile flooding as patrons of the temple would be a natural consequence of the identification of Vespasian with the new Nile, claimed in Alexandria, and at the same time, a statement of the affinity between the monarch and the renewed Nile represented by both Osiris Nesmeti and Osiris Onnophris. What should also be referred to is a long-standing suggestion concerning the identification of the monarch with the new Nile invoked in the liturgical practices at the Temple of Osiris Nesmeti.³¹

²⁶ Laskowska-Kusztal 2005: 76–77, Fig. 22.

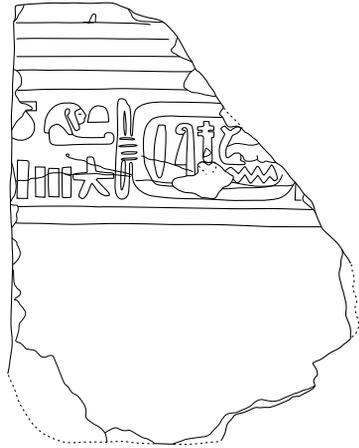
²⁷ That would resemble double dedications of the temples in Dodekaschoinos dedicated to Isis and locally worshipped gods, cf. Hölbl 2004: 100.

²⁸ Khnum as a beneficiary of the offering is confirmed in five from the eight scenes recorded in the sanctuary, cf. Ch. Ubertini in: Dreyer *et al.* 2005: 73, Fig. 19.

²⁹ Bresciani 1978: 112–113, F 13.

³⁰ Zaki 2009: 224–229.

³¹ Laskowska-Kusztal 2013a: 107; Hölbl 2004: 38 and recently the new data concerning the cult of Osiris Nesmeti in the so-called Temple of Domitian in Aswan in Laskowska-Kusztal 2013b: 423–425.



5. Fragment of the lower frieze. Temple of Osiris Nesmeti, wall B (Drawing: E. Laskowska-Kusztal).

The attempt to define Vespasian's extraordinary relations to Osiris Nesmeti and his temple leads to a discussion of widely known interpretations of the functions of *mdw*-staff.³² While recognizing the concept of *mdw* as a symbol of higher gods and the king, i.e. representing their *ka*,³³ it should be emphasized that all *mdw* shared the same features. They fulfilled the function of a portable fetish, a reservoir of primeval vital forces which were a source of power for divine and royal *kas*. This special character is accentuated by departure of processions of different gods' *mdw* related to rituals that served a broadly understood renewal. What should be mentioned here are the festive departures of divine *mdw* participating in rituals performed in *mammisi*, in gods' necropolis, by the sacred lake, i.e. in each place where the original order had to be protected and the primeval act of creation repeated.³⁴ The fact that in the times of Vespasian a particular veneration was shown for a god epitomizing the creative powers accumulated in Khnum's *mdw* draws attention to the royal *mdw* generating everything that emanates from the royal *ka*: energy, food, creative force which causes the country to thrive.³⁵ The associations with the creative potential agglomerated in *mdw*, including the renewal of the Nile, could also be taken into consideration as an explanation for works performed in the temple of Osiris Nesmeti during the reign of Vespasian.

The works commissioned in the times of Vespasian at Elephantine, justified particularly from the point of view of religious propaganda, are documented by another artifact, known by scholars for a long time. It is a bilingual stele signed with Vespasian's cartouches, currently a part of the collection in the museum in Florence (inv. 4021). Its origin cannot

³² The aspects of *mdw* which seem the most essentials for the personality of Osiris Nesmeti were presented in Laskowska-Kusztal 2005: 78–79.

³³ Cauville 2008: 41.

³⁴ Waitkus 1998: 158–163; Cauville 2008: 41–47.

³⁵ Chadeffaud 1982: 151, 161, 163–166; 1984: 1225.



6. Fragment of the stele from the Museum in Florence (inv. 4021) (Bosticco 1972: no. 59).

be established with certainty. First described as stele of Aswan,³⁶ it was later identified as stele of Elephantine due to the presence of patrons of the island: Khnum, Satet and Anuket.³⁷ The state of studies of Elephantine and of excavations in Aswan did not facilitate the identification. Available data indicate close relations between the theological school of Elephantine and the sculpture workshops in Aswan, and therefore suggest that they operated within the circle of the same gods and religious concepts.³⁸ The upper section of the stele displays an exceptional scene with reversed roles between the offering party, usually the king, and the divine beneficiary. In this scene, it is the king who accepts the offering. Khnum, accompanied by Satet and Anuket, offers a gift to Vespasian wearing a double crown and holding a divine *was*-sceptre (**Fig. 6**). The object presented to the king might be controversial. Its shape suggests that it is a vase of water. The vessel has a lid in the shape of a ram's head and resembles large New Year vases which served to collect the waters of the new flooding, attested in the New Kingdom.³⁹ A scene representing Vespasian offering an identical vessel to Khnum is incorporated in the decorative programme of the sanctuary of the temple of Osiris Nesmeti on Elephantine (**Fig. 7**). Its incomplete preservation makes it impossible to conclude whether the texts referred in any way to special divine identities of Vespasian which would describe him as the grantor of that water.

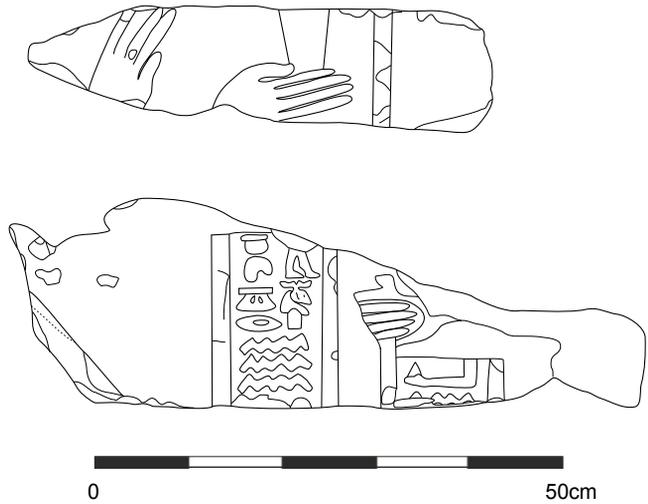
When this scene is compared with the one on the stele it should be noted that the hand holding the gift is placed differently. On the stele, Khnum's hand supports the bottom part of the offered object which might suggest that it is not a vessel but Khnum's *mdw*-staff.

³⁶ Bosticco 1972: 66–67, no. 59.

³⁷ Bingen 1990: 136–137 among others, suggested that it originated on Elephantine. He also commented on the presence of the stele under two catalogue numbers in the publication of Bernard 1989: 172, no. 226; 221–222, no. 249.

³⁸ Laskowska-Kusztal 2007: 56–57.

³⁹ On the subject of connections of these vases with Khnum, cf. Laskowska-Kusztal 2012: 162.



7. Fragments from the wall B.
Sanctuary of the temple of Osiris
Nesmeti (Drawing: E. Laskowska-
Kusztal).

On the other hand, it seems that in the case of *mdw*-staff there should be a longer shaft and its lower part should be visible below his hand.

The Greek text containing the dedication to emperor Vespasian August, situated below the main scene, is also significant.⁴⁰ The special character of the gift offered by Khnum to the king, inherent in both the vase of water and the *mdw*-staff, the divine attribute of the monarch (*was*-scepter) and the content of the dedication text seem to indicate that the stele was founded to venerate the divine aspect of Vespasian being granted the power over the Nile flood waters by Khnum. The credibility of such an assumption is further supported by the suggestion that the stele was dedicated by the strategus Sarapion, the son of Sarapion, i.e. an official of high rank, well informed about the trends in the adopted state propaganda.⁴¹

Doubts and fears of misinterpretation are involved in Vespasian's role in the decoration programmes of the temples in Deir el-Hagar and Medamud. In Dakhla Oasis he is the continuator of the works commissioned under Nero in the temple associated with the cult of the gods conceding abundant harvest and fertility to the country. In this way, he commits himself to a propaganda venture elaborated in a distant part of the Egyptian territory.⁴² Perhaps that act was also motivated by his exceptional personal connection with the Nile flooding. What inspired such supposition was O. Kaper's interpretation of the procession of Niles and goddesses symbolizing farming fields which was carved in Deir el-Hagar during the reign of Vespasian. The procession consists of eighteen characters including sixteen representations of Nile. The scholar expressed the following opinion on them:

⁴⁰ Bernand 1989: 172, no. 226.

⁴¹ Locher 1999: 220. On the subject of the awareness which high Roman officials had of the significance of the Egyptian religion in propaganda, cf. the comment in Pfeiffer 2010: 117, n. 523.

⁴² Kaper 2001; Hölbl 2005: 77, 78, 81, 85, 86.

*The sixteen hapyt recall the sixteen cubit figures which were depicted notably in the reign of Vespasian as a symbol of the ideal height for the inundation.*⁴³

A scene which appears to purposefully refer to the unusual connection Vespasian had with the Nile inundation and, at the same time, with the gods of the cataract who were the patrons of flooding is the one signed with Vespasian's cartouches carved on the socle of the western wall of the courtyard in the temple in Medamud.⁴⁴ It depicts Vespasian fetching vessels of water and flowers for Amun-Re. The accompanying text speaks about the arrival of the new Nile on one hand, and on the other, about fetching the renewed Nile issuing from the caves – *kr.tj* of Elephantine. Vespasian himself is described as the one begotten by the goddess attributed with the term *sr.t*, which on Elephantine was used to define Satet.⁴⁵

In the context of the materials mentioned above, which highlighted the exceptional relations between Vespasian and the Nile flooding, as well as justified the natural interest in the region of the first cataract, it is relevant to refer to Vespasian's blocks discovered during the examination of the ruins of Late Roman fortress Nag al-Hagar located approximately 20km north of Aswan.⁴⁶ The blocks signed with cartouches of that monarch include a fragment of a scene representing the departure from the palace, carved in raised relief, supposedly coming from the screen, and a fragment of outer wall decoration carved in sunken relief and covered with thick plaster. Considered in the context of the columns used for the construction of the fortress, perhaps coming from the same temple, the blocks imply that it was a monumental structure, most probably with a pronaos lined with a column façade with screens. Two Greek inscriptions documented by F.L. Griffith, placed on one of the columns, one above the other, are essential for the identification of the temple. They come from the sixth and eighth year of Vespasian's reign and connect the fragments with the temple of Sobek and its priests.⁴⁷ The temple was most probably located relatively close to the place where the fort was erected. The divine patron of the temple indicated by the above-mentioned texts could imply that the edifice from Nag al-Hagar might have been incorporated into the context of Vespasian's interest in the cult of the Nile and his personal connection with the Nile inundation.⁴⁸

It seems that the objects mentioned in this paper, related to Vespasian's reign, could be regarded as a reflection of a particular means of the royal propaganda created in Alexandria. The analysis of the Alexandrian issues of coins performed by Barbara Lichočka⁴⁹ is an essential contribution to the search for the connections of Vespasian's works in Egyptian temples with his personal identification with the renewed Nile.

⁴³ Bull 1936: Pl. XXII; Kaper 2001: 74, especially nn. 12, 78.

⁴⁴ Drioton 1927: 43–44, no. 346.

⁴⁵ Valbelle 1981: 133, 141.

⁴⁶ Mustafa, Jaritz 1984–1985: 27, 29, 31; Wareth, Zignani 1992: 195.

⁴⁷ Wareth, Zignani 1992: 187; Bernand 1989, 115, no. 174.

⁴⁸ On the subject of Sobek's connection with the Nile flooding, cf. Zaki 2009: 234–235.

⁴⁹ Lichočka 2015.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Professor Tomasz Derda for consultations related to my studies of works of Roman emperors Nero and Vespasian on Elephantine and in Aswan and Dr. Horst Jaritz for his support in my research on Ptolemaic and Roman Elephantine as well as for our never-ending discussions.

I express my gratitude to Dr. Cornelius von Pilgrim and Dr. Wolfgang Müller, who carry out research in Aswan for the Swiss Institute, for providing me with an opportunity to study an important block discovered in season 2013/2014 at the site.

(Translation: B. Majchrzak)

Bibliography

- Adriani, A. 1961: Repertorio d'Arte dell'Egitto Greco-Romano A/II, Palermo
- Bernand, A. 1989: De Thèbes à Syène, Paris
- Bingen, J. 1990: L'épigraphie grecque d'Hermonthis à Philae, *CdE* LXV/129, 129–159
- Bonacasa, F. 1963: Nilo, [*in:*] *EAA* V, 489–493
- Bonneau, D. 1964: La crue du Nil I. Ses descriptions, ses explications, son culte, d'après les auteurs grecs et latins et les documents des époques ptolémaïque, romaine et byzantine, Paris
- Bonneau, D. 1971: Les fêtes de la crue du Nil. Problème de lieux, de dates et d'organisation, *RdE* 23, 49–65
- Bosticco, S. 1972: Museo Archeologico di Firenze. Le Stele Egiziane di Epoca Tarda, Roma
- Bresciani, E. 1978: Assuan. Il tempio tolemaico di Isi, Pisa
- Bull, L. 1936: Appendix, [*in:*] Winlock, H.E., Ed Dakhleh Oasis, New York, 66–77
- Cauville, S. 2008: Le bâton sacré d'Hathor, [*in:*] Waitkus, W. (Ed.), Diener des Horus. Festschrift für Dieter Kurth zum 65. Geburtstag, *Aegyptiaca Hamburgensia* 1, Gladbeck, 41–65
- Chadefaud, C. 1982: Les statues porte-enseignes de l'Égypte ancienne (1580–1085 avant J.-C.). Signification et insertion dans le culte du Ka royal, Paris
- Chadefaud, C. 1984: Stabträgerstatuen, [*in:*] *LÄ* V, 1224–1232
- Clarysse, W. 2000: Les empereurs visitent l'Égypte, [*in:*] Willems, H., Clarysse, W. (Eds), Les Empereurs du Nil, Leuven, 34–38
- Dreyer, G., Bommas, M., Budka, J., Duttonhöfer, R., Jeuthe, C., Jones, J., Kopp, P., Kroll, H., Laskowska-Kusztal, E., Pasternak, R., Pilgrim, C. von, Raue, D., Schaten, S., Seidlmayer, S., Ubertini, Ch. 2005: Stadt und Tempel von Elephantine 31./32. Grabungsbericht, *MDAIK* 61, 13–138
- Drioton, É. 1927: Rapport sur les fouilles de Médamoud (1926). Les inscriptions, *FIFAO* IV/2, Le Caire
- Grenier, J.-Cl. 1987: Le protocole pharaonique des empereurs romains (Analyse formelle et signification historique), *RdE* 38, 81–104
- Grenier, J.-Cl. 1989: Les titulatures des empereurs romains dans les documents en langue égyptienne, *PapBrux* 22, Bruxelles

- Hallof, J. 2010: Schreibung der Pharaonennamen in den Ritualszenen der Tempel der griechisch-römischen Zeit Ägyptens 2: Die römischen Kaiser, *SRAT* 4, Dettelbach
- Hölbl, G. 2000: Altägypten im Römischen Reich. Der römische Pharao und seine Tempel I. Römische Politik und altägyptische Ideologie von Augustus bis Diocletian, Tempelbau in Oberägypten, Mainz a/Rhein
- Hölbl, G. 2004: Altägypten im Römischen Reich. Der römische Pharao und seine Tempel II. Die Tempel des römischen Nubien, Mainz a/Rhein
- Hölbl, G. 2005: Altägypten im Römischen Reich. Der römische Pharao und seine Tempel III. Heiligtümer und religiöses Leben in den ägyptischen Wüsten und Oasen, Mainz a/Rhein
- Jaritz, H. 1980: Die Terrassen vor den Tempeln des Chnum und der Satet. *Elephantine* III, *ArchVer* 32, Mainz a/Rhein
- Jaritz, H. 1984: Monumentaltreppe nördlich des Inselmuseums, [*in:*] Kaiser, W. *et al.*, Stadt und Tempel von Elephantine. Elfter/Zwölfter Grabungsbericht, *MDAIK* 40, 191–194
- Jaritz, H. 1987: Monumentaltreppe, [*in:*] Kaiser, W. *et al.*, Stadt und Tempel von Elephantine. 13./14. Grabungsbericht, *MDAIK* 43, 103–107
- Jaritz, H., Bietak, M. 1977: Zweierlei Pegeleichen zum Messen der Nilfluthöhen im Alten Ägypten. Untersuchung zum neuentdeckten Nilometer des Chnum-Tempels von Elephantine (*Strabon*, XVII, I. 48), *MDAIK* 33, 47–62
- Jaritz, H., Laskowska-Kusztal, E., Niederberger, W. forthcoming: Der ptolemäische Satetempel mit seinen Nebenanlagen und die Treppenanlage des Osiris-Nesmeti Tempels, *ArchVer* 127, Mainz a/Rhein
- Jentel, M.-O. 1992: Neilos, [*in:*] *LIMC* VI/1, 720–726
- Kaper, O.E. 2001: Local Perceptions of the Fertility of the Dakhleh Oasis in the Roman Period, [*in:*] Marlow, C.A., Mills, A.J. (Eds), *The Oasis Papers 1: The Proceedings of the First Conference of the Dakhleh Oasis Project*, *Dakhleh Oasis Project: Monograph* 6, Oxford, 70–79
- Kurth, D. 1982: Nilgott, [*in:*] *LÄ* IV, 485–489
- Laskowska-Kusztal, E. 2007: L'Isis d'Assouan et son armée, *EtudTrav* XXI, 55–68
- Laskowska-Kusztal, E. 2012: Autour de la triade d'Éléphantine, *EtudTrav* XXV, 159–170
- Laskowska-Kusztal, E. 2013a: The Contribution of Graeco-Roman Elephantine to the Theology of the First Cataract Region, [*in:*] Raue, D., Seidlmayer, S.J., Speiser, P. (Eds), *The First Cataract of the Nile. One Region – Diverse Perspectives*, *SDAIK* 36, Berlin-Boston, 103–109
- Laskowska-Kusztal, E. 2013b: Nero at Elephantine, *EtudTrav* XXVI, 417–425
- Lichočka, B. 2015: *Aegyptiaca Vespasiani*. Nilus on Vespasian's Alexandrian Coins. Evidence for the Tradition of the Legitimization of Power, *EtudTrav* XXVIII, 91–104
- Locher, J. 1999: Topographie und Geschichte der Region am ersten Nilkatarakt in griechisch-römischer Zeit, *AfP* 5, Stuttgart-Leipzig
- Malaise, M. 1972: Les conditions de pénétration et de diffusion des cultes égyptiens en Italie, *EPRO* 22, Leiden
- Martin, H.G. 1987: Zwei Reliefs mit Flußgöttern auf Elephantine, *MDAIK* 43, 187–194

- Montevecchi, O. 1981: Vespasiano acclamato dagli Alessandrini. Ancora su P. Fouad 8, *Aegyptus* LXI/1–2, 155–170
- Mustafa, M. ed-Din, Jaritz, H. 1984–1985: A Roman Fortress at Nag' El-Hagar. First Preliminary Report, *ASAE* LXX, 21–31
- Ostrowski, J.A. 1991: Personifications of Rivers in Greek and Roman Art, *Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego CMLXIV, Prace Archeologiczne* 47, *Studia z Archeologii Śródziemnomorskiej* 12, Kraków
- Pfeiffer, S. 2010: Der römische Kaiser und das Land am Nil. Kaiserverehrung und Kaiserkult in Alexandria und Ägypten von Augustus bis Caracalla (30 v.Chr.–217 n.Chr.), *Historia Einzelschriften* 212, Stuttgart
- Plas, D. van der 1986: L'hymne à la crue du Nil I. Traduction et commentaire, *EgUit* 4, Leiden
- Savvopoulos, K., Bianchi, R.S. 2012: Alexandrian sculpture in the Graeco-Roman Museum, Graeco-Roman Museum Research Center, *Bibliotheca Alexandrina*, Alexandria
- Schneider, T. 1997: Vespasian, [in:] Schneider, T., Lexikon der Pharaonen. Die altägyptischen Könige von der Frühzeit bis zur Römerherrschaft, Düsseldorf-Zürich, 307–308
- Valbelle, D. 1981: Satis et Anoukis, Mainz a/Rhein
- Waitkus, W. 1998: Zur Deutung von zwei Besuchsfesten der Göttlichen Stätte (*j3t-ntrjt*) von Edfu, [in:] Gundlach, R., Rochholz, M. (Eds), 4. Ägyptologische Tempeltagung, *ÄAT* 33,2, 1998, 155–174
- Wareth, U.A., Zignani, P. 1992: Nag Al-Hagar. A Fortress with a Palace of the Late Roman Empire. Second Preliminary Report, *BIFAO* 92, 185–210
- Zaki, G. 2009: Le Premier Nome de Haute-Égypte du IIIe siècle avant J.-C. au VIIe siècle après J.-C. d'après les sources hiéroglyphiques des temples ptolémaïques et romains, *MRE* 13, Turnhout
- Zivie, Ch.M. 1982: Le temple de Deir Chelouit I. 1–55, *Inscriptions du propylône et de la porte du temple*, Le Caire