



## SOME REMARKS ON THE TJEMHU LIBYANS<sup>1</sup>

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### ABSTRACT

*The Tjemhu-Libyans are mentioned in Egyptian sources starting with the 6th Dynasty, when they are presented in geographical proximity to the Nubians and meet the Egyptians during exploratory/trading expeditions. Later, the term “Tjemh” was used to generically indicate the Libyan-land and to indicate “the west.” Representations of Tjemhu dancers appear in Egyptian temples show the persistence of contacts between the Egyptians and the Tjemhu-Libyans, despite the lack of other clear indications in Egyptian sources. This paper aims to analyze certain Egyptian sources related to the Tjemhu in order to suggest their possible homeland and to clarify their strong connection with Nubian groups.*

### INTRODUCTION

The relationships between the Egyptians and the Libyans are well documented in Egyptian sources, even if in an intermittent way, as Ritner has stated.<sup>2</sup> The discontinuous presence of Libyan groups and their overlapping features are especially observable as regards the Tjemhu-Libyans. They probably settled in the southern Western Desert, very close to Nubian groups, and, at the same time, were strongly connected with the west, to such an extent that the term “Tjemh” was used beginning with the Middle Kingdom to indicate the land of the Libyans.<sup>3</sup>

The first occurrence of the Tjemhu-Libyans dates to the 6th Dynasty, when the Tjemhu appear in the autobiographies of Weni and Harkhuf as a group settled in the southern Western Desert, in geographical proximity to the Nubians.<sup>4</sup> The text of Harkhuf suggests a possible Tjemhu homeland along routes used by the Egyptians for trade at the end of the Old Kingdom. During their movements along caravan tracks and during desert expeditions, the Egyptians had contact with desert people and established with them enduring relationships, confirmed by archaeological data from the Western Desert. The nature of these relationships was unstable, probably depending on circumstances, as the two autobiographies show: in the text of Weni the Tjemhu are allies of the Egyptians, while in that of Harkhuf they are enemies.

The main problem with suggesting the Tjemhu homeland is the lack of a material culture clearly relates to them. In fact, the new discoveries in the Western Desert, especially along caravan tracks, are related to the Egyptians or to groups not surely identifiable with the Tjemhu. Furthermore, these new data are often related to various periods of time, e.g., end of the Old Kingdom/First Intermediate Period or the New Kingdom. Nonetheless, considering together the autobiographies of Harkhuf and the new data from the Western Desert, it is possible

to suppose the routes early used by the Tjemhu nomads and the way they encountered the Egyptians, establishing with them enduring relationships.

In fact, in later times the Tjemhu-Libyans appear again in Egyptian sources, maintaining strong African features, in accord with the suggested homeland, and sharing some customs with the Nubians, such as the dance to be discussed here. It was performed during Egyptian celebrations, as shown both in temple reliefs and in texts relating to the far-wandering goddess: this myth tells that Hathor/Tefnut, as the wandering eye of the sun, left Egypt and roamed the southern desert in the form of a lioness. After the request of Ra, Thoth sought her out and enticed her back to Egypt.<sup>5</sup> The representation of Libyan and Nubian dancers in celebrations relating to that myth, each with their own features, suggests direct observation of their customs by the Egyptians.

The following analysis of Egyptian sources related to the Tjemhu-Libyans, especially the text of Harkhuf and the representations of Tjemhu dancers, will suggest the location of the Tjemhu homeland and examine how relationships between the Egyptians and the Tjemhu-Libyans were established.

### THE AUTOBIOGRAPHIES OF THE OLD KINGDOM

Weni and Harkhuf were officials during the reigns of Tety, Pepy I, Merenra, and Pepy II, and each included an autobiography in his tomb. In his text,<sup>6</sup> Weni states that people “from Tjemh-land” were part of the Egyptian army with Nubians.<sup>7</sup> Harkhuf describes his expeditions to Yam<sup>8</sup> and his raid into the Western Desert to help the ruler of Yam “to smite the Tjemh to the western corner of heaven.”<sup>9</sup> These two autobiographies testify to a dualistic relationship between the Tjemhu-Libyans and the Egyptians late in the Old Kingdom: Weni refers to having led an army comprising Nubians and Tjemhu against the Asiatic Sand

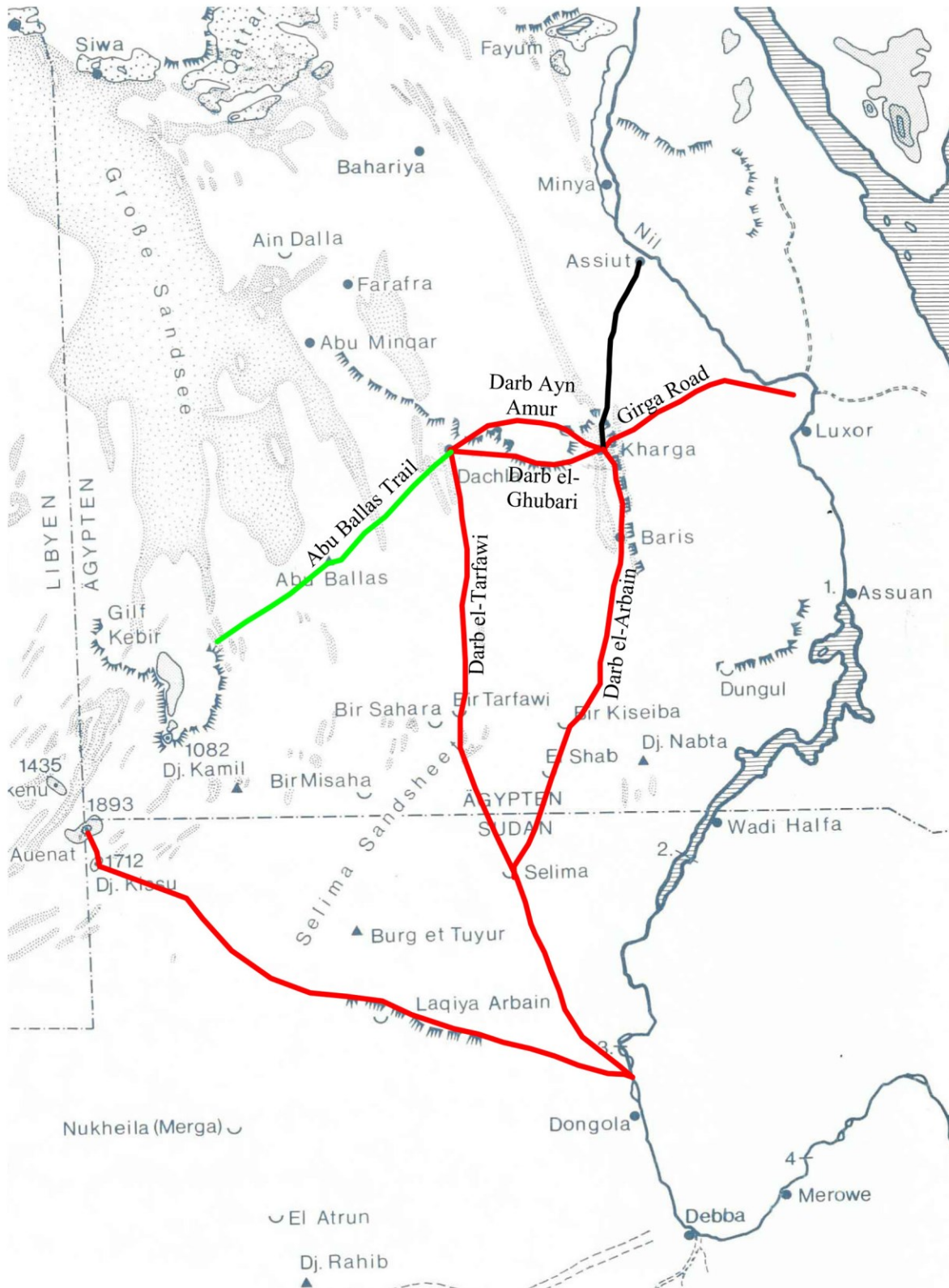


Figure 1: Map of the Western Desert with the caravan routes mentioned in the text. In red, the suggested route of the third expedition of Harkhuf; in green, the Abu Ballas Trail (after Jennerstrasse 8 (eds.), *Tides of the Desert* [Africa Prachistorica 14; Köln 2002], inside front cover as modified by the Author)

Dwellers five times.<sup>10</sup> The presence of Tjemhu soldiers may suggest that the Egyptians had subdued the Tjemhu and the Nubians or else formed an alliance with them that resulted in a relationship of military cooperation during the first part of the 6th Dynasty.

Furthermore, the text of Weni lists the Tjemhu *after* the Nubian groups, thus indicating that the former were geographically close but clearly distinct from the latter. The same conclusion can be inferred from the use of the expression “Tjemeh-land” to indicate the Libyan-land in later sources.<sup>11</sup>

The relationship with the Tjemhu suddenly changed, as the text of Harkhuf shows. Harkhuf declares that he repelled the Tjemhu to the west, probably because their great mobility and the increasing aridity of the environment may have complicated the situation along the frontier with the Nubia. In fact, archaeological research in the Western Desert has demonstrated that it was quite dry and travel through the region was possible only along caravan tracks with stops at water reserves.<sup>12</sup> Along these routes, the Egyptians and the Tjemhu established contacts that were not always peaceful. When the movements of the Tjemhu created problems in the Egyptian relationship with the Nubia or with more distant regions in Africa, such as Yam, the Egyptians did not hesitate to repel them, as Harkhuf states. The possible location of the Tjemhu homeland, suggested by the autobiography of Harkhuf, may explain the reasons for the conflict between the Tjemhu and the Egyptians.

On his third expedition to Yam, Harkhuf traveled from the eighth nome of Upper Egypt (the Thinite nome or *t3 wr*) and went upon the “Oasis Road,” which could be the Girga Road, a caravan route from the Qena Bend area, close to Abydos, to Kharga<sup>13</sup> that passes through the Darb el-Arbain, leading to Nubian desert. The “Oasis” of the inscription may also be Dakhla, site of an important Old Kingdom outpost in the Western Desert. This suggestion is supported by archaeological excavations carried out at the site of Balat/Ayn Asil by the Institut français d’archéologie orientale<sup>14</sup> and the Dakhla Oasis Project,<sup>15</sup> as well as by some epigraphic evidence, such as the use of the term *s3 wh3t* in the mastaba of the 6th Dynasty governor of the oasis; during the New Kingdom, this term also indicates Dakhla.<sup>16</sup> Dakhla was connected with Kharga by the Darb Ayn Amur, where epigraphic finds dating to the Old Kingdom have been found,<sup>17</sup> or perhaps by the Darb el-Ghubari, which was in use at least during the Middle Kingdom:<sup>18</sup> the first road is 10 kilometers shorter than the second and has also a water source at Ayn Amur, halfway along the journey.<sup>19</sup> Thus, Dakhla could be the “Oasis” of Harkhuf’s autobiography.

Regardless of the exact identity of the “Oasis,” it was possible to go south from either of these oases, which were connected to each other, using (from Kharga) the Darb el-Arbain<sup>20</sup> or (from Dakhla) the Darb el-Tarfawi in order to reach Selima Oasis,<sup>21</sup> known in the New Kingdom as *hmt hr*, “the Upper Well.”<sup>22</sup> The name of the oasis could preserve memory of the same area as caravan stop in earlier times.<sup>23</sup> From this place the traveler could then proceed toward Yam, as Harkhuf might have done. The identification of the land of Yam is not generally agreed upon even

today,<sup>24</sup> but the site of Kerma, where archaeological excavations<sup>25</sup> have revealed its importance already during the Old Kingdom,<sup>26</sup> might be a suitable suggestion.<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, the boundary of Egyptian control in Lower Nubia during the Old Kingdom was at Buhen, near the second cataract, where an Egyptian settlement especially devoted to copper working has been uncovered.<sup>28</sup> Kerma, beyond the Egyptian boundary on the third cataract, could be the first Nubian “state” that engaged in trade with Egypt.

The suggested reconstruction of the third journey of Harkhuf is especially based on findings dated to or around his time. In addition, it is possible to consider the stela of Iwt from Naqada, dated to the 6th Dynasty and referring to the owner as “overseer of the interpreters of Yam”: this stela could suggest the same way used by Harkhuf to reach Nubia, starting from the Qena Bend.<sup>29</sup>

Harkhuf relates that when he arrived at Yam, he did not find its ruler because he had gone to expel Tjemhu to the west: if the ruler of Yam went westward, he could have traveled along the Laqiya Arbain (where evidence of human populations in contact with Old Kingdom Egypt has been found<sup>30</sup>) and gone toward Gebel el-Uweinat (Figure 1).

Gebel el-Uweinat was known by the Egyptians at least from the reign of Mentuhotep II, when an official inscription, discovered by Mark Borda and Mahmoud Marai, was carved on its eastern side. The text, which includes the cartouche of Mentuhotep, cites two countries: Yam, which offered incense, and Tekhebeten, mentioned for the first time (Figure 2).<sup>31</sup> Tekhebeten might be Gebel el-Uweinat, in which case the inscription records the journey of Mentuhotep II’s officer: from Yam/Kerma to Tekhebeten/Gebel el-Uweinat,<sup>32</sup> using a route already known in the Old Kingdom. Tekhebeten might also be the name of a more distant place, located in the south or west and accessible via Gebel el-Uweinat, which in that case would be only a stop on the route to Tekhebeten.<sup>33</sup>

The suggested role of Gebel el-Uweinat as a caravan stop on routes leading toward the south or west<sup>34</sup> is clearly supported by the Abu Ballas Trail,<sup>35</sup> which connects Dakhla Oasis with the Gilf Kebir, a sandstone plateau about 150 kilometers from Gebel el-Uweinat. The last site (site 00/7) along that way, located about 15–20 kilometers from the Gilf Kebir Plateau, has yielded sherds of storage jars coming from Dakhla,<sup>36</sup> while other ceramic findings along the road indicate its use by the inhabitants of Balat during the Old Kingdom/First Intermediate Period.<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, from the Gilf Kebir it was possible to go southward to Gebel el-Uweinat, passing through the Karkur Tahl, which is located only 80 kilometers from the southern border of the Gilf Kebir.<sup>38</sup> As a matter of fact, the Gilf Kebir was the westernmost point known by the Egyptians at the time of Harkhuf.<sup>39</sup>

Thus, two points might be fixed: first, the possibility that Harkhuf, using the Laqiya Arbain, would drive the Tjemhu to Gebel el-Uweinat; second, the Abu Ballas Trail stops very close to the Gilf Kebir, so the Gilf Kebir/Uweinat fits well with the expression “the western corner of heaven.”

Gebel el-Uweinat and Gilf Kebir were always strongly tied, as demonstrated by the results of the research carried out in the Gilf

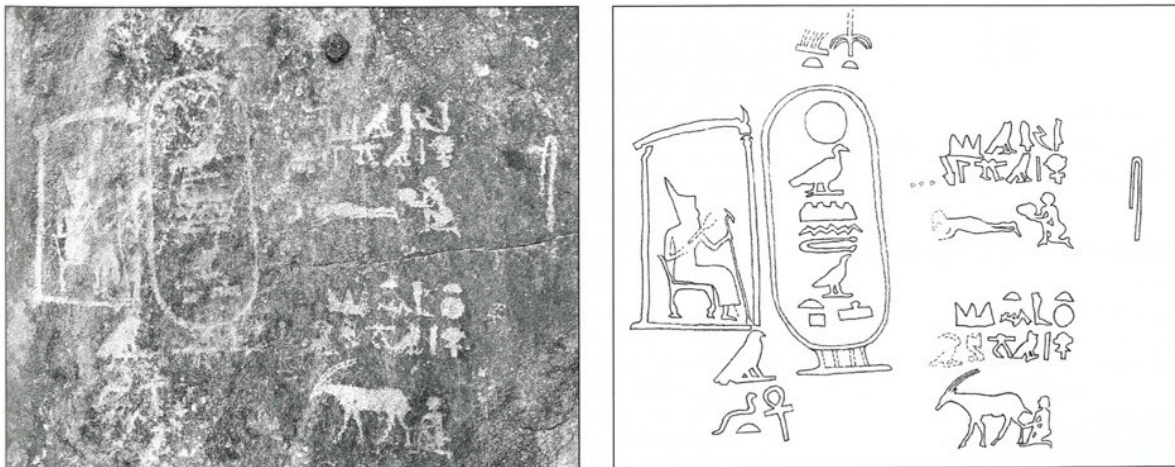


Figure 2: The inscription found in Gebel el-Uweinat (courtesy of Mark Borda)

Kebir by the Arid Climate, Adaptation and Cultural Innovation in Africa (ACACIA) project of Cologne University.<sup>40</sup> Reconstruction of the Holocene environmental conditions in the Gilf Kebir has revealed that it was only temporarily settled owing to the formation in this area of dry playas, which feature water available only for days, weeks, or months.<sup>41</sup> During the early and middle Holocene, the inhabitants of the Gilf Kebir settled permanently in Gebel el-Uweinat and went seasonally to Gilf Kebir, passing through the Karkur Tahl.<sup>42</sup>

Considering the worsening climatic conditions at the end of the Holocene and the abandonment of the Gilf Kebir after about 4800 yr B.P.,<sup>43</sup> people originally living in Gebel el-Uweinat and moving seasonally to Gilf Kebir may have been forced to move from their homeland either toward the Egyptian oases, through the way later known as Abu Ballas Trail, or toward the Nubian Desert, through the way later used by Harkhuf. These caravan routes were also used during historic times:<sup>44</sup> the presence of artifacts with desert associations, such as Clayton Rings,<sup>45</sup> associated with Old Kingdom pottery in Wadi Shaw (along the Laqiya Arbain) and around Dakhla (site 99/38; Meri 95/5)<sup>46</sup> along the Abu Ballas Trail suggests that desert groups, probably including the Tjemhu, used them to move from the west toward the Nile Valley.<sup>47</sup>

The Tjemhu, moving toward Nubia, could have produced social instability that the Egyptians wanted to avoid: thus, Harkhuf helped the ruler of Yam to expel them. The movements of the Tjemhu along the Abu Ballas Trail can be inferred from a graffito showing a bearded hunter that is provisionally compared with figures of the First Intermediate Period.<sup>48</sup> The hunter is probably a Libyan, represented with a pointed beard, patterned skirt, and belt, running with his dogs after having shot his prey. Kuhlmann suggested that he is a “civilized” Libyan hunter, pictured with the typical Egyptian attention to detail.<sup>49</sup>

If Kuhlmann’s suggestion is correct, it is possible that the Egyptians employed Libyans as sentries or guides along the routes they habitually used;<sup>50</sup> if so, how Weni came to have Tjemhu-Libyans in his army can be inferred. The Egyptian policy toward

the Libyans is shown by later sources, some of which suggest their use in the Egyptian administration, especially in Dakhla: it is the case of *Tbktbn*-Libyans, living in Dakhla and serving as hunters and probably informers as they moved freely between the oasis and the surrounding desert areas during the Ramesside Period.<sup>51</sup> Other sources testify to a Libyan presence in the same oasis,<sup>52</sup> probably due to long-lasting contacts between the Egyptians and Libyan groups in that area. The Tjemhu, originally from the Gilf Kebir/Uweinat and moving along the Abu Ballas Trail, were probably the first group to be subjected to assimilation in the Egyptian administration, but Egyptian sources do not offer a clear description of that process.

The suggested assimilation process might not have always been peaceful: the inscription of Meri, dating to the end of the Old Kingdom<sup>53</sup> or the early Middle Kingdom<sup>54</sup> and found along the Abu Ballas Trail, about 30 kilometers southwest of Dakhla (site 95/5), states that Meri went there in order to repulse/search out the “Oasis Dwellers.”<sup>55</sup> These might be the Sheikh Muftah group, the local inhabitants of Dakhla Oasis during the Old Kingdom and the First Intermediate Period. However, this group, whose remains are found only within and around the oasis, did not engage in any conflicts with the Egyptians at Dakhla.<sup>56</sup> Thus, the Tjemhu might be the Oasis Dwellers expelled by Meri, considering that the Abu Ballas Trail connected Dakhla with the Gilf Kebir, the proposed original homeland of the Tjemhu-Libyans.<sup>57</sup>

Later Egyptian sources confirm the location of the Tjemhu-Libyans between the first and second cataract of the Nile: the stela of Setau from Wadi es-Sebua states that he captured Tjemhu to build the temple for Ramesses II.<sup>58</sup>

All the sources presented could suggest the homeland and the movements of the Tjemhu, but the supposed reconstruction here furnished remains hypothetical, since their identification with some groups living in the Western Desert is still lacking. Furthermore, the use of later sources, e.g., the graffito along the Abu Ballas Trail, the inscription of Meri, and the New Kingdom sources, should be considered only as additional indications of what the inscription of Harkhuf and the archaeological data from

the Western Desert show: the Abu Ballas Trail was used for the first time *after* the destruction of the palace of the governor in Balat, so *after* the journeys of Harkhuf, but Dakhla was probably in contact with very distant places during the 6th Dynasty, as documents found *in* the Balat palace testify.<sup>59</sup> The nomadic character of the Tjemhu and the supposed problems their mobility created for the Egyptian state could explain the indication furnished by the inscription of Meri, even if it is dated *after* the inscription of Harkhuf. In the end, the New Kingdom sources could offer a further confirmation to the location of the Tjemhu homeland, transmitted over time.

### THE TJEMHU DANCE

The location of the Tjemhu homeland in the Gilf Kebir/Uweinat area and their continuous movement along caravan tracks used both by the Nubians and the Egyptian might explain the presence of Tjemhu dances in Egyptian sources, a custom particular to the Tjemhu group of Libyans.<sup>60</sup>

The clearest occurrences of Tjemhu dancers are in the Hathor Shrine in the temple of Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahri and in the Festival Hall of the Opet Temple in Luxor. In the first case, a relief shows a group of *Tmhw* dancers wearing feathers on their

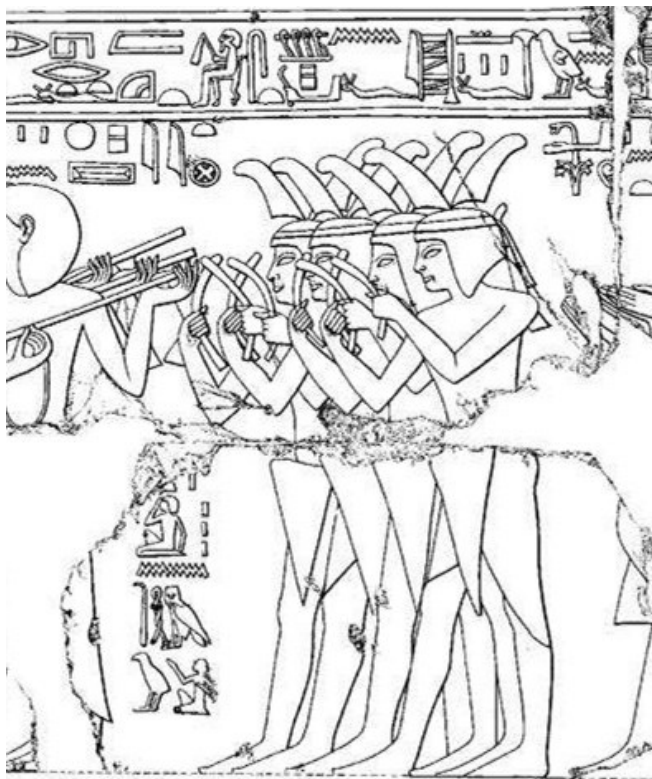


Figure 3: Detail of the celebrants accompanying the procession of the ceremonial barge in the Opet Temple, Luxor (after Epigraphic Survey, *The Festival Procession of Opet in the Colonnade Hall*, Oriental Institute Publication 112 [Chicago: Oriental Institute, 1994], pl. 99).

heads and holding throw sticks, while behind them stand a group of men with the same features; these men beat throw sticks probably to produce rhythm.<sup>61</sup> It is possible that the dancers were Egyptians enacting Libyan customs directly observed during intermittent contacts along the caravan routes, because some of their features, such as the color of the skin and the hair, could be Egyptian.<sup>62</sup>

In the Festival Hall of the Opet Temple, decorated from the reign of Amenhotep III to that of Sety I, Libyan musicians appear, accompanied by the inscription “*Tmhw*,” probably a mistake for “*Tmhw*” (Figure 3).<sup>63</sup> In the same temple, Libyan dancers are represented without indication of their name but with the same features as the Tjemhu dancers at Deir el-Bahri. They are shown with Nubian dancers, accompanying the ceremonial barge during the Opet Festival, in order to declare the sovereignty of the pharaoh over foreign countries, which were always subjugated by the Egyptians.<sup>64</sup>

Literary sources also testify to the association of Tjemhu and Nubian dancers. The texts describing their involvement in these activities are the Hymn to Hathor in Medamud and the Mut Ritual recorded on Papyrus Berlin 3014+3053. In the Medamud hymn, describing celebrations probably part of the 13th Dynasty festival of Montu,<sup>65</sup> the entourage of the returning far-wandering goddess is composed of *Mntyw* and *Styw*-Nubians, who performed a *gsgs* dance,<sup>66</sup> whereas the Papyrus Berlin, a New Kingdom text, adds Tjemhu- and Tjehnu-Libyans welcoming the goddess after her journey. The Tjehnu, the oldest Libyan group mentioned in Egyptian sources,<sup>67</sup> went to Imau for the Nekhebkau feast, bringing game and ostriches as tribute, and the Tjemhu hunted ostriches for the Egyptians, who plucked off the feathers from their backs.<sup>68</sup> After that, the Egyptians made acclamations for the goddess, and the Tjemhu danced for her. The term used for the Libyan dance is a generic one, *ib3*.<sup>69</sup> Figures of the dancers represent the differences: Nubian *gsgs*-dancers jump, while the Libyan *ib3*-dance is characterized by the beating of throw sticks. Such differentiation probably derives from direct observation of foreign dances by the Egyptians during religious celebrations or occasional contacts along the caravan routes.

The involvement of the Libyans in the celebration of the returning far-wandering goddess is demonstrated also by a graffito found at Wadi el-Hol and probably dated to the Middle Kingdom. This shows two men and a cow with a large eye: the upper man, with beard and bobbed hair, suggests a Libyan, while the lower could be an Egyptian; the cow likely is the goddess Hathor.<sup>70</sup> Both the Mut Ritual and the graffito probably testify to a real involvement of the Libyans in such celebration, during which the Egyptians could observe their customs and rituals and reproduce them, as testified by the Egyptian dancers wearing Libyan costumes at Deir el-Bahri.

The participation of desert groups in celebrations of the far-wandering goddess is corroborated by archaeological finds at Hierakonpolis, locality HK 64, where a deposit of ostrich feathers was found associated with a hieroglyphic inscription of “the Golden One, she appears in glory,” a reference to Hathor, one of

the pacified forms of Sekhmet, returning to Egypt.<sup>71</sup> The find is dated to the Second Intermediate Period and is probably related to Nubian groups that are well attested here<sup>72</sup> by the ceramic sherds found around the deposit. The feathers were an offering given by the Nubians to Hathor, while the Egyptians took part in the same celebration, as indicated by the hieroglyphic inscription. As Friedman states, the celebration of the far-wandering goddess's return from the south corresponded with the coming of the Nile inundation.<sup>73</sup>

The deposit of Hierakonpolis and the graffito in Wadi el-Hol, not far from each other, might demonstrate real involvement of the Libyans and the Nubians in an Egyptian celebration, an aspect of a process of assimilation that probably lasted for centuries.

Furthermore, the Papyrus Berlin mentions Tjemhu hunting ostriches, and a certain petroglyph bears mention in this regard. Probably datable to the Holocene period, it is engraved in Karkur Tahl, at the northeastern part of Gebel el-Uweinat, where reaching the Gilf Kebir could be easier. It shows a man with five feathers on his head and seemingly wearing a short skirt; he stretches his right arm toward an ostrich in order to catch it with a rope or a stick<sup>74</sup> (Figure 4). In the same area are also human representations with various other features and styles, probably produced by several groups who occasionally went there for trading or religious purposes.<sup>75</sup>

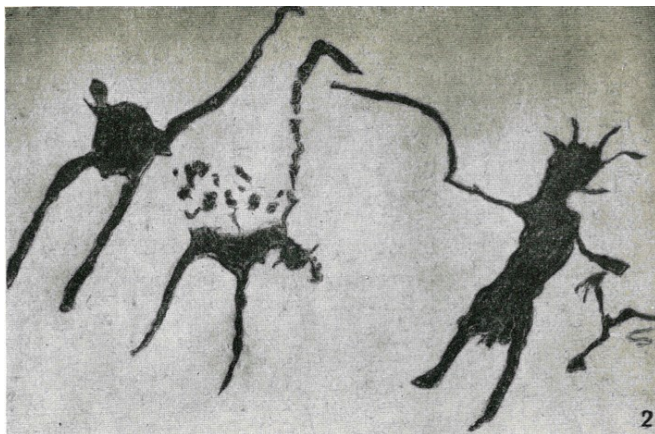


Figure 4: Engraving from the Karkur Tahl (after Hans Rhotert, *Libysche Felsbilder* [Darmstadt: L.C. Wittich Verlag, 1952], taf. XII, 2)

The graffito described above reflects a Tjemhu custom, reported in the Mut Ritual, and it is particularly notable because of its location in the suggested Tjemhu homeland. Furthermore, the first representation of Libyans with more feathers on the

heads, comparable to the Karkur Tahl graffito, occurs in the Twelfth Dynasty tomb of Khnumhotep in Beni Hassan, where Libyans, represented in a way very different from the Old Kingdom sources, are shown arriving in Egypt with cattle and families.<sup>76</sup>

#### CONCLUSION

The Egyptian sources here selected suggest how the relationship between the Egyptians and the Tjemhu-Libyans was created during the 6th Dynasty and continued in later times in an intermittent way. The selection of the sources aims to clarify two particular points that relate to the Tjemhu and connect to each other: their possible homeland and their dance, as perceived and represented by the Egyptians. The inscription of Harkhuf suggests the location of the Tjemhu homeland in the Gebel el-Uweinat/Gilf Kebir area, the westernmost boundary of the Egyptian advance in the Western Desert during the Old Kingdom, as confirmed by the Abu Ballas Trail. Starting from there, the Tjemhu could have gone toward the Nubian Desert, and indeed Old Kingdom sources testify to the geographic proximity between the Tjemhu and Nubians. At the same time, the Tjemhu, going along the Abu Ballas trail, should have had peaceful relationships with the Egyptians, due to a better-controlled political situation around Dakhla in the Old Kingdom.

The hypothetical character of this reconstruction should be considered, owing to the lack of a clear identification of the Tjemhu material culture. The Egyptians showed the Tjemhu as a Libyan group, especially using the word "Tjemh" to indicate the land of Libyans, located in the west. Looking to the west and considering the great amount of archaeological data coming from the Western Desert, it is possible to suppose the identification of the Tjemhu homeland in the Gilf Kebir/Uweinat area, considering also their nomadic character. The increasing use of archaeological data and the knowledge of desert roads, together with the consideration of the Egyptian sources, should allow to definitively clarify this point and to locate many places, up to now testified only by written sources.

The strong nomadic character of the Tjemhu-Libyans is reflected in their intermittent relationships with the Egyptians, who portrayed them through one of their most impressive activities, the dance. Unfortunately, the formalized nature of the Egyptian textual sources (e.g., autobiography, ritual) does not provide clear information about the nature of the contacts with desert groups. Nevertheless, it is possible to infer long-lasting contacts between the Egyptians and the Tjemhu-Libyans, with the gradual assimilation of Libyans and their customs into Egyptian society, as testified by the dancers represented at Deir el-Bahri.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> The author would like to thank Professor Giuseppina Capriotti for her encouragement to write this paper and Dr. Francesca Capuano for revising my English.
- <sup>2</sup> Robert Ritner, "Egypt and the Vanishing Libyans: Institutional Responses to a Nomadic People," in Jeffrey Szuchman (ed.), *Nomads, Tribes, and the State in the Ancient Near East. Cross-Disciplinary Perspective* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 43–56, January, 11, 2013, <http://oi.uchicago.edu/pdf/ois5.pdf>.
- <sup>3</sup> David O'Connor, "The Nature of the Tjemhu (Libyan) Society in the later New Kingdom," in Antony Leahy (ed.), *Libya and Egypt c. 1300-750 BC* (London: School of Oriental and African Studies, Centre of Near and Middle Eastern Studies/Society for Libyan Studies, 1990), 30; Colin A. Hope, "Egypt and 'Libya' to the End of the Old Kingdom," in Zahi Hawass and Janet Richards (eds.), *The Archaeology and Art of Ancient Egypt. Essay on Honor of David B. O'Connor I* (Cairo: Conseil supreme des antiquités de l'Égypte, 2007), 410; Steven Snape, "The Emergence of Libya on the Horizon of Egypt," in David O'Connor and Stephen Quirke (eds.), *Mysterious Lands* (Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press, 2011), 94.
- <sup>4</sup> Jürgen Osing, "Libyen, Libyer," in Wolfgang Helck and Eberhard Otto (eds.), *Lexikon der Ägyptologie III* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harassowitz 1980), 1015–1033; Anthony Leahy, "Libya," in Donald B. Redford (ed.), *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt II* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2001), 290–293.
- <sup>5</sup> Hermann Junker, *Der Auszug der Hathor-Tefnut aus Nubien* (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1911).
- <sup>6</sup> Cairo Museum 1435. Kurt Sethe, *Urkunden des Alten Reich I* (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1933), 98–109; Paul Tresson, *L'inscription d'Ouni, publiée avec aperçu grammatical, notes et glossaire* (Le Caire: Imprimerie de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 1919); Patrizia Piacentini, *L'autobiografia di Uni, principe e governatore dell'Alto Egitto* (Pisa: Giardini, 1990); Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature I* (London: University of California Press, 2006), 18–23.
- <sup>7</sup> Lichtheim, 19; Hans Goedicke, "The Alleged Military Campaign in Southern Palestine in the Reign of Pepi I (VIth Dynasty)," *Rivista di Studi Orientali* 38 (1963): 197.
- <sup>8</sup> Inscribed in his tomb in Qubbet el-Hawa, Aswan. *Editio princeps*: Ernersto Schiaparelli, *Una tomba egiziana inedita della VI<sup>a</sup> Dinastia con Inscrizioni Storiche e Geografiche*, Memorie dell'Accademia dei Lincei ser. 4, vol. 10/1 (1892): 21–53; Sethe, 120–131; Lichtheim, 23–27; Elmar Edel, *Die Felsgräbernekropole der Qubbet el-Hawa bei Assuan / Abt. 1. Architektur, Darstellungen, Texte, archäologischer Befund und Funde der Gräber I. QH 24 - QH 34p; 2. QH 35 - QH 101 ; 3. QH 102 - QH 209. Aus dem Nachlaß verfaßt und herausgegeben von Kari-J. Seyfried und Gerd Vieler* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2008), 617–661, pl. 14, taff. XXVI–XXXII.
- <sup>9</sup> Lichtheim 2006, 25
- <sup>10</sup> Goedicke 1963, 197; Lichtheim, 19.
- <sup>11</sup> For example, the Tale of Sinuhe, Lichtheim, 222; Roland Koch, *Die Erzählung des Sinuhe* (Bruxelles: Fondation Égyptologique Reine Élisabeth, 1990), r. R12; an inscription from the fortress of Zawwyet Umm el-Rakham, Snape, 102; the Great Inscription of the Libyan war of Merenptah in Karnak, Kenneth A. Kitchen, *Ramesside Inscriptions IV* (Oxford: B.H. Blackwell, 1982), 5, r. 26; the inscription of the Libyan wars of Ramses III in Medinet Habu, the Epigraphic Survey, *Medinet Habu I, Earlier Historical Records of Ramses III* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1930), pls. 17, r.6-11-12-16; pl. 19, r.5; pl. 22, r.4-16; pl. 26, r.12; Epigraphic Survey, *Medinet Habu II, Later Historical Records of Ramses III* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1932), pl. 72.
- <sup>12</sup> Stefan Kröpelin, "The Geomorphological and Palaeoclimatic Framework of Prehistoric Occupation in the Wadi Bakht Area," in Jörg Linstädter (ed.), *Wadi Bakht. Landschaftsarchäologie einer Siedlungskammer im Gifl Kebir*, (Köln: Hans Kock, 2005), 51–65.
- <sup>13</sup> Deborah Darnell, "Gravel of the Desert and Broken Pots in the Road: Ceramic Evidence from the Route between the Nile and Kharga Oasis," in Renée Friedman (ed.), *Egypt and Nubia. Gift of the Desert* (London: British Museum Press, 2002), 156-177; John Coleman and Deborah Darnell, *Theban Desert Road Survey in the Egyptian Western Desert I* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 29, January 11, 2013,

- <http://www.oi.uchicago.edu/OI/DEPT/PUB/SRC/OIP119.html>.
- <sup>14</sup> Project led by Georges Soukiassian, Institut français d'archéologie orientale; Michel Valloggia, *Balat I. Le mastaba de Medou-Nefer*, (Le Caire: Imprimerie de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 1986); Georges Soukiassian, Michel Wuttmann, Laure Pantalacci, Pierre Ballet, and Maurice Picon, *Balat III. Les ateliers de potiers d'Ayn Asil. Fin de l'Ancien Empire, Première Période Intermédiaire* (Le Caire: Imprimerie de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 1990); Anne Minault-Gout, *Balat II. Le mastaba d'Ima Pépi*, (Le Caire: Imprimerie de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 1992); Georges Soukiassian, Michel Wuttmann and Laure Pantalacci, *Balat VI. Le palais des gouverneurs de l'époque de Pépy II. Les sanctuaires de ka et leurs dépendances* (Le Caire: Imprimerie de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 2002); Georges Castel and Laure Pantalacci, *Balat VII. Les cimetières est et ouest du mastaba de Khentika* (Le Caire: Imprimerie de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 2005); Silvie Marchand and Georges Soukiassian, *Balat VIII. Un habitat de la XIII<sup>e</sup> dynastie—2 Période Intermédiaire à Ayn Asil* (Le Caire: Imprimerie de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 2010); Georges Soukiassian (ed.), *Balat XI. Monuments funéraires du palais et de la nécropole* (Le Caire: Imprimerie de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 2013).
- <sup>15</sup> The Dakhla Oasis Project from the Monash University, led by Anthony J. Mills. Charles S. Churcher, Anthony J. Mills, *Reports from the Survey of the Dakhleh Oasis, Western Desert of Egypt, 1977–1987* (Oxford: Oxbow, 1999); Gillian E. Bowen and Colin A. Hope, *The Oasis Papers 3: Proceedings of the Third International Conference of the Dakhleh Oasis Project* (Oxford: Oxbow, 2003); Roger S. Bagnall, Paola Davoli, Colin A. Hope, and Bruce E. Parr, *The Oasis Papers 6: Proceedings of the Sixth International Conference of the Dakhleh Oasis Project* (Oxford: Oxbow, 2012).
- <sup>16</sup> Olaf Kaper, "Toponyms of Dakhleh Oasis," *Bulletin de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale* 92 (1992): 125; Pierre Tallet, "A Particularity of the Toponymy of Dakhla Oasis: *s3 wh3t* and *iw-mrw*," *Göttinger Miszellen* 173 (1999): 170.
- <sup>17</sup> A graffito dated back to the 1st Dynasty: Salima Ikram and Corinna Rossi, "An Early Dynastic Serekh from the Kharga Oasis," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 90 (2004): 215; an inscription and some graffiti dated to the 4th–6th Dynasty: Corinna Rossi and Salima Ikram, "Petroglyphs and Inscriptions along the Darb Ayn Amur, Kharga Oasis," *Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache* 29 (2002): 148–149.
- <sup>18</sup> An inscription was found, dated to the Middle Kingdom: Jürgen Osing "Notizen zu den Oasen Charga und Dakhla," *Göttinger Miszellen* 92 (1986): 81–82.
- <sup>19</sup> Lisa Giddy, *Egyptian Oases. Bahariya, Dakhla, Farafra and Kharga during Pharaonic Times* (Warminster: Aris and Phillips, 1987), 10–11.
- <sup>20</sup> D. Darnell, 29.
- <sup>21</sup> David O'Connor, "The Locations of Yam and Kush and Their Historical Implications," *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 23 (1986): 27–50.
- <sup>22</sup> Julien Cooper, "Reconsidering the Location of Yam," *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 48 (2012): 9.
- <sup>23</sup> For the passage by Selima, see O'Connor 1986, 34.
- <sup>24</sup> The main purposes are in Elmar Edel, "Inschriften des Altes Reiches. V. Die Reiseberichte des *hrw-hwif* (Herchuf)," in Otto Firchow (ed.), *Ägyptologische Studien. Festschrift H. Grapow* (Berlin: Institut für Orientforschung, 1955), 51–75; O'Connor 1986; Cooper.
- <sup>25</sup> Researches conducted by G. A. Reisner between 1913 and 1916, by the Swiss archaeological mission directed by Charles Bonnet between 1977 and 2002, and by Matthieu Honegger from 2002 onward.
- <sup>26</sup> Harry S. Smith and Lisa Giddy, "Nubia and Dakhla Oasis in the Late Third Millennium B.C.: The Present Balance of Textual and Archaeological Evidence," in Francis Geus and Florence Thill (eds.), *Mélanges offert à Jean Vercoutter* (Paris: Editions Recherche sur les Civilisations, 1985), 320.
- <sup>27</sup> Klaus P. Kuhlmann, "The 'Oasis Bypass' or the Issue of Desert Trade in Pharaonic Times," in Jennerstrasse 8 (eds.), *Tides of the Desert* (Köln: Heinrich Barth Institut, 2002), 125–170; Claude Obsomer, "Les expéditions d'Herhouf (VI<sup>e</sup> Dynastie) et la localisation de Iam," in Marie-Cécile Bruwier (ed.), *Pharaons noirs: sur la Piste des quarante jours* (Mariemont: Musée Royale de



- Mariemont, 2007), 39–53; Alessandro Roccati, “In Quest of the Land of Tjemeh,” *Sahara* 23 (2012), 125, with preceding bibliography.
- <sup>28</sup> William Y. Adams, *Nubia: Corridor to Africa* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), 171.
- <sup>29</sup> D. Darnell, 29.
- <sup>30</sup> In Wadi Shaw site 82/52 was found a fragment of a Maidum bowl diagnostic for the Old Kingdom and for the site of Ayn Asil, Dakhla. Site 82/52 is part of the Wadi Shaw Camp 49, where there have been found various pottery traditions that have parallels in the Kerma culture, in the Nubian C-Group, or show specific techniques and decoration patterns coming from other desert sites. Site 82/52 was dated by four radiocarbon dates to around 2500 BCE; Rudolph Kuper, “Prehistoric Research in the Southern Libyan Desert: A Brief Account and Some conclusions of the B.O.S. Project,” *Cahiers de recherches de l’Institut de papyrologie et d’égyptologie de Lille* 17 (1995): 133.
- <sup>31</sup> Joseph Clayton, Aloisia De Trafford and Mark Borda, “A Hieroglyphic Inscription found at Jebel Uweinat Mentioning Yam and Tekhebet,” *Sahara* 19 (2008): 128.
- <sup>32</sup> Clayton et al., 131.
- <sup>33</sup> Frank Förster, “With Donkeys, Jars and Water Bags into the Libyan Desert: The Abu Ballas Trail in the Late Old Kingdom/First Intermediate Period,” *British Museum Studies in Ancient Egypt and Sudan* 7 (2007): 7, July 28, 2013, <http://www.britishmuseum.org/pdf/Foerster.pdf>; Cooper, 15.
- <sup>34</sup> Förster 2007, 7; Stefan Kröpelin and Rudolph Kuper, “More Corridors to Africa,” *Cahiers de recherches de l’Institut de papyrologie et d’égyptologie de Lille* 26 (2006–2007), 220.
- <sup>35</sup> Discovered by Carlo Bergmann and investigated within the research program of the Collaborative Research Centre ACACIA (Arid Climatic Adaptation and Cultural Innovation in Africa) at the University of Cologne.
- <sup>36</sup> ACACIA report 1, 2006, March 16, 2013, [http://www.uni-koeln.de/sfb389/a/a1/download/acacia%20A1-E3\\_report%202006-1.pdf](http://www.uni-koeln.de/sfb389/a/a1/download/acacia%20A1-E3_report%202006-1.pdf).
- <sup>37</sup> Förster 2007; Stan Hendrickx, Frank Förster and Merel Eyckerman, “The Pharaonic Pottery of the Abu Ballas Trail: ‘Filling Stations’ along a Desert Highway in Southwestern Egypt,” in Frank Förster and Heiko Riemer (eds), *Desert Road Archaeology in Ancient Egypt and Beyond* (Köln: Heinrich-Barth-Institut, 2013), 339–379.
- <sup>38</sup> Jörg Linstädter (ed.), *Wadi Bakht. Landschaftsarchäologie einer Siedlungskammer im Gilf Kebir* (Köln: Hans Kock, 2005), 62.
- <sup>39</sup> This conclusion was presented by the author in her thesis written at the end of the Post-Graduate School of Archaeology in January 2011 (a.a. 2009/2010) and, later, in occasion of the conference Current Research in Egyptology XIV, hosted in Cambridge 19–22 March 2013; the same conclusion appears in Roccati (2012).
- <sup>40</sup> Werner Schön, “The Late Neolithic of Wadi el-Akhdar (Gilf Kebir) and the Eastern Sahara,” *Archéologie du Nil moyen* 6 (1994): 131–175; Linstädter *passim*.
- <sup>41</sup> Linstädter, 53.
- <sup>42</sup> Linstädter, 62.
- <sup>43</sup> Jörg Linstädter and Stefan Kröpelin, “Wadi Bakht Revisited: Holocene Climate Change and Prehistoric Occupation in the Gilf Kebir Region of the Eastern Sahara, SW Egypt,” *Geoarchaeology: An International Journal* 19.8 (2004): 775, March 30, 2010, <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/gca.20023/pdf>; Heiko Riemer, Mathias Lange and Karin Kindermann, “When the Desert Dried Up: Late Prehistoric Cultures and Contacts in Egypt and Northern Sudan,” in Dietrich Raue, Stephan J. Seidlmayer and Philipp Speiser (eds.), *The First Cataract of the Nile: One Region, Diverse Perspectives* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2013), 157–183.
- <sup>44</sup> Heiko Riemer, “Clayton Rings et empilements de pierres: les premiers voyages en milieu du désertique dans le Sahara oriental,” in Marie-Cécile Bruwier (ed.), *Pharaons noirs: sur la Piste des quarante jours* (Mariemont: Musée Royale de Mariemont, 2007), 21–27.
- <sup>45</sup> These are ceramic truncated cones, open at both ends, named after Patrick A. Clayton, who first found them in 1930. Several scholars have dealt with this topic, including Maria Carmela Gatto, “Two Pottery Caches at Bir Sahara (Egyptian Western Desert),” *Sahara* 13 (2001–2002): 51–60; Colin A. Hope, “Early and Mid-Holocene Ceramics from the Dakhleh Oasis: Traditions and Influences,” in Renée Friedman (ed.), *Egypt and Nubia: Gift of the Desert* (London: British Museum Press, 2002), 39–61; Hope 2007, 406–407; Heiko Riemer and Rudolph Kuper, “Clayton Rings: Enigmatic Ancient Pottery in the Eastern Sahara,” *Sahara* 12 (2000): 96; Riemer, *passim*.
- <sup>46</sup> Riemer and Kuper, 96; Heiko Riemer, Frank Förster, Stan Hendrickx, Stefanie Nussbaum,

- Barbara Eichhorn, Nadja Pöllath, Peter Schönfeld, and Gregor Wagner, "Zwei pharaonische Wüstenstationen südwestlich von Dakhla," *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo* 61 (2005): 291–350.
- <sup>47</sup> Frank Förster, "Beyond Dakhla: The Abu Ballas Trail in the Libyan Desert (SW Dakhla)," in Frank Förster and Heiko Riemer (eds), *Desert Road Archaeology in Ancient Egypt and Beyond*, (Köln: Heinrich-Barth-Institut 2013), 297–337.
- <sup>48</sup> Förster 2007, 7
- <sup>49</sup> Kuhlmann, 153.
- <sup>50</sup> Förster 2013, 313.
- <sup>51</sup> Ricardo A. Caminos, *Late Egyptian Miscellanies* (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), 176; Kuhlmann, 151.
- <sup>52</sup> Robert Ritner, "The Larger Dakhleh Stela," in Robert Ritner (ed.), *The Libyan Anarchy: Documents from Egypt's Third Intermediate Period* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009); Jac J. Janssen, "The Smaller Dakhleh Stela," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 54 (1968): 165–172.
- <sup>53</sup> Kuhlmann, 157.
- <sup>54</sup> Günter Burkard, "Inscription in the Dakhla Region," *Sahara* 9 (1997): 152.
- <sup>55</sup> Kuhlmann, 156.
- <sup>56</sup> Mary M. A. McDonald, "Neolithic Cultural Units and Adaptations in the Dakhleh Oasis," in Charles S. Churcher and Anthony J. Mills (eds.), *Reports from the Survey of the Dakhleh Oasis Western Desert of Egypt 1977–1987* (Oxford: Oxbow, 1999), 129; Hendrickx, Förster, Eyckenman, 348.
- <sup>57</sup> Kuhlmann, 157.
- <sup>58</sup> Kenneth A. Kitchen, *Ramesseid Inscriptions III* (Oxford: B.H. Blackwell, 1982), 95, stela IX, r. 4; Snape, 98.
- <sup>59</sup> Förster 2013, 311.
- <sup>60</sup> Other Libyan groups are occasionally presented as dancers: in the Onomasticon of Amenemope, Libyan dancers are called *imhw*: Alan H. Gardiner, *Ancient Egyptian Onomastica* (London: Oxford University Press, 1947), 95, n. 217. On the Ptolemaic gate of the temple of Mut in Karnak, the Tjemhu are reproduced dancing: Serge Sauneron, *La porte ptolémaïque de l'enceinte de Mout à Karnak* (Le Caire: Imprimerie de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 1983), pl. 11, 11, l. 21.
- <sup>61</sup> Edouard Naville, *The Temple of Deir el Bahari IV* (London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1901), pl. 90.
- <sup>62</sup> Emma Brunner Traut, *Der Tanz im Alten Ägypten, nach bildlichen und inschriftlichen Zeugnisse*, Ägyptologische Forschungen, Heft 6 (Glückstadt: Verlag J. J. Augustin, 1958), 74.
- <sup>63</sup> Epigraphic Survey, *Reliefs and Inscriptions at Luxor Temple I: The Festival Procession of Opet in the Colonnade Hall* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), March, 9, 2013, <http://oi.uchicago.edu/research/pubs/catalog/oip/oip112.html>, pl. 99. See also Libyan soldiers, pl. 93.
- <sup>64</sup> Epigraphic Survey 1994, pls. 24, 25, 28, 32, 37, 38, 91, 92, 96.
- <sup>65</sup> John C. Darnell, "Hathor Returns to Medamud," *Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur* 22 (1995): 47–94.
- <sup>66</sup> *Gsgs* is the word used for "to dance"; J. C. Darnell, 64.
- <sup>67</sup> The first source related to the Tjemhu is the so-called Libyan Palette (CG 14238): Janine Monnet-Saleh, "Fortresses, ou villes-protégées thinites?" *Bulletin de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale* 67 (1969): 173–187; Winfried Barta, "Bemerkungen zur Bedeutung der Mr-Hacke," *Göttinger Miszellen* 54, 1982, 11–16; Günter Dreyer, *Umm el-Qaab I. Das prädynastische Königsgrab U-j und seine frühen Schriftzeugnisse* (Mainz am Rhein: Philipp von Zabern, 1998), 173–180; Marc Etienne, "À propos des représentations d'enceintes crénelées sur les palettes de l'époque de Naqada III," *Archéologie Nil* 9 (1999): 149–164.
- <sup>68</sup> Ursula Verhoeven and Philippe Derchain, *Le voyage de la déesse libyque: ein Text aus dem "Mutritual" des Pap. Berlin 3053* (Bruxelles: Fondation Égyptologique Reine Élisabeth, 1985), 15–17, 20.
- <sup>69</sup> *Ib.*, 23; J. C. Darnell, 71.
- <sup>70</sup> D. Darnell, 126–127, pl. 95.
- <sup>71</sup> Renée Friedman, "Pots, Pebbles and Petroglyphs Part II: 1996 Excavations at Hierakonpolis Locality HK64," in Anthony Leahy and John Tait (eds.), *Studies on Ancient Egypt in Honour of H. S. Smith*, (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1999), 101–108.
- <sup>72</sup> Especially cemeteries HK 21A, HK 47 and HK27C, pan-grave and C-Group cemeteries; see Friedman, 104.
- <sup>73</sup> Friedman, 104.
- <sup>74</sup> Hans Rhotert, *Libysche Felsbilder* (Darmstadt: L.C. Wittich Verlag, 1952), taf. XII, 2.
- <sup>75</sup> Clayton et al., 133 (with references).
- <sup>76</sup> Percy E. Newberry, *Beni Hasan I* (London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1893), pl. XLVII.